



## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Community health, quality of life, and access to opportunity are all shaped by the natural, built, and social environments that define the neighborhoods in which we live. Sacramento is known for its tree-lined streets, livable neighborhoods, and farmers markets selling fresh produce direct from the Central Valley, but these assets are not enjoyed equally throughout the community. As in many cities throughout the U.S., past practices have led to a disproportionate distribution of assets, leading to disparities in health and opportunity for low-income residents and communities of color. This Element outlines actions the City will take to promote public health, engage community members in decision-making, and enrich the quality of life for all residents. It focuses on addressing inequities and empowering all residents to reach their full potential.

This Element satisfies the statutory requirements for the Environmental Justice Element of the General Plan. It is organized around five key goals: clean air, water, and soil; access to healthy food; safe and sanitary housing; active engagement in civic life; and public and private investments that address long-standing inequities, empower disadvantaged residents, and build neighborhood resilience. Related strategies for access to natural open space and opportunities for physical activity are addressed in the Youth, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element. Safe and sanitary housing issues are also addressed in the Housing Element, while land use compatibility is addressed in the Land Use and Placemaking Element. Active transportation and roadway safety are addressed in the Mobility Element. Education, training, and employment are addressed in the Economic Development Element.

# Background

## WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE?

At its core, environmental justice is an affirmation that all people are entitled to live, work, and play in a clean and healthy environment regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability, nationality, culture, or income. Throughout California and beyond, low-income communities and communities of color have historically experienced discrimination, negligence, and political and economic disempowerment. As a result, these groups struggle today with a disproportionate burden of pollution and health impacts, as well as disproportionate social and economic disadvantages such as poverty or housing instability. This situation is considered environmental injustice, and it contributes to health disparities (e.g., disproportionate rates of asthma, lead poisoning, and obesity) among populations of different races, ethnicities, and socioeconomic status. Environmental justice aims to deter, reduce, and eliminate the pollution burdens for populations and communities experiencing the adverse effects of that pollution, so that the unique or compounded health risks of the pollution are not disproportionately borne by disadvantaged communities.



Capital City Freeway construction circa 1966.

## LEGACY OF PAST PRACTICES

An understanding of the detrimental impacts that past practices have had on Sacramento residents and communities is essential for advancing environmental justice and planning for an equitable future. These impacts stem largely from a complex history of institutional policies rooted in racism and discrimination. No one actor was responsible for creating and perpetuating injustice; rather, these systems were upheld by many public agencies, private organizations, and individual property owners over decades. As in many cities throughout the U.S., spatial concentrations of race and poverty in Sacramento were largely shaped by patterns of appropriation, including:

- The dispossession and forced displacement of the indigenous Nisenan, Maidu, Miwok, and Me-Wuk peoples from their ancestral land;
- The use of racially restrictive covenants in property deeds, which kept people who were not white from buying or even occupying land in certain neighborhoods;
- Redlining, which was the federally sanctioned practice of refusing to insure mortgages in and near Black neighborhoods;
- Suburban development, an auto-centric form of development that was largely off-limits to Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), and which led to patterns of public and private investment in suburban roads and amenities coupled with disinvestment in the city center, where many ethnic enclaves were concentrated due to the segregated housing market;
- Urban renewal where local redevelopment agencies condemned areas as “blighted” and expropriated properties from homeowners and tenants in these areas in order to facilitate demolition, effectively removing entire non-white communities from the Downtown area, particularly the West End (an area west of the State Capitol redeveloped in the 1950s/60s); and



- The construction of freeways such as Interstate 5 and State Route 99 which divided and displaced communities of color while making those who remained more vulnerable to increased exposure to air pollution, urban heat island effects, and noise pollution.

The effects of these practices have been pervasive, with distinct geographic and racial patterns of disparities in income, education, health, wealth, and housing between residents in different neighborhoods.

## DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES IN SACRAMENTO

Under California law (SB 1000, The Planning for Healthy Communities Act), the General Plan must address environmental justice with policies for issues that affect disadvantaged communities (DACs) – areas within the city that experience disproportionate levels of pollution, socioeconomic stress, historic disinvestment, and adverse health outcomes. The responsibility for identifying DACs lies with the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA). CalEPA has developed CalEnviroScreen, a methodology that helps identify areas that are most affected by many sources of pollution and where people are often especially vulnerable to pollution's effects. CalEnviroScreen uses data on 21 indicators of pollution, environmental quality, and socioeconomic and public health conditions, which are categorized into two main groups of indicators: pollution burden and population characteristics. An overall CalEnviroScreen score is calculated for each of the state's 8,000 census tracts based on their pollution burden and population characteristics scores. Census tracts are then scored and

ranked based on publicly available data from a variety of federal, State, regional, and local sources. The scores are mapped so that different communities can be compared; an area with a high score is one that experiences a much higher burden than areas with low scores. Under SB 535, a DAC is defined as an area scoring in the top 25 percent (75th – 100th percentile) of all California census tracts for pollution burden and socioeconomic factors as measured in CalEnviroScreen.

Out of a total of 174 census tracts in the planning area, 51 are designated as DACs by the State and 41 of these are located within the City limit. Designated DACs, shown in **Map EJ-1**, are generally concentrated in the northern, central, and eastern parts of the planning area close to freeways and industrial areas, but are also found in the Fruitridge Florin area and the South Area; around 30 percent of Sacramento's residents live in a DAC. Those who live in a DAC tend to be slightly younger (median age of 32.9) as compared to the city as a whole (median age of 34.9) with lower levels of educational attainment (11.6 percent of the population ages 25 and older have a bachelor's degree or higher in DACs vs. 36.9 percent citywide). DACs also have a higher percentage of residents of color (75.5 percent overall, ranging from 47.8 to 91.9) than the city of Sacramento as a whole (59.1 percent communities of color citywide). **Table EJ-1** displays the scoring results used by the State to identify DACs; this includes census tracts within the highest 25th percentile of overall scores in CalEnviroScreen 4.0, as well as census tracts identified in the 2017 DAC designation as disadvantaged, regardless of their scores in CalEnviroScreen 4.0. While these CalEnviroScreen 4.0 indicators are a useful first step in identifying DACs, the data does not address other factors that characterize environmental justice topic areas defined in state law, including risk of displacement, healthy food access, or racial inequity. Though some of these issues are not directly linked to pollution burden and exposure, they do shape the environment and circumstances that affect people's health outcomes and life expectancy, well-being, and access to opportunity.

*For more information about how the CalEnviroScreen 4.0 percentile rankings were developed, please visit <https://oeha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-40>.*

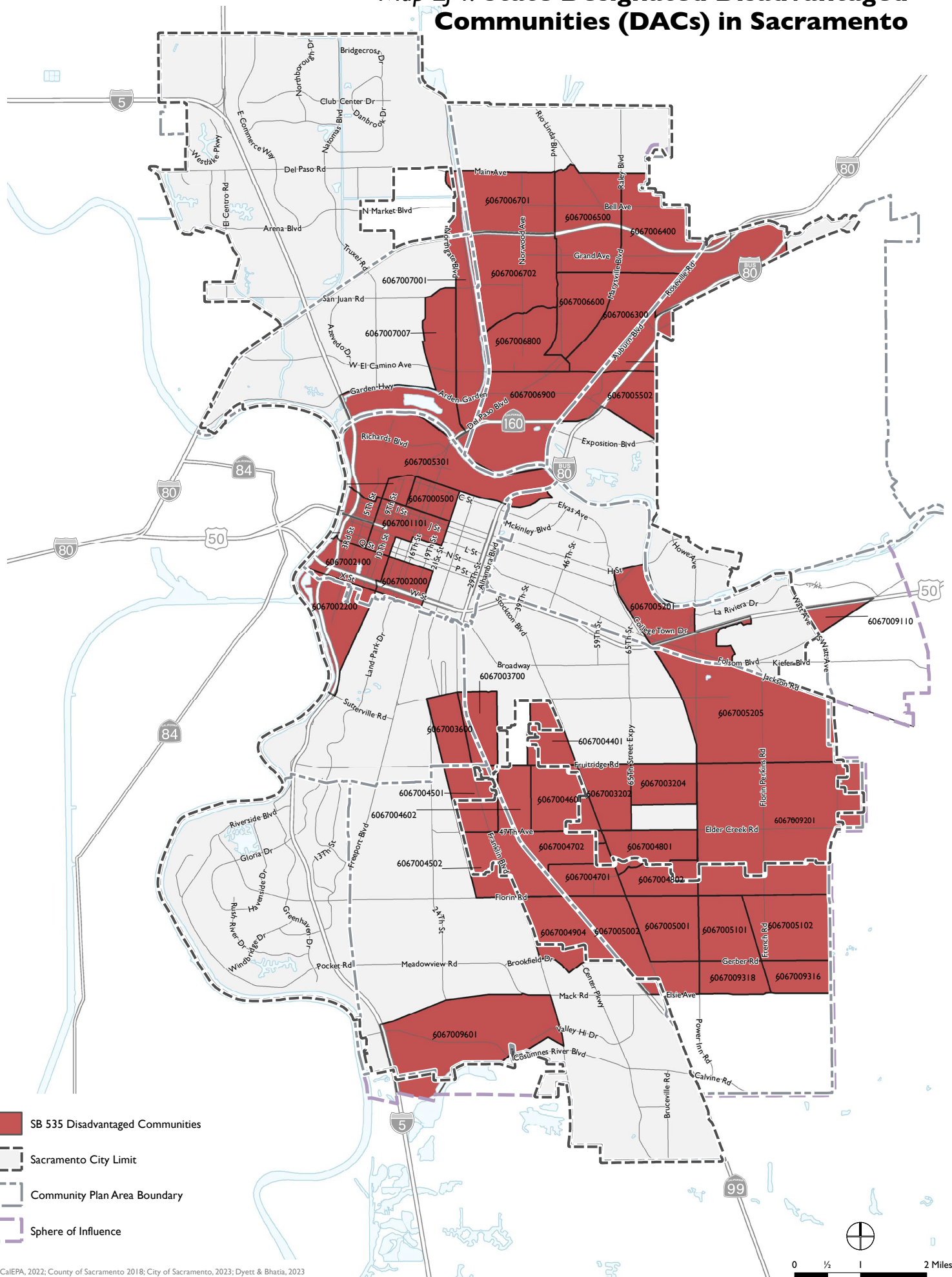
**Table EJ-1: CalEnviroScreen Scores of DACs in the Planning Area**

