



# **Environmental Justice Element**

## **Creating an Equitable Sacramento County**

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**Todd Smith, Planning Director**  
Planning & Environmental Review

# Outline

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- Background of EJ Element
- EJ Element Topics & Projects
- Implementation & Progress
- Areas for Improvement



# Environmental Justice Element

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## SB 1000 – Environmental Justice in Local Land Use Planning

... fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.



# Environmental Justice & Racial Equity

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EJ Element seeks to minimize and equalize effects of environmental hazards among the entire community regardless of income, ethnicity or race.

- **Geographic inequities**

- Neighborhoods with high % of low-income, minority residents experience disproportionate exposure to environmental hazards and resultant health problems.

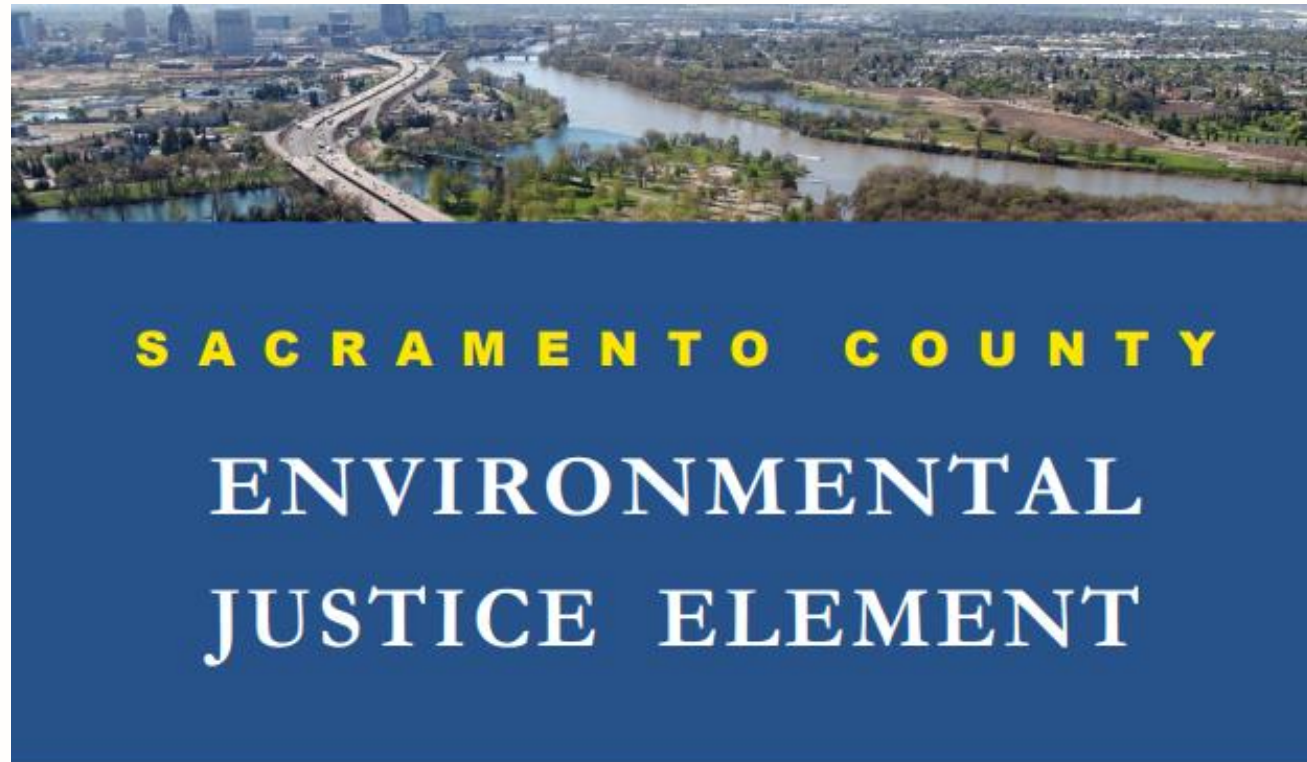
- Land Use decisions can be a factor.

