



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TOOLBOX

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES & APPROACHES
MAY 2021

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE BY TOPIC	6
DATA & INFORMATION SOURCES	18

INTRODUCTION

The concept of environmental justice (EJ) is about equal and fair access to a healthy environment with the goal of protecting minority and low-income communities from incurring disproportionate negative environmental impacts.

Residents living in the Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) region have among the most geographically diverse origins of any metropolitan region in the nation. A range of economic and social impacts such as health outcomes, education, employment, housing conditions, rates of incarceration, and life expectancy vary vastly in this region based on race, income, and census tract. Institutional and systemic racism experienced by these communities continues to impact their access to more mobile, sustainable, and prosperous futures in Southern California. The history of both the United States and California shows how race has played a role in the disparities and inequities that people of color experience today.

There is a disproportionate burden of poverty on people of color relative to their white counterparts. Black (21.5 percent), American Indian/Alaskan Native (19.4 percent), and Hispanic (19 percent) communities experience the highest rate of poverty in our region compared to the white population (13.5 percent). Across the region, life expectancy ranges drastically, from 68 to 93 years, depending on where you live. Below are some demographic statistics that convey the disadvantages in Environmental Justice Areas (EJAs):

- 12.2 million people live in EJAs, comprising of 65 percent of the region's population. Of the people who live in these areas, 82 percent are minority and 20 percent of the households are in poverty.
- In 2016, a family of three earning less than \$19,105 was classified as living in poverty.¹
 - California State Senate Bill (SB) 535 Disadvantaged Areas reports 6.4 million people living in these areas (34 percent of the region). 88 percent of these residents are minority, and 23 percent of all households are at or below the poverty level.
- 3.9 million people live in Communities of Concern (COC) areas, which represents 21 percent of the region. 92 percent of the residents in COC areas are minority and 25 percent of the households are at or below the poverty level.
- EJ communities have at least 10 percent higher concentration of minority populations as compared to the SCAG region.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. *Poverty Thresholds*. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-thresholds.html>

Southern California, in its unique demographic and geographic diversity, presents a keen opportunity to promote EJ in the administration of transportation and land use decisions that affect residents' daily lives. SCAG's 2020 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS, or Connect SoCal) is designed to create region-wide benefits that are distributed equitably, while ensuring that any one group does not carry the burdens of development disproportionately. It is particularly important that Connect SoCal considers the consequences of transportation projects on low-income and minority communities, and avoids, minimizes, or mitigates disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental impacts on low-income and minority populations (also referred to as EJ communities).

Consideration of EJ in the transportation planning process stems from Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which establishes the need for transportation agencies to disclose to the general public the benefits and burdens of proposed projects on minority populations.

SCAG presents the Connect SoCal Environmental Justice Toolbox, which includes recommended practices and approaches to address existing and potential inequitable outcomes for EJ communities organized by the performance indicators included in the Connect SoCal EJ Technical Report. This toolbox can be a resource for local jurisdictions and EJ stakeholders to combat disproportionately adverse impacts on EJ communities.

CONNECT SOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TOOLBOX

PURPOSE

As a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) that receives federal funding, SCAG is required to conduct an EJ analysis for Connect SoCal. The Connect SoCal EJ Technical Report (EJ Technical Report) addresses potential impacts of the Plan on low-income and minority populations and examines historical trends related to EJ throughout the region through 18 performance indicators. Please see the [EJ Technical Report](#) for more information about the 18 EJ performance indicators. In addition to documenting the methodology and results of the EJ

analysis, the EJ Technical Report also included an EJ Toolbox with recommended practices and approaches to help combat disproportionately adverse impacts on EJ communities.

Building on the foundation of previous RTP/SCSs, SCAG is committed to provide a toolbox of recommended strategies and resources to address potential impacts to environmental justice areas (EJAs), Disadvantaged Communities (DAC), communities of concern (COC), and other EJ-related communities. The toolbox presents optional policy recommendations that may be effective in addressing EJ impacts after a comprehensive review of impacts and consultation with all stakeholders. These recommendations were identified through a review of literature, recent planning activities, and input from stakeholders as part of the EJ outreach process.

With the passage of California State Senate Bill 1000 (SB 1000), which requires local jurisdictions with DAC to develop a separate EJ Element or incorporate EJ policies and goals throughout their General Plan, this toolbox can also function as a resource document for local jurisdictions when developing EJ-related goals and policies and EJ community organizations when advocating for solutions for EJ-related community issues.

The EJ Toolbox is meant to be a dynamic document that will change with time and the landscape of EJ. SCAG will continue to collect input from local jurisdictions, community-based organizations, and other EJ stakeholders on an ongoing basis to ensure this toolbox is relevant and accurate.

DEFINITIONS

- [Environmental justice \(EJ\)](#) means “the 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,” as defined by the State of California Department of Justice and in [California State Senate Bill 115 \(SB 115\)](#).

- Disadvantaged Communities (DAC), as established by [California State Senate Bill 535 \(SB 535\)](#), are defined as the top 25 percent scoring areas from CalEnviroScreen 3.0, an environmental health screening tool that ranks each of the state’s 8,000 census tracts using data on 20 indicators of pollution, environmental quality, and socioeconomic and public health conditions. The SB 535 DAC map and various resources can be found on the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment [website](#).
- EJ Areas (EJA) are Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZ), which are similar to census block groups that have a higher concentration of minority population or low-income households than is seen in the region as a whole. The inclusion of this geography helps to fulfill SCAG’s Title VI requirements, along with other state and federal EJ guidelines.
- Communities of Concern (COC) are Census Designated Places (CDP) and the City of Los Angeles Community Planning Areas (CPA) that fall in the upper one-third of all communities in the SCAG region for having the highest concentration of minority population and low-income households.
- Built environment is the way in which communities are designed impacts the likelihood of active travel, healthy food access, exposure to air pollutants, and access to parks and open space, and has a direct impact on opportunities for physical activity and reductions in chronic disease.
- Health equity describes the actions, policies, and practices that eliminate bias and barriers to create health opportunities for all people, and especially historically and systemically marginalized people, to be healthy and prosperous and to participate fully in civic life.
- Public health is the organized community effort to prevent disease and promote health. Health can be protected by promoting disease prevention, good health practices, and maintaining a clean, healthy, and safe living and working environment.²

- Social determinants of health (SDOH) are the amenable circumstances in the environments in which people are born, live, work, play, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality of life outcomes and risks.³

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

- [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq. \(Title VI\)](#) establishes the need for transportation agencies to disclose to the public the benefits and burdens of proposed projects on minority populations. Title VI states that “No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” Additionally, Title VI not only bars intentional discrimination, but also unjustified disparate impact discrimination. Disparate impacts result from policies and practices that are neutral on their face (i.e. there is no evidence of intentional discrimination), but have the effect of discrimination on protected groups.
- The [Federal Transit Administration \(FTA\) Circular 4702.1B, Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for FTA Recipients](#) provides information required in the Title VI Program, including how metropolitan planning organizations, including SCAG, shall implement Title VI regulations.
- [Executive Order 12898 \(1994\)](#) ordered every federal agency to make EJ part of its mission by identifying and addressing the effects of all programs, policies and activities on underrepresented groups and low-income populations.

