

10

**Environmental  
Justice**



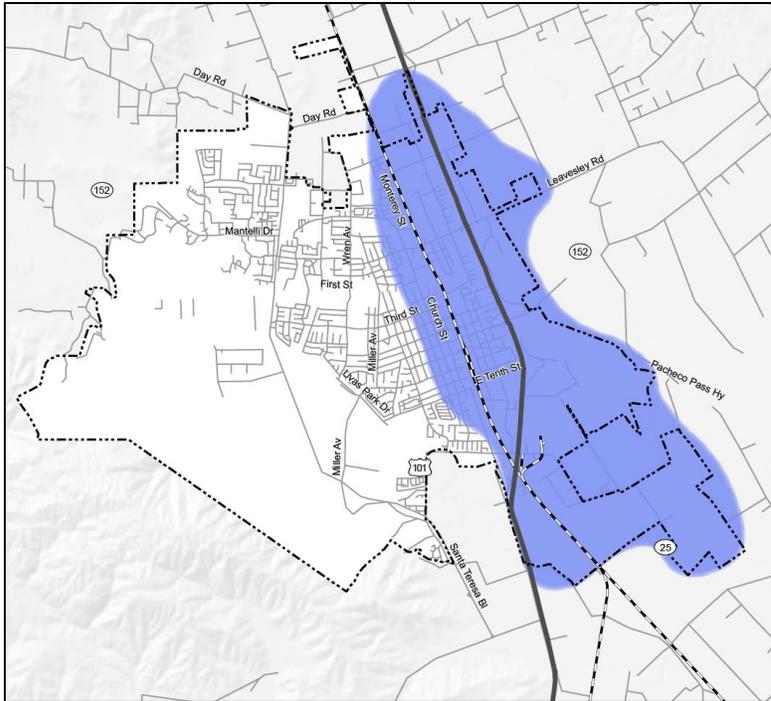
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## **Introduction**

Environmental justice is "...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." Today, and throughout much of California and United States history, communities with lower incomes, lower levels of education, and higher proportions of minority residents often bear a disproportionately large burden of exposure to environmental hazards. These environmental inequities are largely a result of land use policy and zoning regulations (e.g., residential uses located adjacent to industrial uses) that have led some communities to experience higher levels of exposure to air and water pollution. Environmental justice laws seek to address these inequities. California Senate Bill 1000, enacted in 2016, requires general plans adopted after January 2018 to include an environmental justice element, or related goals, policies, and objectives, integrated in other elements. Environmental justice objectives and policies should seek to reduce the unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities through strategies such as reducing pollution exposure, improving air quality, and promoting public facilities, food access, safe and sanitary homes, and physical activity; promote civil engagement in the public decision-making process; and prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities.

To assist in identifying disadvantaged communities, the California Environmental Protection Agency developed an analytical tool, CalEnviroScreen 3.0, which uses 20 different indicators that provide health, environmental, and socioeconomic measures. These indicators are combined to produce individual scores for each census tract throughout California. Census tracts scoring in the 75th percentile or higher are designated as disadvantaged communities. Health, environmental, and socioeconomic indicators for two census tracts in Gilroy ranked at or above the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile include pesticide use, traffic, drinking water contaminants, effects from solid waste sites and facilities, asthma, cardiovascular disease, unemployment, and linguistic isolation. Using these two census tracts as a starting point, the City then broadened the boundaries of the area to more accurately reflect potentially impacted neighborhoods. For planning purposes, the City refers to this area as the Equity and Engagement District (EED), shown in Figure 10-1, which is the focus of the Environmental Justice goals, policies, and programs

**Figure 10-1  
Equity and Engagement District**



Many policies that would address environmental impacts and improve the quality of life for residents living in the EED are already present in other elements of the General Plan. Table 10-1 below provides a list of these policies. The goals, policies, and programs in the Environmental Justice Element aim to fill the gaps and ensure that the General Plan fully addresses the needs of the residents within the EED and the rest of the city.