CENSUS TRACT	WITHIN CITY LIMIT	CALENVIROSCREEN PERCENTILE	POLLUTION BURDEN PERCENTILE	POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS PERCENTILE	DENSITY (RESIDENTS PER ACRE)
6067000500	Y	80.36	75.72	74.79	16.17
6067000600	Y	82.83	74.13	80.23	11.28
6067000700	Y	95.55	77.77	98.90	20.17
6067000800	Y	67.85	66.55	61.25	12.02
6067001101	Y	78.30	75.69	71.47	6.66
6067002000	Y	88.63	82.24	83.98	10.25
6067002100	Y	69.38	90.69	46.68	5.48
6067002200	Y	78.90	91.23	59.32	7.59
6067003202	Y	75.97	33.84	97.77	12.49
6067003204	Y	78.24	37.00	98.34	12.56
6067003600	Y	80.50	53.91	91.05	8.82
6067003700	Y	80.57	47.49	95.35	12.79
6067004401	Y	70.94	26.29	97.84	11.08
6067004501	Y	83.50	46.00	98.74	7.78
6067004502	Y	93.34	65.00	99.58	8.08
6067004601	Y	77.67	40.86	95.93	14.54
6067004602	Y	86.85	54.30	98.41	17.58
6067004701	Y	85.68	60.73	94.43	9.55
6067004702	Y	88.35	57.27	98.52	13.08
6067004801	Y	70.61	32.45	93.26	12.84
6067004802	Y	80.24	44.08	96.66	14.76
6067004904	Y	80.60	57.78	88.30	9.48
6067005001	N	81.58	45.97	97.19	14.07
6067005002	Y	92.52	70.23	97.78	9.40
6067005101	N	81.59	53.37	93.18	7.47
6067005102	N	66.54	34.42	84.32	6.10
6067005201	Y	77.52	74.96	70.71	7.33
6067005205	Y	91.33	94.37	75.67	1.09
6067005301	Y	98.80	98.11	90.76	1.03
6067005502	Y	93.04	83.61	91.52	8.17
6067005505	N	79.19	46.72	94.35	12.34
6067006101	N	81.11	68.15	81.45	7.07
6067006102	N	76.89	52.03	87.12	10.45
6067006201	N	85.73	64.07	92.39	13.37
6067006202	Y	90.57	76.49	91.77	9.05
6067006300	Y	88.91	64.67	96.13	7.42
6067006400	Y	94.13	76.91	97.44	6.54
6067006500	Y	84.09	57.66	93.81	7.28
6067006600	Y	80.98	44.93	96.96	13.53

**Table EJ-1: CalEnviroScreen Scores of DACs in the Planning Area**

CENSUS TRACT	WITHIN CITY LIMIT	CALENVIROSCREEN PERCENTILE	POLLUTION BURDEN PERCENTILE	POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS PERCENTILE	DENSITY (RESIDENTS PER ACRE)
6067006701	Y	80.30	47.36	95.15	11.51
6067006702	Y	85.16	57.14	95.55	8.16
6067006800	Y	79.80	43.00	96.68	11.73
6067006900	Y	93.51	71.19	98.65	3.71
6067007001	Y	82.88	65.28	86.74	5.08
6067007007	Y	79.74	77.49	72.35	5.93
6067007413	Y	92.28	90.12	83.56	5.30
6067009110	N	77.60	43.40	94.40	13.63
6067009201	Y	70.47	86.81	51.68	0.37
6067009316	N	70.59	41.47	85.29	14.64
6067009318	N	81.20	49.98	94.81	7.53
6067009601	Y	61.26	25.43	85.26	3.59

# Map EJ-1: State Designated Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) in Sacramento



# Promoting Public Health

The link between community design and public health has long been established. Modern city planning practices emerged from the need to foster safer, healthier urban environments in an age of industrialization. Today, clean air and water, access to fresh food, and suitable housing options remain the foundational elements of a sustainable and equitable city, and they represent the building blocks for economic and social opportunity. The General Plan recognizes the rich resources that Sacramento offers and incorporates strategies to enhance access for all.

## AIR QUALITY AND POLLUTION EXPOSURE

Pollution exposure occurs when people come into contact with air, food, water, and/or soil pollutants in the course of daily life. In an urban environment, pollution can come from a variety of different sources, including solid waste facilities that emit toxic gases, storage tanks that leak hazardous chemicals into groundwater and soil, agricultural operations using pesticides, cars and trucks emitting exhaust, or stationary sources such as diesel generators emitting exhaust. Ongoing exposure to pollution can worsen



Ambient air quality monitoring equipment

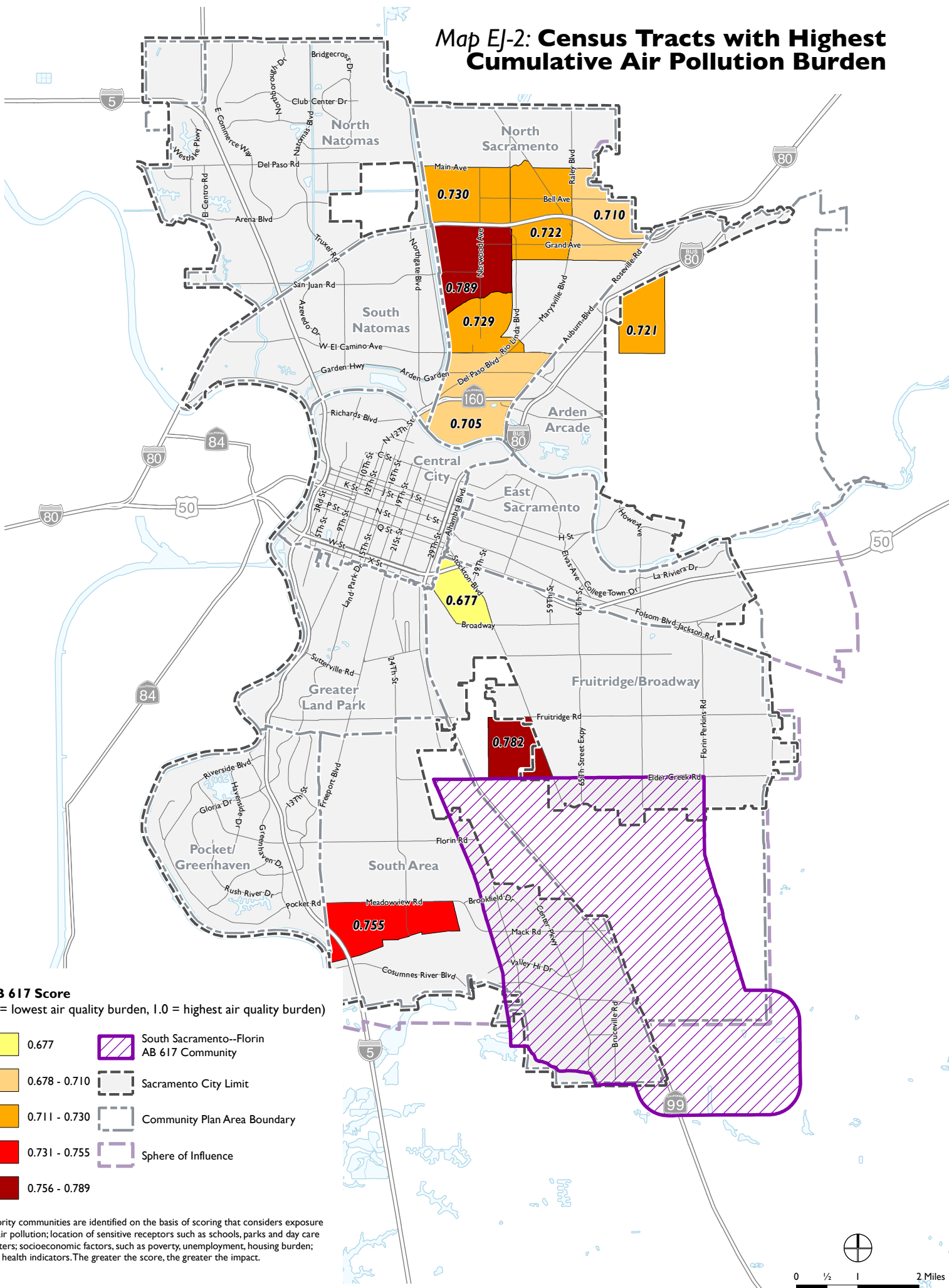
existing health conditions and lead to absences from work or school. Long-term pollution exposure can even result in reduced life expectancy. Based on an analysis of CalEnviroScreen data, Sacramento is most affected by issues related to air quality and hazardous materials, particularly in areas of the city adjacent to former and current industrial activities.