- **Procedural inequities**

- Same neighborhoods face obstacles to participate in the decision-making process for projects that directly affect their neighborhoods

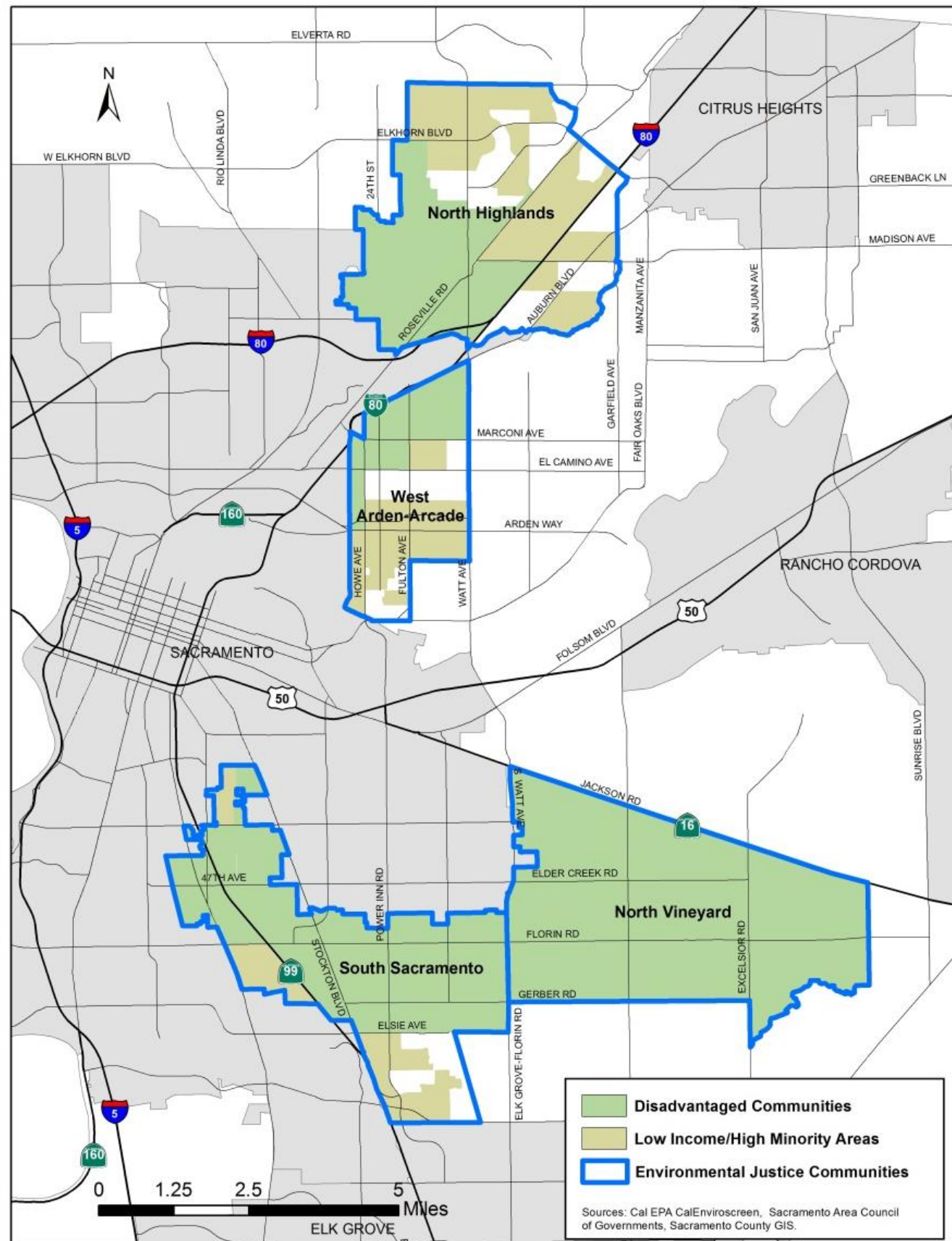
- Not just limited to land use decisions

# Environmental Justice Element Phase 1



- Initial work on Phase 1 began in 2017 & Adopted on May 8, 2018
- Baseline research, scoping & preliminary policies.
- The County elected to emphasize the importance of EJ by preparing a separate, standalone document, that has same weight as any other mandatory element of the County's General Plan.

