

## Paramount General Plan

# Environmental Justice Element

City of Paramount

Adopted February 8, 2022  
Resolution No. 22:014







# City of Paramount

## Environmental Justice Element



City of Paramount  
Community Development Department  
16400 Colorado Avenue  
Paramount, California 90723

Adopted February 8, 2022  
Resolution No. 22:014



This page left intentionally blank.





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	1
Public Engagement.....	3
Background.....	5
Population Characteristics .....	7
Pollution Burdens.....	11
Environmental Justice Approaches.....	16
Goals and Policies .....	25

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Land Use Acres Distribution .....	5
Figure 2: Census Tracts and Disadvantaged Communities .....	7
Figure 3: Air Pollution Sites and Concentrations.....	18
Figure 4: Traffic Density Percentile Scores .....	14
Figure 5: Park Access.....	22
Figure 6: Grocery Store Access .....	23
Figure 7: Neighborhood Community Needs.....	24

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: CalEnviroScreen 3.0 Indicators.....	2
Table 2: CalEnviroScreen (CES) 3.0 Percentiles Scores.....	6
Table 3: Paramount Population by Race and Ethnicity .....	8
Table 4: Population Characteristics Indicators Scores .....	9
Table 5: Toxic Pollutants in 2018 (Pounds per Year).....	11
Table 6: Pollution Burden Indicators Percentiles Scores .....	12



## Environmental Justice Element

### Introduction

Environmental justice is defined 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 regulations and policies implemented by local agencies. Fair treatment means that no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental, and commercial operations and policies, whether recent or from decade-old decisions that may even predate city incorporation.

Equity is grounded in principles of justice and fairness, focused on creating a society in which everyone can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. Equitable outcomes come about when smart, intentional strategies are put in place to ensure that everyone can participate in and benefit from decisions that shape their neighborhoods and regions.

### Legal Requirements

In 2016, Senate Bill 1000 amended California Government Code Section 63502 to require cities and counties with disadvantaged communities to incorporate environmental justice (EJ) policies into their general plans – a master plan for how the community will grow and develop over time. Cities and counties may choose to adopt a separate standalone Environmental Justice Element or address environmental policies throughout the General Plan. The City of Paramount has decided to adopt an Environmental Justice Element ahead of state-mandated deadlines to address important land use and equity issues throughout the City. The Environmental Justice Element includes a comprehensive set of goals and policies aimed at increasing the influence of target populations in the public decisionmaking process and reducing their exposure to environmental hazards. As a General Plan element, the Environmental Justice Element connects to other sections of the General Plan.

### Disadvantaged Communities

Disadvantaged communities refer to areas that are most afflicted with a combination of economic, health, and environmental burdens. California law requires local governments to identify any disadvantaged communities that exist within their jurisdiction. The California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool “CalEnviroScreen 3.0” was developed by the California Environmental Protection Agency to identify disadvantaged communities using the following indicators of pollution burden and population characteristics:

- **Pollution Burden.** Areas disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative public health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation.
- **Population Characteristics.** Areas with concentrations of people that are of low income, high unemployment, low levels of homeownership, higher rent burden, sensitive populations, and/or low levels of educational attainments.



Table 1 summarizes the indicators used in the CalEnviroScreen 3.0 analysis.

**Table 1: CalEnviroScreen 3.0 Indicators**

Pollution Burdens	
<b>Exposure Indicators:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ozone concentrations in air</li> <li>▪ PM <sub>2.5</sub> concentrations in air</li> <li>▪ Diesel particulate matter emissions</li> <li>▪ Drinking water contaminants</li> <li>▪ Use of certain high-hazard, high volatility pesticides</li> <li>▪ Toxic releases from facilities</li> <li>▪ Traffic density</li> </ul>	<b>Environmental Effect Indicators:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Toxic cleanup sites</li> <li>▪ Groundwater threats from leaking underground storage sites and cleanups</li> <li>▪ Hazardous waste facilities and generators</li> <li>▪ Impaired water bodies</li> <li>▪ Solid waste sites and facilities</li> </ul>
Population Characteristics	
<b>Sensitive Population Indicators:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Asthma emergency department visits</li> <li>▪ Cardiovascular disease (emergency department visits for heart attacks)</li> <li>▪ Low birth weight infants</li> </ul>	<b>Socioeconomic Factor Indicators:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Educational attainment</li> <li>▪ Housing burdened low-income households</li> <li>▪ Linguistic isolation</li> <li>▪ Poverty</li> <li>▪ Unemployment</li> </ul>

Source: California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen 3.0), Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), 2017.

Note: The CalEnviroScreen 3.0 tool only reports on a census tract level for the entirety of the State. It is important to note that although these attributes are used to characterize the concentration of burdens within a tract, it is not limited to the tract and can have impacts on the surrounding area.



## Public Engagement

The public engagement process emphasized people-centered strategies and public education activities. The process was designed to help participants understand how environmental justice can impact their community and daily lives and for the City to learn from the participants. Following COVID-19 guidance from local, State, and federal public health agencies, engagement activities were held online. Outreach materials and engagement activities were provided in English and Spanish.

### Focus Group Interviews

Throughout November 2020, a series of focus groups were held with key members of the public in the City of Paramount. These groups included:

- City Commissions
- Community Organizations and Advocacy Groups
- Paramount Community Emergency Response Team
- Paramount Unified School District

The interviews conducted touched on topics related to housing and pollution within the City. The interviewees mentioned the following:

- Waitlists for housing programs
- First-time homebuyer assistance
- Tenant protections
- Incentivizing affordable housing development
- Parking accommodations
- Identifying mixed-use development opportunities
- Improving air quality
- Regulating polluters

### Online Surveys

A community survey was launched on January 29, 2021, as an effort to give residents a chance to give their thoughts and suggestions in helping the City develop the General Plan. The topics addressed in the survey focused on Housing and Community Health & Safety. A total of 103 surveys were completed.

