



# Environmental Justice Element



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# Introduction



## PURPOSE

To identify and reduce unique and compounded health risks, increase community assets, and improve overall health.

## INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Justice Element focuses on reducing pollution exposure, improving air quality, and promoting public facilities, food access, safe and healthy homes, and physical activity. To better address community needs, this Element also encourages and supports inclusive public engagement in City decisions. Together, these efforts work to advance environmental justice across the City and improve the quality of life for all San Diegans.

Varied development patterns within a city can lead to unequal impacts in communities. Development that generates jobs and enriches a community, may also increase air pollution in the surrounding communities. An absence of development can also negatively affect a community. A lack of grocery stores in a community can limit access to healthy food, which has been linked to increased obesity rates and poorer health outcomes. Communities have suffered – and continue to suffer – more from the adverse effects of varied development patterns by carrying a more significant and disproportionate burden of the associated health risks. The Environmental Justice Element is intended to address the imbalances

in our communities caused by past discriminatory actions that have resulted in segregated development patterns and inequitable investment.

Several intersecting and overlapping factors have impacted patterns of segregation and integration over the course of the City's history. These factors include White flight; housing costs; access to well-paying jobs and economic mobility; racially and economically restrictive covenants within real estate deeds; redlining; discriminatory real estate practices; zoning; freeway construction; ballot initiatives; and public resistance to increased housing and density. These factors are discussed in greater detail in the appendices to the Housing Element.

Environmental justice, when action is taken, ensures that people of all races, cultures, and incomes are equally and equitably valued, protected, and served. This includes policies and regulations that affect the quality of the environment, such as mobility, parks, open space, public space, public services, and use of land. Inequitable planning policies and the lack of equitable funding tools have resulted in significant disparities in funding for libraries, public streets,

fire stations and other public spaces. The Environmental Justice Element strives to uphold existing high-quality public spaces and amenities while creating the space for more inclusive practices that foster a San Diego where all community members have equal access and opportunities, regardless of where they live in the City.

Senate Bill 1000 (SB 1000), Planning for Healthy Communities Act, was adopted in 2016 which requires local governments to address environmental justice issues in their General Plan. The State defines environmental justice as:

*“[t]he fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.”*

Environmental Justice Communities (EJ Communities) describes areas of the City most impacted and negatively affected by environmental burdens and associated health risks, as shown in Figure EJ-1.





Community Garden at the Park de La Cruz Community Center  
in the City Height Community Plan Area in San Diego



Figure EJ-1 Environmental Justice Communities

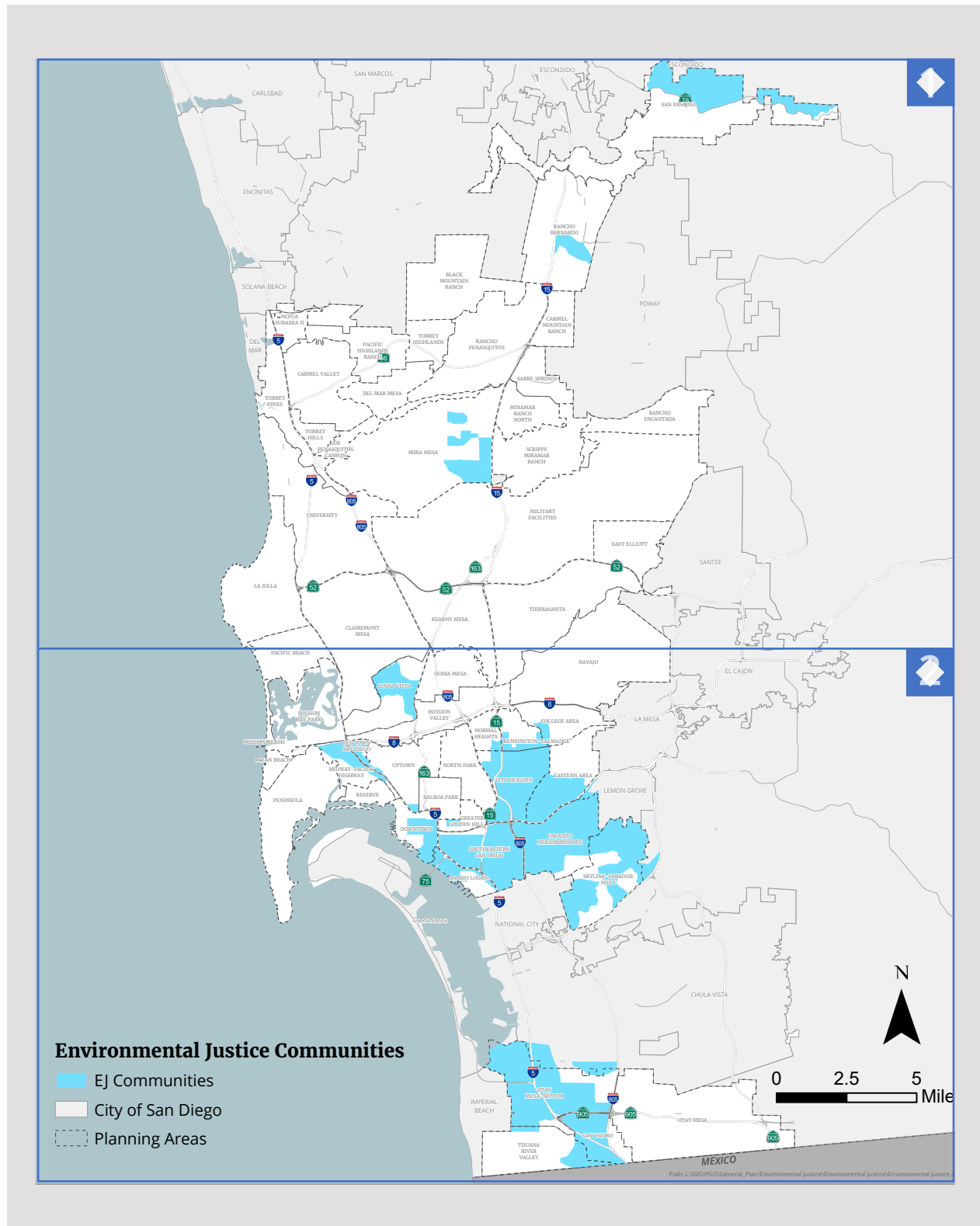




Figure EJ-2 Environmental Justice Communities-Northern San Diego

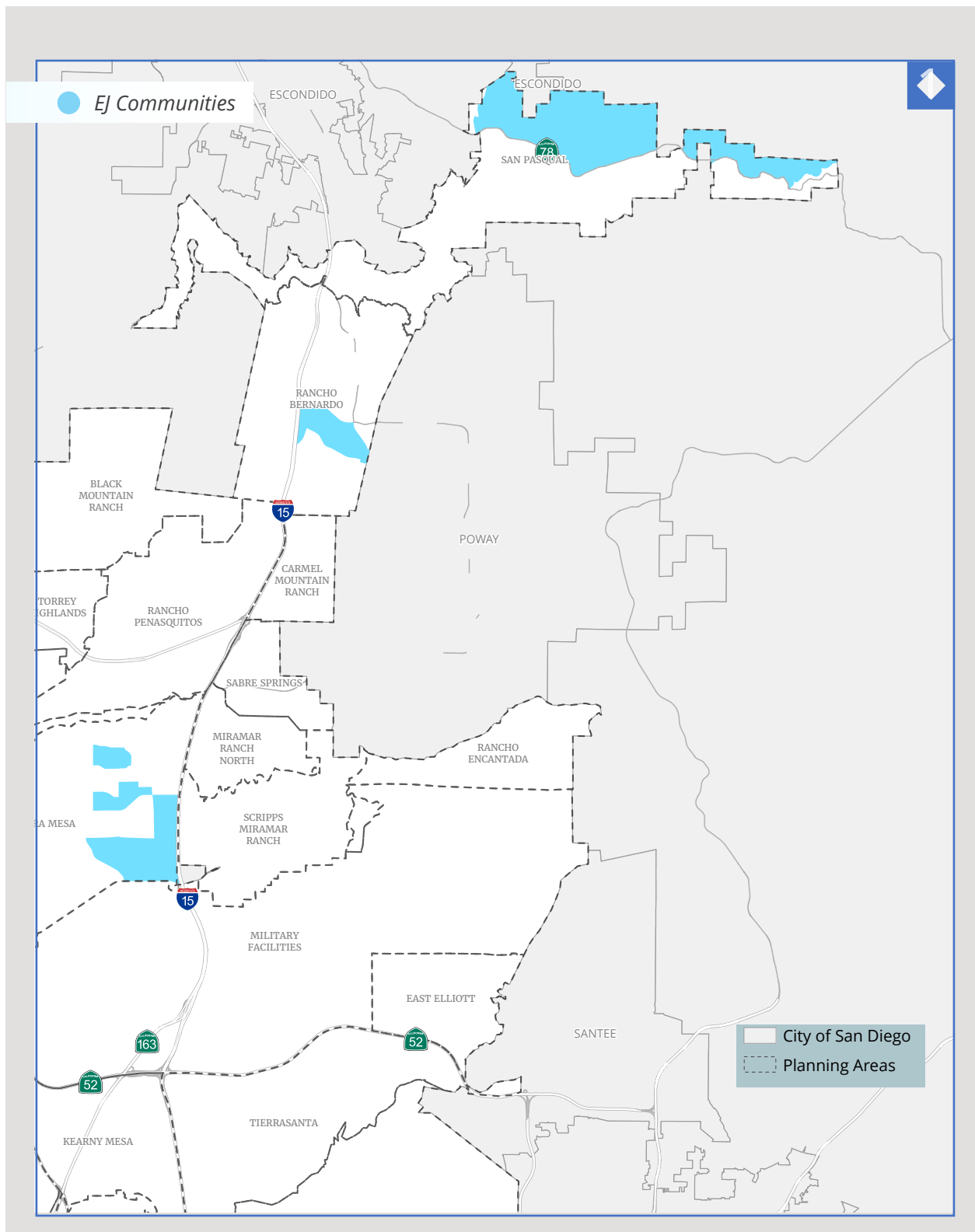
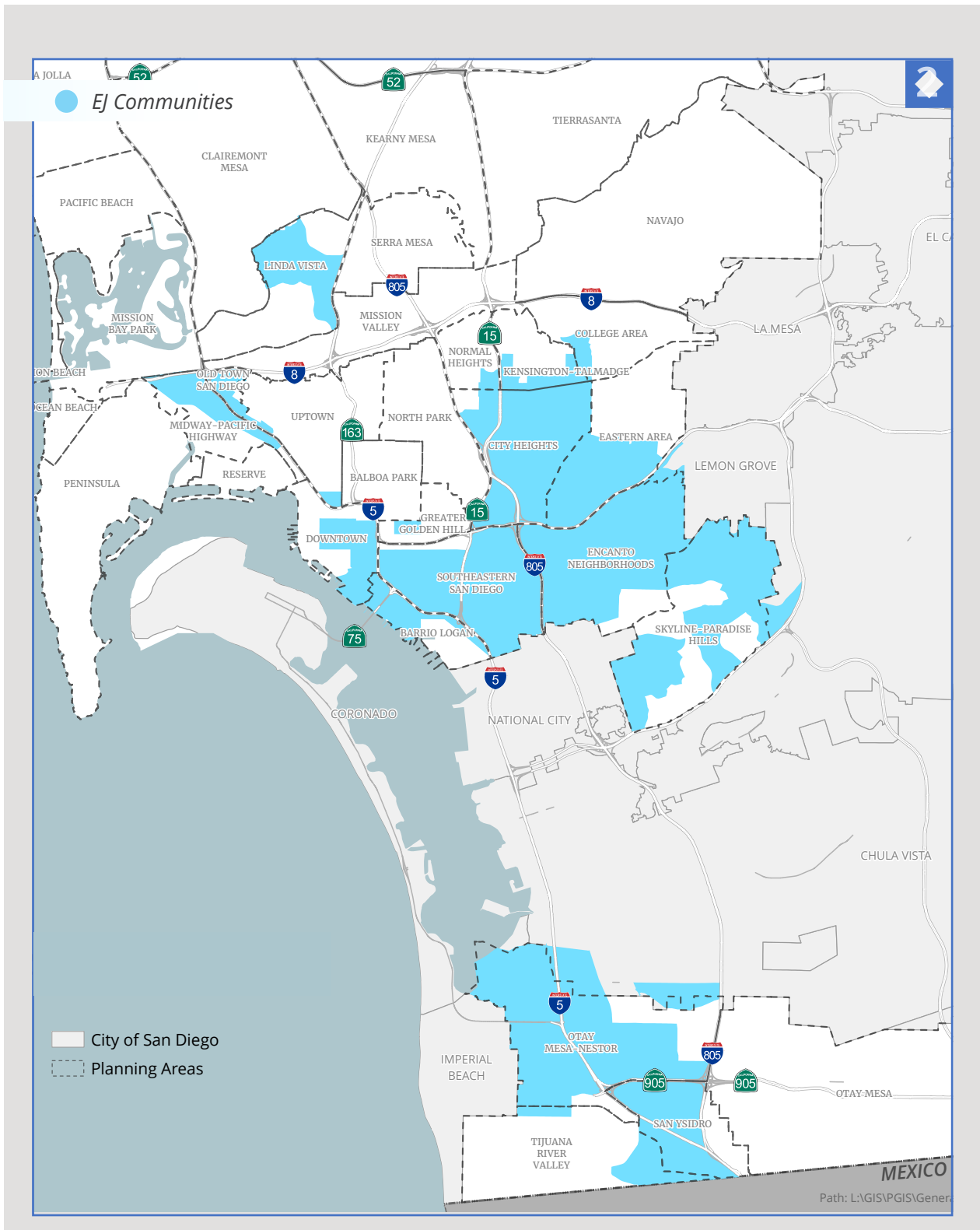


Figure EJ-3 Environmental Justice Communities-Central & Southern San Diego





EJ Communities consider community input and are informed by the following datasets (Figure EJ-4):

### **The CalEnviroScreen Tool 4.0**

developed by the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment is a screening tool used to identify California communities disproportionately burdened by multiple sources of pollution. The tool utilizes environmental, health, and socioeconomic information to score every census tract in the state to inform pollution burdens. Communities in the top 25% of the CalEnviroScreen 4.0 tool and at or below the state average median income are represented in EJ Communities.

### **The Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) 1.0**

was launched by the Council on Environmental Quality as an essential step to implement the Justice40 initiative and ensure that the benefits of the federal programs are reaching communities that are overburdened by pollution and historic underinvestment. The tool highlights disadvantaged census tracts across the country and census tracts are considered disadvantaged, if the census tracts meet the thresholds for at least one of the tool's 8 categories of burden or if they are on land within the boundaries of Federally recognized tribes.



### **Climate and Resilience Map**<sup>1</sup>

was developed by the City using data sources such as the tree canopy and energy cost burden, the City's Climate Equity Index and Heat Risk data. This map helps identify areas within the City with a lower tree canopy and where households spend a larger portion of their income on home energy costs.

Food Apartheid Map 2 Shows areas where a higher percentage of the population suffering from diabetes and obesity intersects with higher percentages of the population participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Table EJ-1 shows what percentage of each Community Plan Area is included in EJ Communities.

<sup>1</sup> Climate and Resilience Map Sources: Tree Canopy and Energy Cost Burden - City of San Diego Climate Equity Index (CEI), 2021; SanGIS/SANDAG GIS Data Warehouse, 2021. | Heat Risk - San Diego Urban Development NASA DEVELOP Team (Spring 2021)

<sup>2</sup> Food Apartheid Map Sources: Obesity and Diabetes - PLACES, Local Data for Better Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020; SanGIS/SANDAG GIS Data Warehouse, 2021. | SNAP - American Community Survey, 2015-2019, US Census; SanGIS/SANDAG GIS Data Warehouse, 2021.

Figure EJ-4 Environmental Justice Factors

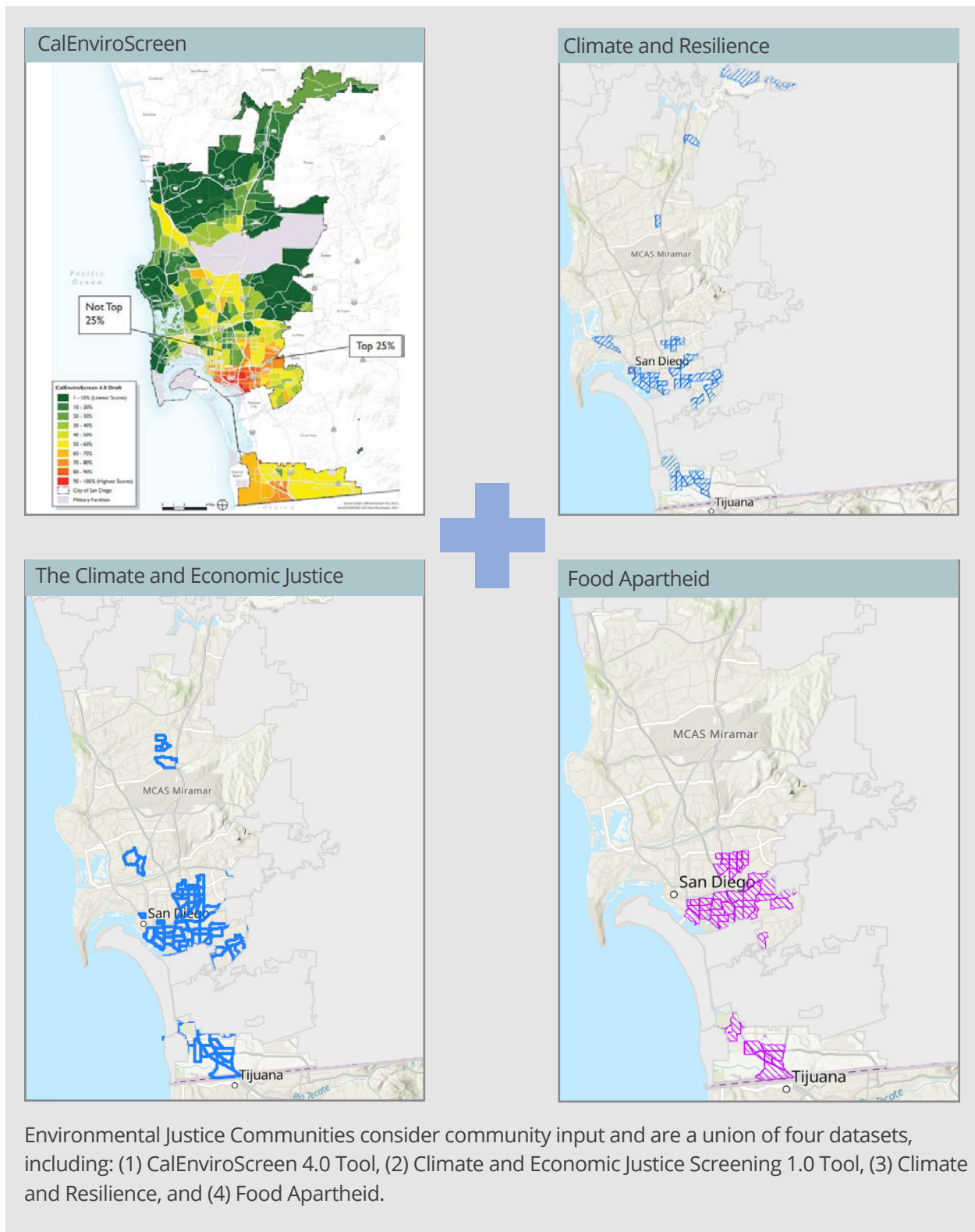




Table EJ-1 Percentage of each Community Plan Area included in EJ Communities.

Community Plan Area	Percent EJ Communities*
Barrio Logan*	100%
San Ysidro	100%
Mid-City:City Heights	93%
Southeastern San Diego	88%
Encanto Neighborhoods	82%
Downtown	60%
Otay Mesa-Nestor	58%
Mid-City: Kensington-Talmadge	50%
Skyline-Paradise Hills	42%
Mid-City:Eastern Area	33%
Linda Vista	29%
Mira Mesa	27%
Greater Golden Hill	25%
Midway-Pacific Highway	25%
College Area	17%
Rancho Bernardo	11%
San Pasqual	11%
Uptown	8%

\* Excludes military area.



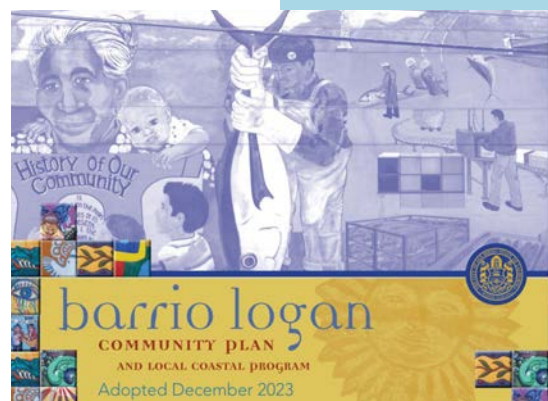
The City has made efforts to advance environmental justice and many environmental justice-related policies have already been adopted by the City Council, including recent amendments to the General Plans Housing, Public Facilities, Services and Safety, and Recreation Elements, as well as the City's Climate Action Plan. Furthermore, the Climate Equity Fund supplements resources available to accelerate the implementation of projects that advance climate justice, resilience, and adaptation in disadvantaged communities.

This Environmental Justice Element is specifically added into the General Plan to call out its importance, but is not intended to replace other environmental justice policies throughout the General Plan and other City plans and policies. This element is rather intended to supplement already existing plans and policies.

However, despite prior efforts, more must be done. EJ Communities experience unique challenges, such as proximity to the international border, freeways, and other maritime industrial uses, and industrial uses not related to maritime or port facilities. Areas surrounding the Chollas Creek Watershed also experience unique challenges, confronting flooding and concerns of pollution.

