

## Discussion Group Input

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE CRITICAL ISSUES RELATED TO PUBLIC FACILITIES AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN SACRAMENTO?

WHAT POLICIES ARE NEEDED AT THE CITYWIDE LEVEL TO ADDRESS PUBLIC FACILITIES AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ISSUES?

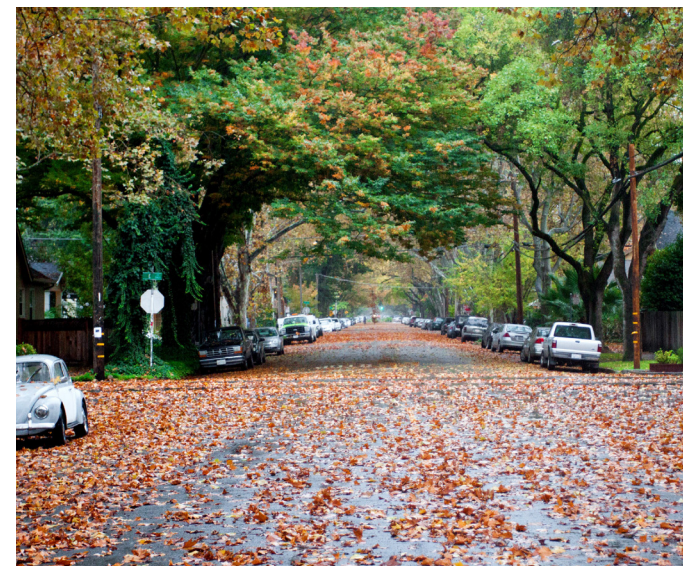
WHAT POLICIES ARE NEEDED AT THE NEIGHBORHOOD LEVEL TO ADDRESS SPECIFIC LOCAL ISSUES?



sacramento | 2040

### Environmental Justice Factbook: Public Facilities & Physical Activity

December 2020





## Introduction

### What is Environmental Justice?

The City of Sacramento envisions a place where everyone can live a long, healthy, and opportunity-filled life, no matter who they are or where they come from. People’s health and opportunity are shaped by multiple factors, including their environment. Environment doesn’t just mean “nature”—it includes all components of our daily lives, including the *social* environment.

However, not all people has the chance to live their healthiest lives because of **environmental injustice**, which means that certain geographies and groups of people unfairly and disproportionately experience **higher exposure to pollution, greater health impacts, and less access** to things that keep people happy and healthy, like parks to play in, safe and affordable places to live, good jobs, schools, and stores that meet basic needs.

Environmental justice is a movement to come to terms with and remedy a history of unjust actions and outcomes. It is about taking concerted action to remedy the inequitable conditions that have led to economic and health disparities. Environmental justice addresses the long standing, disproportionate impact of environmental pollution on vulnerable populations as well as their lack of power in the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws. Ultimately, **environmental justice means the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all groups so that everyone, regardless of their identities, has the chance to live in a healthy environment.**

### Environmental Justice in the 2040 General Plan

To achieve Sacramento’s vision of becoming a national model of sustainable, equitable growth and community development, we must address equity and environmental justice in our City’s comprehensive General Plan. Under California law (SB 1000), cities and other local jurisdictions must address environmental justice by developing policies for issues that affect *disadvantaged communities*, which are communities that experience high levels of pollution, socioeconomic stress, historic disinvestment, and negative health outcomes.

This factbook takes a deeper look at different environmental justice issues that impact both the entire city and the disadvantaged communities that are more vulnerable to their negative effects. Environmental justice is a complex, multifaceted topic: the factbooks provide a summary of some of the issue highlights but are not intended to be a comprehensive or definitive resource.

The factbooks use maps and infographics to examine a few aspects of each issue and to identify who is most affected. It then highlights existing City efforts and resources, and outlines potential policy concepts to include in the General Plan. This factbook uses data at the *census tract* level. A census tract is a geographic boundary that is usually either the smallest or most complete geographic scale for which data is available and has an average population of 4,000 residents, though it can range from 1,200 to 8,000 people. Census tract boundaries and neighborhood boundaries are not the same—while a neighborhood may fall in the boundaries of a single census tract, others may overlap multiple tracts. To help you understand the maps, some general neighborhood names are identified in comment boxes.

#### What is Equity?

“Regardless of one’s identities, equity is when all people have fair, just treatment, access to the opportunities necessary to satisfy their essential needs, advance their well-being and achieve their full potential, while identifying and eliminating barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups.”

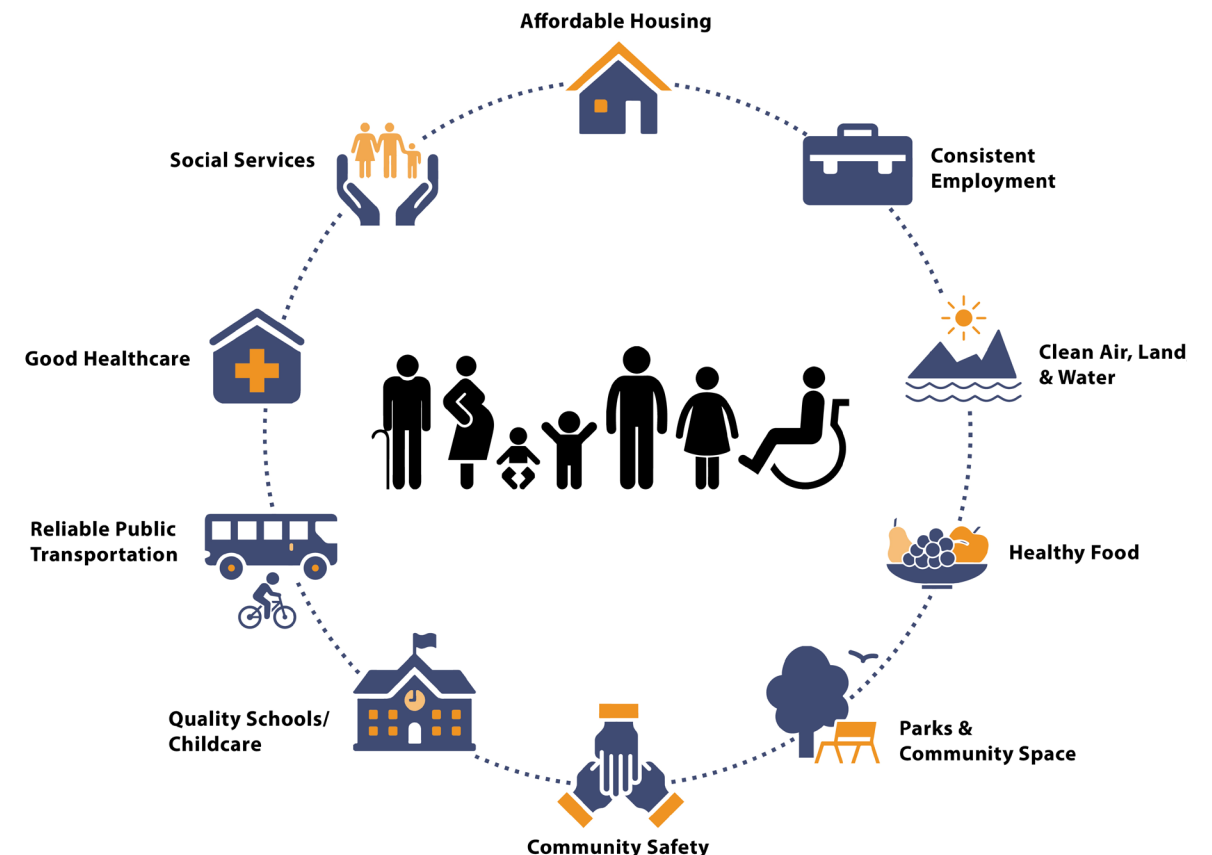
#### ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TOPIC AREAS