When asked questions about the environment, survey responses indicated the following were concerns among the respondents:

- Industrial businesses that handle or release toxic material
- Living close to businesses that release toxic materials

Survey responses also indicated the following are values of survey respondents:

- More open spaces, street trees, and community gardens
- High-quality parks and recreational facilities
- Neighborhoods that provide safe sidewalks, and crosswalks.
- Easy access to bike routes, and connectivity
- Easy access to public transit

### Community Workshops

On February 1 and 3, 2021, the City of Paramount held its first two community workshops to present information and receive community input on the 2021-2029 Housing Element and introduce the new Environmental Justice Element, both components of the General Plan.

The City held a second set of workshops on June 17 and 21, to present information and receive community input with a primary focus on the Environmental Justice element of the 2021-2029 General Plan update. Given restrictions on public gatherings imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, all workshop sessions were conducted using Zoom.

The workshops provided residents with contextual information regarding the Housing Element update and the requirements for the Environmental Justice Element. The workshops also provided an opportunity for residents to participate in a discussion with City staff and consultants and express their ideas and concerns related to housing, pollution burdens, and health.

#### Topics mentioned during the workshop include:

- The need for more single-family homes
- Lack of affordable housing
- Overcrowding, limited access to parking





- Need for higher density buildings, such as condominiums or townhomes
- Stronger monitoring and regulation of heavy industrial polluters
- Insufficient transparency and community engagement efforts on part of the City
- Creating efficient supportive/transitional housing for homeless individuals
- Housing for seniors, large families, veterans, and persons with disabilities
- Easier permitting process for Accessory Dwelling Units
- Homebuyer assistance programs



## Background

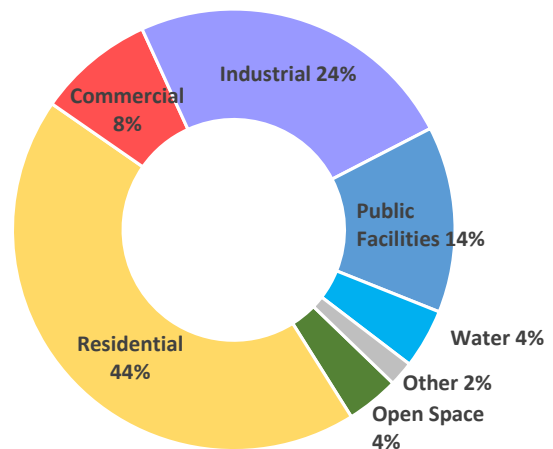
The City is located approximately 17 miles southeast of Downtown Los Angeles. Paramount is part of the Gateway Cities region, which includes many communities such as South Gate, Downey, Compton, and Long Beach which historically have supported large and diverse industrial businesses, including extensive oil industry operations. The city incorporated in 1957 as a result of local campaign to fight its annexation to neighboring cities.

Two large freeways and a major arterial roadway generally define Paramount's boundaries: I-105 near the north, I-710 on the west, State Route 19 (Lakewood Boulevard) on the east. The State Route-91 freeway runs east-west just beyond the City's southern border. Paramount is a small but densely populated community. Per 2020 data from the State Department of Finance, 55,461 people live within Paramount's 4.8 square miles.

According to 2019 land use data, approximately 44 percent of the city is developed with residential uses. Industrial land uses account for 24 percent of the total land area, and commercial land uses account for

eight percent. The remaining 24 percent is comprised of open spaces, public facilities, water bodies, roadways, and other uses. Land use acres as a percentage is presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Land Use Acres Distribution**



Source: UrbanFootprint and CoreLogic Real Estate Data, 2019.



CalEnviroScreen 3.0 produces a percentile ranking of Paramount's census tracts (small, relatively permanent statistical subdivisions of a city or county). The percentile ranking for each census tract demonstrates the degree of burdens present in that tract relative to the rest of the State's census tracts. Using the 20 indicators listed in Table 5, an overall CalEnviroScreen 3.0 score is created for each census tract. All census tracts across the State are then ordered from highest to lowest based on their CalEnviroScreen 3.0 score and assigned a percentile

rank. A percentile ranking above 75 would mean that the census tract is in the top 25% of all CalEnviroScreen 3.0 scores statewide, which classifies the census tract as a "Disadvantaged Community."

Table 2 lists the census tracts within the City with their overall percentile score. All but one is in the top 25%, qualifying each of these tracts as a Disadvantaged Community (DAC).

**Table 2: CalEnviroScreen (CES) 3.0 Percentile Scores**

Census Tracts (Paramount, CA)	Percentiles and Indicators		
	CES 3.0 Percentile Score	Pollution Indicators Percentile	Population Characteristics Percentile
536.01	98	98	87
537.01	98	97	88
537.02	97	92	93
538.01	97	92	92
538.02	96	98	80
536.02	94	90	87
539.02	91	84	85
535.04	90	84	84
535.02	89	86	80
539.01	87	78	84
535.03 <sup>1</sup>	71	69	63

Source: CalEnviroScreen 3.0 the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, June 2018.

Note: 1) Census tracts with a percentile of 75 or greater are highlighted, indicating these areas are within the top 25 percentiles in the State. Census tract 535.03 is not designated as a Disadvantaged Community.



Figure 2 portrays the Census Tracts and their percentile scores, per the CalEnviroScreen 3.0 ranking. The CalEnviroScreen ranks ten of the eleven census tracts in the City of Paramount in the top 25% of census tracts in California with the highest pollution burden and socioeconomic vulnerabilities. All but one census tract (Tract 535.03) in the City of Paramount is therefore designated as Disadvantaged Communities. As previously mentioned, disadvantaged communities include those census tracts with CalEnviroScreen percentiles of 75% to 100% compared to other areas of the state. These percentile scores reflect a combination of a variety of social and environmental factors that