The Environmental Justice Element becomes even more critical in addressing and rectifying these imbalances. Major emergency events serve as a stark reminder of the urgent need to prioritize equitable development and environmental justice to ensure that all communities, regardless of their

Community Plans, which are a part of the City's General Plan, include community-specific policies aimed at further promoting environmental justice, such as more recently-adopted Community Plans in San Ysidro, Otay Mesa, and Barrio Logan.





development patterns, are resilient in the face of environmental challenges. To advance environmental justice issues across the City, this Element sets goals, objectives, and policies categorized by the following topics:

- A. Inclusive Public Engagement in City Decisions
- B. Pollution Exposure and Air Quality
- C. Active Play
- D. Promoting Healthy Food Access
- E. Safe and Healthy Homes
- F. Climate Change and Resilience
- G. Public Facilities and Infrastructure Prioritization.

While this Element applies Citywide, special attention is needed in EJ Communities to advance climate, equity, and sustainability goals.

The identification of EJ communities is important in terms of implementing the City's vision of prioritizing investments in the areas of greatest need. From an environmental justice perspective, EJ communities are the areas of the City with the greatest need for investments to reverse environmental injustices. EJ Communities are also areas that can be prioritized for federal or state funding.

Ongoing implementation and ongoing monitoring will be critical to achieving the goals of this EJ Element. Through regular General Plan monitoring, the City will be able to report on, and make adjustments to policies, objectives, and proposed activities based on ongoing community feedback, availability of new information, or changes in circumstances.



*Unity in the Community Mural located in the City Heights Community Plan Area in San Diego*



*Intentionally left blank.*





A

## Inclusive Public Engagement in City Decisions

# A

## Inclusive Public Engagement in City Decisions

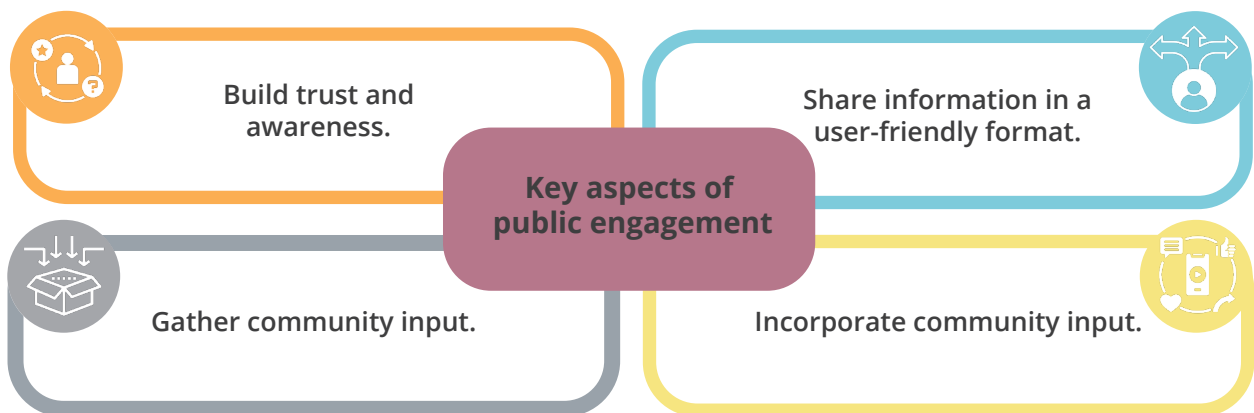
### Goal

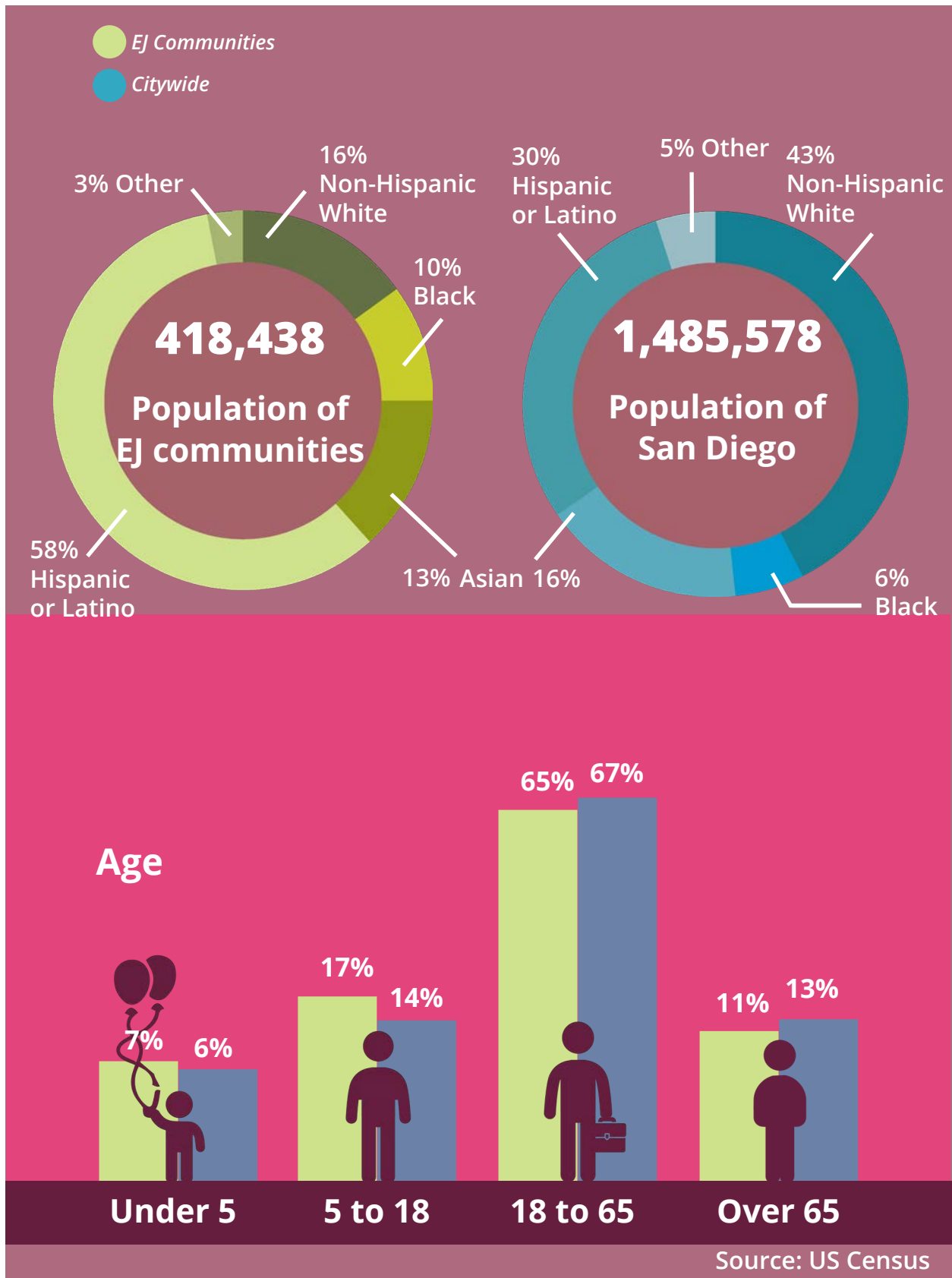
A just and equitable society through inclusive public outreach and participation in the planning process.

### Discussion

Advancing inclusive public engagement is fundamental to addressing environmental justice. Public input is an integral part of the decision-making process and can help highlight topics and concerns that need to be addressed, as well as offer an opportunity to expand upon issues most pressing to community members. Building awareness around City initiatives and programming is the first step to gathering input and supporting community members in becoming familiarized with existing policies and programs, which can translate to more meaningful engagement. Ensuring access to information and opportunities to provide feedback that will be considered as part of the planning process can establish trust between the City and community members. Public engagement events

are opportunities to collect meaningful ideas and input and hear from a diversity of community members and affected stakeholders. Summarizing key takeaways from the engagement and an explanation of how feedback is incorporated into the decision-making process can provide community members with an understanding of the planning process and encourage their ongoing participation. This is critically important in EJ Communities where community members are most vulnerable due to compounded health risks and the needs are greatest. Intentional and inclusive engagement is especially critical in EJ Communities, where 84 percent of the population is non-white, versus 57% Citywide, and where that population of children in EJ Communities is 24% versus 20% Citywide.





Engaging community members to become involved, share their opinions, and shape decisions improves communities. Identifying the needs of the audience and tailoring outreach for those needs is essential to inclusive engagement. Understanding who the community is and any unique needs, challenges, and opportunities should occur from the outset, and a plan for how community feedback will be incorporated and how to share back with community members how their input changed the plan should be developed. This includes offering multilingual services along with multiple innovative ways to provide feedback that are accessible, easy, meaningful and interactive. Analyzing housing, population, and employment information can give insight into the demographics of a community. This can help to make sure the feedback collected is reflective of the community and best informs the decision process.

As part of the planning process, additional resources may be identified that are needed to reach those who are underrepresented. Employing innovative outreach strategies that meet people where they are can provide additional opportunities for engagement. This includes working closely with community partners to leverage existing relationships and reach a broader audience. Tailoring engagement activities to reach a wide audience yields more comprehensive feedback. This includes engaging those most vulnerable and affected by compounding health risks.



Prior planning and policy decisions have contributed to disproportionate burdens being placed on EJ Communities, which have higher health risks because of the nature of the built environment. Inclusive planning processes enhance the quality of life for all community members by incorporating ideas that increase the accessibility and usability of spaces along with an increased sense of ownership and pride of the space.

This section provides guidance on engaging community members to advance inclusive engagement and environmental justice. The objectives of this section are to:

- Increase access to public participation opportunities.
- Ensure participation is representative of community demographics.
- Provide improved tools and guidance to support community education and engagement through the design, planning and implementation of programs.
- Expand opportunities for community members to engage by identifying best practices to make information accessible and user-friendly.



## Policies

- EJ-A.1** Reduce barriers to public participation through various flexible community engagement methods.
- EJ-A.2** Apply diverse and inclusive engagement strategies to increase representative participation opportunities that reflect the local demographics.
- EJ-A.3** Provide tools and guidance to support community education and participation through the planning and implementation of programs.
- EJ-A.4** Implement best practices to make information easily accessible and transparent.
- EJ-A.5** Foster trust between City staff and community members through transparent decision-making processes.
- EJ-A.6** Account for budget and resource considerations to expand services that encourage and accommodate community and stakeholder participation.
- EJ-A.7** Effectively report back and communicate progress about City environmental justice initiatives back to the community and stakeholder.
- EJ-A.8** Meaningfully incorporate public input into the decision-making process.



- a. Ensure impacted community members can participate in decisions that affect their health and environment by providing interpretation and materials in various languages, hosting information sessions outside of traditional working hours, and providing virtual and analog ways of participating.
- b. Consider the concerns of all participants involved throughout the decision-making process.
- c. Provide informative and easy-to-understand project materials and clear instructions on how to provide feedback.
- d. Involve underrepresented groups and populations, such as the State of California Native American tribes, in local decisions at an early planning stage.
- e. Collaborate with community-based organizations.





## Programs

The following strategies are examples of the City's efforts to advance environmental justice across communities by expanding opportunities for inclusive public engagement.

### **Inclusive Public Engagement Guide** -

The Guide will serve as a foundational resource for all City departments to implement and promote inclusive public participation in plans, programs, and policies, expanding opportunities for community representation that considers the local demographics. This initiative will especially focus on developing strategies and techniques to better engage groups and populations that have traditionally experienced barriers to participation.

**Annual Report on Infrastructure Priorities** - City Planning staff hosts a variety of engagement activities each year to gather community input to guide the City's Five-Year Infrastructure Outlook. Once the City's five-year infrastructure outlook is adopted and published, City Planning staff is required to post on City's Infrastructure Priority [webpage](#) a public report detailing each community's priorities, along with what projects were selected for the plan the City Planning staff is required to post a public report detailing each community's priorities, along with what projects were selected for the plan.



## Proposed Actions

- Pursue funding opportunities to expand services that facilitate and incentivize engagement, evening and weekend workshops and information sessions, such as food, translation services, childcare, raffles, giveaway items, etc.
- Enhance the feedback process and improve communication channels to effectively convey progress to community members and stakeholders within EJ communities. This includes actively promoting the availability of translation services whenever needed.
- Provide training to all City Departments to implement the Inclusive Public Engagement Guide, in coordination with the Office of Race and Equity.



Valencia Secret Stairs located in the Encanto Community Plan Area in San Diego





**B**

**Pollution  
Exposure and  
Air Quality**

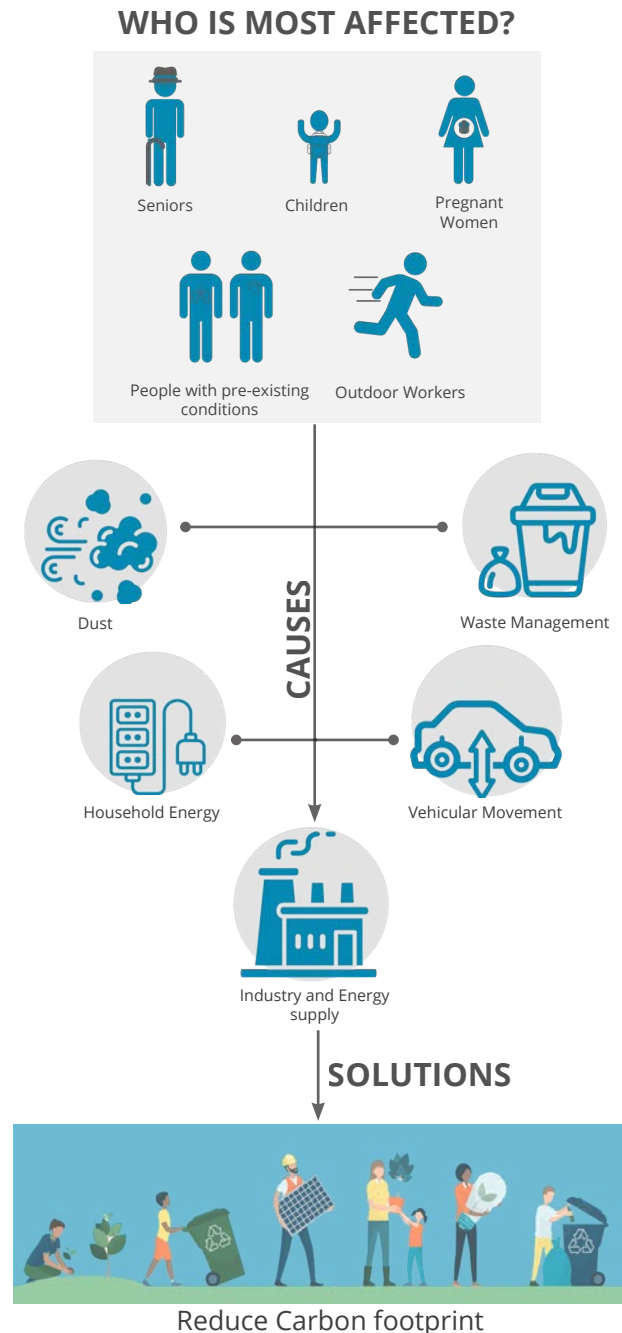
# B Pollution Exposure and Air Quality

## Goals

- Green infrastructure that strengthens environmental protection and supports safe and healthy communities.
- Pollution reduction in communities heavily impacted by pollution and poor air quality.

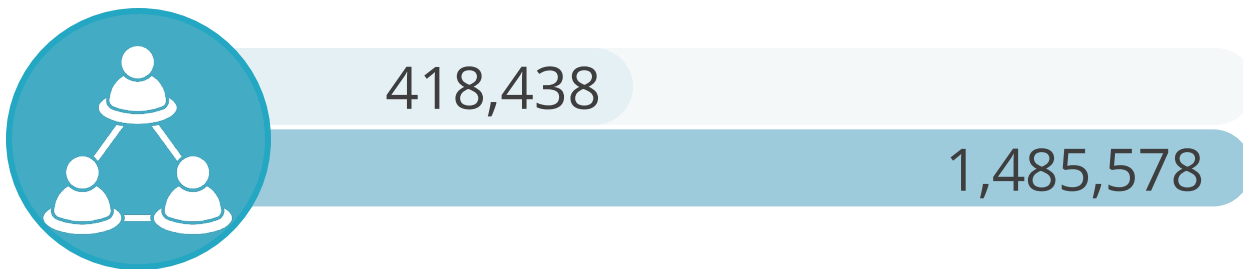
## Discussion

Exposure to pollution and poor air quality directly impacts physical and mental health. Scientific studies link exposure to polluting substances in air, water, and soil to a variety of health problems with short and long-term effects, such as headaches, inflammation of the nose, throat and painful breathing to asthma, heart disease, and cancer. Pollution of environmental resources reduces quality of life, results in significant health consequences, such as increased risk of stroke and asthma, and lower life expectancy. Protecting against environmental degradation of natural resources is critical to protecting human health and well-being.



- *Ej Communities*
- *Citywide*

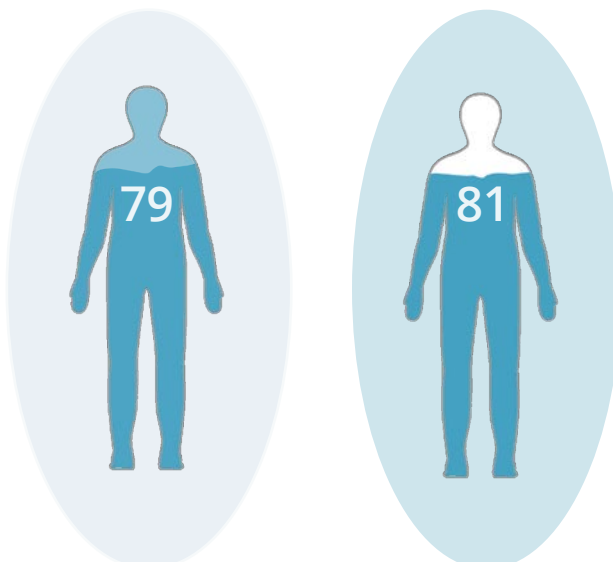
### TOTAL POPULATION



### STROKE IN ADULTS



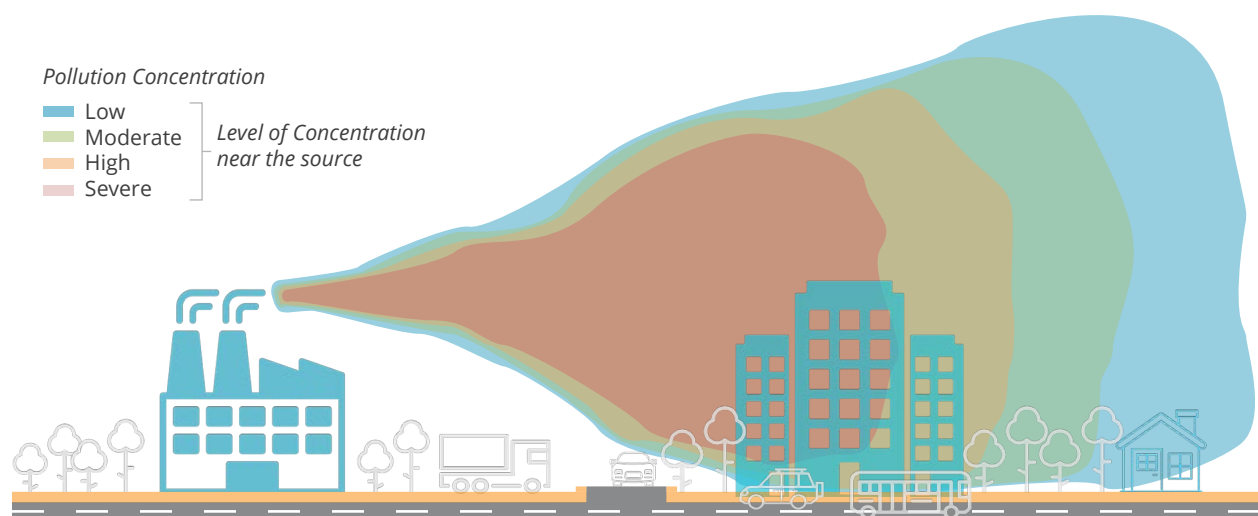
### LIFE EXPECTANCY



There are many factors that contribute to pollution exposure and poor air quality, including illegal dumping, industries and exhaust from vehicles. There are many ways to improve conditions, including identifying opportunities to improve air quality around sensitive land uses (e.g. homes, schools, and parks), shifting toward actions that reduce dependence on fossil fuels, and investing in infrastructure and programming that supports more connected communities to ultimately reduce overall travel by individual car. Community members across the City benefit from improved conditions in areas most impacted, such as EJ Communities, since pollutants are most concentrated near their source and are diluted with increased distance. Reducing Particulate Matter 2.5 (PM2.5) and Diesel Particulate Matter (DPM) is especially important for reducing pollution exposure and improving air quality for the health and well-being of community members across San Diego.

Particulate Matter 2.5 (PM2.5) are tiny particles or droplets in the air that are 2.5 micrometers or smaller in diameter, several times smaller than the thickness of human hair. These particles can be solid or liquid and can come from sources such as cars and trucks, industrial emissions, construction activities, wood burning, and even natural sources like dust and pollen. PM2.5 particles are small enough to travel deep into the lungs even through the lung walls into the blood stream and can cause health problems when present in high concentrations, including heart and lung disease.

Exhaust from trucks, buses, trains, ships and other equipment with diesel engines contain a mixture of gases and solid particles. These solid particles are known as diesel particulate matter (DPM) and are a major contributor to PM2.5 pollution. Higher concentrations of DPM can often be found in urban areas with heavy traffic congestion and industrial activity where diesel-powered vehicles and equipment are prevalent.





Consistent with our understanding of PM2.5 and DPM pollution sources, the most impacted areas of the City are found near the port, international border and along freeways. Figure EJ-5 shows concentrations of PM 2.5. According to CalEnviroScreen 4.0, which ranked PM2.5 levels in census tracts statewide, the average percentile ranking for the City of San Diego was 49.1%, compared to the more impacted EJ Communities at 52.8%. Concentrations of DPM are shown in Figure EJ-6. CalEnviroScreen 4.0 also ranks DPM levels in census tracts statewide, the average percentile ranking for the City of San Diego was 74.2%, compared to the more impacted EJ communities at 80.5%.

