

MEMORANDUM

DATE September 23, 2020
TO Contra Costa County staff and Sustainability Committee
FROM PlaceWorks
SUBJECT Review of Discussion Draft Goals, Policies, and Actions on Environmental Justice for the General Plan

Thank you for reviewing this discussion draft of goals, policies, and actions to support environmental justice in Contra Costa County. Environmental justice is a new legal requirement for the General Plan, but more importantly it is also one of the topics of greatest concern to County residents. This topic is complex and far-reaching, and the policies and actions we craft will have a direct effect on the lives and health of many people. This draft is just the beginning of the conversation. Your additional ideas and input are crucial to improving and strengthening the General Plan.

Throughout California, low-income communities and communities of color have experienced a combination of historic discrimination, negligence, and political and economic disempowerment, with the result that today, they are struggling with both a disproportionate burden of pollution and health impacts, as well as disproportionate social and economic disadvantages such as poverty or housing instability. SB 1000 was enacted to respond to this inequity by both alleviating pollution and health impacts and compelling cities and counties to include the voices of previously marginalized residents in long-range planning decisions.

Legislation Summary

SB 1000, the Planning for Healthy Communities Act, passed in 2016, requires that General Plans address **environmental justice** in **disadvantaged communities** within the area covered by the General Plan.

“Environmental justice” is defined in California law as 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. “Environmental justice” includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:

- (A) The availability of a healthy environment for all people.
- (B) The deterrence, reduction, and elimination of pollution burdens for populations and communities experiencing the adverse effects of that pollution, so that the effects of the pollution are not disproportionately borne by those populations and communities.

- (C) Governmental entities engaging and providing technical assistance to populations and communities most impacted by pollution to promote their meaningful participation in all phases of the environmental and land use decision making process.
- (D) At a minimum, the meaningful consideration of recommendations from populations and communities most impacted by pollution into environmental and land use decisions.¹

“Disadvantaged communities” are defined as low-income areas that are disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation. The attached draft policy guidance uses the term “disadvantaged community” based on this State law definition. However, the term is not supported by everyone, and we will work with County staff to consider alternative terminology, such as *environmental justice communities*, *communities of concern*, or *frontline communities*.

Environmental justice goals, policies, and objectives must do the following:

- Reduce the unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities by reducing pollution exposure and promoting public improvements, public services, community amenities, food access, safe and sanitary homes, and physical activity.
- Promote civil engagement in the public decision-making process.
- Prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities.

SB 1000 defines DACs per Health and Safety Code Section 39711, specifying CalEnviroScreen as the primary screening method for identifying DACs. Interactive CalEnviroScreen mapping is available online at <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-30>. CalEnviroScreen quantifies a range of factors related to the combination of pollution burden and population characteristics (such as poverty, educational attainment, or age) and arrives at a score for every Census tract. In general, the higher the score, the more impacted a community is. Census tracts in the highest quartile of scores (75 to 100) are considered to be disadvantaged communities under SB1000.² In Contra Costa County, the following communities are identified by CalEnviroScreen as disadvantaged communities:

- North Richmond
- Montalvin Manor, Tara Hills, and Bayview
- Rodeo

¹ California Government Code 65040.12.

² Note that this does not refer to the same methodology used to identify “disadvantaged unincorporated communities” under SB 244. Both use median income as one criterion, but SB 244 is focused on safe and adequate infrastructure while SB 1000 is focused on disproportionate impacts of environmental pollution.

- Crockett
- Vine Hill/Mountain View
- Bay Point

Sources for the Draft Goals, Policies, and Actions

PlaceWorks consulted a number of sources to compile the draft goals, policies, and actions, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Most importantly, input from the many residents and community advocates who have attended 20+ meetings in disadvantaged communities, countywide meetings, and Sustainability Commission meetings so far.
- Environmental Justice Assessment Tool developed by the Contra Costa County Sustainability Commission
- General Plan Guidelines prepared by the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research.
- The SB1000 Toolkit prepared by the California Environmental Justice Alliance and PlaceWorks.
- Draft and adopted elements from other communities in California.
- Comment letters from the Attorney General’s office on the environmental justice components of other County General Plans currently underway.
- Policy Suggestions from Environmental Advocates submitted to the County by a consortium of local and regional organizations.
- AB 617 Community Emission Reduction Plans (CERPs)

Recommendations

Under SB 1000, the General Plan Update process must address specific topics in the new/updated goals, policies, and objectives, including the following:

- **Pollution exposure and air quality.** Existing policies could be expanded to target disadvantaged communities, the specific pollutants of concern in those communities, and mitigation approaches for new development that could place sensitive receptors in areas with exposure to pollutants.
- **Public facilities.** The new environmental justice components of the General Plan should ensure that disadvantaged communities have adequate access to public facilities and services, in part by promoting public improvements in those communities.
- **Food access.** The County should include policies to promote projects that would improve access to affordable and nutritious food in disadvantaged communities.