### AB 617

In 2017, Governor Brown signed Assembly Bill 617 (C. Garcia, Chapter 136, Statutes of 2017) to develop a new community-focused program to more effectively reduce localized exposure to air pollution and preserve public health. This bill directs the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to work with local air districts and community organizations to identify and select underserved communities with the highest cumulative air pollution burden. CARB selected the South Sacramento–Florin community in 2018 to be one of the first 10 communities in California to develop and implement a community air monitoring plan. Other community areas within the City of Sacramento have also been identified and nominated by Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD) for consideration into the state program. **Map EJ-2** shows areas of Sacramento with the highest cumulative air pollution burden. Data is also available on the Sacramento Municipal Utilities District’s (SMUD) Sustainable Communities Resource Priorities Map.

Sacramento is located within the Sacramento Valley Air Basin (Basin), which is under the jurisdiction of the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD). The Basin is designated as in “non-attainment” for select State air quality standards, which means that air pollutant emissions exceed acceptable levels for the region, primarily due to fine particles of pollution from diesel-powered trucks, buses, cars, ships, and locomotive engines, typically concentrated near ports, railyards, and freeways. SMAQMD maintains air quality monitoring sites located throughout the Basin, including eight active sites in Sacramento County. Air pollutant concentrations and meteorological information are continuously recorded at these stations and data is then used by scientists to help forecast daily air pollution levels.

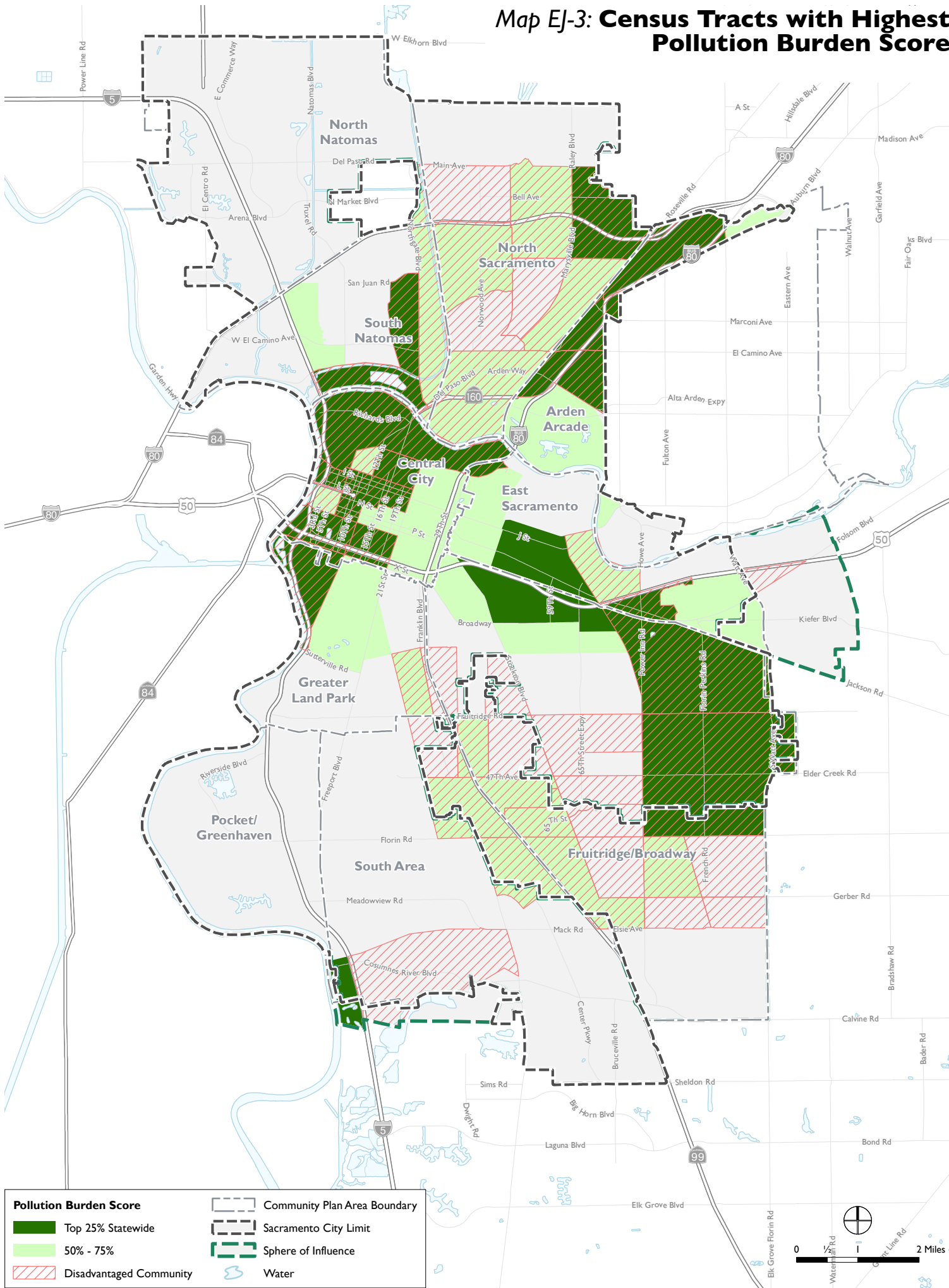
# Map Ej-2: Census Tracts with Highest Cumulative Air Pollution Burden



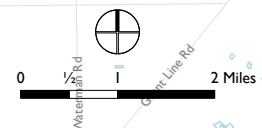
Priority communities are identified on the basis of scoring that considers exposure to air pollution; location of sensitive receptors such as schools, parks and day care centers; socioeconomic factors, such as poverty, unemployment, housing burden; and health indicators. The greater the score, the greater the impact.



# Map EJ-3: Census Tracts with Highest Pollution Burden Score



Pollution Burden Score		Community Plan Area Boundary	
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:darkgreen;"></span>	Top 25% Statewide	<span style="border:1px dashed black; display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px;"></span>	Community Plan Area Boundary
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightgreen;"></span>	50% - 75%	<span style="border:1px dashed black; display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px;"></span>	Sacramento City Limit
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; border:1px dashed red;"></span>	Disadvantaged Community	<span style="border:1px dashed green; display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px;"></span>	Sphere of Influence
	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightblue;"></span>		Water



Source: CA OEHHA, 2021; CalEPA, 2022; City of Sacramento, 2023; Dyett & Bhatia, 2023.

Environmental hazards may also be present in landfills, factories or facilities that release toxic chemicals, sites that have been contaminated in the past, pesticides, or other sources of pollution. Federal, State, and local regulatory requirements and site-specific contingency and evacuation plans help to reduce potential threats. In Sacramento, clusters of hazardous materials sites can be found in areas of past and present industrial activity, including Downtown near the Railyards, Upper Land Park, Old North Sacramento/Noralto, and Granite Park. **Map EJ-3** shows tracts in Sacramento that are most affected by four indicators: toxic releases, cleanup sites, hazardous waste, and solid waste. With the exception of East Sacramento, populations that live in census tracts with an oversaturation of environmental hazards are also more likely to be lower-income and have lower average life expectancies.

