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## East Salinas residents take another planning step toward healthy community

About 100 residents attend meeting to build on ideas for long-term improvement project

BY MARIA INES ZAMUDIO • [MZAMUDIO@THECALIFORNIAN.COM](mailto:MZAMUDIO@THECALIFORNIAN.COM) • FEBRUARY 8, 2010

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Laura Tinajero from Second Chance listens to comments and perspectives from residents of east Salinas during a community planning meeting Saturday at the Jesse Sanchez School. (Conner Jay)

### WHAT'S NEXT

Another east Salinas improvement planning meeting is scheduled in March before the Community Foundation for Monterey County completes the grant proposal and submits it to the California Endowment.

Information: Call 831-770-0951.

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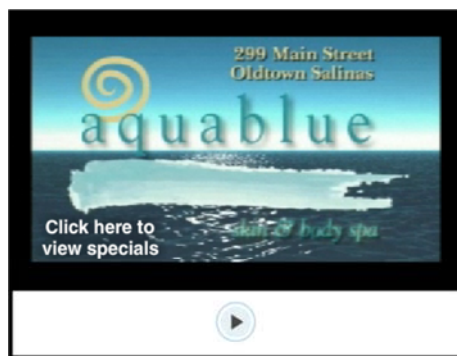
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About 100 east Salinas residents met over the weekend to help in the planning of a safer and healthier community.



The impetus for such a project comes from the California Endowment, which plans to pump millions of dollars into the crime-plagued community over the next decade.

Dozens of residents took part Saturday morning, gathering ideas on how to best put the investment to use.

The Community Foundation for Monterey County is spearheading the project. Foundation staff met with the residents to get input for submitting a grant which is due at the end of March.

The crowd met for about four hours at Jesse Sanchez Elementary School.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for the residents of east Salinas to take a leadership role and make this happen," said Judy Sulsona of the Community Foundation, a co-facilitator for the planning.

East Salinas is one of 14 communities across the state chosen by the California Endowment to receive funding as part of the Building Healthy Communities initiative. The funding, which could start this year, would address health-care issues and violence prevention in one of the city's poorest areas.

#### Determining Outcomes

Part of the planning process involves coming up with five outcomes. Residents were divided into five groups to talk about how to achieve the outcomes, which include:

Providing health care for all children in east Salinas.

Improving access to households, health-care providers and options for avoiding chronic illnesses.

Focusing social and human services on preventive health efforts.

Ensuring that children and families are safe from violence in their homes and neighborhoods.

Youth development.

Some people suggested creating scholarships for college-bound Latino students who would return to Salinas and serve the community.

Others suggested funding the schools in order to keep recreation programs open after school and during the summer.

And another group focused on community outreach for those in need who fail to come forward even though they may need help.

"There's often a stigma in the community when it comes to getting help for domestic violence or getting counseling," said Ana Vasquez, of the Young Women's Christian Association. The YWCA provides help for domestic violence victims in east Salinas.

"How do you reach the people who really need it?" she asked.

The California Endowment is a private health foundation devoted to improving the health of Californians.

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