Both PM2.5 and DPM are significant air pollutants that can have detrimental effects on human health, including respiratory and cardiovascular problems. Children, the elderly, and people suffering from heart or lung disease, asthma, or chronic illness are most sensitive to the effects of PM2.5 and DPM exposure. Efforts to monitor and reduce these pollutants are essential for protecting public health and improving air quality.

The San Diego Air Pollution Control District (APCD) works to improve the health and well-being of San Diegans through air quality improvements by ensuring commercial, industrial, transportation and agricultural businesses are permitted and comply with air pollution control laws; incentivizing cleaner technologies

through grant opportunities; and monitoring, sampling and recording air quality using a network of equipment stationed around the county and alerting the region of air quality conditions. The City works closely with APCD on a number of regional plans and regulations, including the Regional Air Quality Strategy and the Portside Environmental Justice Neighborhood's Community Emission Reduction Plan (CERP) and the upcoming Border Communities CEP. The Portside CERP was developed in a community-driven process to detail actions and strategies APCD will utilize to reduce air pollution and improve public health in the City's neighborhoods of Barrio Logan, Sherman Heights and Logan Heights. The City continues to serve as a steering committee member to support the implementation of the CERP.



Figure EJ-5 Particulate Matter 2.5

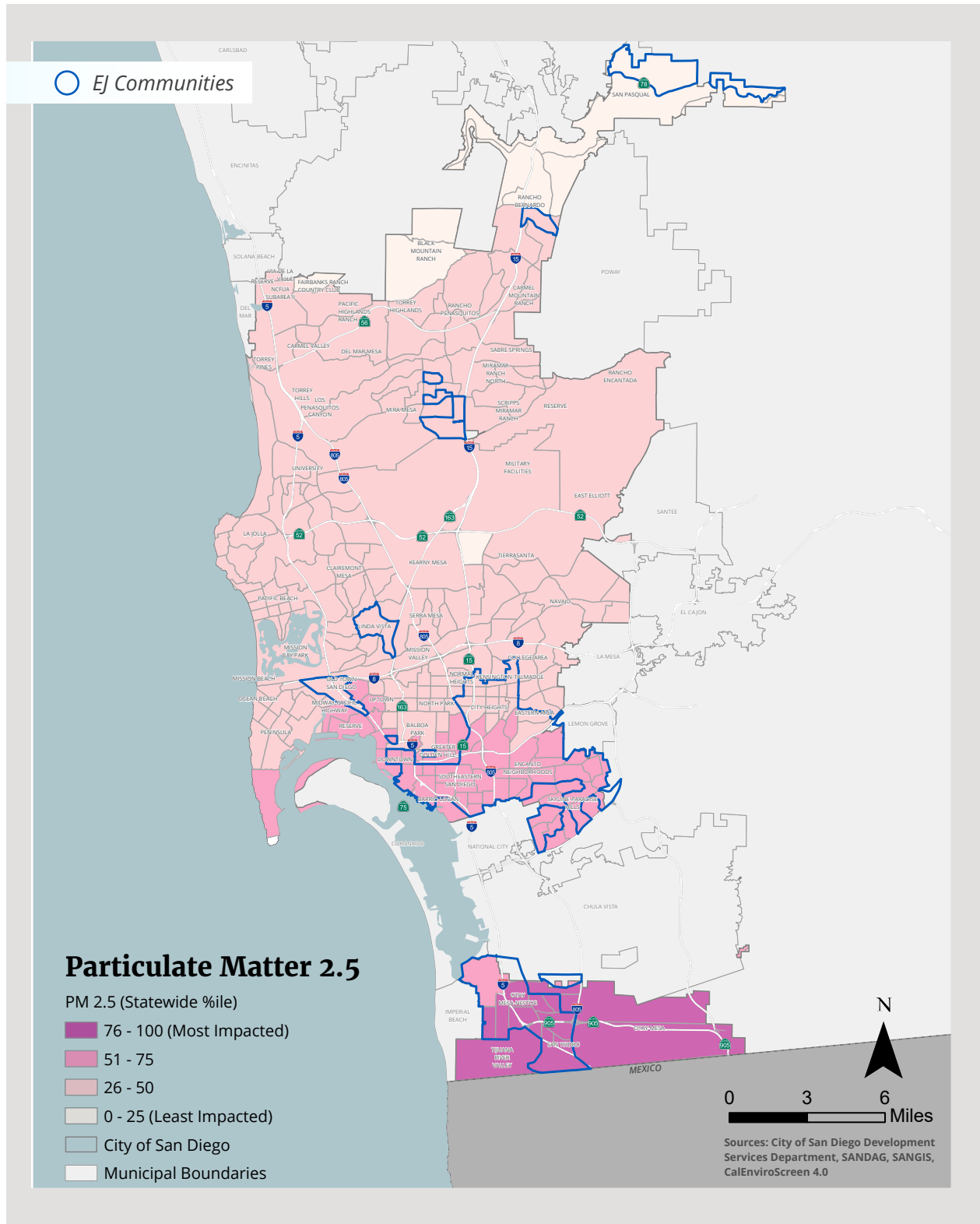
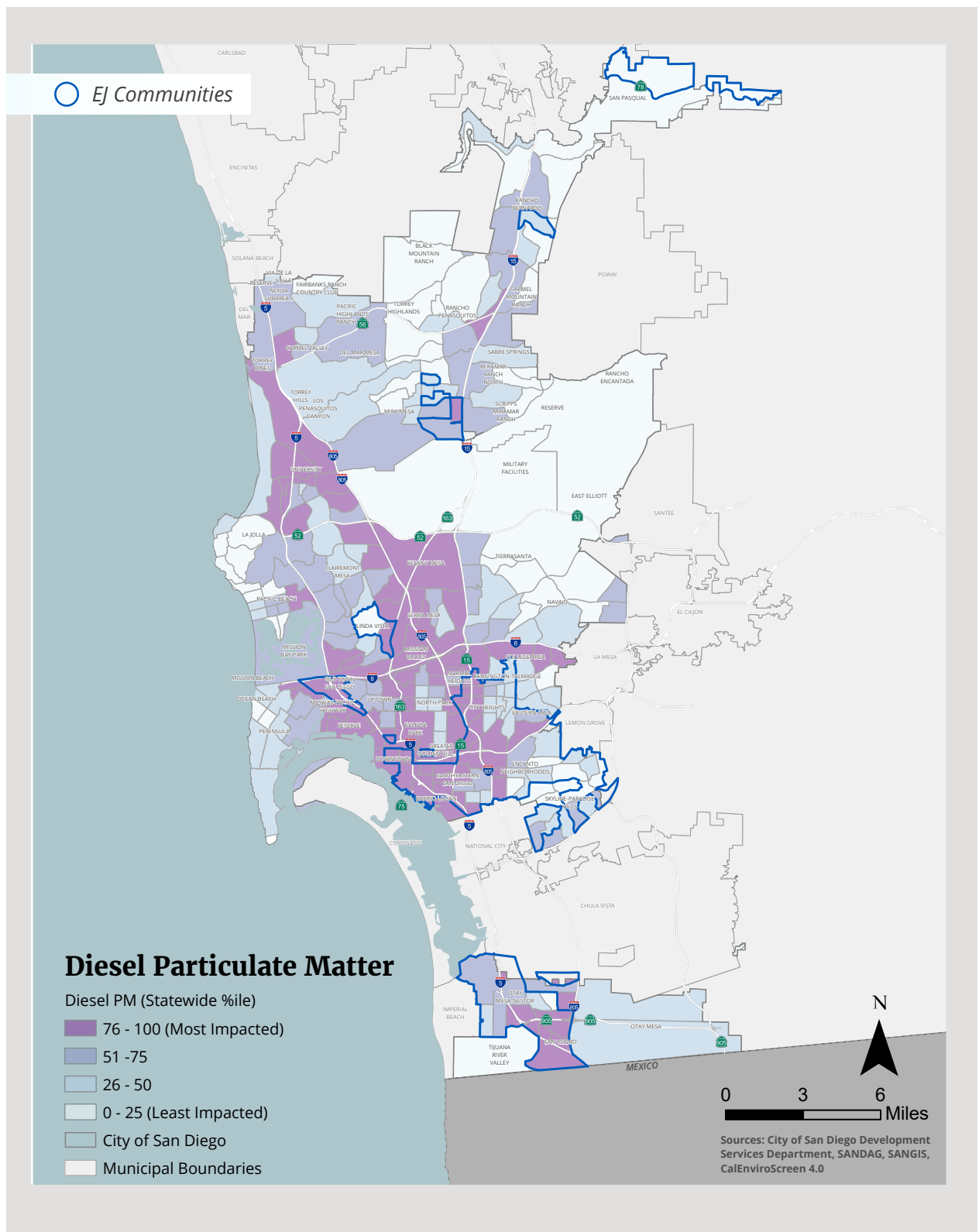


Figure EJ-6 Diesel Particulate Matter



Through both Community Plan updates and San Diego Municipal code amendments, the City has continued to increase opportunities for additional homes in areas served by high-frequency transit to address housing shortages while, simultaneously, reducing greenhouse gas emissions. City continues to plan for higher-density residential development on sites designated for residential, commercial, and mixed-use near transit. These areas are located near either existing or planned high-frequency transit.

Certain previously conforming uses, such as wrecking and dismantling motor vehicles, storage, and material scrap yards, as well as specific types of recycling facilities, are in areas that have been more recently rezoned to allow for homes and mixed-use development. As shown in Figure EJ-7, there are areas of the City where people can experience the most adverse impacts from these land use incompatibilities, such as their proximity to sensitive land uses, including homes, schools, childcare facilities, hospitals, and parks. These uses can negatively affect community members and reduce the quality of life in the neighborhoods in which they are located, resulting in environmental injustices. Although land use changes have increased housing opportunities, existing previously conforming use regulations can allow incompatible uses to continue in perpetuity and, in some cases, even enable them to expand.

Phasing out incompatible uses is

critically important to achieve the goal of increasing housing and mixed-use development and advancing the City's commitment to environmental sustainability.

As part of a comprehensive strategy, it is important to identify lands suitable for prime industrial purposes. This approach ensures not only the continued expansion of housing and mixed-use development but also a dedicated focus on creating and preserving prime industrial areas to ensure safe, healthy, and economically prosperous land use patterns. This approach is needed to achieve a sustainable and balanced future for the City, striving to enhance the overall well-being of its community members, protect the environment, and promote good jobs.

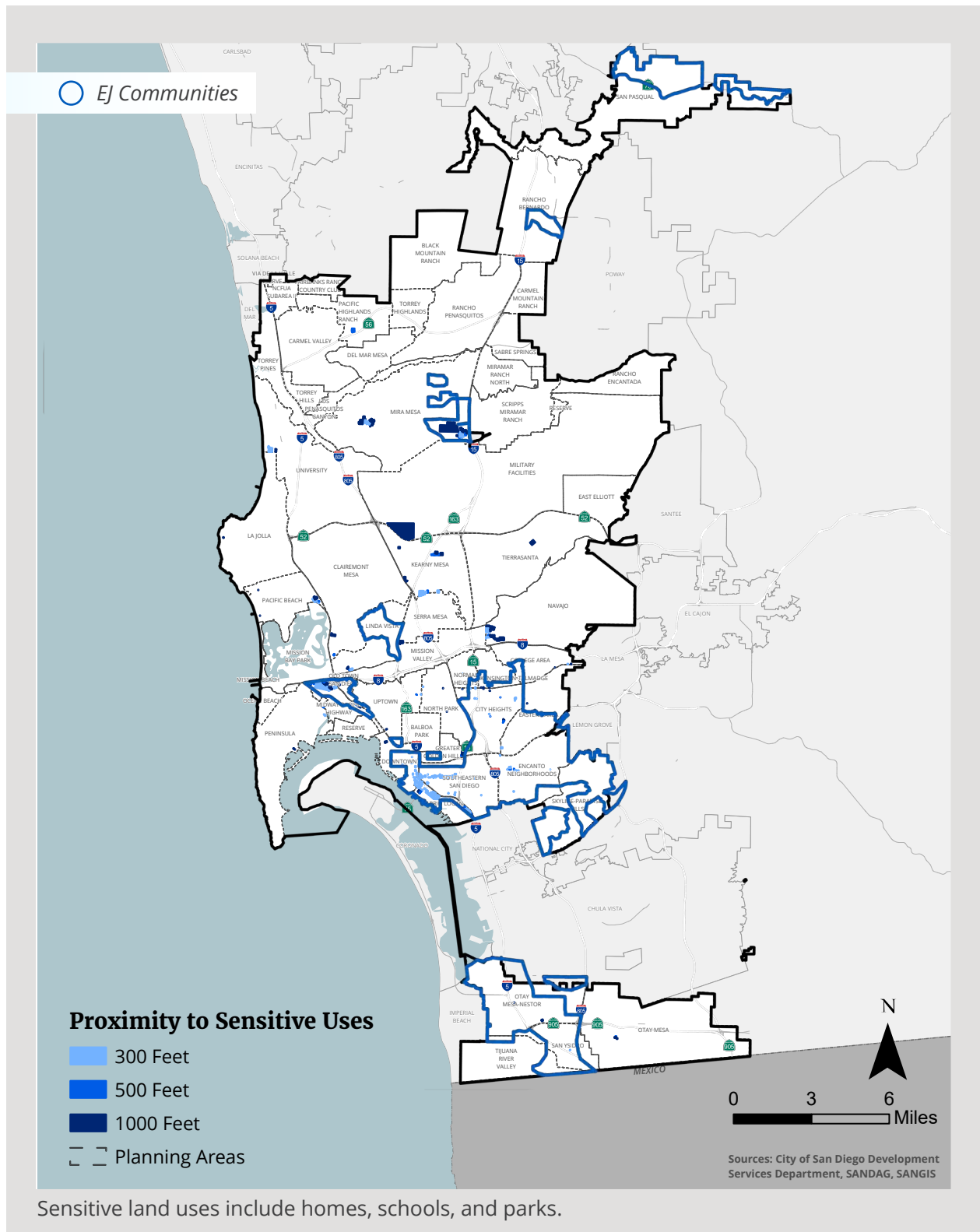
The objectives of this section are to:

- Reduce harmful emissions, especially in communities that are already heavily impacted to improve health outcomes.
- Focus on immediate action to improve air quality in the most impacted communities.
- Invest in green infrastructure that combines environmental, social, and economic value.
- Increase tree planting for shade, improved air quality, and neighborhood beautification.
- Invest in infrastructure for walking/rolling, biking and transit in all communities to reduce pollution from vehicles.

Furthermore, water management to ensure dependable water supply services, mitigate water-related hazards and safeguard the environment is vital to limiting pollution exposure in urban areas. Policies to protect natural resources and limit pollution exposure along with air quality strategies are included throughout the General Plan, and are identified in Table EJ-2. The policies in this Environmental Justice Element build on and provide additional guidance. Together, these policies support and promote improved air quality and health outcomes.



Figure EJ-7 Planned Residential Uses Containing Incompatible Industrial Uses



## Policies

- EJ-B.1** Encourage the use of noise-reducing materials and construction techniques in sensitive receptor development to ensure peaceful and healthy living environments and ensure compatibility between land uses (see Noise Element).
- EJ-B.2** Support programs that help community members transition to electric heating, cooking, hot water, appliances, and cars powered by renewable energy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality and health.
- EJ-B.3** Strive to reduce pollution exposure and air quality issues experienced in EJ Communities.



- a. Apply land use designations that separate industrial uses from sensitive receptors such as schools, hospitals, daycare facilities, residential uses, and parks.
- b. Identify industrial land for the relocation of industrial uses away from residential areas and other sensitive receptors (see also Economic Prosperity Element, Section A).
- c. Use practices that conserve natural resources to support the well-being of current and future generations.
- d. Continue to coordinate closely with the San Diego Air Pollution Control District to implement and monitor the Community Emissions Reduction Plan (CERP).
- e. Notify relevant parties of designated truck routes, improve trucking route street signage infrastructure throughout the City as needed.
- f. Continue robust enforcement of truck route, continue to support truck route restrictions that direct port-related truck traffic to designated routes.
- g. Identify and pursue funding to invest in a study to support construction of truck traffic calming infrastructure in Barrio Logan.
- h. Increase green spaces and tree canopy to improve air quality.

- EJ-B.4** Promote environmental education to a diverse group of community members to address daily environmental actions that can be taken such as composting, recycling, and water conservation.
- EJ-B.5** Support and align City efforts with the goals and recommendations outlined in the Maritime Clean Air Strategy (MCAS) to ensure coordinated and cohesive action towards reducing emissions from maritime sources around the port.
- EJ-B.6** Continue the partnership with the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) and other public and private agencies to implement the Community Emissions Reduction Plan (CERP) for Portside Environmental Justice Neighborhoods. Areas of responsibility for the City include actions related to heavy duty truck strategies and land use strategies that can reduce emissions within portside communities such as Barrio Logan.
- EJ-B.7** Plan for safe and enjoyable mobility options that reduce pollution-emitting vehicular travel.



- a. Support emerging technologies that reduce emissions and decrease dependency on pollution-emitting vehicular travel.
- b. Incentivize walking/rolling, biking, and transit travel choices.
- c. Incentivize electric vehicle charging stations near recreational and commercial spaces such as parks, shopping centers, and libraries.
- d. Support the use of Shared Mobility Devices and partner with other agencies to implement neighborhood circulators that help people to move around the region without relying on a car.
- e. Identify opportunities for Active Transportation Corridors in EJ Communities.
- f. Partner with community-based nonprofit organizations (CBOs) and San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) to pursue opportunities for Transit Stop Improvements.

- EJ-B.8** Identify opportunities for increasing homes while also prioritizing areas suitable for prime industrial use in future community plan updates and



other planning and zoning efforts and support private proposals that align with this policy, aiming to foster sustainable development patterns by establishing dedicated areas to ensure compatibility throughout the City between industrial and residential uses.

**EJ-B.9** Consider actions to discontinue incompatible industrial land uses such as wrecking and dismantling motor vehicles, storage and material scrap yards, and specific types of recycling facilities near sensitive receptors and also identify lands suitable for prime industrial development.



- a. Consider strategies to phase out incompatible industrial land uses particularly in EJ communities.
- b. Consider eliminating incompatible industrial land uses resumption where an incompatible use has been discontinued.
- c. Consider additional incentives for the construction of homes on land designated for housing or mixed-use that have an incompatible industrial land use.
- d. Identify lands as part of Community Plan updates suitable for prime industrial uses.
- e. Work together with community-based organizations to advance actions that remediate brownfields and create opportunities for new homes and additional public green space.
- f. Work together with community-based organizations and affordable home developers to Identify and pursue Brownfield Remediation funding in partnership.

**EJ-B.10** Prioritize programs and services that advance environmental justice in communities with the greatest needs

**EJ-B.11** Consider air quality protection in City agreements where applicable and feasible. .

**EJ-B.12** Encourage incentives related to the zero emissions transition of heavy-duty vehicles operating in EJ communities.

**EJ-B.13** Focus education regarding zero emissions funding for businesses operating in EJ Communities, including focused information sharing regarding APCD incentive programs, HVIP and Cal fleet advisor resources with local businesses with heavy duty truck fleets.

**EJ-B.14** Support Port of San Diego efforts related to obtaining the MCAS zero emissions truck milestones.

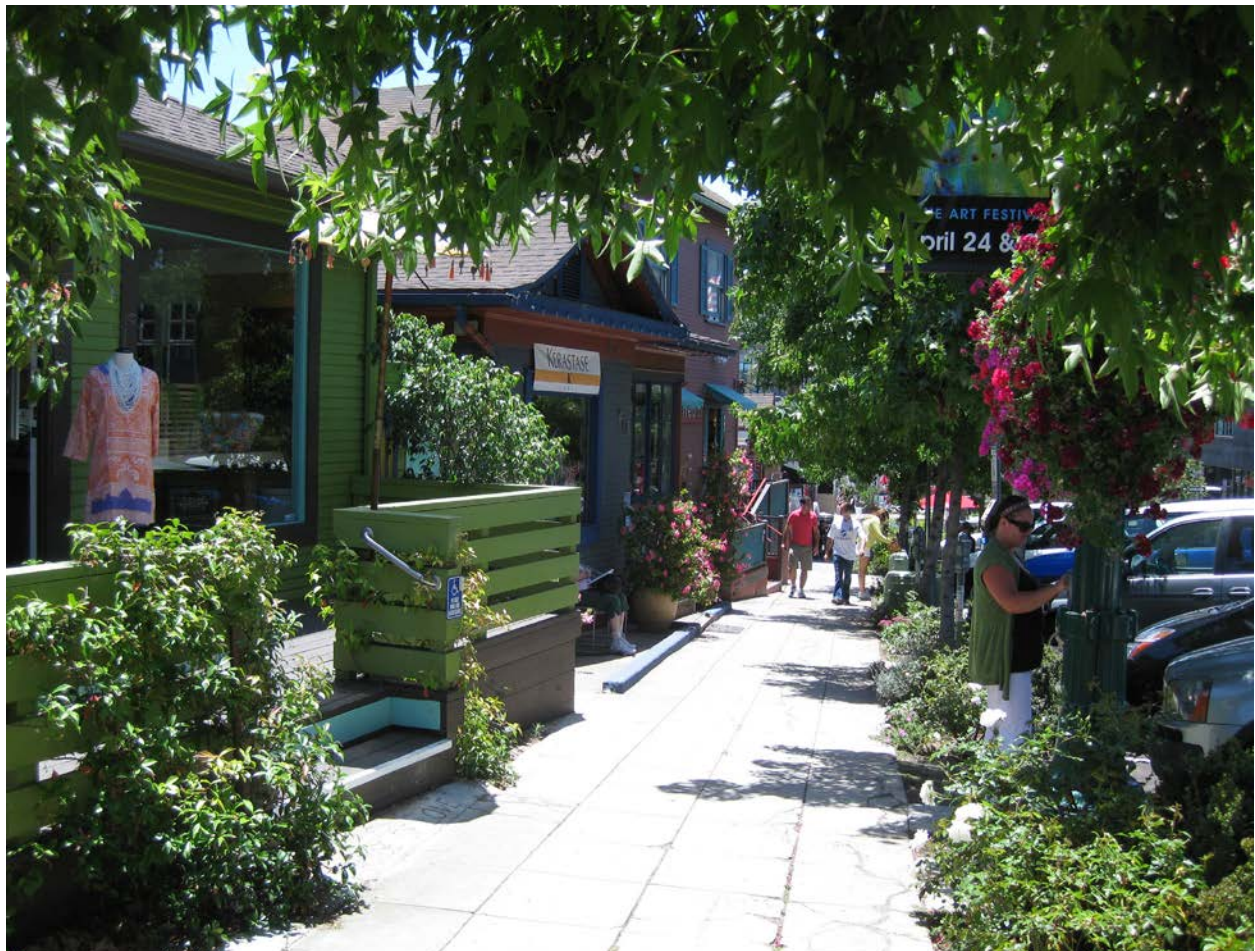


Table EJ-2 Additional Policies in the General Plan Addressing Pollution Issues

Topic	Element	Section	Policy
Water Pollution	Conservation	C. Coastal Resources	CE-C.2, CE-C.6
		D. Water Resources Management	CE-D.2, CE- D.3c, CE-D.3d
		E. Urban Runoff Management	CE-E.1, CE-E.2, CE-E.3, CE-E.4, CE-E.5c, CE-E.6
		M. Border/ International Conservation	CE-M.2, CE-M.3b, CE-M.3c, CE-M.4, CE-M.5
		N. Environmental Education	CE-N.1, CE-N.8
	Public Facilities, Services and Safety	F. Wastewater	PF-F.1 through PF-F.14
		G. Storm Water Infrastructure	PF-G.1 through PF-G.6,
		H. Water Infrastructure	PF-H.1 through PF-H.3
		I. Waste Management	PF-I.1 through PF-I.5
Air Pollution	Conservation	A. Climate Change & Sustainable Development	CE-A.7
		F. Air Quality	CE.F.1 through CE.F.9
		I. Sustainable Energy	CE-I.5, CE-I.8, CE-I.10, CE-I.11
		J. Urban Forestry	CE-J.1 through CE-J.5
		M. Border/ International Conservation	CE-M.3a, CE-M.4, CE-M.5
		N. Environmental Education	CE-N.1, CE-N.3, CE-N.5,
	Mobility	D. Transit	ME-D.17

Table EJ-2 Additional Policies in the General Plan Addressing Pollution Issues (Continued)

Topic	Element	Section	Policy
Ground/ Soil Pollution	Conservation	M. Border/ International Conservations	CE-M.3c, CE-M.5,
Noise Pollution	Noise Element	All Sections	All Policies



## Programs

The following strategies are examples of City-led efforts to advance environmental justice across communities by reducing greenhouse gas emissions that affect air quality and impact pollution exposure.