**Table 10-1: Policies in Other Elements Supporting Environmental Justice Efforts**

<b>Outreach and Inclusion in the Decision-Making Process</b>		
M 3.10	Public Involvement	Page M-17
PFS 9.5	Community Engagement	Page PFS-15
<b>Infrastructure Accessibility, Design, and Maintenance</b>		
M 2.1	Serving All Users	Page M-14
M 3.1	Roadway Design	Page M-15
M 3.3	Sidewalk Network Gaps	Page M-16
M 3.4	Bicycle and Pedestrian Path Network	Page M-16

M 3.5	Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan	Page M-16
M 3.6	Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority	Page M-16
M 3.9	Bicycle Parking	Page M-17
M 3.10	Public Involvement	Page M-17
M 3.13	Road Maintenance and Bicycles	Page M-17
M 3.14	Safe Routes to School	Page M-17
M 3.16	Pedestrian Signage	Page M-18
M 3.17	Traffic Impact Fee for Bicycle/Pedestrian Improvements	Page M-18
M 5.6	Road Maintenance	Page M-21
NCR 3.6	Bicycle Infrastructure Expansion	Page NCR-9
LU 8.1	Community Beautification	Page LU-34
PFS 7.2	Sidewalk Maintenance	Page PFS-12
PFS 7.5	Street Trees	Page PFS-12
<b>Managing Environmental Concerns</b>		
PFS 3.1	Water System Master Plan	Page PFS-7
PFS 3.2	Urban Water Management Plan	Page PFS-7
PFS 3.5	Water Quality	Page PFS-7
PFS 3.7	Water System Reliability	Page PFS-8
PFS 4.1	Wastewater System Master Plan	Page PFS-8
PFS 5.1	Storm Drain Master Plan	Page PFS-10
NCR 4.1	Consistent Standards	Page NCR-12
NCR 4.2	Pollution Prevention	Page NCR-12
NCR 4.3	Drinking Water Quality	Page NCR-12
M 1.4	Residential Traffic	Page M-12
PH 6.1	Noise and Land Use	Page PH-11
PH 6.6	Setbacks and Earth Berms	Page PH-12
PH 6.9	Transportation Noise	Page PH-13

<b>Job Training and Development</b>		
EP 1.5	Training Facilities and Programs	Page EP-4
EP 2.1	Employment Recruitment	Page EP-5
EP 3.4	Development Incentives	Page EP-7
EP 3.5	Business Support Services	Page EP-7
EP 8.2	Jobs to Employed Resident Ratio	Page EP-13
<b>Affordable and Fair Housing</b>		
EP 1.6	Workforce Housing	Page EP-4
<b>Public Transit</b>		
M 4.1	Access to Transit	Page M-19
M 4.7	Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA)	Page M-20
M 4.8	Updated Transit Plan	Page M-21
<b>Provision of Public Facilities and Services</b>		
PFS 1.1	Public Facilities and Development	Page PFS-4
PR 1.2	Healthy Community	Page PR-6
PR 1.3	Parks and Recreational System Master Plan	Page PR-7
PR 1.10	Facility Distribution	Page PR-8
PR 2.1	Recreational Needs	Page PR-10
<b>Policies from the Housing Element</b>		
H-1.4	The City shall support the development of workforce housing to enable the manufacturing workforce to live in the community.	Page H-4
H-2.1	The City shall encourage the provision of new affordable housing.	Page H-4
H-2.2	The City shall provide incentives for affordable housing, including but not limited to the density bonus ordinance, expedited project review, and Affordable Housing Exemption in the Residential Development Ordinance.	Page H-4

H-2.3	The City shall support homeownership opportunities for low- and moderate-income households.	Page H-4
H-2.4	The City shall encourage partnerships between non-profit and for-profit housing developers to encourage affordable housing production.	Page H-4
H-2.5	The City shall continue to require 15 percent of new housing in the Neighborhood District to be affordable to very low-, low-, and moderate-income households.	Page H-4
H-2.6	The City shall consider the development of single-room occupancy units, studio apartments, and other similar unit types that are affordable to extremely low-income residents in higher-density areas of the city.	Page H-4
H-2.7	The City shall continue to participate in programs that assist lower- and moderate-income households to secure affordable housing, such as the County’s Mortgage Credit Certificate program, Section 8 rental voucher programs, and the Housing Trust Fund of Santa Clara County.	Page H-5
H-3.2	The City shall strive to preserve the affordability of existing below market rate housing units.	Page H-5
H-4.1	The City shall encourage housing opportunities for special needs groups, including: seniors; persons with disabilities, including developmental disabilities; the homeless; large households; single female-headed households; and farmworkers.	Page H-5
H-4.2	The City shall encourage the development, rehabilitation, and preservation of affordable and market-rate housing for seniors, particularly in neighborhoods that are accessible to public transit, commercial services, and health and community facilities.	Page H-5
H-4.3	The City shall support efforts to provide emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing for homeless persons and those at risk of homelessness.	Page H-6