### Public Facilities and Physical Activity: Why It's Important

The City of Sacramento offers a variety of public facilities like libraries, parks, community centers, healthcare facilities, and access to infrastructure like sidewalks, street lights, bike lanes, and bathrooms, to help people meet their daily needs. However, not every neighborhood has the same access to high-quality facilities and programs. Lack of these facilities and infrastructure can keep people from being their healthiest and decrease quality of life, especially for people who can't afford the extra costs of private facilities.

#### A HEALTHY, EQUITABLE ENVIRONMENT



# Community Facilities In Sacramento

The City of Sacramento operates facilities that provide valuable amenities to the community. These include public libraries and community centers, which offer a variety of educational and recreational programs, community gathering spaces, access to information and technology, and opportunities to participate in their neighborhood's cultural, political, and social life. Childcare facilities and early education keep children safe and healthy, help them develop skills they will need for success in school and in their lives outside of school, and create better, more equitable long-term outcomes for children. Free or subsidized programs also provide much-needed support for working families.

For the most part, these three types of community facilities are equally distributed across the city. As shown on the map at right, areas with less access to these facilities include Pocket, North Natomas, and College/Glen, which are higher income areas, and parts of Fruitridge/Broadway area. The Fruitridge/Broadway area contains areas known as disadvantaged communities, or areas that are most affected by a combination of pollution and socioeconomic issues, like poverty or linguistic isolation, or health issues like cardiovascular disease. Accessible, high quality community facilities take on greater importance in communities that may be more resource-constrained.

## Community Facilities Findings

1

### Relatively fair distribution of community facilities.

Libraries, community centers, and childcare facilities are important neighborhood resource centers and are mostly well-distributed throughout the city. Sacramento's neighborhood planning area population-based service standard for community centers is one center per 50,000 people. Community plan areas that do not meet this standard include Pocket, North Natomas, and the South Area. Neighborhoods farther away from libraries include Florin, College/Glen, North Laguna, North Natomas, and Willowcreek. Pocket, North Natomas, College/Glen and Willowcreek have fewer child care facilities, comparatively.

2

**Populations affected.** Pocket, North Natomas, and the East Sacramento community plan areas are higher income, tend to have more internet access and may have more resources to access community facilities that aren't as close by. The City's investment in community centers in underserved areas has helped to ensure good geographic access for disadvantaged communities; however, lower income communities in the Fruitridge/Broadway and South Areas will continue to represent populations that will rely on programs, resources, and other facilities improvements in the future.