National Academies Press, Washington D.C. <https://www.nap.edu/read/10548/chapter/3>

³ Healthy People 2020 – Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (2020). *Social Determinants of Health*. <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-of-health>

² The Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. (2003). *The Future of the Public’s Health in the 21st Century*. The

- The [FTA Circular 4703.1, EJ Policy Guidance for FTA Recipients \(Docket No. FTA-2011-0055\)](#) provides recognition to metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs; and other recipients of FTA funds) on how to fully engage EJ populations in the public transportation decision-making process; how to determine whether EJ populations would be subjected to disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects as a result of a transportation plan, project, or activity as well as how to avoid, minimize or mitigate these effects.
- [California Government Code Section 11135](#) states that “No person in the State of California shall, on the basis of race, national origin, ethnic group identification, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, color, or disability, be unlawfully denied full and equal access to the benefits of, or be unlawfully subjected to discrimination under, any program or activity that is conducted, operated, or administered by the state or by any state agency that is funded directly by the state, or receives any financial assistance from the state.”
- “Low-income” households or communities are referred to as a target of California State Assembly Bill 1550 (AB 1550; Gomez, Statutes of 2016), which directs California Climate investments to invest at least 10 percent of the funds in projects within and benefitting low-income communities, in addition to at least 25 percent of funds for disadvantaged communities.
- “Minority” communities or populations refers to the Title VI guidance from the Federal Transit Administration definition of “minority persons”⁴ which includes the following racial and ethnic groups:
 - American Indian and Alaska Native, which refers to people having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintain tribal affiliation or community attachment.
 - Asian, which refers to people having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent, including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
 - Black or African American, which refers to people having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.
 - Hispanic or Latino, which includes persons of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.
 - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, which refers to people having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

Language and terms are intricately connected to equity and representation and are evolving. The names of indicators used throughout this toolbox are drawn from the terminology used in the data source they are taken from. They do not always represent current best practice, and may in fact be offensive, triggering or erasing to some communities. We aim to continue developing this toolbox as we receive feedback and become more aware of best practices.

Several terms are used to describe different EJ communities throughout this toolbox.

- “Disadvantaged Communities” refers to the census tracts within the top 25 percent scoring areas from CalEnviroScreen 3.0 and is described in more detail in the previous section.

⁴ Title VI Circular 4702.1B. “Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients”. https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/FTA_Title_VI_FINAL.pdf

TOOLBOX USER GUIDE

The EJ Toolbox draws from many sources, especially the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research’s (OPR’s) General Plan Guidelines⁵ and California Environmental Justice Alliance and PlaceWork’s SB 1000 Implementation Toolkit.⁶ Research supporting statements about EJ geographies made throughout this document can be found in the [Connect SoCal EJ Technical Report](#).

This EJ Toolbox examines nine EJ topics following the organization of Connect SoCal EJ Technical Report Performance Indicators:

1. Healthy, safe, and sanitary housing
2. Access to essential services and facilities
3. Active living, active transportation, and physical activity
4. Climate vulnerability and resiliency
5. Roadway and aviation noise impacts
6. Air quality and pollution exposure impacts
7. Impacts of road pricing mechanisms
8. Community outreach and engagement
9. Other policy recommendations for EJ impacts

These recommended practices and approaches can be developed into policies and strategies based on the user’s/reader’s needs. All recommendations are optional and up to the discretion of the user/reader. Recommendations incorporating or referring to compliance with existing regulations are for informational purposes only and do not supersede existing regulations.

The EJ Toolbox also includes General Plan Element (GPE) icons to aid local jurisdictions in developing their EJ elements, goals, or policies per requirements from SB 1000. Each icon represents a traditional General Plan Element and is

placed next to each EJ topic area to indicate relevant practices and approaches and resources for that element. The GPE icons (legend provided in the following table) are also used throughout the EJ Technical Report.

General Plan Element Icons		
 = Circulation	 = Conservation	 = Housing
 = Land Use	 = Noise	 = Open Space
 = Safety		

This toolbox is a dynamic document that will change with time and the landscape of EJ. SCAG’s EJ stakeholders and community partners have influenced the content of this toolbox. If you would like to provide feedback or contribute an idea to the toolbox, please send an email to environmentaljustice@scag.ca.gov.

⁵ California Office of Planning and Research. (2017). *General Plan Guidelines, 2017*.

⁶ California Environmental Justice Alliance and PlaceWorks. (2017). *SB 1000 Implementation Toolkit: Planning for Healthy Communities*.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE BY TOPIC

For each EJ Topic, SCAG collected recommended practices and approaches for local jurisdictions and community organizations to consider to reduce EJ impacts. Additional examples of projects, programs and policies related to each topic are also listed. Furthermore, a resources section at the end of the toolbox provides additional data and regulatory resources that may be useful in multiple topic areas.

HEALTHY, SAFE & SANITARY HOUSING



Promoting healthy, safe, and sanitary homes requires three components: housing conditions, housing affordability, and land-use compatibility. Residents living in EJ areas could potentially face disproportionately higher prevalence of housing in poor condition, burdens of housing costs, and proximity to pollutant sources near their homes. These conditions can lead to unsafe housing, gentrification, and displacement.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES AND APPROACHES

- Establish protections for low-income renters, including requiring 60-day notice for rent increases and funds/programs that focus on outreach, information, and enforcement of tenant protection laws.
- Include rent control or rent stabilization policies in disadvantaged communities to promote housing affordability and availability.
- Create requirements to promote the construction of affordable housing in conjunction with market-rate development in disadvantaged communities.
- Adopt policies that incentivize the creation of affordable housing and energy efficient housing near amenities such as parks, schools, transit, and jobs.
- Create a local housing trust fund that leverages developer fees and other fees to fund new affordable housing projects.
- Provide public education and/or materials to educate residents on potential hazards that can lead to unhealthy housing conditions and encourage residents to take action.
- Consider mitigation, non-profit, and grant funding opportunities for local community-oriented businesses.
- Explore the applicability of community land trusts to preserve local land ownership.

