

SOCIAL EQUITY & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ASSESSMENT

Fair Planning and Development for all Communities

2030 VISION

Housing prices are within reach of much of our population. We have a variety of housing types for a variety of lifestyles and family structures – many of them near places where we work, shop, and play. They are connected to attractive, efficient, and well-integrated transit stations. Our streets are walkable and wheelchair accessible, and they're safer to cross. Our homes are built or retrofitted with environmentally-friendly materials and universal design features, resulting in greater energy and water efficiency and significantly easier access for our aging and differently-abled population. A majority of our residents have gainful employment with improved purchasing power and increasing economic prosperity. Industrial plants continue to upgrade pollution-control equipment and curb emissions, making them better neighbors to communities nearby. Residential neighborhoods are free of potentially harmful industries. All voices are heard in the decision-making process.

INTRODUCTION

Social Equity

Social equity means ensuring that all communities are treated fairly and are given equal opportunity to participate in the planning and decision-making process, with an emphasis on ensuring that traditionally disadvantaged groups are not left behind. These groups include, but are not limited to, ethnic minorities, low income residents, persons with disabilities, and seniors. Social equity means everyone, regardless of race, culture, ability, or income, shares in the benefits of planning and development.



Ensuring social equity does not necessarily guarantee equality – but it does mean giving every community an equal voice. Social equity is providing all residents with access to affordable and safe housing, quality jobs, adequate infrastructure, and quality education. It means allowing children and families of all races, abilities, and income levels to live in the best possible environment.

This chapter analyzes the RCP's equity level, much like an environmental impact report, but with an emphasis on social impacts. We know from experience that regions grow healthier when all

communities are strong, which is why social equity is one of the three Es of sustainability (Equity, Environment, and Economy). Without it, the region cannot have true prosperity.

Environmental Justice

Environmental justice is an important component of social equity. SANDAG defines environmental justice¹ as ensuring that land use plans, policies and actions do not disproportionately affect low income and minority communities. Environmental justice is achieved when everyone, regardless of race, culture, or income, enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards and equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.

In 1982, a PCB² landfill proposed in the rural and mostly African-American county of Warren, North Carolina, ignited protests and over 500 arrests. It also brought national attention to the environmental justice movement. The Warren County protests provided the impetus for an U.S. General Accounting Office study, which showed that three of every four off-site, commercial hazardous waste landfills in Region 4 (which comprises eight states in the South) were located in predominantly African-American communities, although African-Americans made up only 20 percent of the region's population. In 1987, the Commission for Racial Justice (CRJ) produced *Toxic Waste and Race*, the first national study to correlate waste facility sites and demographic characteristics. In this study, race was found to be the most potent variable in predicting where these facilities were located – more important than poverty, land values, and home ownership rates. The CRJ study also found that three of every five African-Americans or Hispanics live in a community adjacent to unregulated toxic waste sites. Additionally, the study noted that African-Americans were heavily overrepresented in the populations of metropolitan areas with the greatest number of uncontrolled toxic waste sites.

Federal Legal Background

The federal basis for environmental justice lies in the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution. The Fourteenth Amendment expressly provides that the states may not “deny to any person within [their] jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws”.³



Adding to this, on February 11, 1994, President Clinton signed Executive Order 12898, titled “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations.” The order followed a 1992 report by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) indicating that “racial minority and low income populations experience higher than average exposures to selected air pollutants, hazardous waste facilities, and other forms of environmental

¹ Federal programs define environmental justice as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. State government code (65040.12(c)) 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 and policies.

² PCBs -- polychlorinated biphenyls -- once were used in paints, lubricants and other products. They have been linked to cancer and birth defects.

³ U.S. Constitution, amend. XIV, §1

pollution.” Among other things, the executive order directed federal agencies to incorporate environmental justice into their missions.

In a memorandum accompanying the order, President Clinton underscored existing federal laws that can be used to further environmental justice. These laws include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), among others. Title VI prohibits any recipient (state or local entity or public or private agency) of federal financial assistance from discriminating on the basis of race, color, or national origin in its programs or activities.⁴ Pursuant to the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, this requirement applies to all agency programs and activities, not just those that receive direct federal funding. In response, many state and local agencies that receive federal funding have initiated environmental justice programs of their own. NEPA applies to projects carried out or funded by a federal agency (including the issuance of federal permits). NEPA requires public participation and discussion of alternatives and mitigation measures that could reduce disproportionate negative effects on low income and minority populations.