**Urban Forestry Program** - A Five-Year Plan that builds upon the Climate Action Plan by identifying methods for implementing a tree planting initiative and identifying best management practices for maintaining and protecting the City's existing tree resource.

**Housing Action Package 2.0 (HAP 2.0)** - HAP 2.0 amended the City of San Diego's Municipal Code sections to reduce land use incompatibilities that result in environmental injustices that expose residential uses to the effects of incompatible uses within the Promise Zone, while simultaneously increasing the availability of land for residential development in the City's Promise Zone.

**Electric Vehicle Charging on City Facilities**- The City's program maintains 57 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations with 68 ports at 14 City-owned sites to make charging more convenient for EV drivers.

**Source Water Protection Guidelines**- Guidelines prepared to assist municipal agencies, designers, land planners, developers, and the public in site design planning and selecting best management practices that protect or improve the quality of water runoff draining into reservoirs owned and operated by the City of San Diego's Water Department.

**Pure Water Program**- This multi-year program will provide nearly half of San Diego's water supply locally by the end of 2035. Utilizing proven water purification technology to clean recycled water to produce safe, high-quality drinking water, the program offers a cost-effective investment for San Diego's water needs and will provide a reliable, sustainable water supply.

## Proposed Actions

- Conduct a future study to evaluate the economic and environmental impact of and on incompatible industrial uses at distances up to 1,000 feet from residential uses and sensitive receptors such as schools, child care facilities, senior care facilities, parks, and hospitals.
- Revise the Urban Forestry 5-Year Look Ahead Plan, aiming to provide a comprehensive framework for enhanced pollution mitigation efforts Citywide, fostering a healthier environment for all residents.







C

Active Play

## Goals

- Flexible, multifunctional public spaces that are easily accessible by walking/rolling, biking and transit where people of all age groups, genders, and abilities can play and socialize.
- Flexible and reconfigurable recreation facilities to meet emerging recreation needs, including unscheduled recreation and activities geared towards social interaction, health, and wellness.
- Safe spaces for people to walk/roll and bike to allow for active and healthy ways to move around and enjoy communities.

## Discussion

People who live in EJ Communities in the City are more likely to suffer from diabetes and obesity despite there being a higher number of people who walk/roll, bike, or take transit as shown in Figure EJ-8 and Figure EJ-9. While community members may utilize these options to commute to work, it is likely that safe and enjoyable places to walk/roll and bike outside of commutes, as well as spaces to play, are limited. Over the last several decades, urban patterns have shrunk the horizons of safe public spaces for our children with traffic growth being one of the first and foremost factors. The shift to car-centric neighborhoods has transformed the domains of urban childhood and has resulted in environmental threats by increasing traffic danger, air and noise pollution, and contributing to poorer mental and physical health outcomes.







Figure EJ-8 Diabetes Prevalence

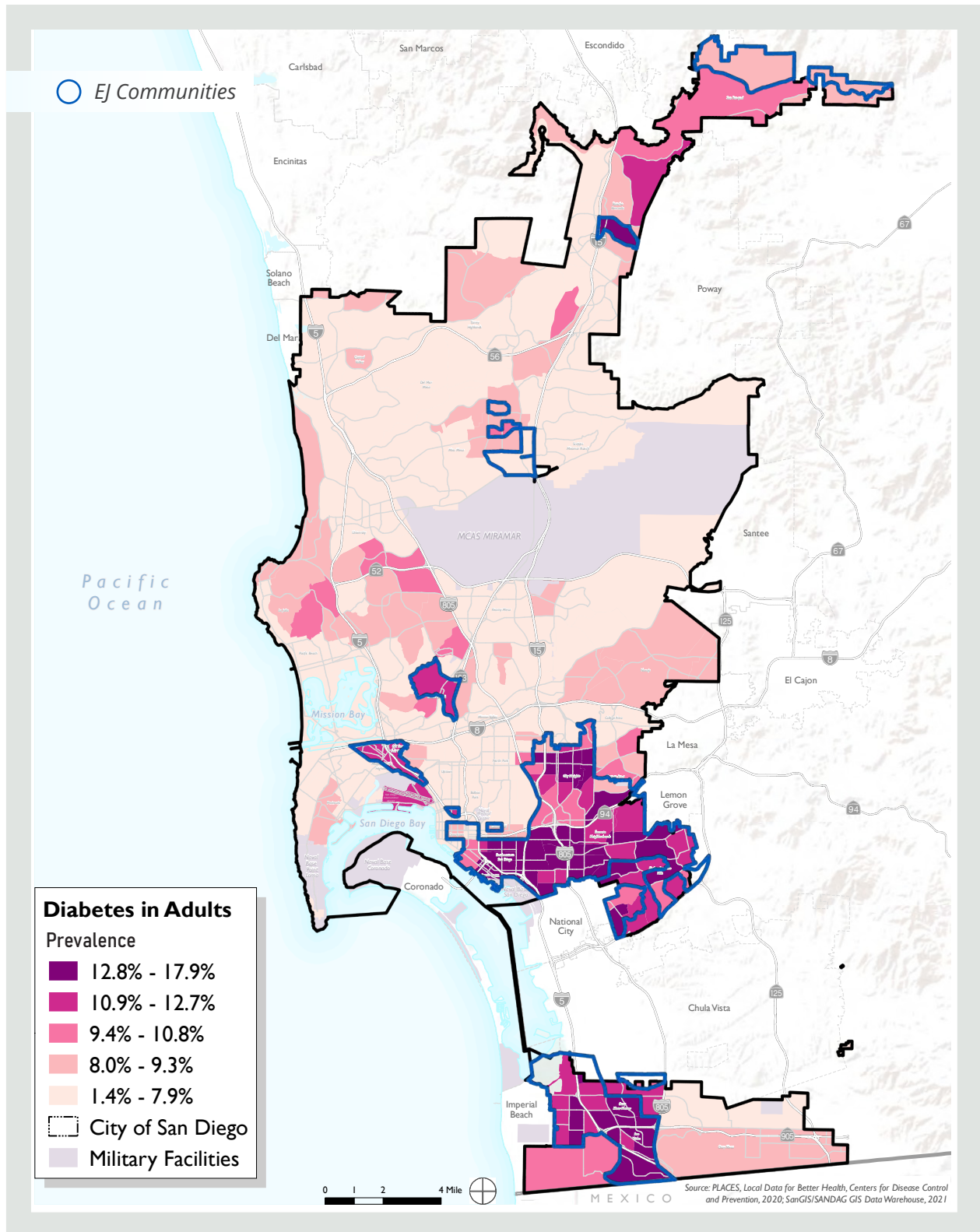
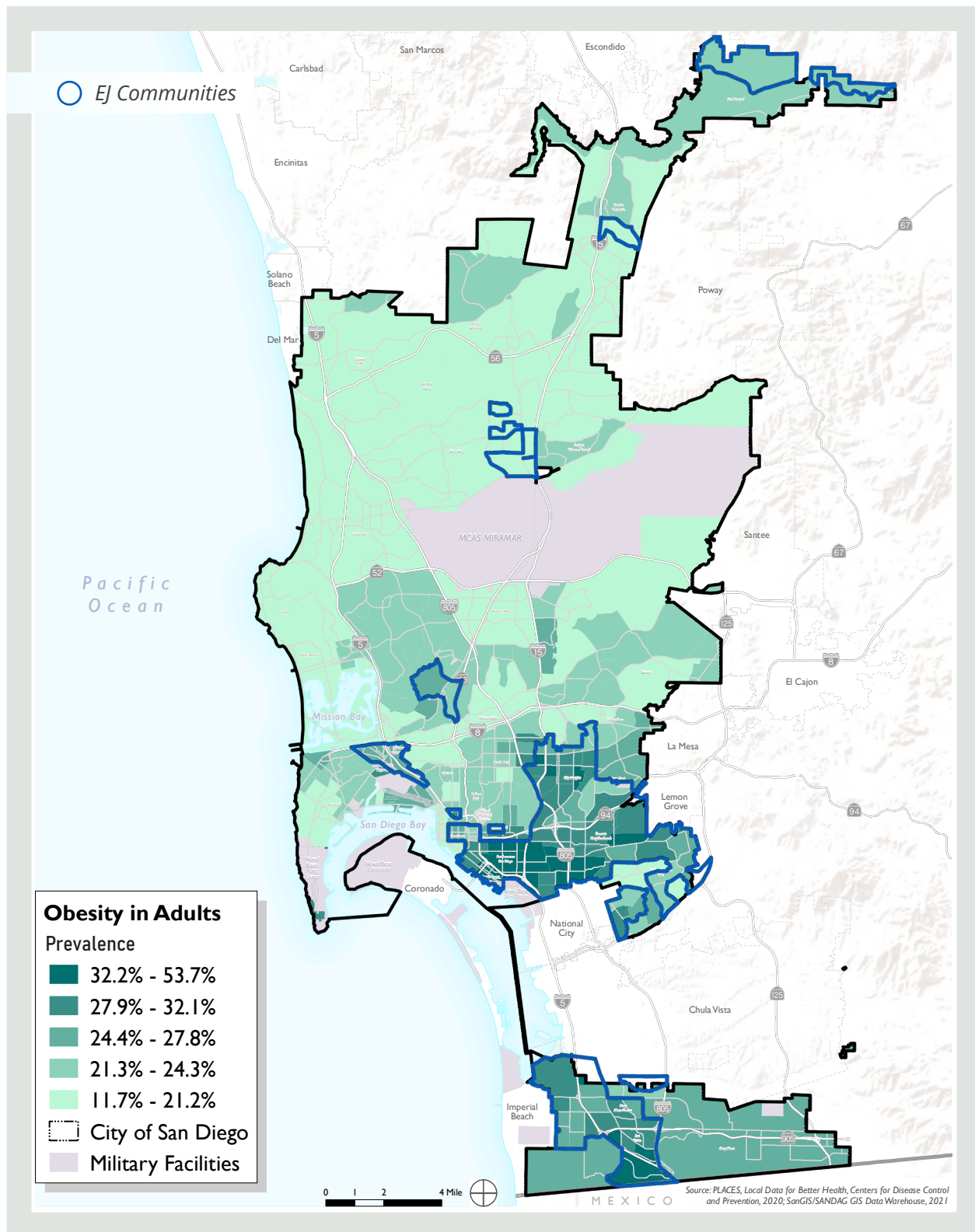


Figure EJ-9 Obesity Prevalence



Public facilities and physical activity are intertwined and play an important role in contributing to public health. Public facilities include public spaces like parks, libraries, community centers, recreational facilities, public transit, and streets that connect people to places. Individuals with access to public spaces such as safe and enjoyable parks and open spaces, safe streets for walking and biking, and reliable public transit have more opportunities to incorporate activities into their daily lives that support physical health and overall mental well-being. Connectivity, accessibility, and safety are important aspects of public facilities such as well-lit streets connected to everyday destinations such as schools, libraries, and grocery stores. These factors significantly impact individual choices regarding walking/rolling, biking, and using transit. The lack of convenient, enjoyable, and safe spaces can push individuals towards driving as their primary option. Public spaces in EJ Communities often lack these attributes—limiting opportunities for physical activity. Investing in improving infrastructure in communities where the needs are greatest will build toward providing safe, connected, and accessible public spaces equitably and support the physical health and well-being of all San Diegans regardless of where they live in the City.

Connectivity, accessibility, and safety in public spaces are essential to supporting physical activity and well-being. Building homes near parks, trails, schools, shopping, and



## Connectivity

## Accessibility



## Safety

job centers allows for connections that foster a more active lifestyle by offering proximity between homes and desired places to go. This supports shorter commutes which results in less driving, less pollution, and a healthier environment. Access to public spaces is a predictor of physical activity levels. Opportunities to improve access to public spaces include addressing unsafe street conditions, building connections, designing buildings to support lively neighborhood centers, and identifying opportunities for new facilities in amenity-deficient areas. Investing in solutions and strategies that improve safety is also instrumental to improving conditions at existing sites and supporting more activity, such as introducing streetlights, bike lanes, and programming to activate spaces so they can be most enjoyed.

Planning for an active lifestyle calls for all three attributes of public spaces and investments in public facilities,

recreation facilities, and mobility. Continued investment in all three attributes of public spaces builds an environment that promotes physical activity. The objectives of this section are to provide:

- Flexible and reconfigurable recreation facilities to meet emerging recreation needs, including unstructured play and activities geared toward social interaction, health, and wellness.
- Safe spaces for people of all age groups, genders, and abilities to walk/roll and bike, allowing for active and healthy ways to move around and enjoy their communities.
- Programs that activate public spaces in a manner that maximizes their positive and healthy use.

The General Plan includes policies to advance connections, access, and safety of public facilities and promote physical activity. The Mobility Element includes policies to get us where we want to go and minimizes environmental and neighborhood impacts. The Public Facilities, Services, and Safety Element fosters safe and connected public facilities, and the Recreation Element provides a similar direction specific to parks and open spaces. This EJ Element provides additional guidance for mobility and walking/rolling, biking, and transit connections. Together these policies support public facilities and promote physical activity and overall well-being.



## Policies

- EJ-C.1** Improve and diversify opportunities for play in public spaces for people of all age groups, genders, and abilities.
- EJ-C.2** Support and collaborate on efforts to improve transit connections to parks, recreation facilities, open spaces, and public spaces.
- EJ-C.3** Design public spaces to be inclusive, equitable and accessible to children of all age groups, genders and abilities and caregivers.
- EJ-C.4** Expand public outreach on mobility policies, improvements, and operations to ensure input is reflective of neighborhood demographics.
- EJ-C.5** Improve accessibility for non-driving elderly, disabled, low-income and other community members (see also Mobility Element, Section B).
- EJ-C.6** Work with SANDAG and transit providers to improve transit stops, implement small neighborhood shuttles and local connectors in addition to other services (see Mobility Element).



**EJ-C.7** Encourage mixed-use, transit-oriented development to minimize the need to drive by increasing opportunities for individuals to live near where they work, offering a convenient mix of local goods and services, and providing access to high-quality transit services (see Land Use and Community Planning Element).

**EJ-C.8** Prioritize programs and services that advance environmental justice in communities with the greatest needs.



Table EJ-3 Additional Policies in the General Plan Addressing Public Spaces and Physical Activity

Topic	Element	Section	Policy
Physical Activity	Recreation	A. Parks and Recreation Guidelines	RE-A.3, RE-A.6, RE-A.9, RE-A.10, RE-A.11 to RE-A.14
		B. Recreational Opportunities	RE-B.1, RE-B.3, RE-B.4
	Mobility	A. Walkable Communities	ME-A.8 to ME-A.11
		B. Bicycling	ME-B.6
		G. Transportation Demand Management	ME-G.6
	Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element	A. Infrastructure and Public Spaces	PF-A.2
	Access & Accessibility	Recreation	D. Accessibility
Mobility		A. Walkable Communities	ME-A.4, ME-A.5
		D. Transit	ME-D.6, ME-D.9.e
Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element		A. Infrastructure and Public Spaces	PF-A.6
Supply	Recreation	E. Joint Use and Cooperative Partnerships	RE-E.1 to RE-E.13
		F. Open Space Lands and Resource-Based Parks	All Policies
	Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element	A. Public Facilities Financing and Evaluation of Growth, Facilities and Services	PF-B.2, PF-B.3, PF-B.9
Connectivity	Mobility	A. Walkable Communities	ME-A.6
		B. Bicycling	ME-B.1.d
		D. Transit	ME-D.3, ME-D.4
		E. Complete Streets	ME-E.8
		G. Transportation Demand Management	ME-G.10, ME-G.11
Safety	Mobility	A. Walkable Communities	ME-A.1, ME-A.2, ME-A.3
		B. Bicycling	ME-B.2, ME-B.4, ME-B.5
		E. Complete Streets	ME-E.10



## Programs

The following programs are examples of City-led efforts to promote physical activity in all communities and increase opportunities to safely access public spaces and enjoy the outdoors.

**Parks Master Plan** - Identifies policies, actions, and partnerships for planning parks, recreation facilities, and programs that reflect the vision of a world-class Citywide network of recreational experiences to engage, inspire, and connect all San Diegans.

**Spaces as Places** - Program to transform streets into more healthy, playful, and vibrant neighborhood components and strengthen the local economy.

**Play All Day Parks Programs** - Creates public recreation opportunities in San Diego neighborhoods through a joint-use partnership between the San Diego School District and the City of San Diego.

**Summer Movies in the Park** - Program fostering safe and comfortable local parks by providing free and family-friendly outdoor movie series across San Diego County.

**Parks After Dark** - Program activating neighborhood parks and public spaces to create safe and positive social atmospheres for community members to enjoy.

**Traffic Maintenance Team** - This City team provides pavement markings, stripping, traffic control and sign maintenance in order to make sure the roads can be safely navigated by all.

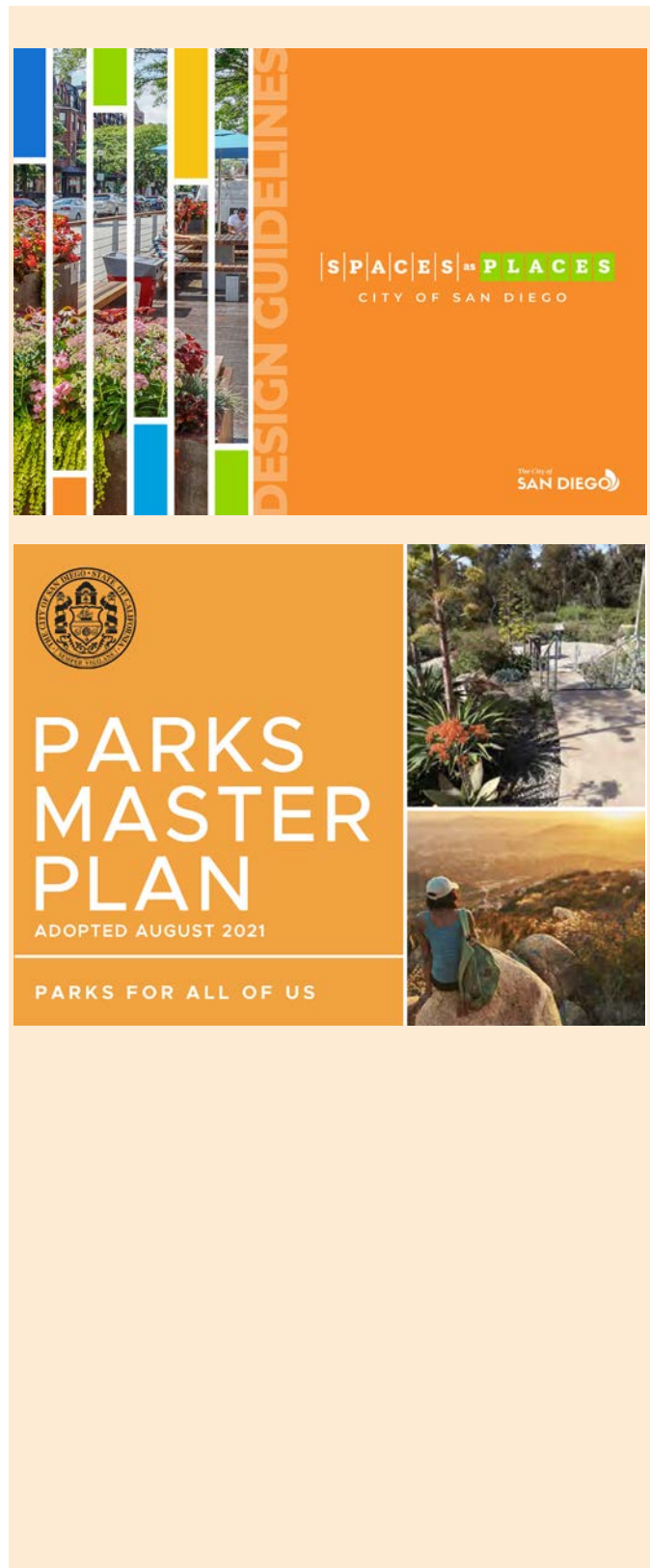
**Slow Streets Program** - The Slow Streets Program fosters a more accessible, pedestrian-friendly environment, provides additional seating areas for visitors and patrons of the surrounding businesses, and encourages non-motorized transportation through selective closure of streets to vehicular traffic.