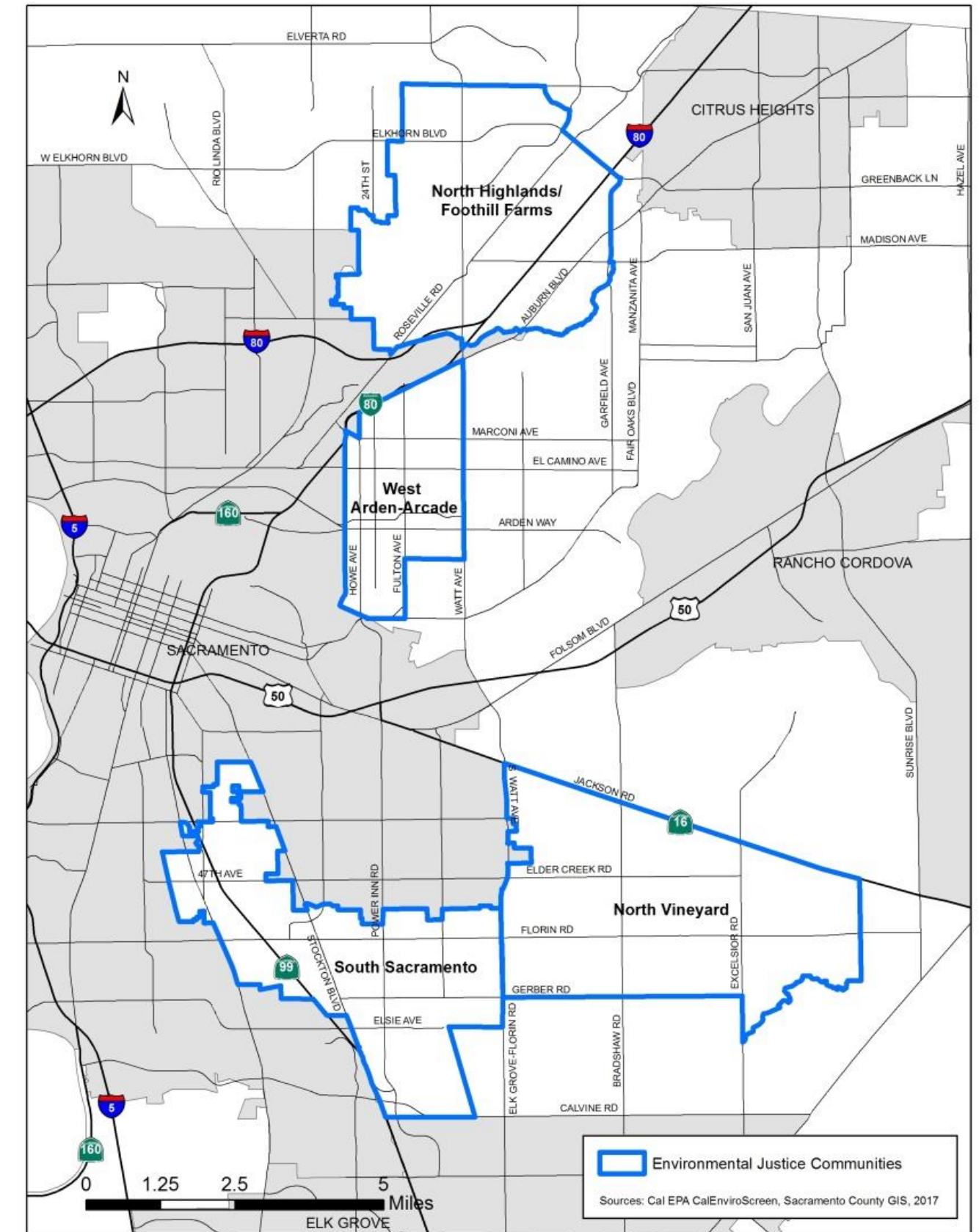
# Environmental Justice Element Phase 1



- Development of EJ Communities
  - CalEnviroScreen 3*
  - MTP/SCS & LI/HM data*
- Community Scale
- Cohesive areas
- Most area within EJ Community is either Disadvantaged Community or Low-Income High Minority area

# Environmental Justice Element Phase 1

- Established EJ Communities
  - North Highlands/Foothill Farms
  - West Arden-Arcade
  - North Vineyard
  - South Sacramento
- Established Baseline Research
  - Demographic Data
    - Race & Ethnicity, language barriers
    - Income, Education & Housing Data
  - Pollution Levels
  - Locations of Food Access and more



# Environmental Justice Element Phase 2

- Began in Summer 2018, Adopted on December 17, 2019
- Built on Phase 1 – confirming baseline research with public engagement.