- **Safe and sanitary homes.** The Housing Element works to ensure access to housing, including affordable housing, and includes policies that promote safe and sanitary homes. These policies could be expanded in the General Plan or a future Housing Element update to address the following:
 - Ensuring that affordable housing projects meet health and safety requirements that are consistent with market-rate housing.
 - Expanding efforts to repair and rehabilitate substandard housing in disadvantaged communities.
 - Remediating lead-based paint, mold, mildew, asbestos, and other contaminants.
 - Enforcing public health-related codes in disadvantaged communities.
- **Physical activity.** The County could expand existing policies in the Open Space Element to target an equitable distribution of physical activity opportunities (i.e., access to parks and open space). This effort could build on projects identified in the County’s Capital Road Improvement Program in addition to specific mobility plans that focus on creating safer and more comfortable streetscapes for pedestrians and bicyclists in disadvantaged communities.
- **Civic engagement.** The County should include new and expanded policies that promote public participation in its planning processes, and which specifically target disadvantaged communities, including through:
 - Using culturally appropriate approaches, language, and context.
 - Considering the convenience of meeting times/locations for community members.
 - Using social media and other communication techniques for those without time to attend public meetings.
 - Providing translation services and childcare when needed.
 - Exploring new pop-up or community-based outreach methods.
 - Leveraging existing events and meetings to meet people where they already are.
- **Prioritization of improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities.** Policies to prioritize improvements and programs that serve disadvantaged communities should address the following:
 - Whether improvements/programs meet an important community need. Under-served communities have needs and priorities that may be distinct from those of the public at large. The equity of projects and investments should be assessed based on whether and how well they address these priority needs.
 - Whether benefits to the local community are significant.
 - Whether low-income residents are the primary beneficiaries.
 - Whether improvements/programs avoid substantial burdens, like increasing toxic exposures, causing a net loss of affordable housing, or displacing residents or local businesses.

Related Topics

Although SB 1000 lists specific topics that must be addressed, the concept of environmental justice can be implemented in many different ways; new policies and programs that improve sustainability, protect community health, and support high-quality jobs (for example) will also advance environmental justice in the county. A successful approach to environmental justice will be ambitious, broad, and holistic. Therefore, the draft policies below are not intended to be the only “environmental justice” policies in the General Plan, but these are a first pass at policies and actions to most directly and specifically respond to the legislative requirements for this topic.

In addition to those policy topics explicitly required by SB 1000, related and supportive policies will address:

- Climate resilience in disadvantaged communities.
- Mixed use development that provides services and jobs near housing.
- Preventing displacement and gentrification when disadvantaged neighborhoods are improved and enhanced.
- Providing a range of housing types for households at a range of income levels, including “missing middle” housing types.
- Multimodal transportation that serves residents who don’t drive and offers opportunities for safe physical activity.
- Public safety and security, including crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED).
- Green building requirements that reduce indoor air pollution and improve health outcomes.
- Emergency and community services that are responsive to the needs of residents and businesses in disadvantaged communities.

We expect more topics to emerge and be added to this set of draft goals, policies, and actions as they undergo review by County staff, the Sustainability Commission, the Planning Commission, the Board of Supervisors, and, of course, the affected communities.

Updates to the Climate Action Plan and the Zoning Code will also reflect the General Plan’s commitment to environmental justice.

Format and Organization

The Board of Supervisors has directed that four themes should be woven throughout the updated General Plan so that they are addressed comprehensively: environmental justice, sustainability, public health, and economic development. The draft policies are listed under the heading of the element in which we think they are most likely to be located.

Note that the Housing Element will be prepared separately from the rest of the Elements in order to meet specific State deadlines and statutory requirements. However, SB 1000 requires the County to address safe and sanitary homes. The current Housing Element, adopted in 2014, already includes a number of policies and programs that address safe and sanitary homes. Any new housing-related policies and actions that are developed through this process will be shared with County housing staff to be incorporated into the Housing Element Update, which must be completed by January 2023.

Currently, based on our experience in other communities, we anticipate denoting policies that focus on environmental justice with an icon and consolidating these policies in an appendix so they can all be reviewed in one place. This approach worked well for the City of Stockton's recent General Plan.

The attached draft goals, policies, and actions include only *countywide* guidance. The General Plan will also include a set of **community profiles** that contain policy guidance specific to each community. Each disadvantaged community, as well as many other communities in the County, will get its own community profile. The policy guidance in each community profile is tailored to the specific issues and needs of each community, as directed by community members through a series of meetings in each community held in 2019 and 2020. In addition, the community profiles for the mapped disadvantaged communities contain important contextual information about the specific sources of pollution, health outcomes, and socioeconomic concerns that contribute to each community's status as a disadvantaged community.

To see the draft community profiles for five of the six mapped disadvantaged communities, please visit the following links. Note that these are still open to further change based on County staff feedback and ongoing dialog with community members. The Vine Hill/Mountain View profile is not yet drafted.