State Legal Background

The first state environmental justice law in California was passed in 1999, although anti-discrimination laws existed before then. The California Constitution prohibits discrimination in the operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting.⁵ State law further prohibits discrimination under any program or activity that is funded or administered by the state.⁶ The Planning and Zoning Law prohibits any local entity from denying any individual or group of the enjoyment of residence, land ownership, tenancy, or any other land use in California due to their race, sex, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, ancestry, lawful occupation, or age.⁷ The Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) specifically prohibits housing discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry, familial status, disability, or source of income.⁸



In 1999, SB 115 was signed into law, defining environmental justice in statute and establishing the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) as the coordinating agency for state environmental justice programs,⁹ and requiring the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) to develop a model environmental justice mission statement for boards, departments, and offices within the agency.¹⁰ SB 89, signed in 2000, required the creation of an environmental justice

⁴ 42 USC §2000d-§2000d-7

⁵ Article I, §31

⁶ §11135

⁷ §65008

⁸ §12900, et seq.

⁹ §65040.12

¹⁰ Public Resources Code §72000-72001

working group and an advisory group to assist Cal/EPA in developing an intra-agency environmental justice strategy.¹¹ This strategy was finalized in September 2003.

AB 1553, which took effect in 2003, required OPR to incorporate environmental justice considerations into General Plan Guidelines, proposing methods for local governments to address the following:

- Planning for the equitable distribution of new public facilities and services that increase and enhance community quality of life.
- Siting industrial facilities and uses that pose a significant hazard to human health and safety in a manner that seeks to avoid over-concentrating these uses in proximity to schools or residential dwellings.
- Building new schools and residential dwellings well apart from industrial facilities and uses that pose a significant hazard to human health and safety.
- Promoting more livable communities by expanding opportunities for transit-oriented development.

These guidelines have been finalized, and are available through OPR.¹² The RCP addresses each of these issues, and in many areas places an increased emphasis on the health and safety of low income and minority communities.

DIVERSITY IN THE SAN DIEGO REGION

Social equity and environmental justice considerations in the RCP ensure that in the future, all communities move forward as the region moves forward. Many communities have traditionally been left behind or excluded from the planning and development process, including low income and minority communities, persons with disabilities, and seniors. Each of these communities has a strong presence in the San Diego region, as shown by the following facts, from the 2000 U.S. Census:

Ethnic Minorities

- Hispanic – 27 percent
- Asian/Other (including Native American) – 13 percent
- Black – five percent

Lower Income Residents

- Thirteen percent of residents live below the poverty level.¹³
- Ten percent of residents are considered to be “extremely low income,” meaning they earn 30 percent or less of the area median income for their household size.¹⁴
- Eleven percent of residents are considered to be “very low income,” meaning they earn between 30 and 50 percent of the area median income for their household size.¹⁵



¹¹ Public Resources Code §72002- 72003

¹² OPR General Plan guidelines can be found at www.opr.ca.gov/planning/PDFs/General_Plan_Guidelines_2003.pdf

¹³ The U.S. Census Bureau defines the 2000 poverty level for a family of four as \$18,400 or below.

¹⁴ In 2004, extremely low income would be about \$19,000 or less for a family of four.

¹⁵ In 2004, very low income would be between about \$19,000 and \$32,000 for a family of four.

- Seventeen percent of residents are considered to be “low income,” meaning they earn between 50 and 80 percent of the area median income for their household size.¹⁶

Seniors

- Eleven percent of residents are age 65 and over.
- By 2030, the number of people age 65 and older will have increased by 128 percent, and 19 percent of the region’s population will be in that age group then.

Persons with Disabilities

About 798,400 people in the region (18 percent of residents) age five and older have some type of disability.¹⁷



EQUITY CONDITIONS IN THE SAN DIEGO REGION

The San Diego region faces serious challenges of inequity. The following information is not a comprehensive look at inequity in the region, but focuses on income, unemployment, job quality, and housing in an attempt to present a brief snapshot of some of the issues facing some of our residents today. More information is needed to truly analyze the conditions in low income and minority communities, as well as those of seniors and persons with disabilities. This is discussed in the last section of this chapter, “Next Steps.”