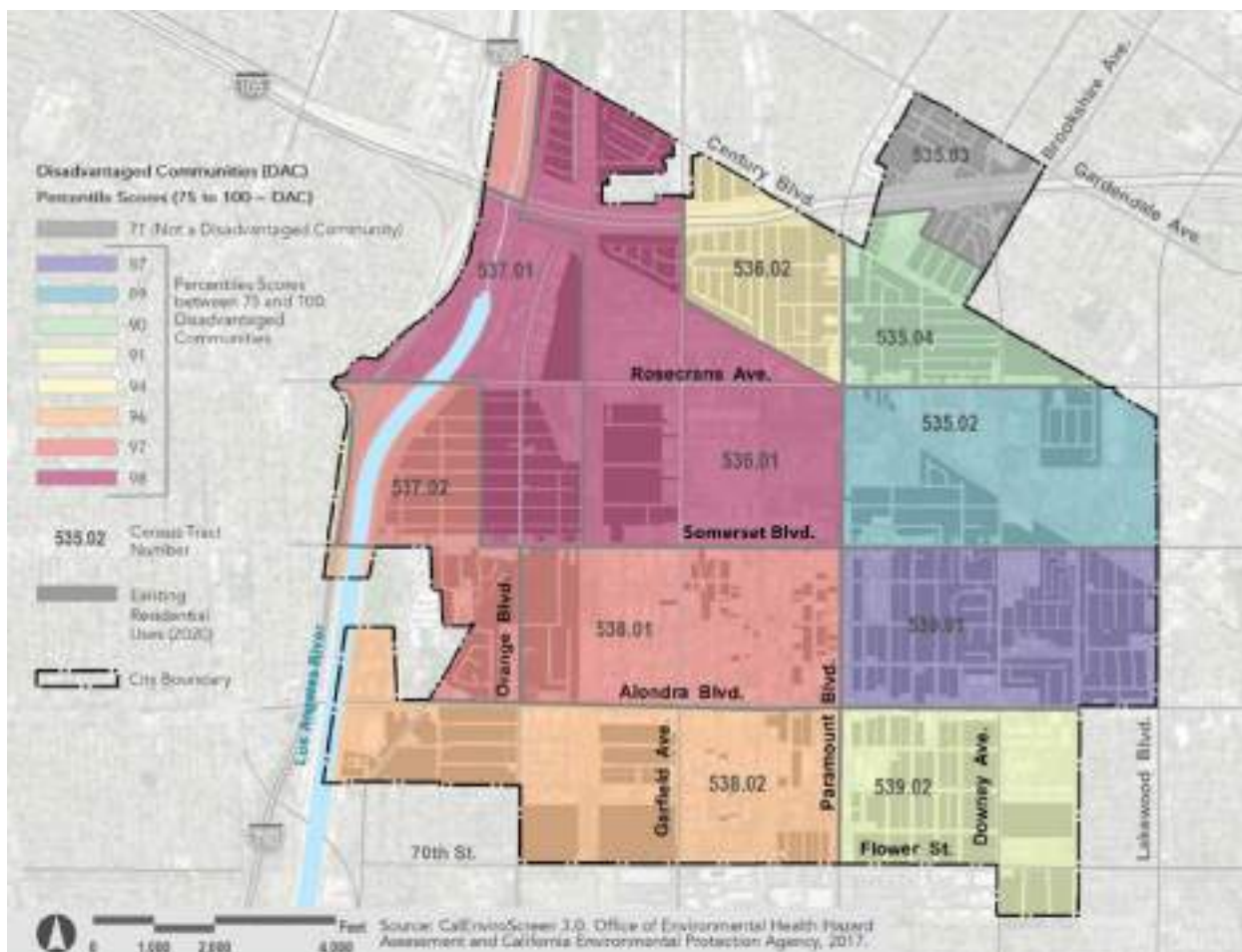
disproportionately affect residents in these DACs and their way of life.

## Population Characteristics

### Race and Ethnicity

In 2019, the City of Paramount had a total population of approximately 54,513. The City is predominantly comprised of a large Latino population with as much as 81 percent of the City being Latino or Hispanic of any race, whereas the non-Hispanic white population makes up 5.5 percent of the population (see Table 3).

**Figure 2: Census Tracts and Disadvantaged Communities**





**Table 3: Paramount Population by Race and Ethnicity**

Race/ Ethnicity	Paramount		Los Angeles County	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
White	3,004	5.5%	2,641,770	26.2%
Hispanic or Latino	44,144	81.0%	4,888,434	48.5%
Black or African American	4,804	8.8%	790,252	7.8%
American Indian and/or Alaskan Native	27	0.0%	20,831	0.2%
Asian, Hawaiian, and/or Pacific Islander	1,925	3.5%	1,479,366	14.7%
Other	609	1.1%	260,917	2.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>54,513</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>10,081,570</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2019 5-Year Estimates.

### Income and Poverty

There are a total of 14,179 occupied housing units in the City (2020) with the majority being single-family homes. The average number of persons per household is 3.89 and most working residents are employed in the educational services, health care, social assistance, and retail trade industries. Paramount residents have a lower per capita and household income than the rest of Los Angeles County, and the State of California. Approximately 16.7 percent of residents lived within the designated federal poverty level in 2015-2019.

Educational attainment is an important element of socioeconomic status and a social determinant of health, as a person with a higher educational attainment (i.e., a degree in higher education) tends to have greater employment opportunities, greater income, and access to more resources than someone without a high school diploma or GED.

Table 4 identifies the CalEnviroScreen 3.0 percentiles scoring for the population characteristics indicators. Both linguistic isolation and poverty ranked fairly high across all census tracts.

### Educational Attainment

Educational attainment measures the highest level of education that an individual has completed. Within the City of Paramount, 33 to 59 percent of the adult population have less than a high school education. Information on education attainment is collected annually in the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS).


**Table 4: Population Characteristics Indicators Scores**

Indicators	Census Tracts										
	536.01	537.01	537.02	538.01	538.02	536.02	539.02	535.04	535.02	539.01	535.03
CES 3.0 Percentile	98	98	97	97	96	94	91	90	89	87	71
Population Characteristics Indicators	87	88	93	92	80	87	85	84	80	84	63
Asthma	86	77	71	87	65	46	29	21	47	46	0
Low Birth Weight	86	74	72	91	91	57	75	57	86	83	43
Cardiovascular Disease	92	87	67	77	67	76	89	59	76	89	0
Education	98	90	57	95	86	90	69	63	70	76	37
Linguistic Isolation	91	89	88	96	87	87	94	85	87	92	85
Poverty	82	82	82	82	82	82	82	82	82	82	82
Unemployment	85	95	89	30	69	84	35	79	38	31	97
Housing Burden	80	80	80	77	81	67	66	65	65	65	65

Source: CalEnviroScreen 3.0 the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, June 2018.