- [North Richmond Draft Community Profile](#)
- [Montalvin Manor, Tara Hills, and Bayview Draft Community Profile](#)
- [Rodeo Draft Community Profile](#)
- [Crockett Draft Community Profile](#)
- [Bay Point Draft Community Profile](#)

A Note on Wording

In consultation with ECC2040 Project Manager Will Nelson, we are following these conventions for Goals, Policies, and Actions:

- **Goal:** Describes the general desired result that the County seeks to create through the implementation of its General Plan. Goals are ambitious and inspirational. A Goal can be supported by any number of policies and/or actions.
 - Most of the goals in the existing General Plan seem to start with “To...” (i.e., the goal is “to” achieve X), but not all. To avoid the redundancy of beginning each goal with “To”, we will strike “to” and just start with what the County is trying to achieve, phrased as a noun.
- **Policy:** Guides decision-making as the County works to achieve a goal. Such policies, once adopted, represent statements of County regulation. A policy is on-going and requires no further implementation. The General Plan’s policies set out the standards that will be used by County staff, the Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors in their review of land development projects and in decision-making about County actions. Words like *require, encourage, promote, allow*, etc. indicate policies. A policy does not have to be mandatory.
 - Many of the existing policies are statements of things that “shall be” done. To reduce the number of words required, we will use an active voice. For example, Policy 3-1 would read “Support and stimulate housing infill...” instead of “Housing infill shall be supported and stimulated...”
- **Action:** A measure, procedure, or technique intended to help to achieve a specified goal. The County must take additional steps to accomplish each action in the General Plan. Words like *complete, adopt, amend, prepare, publish, collaborate with*, etc. indicate actions. An action is something concrete that can and will be completed and “checked off” (literally or metaphorically). There is not a 1:1 correspondence between policies and actions. Some policies may not require actions to implement; some actions may implement more than one policy.
 - These are called “implementation measures” in the existing General Plan. Existing implementation measures use the active voice, and we will maintain that approach.

Environmental Justice Draft Policy Guidance

The draft countywide environmental justice goals, policies, and actions are listed below. They were developed based on community input at community meetings and the in-person, virtual, and online collaborations on community health, sustainability, and environmental justice, as well as best practices and guidance from the State. This policy guidance would be incorporated into the elements of the General Plan as indicated by each heading.

The policy guidance below is also organized by the following goals:

- **Goal EJ-A:** Equitable distribution of social and economic advantages among all communities in the county so that no community is disproportionately burdened by environmental pollution or other hazards.
- **Goal EJ-B:** Equitable and convenient access to fresh and healthy foods among all communities in the county so that all residents find it easy to make healthy food choices.
- **Goal EJ-C:** Equitable access to safe and sanitary homes among all communities in the county so that no resident has to live in an unsafe or unhealthy place.
- **Goal EJ-D:** Equitable access to job training, job opportunities, and economic stability among all communities in the county so that all residents can access safe jobs, earn a living wage to support their families, and build shared prosperity.
- **Goal EJ-E:** Equitable engagement with all communities in the county so that all residents share an equal voice in decisions that affect their community.
- **Goal EJ-F:** Equitable, convenient access to a safe, affordable, multi-modal transportation network among all communities in the county so that all residents, regardless of age, ability, race, culture, or economic status, are less dependent on cars and enjoy opportunities to walk, bike, roll, or take transit to their destinations.
- **Goal EJ-G:** Equitable distribution and quality of public facilities, infrastructure, and services among all communities in the county so that the fundamental needs of all residents are met and all residents can access the services they need.
- **Goal EJ-H:** Equitable and convenient access to health services among all communities in the county so that all residents can find the physical and behavioral health care services they need within their community.
- **Goal EJ-I:** Equitable access to safe recreational activities and parks among all communities in the county so that all residents are empowered to choose an active lifestyle that supports their health.
- **Goal EJ-J:** Equitable and healthy air quality among all communities in the county so that all residents, including those with high sensitivity to unhealthy air, can live in their community without facing disproportionately high risks of respiratory disease and other health problems.
- **Goal EJ-K:** Communities that are safe and resilient from hazards associated with the use, transport, treatment, and disposal of hazardous waste and hazardous substances, including from fossil fuels, chemical refining, and power plants.

Land Use Element

Goal EJ-A Equitable distribution of social and economic advantages among all communities in the county so that no community is disproportionately burdened by environmental pollution or other hazards.

Policies

- Policy EJ-A.1 Incentivize and streamline public and private investment in new development or redevelopment that promotes community goals in disadvantaged communities, as identified in the community profiles.
- Policy EJ-A.2 For projects that would significantly impact a disadvantaged community, pursue community benefits agreements that achieve the community goals identified in the community profile.
- Policy EJ-A.3 Until fossil fuel industries are phased out, require any proposed project requiring a use permit for a fossil fuel industry or its accessory infrastructure that would impact a disadvantaged community to include early and substantial community engagement as part of the permitting process. As conditions of approval, such projects must include substantial community benefits that support the goals identified by the community in the community profile.
- Policy EJ-A.4 Phase out existing fossil fuel industries and transition to just, equitable, and clean industries that offer good-wage jobs.
- Policy EJ-A.5 In order for an application for a major development project to be deemed complete, require applicants to document to the County’s satisfaction how the project will promote environmental justice, including how the project will ensure the following:
- (a) Its costs and benefits will be shared equitably;
 - (b) Its economic opportunities will be shared equitably;
 - (c) It will not displace existing residents or businesses in disadvantaged communities; and
 - (d) It will avoid direct, indirect, or unintended negative impacts on the quality of life of residents within disadvantaged communities. Source: EJ Assessment tool developed by Sustainability Commission
- Policy EJ-A.6 *Prioritize clean-up of illegal dumping in disadvantaged communities.*

Actions

- Action EJ-A.1 In coordination with impacted communities, workers, and business/industry, develop and implement a plan to phase out fossil fuel industries and transition to just, equitable, and clean industries that offer good-wage jobs. The plan should address site remediation responsibility and strategies to improve the health, safety, infrastructure, job opportunities, and revenue opportunities during the shift to a zero emission economy, paying special attention to helping develop new opportunities for how disadvantaged communities will realize economic, health, and other benefits.