The following data includes information about high minority Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZs), low income TAZs, and TAZs that are both high minority and low income. TAZs are geographic areas used in transportation forecasting that summarize socioeconomic and land-use characteristics. They are typically smaller than census tracts, and therefore can help put forth a more accurate description of a community’s ethnicity and income distribution. For this analysis, high minority TAZs are defined as those where non-Whites made up 65 percent or more of the population. Very low income TAZs are those where one third of the households have incomes of 50 percent or less of the regional median income of \$47,268. High minority and very low income TAZs are those where both criteria were met. Figure 6.1 shows these communities in the San Diego region.

¹⁶ In 2004, low income would be between about \$32,000 and \$50,720 for a family of four.

¹⁷ This includes sensory, mental, physical, and self-care, employment, and go-outside-home disabilities.

San Diego Region MINORITY AND LOW INCOME POPULATIONS

- Minority Populations**
- Low Income Populations**
- Minority and Low Income Populations**

Source: 2000 Census, SANDAG

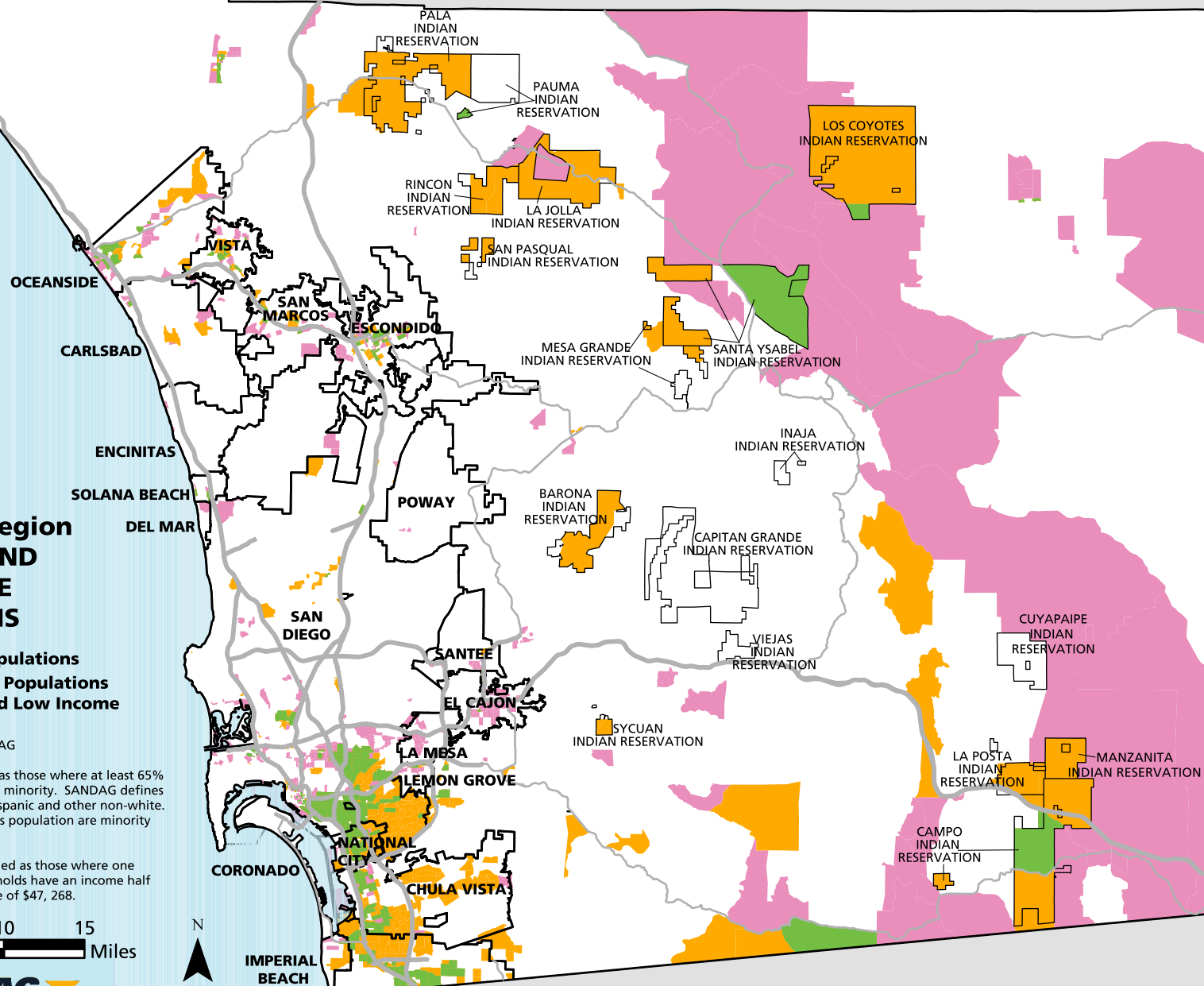
Minority areas are defined as those where at least 65% of households are classified minority. SANDAG defines minority as Asian, Black, Hispanic and other non-white. In 2000, 45% of the region's population are minority and 55% non-minority.

