



San Mateo County South Coast

Community Conversation Proceedings

February 27, 2017

La Honda Pescadero Unified School District, Board Room,
360 Butano Cutoff, Pescadero, California

Background

This document summarizes key themes and discussion points shared during the San Mateo South Coast community conversation as part of Silicon Valley Community Foundation's Grantmaking Review process. The community foundation convened a series of six community conversations as part of this project, each focused on a key issue – economic security, immigration, education, building strong communities, civic engagement and public participation, and using technology for social good – in order to gather perspectives to inform the Foundation's work. At the end of this series, the community foundation added two more convenings in Gilroy and Pescadero, to ensure that the diverse geographic experiences of the region were reflected in this effort.

A total of 30 community participants attended the Pescadero convening, including representatives from the La Honda Pescadero School District, County service agencies, nonprofit organizations, and one member of the community foundation's Bboard of directors, Dan Perez. In addition, various representatives of SVCF's leadership team attended the community conversation, including Chief Community Impact Officer, Erica Wood, and Vice President of Strategic Initiatives and Grantmaking, Manuel Santamaría.

OVERVIEW OF GRANTMAKING REVIEW PROCESS

The grantmaking strategic review process is intended to be both a look back at what SVCF has achieved with its grantmaking investments since 2008, as well as a look forward to assess and understand where there are emerging opportunities for SVCF to make a positive difference for our community through grantmaking. The review process will provide SVCF's staff and board of directors with the information necessary to determine whether to stay the course with our grantmaking, make adjustments or direct our investments to new strategic areas of concern. Decisions based on this review process will be announced in October 2017.

STRUCTURE OF COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Each community conversation follows a similar model, designed to provide participants with a common context and framing for productive discussion. Erica Wood and Manuel Santamaria opened the conversation with a welcome, provided an overview of SVCF's impact data and introduced two critical questions participants were being asked to discuss. For the Pescadero convening, the questions were:

1. What are the most pressing issues in Pescadero?
2. How can SVCF add value and best engage to help solve the most pressing issues in Pescadero?

Shiree Teng of the consulting team, Teng & Smith, Inc., provided instructions on the expectations and group agreements for breakout circles. Participants were invited to self-select one group to engage in direct conversations with each other through facilitated small-group discussions focused around the two questions above.

SVCF staff was present in the breakout circles as notetakers/scribes, Spanish language translators or listeners only. After small group discussions were over, participants reconvened as a large group where SVCF staff provided information about next steps in the grantmaking review process and reminded participants to check www.siliconvallecf.org/svcfgrants for more information. All aspects of the conversations were recorded by notetakers and then synthesized for the community foundation to take under consideration.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION THEMES

Participants welcomed the opportunity to share and connect with each other. Teng and Smith, Inc. transcribed participants' post-it notes, as well as the notetakers'/scribes' own observations and reflections, providing for a rich and detailed summation of each question.

Conversation Summaries

The group discussions identified further pressing needs and opportunities for greater impact in our region. The following section summarizes discussion for each critical question in an overview of the conversation.

Please note that the detailed notes for each conversation are available in a separate appendix. They are actual comments and feedback from the participants from this community conversation and may not reflect the opinions or future plans of the community foundation.

CRITICAL QUESTION ONE

What are the most pressing issues in Pescadero?

(Two breakout circles, total of 30 participants)

Overview of Conversation

- *Flooding.* Participants expressed strong concern about flooding in Pescadero, its effects on roads and transportation, and how flooding overwhelms Pescadero's wastewater and clean drinking systems. They describe a situation that requires multiple partners and agencies to come together to work proactively towards a solution.
- *Affordable housing.* There is an urgent need for affordable housing for very low, low and middle income segments of Pescadero's community. Participants call out the need for housing for farmworkers and teachers in particular, better protections for tenants and existing affordable housing, and a lack of increased access to affordable farmland. "Who gets to live here? Tourists, open space, us? I ended up here, but who gets to stay here?"
- *Isolation.* Pescadero exists apart from the region at large – its resources, agencies and infrastructure - it is a rural area that serves as "a weekend getaway for the Bay Area." The effect of this isolation is felt keenly in a lack of connectivity to each other; there is a need for venues and network for socializing and gathering.
- *Segregation.* At the same time, participants describe a community that experiences de facto segregated internally along lines of class, resident/tourist and particularly race/ethnicity. "There are two Pescaderos... A Latino Pescadero and an Anglo Pescadero."
- *Infrastructure.* Participants name core infrastructure – water, sewage garbage systems; communication and internet; transportation, roads and transit; and emergency services – as a pressing need in Pescadero. They describe an infrastructure that is not integrated into the larger regional infrastructure and services, and is uneven or broken or over capacity within Pescadero. This results in constant disruption to peoples' lives in ways that matter, ranging from poor water quality to students who are unable to do their homework because of lack of internet to disjointed responses to emergency flooding situations to lack of transportation for students attending community college in the region.
- *Basic community needs.* Healthy food, clean water, laundry facilities, access to healthcare, public restrooms and parking, childcare and recreational facilities were called out. These are especially important in relation to agricultural workers and their families.
- *Focus on young people.* Participants discuss pressing needs associated with young people in two ways - in terms of education and also in terms of resources to support young people. In terms of education, participants call out for long term funding to be invested in schools, to increase staff in schools, to support students in their transition to college and to fund college education for young people. They want to see education that is more grounded in project based learning, with new kinds of curriculum that focus on problem solving and utilizing working lands in the area. They want to see education that is more linked to hands on learning and career opportunities, with vocational, trade courses and internships integrated into the curriculum. Beyond the classroom, participants see a need for more supports for young people – social venues, teen health access, enriched afterschool programming, sports. They note there is high use of drugs and alcohol among the young people and they want to offer alternative ways to connect with each other.
- *Support for immigrant community.* There is an urgent need to support immigrant community in the current political environment with resources, legal services, information and solidarity. Help the larger community understand how to take action and be effective allies while also fortifying immigrant communities from within.