# Environmental Justice Element Phase 2

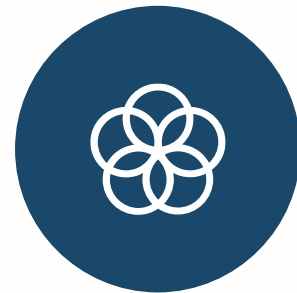
- Community Outreach
  - 7 Pop-up booth at community events
  - Web survey (7 languages)
  - 3 community workshops
  - Meeting with CBOs & stakeholders
- What we learned
  - Importance of humility
  - Approaching with right attitude
  - Willingness to listen



**The County's  
Environmental Justice  
Element covers the  
following topical areas:**

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Civil Engagement



Crime Prevention



Food Access



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Promotion of  
Physical Activity



Access to Public  
Facilities



Reduce Pollution  
Exposure



Safe and  
Sanitary Homes



# Civil Engagement

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**Ensure appropriate opportunities for all persons to participate in the decision-making process.**

- **Community Outreach Strategy**

- A framework for all departments to participate in meaningful two-way communication with the public on all aspects of County governance & delivery of services.

- Continued work with Public Information Office.

- Increased social media & mailing list presence.

- On-call contracts with multiple translation & interpretative services



# Crime Prevention

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**Fear of crime could discourage residents from accessing services that meet Environmental Justice objectives.**

- **Crime Prevention through Environmental Design**

- Reducing both the incidence and fear of crime by proper design, maintenance and use of buildings and the spaces between buildings.

- **Supporting Youth**

- Youth Master Plan to provide vision and a roadmap to improve and enhance the overall quality of life
- Board of Supervisors established *Behavioral Health Youth Advisory Board* in 2021.



# Food Access

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**Food plays a critical role in the health, economy and culture of a sustainable community. It is essential that all have access to food that is healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate.**

- **Food Action Plan**

- Create a holistic vision for the food system from production through waste management County-wide.
- Working with Public Health & Sacramento Food Policy Council on Food Systems Assessment and Food Action Plan

- **Healthy Food Access**

- Require healthy food at convenience stores.
- Allowing edible landscaping as common outdoor amenities & open space.
- Support CalFresh, Market Match, WIC & Farmers Markets.



# Physical Activity

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**Physical Activity is a large contributor to the physical and mental health of Sacramento County residents. Active people tend to live longer and have lower risks for diseases.**

- **Promote Physical Activity**

- Support physical activity programs and education offered by the local park and recreation districts
- Promote walking, biking, and other modes of active transportation
- Encourage school district activities that support physical activity wellness.

- **Active Transportation Plan**

- Adopted in October, 2022
- Combines and updates Pedestrian Master Plan and Bicycle Master Plan
- Prioritizes improvements in EJ Communities.

<http://walkbikesacramento.net>



# Public Facilities

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**Public Facilities are essential for creating and maintaining healthy, connected and vibrant communities.**

- **Equitable Distribution of Public Facilities**
  - Advocate for equitable distribution of public facilities and levels of service within EJ Communities amongst service districts.
  - Preferences given to EJ Communities.