H-4.4	The City shall support the development of permanent and seasonal farmworker housing in appropriate areas of the city.	Page H-6
H-5.1	The City shall promote fair housing standards.	Page H-7
H-5.2	The City shall refer discrimination complaints to Project Sentinel or other organizations that address housing discrimination.	Page H-7
H-6.1	The City shall consolidate and disseminate housing related resources to provide better access to information on available housing programs and affordable housing units.	Page H-7
H-6.2	The City shall encourage the production of secondary units in single family districts through outreach and educational materials.	Page H-7

## Community Outreach and Inclusion in the Decision-Making Process

A key component to environmental justice is to proactively encourage involvement of community members who both live and work in the EED in the public decision-making process, especially those residents most impacted by pollution, toxins, and other environmental problems. Facilitating community outreach during the decision-making process also helps City leadership understand where their constituents’ priorities lie, which will help City leaders prioritize resources to address issues that are most critical to resolve and most relevant to improving the day-to-day lives of residents.

The purpose of this section is to ensure residents are informed of and have a say in City decisions that may impact their health and well-being. This section addresses public outreach strategies that ensure the consideration and inclusion of all neighborhoods in the decision-making process.

### Goal EJ 1

To encourage involvement of all Gilroy neighborhoods in the public decision-making process.

#### **EJ 1.1 Translation at Public Meetings**

Provide Spanish translation at public meetings, as requested.

#### **EJ 1.2 Translation for Public Notices**

Publish public meeting notices in English and Spanish.

#### **EJ 1.3 Assess Community Priorities**

Consult with local community leaders to ensure community priorities are being addressed.

#### **EJ 1.4 Meeting Accessibility**

Strive to schedule public meetings at convenient times and in different locations around the City to bring discussion of City issues to all neighborhoods in Gilroy.

#### **EJ 1.5 Consider All Neighborhoods**

When updating a citywide plan or a regional plan that covers the entire city, incorporate consideration for the viewpoints and concerns of all neighborhoods within Gilroy.

#### **EJ 1.6 Public Outreach Materials**

Strive to make public outreach and education materials available online and in-person, in Spanish and English, and accessible to Gilroy neighborhoods.



### **EJ 1.7 Accessibility and Transparency**

Report and summarize findings from studies or evaluations that impact the health and well-being of all neighborhoods within Gilroy. Materials produced for this purpose should be designed and written in a way that is easily accessible to the public.

## **Access to Health Care and Healthy Foods**

Access to health care and healthy foods is a critical component of community health. Policies in this section address accessibility to mental health services, health and wellness education, as well as support to local food vendors to provide healthy foods to their customers.

### **Goal EJ 2**

To improve access to healthy foods, health services, and resources to enhance quality of life.

#### **EJ 2.1 Supply Healthy Foods**

Encourage the County of Santa Clara Public Health Department to assist local vendors such as markets and convenience stores in supplying fresh produce for their customers.

#### **EJ 2.2 Economic Incentives**

Explore opportunities for the creation of economic incentives for local retail vendors to bring healthy foods to underserved areas.

#### **EJ 2.3 Farmer's Markets**

Encourage and facilitate the establishment of one or more farmer's markets in Gilroy.

#### **EJ 2.4 Accept EBT Payments at Farmer's Markets**

Work with Farmer's Market vendors to accept payment through Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT), which allows residents in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) to purchase foods with their program benefits.

#### **EJ 2.5 Mental Health Services**

Encourage the County of Santa Clara Behavioral Health Services to improve city resident access to and awareness of resources for mental health services, substance use services, and suicide prevention.

**EJ 2.6 Health and Wellness Education**

Encourage the County of Santa Clara Public Health Department to provide health education such as wellness classes, healthy cooking classes, as well as to raise awareness of healthy habits and other current public health issues.

## Managing Environmental Concerns

This section addresses environmental concerns related to air and noise pollution. Policies in other elements of the General Plan address water quality concerns through infrastructure improvements. Most of the City has been built out, making it difficult to change the location of existing industries or build noise-reduction structures around existing homes and businesses. Most of the policies in this section promote retrofitting existing homes to filter out air contaminants and outside noise.