The policies in this section prioritize City action on hazardous materials and waste, air pollution, and coordination with SMAQMD, focusing efforts on air filtration systems, meeting local air quality standards, using new technologies and techniques, and raising public awareness of air quality and improvement actions.

## GOAL AND POLICIES

EJ-1

**Clean air, water, and soil with no segment of the community disproportionately burdened by environment conditions.**

### Air Quality

**EJ-1.1 Air Quality Monitoring.** The City shall collaborate with the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD) to support the expansion of air quality monitoring efforts in Sacramento, prioritizing locations in the north and south of the city that have been identified with community input as a high priority for air pollution control initiatives.

**EJ-1.2 Community Air Protection.** On an ongoing basis, the City shall support the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD), community members, businesses, and other stakeholders in implementation of AB 617 and other Community Emissions Reduction Programs (CERPs), which may include developing and implementing community air monitoring plans, community emissions reduction plans, and other air pollution control initiatives. Supportive City actions may include the following:

- Participation on steering committees and technical advisory committees;
- Support or guidance for pilot programs; or
- Leveraging related City activities and grant programs to maximize the impact of actions in disadvantaged communities.

**EJ-1.3 Data-Informed Efforts.** The City shall collaborate with the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD), community organizations, and other stakeholders, and use air quality monitoring data to inform area-specific improvement actions outside of AB 617-related efforts and other Community Emissions Reduction Programs (CERPs). Such actions may include the following:

- Prioritizing areas for the installation of indoor air filtration rated MERV 13 or greater in existing buildings containing sensitive populations;
- Prioritizing areas for capital investments with co-benefits for air quality, such as planting trees, planting vegetation barriers along high-volume roadways, and installing electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure;
- Integrating air quality improvement actions into planning efforts, such as new specific plans, master plans, or area plans that will guide development in impacted areas; or

- Limiting the establishment of new sources of air pollutants in areas with elevated levels of pollutant concentrations unless appropriate mitigation is implemented.

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**EJ-1.4 Impact Assessment.** The City shall continue to use the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD) modeling tools and guidance documents, as appropriate, to identify and mitigate air quality impacts from proposed development projects.

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### *Hazardous Materials*

**EJ-1.5 Compatibility with Hazardous Materials Facilities.** The City shall ensure that future development of treatment, storage, or disposal facilities is consistent with the County's Hazardous Waste Management Plan, and that land uses near these facilities, or proposed sites for the storage or use of hazardous materials, are compatible with their operation.

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**EJ-1.6 Risks from Hazardous Materials Facilities.** The City shall review proposed facilities that would produce or store hazardous materials (gas, natural gas, or other fuels) to identify and require feasible mitigation for any significant risks. The review shall consider, at a minimum, the following:

- Presence of seismic or geologic hazards;
  - Presence of hazardous materials;
  - Proximity to residential development and areas in which substantial concentrations of people exist, particularly disadvantaged communities (DACs) already overburdened by pollution; and
  - Nature and level of risk and hazard associated with the proposed project.
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**EJ-1.7 Transportation Routes.** The City shall restrict transport of hazardous materials within Sacramento to designated routes.

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**EJ-1.8 Site Contamination.** The City shall ensure buildings and sites are or have been investigated for the presence of hazardous materials and/or waste contamination before development, where applicable. The City shall continue to require remediation and construction techniques for adequate protection of construction workers, future occupants, adjacent residents, and the environment, and ensure they are adequately protected from hazards associated with contamination.

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**EJ-1.9 Household Hazardous Waste Collection Programs.** The City shall continue to provide household hazardous waste collection programs to encourage proper disposal of products containing hazardous materials or hazardous waste.

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**EJ-1.10 Education.** The City shall continue to educate and inform residents and businesses on how to reduce or eliminate the use of hazardous materials and products, and shall encourage the use of safer, nontoxic, environmentally friendly equivalents. Use accessible and culturally/linguistically relevant methods to increase awareness and participation.

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## HEALTHY FOOD RESOURCES

Increasingly, Sacramento is considered America’s “farm-to-fork” capital. There are over 1.5 million acres of farmland in the surrounding region that provide produce to a network of year-round and seasonal farmers markets throughout the city, including the largest Certified Farmers Market in the state. Yet, amid these unmatched agricultural riches, healthy food remains out of reach for some Sacramento residents. Lack of access to healthy food resources can lead to a higher risk of obesity and diabetes. Hunger also makes it difficult to focus at school or work. As food is one of the most basic needs, food insecurity can force people to make choices that place food above other necessities, like medicine or other basics. Policies in the Environmental Justice Element aim to increase access to healthy food throughout the city, particularly in underserved areas, so that people can meaningfully participate in and benefit from local food production and distribution.

**Map EJ-4** shows access to grocery stores, farmers markets, and other sources of healthy food from residential areas of Sacramento. While most neighborhoods have access to a source of healthy food within

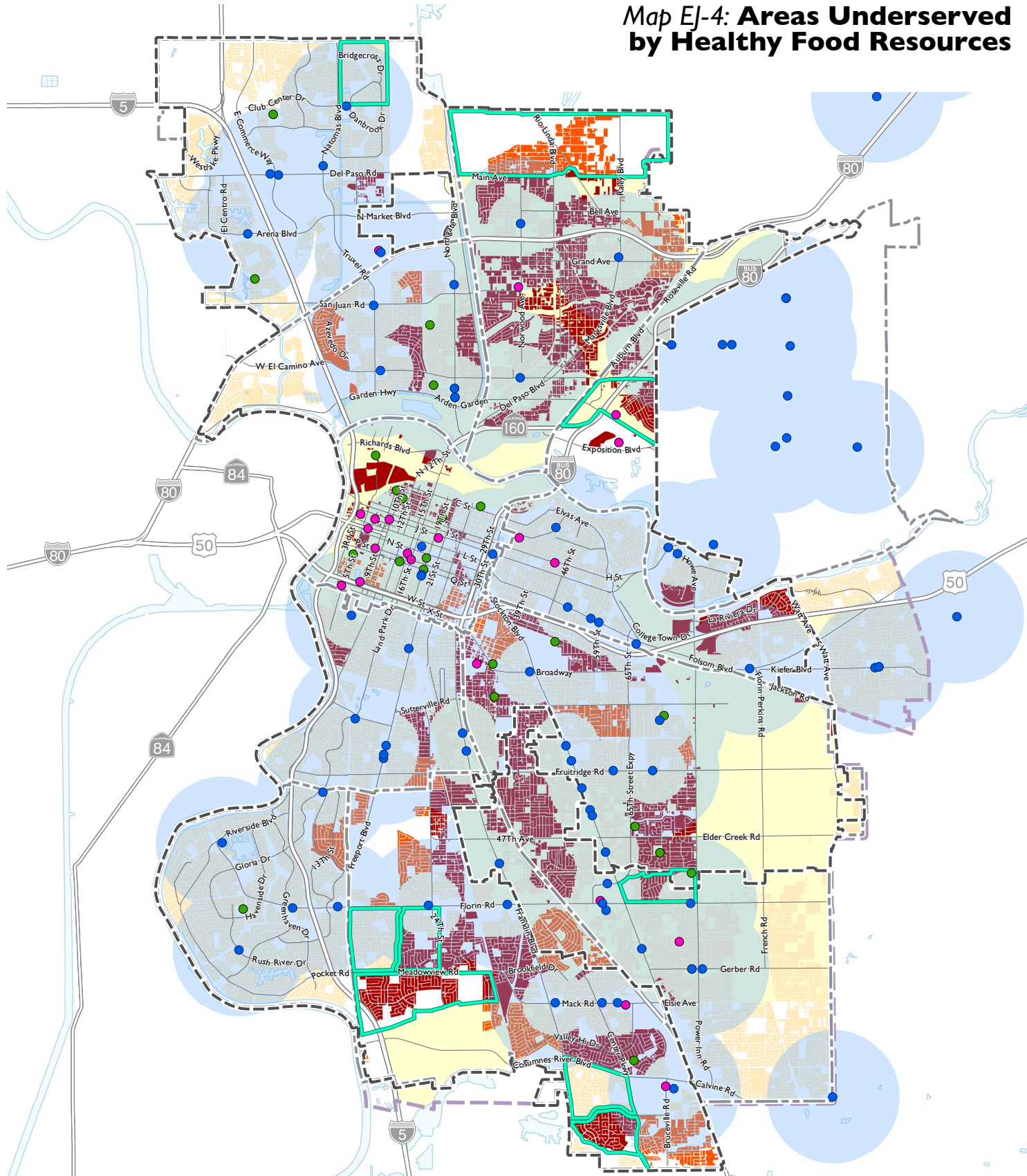
proximity of home, the map highlights underserved areas of the city, including some areas identified as “food deserts” by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Notably, residents of the tier 1 underserved areas shown are disproportionately low-income people of color.