Note: Census tracts with a population characteristic percentile of 75 or greater are in bold, indicating these areas are within the top 25 percentiles in the State.

Population characteristics indicators in Paramount ranking in the top 25% of all census tracts in the State are identified and described in detail below:



**Asthma.** Asthma increases an individual's sensitivity to pollutants. Air pollutants, including particulate matter, ozone, nitrogen dioxide, and

diesel exhaust can trigger symptoms among asthmatics. Children living along major roadways and freeways have been known to suffer from asthma at a disproportionate rate. Asthma can also increase susceptibility to respiratory diseases such as pneumonia and influenza.



**Low Birth Weight.** Low birth weight is a key marker of overall population health. Babies born of low weight are at higher risk of health conditions that can make

them more sensitive to environmental exposures. Risk of low birth weight is increased by certain environmental exposures and social factors, making these individuals more prone to asthma, coronary heart disease, and type 2 diabetes.



**Cardiovascular Disease.** Cardiovascular diseases refer to conditions that involve blocked or narrowed blood vessels, that increase the risk of heart attacks

and other heart related problems. Recent studies have shown that individuals with preexisting heart disease respond differently to the effects of pollution than individuals without heart diseases.



**Education.** Educational attainment is an important independent predictor of health. As a component of socioeconomic status,

education is also related to the degree of indoor and outdoor pollution exposure. Studies have

demonstrated that the likeliness of exposure to environmental pollutants was associated with educational attainment. Low educational attainment increases the likelihood of experiencing economic hardship, stress, and lack of social support and reduced access to medical care, which can significantly affect health.



**Linguistic Isolation.** The inability to speak English well can have impacts on an individual's communication with service providers and their ability to

perform daily social activities. People with limited English are less likely to have regular medical care and are more likely to report difficulty getting medical information or advice. Linguistic isolation is also an indicator of one's ability to participate in local politics and decision-making, as there is a disconnect between government and residents who are not well versed in English writing or speaking.



**Poverty.** Poverty is an important social determinant of health. Numerous studies have suggested that lower income populations are likelier than wealthier populations

to experience adverse health outcomes when exposed to environmental pollution. Wealth impacts health, as it determines one's living conditions, occupations, nutrition, and access to proper health care services.



**Unemployment.** At an individual level, unemployment can be associated with stress. Individuals who are unemployed tend to have higher annual illness rates and

lack health insurance and access to health care. Stress from being unemployed and not securing income can result in chronic illnesses related to stress.



**Housing Burden.** Housing affordability is an important part of the framework of social and economic conditions that can have impacts on the health and

well-being of individuals. Individuals of lower income levels are often faced with high housing costs which can result in several health-related concerns, due to the significant stress that comes with trying to afford rent.

## Pollution Burdens

### Proximity to Industrial Uses

About a quarter of Paramount, 24 percent, is designated for industrial land use. Residents living near major industrial sites are facing a complex situation consisting of multiple exposures, to a variety of hazards including exposures to noise, dust, visual pollution, stress, etc.

Table 6 identifies the CalEnviroScreen 3.0 percentile scoring for the pollution burden indicators. Both toxic release inventory and particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), which is fine inhalable particles with diameters that are generally 2.5 micrometers and smaller, consistently scored high across all census tracts in the City.

### Hazardous Waste and Toxic Materials Release

Hazardous waste is created by different commercial or industrial activities containing chemicals that may be dangerous or harmful to health. Only certain regulated facilities are allowed to treat, store, or dispose of hazardous waste. Hazardous waste includes a range of materials from automotive oil to high toxic waste materials produced by businesses and industries. Hazardous waste may also be transported from businesses that generate waste to permitted facilities for recycling, treatment, storage, or disposal.

Facilities that make or use toxic chemicals sometimes release these chemicals into the air, creating a Toxic Materials Release. See Table 5 and Figure 3 for location and the number of toxic pollutions released annually.

**Table 5: Toxic Pollutants in 2018  
(Pounds per Year)**

Business Name	RCRA Type	Toxic Pollutants Pounds Released Annually
Ace Clearwater Enterprises	Large Quantity Generator	90 lbs.
Aerocraft Heat Treating Co., Inc.	Transporter	152 lbs.
Press Forge Co.	Transporter	1,063 lbs.
Weber Metals, Inc.	Large Quantity Generator	1,330 lbs.
Anaplex Corp.	Large Quantity Generator	2,645 lbs.
Carlton Forge Works	Transporter	12,020 lbs.

Source: South Coast Air Quality Management District, AB 2588 Emissions Reporting, 2018.

The Toxic Release Inventory tracks toxicity-weighted concentrations of modeled chemical releases into the air from facility emissions and off-site incinerations as reported by industrial and federal facilities. The USEPA has additional information regarding toxic releases from facilities. All Paramount Planning Area census tracts are in proximity to facilities that handle toxic chemicals.