- Create homeowner assistance programs to assist low-income families to purchase homes or prevent foreclosures.
- Consider community-based ownership options, such as co-ops, to encourage ownership opportunities in areas with low homeownership rates.
- Enact policies that protect and preserve mobile homes and mobile home parks as it is often a primary housing option in many disadvantaged and rural communities.
- Employ anti-displacement strategies, including:
 - Inclusionary zoning, no net loss of affordable housing (within ½ mile of public investments), incentive rezoning regulations that fund inclusionary housing, jobs-housing linkage fees, replacement housing policies, or foreclosure assistance.
 - Adopt local hire policies and training/apprenticeship programs for new transportation, housing, and real estate investments that are targeted to low-income residents.
 - Provide small business disruption funds to support local businesses in communities that are seeing new infrastructure investment.
 - Support programs and policies that incentivize local purchase (e.g., bicycle-friendly business districts, farmer’s markets, walkable commercial centers near neighborhoods, etc.).
 - Adopt participatory budgeting for major transportation and transit-supportive infrastructure, with an emphasis on allowing historically marginalized groups to determine how best to allocate revenues to address their concerns.

- [Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy, LAX Community Benefit Agreement](#)
- [Los Angeles Regional and Open Space Park District, Displacement Avoidance Strategy](#)
- [The Partnership for Working Families, Policy & Tools: Community Benefits Toolkit](#)
- [University of California, Berkeley Urban Displacement Project](#)

PROJECT, PROGRAM AND POLICY EXAMPLES

- [Anti-Eviction Mapping Project](#)
- [California Air Resources Board \(CARB\), Developing a New Methodology for Analyzing Potential Displacement \(2017\)](#)
- [California Strategic Growth Council Anti-Displacement Strategies Round 6 \(2019-2020\)](#)

ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES & FACILITIES



Many EJ communities do not have adequate access to a wide range of necessary facilities, such as parks, schools, shopping, and employment. The lack of access to these essential services can lead to a variety of EJ-related issues.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES AND APPROACHES

- Coordinate provision of public services to disadvantaged communities and areas of newly permitted development so that provision of any given service does not stimulate development that significantly hinders the local jurisdiction's ability to provide other services at uniform levels.
- Ensure the equitable distribution of beneficial public facilities, prioritizing new facilities in traditionally underserved areas.
- Increase access to diverse, high-quality parks, green space, recreational facilities, and natural environments for traditionally underserved communities.
- Encourage transit providers to establish and maintain routes to jobs, shopping, schools, parks, and health care facilities that are convenient to low-income and minority populations.
- Increase awareness of accessibility and proximity to key destinations from active transportation and transit infrastructure, i.e. through wayfinding, public education, etc.
- Restrict sensitive public facilities, such as schools and hospitals, from being located near industrial facilities like warehouses, high-volume roadways, chemical/toxic plants near schools, residential homes, senior living, and other infrastructure that pose a hazard to human health and safety or risk of exposure to health hazards caused by infrastructure⁷.

- Provide a range of quality recreational facilities that are well maintained, have adequate lighting, signage, hours of operation, and represent the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural needs of the community.
- Require new infill development projects to provide mini parks in infill areas to increase the number and accessibility of parks.
- Permit homeowners' associations to manage mini parks, formative parks, and neighborhood parks, so long as parks are publicly accessible and well maintained.
- Consider and minimize any direct impacts on land values and existing housing that might occur through land acquisition and development in low-income areas.
- Encourage safe routes to schools and parks from residential areas.

PROJECT, PROGRAM AND POLICY EXAMPLES

- [City of Buena Park's Complete Streets Master Plan](#)
- [Los Angeles Unified School District \(LAUSD\) Desegregation Plan](#)
- [Riverside County Transportation Committee – Blythe Wellness Express](#)
- [Safe Routes to Healthy Food](#)
- [Safe Routes to Parks](#)
- [Safe Routes to School \(SRTS\) Programs](#)
 - [City of Lancaster SRTS Plan](#)
 - [City of Los Angeles SRTS Program](#)
 - [Imperial County SRTS Program](#)
 - [San Bernardino County Regional SRTS Program](#)

⁷ Safe Routes to School National Partnership. (2018). "Big Trucks, Little Children: How Poorly Planned Industrial

Zoning Threatens Children's Health and Safety". https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/sites/default/files/resource_files/large_trucks_little_children_final_09.25.18.pdf

ACTIVE LIVING, ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



Residents living in disadvantaged communities may face barriers to leading active lifestyles due to poor air quality, unsafe conditions for pedestrians and/or bicyclists, poor sidewalk conditions or absence of sidewalks, or the lack of access to active transportation networks, all of which can limit physical activity. Additionally, areas with low access to fresh foods or areas where fast food and junk food retailers outnumber supermarkets and grocery stores disproportionately burden low-income communities across the SCAG region.⁸ Promoting healthy food environments and encouraging land use strategies to help shape positive health behaviors and outcomes are an integral part of the obesity epidemic solution.⁹

RECOMMENDED ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICES AND APPROACHES

- Partner with local educational institutions and/or community-based organizations and provide public education programs or materials about environmental health impacts to promote active transportation choices and help residents make informed decisions about their health and community so they can be empowered to take action.
- Facilitate pedestrian and bicycle access to parks, open space, and other essential services in EJ communities by developing and updating transportation infrastructure, such as sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and street lighting, to encourage active transportation within communities, or investing in infrastructure improvements.

- Encourage and sustain linear parks to connect neighborhoods and communities.
- Partner with local school districts, non-profit organizations, and community-based organizations to offer bicycle education and traffic safety training. Improve access by providing bicycles, helmets and related equipment for lower income families and promoting joint use of school properties for parks and recreational facilities.
- Adopt and institutionalize complete pedestrian network plans that allows for safe travel between all areas and destinations of the community.
- Adopt and implement Complete Streets policies requiring jurisdictions to design streets that are safe and accessible for all modes of travel. Complete Streets designs include traffic-calming measures as well as reallocation of street space to people walking and bicycling.
- Adopt and implement [Vision Zero Policies](#) to create safer streets for all users.
- Fund measures that help improve air quality in neighboring homes, schools, and other sensitive receptors like limit siting of new sensitive uses, such as playgrounds, daycare centers, schools, residences, or medical facilities, within 500 feet of freeways and 500 feet of warehouses and other industries with heavy volume of traffic to make it healthier and safer for residents to walk and bicycle recreationally or to local destinations.
- Engage with local private industry to strengthen public-private partnerships like shared micro-mobility (bike/scooter share) programs.
- Use checklists similar to [Riverside County's Healthy Development Checklists](#) to develop Complete Streets and healthier communities when reviewing new development projects.
- Conduct [Safe Routes to School \(SRTS\)](#) walk audits that include EJ hazards checklists that include analyzing canopy, urban heat island threat, air quality, flood drainage, etc.