Sacramento Public Library

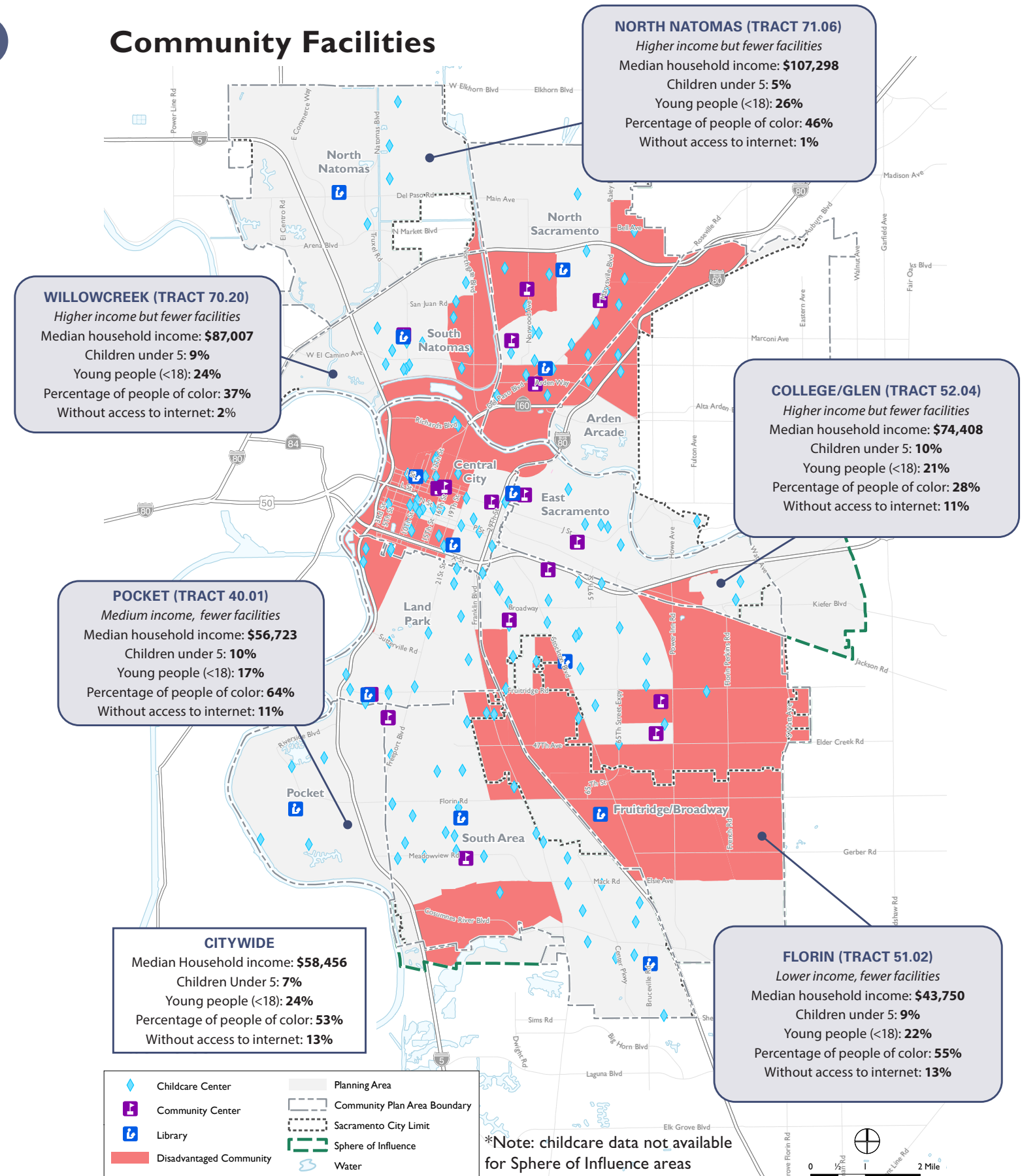


Oak Park Community Center



Northview Head Start Early Learning Center

## Community Facilities



Source: CES, 3.0; American Community Survey, 2014-2018; City of Sacramento, 2019; Dyett & Bhatia, 2020.



## Housing Location and Access to Transit

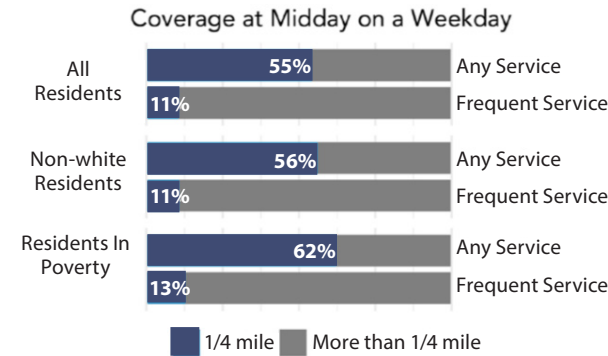
Proximity to accessible transit and its location relative to affordable housing plays a central role in how individuals and families engage in their communities. For low-income families, the ability to live in an affordable home near good public transit translates into improved access to healthcare, education and employment opportunities, schools, public facilities and services, and reduced commuting costs. In September 2019, a survey by the Sacramento Valley Fair Housing Collaborative found that lack of access to affordable public transit was the second most frequently cited barrier to economic opportunity.

In Sacramento, the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program (formerly known as Section 8) provides assistance to very low-income individuals and families to enable them to afford decent housing in the private rental housing market. The map at right shows high frequency transit routes (buses or light rail lines that arrive every 15 minutes or less) in relation to where HCV vouchers are being redeemed. Darker blue areas are tracts with greater number of properties that use HCV vouchers. Many areas with medium to high percentages of properties that use HCV vouchers are also disadvantaged communities.

## Access to Transit Findings

- 1 Transit ridership.** Overall, transit ridership in Sacramento is lower than in peer cities. Though downtown is well-served, lower density development in the outer areas make it challenging to deliver frequent, reliable service and inner and intra city connections, particularly east-west connections that link rapid transit lines.
- 2 Areas affected.** The Blue line and rapid transit line in south Sacramento touch areas with higher percentages of HCV voucher use, as well as disadvantaged communities. However, areas between these lines have limited access to rapid transit. South Natomas and portions of the North Sacramento community plan area are not well served.
- 3 Populations affected.** Though people of color and lower income people are equally affected as all Sacramentans by the lack of frequent service coverage overall, the impacts are felt more greatly for low-income people if they live and work in places and at times when transit doesn't operate, or if they can't afford to wait for infrequent transit.

### TRANSIT COVERAGE, 2018



Data collected by SacRT (Sacramento's regional transit agency) reveal that all Sacramentans are burdened by lack of frequent service equitably- no one group faces more of a burden than another. Low-income residents have slightly better coverage.

In February 2019, the SacRT Board approved a new bus network as part of "SacRT Forward", redesigning delivery of transit services in the region. A rapid transit line will now connect parts of Fruitridge/Broadway to downtown, where high densities of jobs are located.