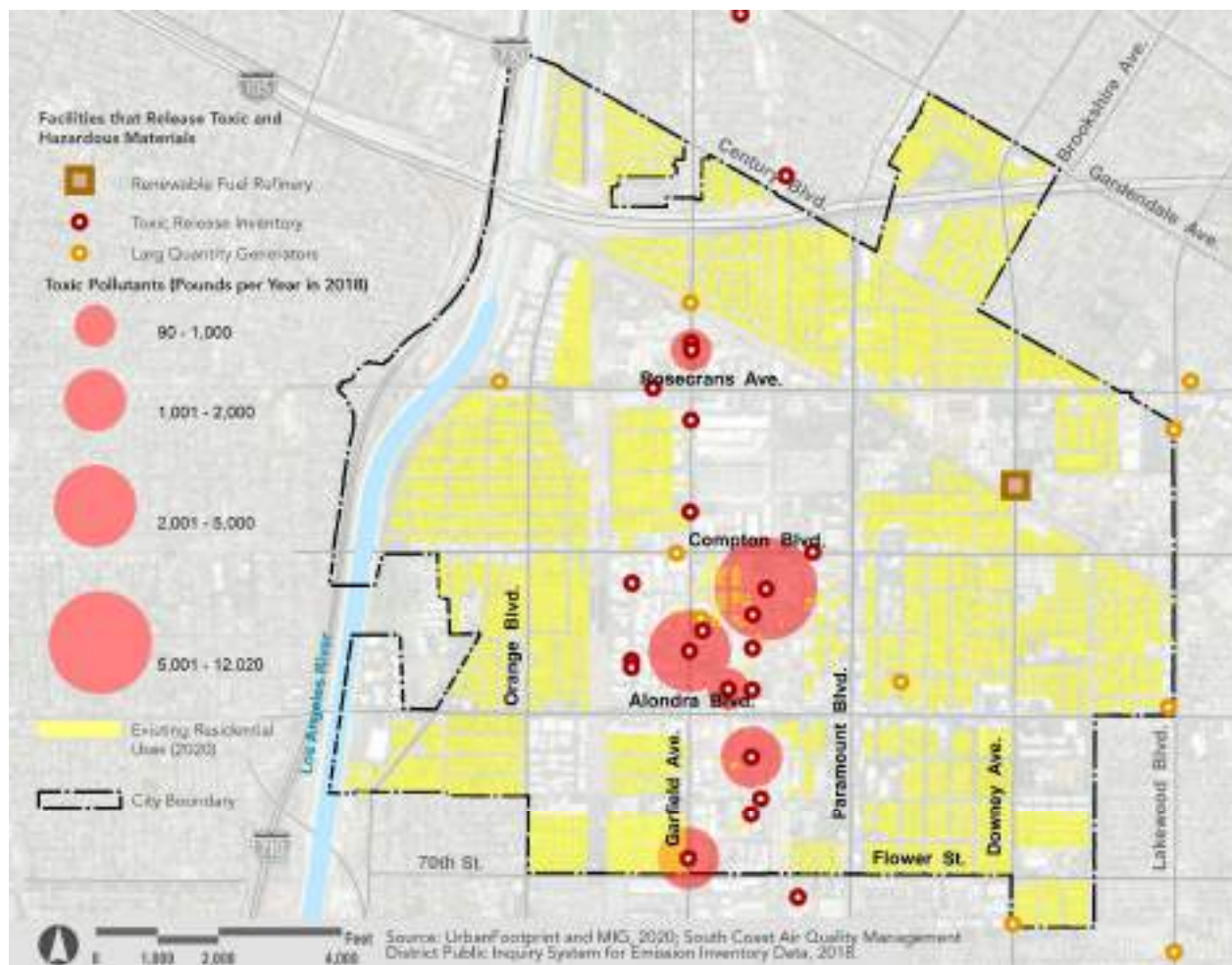
**Table 6: Pollution Burden Indicators Percentile Scores**

Indicators	Census Tracts										
	536.01	537.01	537.02	538.01	538.02	536.02	539.02	535.04	535.02	539.01	535.03
CES 3.0 Percentile	98	98	97	97	96	94	91	90	89	87	71
Pollution Indicators	98	97	92	92	98	90	84	84	86	78	69
Toxic Release Inventory	91	89	88	96	87	87	94	85	87	92	85
PM <sub>2.5</sub>	82	82	82	82	82	82	82	82	82	82	82
Solid Waste Facilities	98	90	57	95	86	90	69	63	70	76	37
Groundwater Threats	92	87	67	77	67	76	89	59	76	89	0
Hazardous Waste	86	74	72	91	91	57	75	57	86	83	43
Diesel PM	80	80	80	77	81	67	66	65	65	65	65
Traffic Density	85	95	89	30	69	84	35	79	38	31	97
Cleanup Sites	86	77	71	87	65	46	29	21	47	46	0
Ozone	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
Drinking Water	32	31	15	15	15	23	79	37	33	33	39
Pesticides	0	0	0	0	66	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: CalEnviroScreen 3.0 the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, June 2018.

Note: Census tracts with a pollution burden percentile of 75 or greater are highlighted, indicating these areas are within the top 25 percentiles in the State