**Ciclosdias** - The City, in partnership with the San Diego County Bike Coalition, facilitates the annual Ciclosdias event, where approximately 3 miles of City streets are closed to vehicular traffic so that families, pedestrians, cyclists, joggers, skateboarders, and anyone else can enjoy the public space in a new way.



## Proposed Actions

- Develop a Child-Friendly Public Spaces Design Guide to provide a framework for a more inclusive, community-oriented vision to make the City more playful and accessible to kids and their caregivers.
- Complete a Parks Need Index highlighting park deficient areas to inform policy and infrastructure prioritization.
- Develop a Citywide Trails Master Plan that includes safe and enjoyable urban connections for walking/ rolling and biking.



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D

Promoting  
Healthy Food  
Access

# D Promoting Healthy Food Access

## Goal

Healthy food that is available and affordable to all in a manner that generates net-zero waste.

## Discussion

### Environmental Factors and Food Production

There are many components that contribute to a functioning healthy food system. Identifying challenges in the built environment and fostering systems that make healthy choices the easy option is vital to supporting the health of San Diegans. Considering the relationship between people's food habits and the built environment is another integral part of creating a holistic strategy to bring healthy, nutritious food to people, where they spend the most time and feel the most comfortable. Incentivizing and streamlining the construction of supermarkets in areas where fresh food can be hard to find and where they are needed most is essential to addressing healthy food access. At the same time, developing public spaces that can lend themselves to hosting farmer's markets that are inclusive and well-connected to jobs, housing, schools, and parks can allow these places to act as connection points within the community. Strategies such as these can aid in addressing food access challenges specific to the locality, neighborhood and the unique urban landscape of communities across the City.

### Conscious Consumption



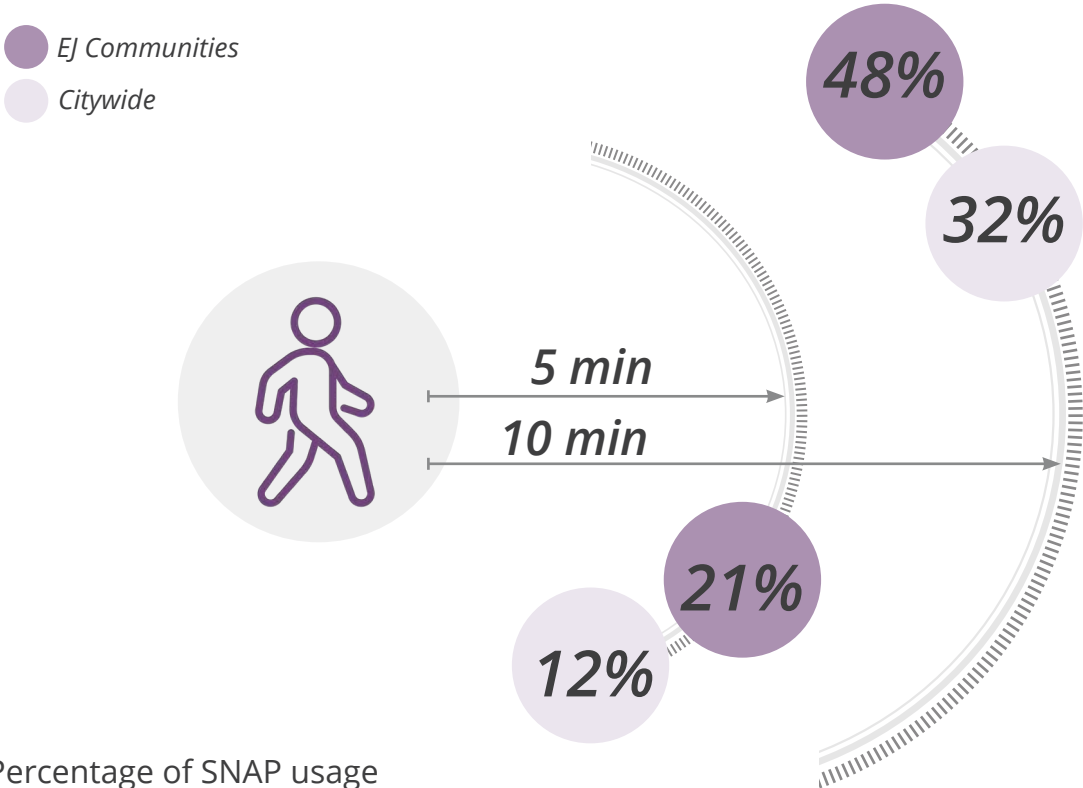
People's conscious consumption of goods and businesses' implementation of sustainable practices can also help reduce carbon footprints and overall waste engrained in the food system cycle. Making it easy to shop locally, compost, and reducing plastic use in packaging is an integral part of shifting toward a more sustainable food system. These actions remove barriers to more eco-friendly behaviors and can have a significant impact on reducing environmental impacts at various stages of production, distribution, consumption, and waste disposal—safeguarding the health of our planet for future generations.

*It is estimated that one in four people in San Diego County are nutrition insecure. - San Diego Hunger Coalition (June 2023)*



### Food Insecurity

The percentage of people within a 5- or 10-minute walk from a grocery store or farmer’s market is higher in EJ Communities. At the same time, food insecurity can be described as a lack of consistent access to sufficient food and is a measure of how many people cannot afford food. People experiencing food insecurity may participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and SNAP usage is particularly prominent in EJ Communities. Supporting the development of programs that bridge the gap between access, availability, and affordability is essential to a thriving healthy food system. Figure EJ-10 shows SNAP usage prevalence throughout the City and Figure EJ-11 shows walking proximity to grocery stores.



Percentage of SNAP usage

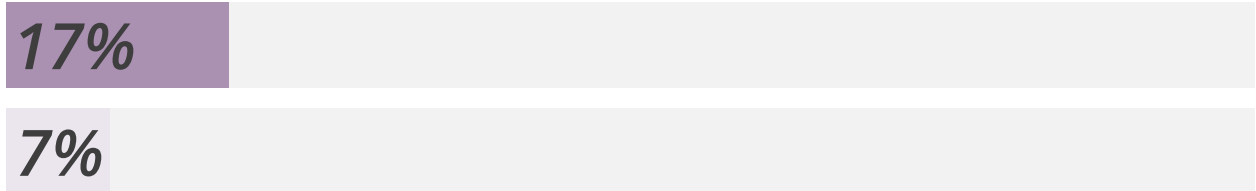


Figure EJ-10 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or Public Assistance Income

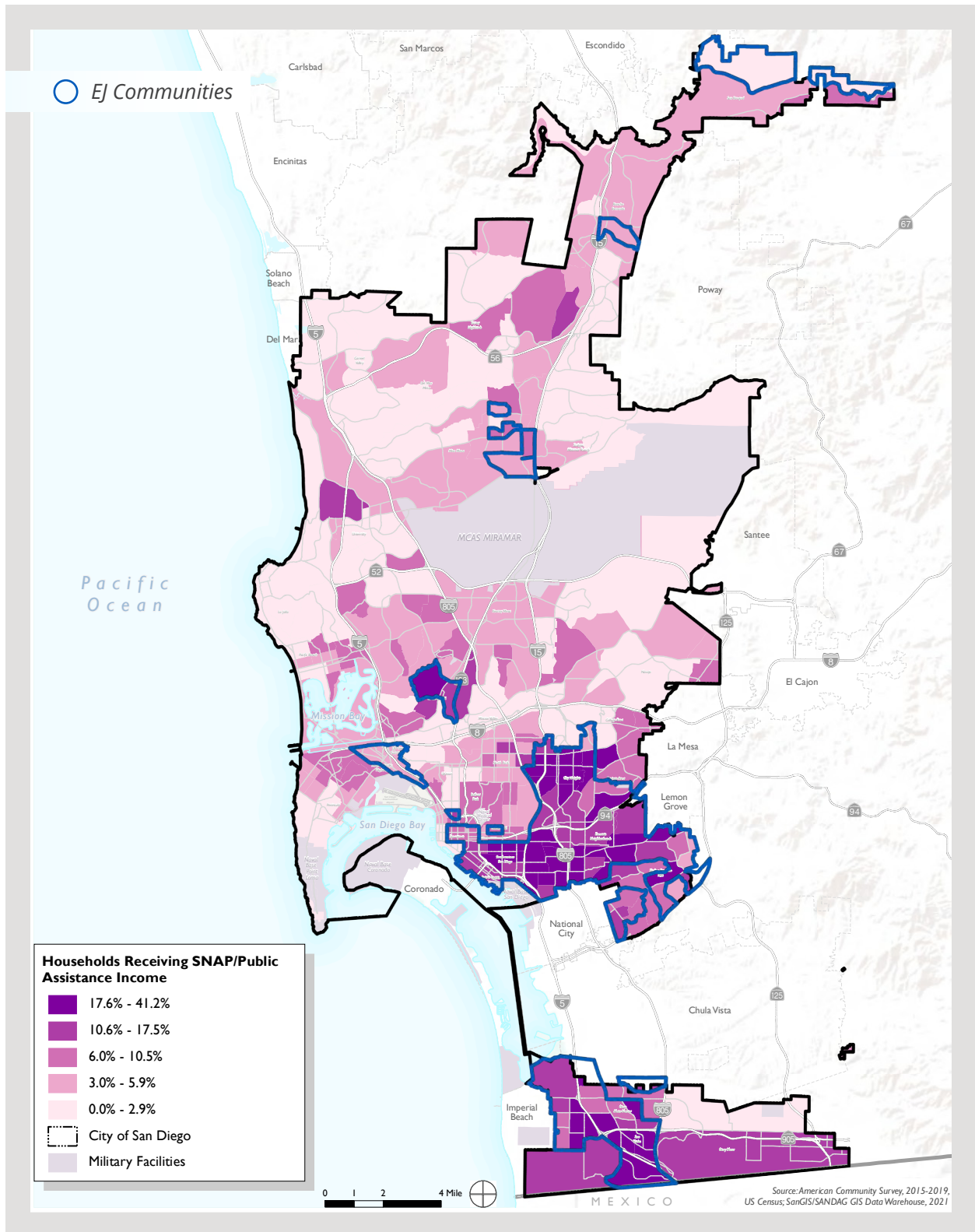
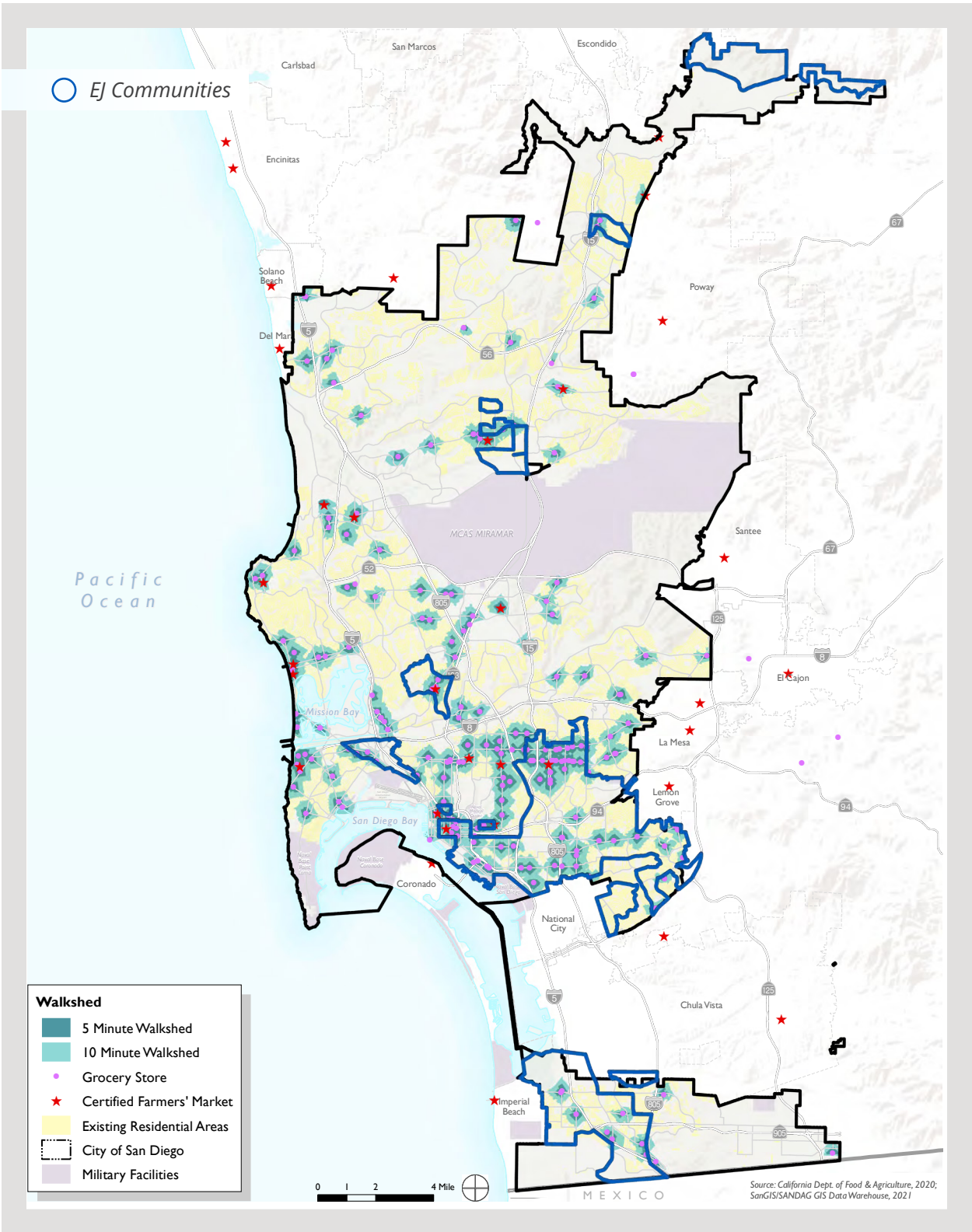




Figure EJ-11 Proximity to Grocery Stores and Certified Farmers Market



## Health Implications

Health implications due to food insecurity can have far-reaching consequences on both physical and mental well-being. It can lead to nutritional deficiencies that can hinder proper growth and development in children, chronic health conditions such as type-two diabetes and cardiovascular diseases, obesity and weight gain, complications related to maternal and child health, and can also negatively impact cognitive function. For areas that lack safe and convenient access to grocery stores that offer healthy and fresh food options, more grocery stores, along with farmer's markets and community gardens, in areas lacking access, can play a significant role in reducing food insecurity by offering better options for obtaining nutritious and affordable food.

## Policy and Regulatory Opportunities

A multifaceted policy approach can support healthy food consumption and food security. Strategies include identifying opportunities to improve availability, access and affordability to fresh and healthy food, as well as sharing information on healthy food options. Well-connected urban gardens, farmer's markets, grocery stores and quality public spaces are among the strategies that can be used to support these efforts and offer the potential to further sustainability goals; improve public health and equity through better access to fresh healthy food; promote food system security by reducing reliance on long distance supply chains; reduce the amount of energy used to transport food; and foster economic

development opportunities, including micro-enterprises. At the same time, supporting programs that expand the affordability of fresh food is crucial to making healthy food an option when faced with food insecurity.

The objectives of this section are to:

- Increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Promote and support programs that improve access and availability of affordable healthy food.
- Increase the presence of supermarkets in underserved areas to improve access to fresh, high-quality groceries that support the health of San Diegans.
- Increase the presence of farmer's markets, community gardens, and small brick-and-mortar markets selling fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Increase access to clean water fountains in public spaces.
- Reduce single-use plastic packaging for all food types.
- Incentivize presence of net zero waste grocery stores.

The policies below work together to facilitate programming in both public and private spaces to advance the availability, access, and affordability of fresh fruits and vegetables to promote a healthy food system.



*"A good start in life puts each individual child on the path to realizing their full potential and collectively sets the foundation for a healthy, equitable and peaceful society."*

Bernard Van Leer Foundation

## Policies

**EJ-D.1** Support and prioritize programs and services expand urban agriculture to realize policy implementation, programs and services to realize environmental, economic, and public health benefits including increased access to fresh, healthy and local food, reduced energy used for food transportation and distribution, and increasing opportunities for economic development and local enterprise (see also Conservation Element, Section L, and Recreation Element, Sections A and E).

**EJ-D.2** Allow urban agriculture uses in appropriate locations.



- a. Allow urban agriculture uses in appropriate locations, that enhance neighboring uses and the community.
- b. Increase opportunities for farmer's markets on public and private lands.
- c. Increase opportunities for rooftop gardens and the use of edible landscape materials.
- d. Encourage the use of vacant land and underutilized lots for urban agriculture.

**EJ-D.3** Support food system planning that increases food system security, links local producers to local markets, creates jobs, and re-circulates food dollars in the local economy.



- a. Facilitate the participation of Community members in policy-making, and public education and outreach efforts related to food system planning.
- b. Support efforts to establish food distribution centers within the region and encourage the development of a permanent public market in the City of San Diego.
- c. Reserve areas needed for local food processing, wholesaling, and distribution through the use of zoning and economic development incentives.

**EJ-D.4** Consider incentives to encourage the development of affordable high-quality grocery stores in EJ Communities.



- a. Explore opportunities to increase the presence of affordable high quality grocery stores and improve access to healthy food
- b. Incentivize repurposing existing sites, including abandoned warehouses, unused retail space, and brownfield sites, for the development of affordable high-quality grocery stores.
- c. Collaborate with community-based organizations to inform how grocery stores could best meet the needs of the community.

**EJ-D.5** Encourage the reduction of single-use plastic packaging, support local food systems, and enhance economic opportunities within EJ communities.



- a. Encourage partnerships between grocery stores, restaurants, and community members to collectively reduce plastic waste and promote positive behavior changes.
- b. Support creation of local jobs, stimulation of economic growth, and enhanced community resilience.

**EJ-D.6** Collaborate with public health professionals to maximize the public health benefits related to urban agriculture.

**EJ-D.7** Collaborate with local partners and businesses to promote the systematic collection and redistribution of surplus edible food to communities in need, per SB 1383, thereby addressing food insecurity, minimizing waste and fostering sustainable practices within the City.

**EJ-D.8** Explore opportunities to expand access to healthy foods through City owned agricultural lands in San Pasqual.

## Programs

The following programs are examples of City-led efforts to advance a healthy, affordable, and sustainable food system across San Diego, especially in EJ Communities.

**Communities Garden Program** - Provides a toolkit for community members interested in starting a community garden in a local park or other City-owned property, including various forms, a checklist, and instructions.

**Urban Agriculture Program** - The City's Urban Agriculture Program supports the expansion of urban agriculture to realize environmental, economic and public health benefits including increasing access to fresh local food, reducing energy used for food transportation and distribution and increasing opportunities for economic development and local enterprise.

**Urban Agriculture Incentive Program** - The City's Economic Department offers a property tax incentive to encourage agriculture and healthy living in urban neighborhoods.

**Organic Waste Recycling Program** - Reduces organic waste disposed of in landfills to make San Diego a more sustainable and thriving place for everyone.

**The Single Use Plastic Reduction Ordinance** - This ordinance prohibits the distribution and sale of most polystyrene foam containers, restricts the provision of single-use plastic straws and utensils to customer request only, and bans all polystyrene foam products from City facilities, with waivers available for eligible entities.

## Proposed Actions

- Maintain a supermarket needs index to regularly identify what areas in the City are still underserved by high-quality grocery stores.
- Educate community members on creating community gardens and urban farming to support access to healthy and affordable food.
- Educate community members and local businesses on single-use plastic waste reduction around food packaging.



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**E**

Safe and  
Healthy Homes

# E Safe and Healthy Homes

## Goal

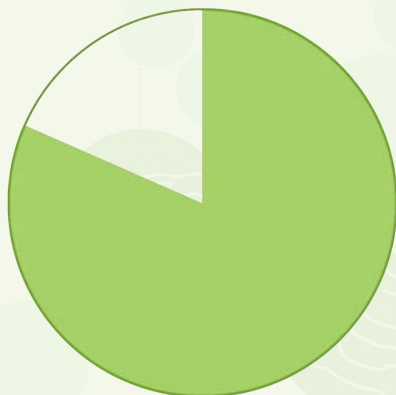
Safe and healthy homes for people of all age groups, genders, and abilities to thrive in their communities.

## Discussion

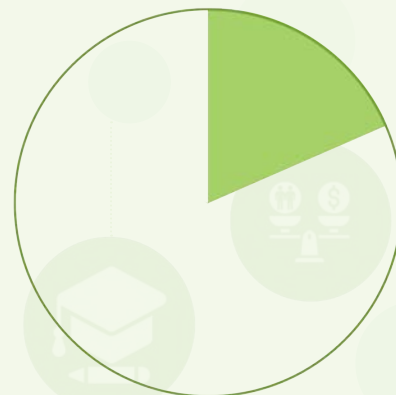
Homes designed, constructed, and maintained to promote the physical, mental, and social well-being of occupants offer many benefits, including stability, reduced stress, and good health. Children raised in safe and healthy environments tend to have better opportunities for physical and cognitive development. Access to clean air, natural light and stimulating surroundings positively influences a child's growth and learning capabilities. Location, quality and affordability of homes also play a role in fostering comfortable and secure living environments for all ages.

The Child Opportunity Index measures neighborhood resources and conditions that affect childhood development. The index has neighborhood-level indicators including access and quality of early childhood education, high-quality schools, green space, healthy food, toxin-free environments and socioeconomic resources as shown on Figure EJ-12.