Low income areas are defined as those where one third (33%) or more households have an income half the region's median income of \$47,268.

0 2.5 5 10 15
Miles



September 2003



Poverty/ Unemployment/ Job Quality

- Thirteen percent of San Diego residents live below the poverty level.
- Sixteen percent of people with disabilities live below the poverty level.
- Nine percent of seniors with disabilities live below the poverty level, compared to six percent of seniors with no disabilities.
- Seventeen percent of children age 17 and under live below the poverty level.
- Regionally, the unemployment rate is 6 percent, compared to 9 percent in high minority TAZs, 10 percent in very low income TAZs, and 11 percent in tracts that are both high minority and very low income.
- Regionally, 38 percent of residents are employed in managerial and professional positions, compared to 21 percent of residents in high minority TAZs, 23 percent in very low income TAZs, and 16 percent in TAZs that are both high minority and very low income.



Housing

- Of the total owner-occupied homes in the San Diego region, only 19 percent are owned by non-White householders.
- In high minority TAZs, 42 percent of households owned their own homes, compared to 55 percent regionwide. In very low income TAZs, 27 percent of residents owned their own homes, and in TAZs that are both high minority and very low income, only 25 percent of residents owned their own homes.
- Thirty percent of households in high minority TAZs were overcrowded¹⁸, and 24 percent of households in very low income TAZs were overcrowded, compared to 12 percent regionwide. In TAZs that are both high minority and very low income 37 percent of households were overcrowded.
- Twelve percent of homes in high minority TAZs, and 17 percent of homes in very low income TAZs were built before 1950, compared to 10 percent regionwide. In TAZs that were both high minority and very low income, 37 percent of homes were built before 1950. Older housing can lead to health hazards for residents. It may be substandard and there is an increased risk of the presence of lead based paint.

¹⁸ According the U.S. Census Bureau, households with more than 1.01 people per room (excluding bathrooms) are considered overcrowded.

Community Example 1: Imperial Avenue Corridor

The San Diego City/County Reinvestment Task Force¹⁹ recently conducted a socio-economic study of the Imperial Avenue Corridor²⁰ in the City of San Diego. This area has the highest concentration of minorities and low income households within the City of San Diego. The Task Force study²¹ analyzed population, income, employment characteristics, land use, housing needs, the availability of capital, and the distribution of banks within the study area. A few of the Task Force's key findings show that in the Imperial Avenue Corridor:

- The total housing stock as a percentage of the population is lower than in the region as a whole, while residential densities are among the highest in the region, indicating overcrowded housing situations.
- Residents living in the Imperial Avenue Corridor are not receiving a proportionate amount of bank loans or bank-loan dollars based on the business characteristics of the study area.
- For every home loan denied in the study area, 1.3 loans were approved – compared to the regionwide rate of 3.2.
- Eighty-eight percent of the home loan denials were in the low income tracts within the Imperial Avenue Corridor, compared to 3.8 percent in low income tracts for the region.
- Forty-one percent of the home loan applications were denied, compared to a 23 percent denial rate for the region overall.
- There are approximately 6,440 households per bank branch. This is more than three times greater than the regional average of 2,025 households per branch.

While these communities are within the City of San Diego, these types of conditions exist in low income and minority communities throughout the San Diego region.

¹⁹ The San Diego City/County Reinvestment Task Force was created in 1977 to monitor lending practices and to develop strategies for reinvestment in the San Diego region.

²⁰ The Imperial Avenue Corridor includes the neighborhoods of Barrio Logan, Logan Heights, Sherman Heights, Grant Hill, Stockton, Mt. Hope, Chollas View, Mountain View, Lincoln Park, Southcrest, and Shelltown.

²¹ This study was funded by and produced for the Annie E. Casey Foundation and was conducted in collaboration with Steve Bouton of Bouton and Associates.