**Figure 3: Air Pollution Sites and Concentrations**

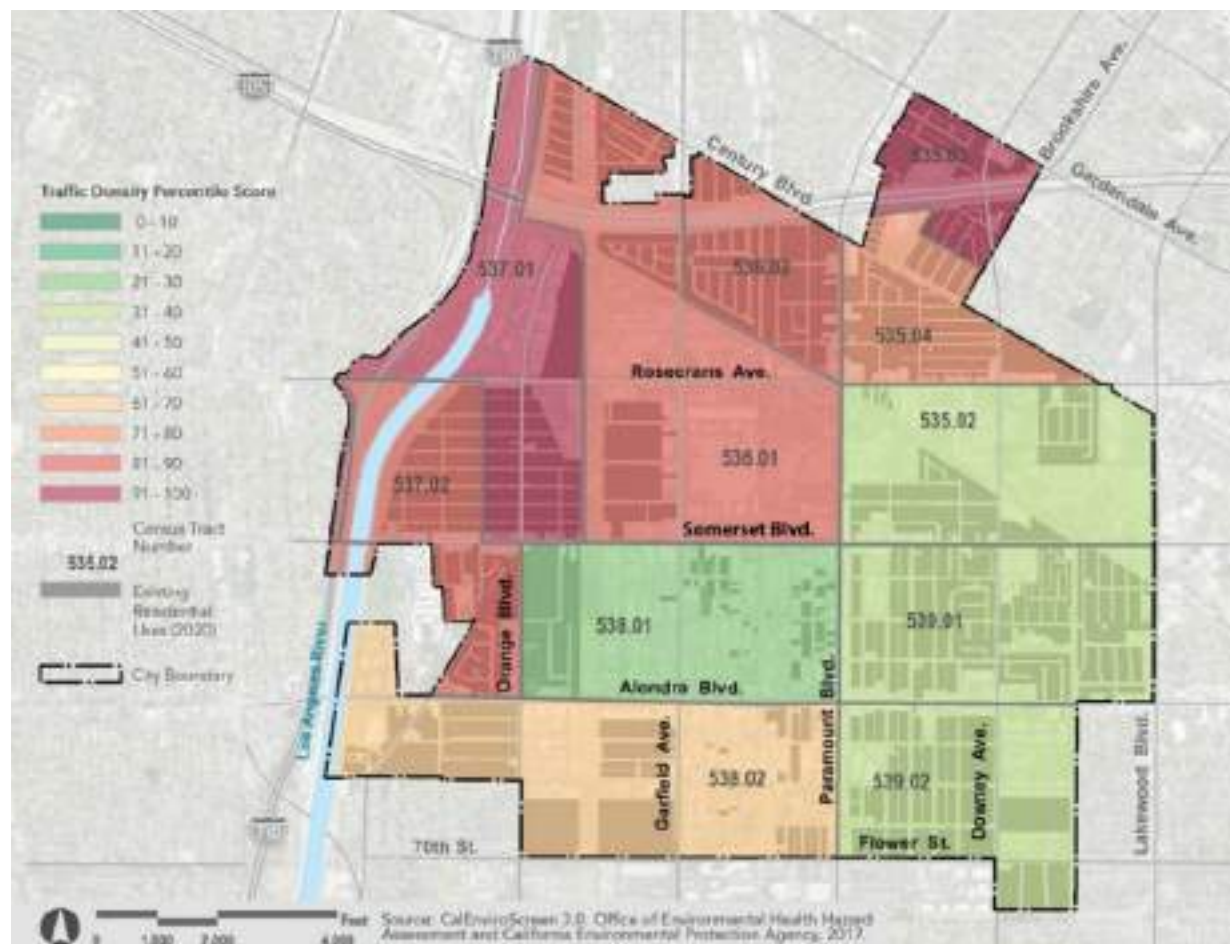


### **Vehicle/ Truck Emission - Traffic Density, Particulate Matter (PM)**

While California has the strictest auto emissions standards in the U.S., the state is also known for its freeways and heavy traffic. Traffic is a significant source of air pollution, particularly in urban areas, where more than 50 percent of particulate emissions come from traffic. Exhaust from vehicles contains a large number of toxic chemicals, including nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, and benzene. Traffic exhaust also plays a role in the formation of photochemical smog. Health effects of concern from

these pollutants include heart and lung disease, cancer, and increased mortality.

Reported traffic density in the city and surrounds is linked to the freeway network crossing Paramount. Census tracts closer to the freeways (north and west) present higher percentile scores than the tracts located in the south and east, see Figure 4.



**Toxic Release Inventory.**

Facilities that make or use toxic chemicals can release these chemicals into the air. The Toxic Release Inventory is a database that tracks toxicity-weighted

concentrations of modeled chemical releases into the air from facility emissions and off-site incinerations as reported by industrial and federal facilities. The USEPA has additional information regarding toxic releases from facilities. All Planning Area census tracts are in proximity to facilities that handle toxic chemicals.



**PM<sub>2.5</sub>.** Particulate matter (PM) is a complex measure of aerosolized solids and liquid particles, which include substances such as organic chemicals, dust, allergens, and metals. These

particles can be emitted through vehicles, industrial processes, wood burning, and other activities involving combustion. PMs have adverse health effects depending on their size, as the smaller the particle the more deeply the particle may penetrate into the lungs. Children, elderly, persons suffering from cardiopulmonary disease, and other respiratory illness are vulnerable to the effects of PM.



**Solid Waste Facilities.** Solid waste facilities are places where household garbage and similar kinds of waste are collected, processed, or stored. These include landfills and composting

or recycling facilities. Solid waste disposal can release waste gases such as methane and carbon dioxide and may do so for decades after site closure. Exposure to landfill leachate can have adverse impacts on reproductive and respiratory systems. Composting, recycling, and waste treatment facilities may produce odors, attract pests, and increase local truck traffic.

**Groundwater Threats.**

Hazardous chemicals can be stored in containers on land or in underground storage tanks. Common soil and groundwater pollutants include gasoline and

diesel fuel, solvents, heavy metals, and pesticides. Leaks from containers and tanks can contaminate soil and pollute groundwater. Human-made ponds containing water produced from oil and gas activities may also contain pollutants.



**Hazardous Waste.** Hazardous waste is potentially dangerous or harmful to human health and the environment. Potential health effects associated with living in proximity to hazardous waste

processing and disposal sites include diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Only certain licensed facilities are allowed to treat, store, or dispose of this type of waste. Hazardous waste can range from used automotive oil to highly toxic waste materials produced by factories and businesses.



**Diesel PM.** Diesel particulate matter is emitted into the environment from on- and off-road sources. These sources include trucks, buses, cars, ships, and locomotive engines. Diesel

particulate matters are found in higher concentrations near ports, rail yards, and freeways. As with other particulate matters, diesel PM can enter into an individual's airways and cause, or worsen, chronic respiratory illnesses.





**Traffic Density.** Heavy traffic is common in major cities. Traffic density is used to represent the number of vehicles on the road in a specific area, resulting in human exposures to chemicals

that are released into the air by the exhaust of vehicles. Major roadways have several effects on communities, including noise, vibration, and injuries. Exhaust fumes contain toxic chemicals that can damage DNA, cause cancer, make breathing difficult, and cause low weight and premature births. Children who live or go to schools near busy roads can have higher rates of asthma and other lung diseases.



**Cleanup Sites.** Contaminated sites can pose a variety of risks to nearby residents. Hazardous substances can move off-site and impact surrounding communities.

In general, it takes many years for a site to be certified as clean, and cleanup work is often delayed due to cost, litigation, concerns about liability or detection of new contaminants.