**88%** of census tracts within EJ Communities fall under the Childhood Opportunity Index categories of low and very low opportunity, compared to **32%** Citywide.

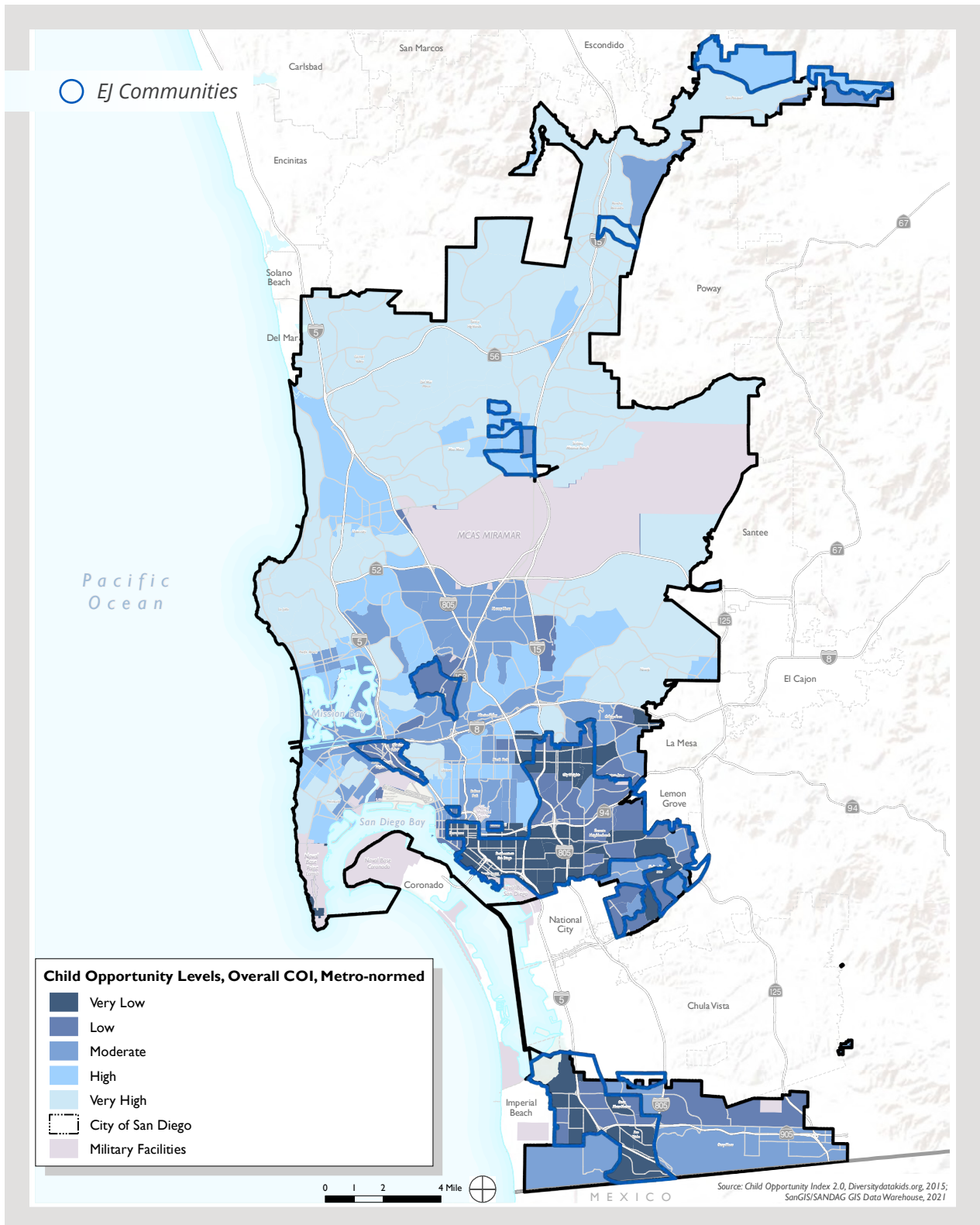




EJ Communities




City of San Diego

Figure EJ-12 Childhood Opportunity Index



-  EJ Communities
-  City of San Diego


# HOW HOUSEHOLDS WITHIN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITIES COMPARE TO THOSE ACROSS THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO



**COMMUNITY DIVERSITY INDEX**


The Diversity Index from Esri represents the likelihood that two persons, chosen at random from the same area, belong to different race or ethnic groups.

**81% | 72%**



**HOUSEHOLDS WITH HOUSING COST OF 50% OR MORE OF THEIR HOUSEHOLD INCOME.**

**26% | 20%**



**NON US CITIZEN POPULATION**

**16% | 11%**

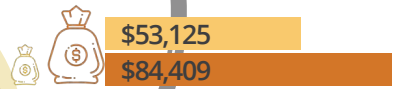
**AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE**



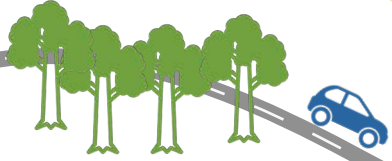
The average household size is generally higher in EJ Communities at 3.2 people per household as compared to 2.7 Citywide.



**MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME**



**HOMES THAT ARE RENTER OCCUPIED**



**HOMES BELOW FEDERAL POVERTY LINE**

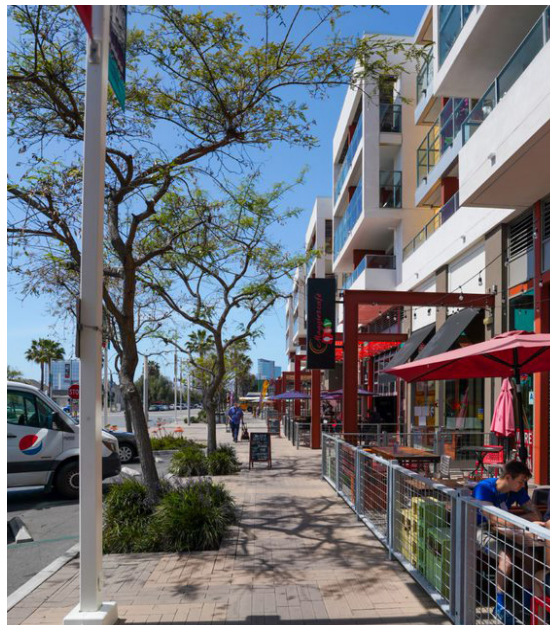
The Federal Poverty Line for a household of 4 people is \$29,950. The percentage of homes below the federal poverty line is 18% within EJ Communities as compared to 11% Citywide.

## HOME LOCATION

The location of a home and its proximity to jobs, schools, and amenities such as grocery stores and pharmacies influence everyday choices and how people engage in their community. Amenities such as pharmacies can promote public health by providing access to medication and other essential home items. At the same time, access to parks, recreation and comfortable streets to walk/roll and bike promote physical health by making it easy for people to enjoy the outdoors. Streets where people feel safe can reduce miles driven by traveling to places without a car. Access to reliable transit options opens opportunity and access to higher-income jobs, higher-performing schools, and fresh and healthy food and produce.

Opportunity maps developed annually by the State Tax Credit Allocation Committee (TCAC) address a person's access to resources based on their location, such as proximity to jobs, quality of education, and other environmental indicators. A person earning a lower income may not be able to afford housing choices in areas of moderate and high opportunity. Communities with low access to opportunity areas do not have the same level of access to jobs and quality of education compared to communities with moderate and high opportunity areas.

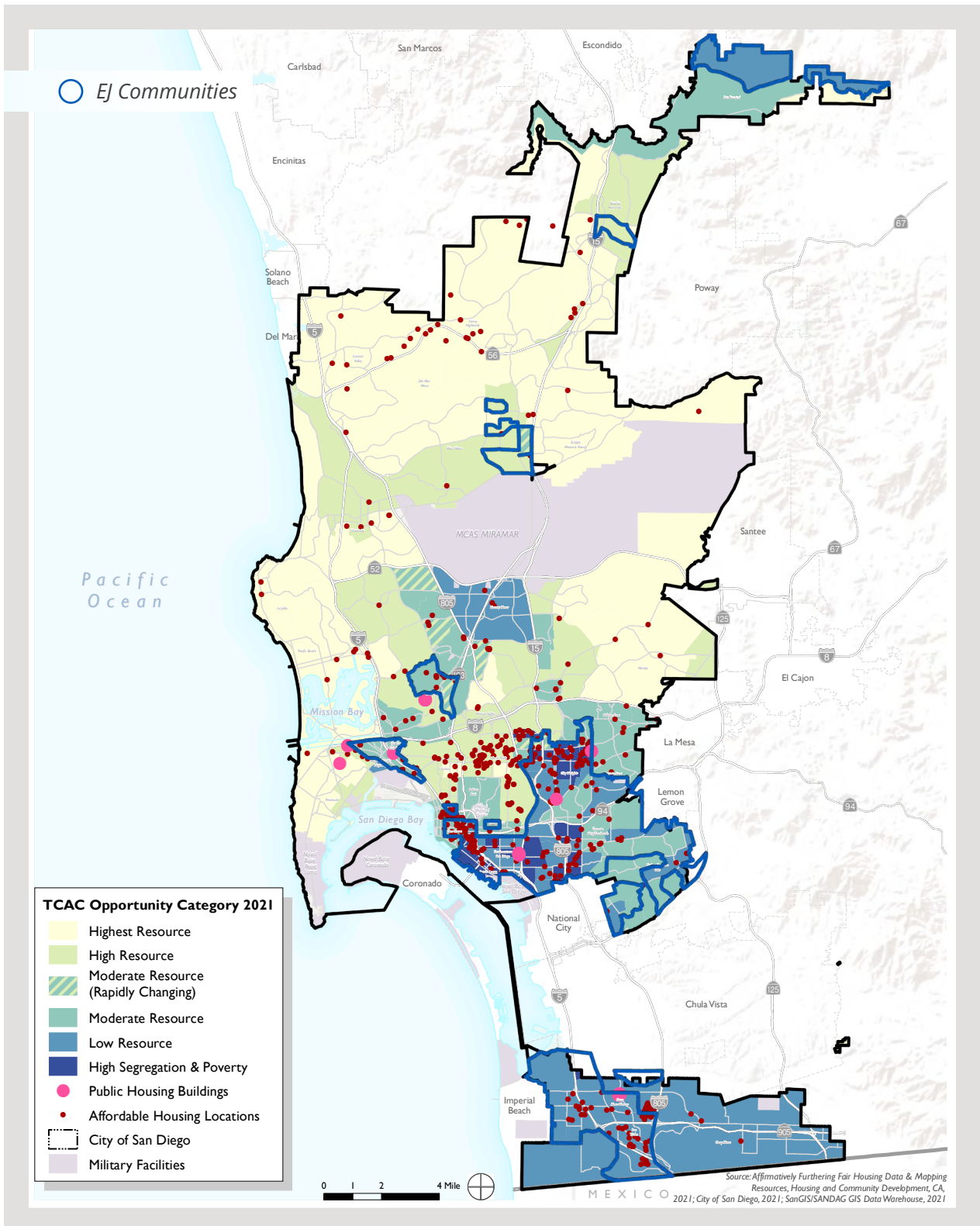
Deed-restricted affordable homes are homes that have an agreement with the San Diego Housing Commission that limits the rent or sale price of the



home for a specified period of time at a cost that is affordable for families of varying income levels. Within the City, deed-restricted affordable homes are located in areas at all levels of resources, including low resource or high segregation and poverty areas as shown on Figure EJ-13, TCAC Areas and Deed Restricted Affordable Homes. Creating opportunities for families of varying income levels to live in higher-resource areas and promoting opportunities to improve access and resources in areas that are lacking amenities can reduce barriers to higher-paying jobs and higher-performing schools.

This EJ Element section builds on the programs and policies in the Housing Element, which identifies the City's commitments to affirmatively further fair housing in much greater detail.

Figure EJ-13 TCAC Opportunity areas and Deed-Restricted Affordable Homes



## HOME QUALITY

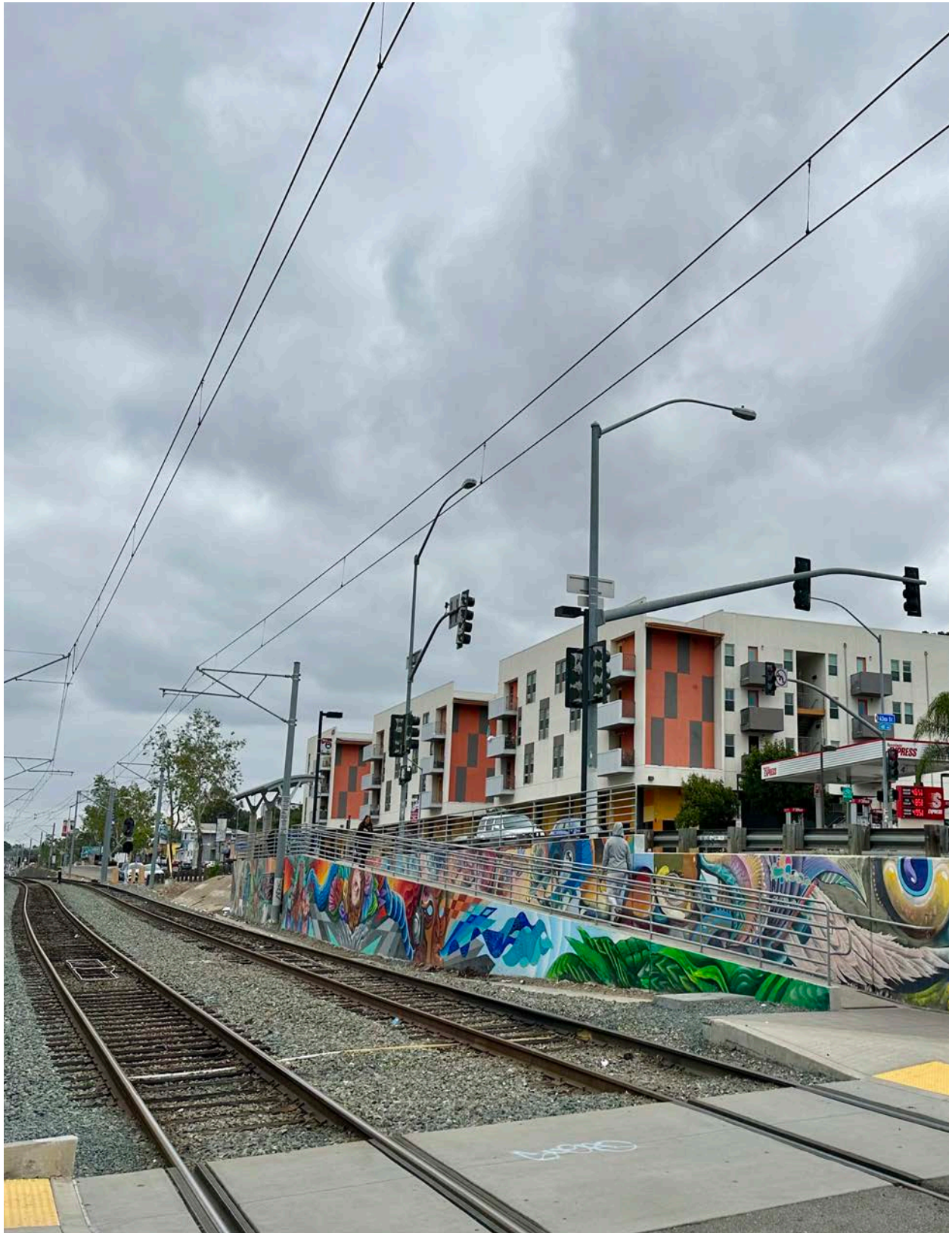
Homes that meet safety standards decrease the likelihood of accidents and injuries. Proper electrical wiring, fire prevention measures, and structural stability are vital to prevent hazards that could harm occupants. Safe and healthy homes provide protection from environmental hazards such as extreme temperatures, pollution, and toxins. They also reduce the risk of illnesses related to exposure, respiratory problems and other health issues.

Well-constructed homes are better equipped to withstand natural disasters, such as earthquakes, wildfires and floods. This can reduce the risk of displacement during emergencies and help communities recover more quickly after disasters. Communities with safe and healthy housing tend to foster stronger social connections. When people feel secure in their living environment, they are more likely to engage with their neighbors, participate in community activities, and form supportive networks.

Retrofitting and maintenance can improve the quality of older homes. Pursuing the development of affordable homes and simultaneously preserving the quality of the existing housing stock is crucial to support the health and well-being of San Diegans.







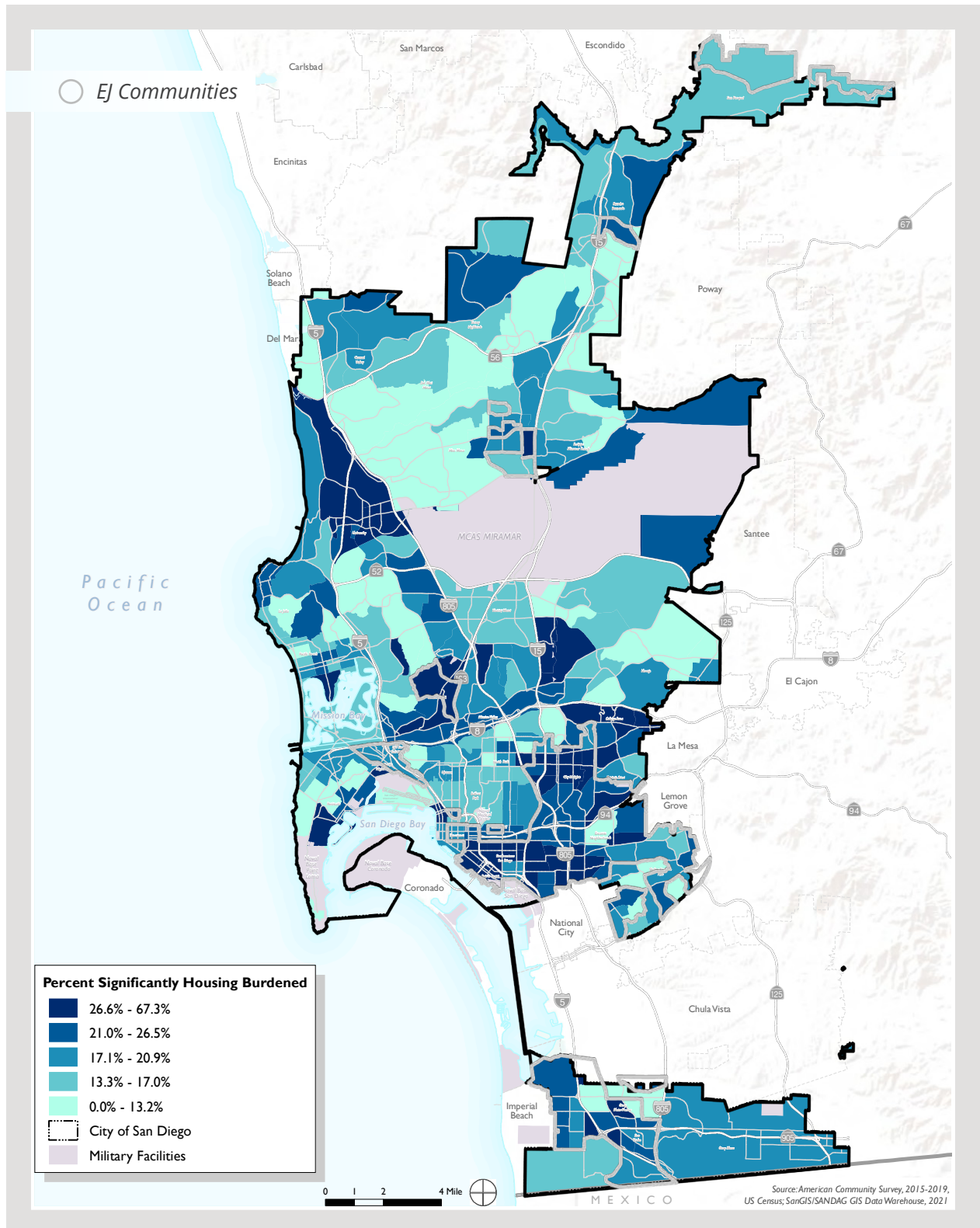
## HOME AFFORDABILITY

Rising housing costs and lack of affordable homes is a cause of housing insecurity. Households that spend 30 percent or more of their income on housing costs are considered housing-burdened, and those that spend 50 percent, or more are significantly housing burdened. Households that are housing-burdened have fewer financial resources for food, healthcare, and other basic needs.

Within the City, 43 percent of households are housing burdened, and 20 percent are significantly housing burdened as shown on Figure EJ-14. Access to safe housing that is sustainable to maintain with an individual's living wage offers economic stability and community stability. People who live in affordable, secure, and well-maintained homes are more likely to be productive in their personal and professional lives.



Figure EJ-14 Significantly Housing Burdened Households



When combined with changing market dynamics, lack of affordability and housing insecurity can also lead to displacement of people that cannot afford to stay in gentrifying areas. Within the City, various typologies exist, as described in Table EJ-4. Areas of advanced exclusive typology and areas identified as being at risk of becoming exclusive tend to be higher-income areas, as shown on Figure EJ-15. The places of change where risk of displacement is higher necessitates a strategy that considers the circumstances and requirements of those affected. Collaborating with displaced individuals is crucial to guarantee their voices are heard and their needs addressed.

The benefits of safe and healthy housing extend beyond the immediate inhabitants. As generations grow up in such environments, they are more likely to carry forward healthier lifestyles and contribute successfully to their communities. The Housing Element sets goals, policies, and objectives to guide the development of homes and outlines proposed activities to reach overarching goals. The Housing Element addresses Environmental Justice housing concerns relating to home location, home quality, and home affordability. Several Housing Element Goals address environmental justice issues, such as substandard living conditions, affordable housing preservation, or improved access to parks, jobs, and schools.