- Action EJ-A.2 Develop criteria for evaluating projects that would potentially impact a disadvantaged community. For projects that would adversely impact a disadvantaged community, establish required project approval findings to ensure that community benefit agreements or other mitigation efforts would achieve the community goals identified in the community profile. As part of this work, define what constitutes a major development project in or adjacent to a disadvantaged community; as indicated in other policies and actions in this General Plan, such projects may be subject to additional requirements compared to projects that don't meet that definition.
- Action EJ-A.3 Develop a checklist that establishes criteria to evaluate how new development supports the County's environmental justice and health goals and the environmental justice and health-related community goals identified in the relevant community profile.
- Action EJ-A.4 *Upon each review of the General Plan [will cross reference a Land Use Element action related to regular reviews of the General Plan], work with the Contra Costa County Health Services Department to monitor health outcomes data for disadvantaged communities in order to determine the effectiveness of the County's environmental justice policies. During this review, assess any updated information related to the delineation of disadvantaged communities in Contra Costa County. Based on these reviews, update the map of disadvantaged communities and environmental justice-related goals, policies, and actions accordingly.*
- Action EJ-A.5 Explore the feasibility of creating, participating in, or attracting a public bank.
- Action EJ-A.6 *Develop and sufficiently fund a program to assist project applicants in disadvantaged communities in navigating the project application and review process.*
- Action EJ-A.7 *Improve code enforcement and public works maintenance practices to keep disadvantaged communities hazard free, safe, and clean, emphasizing enforcement actions on issues identified by the community in its community profile.*

Goal EJ-B Equitable and convenient access to fresh and healthy foods among all communities in the county so that all residents find it easy to make healthy food choices.

Policies

- Policy EJ-B.1 Increase access to fresh food in disadvantaged communities by allowing and encouraging local food production, micro agriculture, edible landscapes, rooftop gardens, community gardens, urban farms, and farmers' markets on vacant or underutilized lands, including publicly-owned land, and by distributing information about community-supported agriculture programs that provide affordable access to fresh food.
- Policy EJ-B.2 Require new or substantially renovated County facilities that interface with the public and that are located in disadvantaged communities to incorporate facilities and amenities that improve the public's access to healthy food options.

- Policy EJ-B.3 Maximize multimodal access to fresh food by encouraging grocery stores, healthy corner stores, and outdoor markets at key transit nodes and within transit-oriented developments.
- Policy EJ-B.4 Provide access to public land, cleanup, and other County services for farmers' markets in disadvantaged communities.
- Policy EJ-B.5 Encourage farmers and neighborhood community gardens to participate in local farmers' markets.

Actions

- Action EJ-B.1 Prepare a healthy food ordinance that creates incentives and guidelines that support access to healthy food through land use controls, such as streamlined permitting of grocery stores. When developing this ordinance, work with Contra Costa County Health Services to collect geographic data about current health conditions.
- Action EJ-B.2 Implement a County Nutrition Action Plan (CNAP) to promote the 2010 Dietary Guidelines, federal and State food security programs, and physical activity.
- Action EJ-B.3 Develop guidelines to support implementation of micro agriculture, rooftop gardens, community gardens, urban farms, and farmers' markets, including seeking input from local residents on convenient and accessible locations.
- Action EJ-B.4 Educate local farmers about opportunities for participation in local farmers' markets to bring locally grown food to disadvantaged communities. In addition, encourage farmers' markets to reduce vendor restrictions or entry fees for local farmers to incentivize local participation.
- Action EJ-B.5 Conduct nutrition workshops, health events and social marketing for low income residents to promote healthy eating and active living. (from <https://cchealth.org/nutrition/>)
- Action EJ-B.6 Coordinate school and after-school programs as well as peer to peer education to empower families and youth to choose healthy foods, drink water instead of sweetened drinks and live an active life. This could include educational field trips to local farms, community gardens, and outdoor recreation areas. (from <https://cchealth.org/nutrition/>)
- Action EJ-B.7 Participate in local coalitions and subcontract with community partners to collaborate with government agencies, child care centers, faith-based organizations, community leaders, food retailers, other businesses and schools to support programs and policies that mitigate child obesity and improve access and intake of healthy foods and physical activity. (from <https://cchealth.org/nutrition/>)
- Action EJ-B.8 Encourage worksite wellness through access to healthier food choices in vending machines and promotion of physical activity. (from <https://cchealth.org/nutrition/>)
- Action EJ-B.9 Collect data for grant funding, program planning and evaluation of interventions to improve access and consumption of healthy food and physical activity. (from <https://cchealth.org/nutrition/>)

Action EJ-B.10 Every five years, review the existing Alcoholic Beverage Sales Commercial Activities Ordinance to ensure disadvantaged communities are not experiencing disproportionate concentrations of or impacts from new bars and liquor stores. To support implementation of this ordinance, set up and maintain a shared data system between the Health Services and Conservation and Development departments that identifies the locations of current establishments, along with information about public safety and public health.

Goal EJ-C Equitable access to safe and sanitary homes among all communities in the county so that no resident has to live in an unsafe or unhealthy place.