The grocery store is the primary source of healthy food for most Sacramentans, providing access to a wide variety of nutritious and relatively affordable produce and other foods. Large chain grocery retailers locate new stores based on a set of criteria that include parcel size, proximity to major arterial corridors, and size and spending power of the local customer base. As a result, it is a challenge for low-income neighborhoods to attract and retain new stores. Mission-driven grocery store operators that specialize in providing healthy food to low-income communities, and food co-ops, which are owned and operated by local residents or employees, have also emerged as an alternative that can provide healthy, culturally relevant food while also empowering area residents economically.

Supporting a fine-grained network of food distribution points, as well as creative food distribution ideas, can also help to improve access. For example,

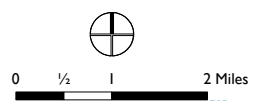


# Map EJ-4: Areas Underserved by Healthy Food Resources



- Healthy Food Retailer\*
  - City-operated Community Garden
  - Farmers Market
  - USDA Low Income/Access (2019)\*\*
  - Healthy Food Retailer 1-mile Radius
  - SB 535 Disadvantaged Communities
- Areas Underserved by Healthy Food Resources**
- Tier 1 Poverty Rate > Citywide Average
  - Tier 2 Household Income < Citywide Median
  - Tier 3 Underserved Residential Area
  - Sacramento City Limit
  - Community Plan Area Boundary
  - Sphere of Influence

\* Locations of existing healthy food retail sales points were identified using 2019 Co-Star data and verified using Google.  
 \*\* "Low-income" is defined by the poverty rate and median family income of a tract. "Low-access" means a significant number or share of the population in the tract had limited access to a food store (supermarket, supercenter, or large grocery store)—i.e., they lived more than 1 mile from a food store in urban areas or more than 10 miles in rural areas.  
 Note on Tiers: According to Census ACS 2016-2020 5-Year Estimates, citywide median household income is \$65,847 and citywide poverty rate is 15.7%.



## RANCHO SAN MIGUEL MARKET

In 2022, the City partnered with Rancho San Miguel Markets, a 100 percent employee-owned food co-op, to open a new location in the Oak Park neighborhood. This collaboration brought a culturally-relevant grocery store to a historically disinvested area of the city.



Source: The Sacramento Bee

libraries, schools, parks, and even large parking lots can become sites where sales or distribution of fresh food can occur. Urban agriculture and community gardens can also help to improve food sovereignty and fresh food accessibility by making it easier for people to grow their own food. Additionally, home-based food enterprises, in which private residences can prepare, cook, and serve food to consumers, represent another strategy that can serve as a source of healthy food and opportunity for entrepreneurship.

Finally, regional efforts to develop a regional food hub, which encompasses aspects of food aggregation, packing, processing, storage, marketing and distribution capacity and facilities, offer great opportunities to strengthen the food system and improve access to healthy foods. Food hubs can help connect locally produced and source-identified foods to local markets by creating new market channels between growers and consumers. As the food hub and local food system scale expands, it can serve larger markets, such as institutional and wholesale buyers, and even markets outside of the Sacramento region.

The policies in this section focus on improving access to and awareness of healthy foods. Access is addressed through policies that aim to support retailers and food grocers, while also expanding opportunities for food distribution and regional collaboration. Policies on healthy food promotion, youth food literacy, and promoting the city as the Farm-to-Fork capital aim to facilitate and improve awareness of healthy foods and how to use them.



## GOAL AND POLICIES

EJ-2

**Equitable access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food and wider access to healthy food resources in disadvantaged communities.**

### *Healthy Food Access*

**EJ-2.1 New Healthy Food Grocers.** The City should leverage tax and fee deferral/reduction, California Food Financing Initiative funding, and other economic development grant monies to attract new healthy food grocers and co-ops and help them establish and/or make necessary improvements. As a priority, efforts should be focused in areas underserved by healthy food retail with good access to the transportation network, such as along Meadowview Road, Franklin Boulevard, and Marysville Boulevard where grocery stores and food co-ops are most economically viable.

**EJ-2.2 Grocery Access.** The City should partner with the Sacramento Regional Transit District (SacRT) and other community partners to promote and improve access to groceries. Strategies may include increasing transit access, connecting residents with on-going food assistance programs, and promoting the use of app-based microtransit and home delivery services among seniors, people with disabilities, families with children, and residents of areas underserved by healthy food retail.

**EJ-2.3 Open Air Food Sales.** In underserved areas shown on **Map EJ-4**, the City should collaborate with community-based organizations (CBOs), including but not limited to faith-based organizations, to establish community markets on publicly-owned sites such as libraries, schools, or community center parking lots and promote the sale and distribution of fresh food via farmers markets, farm stands, grocery trucks, or other regular healthy food sales events.

**EJ-2.4 Expanded Reach of Food Distribution.** The City should support the efforts of local organizations to expand the reach of food distribution. Strategies may include the following:

- Exploring cost-effective options such as promoting the use of volunteers at food banks;
- Permitting extended hours at distribution points;
- Facilitating the siting of new distribution points; and
- Helping to facilitate informal food distribution efforts in the community.

**EJ-2.5 Food Assistance Programs.** The City shall increase community awareness of and participation in existing federal food assistance programs, such as the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutrition program and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Approaches can include the following:

- Providing information in City newsletters, on the City's website, and at community centers and other City facilities;
- Explaining to merchants the incentive to registering to accept WIC and SNAP payments (e.g., immediate expansion of market of potential customers); and
- Exploring the feasibility of requiring the acceptance of food assistance programs at farmers markets.



Food literacy and awareness can support healthy eating.

**EJ-2.6 Food Recovery Program.** The City shall participate in the regional edible food recovery program pursuant to SB 1383, intended to reduce organic waste in the community and divert consumable food to those in need by collecting and redistributing unused food from commercial edible food generators such as grocery stores, supermarkets, big box stores, restaurants, corporate kitchens, and food wholesalers and distributors.

**EJ-2.7 Partner with Farmers.** The City should engage with local growers and community-based (CBOs) organizations on ways to expand regional Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) as an alternative source of fresh and healthy fruits and vegetables for Sacramento residents, particularly those with limited mobility, limited income, or those furthest from existing grocery stores.

**EJ-2.8 Community and Home Gardening.** The City shall support community and home gardening efforts, particularly in disadvantaged communities (DACs) and communities historically underserved by healthy food retail. Support may include the following:

- Connecting residents to existing resources such as local community gardens and organizations that offer workshops on gardening basics, or
- Cooking easy, healthy meals with fresh produce.

**EJ-2.9 Urban Agriculture in New Development.** The City shall promote rooftop gardens, edible gardens, and other sustainable agricultural landscaping alternatives within multi-unit, commercial, and industrial developments.

**EJ-2.10 Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone.** The City shall continue to implement the Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone to facilitate activation of vacant and undeveloped spaces and improve access to fresh, healthy, and affordable foods.

**EJ-2.11 Home-Based Food Enterprises.** The City should work with the County to promote the availability of permits for home-based food enterprises (e.g., Cottage Food Operations). The City should focus outreach and promotional efforts in disadvantaged communities (DACs) and historically underserved areas where home-based operations can serve as both a source of healthy food and an opportunity for entrepreneurship.

**EJ-2.12 Regional Food Hub.** The City should participate in efforts to establish a regional food hub that could support a variety of efforts, including but not limited to aggregating crops from small local producers; packaging, processing, storage, and distribution services; and food business incubator programs. Participation may include the following:

- Assistance with site selection,
- Long-term lease of surplus City properties, and/or
- Procurement/purchasing contracts.





**EJ-2.13 Public-Private Partnerships.** The City should support efforts to form creative public-private partnerships for expanding urban agriculture access, including but not limited to the following:

- Providing land for growing food,
- Facilitating water access,
- Expanding private community gardens, and
- Leveraging other creative assets.

**EJ-2.14 Financial Incentives.** The City shall pursue financial incentives to support the provision of healthy and culturally relevant food options in existing retailers in disadvantaged communities (DACs) and historically underserved areas.

**EJ-2.15 Limit Unhealthy Food Establishments.** The City shall explore mechanisms to limit unhealthy food establishments, especially in disadvantaged communities (DACs) and historically underserved areas.