### Goal EJ 3

To reduce noise and air pollution impacts in residential areas.

**EJ 3.1 Air Purification Home Retrofit Program**

Explore the feasibility of a program to provide residents the resources to retrofit their homes to filter air contaminants and purify the air inside.

**EJ 3.2 Noise Reduction Retrofit Program**

Explore the feasibility of a program to provide residents the resources to retrofit their homes with noise reduction features.

**EJ 3.3 Noise Attenuation for Existing Development**

Explore the feasibility of constructing sound walls or vegetative buffers between U.S. Highway 101 and residential neighborhoods adjacent to U.S. Highway 101.

## Job Training and Development

Income burden can negatively influence physical health and overall well-being. Residents working multiple jobs may not have time for exercise or cooking healthy meals. Not having enough disposable income can cause families to make difficult decisions, such as deciding whether to buy healthy food or pay rent. Improving access to well-paying jobs and increasing earning potential can fundamentally improve the well-being of residents by eliminating the need to choose between food or rent. This section addresses the provision of and access to job training programs.

## Goal EJ 4

Encourage the growth and development of retail, office, service, and entertainment uses in Gilroy to provide jobs, support City services, and make Gilroy an attractive place to live.

### **EJ 4.1 Financial and Employment Assistance**

Encourage the County of Santa Clara Department of Employment and Benefit Services to improve city resident access to and awareness of available financial and employment assistance.

### **EJ 4.2 Employment Training**

Encourage organizations such as Gavilan Adult Career Education Services (ACES), the Gilroy Unified School District, and local non-profit organizations to improve city resident access to and awareness of available employment training resources.

## Implementation Programs

<b>Table 10-2: Environmental Justice Implementation Programs</b>	2021-2023	2024-2028	2029-2040	Annual	Ongoing
<p><b>1. Translation</b> Develop a program of phased implementation of Spanish translation of public meeting notices and translation provided at public meetings.</p> <p><b>Implements Policies:</b> EJ 1.1, EJ1.2</p> <p><b>Responsible Department:</b> Communication &amp; Engagement Manager</p>	X				X
<p><b>2. Community Engagement Program</b> Provide opportunities for City Council, Planning Commission, and City staff and residents to communicate and engage throughout the year. Examples of such events include “coffee with city leaders” and community forums and meetings.</p> <p><b>Implements Policies:</b> EJ 1.3</p> <p><b>Responsible Department:</b> Communication &amp; Engagement Manager</p>					X
<p><b>3. Maintain List of Meeting Facilities</b> Create and periodically update the City’s website to maintain a current list of meeting facilities located throughout Gilroy.</p> <p><b>Implements Policy:</b> EJ 1.4</p> <p><b>Responsible Department:</b> Recreation</p>	X				X
<p><b>4. Farmer’s Market Vendor Resources</b> Encourage and facilitate the establishment of farmer’s markets in Gilroy. Encourage and help facilitate vendor acceptance of EBT payments.</p> <p><b>Implements Policies:</b> EJ 2.3, 2.4</p>	X				

<b>Table 10-2: Environmental Justice Implementation Programs</b>		<b>2021-2023</b>	<b>2024-2028</b>	<b>2029-2040</b>	<b>Annual</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Responsible Department:</b>	Economic Development					
<b>5. Home Retrofit Program</b>	Study the potential of a program to provide residents the resources and financing mechanisms to retrofit their home to filter out air contaminants and excessive noise. Actively seek and apply for grants that can provide financing for a feasibility study and for implementation of this program.			X		
<b>Implements Policy:</b>	EJ 3.1, 3.2					
<b>Responsible Department:</b>	Community Development					
<b>6. Sound Wall Feasibility Analysis</b>	Coordinate with Caltrans and Valley Transportation Authority to conduct a feasibility analysis on building sound walls along U.S. Highway 101 adjacent to sensitive receptors, e.g., residences and parkland. Actively seek and apply for grants that can provide financing for a feasibility study and for implementation of this program.			X		
<b>Implements Policy:</b>	EJ 3.3					
<b>Responsible Department:</b>	Community Development					
<b>7. Career and Job Fair</b>	Coordinate with the Chamber of Commerce, Gavilan College and other organizations to organize an annual career and job fair with local employers to highlight local employment and employment training opportunities for Gilroy residents.	X			X	
<b>Implements Policy:</b>	EJ 4.2					
<b>Responsible Department:</b>	Economic Development					

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