Policies

- Policy EJ-C.1 Ensure that future improvements in disadvantaged communities will not produce a net loss of affordable housing or the displacement of residents.
- Policy EJ-C.2 *Ensure adequate living conditions for tenants through ongoing and effective code enforcement, with priority given to rental properties in disadvantaged communities.*
- Policy EJ-C.3 *Coordinate with the Housing Authority of Contra Costa County, affordable housing developers, and other organizations to transition vacant, unentitled land in disadvantaged communities into affordable housing, which could include many types of innovative housing products. This should include homeownership opportunities to help residents build intergenerational wealth.*

Actions

- Action EJ-C.1 *Develop and implement a rent control and just cause for eviction ordinance to strengthen the protections provided by AB 1482 and provide accessible resources for fair tenant protections in disadvantaged communities.*
- Action EJ-C.2 Conduct periodic outreach in disadvantaged communities to inform tenants of their rights and responsibilities. Written outreach efforts should be translated into appropriate languages.
- Action EJ-C.3 Update the County Health and Safety Code to establish a framework for the County to protect residents' access to secure housing through eviction moratoriums or other mechanisms when the County and/or State declare states of emergency due to natural or human-made disasters, including epidemics and pandemics.
- Action EJ-C.4 Obtain funding for, address barriers to, and increase participation in the County's weatherization program for extremely low, very low, and low-income homeowners, landlords, and renters, as well as in other programs like the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative, to provide resources to bring older properties up to Code and improve their livability, make minor home repairs and energy improvements, and improve health and quality of life. Focus these resources on homes in disadvantaged communities, and in particular rental housing and high-density housing.

- Action EJ-C.5 Create a bulk buying program that allows people to purchase air conditioners, air purifiers, heaters, and other electric appliances at wholesale prices to increase energy efficiency and replace hazardous appliances. Work with volunteer groups to help people install air conditioners and other electrical appliances if they are unable to do so themselves, focusing on disadvantaged communities and other areas with high levels of vulnerable people. Consider augmenting energy efficiency programs to reduce electricity use and help offset the cost of operating electrical appliances.
- Action EJ-C.6 Partner with a local solar company to enact a solar group buy program to purchase solar panels and battery storage in bulk for installation in disadvantaged communities, including the establishment and subsidization of community solar programs for joint membership, which aggregate multiple consumers' electricity sourced from a single photo-voltaic solar location. The program should include an educational component to teach the community about the benefits and process of solar installation and give them the opportunity to sign up for the program at a discounted rate.
- Action EJ-C.7 In collaboration with nonprofit and for-profit developers, obtain funding for and establish community land trusts serving each disadvantaged community that will support long-term community ownership and housing affordability.
- Action EJ-C.8 *Expand the County's first-time homebuyer program to provide more education and assistance, prioritizing outreach and marketing in disadvantaged communities to spread awareness of the program.*
- Action EJ-C.9 *In coordination with Contra Costa Health Services, create an inventory of available land for tiny homes or other types of innovative housing products as alternatives to accommodate people who lack housing.*
- Action EJ-C.10 Collaborate with Contra Costa Health Services and the Contra Costa Council on Homelessness to develop and implement a plan to *provide transition facilities and services for people facing homelessness. Link homeless programs with supportive services such as behavioral health, substance abuse, and primary health care.*
- Action EJ-C.11 Conduct periodic outreach to absentee owners of properties in disadvantaged communities to inform owners of their legal obligations to maintain rental properties in safe and habitable condition. Keep tenants informed of these efforts, including by translating the information into languages other than English.
- Action EJ-C.12 Continue to support the Contra Costa Lead Poisoning Prevention Project's programs, including services for children, public health nurse case management, home environmental investigation, education and outreach, and information and referrals for parents, home remodelers and child care providers. (from <https://cchealth.org/lead-poison/>)

Goal EJ-D Equitable access to job training, job opportunities, and economic stability among all communities in the county so that all residents can access safe jobs, earn a living wage to support their families, and build shared prosperity.

Policies

- Policy EJ-D.1 Actively work across County departments and agencies to attract businesses that provide desired goods and services in disadvantaged communities, including food stores with fresh produce, health care, childcare, pharmacies, and other retailers. Balance community desires with comprehensive assessments of market demand to guide business attraction efforts.
- Policy EJ-D.2 Actively work across County departments and agencies to attract manufacturing businesses in the clean technology sector, especially those that will not increase emissions in or near disadvantaged communities.
- Policy EJ-D.3 Promote entrepreneurship and locally owned businesses and enterprises in disadvantaged communities to support economic self-sufficiency and stability, including through training and outreach to local small business owners.

Actions

- Action EJ-D.1 *Explore the feasibility of establishing a First Source Hiring Program requiring project applicants to make best efforts to hire new employees, workers, and subcontractor components of the project from the local area.*
- Action EJ-D.2 Partner with community organizations, large employers, trade associations, unions, and job training skills centers to support enhanced job-skills training, recruitment programs and services, and childcare services to support workers in disadvantaged communities. Work with experienced groups to ensure that programs will be properly staffed and funded. Training and intervention strategies should reduce barriers to employment for youth, formerly incarcerated residents, and residents with limited English proficiency, and they should support a just transition toward a sustainable economy by re-training fossil fuel-based workers with skills for green industrial jobs.
- Action EJ-D.3 *Explore strategies to establish a revolving loan fund or other economic development initiatives to support small businesses in disadvantaged communities.*

Goal EJ-E Equitable engagement with all communities in the county so that all residents share an equal voice in decisions that affect their community.