- *Economic sustainability.* Participant voices clustered around economic sustainability in Pescadero. This included setting a bar for jobs that pay living wages, increasing access to arable farmlands for cultivation, dismantling economic disparities in the region that are built into the economy of Pescadero, and the need for mechanisms such as a community bank to foster entrepreneurial small business and reinvest money in the community.
- *Lack of coordination and communication around priority competing interests.* Pescadero's unique economy and protections for the environment need to be balanced with basic needs and services for serving Pescadero residents and workers. There is a need for a cohesive whole perspective on community needs and resources to address these. Agencies, partners and funding entities need to improve coordination and communication around these issues.

CRITICAL QUESTION TWO

How can SVCF add value and best engage to help solve the most pressing issues in Pescadero?

(Two breakout circles, total of 33 participants)

Overview of Conversation

- *Provide funding for pressing issues.* Participants identified issue areas/projects in need of funding: basic services for the community, especially infrastructure improvements, a laundromat and a health clinic; programming for youth, including an investment in early childhood education, college preparation and transition, and workforce experience; affordable housing; community planning; immediate funding for immigration services; a community center, social events and communication; and infrastructure improvements, especially to facilitate transportation for college students in and out of Pescadero.
- *Convene, coordinate and facilitate within Pescadero to identify solutions.* Other than funding, participants most frequently described convening partners and facilitating conversations within Pescadero as a way for SVCF to add value/engage. Participants envision SVCF convening and facilitating a table, forum(s) or collaboratives where partners can work together to move smaller projects such as a community center or address systemic issues such as infrastructure. Help to implement planning processes that will benefit Pescadero.
- *Advocacy.* SVCF can help Pescadero articulate its needs, creating a platform or voice for Pescadero to strengthen its political participation and representation in the region at large, but especially in decisions that have to do with Pescadero. "Increase feedback loop with community. Advocate for Pescadero needs." "Flex political muscle to allow Pescadero to make our own decisions."
- *Promote and sponsor community connectivity.* Participants suggest that SVCF can play an important role by sponsoring events and activities to promote connection and combat isolation, and by strengthening systems for communication among community members.
- *Procure technical expertise.* Provide much needed technical expertise, such as legal counsel and consultants to move forward improvements to water and flooding infrastructure and to strengthen environmental stewardship.
- *Build capacity locally.* Equip residents with tools and the skill to analyze, research and navigate government systems. Especially, provide leadership development to young people and encourage them to reinvest this in the community.
- *Research.* Commission or conduct research to locate best practices and solutions employed in areas that are comparable to Pescadero. "What can we customize to our area based on our particular issues?"
- *Move policy for economic equity.* Support policy that will strengthen economic equity - sustainable agriculture, cooperative economics, fair wages and entrepreneurship - in Pescadero.
- *Link and leverage diverse funding streams for basic needs and infrastructure.* Coordinate and link public and private funding streams to improve infrastructure and access to basic needs for Pescadero's community.

- *Strategic approach for philanthropy and SVCF.* Approach funding with these strategies in mind: larger multi-year funding for deeper impact; fund around diverse partnerships and initiatives with diverse constituents and stakeholders; work small, “small changes make a big impact here;” fund innovation; connect donors to issues and initiatives where they bring expertise, communication infrastructure, for example; and use a “collective impact approach to solving complex problems – looking at intersections of a problem from economic to education to environment and bringing them together; e.g., food justice and community food security.”