⁸ Cooksey-Stowers, K., Schwartz, M.B., & Brownell, K. (2017). International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. "Food Swamps Predict Obesity Better Than Food Deserts in the United States". <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5708005/>

⁹ Ibid.

- Construct walking/biking infrastructure using materials that lowers urban heat island effects as well as urban forestry to better encourage the health and safety of users in hotter climates.
- Fund the development of SRTS Countywide plans.

PROJECT, PROGRAM AND POLICY EXAMPLES

- [California Focus Cities Program](#)
- [California Walks](#)
- [Long Beach Bike Share](#)
- [The Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition \(LACBC\)](#)
- [Metro's Go Bike Riding Courses](#)
- [Riverside County's Mission Heritage Plaza Project](#)
- [Safe Mobility Santa Ana – A Vision Zero Plan](#)
- [Safe Streets Long Beach Action Plans](#)
- [Santa Monica Bike Share](#)
- [The United States Environmental Protection Agency \(U.S. EPA\) Healthy School Environments](#)
- [Vision Zero LA County: A Plan for Safer Roadways](#)
- [Youth Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Education Program](#)

RECOMMENDED FOOD ACCESS PRACTICES AND APPROACHES

- Prioritize healthy food supplies in economic development efforts, especially in areas where a healthy food supply, farmer's market, or community garden is not located within a walkable distance (i.e. half to a quarter mile away).

- Encourage the development of healthy food establishments in areas with a high-density of establishments selling high-calorie fast food and junk food, relative to healthier food options.¹⁰
- Expand the number of low-income Community-Supported Agricultural models to increase fresh food access in low-income areas, while fairly compensating farmers for their products.¹¹
- Restrict the location and amount of national fast-food chain restaurants and other food retailers that promote low-nutrient-dense foods through land use and other controls, especially near sensitive land uses.
- Set up school- or community-based programs that integrate gardening and nutrition, and make the connection between healthy food choices and locally-grown fresh produce.

PROJECT, PROGRAM AND POLICY EXAMPLES

- [Los Angeles Community Garden Council](#)
- [National Healthy Corner Stores Network](#)
- [People's Kitchen Collective Free Breakfast Program \(inspired by the Black Panther Party's Free Breakfast for School Children program, 1969\)](#)
- [Riverside Garden Council](#)
- [Safe Routes to Healthy Food](#)
- [South Los Angeles Healthy Eating Active Communities Initiative](#)

¹⁰ Cooksey-Stowers, K., Schwartz, M.B., & Brownell, K. (2017). International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. "Food Swamps Predict Obesity Rates Better Than Food Deserts in the United States". <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5708005/>

¹¹ American Planning Association. (2012). Planning for food access and community-based food systems: A national scan and evaluation of local comprehensive and sustainability plans. https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/legacy_resources/research/foodaccess/pdf/foodaccessreport.pdf

CLIMATE VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCY



Climate change already impacts all communities in California, but EJ communities can potentially suffer disproportionately higher adverse impacts when EJ is not considered during the planning process. Extreme heat, flooding, wildfire, drought, and sea-level rise are hazards that can harm people and present risk to the built and natural environment.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES AND APPROACHES

- Support measures for extreme heat resiliency and adaptation. For example, encourage more urban greening and forestry to increase tree and vegetation cover, create cool/green roofs, reduce impervious surfaces, use cool pavements and provide cooling centers with reliable power sources, especially in low-income and minority communities that do not have access.
- Coordinate emergency response and transportation resources available to vulnerable communities and populations and support increased resilience for transportation, particularly for persons with limited mobility such as retrofitting existing transportation infrastructure, constructing new infrastructure using resilient materials and design features, developing evacuation plans for person with limited mobility including how to obtain vehicles and drivers in an emergency situation, etc.
- Measure climate vulnerability for local communities, including EJ communities, through a process called Vulnerability Assessment¹² to better understand climate change impacts and develop adequate climate resiliency and adaptation plans.

- Adopt and institutionalize climate resiliency and adaptation plans to help manage the growing effects of climate change and identify and response to health impacts for all communities, especially EJ communities.
- Expand access to renewable energy, increase energy efficiency, and promote resilient design in the built environment.
- Support land uses that support resiliency and adaptation to climate change like promoting infill, mixed-use, and higher density development, promote greater linkage between land uses and transit to decrease greenhouse gases (GHG), encourage active transportation over driving, etc.
- Develop renewable energy supply to support adaptation to climate change and improve resiliency in the face of increased hazards.
- Require new developments in and near flood-prone areas to use permeable paving, rain gardens, and other low-impact development strategies to slow down floodwaters and promote groundwater infiltration, especially in EJ communities who have less economic opportunity to move out of flood-prone areas.
- Preserve native vegetation in wildland areas and constructed landscapes to reduce vulnerability to extreme heat and wildfire associated with climate change.
- Increase awareness of the effect humans have on the environment and encourage individuals and organizations to modify habits and operations that cause degradation to the environment and contribute to climate change.
- Partner and fund local community-based organizations to host EJ tours to better understand challenges in the community and serve as a platform to discuss solutions.
- Create a county/city advisory council on climate resiliency/ EJ and climate disaster preparedness that includes appointed community members.

¹² California Natural Resources Agency. Adaptation Planning Guide. http://resources.ca.gov/docs/climate/01APG_Planning_for_Adaptive_Communities.pdf

PROJECT, PROGRAM AND POLICY EXAMPLES

- [California Air Pollution Control Officers Association, Model Policies for Greenhouse Gases in General Plan \(2009\)](#)
- [California Department of Public Health, California Building Against Resilience Against Climate Effects \(CalBRACE\) Initiative](#)
- [City of Riverside Heat Response Plan](#)
- [Ready LA County Emergency Preparedness Resources](#)
- [Orange County Extreme Heat Resources](#)
- [San Bernardino County Heat Wave Plan](#)
- [Ventura County Tree Protection Ordinance](#)

ROADWAY AND AVIATION NOISE IMPACTS



Low-income and minority populations can more likely be found living in subpar housing closer to freeways and airports, which can have disproportionately adverse noise impacts. The primary objective of noise compatibility and mitigation efforts is to minimize the number of people exposed to frequent and/or high levels of road and airport noise capable of disrupting noise-sensitive activities (e.g. sleep, work).