**Drinking Water.** Californians receive their water from a variety of sources and distribution systems. As such, drinking water varies with location, water

sources, and treatment methods. Contaminants are introduced into water sources through natural occurrences, industrial releases, accidental contaminant spills, and runoff from agricultural or industrial facilities. Lower income and rural communities are disproportionately exposed to contaminants in their drinking water.

## Environmental Justice Approaches

### Pollution Exposures and Health Risks

Pollution is the presence in or introduction into the environment of a substance that has harmful or

poisonous effects. In the city environment (though not only within cities) there are three major types of pollution: air pollution, water pollution, and land pollution. The concentration and exposure time of certain pollutants are factors that are considered when identifying the risk that is posed to human health.

Pollution sources include household activities, mobile sources (such as vehicles and planes), agricultural activities, and stationary sources (such as factories and landfills). However, some pollution sources are not always easily traced to one particular source, making it hard to identify the polluter, which is why there are regulations and procedures in place for handling toxic material. Reducing the overall risk of exposure to pollution in areas where there are several types of pollution sources is important in preserving public health and quality of life.

Previous sections have demonstrated the pollution burdens placed on the communities of Paramount. Strategies for mitigating the risk of exposure and ensuring that resident health is priority are important to implement. The following strategies are potential methods of addressing industrial and air pollution throughout the city.

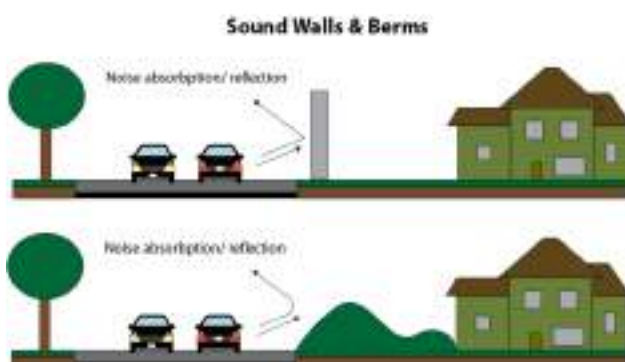
### Addressing Industrial and Air Pollution

#### Sound Walls and Berms

Residents in the City of Paramount are surrounded by major freeways and arterial streets (I-105, I-710, and State Route 91) serving as significant noise pollution sources. Sound becomes unwanted when it interferes with normal activities such as sleep and diminishes one's quality of life. Studies have shown that there are direct links between the amount of noise one is exposed to in the urban environment and their health. Some noise-related problems include high blood pressure, speech interference, hearing loss, sleep disruption, loss of productivity, and other stress related illnesses. Among these problems Noise

Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL) is the most common and adverse health effect as a result of noise pollution. Some studies have shown that sounds measuring 70 decibels (dB) or more for a prolonged period of time may result in damage to hearing, while the average level of highway traffic noise ranges from 70-80 dB at a range of 50 feet.

The use of sound walls or sound berms (detailed in the illustration above) would be a way that the city can mitigate and address the problem related to noise from trucks and vehicles. Placing sound walls/berms along freeway or major corridors that reside next to residential areas is a design-based approach that would significantly reduce the amount of noise



residents in the area are exposed to.

### Pollution Prevention Plan

A Pollution Prevention Plan would be a city led effort to address issues of pollution that directly affect residents. A proactive, rather than reactive approach, ensures that the city has measures and operational procedures in place to address pollution concerns and issues. A Pollution Prevention Plan would be any effort that reduces, eliminates, or prevents pollution at its source, also known as “source reduction”.

### Transportation Strategies

Expanding means to reliable public transportation and providing efficient infrastructure that encourage active transportation aims to address the issue of ambient air quality within the city. By offering different methods

of transportation, residents may seek alternatives that reduce the number of vehicles on the roads within the city. With fewer vehicles being used to travel locally, there will be a reduction in PM pollution from vehicle exhausts.

### Trees and Green Buffers

Urban greening efforts such as increasing the amount of tree canopy coverage along residential and commercial corridors are among some of the ways of addressing the issue of ambient air pollution. Harmful air pollutants such as airborne particles, nitrogen dioxide, and carbon monoxide are found in high concentrations along busy roadways. Tree cover near these busy roadways may serve as a buffer from these pollutants by, helping to reduce their concentration. On the ground, green buffers such as rain gardens collect and treat stormwater that comes from streets and sidewalks and often times carry pollutants from vehicles and other pollution sources into waterways.

### Building Design Measures

Building design measures that ensure that there is



proper and filtered airflow in building structures helps ensure that occupants are breathing clean air. Along with air quality benefits, constructing buildings with double-pane windows helps reduce the amount of sound pollution from busy roadways.

### Enforcing and Monitoring

Consultation with regional agencies supports rigorous monitoring and enforcement of air pollution



standards. Proper enforcement and monitoring keep local industrial sites accountable and regulates the amount and type of pollution that is being released. Paramount lies within the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), an agency responsible for attaining state and federal clean air standards in the South Coast Air Basin. The basin covers an area of 6,745 square miles with a population of 14.6 million. The South Coast AQMD offers a broad range of programs to help achieve cleaner air quality through financial assistance and incentives for business and local government to adopt clean air technologies.

### **Site Polluters Away from Residential Uses**

Adjustment of zoning ordinances to prevent and restrict high pollution business from being in close proximity to residential neighborhoods reduces the number of households that are exposed to harmful pollutants. The map below demonstrates the concentration of toxic pollutants and industrial land uses (seen in grey blue color) and their proximity to land designated for residential uses (seen in yellow).

### **Social Well-being**

Community health starts with the individual. As an individual develops, they learn to interact with others, conduct everyday healthy habits, and formulate a sense of identity and interests. Positive social habits can help build stronger support systems and allow an individual to stay healthier mentally and physically. Proper social well-being is cultivated in different spaces such as at home, school, and in the community at-large, which is why Paramount aims to address these particular spaces in order to develop stronger social well-being for its residents. Ways to improve social well-being include improving educational resources, expanding safe and affordable housing, and adopting community programs and services that benefit Paramount residents.

### **Improving Educational Resources**

By improving educational resources, the City is better able to provide essential tools and guidance that benefit the students of Paramount. These educational resources can be tailored to address several social factors that can have a strong impact on the lives of students, such as adopting curriculums that address everyday life, such as: health (both mental and physical), environmental justice, and climate change.