Community Example 2: Barrio Logan

In 1997, the Environmental Health Coalition, a local environmental justice nonprofit organization, sought to provide information on the health effects that may be related to environmental pollution for residents of four communities in San Diego County, which bear more sources of pollution than most others. Disorders often related to toxic pollution exposure were documented in 838 adults and children in Barrio Logan, Logan Heights, Sherman Heights, and National City. Some of the results suggest that the health of these residents may be adversely impacted by these exposures. Respiratory illness and associated symptoms among children were the most striking findings of the study. Other findings:

- Survey children reported nearly twice the number of symptoms of respiratory illness than the control group.
- Twelve percent of all survey children not previously diagnosed with asthma reported at least two symptoms of respiratory illness that may indicate undiagnosed asthma. 7.7 percent of all survey children had physician-diagnosed asthma. This indicates that up to 20 percent of children may be asthmatic.
- Children living within the Barrio Logan area reported more physician-diagnosed asthma than children in the other survey areas or the control group: 10.5 percent reported physician-diagnosed asthma compared to the national average of 7.7 percent and the national average for Mexican-American children of 4.4 percent.
- Twenty seven percent of all survey children reported nose and eye irritation, compared to 15 percent of the control group.
- Rates of adult respiratory symptoms were higher than that of the control group with 17.6 percent reporting two or three symptoms, compared to 9.3 percent in the control group.

While this is also a City of San Diego example, these types of conditions exist in low income and minority communities throughout the San Diego region.

ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL EQUITY/ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN THE RCP

Given the existing and growing diversity of our region, the RCP must promote social equity and environmental justice. The following section discusses social equity and environmental justice-related issues in each major topic area of the RCP, and lays out the goals, policy objectives and/or actions within the individual RCP chapters that address these issues. To achieve social equity and environmental justice, we must have greater public involvement. That's why a core value of the RCP is to "promote broader participation in the planning process and the allocation of resources." (See Vision and Core Values chapter for additional information).

Many jurisdictions in the region have already implemented a wide range of the following goals, policy objectives, and actions that promote social equity and environmental justice, such as zoning in a way that avoids incompatible land uses, developing affordable housing for their residents, and incorporating accessibility guidelines into their building codes. However, it is important that future planning and development builds upon and expands these successes.

URBAN FORM

Equity considerations are essential when discussing urban form (where and how our region grows.) In the discussions of where we should grow, the focus is often on the environmental consequences of sprawl, such as increased traffic, air pollution, consumption of open space, and energy consumption. However, sprawl also has social and economic consequences. It can accelerate urban infrastructure decline, concentrate poverty in urban areas, create a spatial mismatch between urban workers and suburban job centers, and negatively affect public health.

The solution to sprawl is to focus future growth in our existing urban communities close to public transit. However, these communities, which tend to be older, often have higher concentrations of low income and minority residents than newer communities. While focusing growth in these communities is encouraged, this growth must include adequate supporting infrastructure to ensure a rising standard of living for existing residents. Growth without supporting infrastructure can exacerbate problems in older communities.



Likewise, in discussions of how the region should grow, mixed use is often promoted as a way of creating walkable, transit-friendly communities. However, it is important to note that not all uses should be mixed. For example, placing housing close to potentially toxic commercial and industrial uses can place residents at risk. While the solution may seem obvious – simply avoid building residential or school uses near industrial facilities – other uses can also be potentially toxic. These include heavy transportation corridors, distribution centers and corridors, agricultural areas with heavy pesticide use, and small sources of air toxics, such as chrome plating, dry cleaning, and auto body shops.

Additionally, accessibility for seniors and persons with disabilities is a key issue as we plan for growth. The built environment causes many of the inequities for people with disabilities. Physical standards for buildings, sidewalks, streets, and public areas can inadvertently restrict the activities and the quality of life of many members of the community. One solution is “Universal Design” – the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

URBAN FORM GOALS, POLICY OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS

In response to these issues, the RCP includes the following social equity and environmental justice-related urban form goals, policy objectives, and actions:

Goal

Create safe, healthy, walkable, and vibrant communities that are designed and built accessible to people of all abilities.