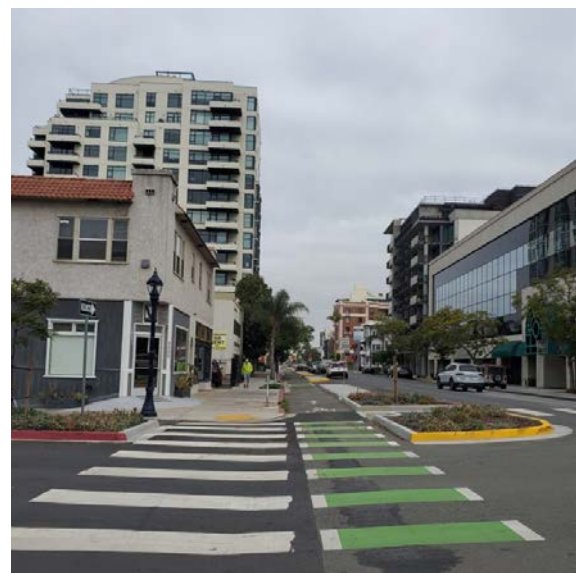


Figure EJ-15 Gentrification & Displacement Risk

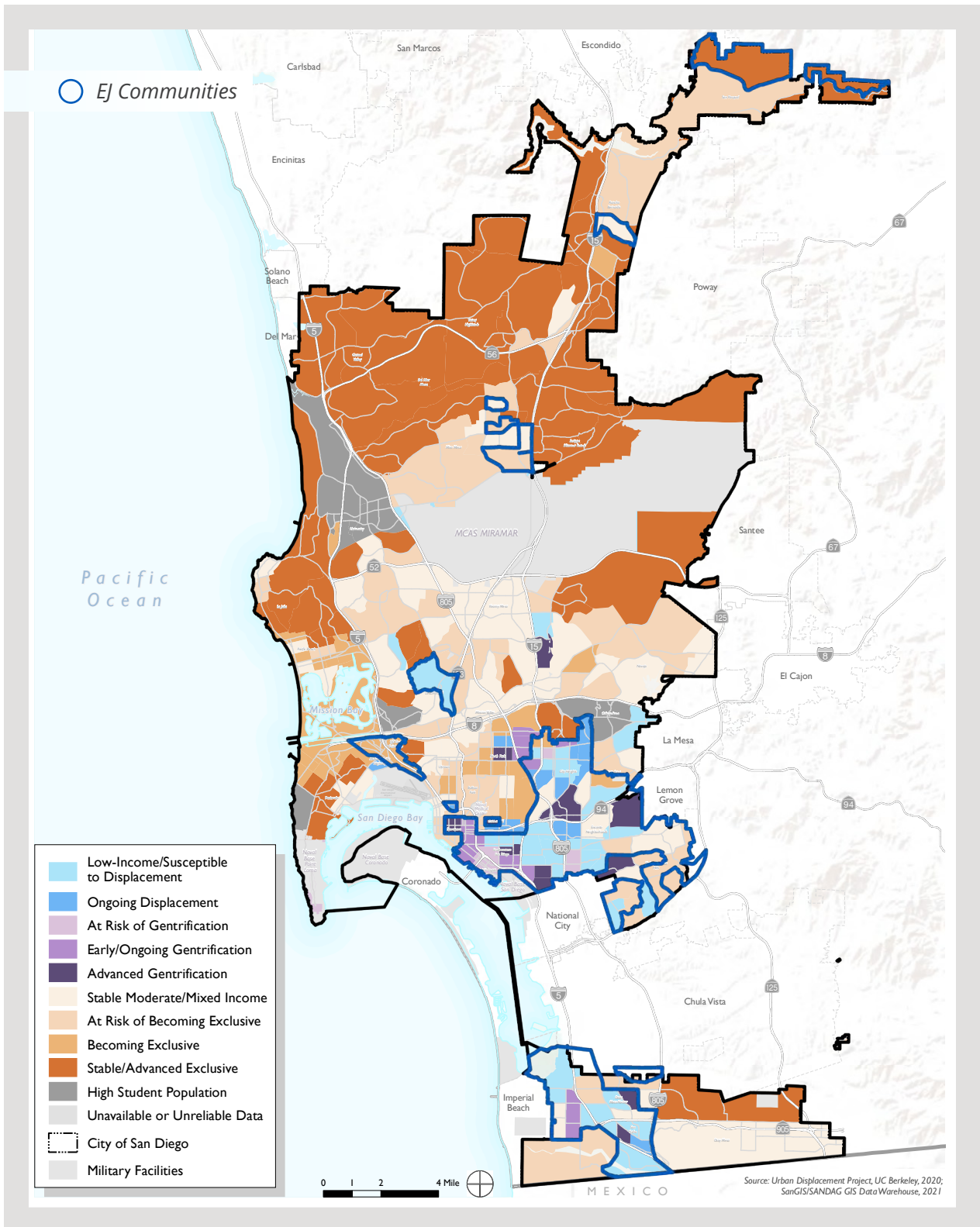


Table EJ-4 Modified Gentrification, Displacement, and Exclusion Typology

Typology	Description
Low-Income/Susceptible to Displacement	Predominantly low-income or mixed low-income neighborhoods that exhibit characteristics of neighborhood stability and affordability to low-income households but could develop a risk of gentrification and displacement pressures in the future.
Ongoing Displacement of Low-Income Households	Considers disinvestment-driven displacement as well as investment-driven displacement.
At Risk of Gentrification	Identifies tracts that are not currently gentrifying but demonstrate characteristics of recent housing market change, housing stock, and proximity to areas that indicate risk of gentrification in the future.
Early/Ongoing Gentrification	Identifies tracts that are currently undergoing the process of gentrification.
Advanced Gentrification	Captures gentrified neighborhoods that have turned over to predominantly higher-income residents.
Stable Moderate/Mixed Income	Identifies moderate-to-high-income tracts that are not currently at risk of becoming exclusive neighborhoods.
At Risk of Becoming Exclusive	Highlights moderate-to-high-income tracts that exhibit risk factors for future exclusion of lower-income households.
Becoming Exclusive	Captures neighborhoods that have begun the process of exclusion of lower-income households.
Stable/Advanced Exclusive	Highlights neighborhoods that exhibit enduring patterns of exclusion beyond recent demographic change.

Source:

The Urban Displacement Replication Project. (2020). Report from The Urban Displacement Project. [https://www.urbandisplacement.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/udp\\_replication\\_project\\_methodology\\_10.16.2020-converted.pdf](https://www.urbandisplacement.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/udp_replication_project_methodology_10.16.2020-converted.pdf)

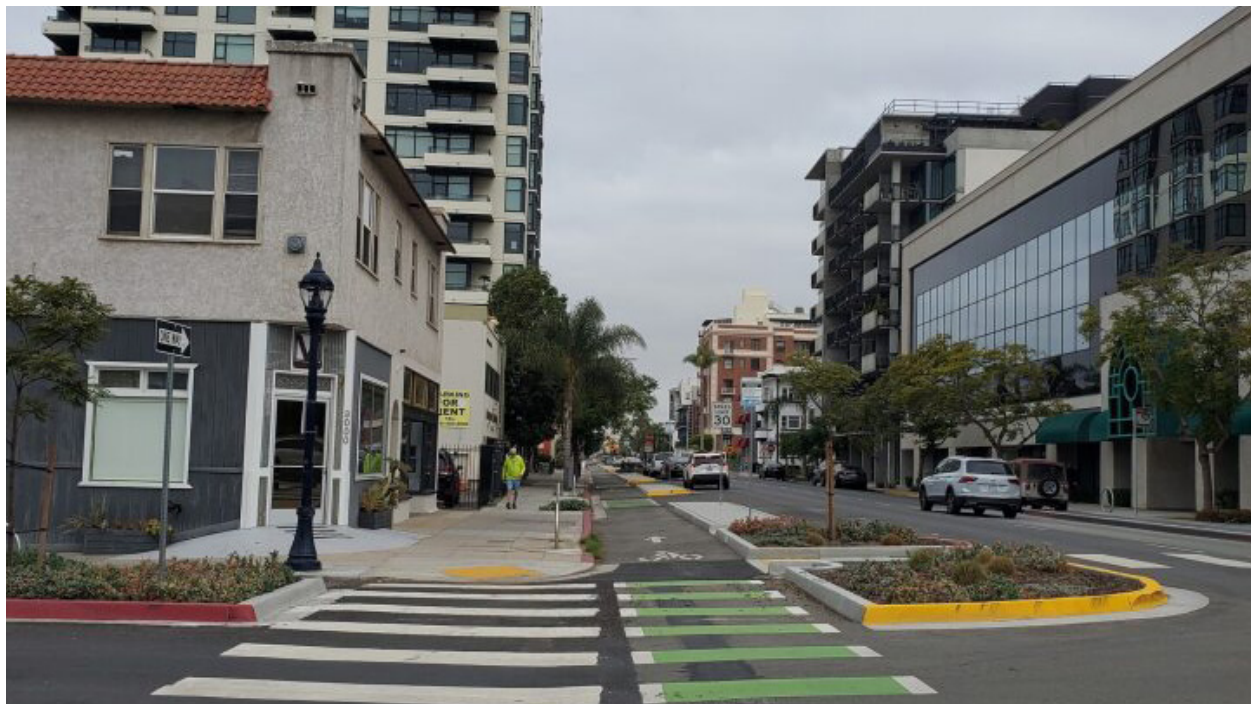
The following table identifies which Housing Element goals, objectives and policies address environmental justice housing concerns.

*Table EJ-5 Additional Policies in the General Plan Addressing Housing Issues*

Discussion Topic	Issue	Housing Element Goal	Housing Element Policies
Location	Access to Amenities	1. Facilitate the construction of Quality Housing	C.5
		4. Enhance Quality of Life	L.2, M.5
		5. Exemplify Sustainable Development and Growth	P.1, P.2, O.2
	Access to Jobs and Transportation	1. Facilitate the Construction of Quality Housing	A.2
5. Exemplify Sustainable Development and Growth		O.2, O.3, O.4	
Quality	Substandard Living Conditions	2. Improve the Existing Housing Stock	G.2, G.3, G.5, H.3
		5. Exemplify Sustainable Development and Growth	O.1, P.1, P.2, Q.1, Q.2
	Overcrowding	1. Facilities the construction of Quality Housing	C.5
		4. Enhance Quality of Life	M.5
Affordability	Housing for Middle- Income Families	1. Facilities the construction of Quality Housing	C.2, C.3
	Access to Safe, Affordable Housing in all Communities	1. Facilities the construction of Quality Housing	A.1 through A9, B.2, C.1 through C.12, D.1 through D.4
		2. Improve the Existing Housing Stock	G.5
		3. Provide New Affordable Housing	C.4, I.2, E.2, E.3, E.5, E.7, E.11
		5. Exemplify Sustainable Development and Growth	O.2

Table EJ-5 Additional Policies in the General Plan Addressing Housing Issues (Continued)

Discussion Topic	Issue	Housing Element Goal	Housing Element Policies
Affordability	Preventing Displacement	1. Facilitates the construction of Quality Housing	E.1 through E.13, G.3
		2. Improve the Existing Housing Stock	H.3, G.2, G.3, G.5
		4. Enhance Quality of Life	N.7
	Outreach to At- Risk San Diegans	1. Facilitates the construction of Quality Housing	E. 13
		2. Improve the Existing Housing Stock	G.1, G.2
		4. Enhance Quality of Life	N.4
		6. Publicize Housing needs and Resources	R.1, R.2, S.1, S.2





## Programs

The following strategies are examples of City-led efforts to advance environmental justice by incentivizing housing at all income levels.

**Housing Action Package** – Programs and code revisions to incentivize the construction of new homes at all income levels.

**Land Development Code** – Established Sustainable Development Areas that expand affordable housing opportunities in higher resource areas that are within walking distance of high-quality transit.

**Accessory Dwelling Unit Home Density Program** – Allows development of multiple Accessory Dwelling Unit homes in transit-rich neighborhoods with homes set aside for low and moderate-income residents.

**Complete Communities: Housing Solutions Program** – Program incentivizing homes near high-frequency transit with a focus on creating a variety of housing options for people of all incomes.

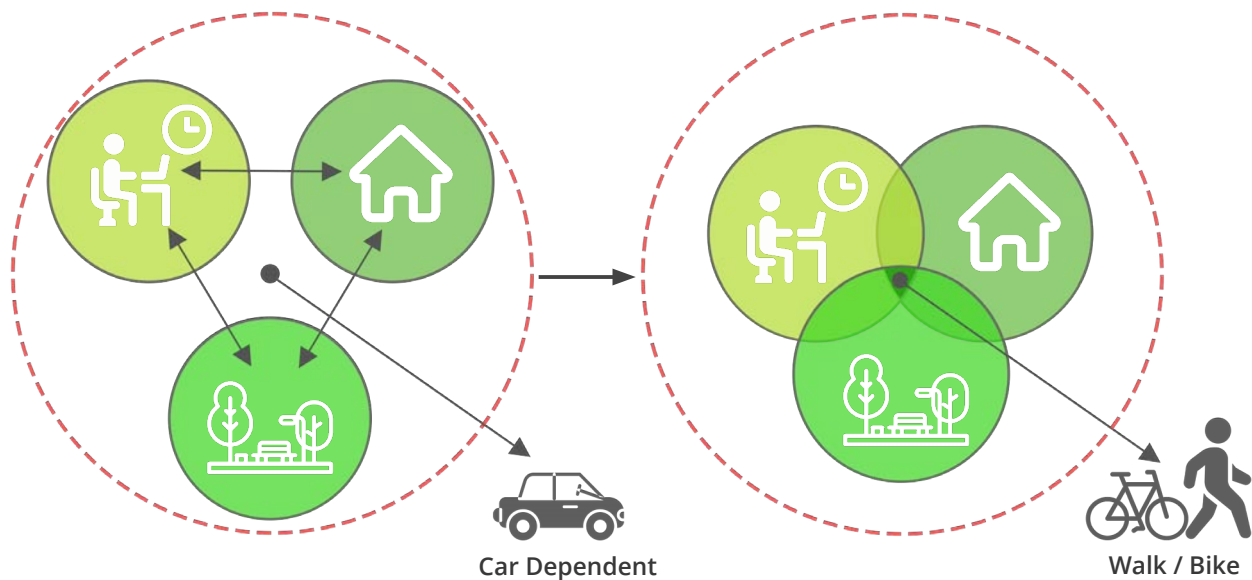
**Lead Hazard Prevention Ordinance** – Mandating lead-safe practices, hazard correction, and education to prevent lead poisoning in order to safeguard public health.

**Tenant Protection Regulations** – Adopted and exceeded protections provided by California Assembly Bill 1482, providing protections for residential tenants facing potential eviction that include noticing requirements, relocation assistance, education and resources, and accountability measures.



## Proposed Actions

- Incentivize middle-income housing to foster a well-rounded housing market.
- Explore new models for affordable housing, including new home ownership opportunities, in all communities (e.g., cooperative housing, community land trusts, etc.)
- Develop an Affordable Home Development Master Plan to identify new affordable home opportunities on City-owned land.
- Explore ways to improve indoor air quality through efforts such as building decarbonization.
- Continue enforcement and expansion of lead hazard prevention measures to safeguard public health and protect vulnerable population.



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**F** Climate Change and Resilience

## Goal

Reduce exposure to climate change and increase climate resilience.

## Discussion

EJ communities are more impacted by environmental and social factors influenced by climate change and the resilience of the built environment. Climate change is giving rise to extreme weather conditions that impact well-being, safety, and overall health across the City, such as flooding, wild fires, and extreme heat; however, some neighborhoods bear a heavier burden and possess fewer resources to cope with and respond to these challenges. To safeguard the City's most vulnerable populations, such as children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities, it is essential to address climate vulnerabilities, especially within EJ Communities.

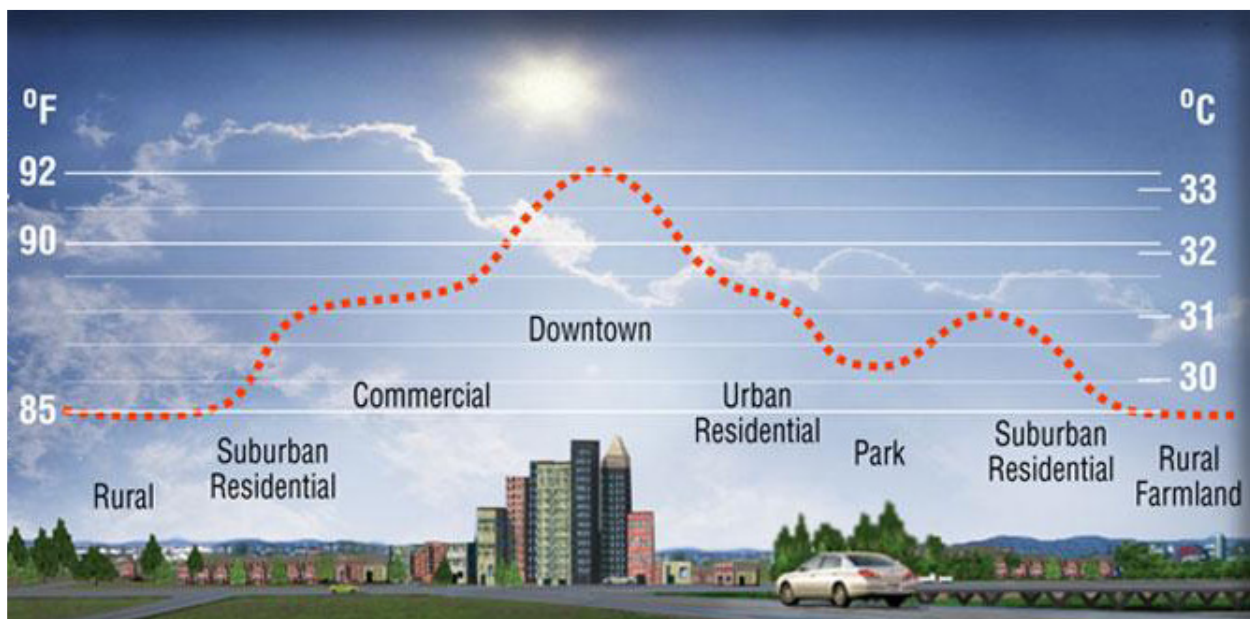
Areas with limited tree cover and high concentrations of structures like buildings and roads tend to absorb and radiate heat more than natural landscapes, resulting in elevated temperatures—a phenomenon known as the urban heat island effect. Moreover, older, more developed neighborhoods may face challenges in maintaining comfortable indoor temperatures due to outdated building infrastructure lacking energy-efficient features such as adequate insulation, modern appliances, and efficient heating and cooling systems. The energy cost burden, which denotes the proportion of household income spent



on energy expenses like electricity and natural gas, disproportionately affects certain households, particularly those with lower incomes. While families may use cost-effective methods like fans or adding extra layers of clothing to reduce energy consumption, these strategies may not be sufficient during extreme weather events when vulnerable populations are at a higher risk of health issues. Figure EJ-16 displays tree coverage across the City, highlighting areas with limited shade to counteract heat buildup. Figure EJ-17 illustrates disparities in energy cost burdens experienced by community members, with areas featuring lower tree canopy cover generally experiencing higher energy cost burdens. Extreme rainfall, including atmospheric rivers, can

result in catastrophic flooding, and can disproportionately affect people that live in EJ Communities.

Stormwater and flood control infrastructure is crucial to protecting lives and property. In particular, green infrastructure can effectively limit adverse effects of extreme rainfall and can simultaneously improve water quality, and add natural areas for improved biological diversity and overall improved community well-being. Taking action to mitigate climate change and formulate strategies to adapt to a shifting environment will help protect the health and safety of all San Diegans.



Urban Heat Island - Image Credit: U.S. EPA

Table EJ-6 Tree Canopy Coverage, Heat Risk and Energy Costs.