### PUBLIC TRANSIT RANKING: SACRAMENTO AND PEER CITIES



**Sacramento**  
Population: 508,517  
Commuters using public transit: 3.5%



**Oakland**  
Population: 429,114  
Commuters using public transit: 22%



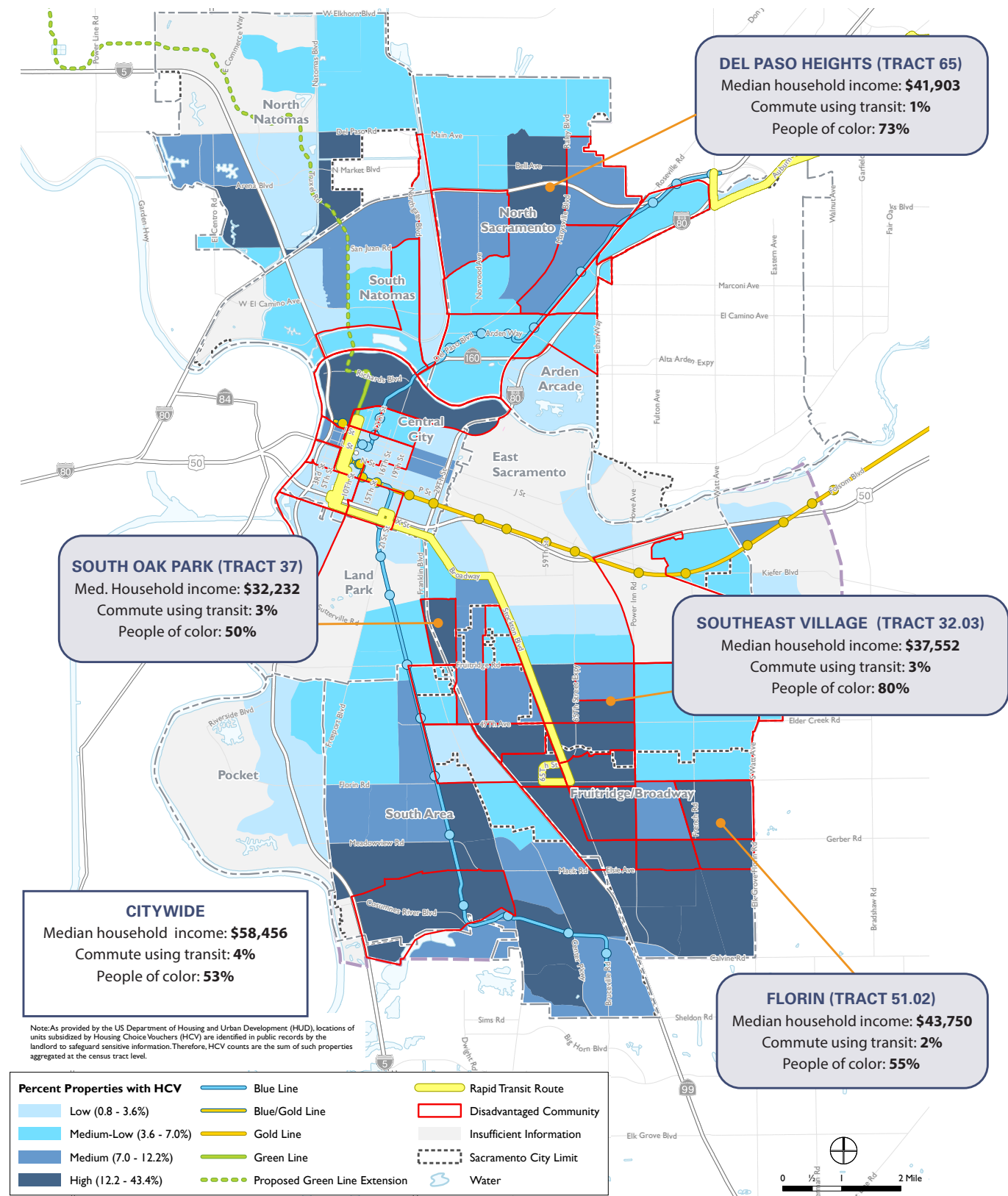
**Long Beach**  
Population: 467,353  
Commuters using public transit: 6%



**Portland**  
Population: 652,573  
Commuters using public transit: 13%

Source: ACS, 2018; 2014-2018.

## Concentration of Households Using Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV)



Source: American Community Survey, 2014-2018; CalEnviroScreen 3.0, 2018; Dyett & Bhatia, 2020.



# Physical Activity

Physical activity, which includes walking, playing, bicycling, and exercising, is one of the most important contributors to good health. The built environment plays a large role in determining whether communities have opportunities for physical activity. Access and proximity to safe places for physical activity, including parks, are significant predictors of physical activity levels.

Parks provide a space for communities to play, relax, participate in sports, gather for events, and more. Sacramento has an established goal of providing five acres of parkland for every thousand residents. Today, this goal is being met citywide, but some community plan areas either do not meet that standard or the parks are not within an easy 10 minute walk.

The map at right shows, residential areas in yellow and existing parks in green. Around each park, there are red dotted areas that are within a 10-minute walking distance, considering sidewalks, crosswalks, shortcuts, and walking paths that lead to park entrances. The dotted brown borders show disadvantaged communities that have residential areas that are not within easy walking distance to a park.

While most residential neighborhoods have good park access, some do not, either because there isn't a park close by or because there is a barrier in the way -- like a fence, road, waterway, or railway tracks.

## Physical Activity Findings

**1 Parks and Physical Activity.** Sacramento has higher rates of lack of physical activity overall than other peer cities. Its ParkScore rating, an evaluation of park access and quality, is higher than Oakland, but lower than other peer cities.

**2 Areas affected.** As shown on the map at right, there are residential areas of North Sacramento and Fruitridge-Broadway that don't have a park within easy walking distance of home. Many of these are also disadvantaged communities. There are also residential areas -- such as the neighborhood north of Robla Park in North Sacramento-- that do have a park close to home, but barriers limit easy access to it.

**3 Populations affected.** With the exception of some parts of Land Park, residents most affected by lack of access to parks tend to be lower income, and have lower rates of physical activity.