RECOMMENDED ROADWAY NOISE PRACTICES AND APPROACHES

- Conduct a project-specific noise evaluation and identify and implement applicable and appropriate mitigation during site planning, such as incorporating noise barriers (i.e. sound walls, berms, walls and fences, and thick plantings of trees and shrubs) and other noise reduction features (i.e. parking and loading areas, ingress/egress points, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) units, and refuse collection areas).
- Employ land-use planning measures, such as zoning and restrictions on development, to ensure that future development is compatible with adjacent transportation facilities.
- Minimize impacts to noise-sensitive land uses (including residences, schools, hospitals, childcare facilities, and airports) and new noise-generating facilities (including new roadway lanes, roadways, rail lines, transit centers, park-and-ride lots, and goods movement corridors) by considering acoustical site design (i.e. arrangement of buildings by capitalizing on site's natural shape and contours), acoustical architectural design (i.e. considerations of building height, room arrangement, window placement, etc.), acoustical construction methods (i.e. consideration of building materials and techniques to reduce noise transmission through walls, windows, doors, ceilings, and floors), and noise barriers.

- Construct roadways, where appropriate and feasible, so that they are depressed below-grade of the existing sensitive land uses to create an effective barrier between the roadway and sensitive receptors.
- Discourage noise-sensitive development where the ambient noise levels already exceed jurisdictional noise level standards.
- Encourage road diets and other strategies to reduce vehicle speeds on roads to minimize auto noise impacts.

PROJECT, PROGRAM AND POLICY EXAMPLES

- [City of Irvine Noise Evaluation](#)
- [City of Riverside Road Diet](#)
- [Complete Streets Project – Cordova Street from Hill Ave. to Arroyo Parkway \(aka Cordova Street Road Diet\)](#)
- [Los Angeles County Environmental Impact Analysis \(2016\)](#)
- [San Bernardino County Noise Evaluation](#)
- [San Bernardino County Noise Impact Study \(2014\)](#)
- [U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, The Audible Landscape: A Manual for Highway Noise and Land Use](#)

RECOMMENDED AVIATION NOISE PRACTICES AND APPROACHES

- Provide voluntary sound insulation to eligible residential units, located within the noise contours of 65+ decibels¹³ Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL), especially in EJ areas.

- Minimize impacts to noise-sensitive land uses, including residences, schools, hospitals, childcare facilities, and airports by considering acoustical site design (i.e. arrangement of buildings by capitalizing on site’s natural shape and contours), acoustical architectural design (i.e. considerations of building height, room arrangement, window placement, etc.), acoustical construction methods (i.e. consideration of building materials and techniques to reduce noise transmission through walls, windows, doors, ceilings, and floors), and noise barriers.
- Encourage implementation of airport noise mitigation monitoring or airport noise mitigation plans in affected populations, such as low-income or minority communities, to monitor disproportionately adverse impacts, if any, and properly avoid or mitigate it.

PROJECT, PROGRAM AND POLICY EXAMPLES

- [Caltrans Airport Noise Program](#)
- [Los Angeles World Airports, LAX Noise Management Portal](#)
- [Los Angeles World Airports, LAX Noise Management Program Brochure \(2015\)](#)
- [National Business Aviation Association \(NBAA\) Noise Abatement Program](#)

¹³ 65 decibels can be likened to the sound of laughter.

AIR QUALITY & AIR POLLUTION EXPOSURE IMPACTS



Exposure to air pollutants can result in many serious health issues, such as premature deaths and lifelong asthma and respiratory problems. Historically, urban freeways in Southern California have been built and expanded in low-income communities of color, where the disproportionate burden of vehicular emissions lands. Ports and industrial areas where there is high truck activity are examples of stationary sites that contribute to poor air quality in the surrounding neighborhoods.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES AND APPROACHES

- Identify and assess existing air quality conditions for communities, especially EJ communities, and exposure risks by using tools, such as the [California Air Resources Board's \(CARB's\) Pollution Mapping Tool](#), EPA's [Toxic Release Inventory](#), or [CalEnviroScreen](#), to develop appropriate mitigation and strategies to combat the adverse impacts of air pollution.
- Adopt policies that can help reduce air pollution exposure, such as restricting the number of pollution sources, specifically in EJ communities, creating monitoring systems or requirements to ensure pollution or exposure can be contained, or partnering with local air management districts or community organizations to outreach to residents and gather input to establish mitigation monitoring programs.
- Adopt ordinances that can help ameliorate or remove an existing source of pollution from communities (i.e. amortization ordinance), which authorizes a process for public agencies to remove a targeted polluting land use from a community.

- Devise strategies to reduce traffic emissions like speed reduction in neighborhood streets such as roundabouts and speed bumps, traffic signal synchronization, or speed limit reduction on high-speed roadways.
- Utilize urban design to reduce air pollution including:
 - Increase vegetation for pollution dispersion.
 - Create land use patterns that encourage active transportation or use of public transit (please see the [Active Living, Active Transportation, and Physical Activity section](#) for more recommended practices).
 - Restrict certain heights of buildings to avoid creating pockets of pollution buildup along street corridors.
 - Implement Complete Streets principles especially in EJ communities.
 - Provide effective buffer spaces like sound walls or landscaping between highly-traveled corridors or roadways and sensitive land uses.
- Encourage compact development in appropriate locations for more efficient use of land to help reduce air pollution caused by vehicle use.
- Recognize, promote, and adopt policies to create a multimodal transportation system that reduces solo driving.
- Require construction of new buildings to provide healthier indoor air quality with indoor high-efficiency filtration.
- Require that all new access roads, driveways, and parking areas serving new commercial and industrial development be constructed with materials that minimize particulate emissions and are appropriate to the scale and intensity of use.

There are also several strategies used across the nation to reduce the harms of pollution in and around schools. As documented in the [U.S. EPA Best Practices for Reducing Near-Road Air Pollution Exposure at Schools](#) publication, some efforts include:

- Upgrading filtration systems used in classrooms.

- Locating air intakes away from pollution sources.
- Providing training to school staff and students on indoor air quality and ventilation.
- Avoiding strenuous activities, such as physical education class and sports, during peak traffic times.
- Reducing car and bus idling, upgrade and electrify bus fleets, and encourage active transportation, such as walking and biking to school.
- Considering improvements to site layout, such as locating classrooms further from the roadway.
- Considering installation of solid and/or vegetative barriers.

Local air districts, local jurisdictions and project sponsors may voluntarily implement measures adopted by Air Resources Board (ARB) designed to attain federal air quality standards for PM2.5 and eight-hour ozone. Should organizations volunteer to implement ARB measures as mitigation, the following ARB measures can be considered:

- Require clean fuels and reduce petroleum dependency.
- Pursue near-term advanced technology demonstration and deployment such as:
 - Zero emissions heavy-duty trucks.
 - Tier 4 marine engine repowers and replacements.
 - Tier 4 and zero emissions railyard equipment.
- Pursue long-term advanced technology measures.
- Conduct corridor-level analysis for proposed projects in areas where air quality impacts may be concentrated among EJ communities.
- Work with the affected community on mitigation measures to proactively identify EJ impacts of each project.
- Participate in statewide and regional discussions seeking to balance multiple policy objectives affecting air quality and the siting of transit-oriented development.