Policy Objectives

1. Improve existing public facilities in smart growth areas to mitigate the impact of higher intensities of use.
2. Place high priority on public facility investments that support compact, mixed-use, accessible, walkable neighborhoods that are conveniently located to transit.
3. Protect public health and safety by avoiding and/or mitigating incompatible land uses

Actions

1. Implement development projects and plans that:
 - Provide a more diverse mix of housing types, jobs, services, and recreational land uses with good access for pedestrians and people with disabilities.
 - Preserve our natural resources.
 - Create buffers between agriculture and urban development.
 - Avoid and mitigate incompatible land uses, for example, by establishing buffers or transition zones between housing and heavy industrial uses.
2. Develop an urban design best practices manual as a tool for local agencies, which addresses walkability, compatibility with public transportation, crime prevention, universal design, and accessibility, as well as other urban design issues.
3. Institute an education and outreach program to help local agencies develop community consensus on urban design that supports smart growth.
4. Prioritize transportation infrastructure funding and other public facility investments in areas that support smart growth development, as shown by the smart growth opportunity areas concept map.
5. Promote public and private investments in redevelopment and infill areas through the Smart Growth Incentive Program and other funding programs.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation systems can have a significant effect on the quality of life for a region's residents by determining access to housing, jobs, services, and recreational opportunities. Social equity means investing in transportation systems that provide urban residents with opportunities to work, shop, study, invest, and play in the region.

However, without proper planning and development, transportation systems can also be disruptive to communities. The construction of roads, freeways, and rail-transit systems has placed health burdens on many lower income and minority communities. At times, the construction of new transportation systems has physically divided communities, resulting in long-lasting social and economic costs.



Additionally, transportation planning must be done in a way that provides for accessibility to low income and minority communities, seniors, and persons with disabilities. This accessibility can be seen in terms of location of transit stations, physical accessibility of buses and trains (wheelchair and disabled access), and cost of services. Transportation planning must be done with a wide variety of communities in order to promote regional equity.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

In response to these issues, the RCP includes the following social equity and environmental justice-related transportation policy objectives, and actions:

Policy Objectives

1. Provide equitable and accessible transportation services for all residents, regardless of income, age, or ability.
2. Ensure that the benefits and potential burdens of transportation projects are equitable.

Actions

1. Ensure that transit is accessible, available, and within the financial reach of as many residents as possible.
2. Design new transportation projects in such a way that they do not result in disproportionate health-related and environmental impacts on any community.
3. Ensure that the development review process addresses the transit planning needs both within and adjacent to proposed developments.

4. Develop and implement programs such as paratransit that improve transportation options for seniors and persons with disabilities.
5. Develop Transportation Project Evaluation Criteria based on the preliminary criteria themes in the RCP in order to prioritize transportation funding and transit service in areas where smart growth development has already occurred or is planned.

HOUSING

Promoting equity in the region means building healthy, mixed-income neighborhoods with sufficient affordable housing. Housing is one of the most important factors in our residents' quality of life. Unfortunately, high housing costs are leading to extreme hardship for low income residents in the San Diego region. There simply is not enough housing that is affordable to residents that work at the lower-wage jobs that help drive our economy, like those in the tourism and service sectors. As rents rise, these residents are often forced to move repeatedly, live in overcrowded units, or move out of the region to find less expensive housing, leading to long commutes.



In addition to providing affordable housing, we need to ensure that homes are being made available to all residents, regardless of ethnicity. Recent data from the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) showed that in San Diego County, while only nine percent of loan applications filed by White applicants were denied, 10 percent of Asian applicants, 17 percent of Black applicants, 17 percent of Hispanic applicants, and 17 percent of Native American/Alaskan Native applicants were turned down. While there can be a variety of reasons for this, discrimination is a strong possibility. At a minimum, it points to a need for increased analysis of lending patterns in minority communities, and the enforcement of fair-housing laws, which can be used to prevent discrimination in the selling and renting of homes as well as the siting of new affordable housing.

Additionally, the housing built in the region needs to be accessible to persons with disabilities. This is especially important as the region ages. While currently 18 percent of residents have some type of disability, this percentage will greatly increase as the older population increases, and designing accessible housing now means that residents will be more likely to be able to stay in their homes as they age.

We also need to ensure that existing homes in low income and minority communities aren't negatively affecting the health of residents. These communities often have an older housing stock, which is more likely to cause lead-related health hazards. Lead is a highly toxic metal that was used for many years in products found in and around our homes. Lead may cause a range of health effects, from behavioral problems and learning disabilities, to seizures and death. Children under seven years old are most at risk, because their bodies are growing quickly. Research suggests that

the primary sources of lead exposure for most children are deteriorating lead-based paint, lead contaminated dust, and lead contaminated residential soil.

HOUSING GOALS, POLICY OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS

In response to these issues, the RCP includes the following social equity and environmental justice-related housing goals, policy objectives, and actions:

Goal

Provide a variety of affordable and quality smart growth housing choices for people of all income levels and abilities throughout the region.