### CITYWIDE RATES OF LACK OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, SACRAMENTO AND PEER CITIES:

#### Sacramento, CA



#### Oakland, CA



#### Long Beach, CA



#### Portland, OR

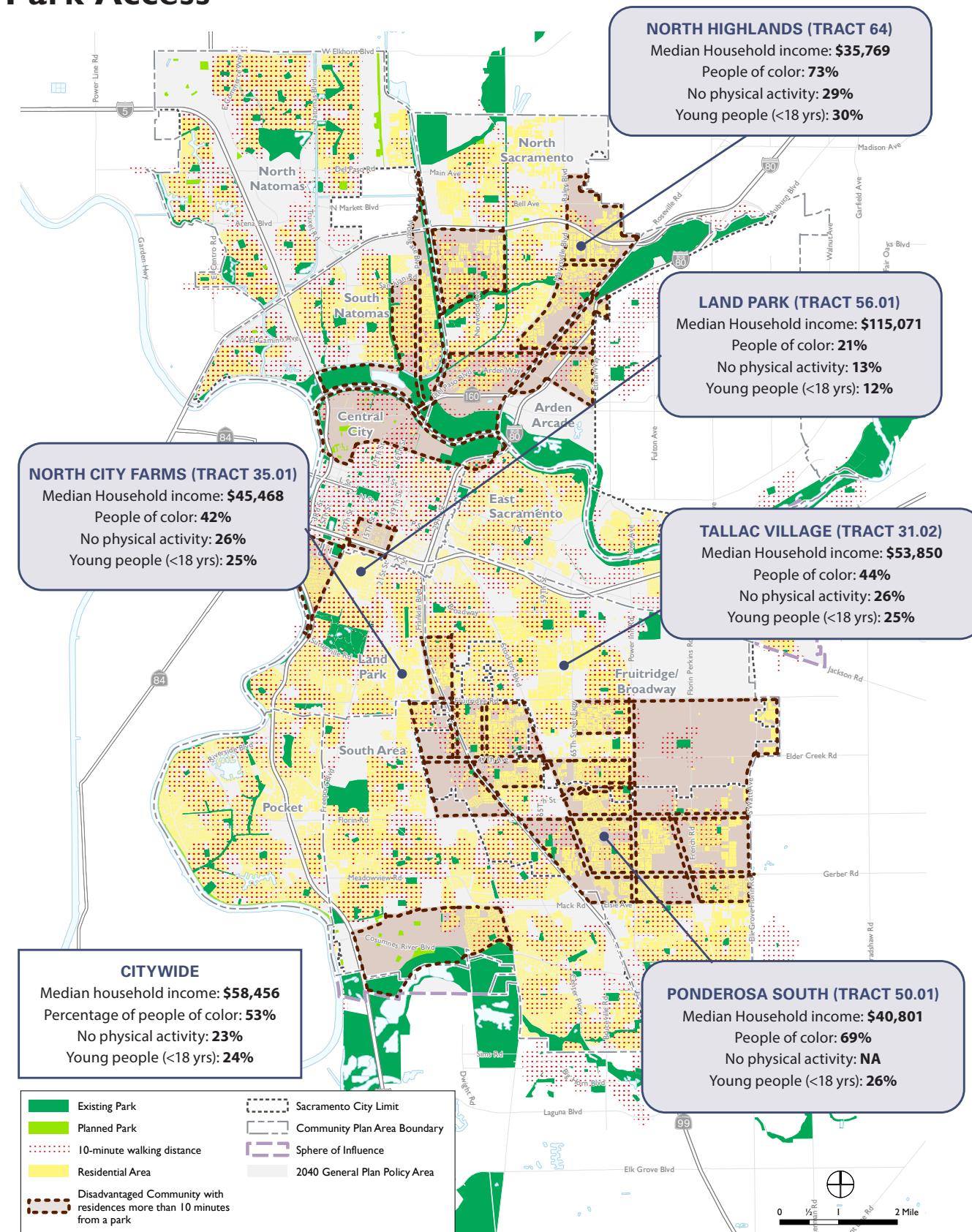


Source: 500 Healthy Cities; Trust for Public Land.



Barriers to parks can also limit access. For example, access to Robla Park is constrained by a fence on Berthoud Street.

## Park Access



Source: American Community Survey, 2014-2018; City of Sacramento, 2019; Dyett & Bhatia, 2020.



## Tree Canopy

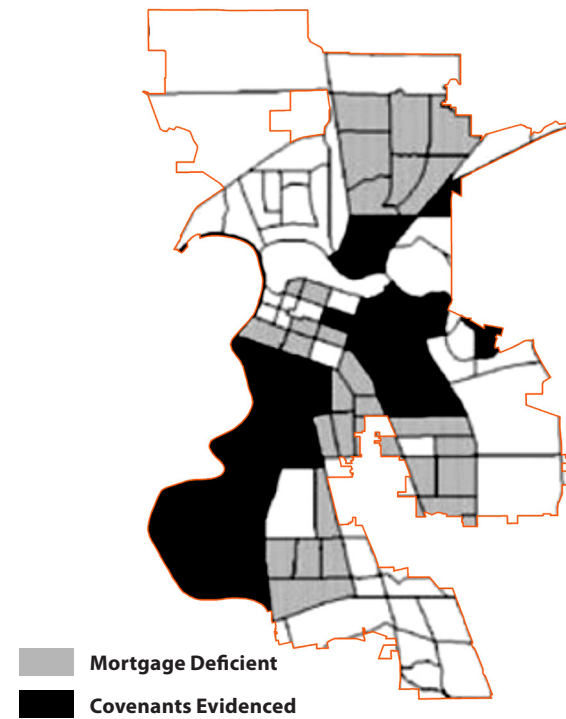
Trees clean the air, provide shade and reduce urban temperatures, make it more pleasant to exercise and play outside, reduce stress, and have economic benefits for the community. The shade trees provide can also help protect against the urban island effect, which are higher temperatures caused by the structures like buildings and paved surfaces within the urban areas themselves.

According to a 2017 global study of tree canopy (area that is shaded by trees), Sacramento is the greenest city in the United States, and third greenest in the world after Vancouver and Singapore. Trees cover nearly 20 percent of the city, and the urban forest is almost entirely planted-- not naturally occurring.

Despite the title of the "City of Trees," distribution of tree canopy varies greatly across Sacramento neighborhoods. The 2018 Urban Forest Master Plan will help to address these gaps. On the map, the darkest areas represent tracts with the greatest amount of tree canopy coverage.

## Tree Canopy Findings

- 1 City of Trees.** Sacramento ranks in the top three cities globally for tree canopy coverage; however, this coverage is not equitably distributed.
- 2 Areas affected.** Areas with a higher than average number of trees include Land Park and East Sacramento. The residential neighborhoods of North Natomas, Meadowview, Del Paso Heights, South Natomas, Parkway and Valley Hi have less than average tree canopy. Some areas of Sacramento that have less trees are also less populated, or are industrial areas, such as near the Army Depot.
- 3 Populations affected.** Tree canopy coverage largely follows income lines-- the most tree canopy can be found in higher-income areas. The exception is North Natomas, a higher income area with more recent development and younger trees. Areas with lower tree canopy are also more likely to be communities of color and disadvantaged communities.