PROJECT, PROGRAM AND POLICY EXAMPLES

- [California Air Resources Board \(CARB\), Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective \(2005\), and technical supplement, Strategies to Reduce Air Pollution Exposure near High-Volume Roadways \(2017\)](#)
- [California Air Resources Board \(CARB\), Community Air Protection Program \(CAPP\)](#)
- [California Air Resources Board \(CARB\), Map for Local Air District Websites](#)
- [California Department of Education, Indoor Air Quality – A Guide for Educators](#)
- [Identifying Violations Affecting Neighborhoods \(IVAN\) Air Monitoring Network, Imperial County – Community-Air Quality Monitors](#)
- [Imperial County Air Pollution Control District, Carl Moyer Grant Program](#)
- [South Coast Air Quality Management District Guidance Document for Addressing Air Quality Issues in General Plans and Local Planning \(2005\)](#)
- [Ventura County Air Pollution Control District, Air Monitoring Network Report \(2017\)](#)

IMPACTS OF ROAD PRICING MECHANISMS

CI

Some potential solutions to air pollution and congestion management can lie within a successful road pricing program. SCAG considered road pricing programs in the context of regional travel, and there are a variety of road pricing programs that are being explored, including corridor/facility pricing, mileage-based user fees, and cordon pricing. Current express lane programs are developed and managed by County Transportation Commissions and are based on corridor-level policies consistent with regional operations.¹⁴ Agencies within the region, including SCAG, are incorporating EJ considerations into research on and planning for innovative road pricing concepts. EJ concerns and applicable tools will vary greatly from one jurisdiction/community to another due to different impacts and needs.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES AND APPROACHES

- Engage and involve important parties like businesses, truck drivers, residents, and environmental and community-based organizations when assessing impacts and devising road pricing policies to improve transportation accessibility and congestion in the community.
- Incorporate equity considerations across all income groups and communities during the development of road pricing mechanisms.
- Adjust mitigation of negative impacts on EJ communities to reflect the specifics of the pricing program and local conditions.

PROJECT, PROGRAM AND POLICY EXAMPLES

- [National Cooperative Highway Research Program, Report 686 – Road Pricing Perceptions and Program Development](#)
- [SCAG, Mobility Go Zone & Pricing Feasibility Study Report](#)
- [TransForm, Pricing Roads, Advancing Equity Report](#)

¹⁴ For more information on express lane corridor planning, see [OCTA 91 Express Lanes](#) and the [RCTC 91 express lanes extension](#).

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Community outreach and engagement is an essential step in identifying and addressing EJ community concerns. Community involvement in the planning decision-making process can produce effective and meaningful policies that can help improve an array of EJ-related issue areas.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES AND APPROACHES

- Develop public outreach plans that engage community-based organizations with relationships to residents, health departments, and schools to assist in assessing strategies to create these outreach plans.
- Anticipate any barriers to effective communication and participation with all community members when developing an effective public outreach plan by looking at the demographics in the area (i.e. primary language, age, internet access, and educational attainment).
- Promote capacity building within communities that are historically underrepresented in the decision-making process by providing relevant and effective training and workshops that empowers them to participate in their local decision-making process.
- Make public meetings and workshops more accessible and convenient for residents by holding events in public venues that are easy to get to (via transit or other methods of transportation), providing child-care and/or food, and distributing materials and details far enough in advance to allow sufficient time for interested residents to plan for, review, and comment.
- Develop partnerships between local jurisdictions and community-based organizations to encourage better engagement with the community.

- Use different methods of education and engagement, depending on the applicability of the methods, such as community-based participatory research, community benefits agreements, community events, design charrettes, door-to-door canvassing, focus groups, interactive workshops, online and mobile engagement, open houses, participatory budgeting, surveys, and tours.
- Engage and support community groups to follow project development at all levels of the planning process.

PROJECT, PROGRAM AND POLICY EXAMPLES

- [Greenlining Institute’s Mobility Equity Framework \(2018\)](#)
- [Institute for Local Government: Technology, Tools, and Techniques to Improve Public Engagement](#)
- [SCAG, Public Participation Plan \(2018\)](#)
- [University of Southern California \(USC\) Civic Engagement, Investing in Our Communities Brochure \(2013-14\)](#)

OTHER POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IMPACTS

During the extensive outreach process conducted for the Connect SoCal plan and EJ Working Groups, SCAG received many recommendations to address a variety of EJ input, which are provided below:

- Improve safety at transit stations.
- Provide infrastructure for electric vehicles in disadvantaged communities along heavily traveled corridors.
- Create resources and training opportunities for the new jobs that will be created as a result of changing times and innovative technology.
- Increase access to ownership of clean vehicles (old or new) by addressing barriers like monetary funds or limited infrastructure.
- Expand passenger vehicle replacement with cleaner vehicles, such as electric vehicles or plug-in hybrid electric vehicles.
- Develop and support a daily/weekly informational forecast report to local communities and residents on impacts areas like noise or air pollution.
- Support measures that help train and hire local residents for construction or operation of the project to improve their economic status and access to health care.
- Support job training and placement programs for groups that face barriers to employment, such as formerly incarcerated people, low-income communities, communities of color, and youth in foster care systems.

PROJECT, PROGRAM AND POLICY EXAMPLES

- [California Energy Commission \(CEC\), Critical Clean Transportation Investments](#)
- [California Energy Commission \(CEC\), Light-Duty Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Allocation Workshop](#)
- [City of Santa Ana Youth Employment Services](#)

- [Orange Regional and Local Plans PY \(2017-2021\) – Two Year Modifications](#)
- [San Bernardino and Riverside County Workforce Development Boards, New Hope Prison to Employment service](#)
- [San Bernardino County Zero-Emission Vehicle Readiness and Implementation Plan \(2019\)](#)

As stated at the beginning of this document, this toolbox is a dynamic document that will change with time and the landscape of EJ. SCAG's EJ stakeholders and community partners have influenced and are poised to continue shaping the content of this toolbox. If you would like to provide feedback or contribute an idea to the toolbox, please send an email to environmentaljustice@scag.ca.gov.

DATA AND INFORMATION SOURCES

This section provides a list of resources on existing databases, programs, and other health initiatives and plans to help toolbox users incorporate health analysis and tools into their planning processes. It is organized by local, regional, state, and national contexts.