Policy Objectives

1. Increase the supply and variety of housing choices, especially higher density multi-family housing, for residents of all ages and income levels.
2. Provide incentives for local jurisdictions to meet their housing needs.
3. Provide an adequate supply of housing for our region's workforce to minimize interregional and long distance commuting.
4. Conserve and rehabilitate the existing housing stock.
5. Provide safe, healthy, environmentally sound, and accessible housing, for all segments of the population.
6. Minimize the displacement of lower income and minority residents as housing costs rise when redevelopment and revitalization occurs.
7. Increase opportunities for homeownership.
8. Minimize the displacement of lower income and minority residents as housing costs rise when redevelopment and revitalization occurs.

Actions

1. Identify and rezone appropriate sites for entry-level small-lot single family houses, higher density multifamily housing, and mixed use housing in appropriate locations close to public transportation, employment, and other services.
2. Identify and rezone appropriate sites for homeless facilities, transitional housing, farmworker housing, and housing for those in need of supportive services, while not disproportionately siting them in any one community.

3. Research and hold forums on housing issues of local and regional interest, such as condominium conversions, fair housing, methods to preserve the supply of affordable rental units, tax incentives, and other topics.
4. Develop and implement local affordable housing programs and incentives, such as inclusionary housing, density bonus, second dwelling unit, and priority permit processing programs.
5. Develop and implement programs to conserve and rehabilitate our existing affordable housing stock, including rental apartments.
6. Implement homeownership programs, such as cooperatives (co-ops), first time homebuyer programs, community land trusts, location efficient mortgage programs, and employer-assisted housing programs.
7. Develop and implement programs for new housing construction that encourage environmentally sustainable construction (green building techniques) and the application of universal design principles to promote accessibility.
8. Eliminate environmental and health hazards in existing housing, and in new housing as it is sited, designed, and built.
9. Provide replacement housing for lower income residents as conversion, demolition redevelopment and/or infill development occurs.
10. Implement public education programs, showing positive examples and benefits of affordable and multifamily housing, and mixed use developments.
11. Enforce local state, and federal housing laws and regulations.
12. Pursue and ensure the lawful and efficient use of existing funds for the creation of additional affordable housing for seniors, lower income families and the homeless.
13. Develop new funding sources for the creation of additional affordable housing for seniors, lower income families and the homeless, such as housing trust funds, linkage fees, and bonds.

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

The most important social equity and environmental justice issues in the healthy environment chapter are related to air and water quality in low income and minority communities. The nonprofit institute PolicyLink states:

Because they possess less political and economic clout than wealthier communities, low income communities are often more likely to be near potential air polluters like freeways and industrial installations. And, these communities are more likely to be home to incompatible land uses, such as potentially toxic industries or business near schools or

homes. A wide variety of facilities that can pose a potential hazard to nearby residents, including drycleaners, gas stations, welding shops, metal plating shops, auto body shops, and other small sources of air toxics.²²

This statement also could apply to water quality. While clean air and water are goals for the entire region, we need to work diligently to ensure that all our residents, regardless of income or ethnicity, share the benefits of a healthy environment.

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT ACTIONS

Actions

In response to these issues, the RCP includes the following social equity and environmental justice-related healthy environment actions:

1. Preserve and maintain natural areas in urban neighborhoods, such as canyons and creeks, and provide access for the enjoyment of the region's residents.
2. Evaluate the quality of surface water bodies and develop and implement programs to ensure that no community is disproportionately negatively affected.
3. Site industries and high-traffic corridors in a way that minimizes the potential impacts of poor air quality on homes, schools, hospitals and other land uses where people congregate, and implement programs to ensure low income and minority populations are not disproportionately affected.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Promoting social equity in the region means providing economic opportunity and secure, high-quality jobs for all residents. This means providing education and workforce training opportunities that are targeted to residents from a variety of backgrounds and education levels, with an emphasis on outreach to low income communities. It means ensuring access to the education and skills necessary for all individuals to participate fully in regional growth industries and the competitive economy. And, it means creating high-quality, middle-income jobs that lower income residents can obtain with proper training.



ECONOMIC PROSPERITY GOALS, POLICY OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS

In response to these issues, the RCP includes the following social equity and environmental justice-related economic prosperity goal, policy objectives, and action:

²² "Promoting Regional Equity: A Framing Paper," PolicyLink, November 2002

Goal

Ensure a rising standard of living for all of our residents.