Policies

- Policy EJ-E.1 Notify the community through the County website and coordination with community organizations and leaders when County planning decisions are being considered in or adjacent to disadvantaged communities. Conduct outreach and engagement with disadvantaged communities as follows:

- Prepare public notices and other materials in the predominant language(s) spoken in the community and provide interpretation services at meetings as needed.
- Make public notices and other important documents available in print at local libraries, community centers, or other gathering places.
- Use approaches appropriate for the community.
- Schedule, format, and locate community workshops and meetings to be convenient for community members and provide childcare.
- Use social media, virtual meeting platforms, and other communication techniques for those without time or ability to attend public meetings.
- Consider data that reflects the economic, gender, age, and racial diversity of the affected population. [Source: EJ Assessment tool from Sustainability Commission]
- Clearly explain potential adverse impacts of a proposed project in plain language that is easily understood by the target community.

Policy EJ-E.2 Support community-driven or community-led initiatives in disadvantaged communities that work toward the goals identified in the community profiles. Support could include technical assistance and providing staff resources and meeting spaces, among other methods.

Actions

- Action EJ-E.1 In coordination with leaders and stakeholders from disadvantaged communities, prepare a community engagement toolkit that identifies outreach and engagement activities based on the project type and stakeholders involved in order to build community participation and ensure all voices are represented.
- Action EJ-E.2 *Establish an ongoing environmental justice advisory group comprised of community members from disadvantaged communities to advise and assist the County in addressing disproportionate health, safety, and welfare in disadvantaged communities.*
- Action EJ-E.3 Identify, initiate, and formalize partnerships with community organizations and leaders in disadvantaged communities to ensure that local residents can make significant contributions to planning processes.
- Action EJ-E.4 Partner with the County Administrator's Office and appropriate departments to identify communities with a significant number of non-English speaking households, and develop resources and strategies to better engage them.
- Action EJ-E.5 As part of the General Plan annual progress report to the Board of Supervisors, describe the County's efforts to meet the needs of each disadvantaged community. The report should specifically summarize the extent to which the County has implemented the policies and actions identified in each disadvantaged community profile.

- Action EJ-E.6 Hold at least one public meeting per year in each disadvantaged community, including representatives from the full spectrum of County Departments, to hear from residents of these communities, and use that input to inform the County’s annual budgeting process. Provide translation and childcare services at these meetings.
- Action EJ-E.7 Support community events, such as block parties and community service days, that support social connections, neighborhood identity, and behavioral health.
- Action EJ-E.8 Partner with community organizations and franchise garbage haulers to optimize community clean-up days in disadvantaged communities, including by focusing clean-up activities in disadvantaged communities over other communities that are part of the same contract.

Transportation and Circulation Element

Goal EJ-F Equitable, convenient access to a safe, affordable, multi-modal transportation network among all communities in the county so that all residents, regardless of age, ability, race, culture, or economic status, are less dependent on cars and enjoy opportunities to walk, bike, roll, or take transit to their destinations.

Policies

- Policy EJ-F.1 *Support improvements to transit, bikeways, and sidewalks in disadvantaged communities to make active transportation more accessible and user-friendly while decreasing vehicle speeds, congestion, and air pollution. Prioritize infrastructure projects identified in disadvantaged community profiles.*
- Policy EJ-F.2 *Prioritize energy-efficient street lighting programs in disadvantaged communities, particularly at parks and transit stops, along commercial corridors, near high density housing, and in high crime neighborhoods.*
- Policy EJ-F.3 Prioritize transit shelters and benches or other seating at transit stops in disadvantaged communities, especially along commercial corridors and near high density housing.
- Policy EJ-F.4 *Support local transit providers in establishing and maintaining routes and services that provide disadvantaged communities with convenient access to employment centers, shopping, healthy food outlets, and services. Support extended hours to serve shift workers.*
- Policy EJ-F.5 Support development of small-scale neighborhood nodes that provide a range of neighborhood-serving retail, public amenities, and services to residents of disadvantaged communities within walking distance of their homes.
- Policy EJ-F.6 Work with school districts and neighborhood groups to ensure that safe walking, bicycling, and transit routes to school exist, prioritizing the development and maintenance of sidewalks, crosswalks, street lighting, bicycling infrastructure, transit stop amenities, automotive speed controls, and other safety improvements in disadvantaged communities, including in residential areas and near schools, libraries, and recreational facilities.

Actions

- Action EJ-F.1 *Engage in community-based transportation plans or other initiatives by transit providers that seek to expand the hours of operation, operational boundaries, convenience, and quality of accessible transit services to improve mobility for seniors, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable communities.*
- Action EJ-F.2 Develop a program to subsidize transit passes for residents of disadvantaged communities.
- Action EJ-F.3 Create and promote a program to facilitate partial and/or temporary street closures for amenities such as parklets and community events such as farmers' markets, block parties, or bicycle and pedestrian events, if requested by residents. Support community members by providing timely feedback and processing permits.
- Action EJ-F.4 Develop a program to establish, maintain, and enforce truck routes in the unincorporated county. This program should establish criteria for designating truck routes, signage, and enforcement mechanisms.
- Action EJ-F.5 Partner with adjacent jurisdictions and regional transportation planning committees to manage regional movement of goods in unincorporated areas to encourage truckers to remain on freeways and regional routes while minimizing impacts on residents and other sensitive receptors in disadvantaged communities. Seek creative options to deter trucks from residential streets in disadvantaged communities, acknowledging that California Highway Patrol may not have the resources to provide enforcement of truck routes.