LOCAL

- The [California Air Resources Board \(CARB\) Pollution Mapping Tool](#) allows users to locate, view, and analyze emissions of greenhouse gases, criteria pollutants, and toxic air contaminants from large facilities in California. Data are presented on a district, census tract, zip code, city, and county level.
- [California Building Resilience Against Climate Effects \(CalBRACE\)](#) hosts a collection of resources that includes tools, reports, and guides to help local health departments assess, plan, and monitor climate vulnerabilities to reduce and prevent health risks associated with climate change. Climate change indicators are compiled from the data available from the California Department of Public Health. Climate vulnerabilities are assessed and used to provide insights on the most pressing climate issues.
- The [California Heat Assessment Tool](#) helps local and state health practitioners to better understand dimensions of heat vulnerability driven by climate changes and where action can be taken to mitigate the public health impacts of extreme heat in the future.
- The [Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy \(CHAS\)](#) demonstrates the extent of housing problems and housing needs, particularly for low-income households. Each year, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) receives custom tabulations of American Community Survey (ACS) data from the U.S. Census Bureau, known as the CHAS data.

- [Riverside University Health System – Public Health \(RUHS-PH\)](#) established the initiative to advance the County’s efforts of working with local cities to adopt [Healthy City resolutions](#) and Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) resolutions, and to encourage the incorporation of health elements in general plans. The Healthy Cities Network has also established community profiles and fact sheets providing city-level data summaries. Since the inception of the initiative, over 27 jurisdictions in the county have adopted a health element, established HEAL resolutions or have a health element in progress¹⁵.
- [San Bernardino County Community Vital Signs](#) is an initiative to support the Wellness Element in the Countywide Vision Plan, guided by the San Bernardino County Community Transformation Plan, which is a countywide plan that includes an analysis of the social determinants of health. The Vital Signs initiative established a community health improvement framework to align resources and improve health outcomes¹⁶.
- The [South Coast Air Quality Management District \(AQMD\) California State Assembly Bill \(AB 617\) Community Programs](#) requires extensive community-based efforts that focus on improving air quality and public health in EJ communities.¹⁷ [California Assembly Bill 617 \(AB 617\)](#) requires the state board to select highest priority communities for the deployment of community air monitoring systems. In the SCAG region, there are currently 7 EJ communities engaged in the development of Community Emission Reduction Plan (CERP), including South Los Angeles-South Central Los Angeles-Hyde Park, East Los Angeles-Boyle Heights-West Commerce, Wilmington-Carson-West Long Beach, South East Los Angeles, San Bernardino-Muscoy, Eastern Coachella Valley, and El Centro-Herber-Calexico.

- The [University of Southern California \(USC\) Price Center for Social Innovation – Neighborhood Data for Social Change \(NDSC\)](#) hosts a platform to help Los Angeles County community stakeholders track measurable change, improve local policies and programs, and ultimately advocate for a better quality of life within their communities through maps, charts, and data analysis. The NDSC platform supports strong local policy that is data informed and relevant to a wide range of local stakeholders, including local governments, media, nonprofit organizations, advocacy groups, and the general public.¹⁸

REGIONAL

- The [Regional Housing Needs Assessment \(RHNA\)](#), as mandated by State Housing Law as part of the periodic process of updating local housing elements of the General Plan, quantifies the need for housing within each jurisdiction during specified planning periods. For example, RHNA uses a rent-to-income ratio to assess cost burdens at the household level, regardless of the median income of the area. Communities can use the RHNA in land use planning, prioritizing local resource allocation, and in deciding how to address identified existing and future housing needs resulting from population, employment, and household growth. The RHNA does not necessarily encourage or promote growth, but rather allows communities to anticipate growth, so that collectively the region and subregion can grow in ways that enhance quality of life, improve access to jobs, promotes transportation mobility, and addresses social equity, fair share housing needs. SCAG is in the process of developing the 6th cycle RHNA allocation plan, which will cover the planning period October 2021 through October 2029. It is planned for adoption by SCAG in March 2021.

¹⁵ Riverside University Health System Public Health. (2017). Healthy Cities Network.

¹⁶ San Bernardino County. (2013). Community Vital Signs Final Report.

¹⁷ South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD). (2020). AB 617 Community Air Initiatives.

¹⁸ University of Southern California (USC) Price Center for Social Innovation. (2020). Neighborhood Data for Social Change.

- The [Southern California Association of Governments \(SCAG\) Environmental Justice Technical Report to Connect SoCal](#), included as an appendix to SCAG’s 2020 RTP/SCS, or Connect SoCal, which is designed to create region-wide benefits that are distributed equitably, while ensuring that any one group does not carry the burdens of development disproportionately. It is particularly important that Connect SoCal considers the consequences of transportation projects on low-income and minority communities, and avoids, minimizes, or mitigates disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental impacts on low-income and minority populations (also referred to as EJ communities).
- The [Southern California Association of Governments \(SCAG\) Public Health Technical Report to Connect SoCal](#) presents an overview of health outcomes in the SCAG region as they relate to the built environment and the impacts of the RTP/SCS, or Connect SoCal. The multimodal transportation and land use strategies of Connect SoCal include many co-benefits for improving health outcomes and present opportunities to ensure investments result in equitable health outcomes and benefit all populations in the region.
- The [2017 State of California General Plan Guidelines](#), published by the Office of Planning and Research (OPR), provides guidance to local jurisdictions when they are updating their General Plans. The updated guidelines contain new requirements and guidance relating to public health, health equity, and the built environment. OPR provides additional guidance on planning for healthy communities and how to integrate health into the General Plans, including how to incorporate health as a separate element, as an integrated approach woven across multiple elements, or as a hybrid approach that weaves health throughout the General Plan.¹⁹
- [CalEnviroScreen](#), released on behalf of the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), incorporates recent data for nearly all indicators to better reflect environmental conditions or a population’s vulnerability to environmental pollutants²⁰ and ranks communities based on data that are available from state and federal governmental sources. CalEnviroScreen is a science-based mapping tool that helps identify California communities that are most affected by many sources of pollution, and that are often especially vulnerable to pollution’s effects. This tool uses environmental, health, and socioeconomic information to produce a numerical score for each census tract in the state. The scores are mapped so that different communities can be compared. An area with a high score is one that experiences a much higher pollution burden than areas with low scores.
- The [California Healthy Places Index \(HPI\)](#) is a data visualization tool developed by the Public Health Alliance of Southern California to assist communities in exploring local factors that measure life expectancy and compares health outcomes across the state. The HPI provides indexed scores and more detailed data on specific policy action areas that shape health, including housing, transportation, and education.²¹

STATE

- The [2017 Regional Transportation Plan Guidelines for Metropolitan Planning Organization \(MPO\)](#), released by the California Transportation Commission (CTC), provides guidance for MPOs when preparing their RTP/SCSs, including promoting public health and health equity as well as an appendix that details policies and examples from MPOs across the state.

¹⁹ Governor’s Office of Planning and Research. (2017). General Plan Guidelines: 2017 Update.

²⁰ Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). (2018). CalEnviroScreen 3.0.

²¹ Public Health Alliance of Southern California. (2018). California Healthy Places Index.