**EJ-2.16 Discourage Unhealthy Uses.** The City should discourage the establishment of new drive-through restaurants, alcohol permits for off-site sales, and tobacco sales points near food deserts, schools, and pedestrian priority areas.

### *Healthy Food Awareness*

**EJ-2.17 Healthy Food Promotion.** With community partners, the City shall expand efforts to promote healthy eating throughout the community by preserving and promoting community gardens, demonstration gardens, and free and culturally relevant nutrition and cooking classes at Sacramento community centers. Efforts should be prioritized in disadvantaged communities (DACs) and historically underserved areas, with an emphasis on supporting low-cost, practical, and culturally relevant strategies for healthy eating.

**EJ-2.18 Youth Food Literacy.** The City shall support efforts to increase food literacy among children and youth, through collaboration with schools, hospitals, community groups and other partners to develop and deliver programs, activities, and events.

**EJ-2.19 Farm-to-Fork.** The City shall promote Sacramento as America's Farm-to-Fork capital with support for festivals, events, and programs that highlight the city's access to fresh, healthy food, and encourage healthy eating and nutrition. Efforts should consider focusing events in disadvantaged communities (DACs) and historically underrepresented areas.

**EJ-2.20 Evaluating Health Impacts.** The City may use best available data tools, including but not limited to Healthy Places Index, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Social Vulnerability Index, and CalEnviroScreen, when evaluating health impacts from proposed projects in disadvantaged and historically underserved communities.





## SAFE AND SANITARY HOUSING

Access to safe, sanitary housing is important for everyone. Beyond being a source of shelter, a home gives families a sense of safety, security, and peace of mind. Many housing factors have a profound influence on a person’s health and well-being, such as whether or not housing is located in a resource-rich, complete neighborhood; is of high quality and free from health hazards; is affordable and not a financial burden; or is a place where people can remain if they so choose.

The Housing Element of the General Plan outlines the City’s strategy and commitment for how it will meet the housing needs of everyone in the community. It contains goals, policies, and programs that focus on expanding the housing stock and offering a wider range of housing choices for everyone in Sacramento. Many of these goals, policies, and programs address key environmental justice and housing topics, including the following:

- Increasing overall housing production;
- Increasing affordable housing and workforce housing production;
- Advancing equity and inclusion;
- Protecting residents from displacement, preserving existing housing stock;
- Providing housing for people experiencing homelessness; and
- Increasing accessible housing.

To support the strategies in the Housing Element, the policies in this section focus on how the City can help coordinate interagency and interdepartmental efforts to address safe and sanitary housing needs for residents impacted by a cumulative burden of socioeconomic and environmental factors.

## GOAL AND POLICIES

EJ-3

**Coordination of resources to ensure stable, safe, and sanitary housing for all Sacramentans.**

EJ-3.1

**Resource Optimization.** The City shall coordinate across municipal departments and with relevant partner agencies including the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency (SHRA), the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD), Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD), Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), Capitol Area Development Authority (CADA), Sacramento County, and others, to optimize the use of grant monies, incentives, financial resources, staffing, investments, and programs in addressing displacement and tenant protections; sanitary housing and maintenance issues; environmental hazards in homes and neighborhoods; and other concerns related to stable, safe, and sanitary housing.

**EJ-3.2 Supplemental Funding Sources for Building Rehabilitation.** The City shall prioritize identification of supplemental funding sources/resources and partner programs for retrofit, rehabilitation, electrification, and lead abatement projects that address health and safety in housing occupied by low-income renters and homeowners, including air quality improvements. Partner programs could include those with the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency (SHRA), Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD), and other community-based organizations (CBOs). Supplemental funding sources could include loans and grants available from the Strategic Growth Council (SGC), California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), California Air Resources Board (CARB), California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and other entities.

**EJ-3.3 Healthy Homes.** The City shall continue to work with the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency (SHRA) and community organizations to promote safe and sanitary housing by providing owners and occupants with information and resources. Efforts may include the development and dissemination of healthy home checklists or conducting trainings, workshops, or audits.

**EJ-3.4 Healthy Environment.** In private and non-profit housing projects, the City should promote and seek ways to incentivize the inclusion of features and amenities that support and enhance the health of occupants and the environment, including, but not limited to:

- Energy-efficient and all-electric appliances;
- Green infrastructure, such as green roofs or appropriate tree planting;
- Community gardens; and
- Active transportation infrastructure.



Affordable housing concept at Mirasol Village.

# Engaging and Empowering the Community

Meaningful participation of all people in decisions that affect their lives and communities is a critical component of environmental justice and a prerequisite for a sustainable and equitable city. Across the U.S., the communities most impacted by environmental issues have historically been left out of decision-making process, and the result has been a pattern of underinvestment and disinvestment in the most socioeconomically disadvantaged communities. Undoing the harm caused by inequitable practices will require a sustained effort to engage and empower historically underrepresented communities and a targeted focus of investments and actions in areas that are cumulatively most affected by environmental, social, and economic burdens.

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

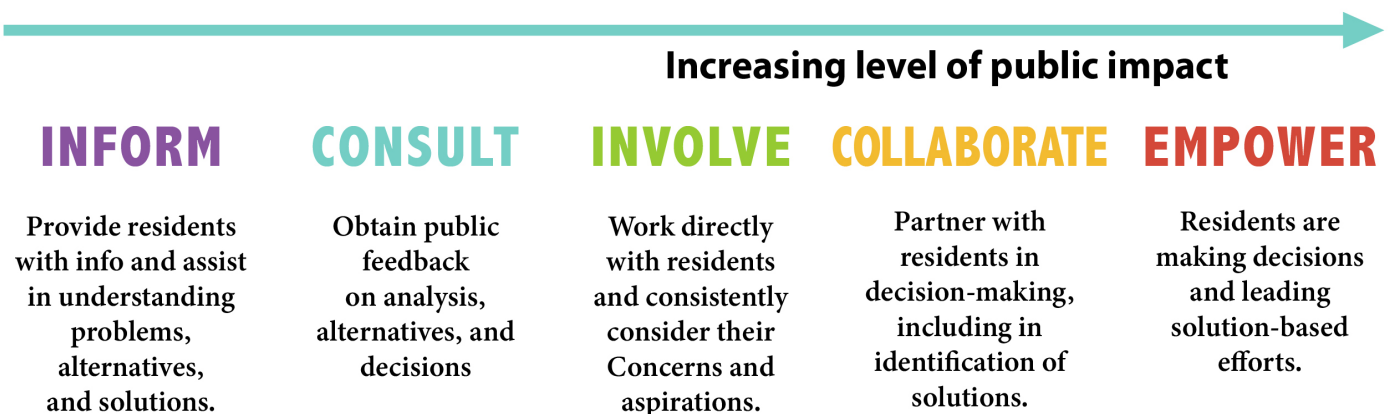
The City is committed to ensuring the just and equitable treatment of all neighborhoods and people, addressing historical inequities, and ensuring broad community participation and ownership in public processes, as well as accountability in implementing plans. Achieving inclusive, authentic community engagement and closing equity gaps requires direct participation by impacted communities in the

development and implementation of solutions and policy decisions that directly affect them. As shown in **Figure EJ-1**, community engagement can be conducted on a spectrum that ranges from informing to power sharing. This spectrum can also be thought of as a series of steps essential for building capacity for community collaboration and governance.

Inclusive, transparent, and accountable governance that facilitates participation in planning efforts is a key component of civic engagement. To sustain engagement and promote a culture of civic participation, feedback loops can be built in to show how the community’s input directly influenced the process. Accountability also means reducing the burden of participation — this can mean coordinating internally across City departments to share relevant community outreach findings and to provide a coordinated response to community concerns. Accountability can also be built through increased representation of disadvantaged communities on decision-making bodies or on oversight committees that ensure follow-up on commitments to the community.

The policies in this section seek to improve civic engagement through capacity building and developing community partners, especially in historically underserved and underrepresented areas of the city.

*Figure EJ-1*  
**Community Engagement Spectrum**



Credit: graphic designed by Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), based on the framework developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)

## GOAL AND POLICIES

EJ-4

**Active participation of all segments of the community - particularly historically underrepresented groups - in civic life and in the development and implementation of solutions for neighborhood priorities.**

### *Civic Engagement*

**EJ-4.1 Meaningful, Relevant Engagement.** The City shall design and implement public engagement processes and events that encompass the following:

- Emphasize participation from low-income communities and communities of color;
- Are centered on and driven by neighborhood and resident priorities;
- Are relevant and rooted in existing conditions;
- Emphasize the collaborative exchange of ideas; and
- Provide meaningful opportunities for participants to influence outcomes.