Housing Element

As noted in the introduction above, the Housing Element will be updated through a separate and parallel process. Any relevant policies developed to address safe and sanitary homes or other topics will be folded into the Housing Element through that process.

Relevant policies in the current adopted Housing Element include:

GOAL 1 Maintain and improve the quality of the existing housing stock and residential neighborhoods in Contra Costa County.

Policy 1.1 Assist low-income homeowners in maintaining and improving residential properties through housing rehabilitation and energy efficiency assistance programs.

Policy 1.2 Focus rehabilitation assistance and code enforcement efforts in communities with a high concentration of older and/or substandard residential structures.

Policy 1.3 Assist affordable housing providers in the acquisition and rehabilitation of older residential structures, and maintain them as long-term affordable housing.

Policy 1.4 Promote increased awareness among property owners and residents of the importance of property maintenance to neighborhood quality.

GOAL 8 Promote equal opportunity for all residents to reside in the housing of their choice.

Policy 8.1 Prohibit discrimination in the sale or rental of housing to anyone on the basis of race, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation, familial status, marital status or other such arbitrary factors.

Policy 8.2 Provide financial support to non-profit organizations providing fair housing services.

Policy 8.3 Enhance the opportunity for seniors, persons with disabilities, large households, single parents, persons with HIV/AIDS, persons with mental illness, and farmworkers to have access to housing of their choice.

Housing Programs:

Rehabilitation Loans: Disseminate information on housing rehabilitation assistance through the County website, public access cable channels, notices in the press, presentations and distribution of brochures to public service agencies and community groups, and mailings to County residents.

Code Enforcement: Continue to carry out code enforcement activities (rental inspection program) as a means to maintain the quality of the housing stock and residential neighborhoods.

Acquisition/Rehabilitation: Disseminate information on housing rehabilitation assistance on the Department webpage, presentations and distribution of brochures to apartment owners and property management associations.

First-Time Homebuyer Opportunities: Continue to expand homeownership opportunities through a combination of homebuyer assistance programs, financial support of new construction, and development agreements.

Residential Sites Inventory: Maintain an up-to-date inventory of vacant/underutilized residential sites as funding permits and make inventory available to potential developers (both for profit and non-profit developers)

Public Facilities and Services Element

Goal EJ-G Equitable distribution and quality of public facilities, infrastructure, and services among all communities in the county so that the fundamental needs of all residents are met and all residents can access the services they need.

Policies

Policy EJ-G.1 Systematically prioritize investments in public facilities, infrastructure, and services that benefit disadvantaged communities and respond to the needs identified in the community profiles.

- Policy EJ-G.2 Assist disadvantaged communities in establishing funding and financing mechanisms – both community-generated mechanisms like building improvement districts and County-initiated mechanisms like landscape and lighting improvement districts – to provide community-desired public facilities and services.
- Policy EJ-G.3 Coordinate with the planning efforts of various service providers (e.g., water, sewer, and recreation districts) to ensure efficient and effective service delivery in disadvantaged communities.

Actions

- Action EJ-G.1 Review needs and services in each disadvantaged community as part of the annual budgeting process.
- Action EJ-G.2 Identify, secure funding for, and implement green infrastructure projects in disadvantaged communities that support the community goals identified in the community profiles.
- Action EJ-G.3 Explore options for the County to provide seed grants, micro loans, or similar funding to community-based organizations or public-private partners to support green infrastructure or other related improvements in disadvantaged communities.
- Action EJ-G.4 Compile, maintain, and make easily available a list of numbers to call for basic needs such as code enforcement, housing assistance, food assistance, and healthcare. Provide this information in multiple languages.
- Action EJ-G.5 Establish a task force of County department heads or their immediate deputies and other stakeholders (e.g., cities, local environmental justice organizations, and other service providers) to coordinate efforts, provide oversight, and otherwise ensure that public services and facilities in disadvantaged communities are prioritized and efficiently and effectively delivered.
- Action EJ-G.6 Encourage internet providers to improve access to reliable, fast internet access in disadvantaged communities at affordable prices.

Goal EJ-H Equitable and convenient access to health services among all communities in the county so that all residents can find the physical and behavioral health care services they need within their community.

Policies

- Policy EJ-H.1 Work with Contra Costa Health Services and community-based organizations to expand community health-related outreach, analysis, and implementation efforts in disadvantaged communities.
- Policy EJ-H.2 *Collaborate with non-profit partners and Contra Costa Health Services to attract medical clinics, behavioral health facilities, and pharmacies in areas that lack access to health care, prioritizing disadvantaged communities.*

Actions

Action EJ-H.1 Minimize zoning requirements for medical facilities to reduce barriers to development.

Goal EJ-I Equitable access to safe recreational activities and parks among all communities in the county so that all residents are empowered to choose an active lifestyle that supports their health.

Policies

Policy EJ-I.1 Assist with coordination to support joint use recreation facilities serving disadvantaged communities.