### History: Redlining and Racially Restrictive Covenants

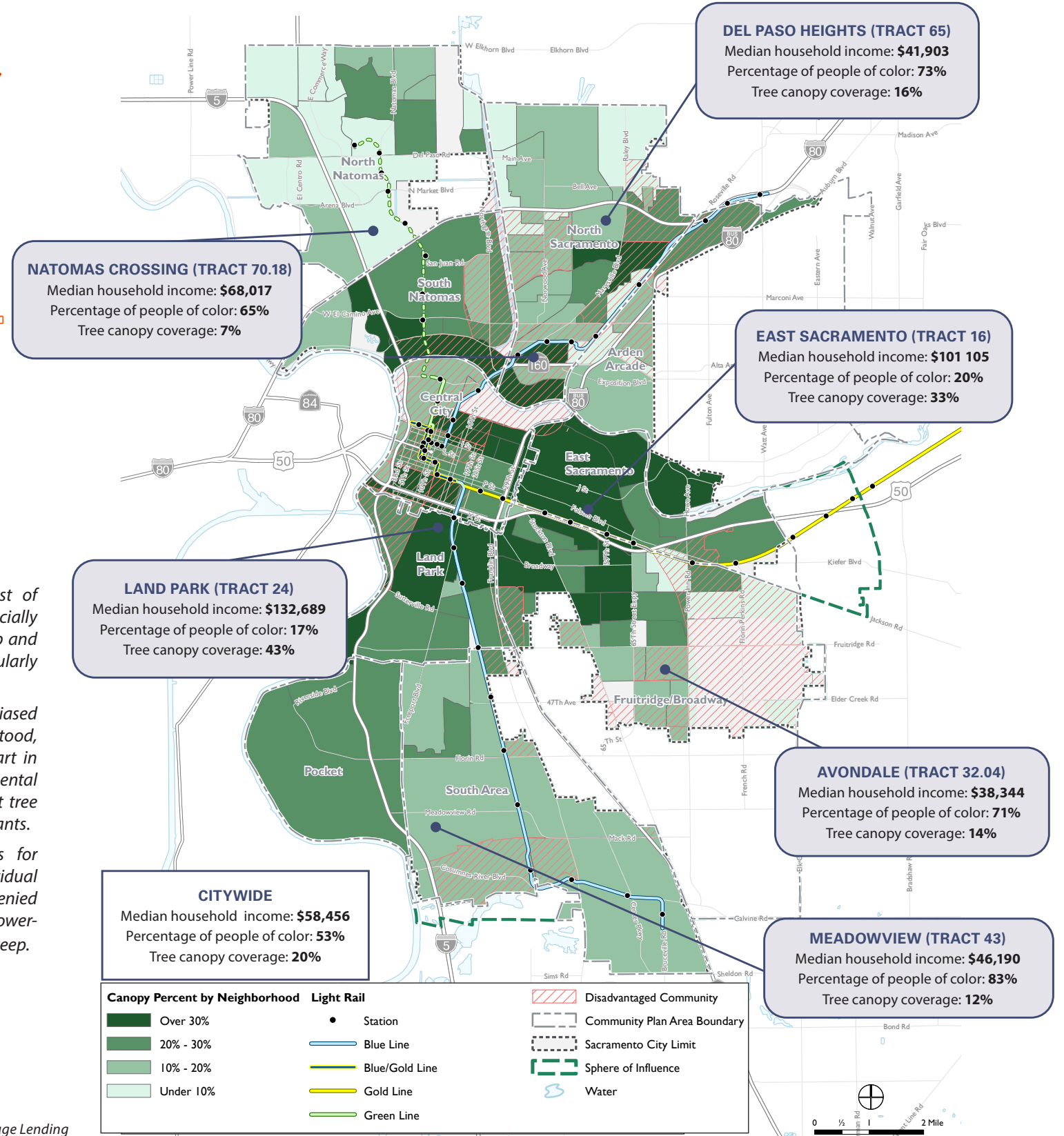
*Like other American Cities, Sacramento has a past of systematic segregation and exclusion. Redlining and racially restrictive covenants limited access to homeownership and wealth creation among communities of color, particularly Black Americans.*

*While the direct connection between past racially-biased housing practices and tree canopy is not well understood, spatial patterns indicate they may have played a part in shaping the location of city investment in environmental amenities like trees-- many of the areas with greatest tree canopy were also locations of racially-restrictive covenants.*

*In the 1980s, declining availability of city funds for tree maintenance shifted responsibility to individual neighborhoods. Because some communities were denied the ability to build wealth, many property owners in lower-income neighborhoods could not pay costs for tree upkeep.*

Source: J. Hernandez. (2009). Redlining Revisited: Mortgage Lending Patterns in Sacramento 1930-2004. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. 33. 291-313.

## Tree Canopy Coverage



Source: CalEnviroScreen 3.0, 2018; American Community Survey, 2014-2018; City of Sacramento, 2019; Dyett & Bhatia, 2020.



## Bicycling Infrastructure

Sacramento is working to develop infrastructure that supports safe and low-stress bicycling as a mode of transportation, expanding bikeways and shared-use paths, and supporting shared bikes and scooters. People who bicycle who are also lower income are the least likely to have close access to low stress bikeway infrastructure. According to Sacramento's 2017 Vision Zero Collision Landscape Analysis, 32 percent of bicycle crashes and 46 percent of pedestrian crashes occur in the City's disadvantaged communities, which account for only 25% of the roadway network.

The City of Sacramento's 2016 Bicycle Master Plan includes a vision for a safer, more comfortable and continuous network of shared-use paths attracting and serving residents of all ages and abilities from all neighborhoods and thereby integrating bicycling as a fundamental part of Sacramento's everyday transportation system.

One of the Master Plan's goals includes equitable investments in bicycling facilities and programs for all neighborhoods. The bicycle equity map overlays data on poverty, those who bicycle to work, non-auto ownership, and bicycle collisions into one map. It shows that Sacramento is a patchwork of neighborhoods of varying equity levels. Dark red areas have high levels of inequity, highlighting socio-economic factors, lack of bicycle infrastructure, and unsafe conditions.