**EJ-4.2 Innovative Methods.** The City shall explore innovative strategies for increasing community involvement in civic processes and ownership of outcomes, tailoring strategies to best reach target audiences. Strategies to explore may include the following:

- Participatory budgeting,
- Participatory action research, or
- Other approaches that emphasize the active participation of community members most affected by the questions at issue.

**EJ-4.3 Community Partners.** The City shall partner with community-based organizations (CBOs) and culture brokers on an ongoing basis to develop and implement effective outreach programs, increase opportunities for community involvement in civic processes, and build a deeper understanding of city governance within the community. The City shall seek opportunities to support community partners in these efforts, such as by providing technical assistance, data, meeting spaces, and other support services as feasible.

**EJ-4.4 Capacity Building.** The City should enlist and strengthen the capacity of community members and groups so that historically marginalized community members participate in local decision-making and engage meaningfully in planning efforts.

**EJ-4.5 Increasing Participation of Underserved Communities.** The City shall increase the participation of socioeconomically disadvantaged residents and other traditionally underrepresented groups in city planning and decision-making processes. Strategies may include the following:

- Holding public meetings and outreach activities at culturally appropriate neighborhood gathering places, at accessible times and venues, and/or at community events;
- Employing a wide range of outreach methods and activities, including pop-up events, focus groups, community workshops, and online surveys; or
- Providing transportation vouchers, interpretation and translation services, childcare, food, or monetary compensation, or other methods that remove barriers to participation.

*Accountability*

**EJ-4.6 Community Oversight.** The City shall explore opportunities to increase community oversight of and input into City policies and practices, such as the creation and ongoing support of community-led advisory committees such as the Environmental Justice Collaborative Governance Committee (EJCGC).



**EJ-4.7 Sustained Engagement.** The City shall maintain communication channels that allow for ongoing dialogue with neighborhood groups and individual residents; use this information to inform development of City programs, projects, and services; and share this information across departments to optimize the effectiveness of efforts.

**EJ-4.8 Community Ownership and Accountability.** Recognizing that community ownership of decisions is fundamental for successful planning and implementation, the City shall emphasize collaborative decision-making throughout the community engagement process and empower disadvantaged and under-represented community members to participate at all phases of the decision-making process. The City shall also build accountability into engagement processes by systematically reporting out to the community on the results and informing participants of how their input has influenced outcomes.



## INVESTMENT PRIORITIZATION

As in cities throughout the U.S., spatial concentrations of racial and socioeconomic disparity in Sacramento have been shaped largely by patterns of appropriation and disinvestment. These inequities can only be redressed with a deliberate and sustained effort over time. By embedding equity in City operations, departmental priorities, deployment of resources and planning efforts, and public and private investments, Sacramento can forge a path to a more sustainable and equitable city.

### Prioritizing Disadvantaged Communities and Communities Cumulatively Impacted by Environmental Justice Issues

As described above, distinct patterns of disproportionate burden by geography, income, and race exist across the city for a multitude of environmental and community health issues. The locations and populations affected by each individual issue vary, but when viewed in aggregate it is clear that certain communities within Sacramento are cumulatively impacted by multiple factors. An earlier section of this element discusses DACs in Sacramento as defined by CalEPA, which identifies which communities may be most affected by environmental pollutants through its tool, CalEnviroScreen. While CalEnviroScreen accounts for 21 indicators that include pollution, demographic, and health variables, it is limited in capturing the full scope of cumulative environmental justice impacts

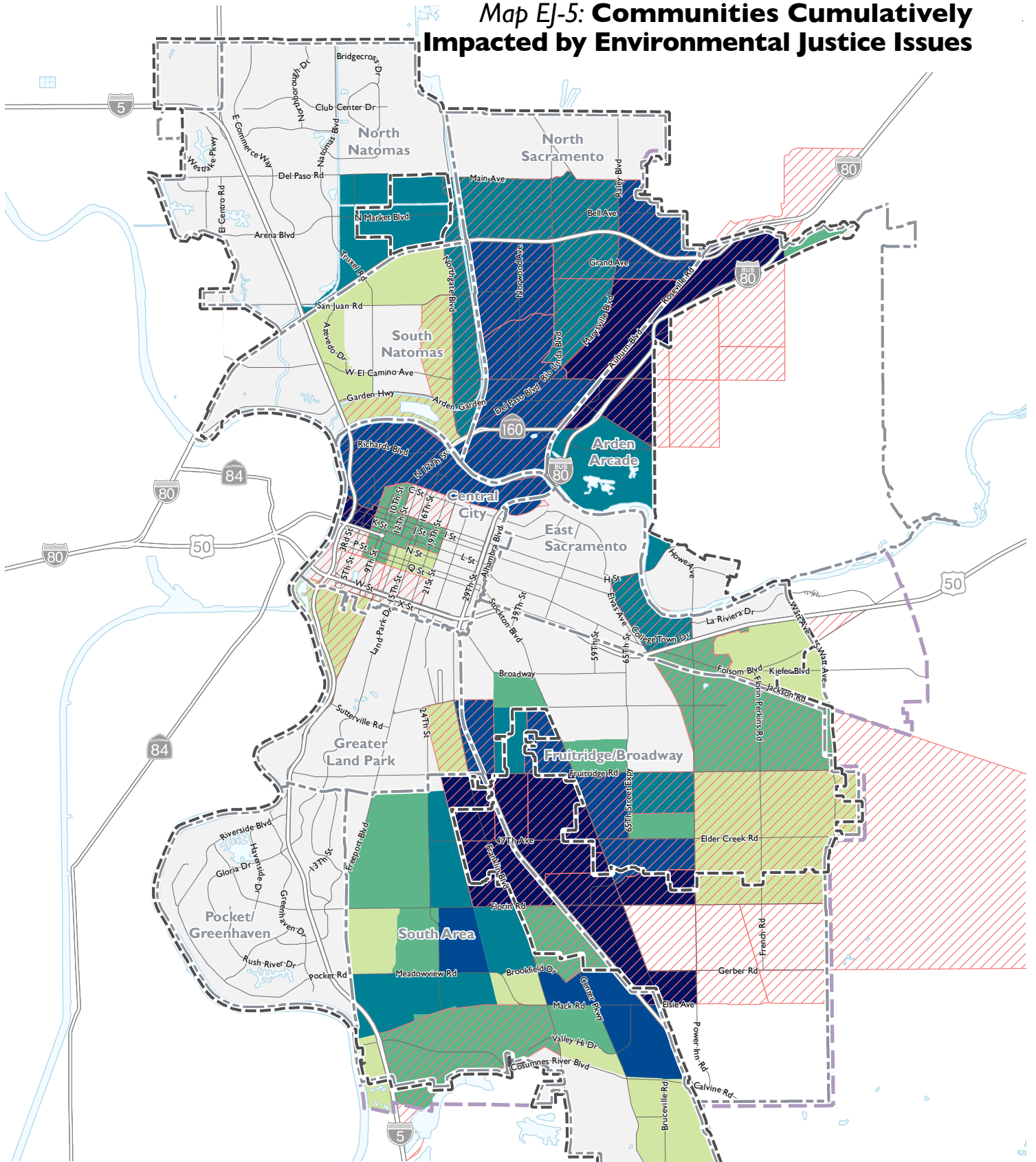


to communities. As such, to compliment **Map EJ-1**, which shows the DACs identified through CalEnviroScreen, **Map EJ-5** represents additional analysis and shows the most cumulatively impacted communities based on a composite analysis of 68 factors including the indicators used in CalEnviroScreen, in addition to variables such as housing conditions, access to healthy food and recreational facilities, neighborhood conditions, transportation safety, and race. **Map EJ-5** builds off of **Map EJ-1**, which identifies areas in addition to DACs. These maps can be used to help guide future investments and actions by the public, private, and non-profit sectors in DACs and other areas cumulatively impacted by environmental justice issues. In decision-making processes, City officials and staff can also use these maps to help prioritize interventions that redress burden, build capacity, and empower the most vulnerable and historically underserved communities in Sacramento.