Policy Objectives

1. Offer broad access to education and workforce training opportunities to all residents, with an emphasis on the economically disadvantaged, to foster shared economic prosperity
2. Provide an adequate supply of housing for our region's workforce and adequate sites to accommodate business expansion and retention.
3. Produce more high-quality jobs in the region.

Actions

1. Ensure that sufficient land with appropriate zoning and urban services is available for future housing and employment needs.
2. Provide infrastructure that enables emerging technologies and existing businesses that provide high-quality jobs to flourish.
3. Develop and implement programs that provide workforce development and educational opportunities for all residents.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

The most pressing social equity and environmental justice issue regarding public facilities is the disproportionate siting of potentially polluting facilities in low income and minority communities. These types of facilities can include, but are not limited to, landfills, hazardous waste collection facilities, power plants and transmission lines. Not all of these uses are toxic, however, great care must be taken when siting them to ensure that they do not create health hazards for the community. The analysis of potentially impacted communities needs to include not just the community in question, but, in some cases, adjacent communities, because some pollution effects can be far-reaching.

**PUBLIC FACILITIES ACTIONS**

In response to these issues, the RCP includes the following social equity and environmental justice-related public facilities actions:

Actions

1. Locate energy facilities, such as power plants and/or transmission lines, so that lower income and minority communities are not disproportionately negatively affected.
2. Site waste disposal and management facilities in a manner that protects public health and safety and does not disproportionately negatively affect lower income and minority communities.

**NEXT STEPS FOR PROMOTING REGIONAL
SOCIAL EQUITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

There are four key steps that must be taken in order to promote social equity and environmental justice in the San Diego region:

Monitor the Performance of the RCP

The RCP contains a number of social equity and environmental justice-based actions. As the RCP is implemented, it is essential that its performance is monitored to ensure that these actions are being carried out and have the desired effect. The Performance Monitoring chapter describes performance indicators to monitor social equity within the region.

Expand Current Social Equity and Environmental Justice Analysis

The development of this RCP highlighted many areas where insufficient information exists to thoroughly assess existing social equity and environmental justice conditions in the region. Future studies need to be conducted in areas such as:

- The location and emissions levels of potentially toxic facilities.
- The location of potentially incompatible land uses and zoning.
- Air and water quality in low income and minority communities.
- The physical, social, environmental, and economic impacts of transportation systems that are proposed in the Regional Transportation Plan.

This information needs to be gathered and mapped in order to more effectively analyze, and propose solutions to, existing conditions in the San Diego region.

Evaluate Future Plans, Programs, and Projects

The social equity and environmental justice analysis and policies included in the RCP are just a first step to ensuring greater equity in our region. Criteria and procedures should be developed to ensure that all plans, programs, and projects within the region consider social equity. These criteria and procedures could be utilized by SANDAG and other public agencies, including Caltrans and the local jurisdictions, to evaluate the potential social equity and environmental justice-related impacts of plans and projects, in a manner similar to that used to evaluate environmental impacts of projects, and in allocating regional funding. These criteria and procedures would not need to result in new review processes; instead they could be used to enhance to existing processes.

Expand Public Involvement

Public involvement is essential to advancing social equity in the region. SANDAG, the local jurisdictions, and other public agencies need to review their public involvement strategies to ensure that they are providing for the meaningful involvement a wide range of residents, including lower income and minority residents, seniors, tribal government representatives, persons with disabilities, and others. A meaningful involvement process ensures that: (1) potentially affected community residents have an appropriate opportunity to participate in decisions about a proposed activity that will affect their environment and/or health; (2) the public's contribution can influence the decisions being made; (3) the concerns of all participants involved are considered in the decision-making process; and (4) the decision makers seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected. This type of process helps us design and implement plans and projects that truly meet the needs of our diverse communities.

CONCLUSION

Social equity and environmental justice are essential components of a successful region, especially one as diverse as the San Diego region. While guaranteeing social equity and environmental justice does not guarantee equality, it can help reduce existing inequalities while ensuring that no communities are disproportionately negatively affected by future plans and actions. Lower income and minority residents, seniors, persons with disabilities, and others that have been traditionally underrepresented in the planning process need to be given an equal voice in the decisions that affect their communities. In order to have true sustainability, we must ensure that all residents are given opportunities to benefit from the region's economic and environmental health.