Policy EJ-I.2 Increase access to diverse, high-quality parks, green space, recreational facilities, and natural environments for disadvantaged communities. Design and maintain these facilities to offer a safe and comfortable environment for residents of all ages and abilities.

Policy EJ-I.3 Rather than allowing in-lieu fees, require major new development projects in disadvantaged communities to improve existing park and recreation amenities within the community and/or to add new amenities within the project, ideally open to the public. In-lieu fees may only be used when amenity improvements or new amenities are not feasible, as determined by the County.

Policy EJ-I.4 Require new or substantially renovated County recreational facilities located in disadvantaged communities to incorporate facilities, amenities, and public spaces that create opportunities for physical activity and social interaction.

Policy EJ-I.5 Increase recreation opportunities in disadvantaged communities by working with other agencies to convert public easements, such as utility corridors or unused rights-of-way, into parks and trails.

Policy EJ-I.6 Support local community groups and volunteer organizations in efforts to improve or maintain local parks, trails, and other public spaces, especially in disadvantaged communities.

Actions

Action EJ-I.1 Coordinate with park districts to prepare a parks and open space needs assessment for each disadvantaged community. Based on the results of the assessment for each community, implement improvements that address barriers to outdoor physical activity, such as inadequate infrastructure and safety concerns.

Action EJ-I.2 Work with recreation and school districts to identify indoor recreational and athletic facilities to serve as emergency housing and cooling centers in disadvantaged communities for natural hazards or extreme heat events. In addition, work with these districts to prepare a list of priority improvements at these facilities to implement in preparation for emergency events.

Conservation Element

Goal EJ-J Equitable and healthy air quality among all communities in the county so that all residents, including those with high sensitivity to unhealthy air, can live in their community without facing disproportionately high risks of respiratory disease and other health problems.

Policies

- Policy EJ-J.1 Require a cumulative health risk assessment, including consideration of truck traffic impacts, when a project potentially affects sensitive receptors in disadvantaged communities, and require appropriate mitigation based on the findings of the assessment.
- Policy EJ-J.2 When evaluating health risk impacts of projects in disadvantaged communities, use a cancer risk of 1.0 per million as the threshold for a significant impact.
- Policy EJ-J.3 Require new development to site sensitive receptors such as homes, schools, playgrounds, sports fields, childcare centers, senior centers, and long-term health care facilities as far away as possible from significant pollution sources.
- Policy EJ-J.4 When evaluating air quality impacts of projects in disadvantaged communities, use thresholds of significance that match or are more stringent than the air quality thresholds of significance identified in the current Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) Air Quality Guidelines.
- Policy EJ-J.5 Consider future General Plan and/or Zoning Code amendments as needed to support BAAQMD in meeting AB 617 objectives to reduce the health impacts of air pollution in Communities of Concern.
- Policy EJ-J.6 Prioritize new street tree plantings and increase the tree canopy in disadvantaged communities, in particular areas with a high heat index.
- Policy EJ-J.7 Preserve, restore, and enhance natural landscapes in and near disadvantaged communities for their role in improving air quality and community health.
- Policy EJ-J.8 Require warehouse and distribution facilities to provide adequate on-site truck parking to prevent idling, and require refrigerated warehouses to provide generators for refrigerated trucks.
- Policy EJ-J.9 Prohibit fossil fuel powered truck, construction vehicle, and transit vehicle idling within 100 feet of sensitive receptors such as homes, schools, playgrounds, sports fields, childcare centers, senior centers, and long-term health care facilities.

Actions

- Action EJ-J.1 Coordinate with State and regional regulatory entities and community members to fund citizen-led data collection, monitor pollution exposure, and identify and implement solutions in disadvantaged communities.
- Action EJ-J.2 Assist BAAQMD in establishing and implementing Community Air Monitoring Plans for disadvantaged communities.
- Action EJ-J.3 Coordinate with BAAQMD to create a targeted permit inspection program in disadvantaged communities to help ensure enforcement of air quality permits.

- Action EJ-J.4 Enforce the State’s five-minute maximum idling law.
- Action EJ-J.5 Prepare an urban forest master plan for the county that includes quantified goals and tracking methods, prioritizing disadvantaged communities.
- Action EJ-J.6 Develop and implement a plan to provide clean air refuges during times when outdoor air quality is unhealthy.

Safety Element

Goal EJ-K Communities that are safe and resilient from hazards associated with the use, transport, treatment, and disposal of hazardous waste and hazardous substances, including from fossil fuels, chemical refining, and power plants.

Policies

- Policy EJ-K.1 Discourage construction of new large-scale hazardous waste facilities.
- Policy EJ-K.2 Advocate for and coordinate with local and regional agencies in efforts to remediate or treat contaminated surface water, groundwater, or soils in or affecting disadvantaged communities.

Actions

- Action EJ-K.1 Obtain grant funding and establish partnerships with local environmental justice organizations to implement the County’s Brownfields and Contaminated Sites Cleanup Policy in disadvantaged communities.
- Action EJ-K.2 Establish a comprehensive, long term strategy that coordinates efforts from all regulatory agencies to mitigate impacts from industrial facilities on adjacent communities, both acute and long-term, with priority given to developing strategies for disadvantaged communities. The strategies must include specific mitigations to address air pollution, pipeline risks, and accidents, including identification of and community education about evacuation routes.