## Bicycling Infrastructure Findings

- 1 Bicycling Activity.** Despite its flat topography, Sacramento has comparatively lower rates of bicycle commuting than other peer cities in the Bay Area and Pacific Northwest. It has slightly higher rates than peer cities in southern California.
- 2 Areas affected.** The Bicycle Master plan equity analysis finds Gardenland, Oak Park, Fruitridge Vista, Woodbine, and Carleton Tract have high levels of inequity highlighting socio-economic factors and a lack of bicycle infrastructure.
- 3 Populations affected.** Those most impacted by the lack of low stress bikeway infrastructure and with disproportionately high numbers of crashes are low income and communities of color. Three out of the six most equity-affected areas are disadvantaged communities.

### PERCENTAGE OF COMMUTERS WHO BIKE TO WORK, 2018:

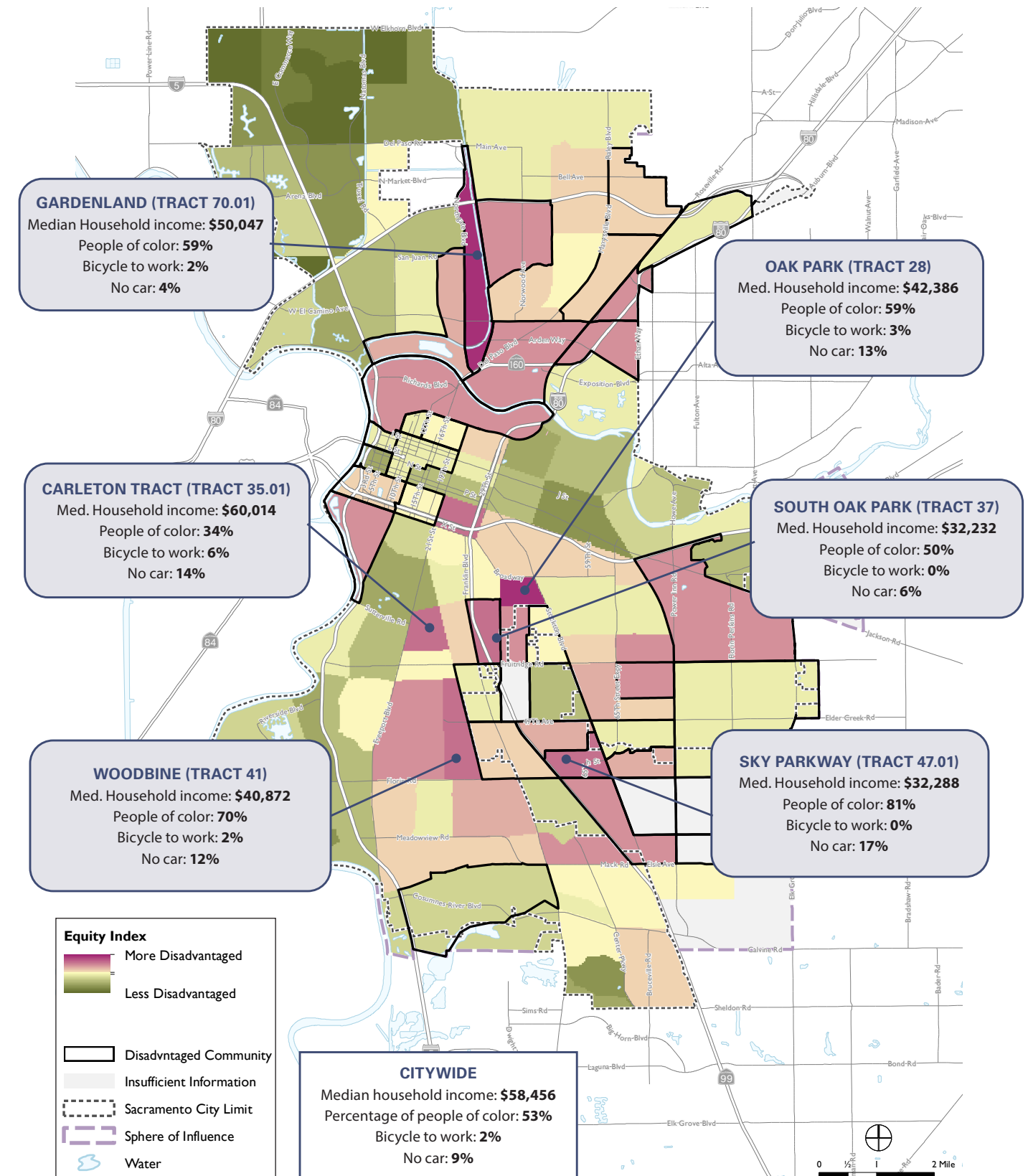
- 1.9% Sacramento, CA
- 2.8% Oakland, CA
- 0.9% Long Beach, CA
- 6.3% Portland, OR

Source: ACS, 2014-2018



Sacramento's bicycle infrastructure includes roadways; shared use paths, lanes and trails; and amenities like bike racks, special bicycle signals, and other components.