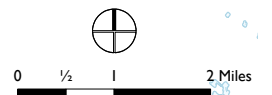
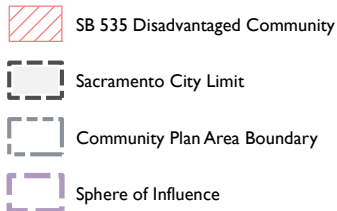
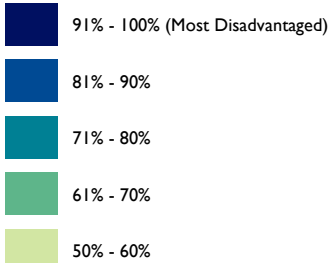
### Operationalizing Equity

Without deliberate and intentional action, the inequities that exist in our community can easily be perpetuated in municipal operations and decision-making. The City aims to operationalize equity by supporting educational efforts about the root causes of inequity and by integrating equity analysis tools across departments, boards, and other appointed organizations. Operationalizing equity can also mean considering how well City staff and services reflect the diversity of Sacramento's people and cultures, as well as considering how work plans and budgeting processes could aggravate or compound existing environmental and socioeconomic burdens. The City's Office of Diversity and Equity already works to operationalize equity by using the theory of change and racial equity analysis from the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) to guide the development of staff training and resources. The GARE theory of change emphasizes normalizing conversations about race, developing a shared understanding of commonly held definitions of implicit bias and institutional and structural racism.

# Map EJ-5: Communities Cumulatively Impacted by Environmental Justice Issues



## EJ Composite Score (Top 50%)







The policies in this section support efforts to invest in and continue to operationalize equity, especially in internal City practices. The policies emphasize investment in education, training, cross-departmental collaboration, and thoughtful investments that address long-standing inequities.

## GOAL AND POLICIES

EJ-5

**Investments that address long-standing inequities, empower disadvantaged residents, and build neighborhood resilience.**

**EJ-5.1 Equity Education.** The City shall invest in ongoing capacity-building equity training for City staff, boards, and elected officials to do the following:

- Learn national best practices for normalizing, organizing, and operationalizing racial equity;
- Increase collective understanding of the role of government in addressing racial inequity with an intersectional approach that centers on race, but includes all marginalized identities;
- Develop consistent onboarding processes that include equity-centered community engagement and racial equity approach; and
- Organize collective and citywide coordinated action to address root causes of systemic racial inequity, identify opportunities to address it, and identify equity outcomes that measure performance and provide transparent community indicators.

**EJ-5.2 Internal Practices.** The City shall annually audit municipal hiring practices, policies, and protocols with the goal of identifying areas of improvement for workforce diversity beyond federally required Equal Employment Opportunity reports and moving toward the workforce equity goals of the Race & Gender Equity Action Plan's (RGEAP) department assessment and annual reporting strategies.

**EJ-5.3 Cross-Functional Action Team.** With participation of staff from City departments and partner agencies, the City shall maintain a cross-functional neighborhood development action team responsible for coordinating resources, actions, and investments aimed at increasing the quality of life and economic growth of people, businesses, and places in Sacramento's historically disenfranchised and disinvested neighborhoods.

**EJ-5.4 Racial, Gender, and LGBTQ+ Equity.** The City shall place racial, gender, and LGBTQ+ equity at the core of its values, policies, and practices and promote a culture of acceptance within the City organization.

**EJ-5.5 Investment Prioritization.** The City shall prioritize investments in infrastructure and interventions that address long-standing inequities, empower disadvantaged residents, and build neighborhood resilience.

**EJ-5.6 Embedding Racial Equity.** The City shall leverage and apply the racial equity analysis from the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) to embed racial equity in City practices, both internally and externally.

## IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

### Plans and Programs

**EJ-A.1: Retailer Incentive Program.** The City should evaluate developing a program to incentivize and assist business owners to stock fresh and healthy food at affordable prices in areas underserved by healthy food resources (shown on **Map EJ-4**) where convenience stores and other retail outlets exist (such as Meadowview and North Sacramento). Program elements could include the following:

- Funding for refrigeration equipment;
- Business counseling and technical assistance;
- Nutritional education; and
- Store design support.

**Responsible Entity:** Office of Innovation and Economic Development (lead) Community Development Department (support)

**Timeframe:** Mid-term (2030-2035)

**EJ-A.2: Air Filtration Systems.** The City shall explore opportunities to accelerate the installation of air filtration systems in existing buildings in partnerships with the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD) and other partners in the Sacramento region. Schools, nursing homes, and other sensitive uses within disadvantaged communities (DACs) and areas most affected by air quality issues should be prioritized.

**Responsible Entity:** Office of Climate Action and Sustainability (lead); Community Development Department (support)

**Timeframe:** Near-term (2024-2029)

**EJ-A.3: Diverse Representation.** The City shall develop and implement a coordinated plan to increase diversity on City boards and commissions and in City-sponsored activities and events. Steps should include the following:

- Developing a proactive recruitment program reaching out to numerous communities.
- Recruiting individuals from underrepresented populations, including, but not limited to, communities of color, youth, and low-income populations, to represent their communities.
- Reporting annually to the City Council on the diversity of City boards, commissions, and committees.

**Responsible Entity:** City Clerk's Office (lead); City Manager's Office (support); Youth, Parks, and Community Enrichment Department (support); Community Development Department (support); Public Works (support)

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

**EJ-A.4: Community-Led Planning.** Pilot a community-led planning grant program focused on addressing the needs of people within disadvantaged and/or historically underserved communities. The planning process would include documenting community vision for a



specific neighborhood, concerns keeping the people in that neighborhood from thriving, and potential actions to increase community resiliency, equity, and/or inclusive economic development. These actions could include regulatory fixes to City ordinances, education and training on City programs and opportunities, infrastructure improvements, or others. Pending funding and staff availability, the planning effort should be accompanied by funding and staff time to address some near-term implementation as well as include a final document (or action plan) with a list of short and longer-term actions that can be used to support grant applications, advocacy to government officials, and guide ongoing community collaborations.

**Responsible Entity:** Community Development Department (lead); Office of Innovation and Economic Development (support)

**Timeframe:** Near-term (2024-2029)

### *Regulations, Standards, and Development Review*

**EJ-A.5: Amortization Ordinance.** The City shall study the feasibility of an amortization ordinance that would phase out polluting industries currently located near sensitive receptors. The study should identify a process and criteria for determining which industries to amortize.

**Responsible Entity:** Community Development Department

**Timeframe:** Mid-term (2030-2035)



**EJ-A.6: Performance Zoning.** The City shall develop zoning standards applicable to new and existing industrial and manufacturing developments to minimize or avoid adverse effects related to air quality, noise, or safety on sensitive populations in disadvantaged communities and other areas of the city where industrial and manufacturing uses are near residential uses, such as the Robla neighborhood.

**Responsible Entity:** Community Development Department

**Timeframe:** Near-term (2024-2029)

**EJ-A.7: Healthy Food Zoning.** The City shall update the Zoning Code to promote and protect healthy food options. Possible amendments to the code include the following:

- Incorporate zoning controls that prohibit tobacco sales points near schools and other areas;
- Clearly defining “healthy food grocery stores” to ensure that businesses meeting that description have access to incentives developed with them in mind;
- Include standards and incentives flexible enough to accommodate “alternative” grocery stores, which use less space, require less parking, and focus on the day-to-day needs of nearby residents; or
- Preserve grocery store uses in underserved areas through zoning designations.

**Responsible Entity:** Community Development Department

**Timeframe:** Mid-term (2030-2035)



**EJ-A.8: Racial Equity Analysis.** The City shall pilot and develop capacity in applying a racial equity analysis from Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) and other equity centered strategies for preventing racism and for identifying new options to remedy long-standing inequities.

**Responsible Entity:** City Manager’s Office (lead); Community Development Department (support)

**Timeframe:** Near-term (2024-2029)

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### *City Data and Services*

**EJ-A.9: Community Input Database.** The City shall expand the use of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software to efficiently track and respond to resident inquiries and to streamline collection and management of community input. This should involve the following:

- Determining which departments need software licenses;
- Establishing protocols for the collection and use of community input;
- Providing training to staff on use of database; and
- Designating responsibility of database management.

**Responsible Entity:** Information Technology Department (lead), Office of Innovation and Economic Development (support)

**Timeframe:** Near-term (2024-2029)

### *Financing and Budgeting*

**EJ-A.10: Outreach Funding.** The City shall study the feasibility of establishing funding that City departments draw on for community outreach. The intent would be to provide a source of funding to supplement departmental budgets and grant funding in order to ensure that City objectives for community outreach can be achieved.

**Responsible Entity:** Office of Innovation and Economic Development (lead); City Manager’s Office (support); Department of Finance (support)

**Timeframe:** Near-term (2024-2029)

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**EJ-A.11: Healthy Food Initiatives Partnership.** The City shall identify partners and coordinate closely with other agencies who together would be responsible in assessing, designing, and implementing City healthy food initiatives. City staff will engage in cross-departmental and inter-agency coordination, program administration, and community relations.

**Responsible Entity:** City Manager’s Office (lead); Community Development Department (support); Youth, Parks, and Community Enrichment Department (support); Department of Finance (support)

**Timeframe:** Near-term (2024-2029)

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