- The [California Household Travel Survey \(CHTS\)](#), conducted by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) every ten years, obtains detailed information about the socioeconomic characteristics and travel behavior of households statewide.
- [California State Assembly Bill 441 \(AB 441\)](#) requires the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Guidelines to identify planning practices that promote health and well-being for Californians. AB 441 provides guidance for MPOs developing regional transportation plans to include programs, policies and practices that promote health and guidelines supporting analysis of aging populations, climate change and health equity.
- [California State Senate Bill 1000 \(SB 1000\) – Environmental Justice Element 2020 Guidance](#) is an update to SB 1000 released by the State of California Governor’s Office of Planning and Research in early 2020, which incorporates the topic of EJ into city and county General Plans in the state of California. SB 1000 is a legislation that made EJ a new mandatory topic in the General Plan and applies to all cities and counties in California with DAC as defined by SB 535, effective January 1, 2018. Each city or county is required to adopt a General Plan which outlines a vision for how a community will grow and change and reflects community priorities and values in its goals, objectives, and implementation measures through the General Plan Requirements. EJ is required for those specific communities that have DAC within their jurisdictions.
- The [Health in All Policies \(HiAP\) Task Force](#) is a project of the Strategic Growth Council, brings together over 20 agencies and departments. The HiAP Task Force continues to support collaboration on health-related outcomes and move forward a range of health initiatives across the state. The Task Force has published a number of new action plans identifying actions state agencies can take to implement solutions that will improve health across the state, including the Equity in Government Practices Action Plan^{22,23} and the Land Use, Schools, and Health Work Group 2016-2018 Action Report.²⁴
- The [Office of Health Equity \(OHE\)](#) moved forward with the implementation of the [Portrait of Promise: The California Statewide Plan to Promote Health and Mental Health Equity](#).²⁵ Example action items include advancing climate change and health equity research, supporting the [California Building Resilience Against Climate Effects \(CalBRACE\) Framework](#) through research, and publishing new reports such as, [Safeguarding California: Implementation Action Plan – Public Health Sector Plan](#). The goals of the CalBRACE project are to enhance the California Department of Public Health’s (CDPH) capability to plan for and reduce health risks associated with climate change by developing climate change and health indicators to better understand the people and places that are most susceptible to adverse health impacts associated with climate change, specifically extreme heat, wildfire, sea level rise, drought and poor air quality.

22 Health in All Policies Task Force (2018). Equity in Government Practices Action Plan.

23 California Strategic Growth Council. (2018). HiAP Task Force Action Plans and Reports.

24 Health in All Policies Task Force. (2018). Land Use, Schools and Health Work Group 2016–2018 Action Report.

25 California Department of Public Health. (2015). Portrait of Promise: The California Statewide Plan to Promote Health and Mental Health Equity.

- [University of California, Los Angeles \(UCLA\) – California Health Interview Survey \(CHIS\)](#), developed by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research and the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health, is the nation’s largest state health survey that offers free data files and health statistics via its data tool, [AskCHIS](#). It provides comprehensive data on the health of California residents and helps policymakers, researchers, health professionals, and others build healthy communities.

NATIONAL

- The U.S. Census Bureau [American Community Survey](#) is a nationwide annual survey that collects sociodemographic and health information for public officials, policymakers, city/state planners, and entrepreneurs to help build their community plans for hospitals and schools, support school lunch programs, improve emergency services, build infrastructure, inform businesses to provide more economic opportunity and expand to new markets, and more. It also includes regional and state data.
- The [American Heart Association \(AHA\)](#) released the [American Heart Association Active Transportation Policy Statement](#) in July 2017 and stated the Association’s commitment to equitable strategies to promote and improve active transportation for all Americans. The policy includes recommendations, research, and resources to embed health within transportation policy to engage a wide range of stakeholders and address community planning, housing, gentrification, street scale-design, health equity, crime, and safety to improve health outcomes.
- The [American Public Health Association \(APHA\)](#) serves as a national resource for public health research on issues such as environmental health, climate change, health equity and other emerging topics. In 2018, APHA adopted national policy statements, which include goals such as advancing health equity and supporting food security. In 2017, APHA released a [report](#) which outlines how MPOs, such as SCAG, can partner with public health practitioners to advance healthy communities, which includes a core recommendation to integrate public health data into the scenario planning modeling processes.²⁶
- The [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#) aims to protect human health and the environment. EPA provides technical assistance to support recovery planning of public health and infrastructure such as waste water treatment plants, long-term cleanup to minimize public health threats including environmental sampling and monitoring, site assessment decontamination and disposal, and environmental surveillance.²⁷ Their website provides information about air quality and pollution, chemicals and toxics, greener living such as sustainable energy and food waste and recycling, health effects and risks of common pollutants, land, waste, and cleanup, and water quality and infrastructure. They also have information about bed bugs, lead, mold, pesticides, and radon. EPA’s [Office of Environmental Justice](#) manages [EJSCREEN](#), a screening and mapping tool, and other resources specific to EJ actions.
- The [U.S. EPA Toxics Release Inventory \(TRI\) Program](#) tracks the industrial management of toxic chemicals that may cause harm to human health and the environment. Data are reported by certain industrial and federal facilities on a city, county, state, and national level.

²⁶ American Public Health Association (APHA).

²⁷ U.S. Department of the Interior. Recovery – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. <https://www.doi.gov/recovery/about-us/primary-agencies/EPA>

- The [Federal Highway Administration \(FHWA\)](#) developed tools to help MPOs and other agencies integrate public health into their planning activities.²⁸ This [framework](#) includes definitions of the social determinants of health and health equity. It also includes a step-by-step process to guide planners through the implementation process.
- The [Healthy People 2020](#) and the [Healthy People 2030 Framework](#) address issues of health equity across the nation by tracking and providing interactive data tools relating to rates of illness, death, chronic conditions, behaviors and other types of outcomes in relation to demographic factors including race and ethnicity, gender, disability status or special health care needs, and geographic location (rural and urban).
- The [National Parks Service \(NPS\)](#) released the [Healthy Parks Healthy People 2.0 Strategy Plan](#) in June 2018, serving as a framework for connecting parks to health and well-being. Established in 2011, Healthy Parks Healthy People promotes all parks and public lands as physical, mental, and social health resources for communities.²⁹ NPS outlines eleven ways for collaboration, ranging from supporting community engagement, technology tools, and improving local access to parks and urban green spaces.

²⁸ U.S. Department of Transportation. Federal Highway Administration. Health in Transportation Corridor Planning Framework.

²⁹ U.S. Department of the Interior. Natural Park Service. (2018). Healthy Parks Healthy People 2018–2023 Strategic Plan.



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ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TOOLBOX

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES & APPROACHES
MAY 2021