## Bicycle Master Plan Equity Analysis

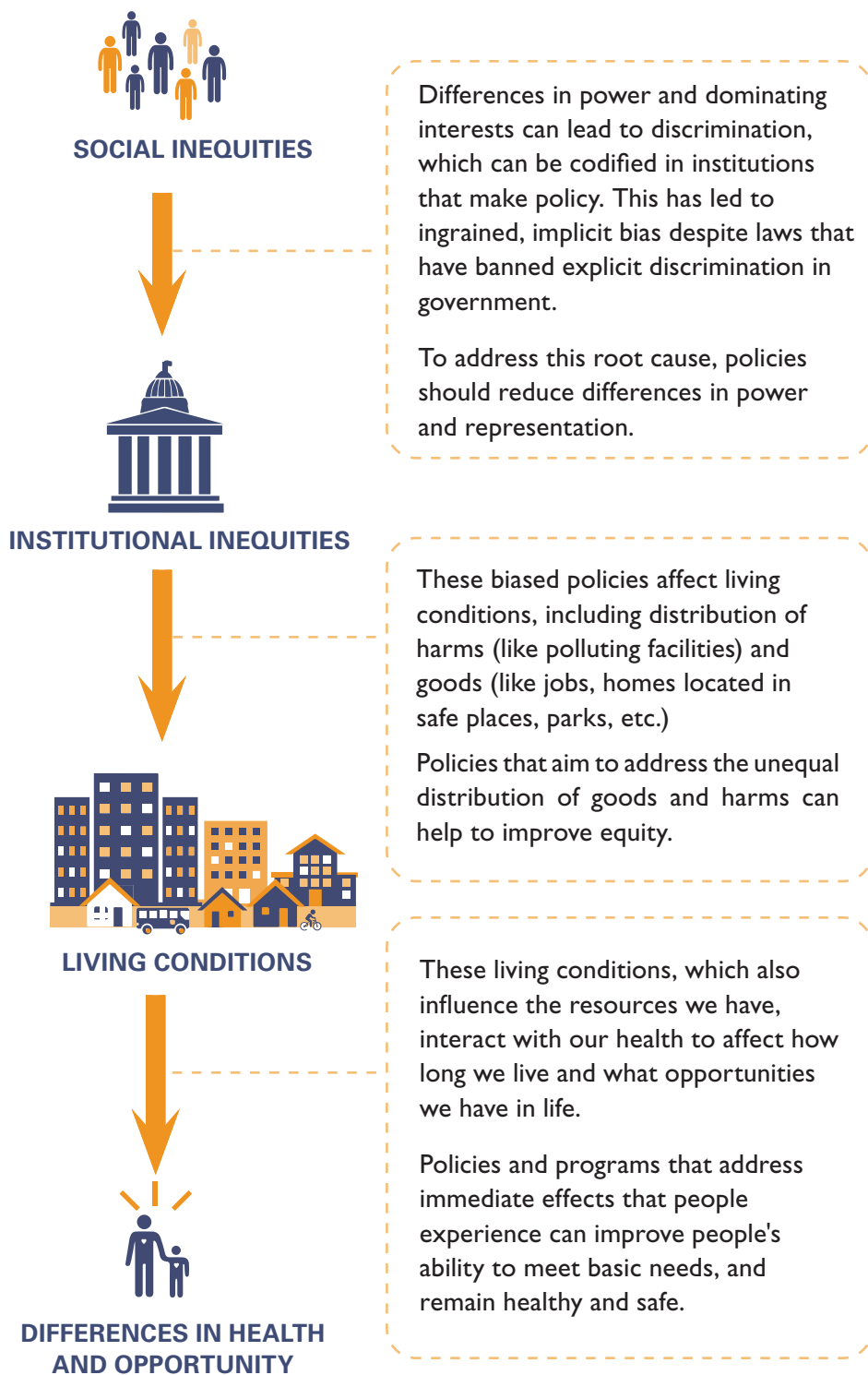


Source: City of Sacramento Bicycle Master Plan, 2016; American Community Survey, 2014-2018; City of Sacramento, 2019; Dyett & Bhatia, 2020.



## Strategies

### Root Causes Of Environmental Injustice



*Adapted from BARHII's Public Health Framework for Reducing Health Inequities Framework.*

### Public Facilities and Physical Activity Issues

**1 Community Facilities and Transit.** Critical community facilities such as libraries, community centers, and childcare are well-distributed throughout Sacramento. Proximity of affordable housing to transit is also improving with implementation of new SacRT rapid transit bus lines, though there are some areas in Sacramento where rapid transit access would improve the lives of those who depend on affordable, reliable public transportation.

**2 Tree Canopy and Parks.** While Sacramento enjoys a significant level of tree canopy, it is not distributed equitably, with many low-income areas lacking the same level of coverage as higher income areas. Park access could be improved, especially in the North Sacramento, Land Park, and Fruitridge/Broadway community plan areas.

**3 Active Transportation Infrastructure.** A third of bicycle accidents that result in serious injury or death occur in disadvantaged communities. Those most impacted by the lack of low stress bikeway infrastructure and with disproportionately high numbers of crashes are low income and communities of color. Three out of the six most equity-affected areas are disadvantaged communities.

### Existing/Ongoing City Efforts

- 1**
  - Existing General Plan goals and policies that promote equitable distribution of community facilities and services that are responsive to the unique needs and interests of residents, as well as address needs of underserved areas (i.e. YPCE has a goal of providing a community center for every 50,000 population per community plan area).
  - Implementation of SacRT Forward, a major redesign of the Sacramento Regional Transit District's bus network to better reflect customer needs, meets today's current travel patterns and improve connectivity with more direct service and better frequency.
- 2**
  - Implementation of the Urban Forest Master Plan to address the protection, maintenance, sustainability, and enhancement of Sacramento's tree canopy.
  - Programs like the Parks Leadership Academy for Youth, also known as PLAY; an opportunity for middle and high school aged students to learn, apply and teach park maintenance techniques to other volunteers in their local parks.
  - Updating the Parks and Recreation Master Plan to identify gaps and opportunities for equitable and accessible parks and recreation opportunities.
- 3**
  - Adopted its Vision Zero Action Plan in 2018 and has made significant progress on the short term actions as well as some longer term actions to eliminate traffic deaths.
  - Ongoing active transportation and complete streets projects.
  - Ongoing Transportation Priorities Plan that will solicit community values around transportation, strive to be inclusive and equitable in its process, resulting in a prioritized list of projects that values equitable investment.



# Public Facilities and Physical Activity Actions: What is Needed

ADD YOUR IDEAS TO THE BOXES BELOW AND ON THE BACK OF THIS FACTBOOK.

## 1 Improve transit connections to public facilities.

*Example policies could include: Work with other public agencies and private partners to site facilities such as schools, parks, public buildings, and health care facilities and provide affordable means of transportation to improve the quality of life in declining or disinvested communities.*

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## 2 Promote location of environmental amenities and destinations in areas of greatest need.

*Example policies could include: Promote the location of public facilities and desirable destinations such as parks, schools, health care facilities, and employment centers near low-income communities and provide opportunities for all residents to be physically active.*

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## 3 Improve active transportation infrastructure.

*Example policies could include: Prioritize active modes of transportation to reduce auto dependency provide by providing a viable network of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure that will support travel to desired destinations for all residents; When planning for new development and infrastructure, promote policies and design features that are conducive to alternative transportation modes.*

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**ADDITIONAL IDEAS OR ISSUES:**