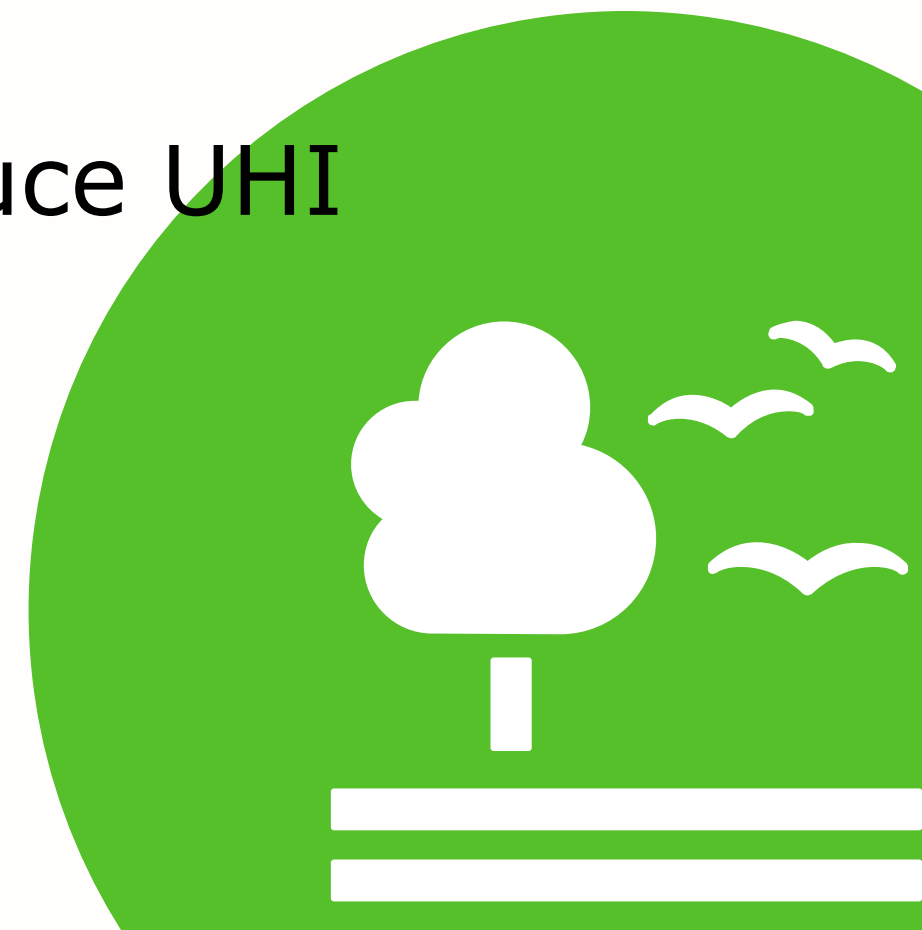
# Pollution Exposure

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**EJ Communities are often disproportionately burdened by multiple sources of pollution exposure.**

- **Climate Action Plan**

- Develop Climate Action Plan and prioritize climate-related investments in EJ Communities
- Transportation – EV charging facilities, public transit
- Green infrastructure, increasing urban forest to reduce UHI
- Energy efficiency upgrades in older building stock
- Incentives needed





# Safe and Sanitary Homes

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**Substandard housing, overcrowded housing, and housing affordability can be issues in EJ Communities.**

- **Housing Maintenance**

- Assist in promoting Low Income Weatherization Program in EJ Communities.

- **Housing Affordability**

- Review and update Affordable Housing Program
- County Rezone/Infill Programs



# Implementation

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- Annual Stakeholder Meeting
  - Opportunity for stakeholders to inform the County on implementation priority.
- Executive Level Working Group
  - Focus on implementation measures that involve multiple County departments



- EJ Report Card
  - Reporting on Implementation of EJ Element
- Staff Training

# Implementation Priority Criteria

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- The implementation priorities were identified by using the following criteria:
  1. Will it institutionalize Environmental Justice as part of the County's regular business practices, and
  2. Is it already funded and have a staffing commitment, and
  3. Does it provide co-benefits across other related community issues and County priorities.



# Other Projects

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- **Re-Envision West Arden Arcade**

- Long-range vision focusing on creating safer and more appealing walk, rolling, bicycling environment.
- Approved in February 2022.

- ***Award of Excellence*** in the Transportation Category from the Sacramento Valley American Planning Association

- **North Watt Area**

- Participation in Study to review and update North Watt Corridor Plan for additional infill housing development.
- Re-imagine North Watt Avenue (DOT) will include EJ Principles

- **Stockton Blvd**

- Continued work to study the feasibility of infill development along the corridor.

# Areas for Improvement

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- **Executive-Level Working Group**

- Continue to form and elevate the importance of the EJ Element and the Working Group.

- Highlight additional need and funding for EJ Communities.

- Provide EJ training to other departments in the County & Agencies.

- **Increasing Awareness**

- Continue to elevate the importance of the EJ Element to all County Departments

- EJ Training for County staff or other agencies

- **Outreach Strategy**

- Best practices, funding for multi-lingual services, increase use of social media, and develop new ways to communicate with County residents.

# Areas for Improvement

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- **Community Outreach**

- Working with CBOs
- Two-way communication
- Listening Sessions
- Regular updates with stakeholders
- Community Ambassadors
- Showing up
  - Attending Community Meetings, Stronger social media presence, Attending CBO meetings, etc...

- **More Collaboration**

- Working with other Agencies and Departments
  - Tree Planting (STF, SMUD)
  - Weatherization Program (SMUD)
  - Air Quality Monitoring (SMAQMD)
  - Food Action Plan (DHS, SFPC)
  - Prioritizing Road Maintenance (DOT)
  - Better Transportation Options & Improved Transit Stops (SacRT)
  - And so much more...

# Questions?

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[EnvJustice@Saccounty.gov](mailto:EnvJustice@Saccounty.gov)

# Thank you!

*We look forward working with you on implementing Environmental Justice Element for Equitable Sacramento County!*

## Environmental Justice Website

- Check out our EJ Report Card
- Sign up for Email Updates
- Stakeholder Meeting on 12/6/23

Scan QR Code  
for EJ Email  
Subscription



[EnvJustice@saccounty.gov](mailto:EnvJustice@saccounty.gov)