

UNDERSTANDING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Varied development patterns within a city can lead to unequal impacts in communities. New development, such as a regional port, can generate new jobs and enrich a city but may also increase air pollution in the surrounding area. On the other hand, an absence of local development can also adversely impact a community. For example, a lack of grocery stores in a community limits access to healthy food choices, which has been linked to increased obesity rates. In reality, some communities suffer more from the adverse effects of varied development patterns by carrying a more significant and disproportionate burden of the associated health risks. Environmental Justice speaks to these historical imbalances that we see in our communities, despite all being within the same city.

The State of California defines Environmental Justice 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"

California Government Code Section 65040.12(c)

Environmental Justice ensures that people of all races, cultures, and incomes are equally and equitably valued, protected, and served by laws. This includes regulations and policies that impact the quality of the environment around us, such as transportation, parks, natural spaces, urban landscapes, city services, and the overall use of land.

PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ELEMENT

The City's General Plan guides future development across the City through citywide policies addressing land use, mobility, urban design, economic prosperity, recreation, conservation, noise, historic preservation, and public facilities, services and safety. Environmental Justice will be a new element added to the General Plan with the purpose of setting goals, policies, and implementation measures focused on advancing environmental justice in our City. Priorities outlined in the Environmental Justice Element will be reflected in Community plans, City Council policies, infrastructure and facility improvement programs, as well as annual City budgets that work together with the General Plan to advance improvements in neighborhoods throughout San Diego.

The Environmental Justice Element will prioritize the following:



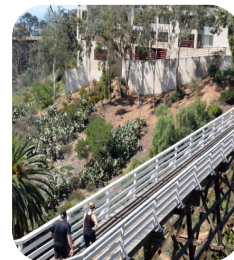
Clean air that affects our children's health.



Access to fresh food that nourishes our bodies.



Enjoyable spaces where our families can play.



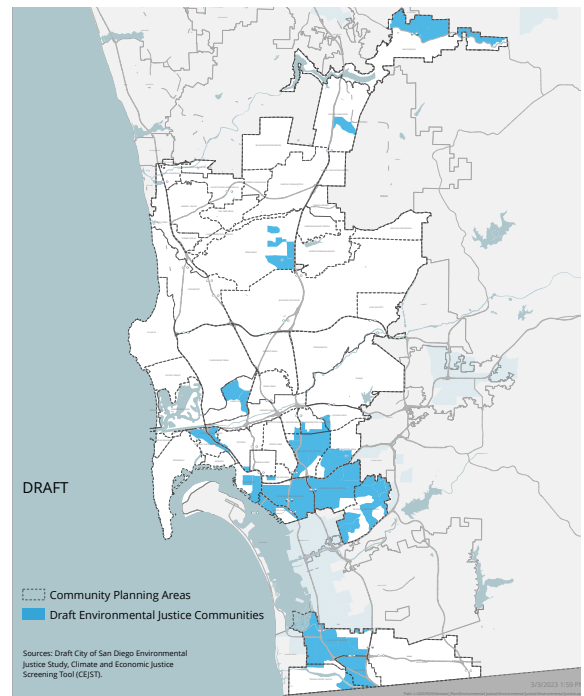
Safe and healthy homes where our families live.



Communication between City Officials and San Diegans to inform decision-making.

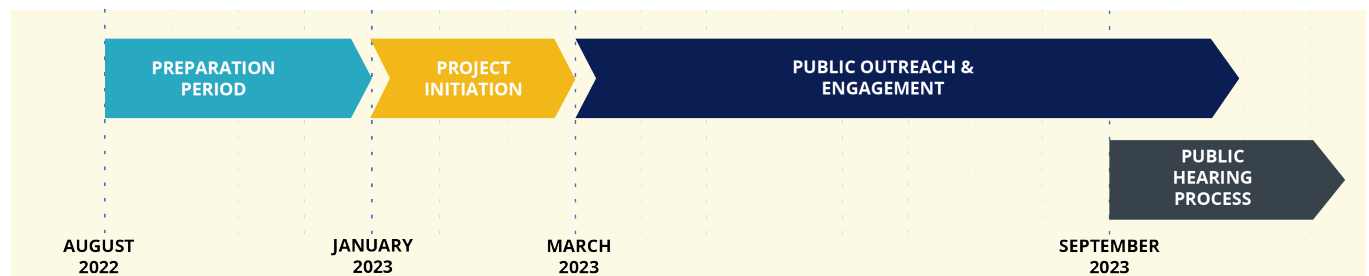
INITIAL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE SCREEN

Environmental Justice (EJ) Communities are those identified to be the most impacted and negatively affected by environmental burdens and associated health risks. These communities can begin to be identified based on quantifiable factors pertaining to neighborhood quality and environmental hazards such as air pollution, access to fresh food, and household income, all of which are known to contribute to health issues. The identification of EJ Communities builds upon recently adopted initiatives and metrics such as the Climate Equity Index and policies adopted as part of the Climate Action Plan and Build Better SD and additional factors such as tribal community population and tree canopy data. The Planning Department conducted an Initial Environmental Justice Screen to inform the identification of EJ Communities, which will be further informed by the lived experiences of people across the city. Outreach and Engagement will be conducted in the Spring of 2023 to ensure the final identification of EJ Communities reflects community feedback and better captures areas impacted by compounded health risks.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE

Community involvement is extremely important to the City and the input received from our communities will drive the decision-making process. The graphic below provides a quick snapshot of our expected timeline.



GET INVOLVED & STAY CONNECTED

We want to hear from you! To learn more about engagement opportunities and sign up for notifications about this initiative, please visit www.SanDiego.gov/EJElement.

You can also email us at publicspaces@sandiego.gov or send mail to 9485 Aero Drive, San Diego, CA 92123, Attn: Paola Boylan.



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