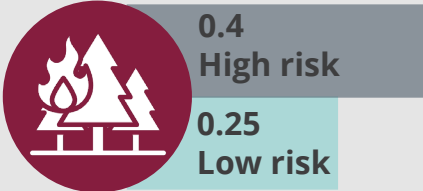
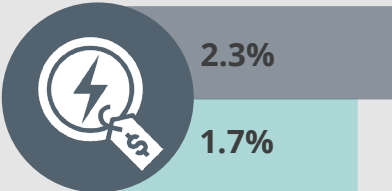
Tree Canopy	Text						
<p><b>Heat Risk</b></p>  <table border="1"> <tr> <td>EJ Communities</td> <td>0.4</td> <td>High risk</td> </tr> <tr> <td>City of San Diego</td> <td>0.25</td> <td>Low risk</td> </tr> </table>	EJ Communities	0.4	High risk	City of San Diego	0.25	Low risk	<p>Heat risk is a measure of heat exposure and vulnerability combined. Values for census tracts are normalized to a range of 0 to 1 with higher scores indicating higher heat risk. The average score for EJ Communities is considered high risk at 0.4, while the average across the City is generally low risk at 0.25. This indicates that EJ Communities have higher populations of people with health conditions such as heart disease and diabetes and high heat exposure as compared to other areas.</p>
EJ Communities	0.4	High risk					
City of San Diego	0.25	Low risk					
<p><b>Energy Cost</b></p>  <table border="1"> <tr> <td>EJ Communities</td> <td>2.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>City of San Diego</td> <td>1.7%</td> </tr> </table>	EJ Communities	2.3%	City of San Diego	1.7%	<p>The annual cost of energy as a percentage of median household income is higher within EJ Communities compared to across the City. As energy use needs increase to combat high heat, energy cost-burdened households may struggle to afford the energy needed to cool themselves and their homes.</p>		
EJ Communities	2.3%						
City of San Diego	1.7%						



Figure EJ-16 Tree Canopy & Cool Zone Sites

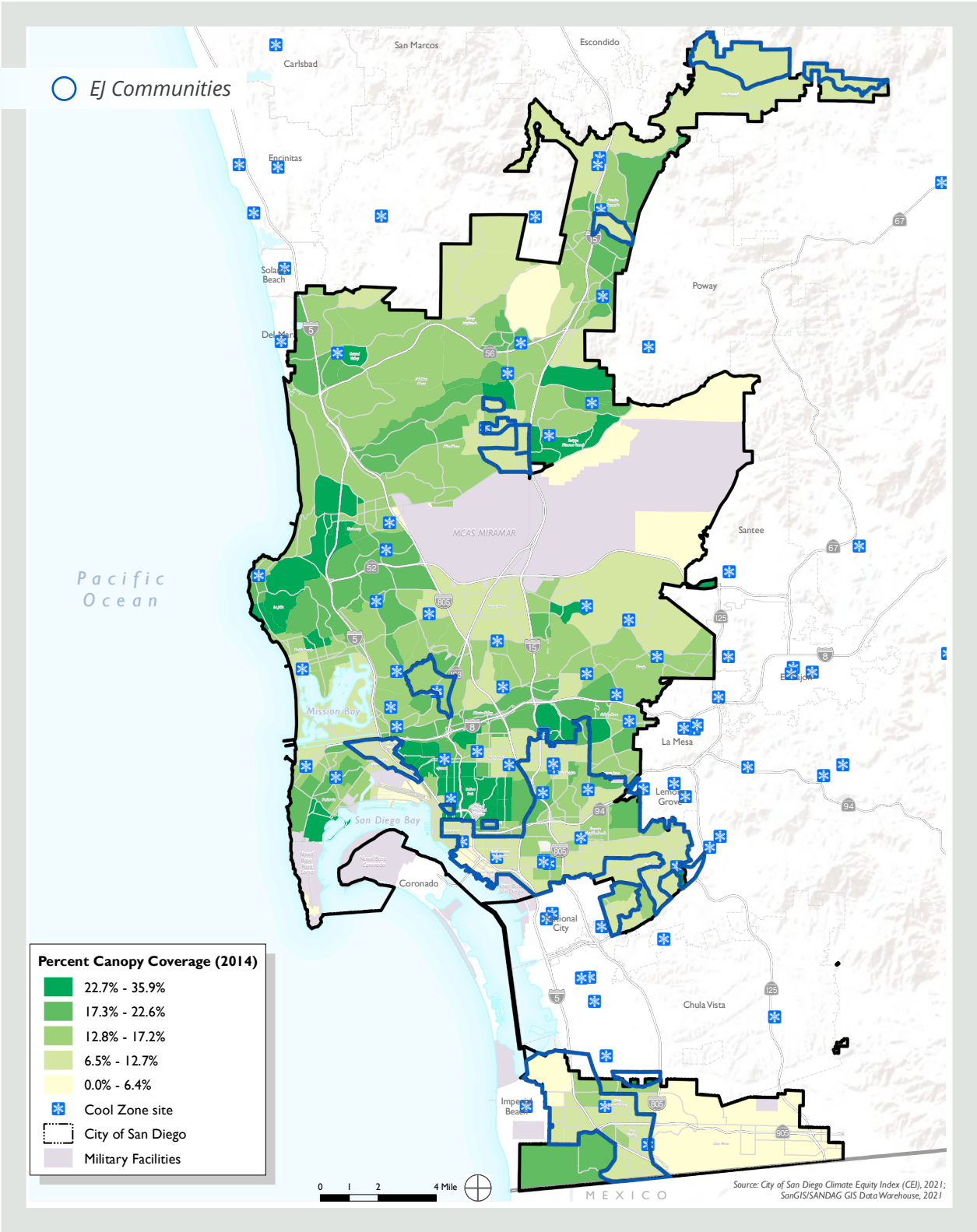
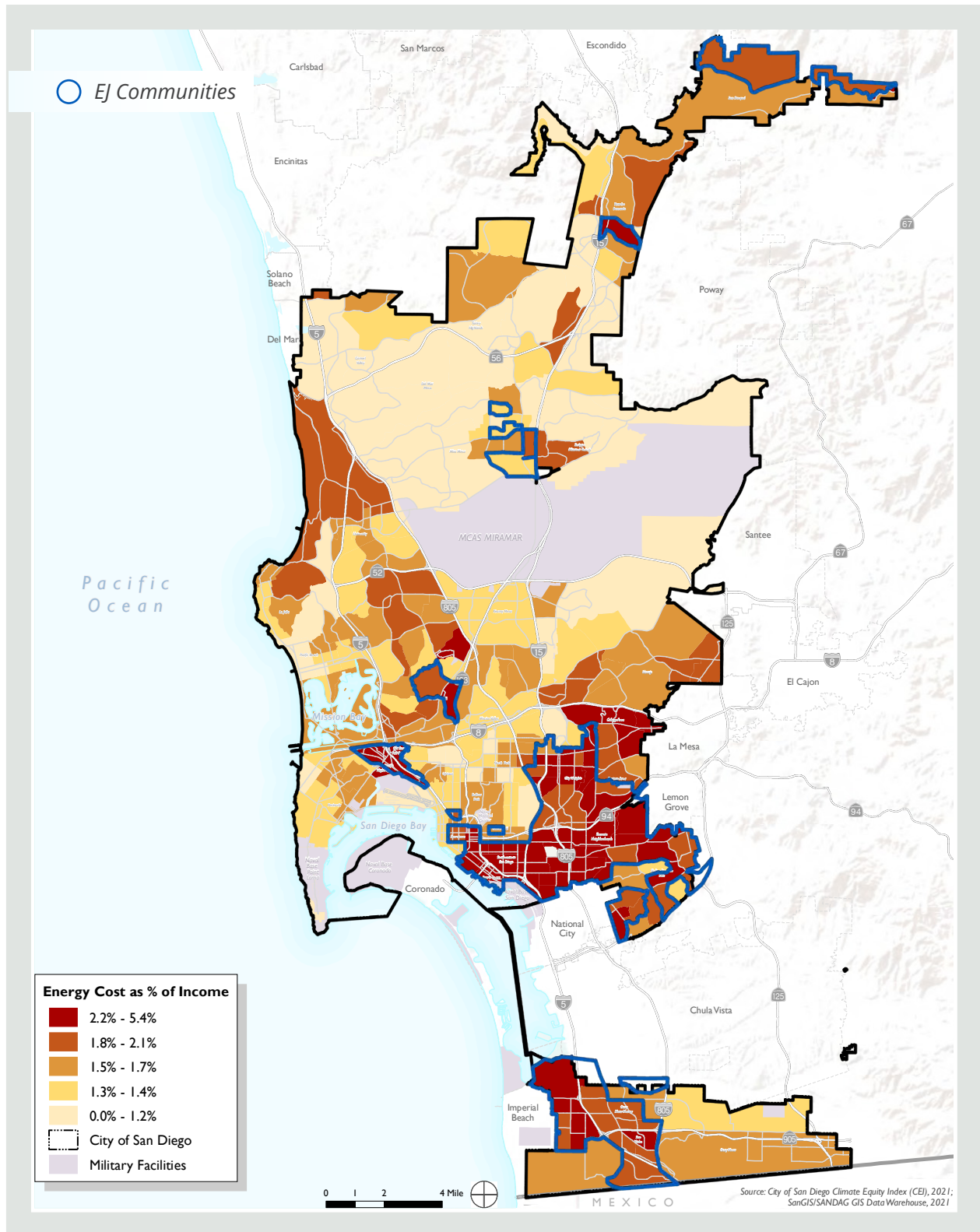


Figure EJ-17 Energy Cost Burden



The City's Climate Action Plan (CAP) sets goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and address climate change. The CAP outlines six strategies to achieve these goals. The strategies include quantified performance targets, outlining how the City will track progress and achieve its overall GHG emissions reduction goals. Each measure is broken down into discrete actions and supporting actions that work together to achieve GHG emissions reductions.

Planning for infrastructure that balances with nature calls for adaptation strategies that can lessen vulnerability by reducing exposure or sensitivity to climate change hazards, or by increasing their adaptive capacity, or ability to respond to climate change hazards. Climate Resilient SD addresses the four primary climate change-related hazards: extreme heat, extreme rainfall or drought, wildfires and sea level rise. Identifying the most vulnerable communities, assets and resources can help implement adaptation strategies where they are most needed and use resources most effectively. Pursuing environmental justice requires acknowledging disparities and focusing efforts to improve conditions in areas most affected.

The Public Facilities, Services, and Safety Element and Conservation Element contain policies addressing climate change. These policies are supported by the CAP and Climate Resilient SD, which outline the

strategies for readiness, adaptation, and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions responsible for climate change. Together, these efforts help address climate-related challenges and strengthen our ability to recover and thrive in a changing climate.



## Programs

The following strategies are examples of City-led efforts to advance environmental justice across communities by reducing and mitigating the effects of GHG emissions.

**Climate Action Plan** - Sets goals to reduce GHG emissions and details the strategies and actions to be collectively taken to make San Diego a more sustainable, healthy and thriving City.

**Climate Resilient SD Plan** - A comprehensive climate adaptation and resiliency plan to increase the City's ability to adapt, recover and thrive in a changing climate.

**Climate Equity Fund** - Supplements resources available to accelerate the implementation of projects that advance climate justice, resilience, and adaptation in disadvantaged communities.

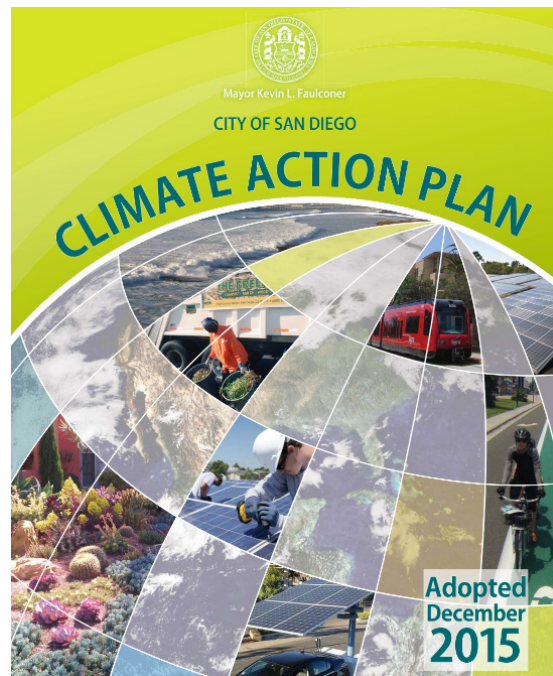
**Municipal Energy Strategy** - A strategic energy plan that puts the City's municipal buildings on the path to zero emissions.

**PureWater Program** - Purifies recycled water to augment local water supply sustainably and reduce the dependence on imported water sources in order to combat the effects of climate change.

**Kate Session and Arbor Days** - City Events fostering community-led mass tree planting initiatives across neighborhoods.

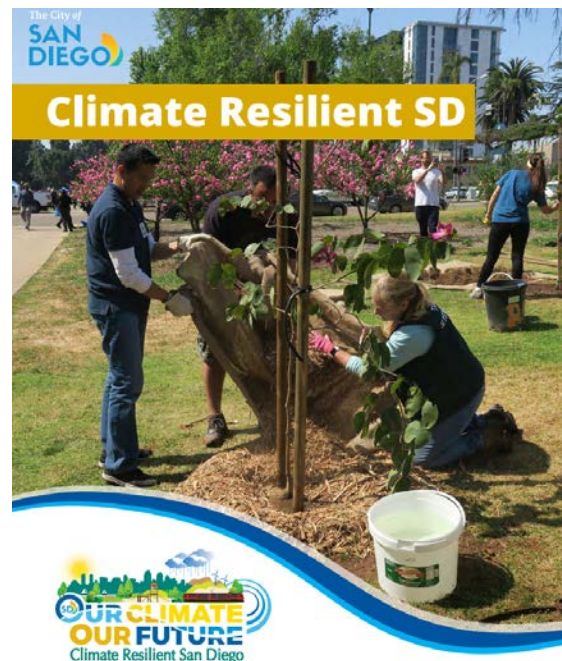
**Free Tree SD** - Program for community members to request a new free street tree from the City to increase San Diego's tree canopy, combating the heat island effect, and creating a more sustainable urban environment.

**Trees 4 Communities** - \$4.6M allocated for tree planting, enhancing outreach, and community meetings in the following traditionally underserved communities (many of which are overlapping EJ Communities): Barrio Logan, Logan Heights, Sherman Heights, Stockton, Grant Hill, San Ysidro, Mt. Hope, Mountain View, Southcrest, and Shelltown.



## Proposed Actions

- Develop a Heat Action Plan that will identify specific heat mitigation and cooling solutions within the City's most heat vulnerable neighborhoods, as identified by the Urban Heat Vulnerability Index, that are aligned with strategies within Climate Resilient SD.
- Develop an urban greening program to promote expanded green spaces in urban areas. The program should facilitate greening of City buildings and encourage private development to include green features.
- Develop a plan for green infrastructure prioritizing storm water capture, enhanced water quality, and flood prevention measures, with a specific focus on communities vulnerable to flooding.
- Working with County of San Diego Public Health Department and community based organizations, develop resilience hubs which can provide shelter, food distribution, healthcare, or other services as needed.
- Develop programs to incentivize building decarbonization.
- With input from businesses and community members develop a Reach Code that goes beyond the minimum requirements set by the state for energy efficiency and energy performance of buildings.
- Seek a grant for \$10M along with other funding opportunities to expand tree planting and preservation initiatives for trees, promoting denser urban canopy to mitigate the greenhouse effect, enhance air quality, biodiversity, and overall urban resilience.
- Establish a Climate Resilience Advisory Board to help inform the City on how to best prepare communities for changing climate.
- Establish a Climate Action Advisory Board to help inform the City on how to best reduce GHG emissions while improving our communities.







G

## Public Facilities and Infrastructure Prioritization



# Public Facilities and Infrastructure Prioritization

## Goal

Public facilities and infrastructure for people of all age groups and abilities prioritized in areas with the greatest needs.

## Discussion

Infrastructure is not just the physical structures that surround us, it is the essential fabric that connects us to opportunity. San Diegans drive down roads and wait at transit stops, walk down sidewalks to drop their children off at school, meet with friends and family in parks, borrow from their local libraries and pass under streetlights. When infrastructure is high quality, located where it is needed, and well-maintained, community members can access economic opportunities, use essential services, and deepen social connections, resulting in healthy and stable communities. Infrastructure lays the foundation for safe, healthy and connected communities. Public infrastructure is funded through a variety of funding sources such as the City infrastructure fund, General Fund, grants, enterprise funds, development impact fees, developer contribution funds, and other funding sources. Funding and prioritizing public facilities equitably are critical to advancing environmental justice and improving access for San Diegans of all ages and abilities.

Past decisions have led to inequitable funding for certain communities and resulted in limited opportunities to build public facilities and prioritize development based on changing needs. The history of exclusionary zoning, combined with racially biased planning and investment practices, has resulted in disparities in access to



high-quality infrastructure by race, income, and other demographics. As a result, lower-income EJ Communities often have lower quality infrastructure like streets and sidewalks, parks, stormwater management, and libraries, or lack these pieces of infrastructure altogether. Communities with the greatest concentrations of people who are black, indigenous, and people of color have access to 73 percent fewer park spaces within a 10-minute walk compared to communities with greater concentration of white people. People in lower-income communities have 85 percent less park space within a 10-minute walk than people in higher-income areas.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Trust for Public Land's 2023 Park Score Index for San Diego, CA



Within the City, there are disparities by race and income across communities due to the influence of infrastructure on health and quality of life. People who live in lower-income communities with greater concentrations of black, indigenous, and people of color experience higher rates of hospitalization due to heart disease. Non-Hispanic black residents experience the highest rates, despite comprising only 5.7 percent of the City's overall population.<sup>2</sup>

As addressed in the Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element, the City adopted a Facilities Benefit Assessment (FBA) for planned urbanizing communities that required development to pay for the planned public facilities. Once a facility was constructed, the City had to fund the maintenance and operation, primarily with the General Fund. The City also adopted a Development Impact Fee (DIF) for urbanized communities to collect a proportional fair share of capital improvements needed to offset the impact of the development. Each community planning area had its own Public Facilities Financing Plan (PFFP) and funds could only be collected for and spent on the listed projects within each plan. Unlike the FBA in the planned urbanizing areas, DIFs were not intended to fully fund all capital improvements for existing and future development. The City repealed the FBA in 2016 as the facilities were funded or built in the planned urbanizing communities.

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<sup>2</sup> Tableau Public's 2021 Community Profiles by Municipality - San Diego





PFFPs in urban areas were not updated as often. The fee amounts did not keep pace with the full amount of the cost needed to fund infrastructure. The funds collected from developments were locked into place by community planning area. DIFs significantly varied by community, with generally higher fees and therefore more funding for investments in the higher-resourced communities. In more urban communities with lower fees, including underserved communities, less funding was available to fund infrastructure improvements. This resulted in greater infrastructure investments in newer more affluent communities with more development and less investments in traditionally disadvantaged communities and older urban communities.

In 2021, the City adopted a Citywide park DIF which replaced the parks components of individual Community Plan area-based fees and all future fees collected to be invested throughout the City and allowed the City to focus its investments in the areas with the greatest needs, to achieve an equitable and balanced Citywide park system. The Citywide fee enables faster and greater delivery of parks and recreation facilities, and more efficient use of land to provide more recreational assets. The fee prioritizes investments in park deficient communities and other areas with the greatest needs.

In 2022, the City amended the Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element to update policies to further align with housing, equity, and climate goals, as well as acknowledge the new development patterns of urban infill as the primary development in need of infrastructure. Updated policies also align with the greenhouse gas emissions reductions addressed in the CAP. Furthermore, goals and policies are set to develop and maintain financially sustainable, quality infrastructure and public spaces for all San Diegans, and prioritize infrastructure in areas with the greatest growth, higher densities, and overall greatest needs.

The Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element is complemented by Council Policy 000-33, which sets guidelines for engaging with community members to gather input on infrastructure, and Council Policy 800-14, which sets guidelines on prioritization of public infrastructure across the City. Together, the infrastructure investment is prioritized through an equitable framework in areas with the greatest needs, and public input on infrastructure needs is tailored to be gathered more inclusively and meaningful from people of all age groups and all abilities. The policies in this section build on the Council Policies and Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element.



## Policies

- EJ-G.1** Prioritize and allocate new and improved public facilities and services in communities with the greatest needs. (see also Public Facilities Element, Policy PF-B.3).
- EJ-G.2** Strive to achieve meaningful participation for all community members to determine needed public facilities.
- EJ-G.3** Strive to provide equal access to public facilities and infrastructure.
- EJ-G.4** Identify areas with the greatest park needs and where the development of additional recreational value and parkland will have the greatest positive impact on community members.

*Table EJ-7 Additional Policies in the General Plan Addressing Public Facilities and Infrastructure*

Topic	Element	Section	Policy
Public Spaces	Public Facilities, Services and Safety	A. Infrastructure and Public Spaces	PF-A.2, PF-A.5, PF-A.6
		B. Public Facilities Financing and Evolution of Growth, Facilities and Services.	PF B.2
		C. Public Facilities Service Prioritization.	PF- C.3
Safety		E. Police	PF-E.1
Libraries		J. Libraries	PF-J.1, PF-J.2, PF-J.5, PF-J.6, PF-J.9
Parks		Recreation	A. Park and Recreation Guidelines
	B. Recreational Opportunities		RE-B.2
	D. Accessibility		RE-D.1, RE-D.3, RE-D.4

## Programs

The following strategies are examples of City-led efforts to ensure equitable investments and prioritize the much-needed public facilities in areas with the greatest needs.

**Parks for All of Us** – Adopted a Parks Master Plan for all created an equitable parks system and comprehensive funding program for parks.

**Build Better SD** – Created an equitable, comprehensive funding program for public facilities, including fire facilities, libraries, streets, and pedestrian and bike facilities.

**Council Policy 800-14** – Amended the policy that sets guidelines for the prioritization of public infrastructure to ensure infrastructure is prioritized through an equitable framework in areas with the greatest needs.

**Council Policy 000-32** – Amended the policy that sets guidelines for the City to engage with community members to collect input on infrastructure needs to ensure engagement is inclusive and meaningful to community members of all age groups and abilities.

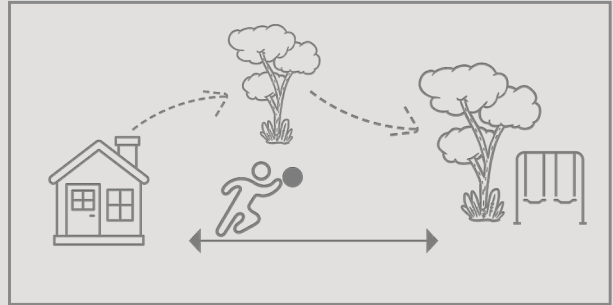
**Infrastructure Prioritization Engagement** - City staff engage with community members across the City on a regular basis through surveys, workshops and mobile engagements to learn more about infrastructure priorities.

**Library Master Plan** - The plan presents an aspirational vision for the San Diego Public Library where the library and its services are equitable, engaging and experiential, geographically accessible everywhere, and empowered with the necessary resources to thrive. The plan also provides a detailed plan to modernize branches, meet growing community needs, and become more geographically available across San Diego.

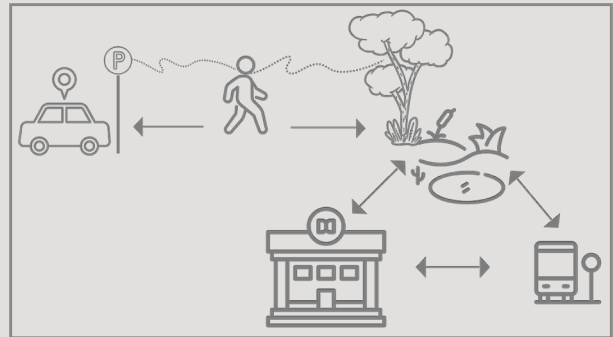


## Proposed Actions

- Develop a Park Needs Index to identify the areas of the City with the greatest park needs and where the development of additional recreational value and parkland will have the greatest impact on community members.
- Develop plans to identify areas with the greatest needs for safe walking/rolling and transit opportunities and stormwater and flood prevention.
- Develop a framework to improve coordination with community-based organizations to streamline the delivery of needed community investments in EJ Communities.
- Develop a streamlined process to deliver community led projects in an efficient and timely manner.



*A variety of public spaces and open spaces can provide options and encourage people to venture outdoors.*



*Walking or rolling in neighborhoods can be made more enjoyable with vibrant public spaces.*

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