Other approaches include expanding funding for resources such as effective guidance counseling for students seeking higher education, scholarships (such as the Paramount Education Partnership), and awards, and other educational opportunities. With equitable guidance counseling, students are better informed on the options when it comes to pursuing higher education.

Improving educational resources may have implications for the advancement of educational attainment by residents of Paramount. Educational attainment, as defined earlier, is an important component of socioeconomic status and a social determinant of health. Resources that improve the quality of education ensures that students are adequately supported and accommodated in their educational pursuits.

### **Expanding Safe and Affordable Housing**

Housing is essential for all individuals. Safe and affordable housing is also identified as a key determinant of proper social well-being. When considering ways to improve mental health and well-being, housing usually is not the first factor that comes to mind. However, safe and affordable housing is crucial in ensuring a stable housing situation for all families. Households who struggle to pay rent often have difficulty attending to other immediate needs, often times neglecting their mental and physical health. Children who undergo a variety of transitions from one home to the next or experience



homelessness, are prone to developmental delays, depression, and mental health problems more often than those who are in a more stable housing condition. Threats of foreclosure and eviction instill stress on families and can then increase the risk of stress-related health conditions. By expanding access to safe and affordable housing for current and future residents of Paramount, the city is investing in the well-being of its residents.

### **Community Programs and Services**

Creating and implementing community programs and services that benefit the various residents of Paramount is crucial in cultivating a stronger sense of belonging and community pride. Over the years, Paramount has held a number of community wide events and programs that engage residents of all ages.

### **Increasing Health Food Access**

Access to affordable and nutritious food plays an important role in the optimal growth, development, health, and well-being of individuals in all stages of life. Healthy eating can reduce the risk of chronic disease, such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and other types of cancers. Limited access to food retailers, such as grocery stores, farmers' markets, cooperatives, and other vendors of fresh food may make it more difficult for residents to adopt a healthier diet. Many communities that lack access to healthy foods are also oversaturated with fast-food restaurants, liquor stores, and other sources of inexpensive and processed foods that have no nutritional value. Increasing resident accessibility to fresh and affordable foods is therefore critical in addressing the risk to chronic diseases caused by poor nutrition.

#### **Grocery Store Access**

Within the City of Paramount, a number of residents do not have a grocery store within walking distance,

limiting adequate access to grocery stores. Areas with large concentration of residents have to walk more than one mile to reach the nearest grocery offering nutritious foods. Improving access to grocery stores that offer affordable and nutritious produce can encourage residents in the area to adopt healthier habits. Healthier eating habits provide a variety of health-related benefits. Improving grocery store access may also enable residents to seek alternatives to driving a vehicle when taking a quick trip to the grocery store. Instead of driving they may choose to bike or walk, which in turn can improve local air quality by reducing the number of vehicles on the road.

#### **Healthy Food Access**

Ensuring that all Paramount residents have access to nutritious and affordable foods addresses the problem of food deserts. A food desert is characterized as an area where it is difficult to find and buy affordable and fresh foods, making it more difficult for residents to maintain a healthy diet. Developing and equipping grocery stores, small retailers, corner markets, and farmers' markets to provide more nutritious and affordable foods not only addresses this problem but is also an important part of creating a healthy community.

#### **Community Gardens**

The City of Paramount has a long history of supporting urban agriculture. Community gardens are a great way of utilizing vacant lots, and turning them into hubs of community engagement, while addressing issues related to access to healthy foods and food sovereignty. Gardens in the urban area can help improve air and soil quality, as well as reduce the "food miles" required to transport nutritious food. In many cases, community gardens can be operated in an individual manner, where people are assigned their own plots of land, or in a co-operative style where everyone shares the work and the harvest. Community gardens are beneficial to the health of





residents, but also are great ways for cultivating community and culture within the City. Through collaborative efforts amongst residents and neighbors, these gardens help build trust between community members. Along with the social benefits of community gardening come the mental health benefits of reducing stress and improving mental health when partaking in gardening activities such as tree pruning, cleaning, and other activities that keep the body moving and the mind focused.

### **Access to Open Space and Physical Activity**

Urban green spaces, such as parks, sports fields, and gardens give people the space needed to engage in physical activity, relaxation, and to cool off on warm days. Green and open spaces are important resources for the physical activity of residents within a city, as they have the potential to reduce chronic illnesses such as obesity and diabetes, as well as other cardiovascular-related illnesses. Green space also provides a means for climate mitigation by reducing heat island effects in cities and reducing air pollution effects. Seeing that access to open spaces provides a variety of benefits to everyone's mental and physical well-being, it is important that all residents have equal access to these spaces throughout Paramount. Figure 5 portrays the degree of current access to parks and recreational facilities throughout the City of Paramount.

#### **Physical Activity (More walking, biking- physical activity at parks)**

Regular physical activity is one of the most important things that someone can do for health. Research shows that regular physical activity improves health in people of all ages, as certain activities can improve heart and lung function, strengthen muscles and bones, and help people maintain a healthy weight. Small changes such as choosing to walk to the grocery store instead of driving or biking around the neighborhood can be very beneficial. Parks throughout the city provide residents with several amenities such

as pathways, tracks, sporting fields and courts, and exercise equipment.

#### **Park Access**

Currently within the city of Paramount, there is little open space other than the park system for residents to enjoy, with a variety of small pocket parks and larger parks such as Paramount, Salud, and Progress Parks. Figure 5 illustrates that people living in the more densely populated areas have to walk more than 10 minutes (half mile) to reach the nearest park.

#### **Identify and Maximizing Use of Green and Open Space (Urban Greening)**

Maximizing use of green and open space in a mostly developed city is challenging, but with innovative designs and improvement to existing space, a city can work towards expanding access to green and open space. As previously mentioned, green and open space is important for one's physical and mental health. Ways to maximize green space within the city include green streets and infrastructure, more trees on streets, and small-scale urban gardens.

### **Community Engagement**

#### **Linguistic Isolation**

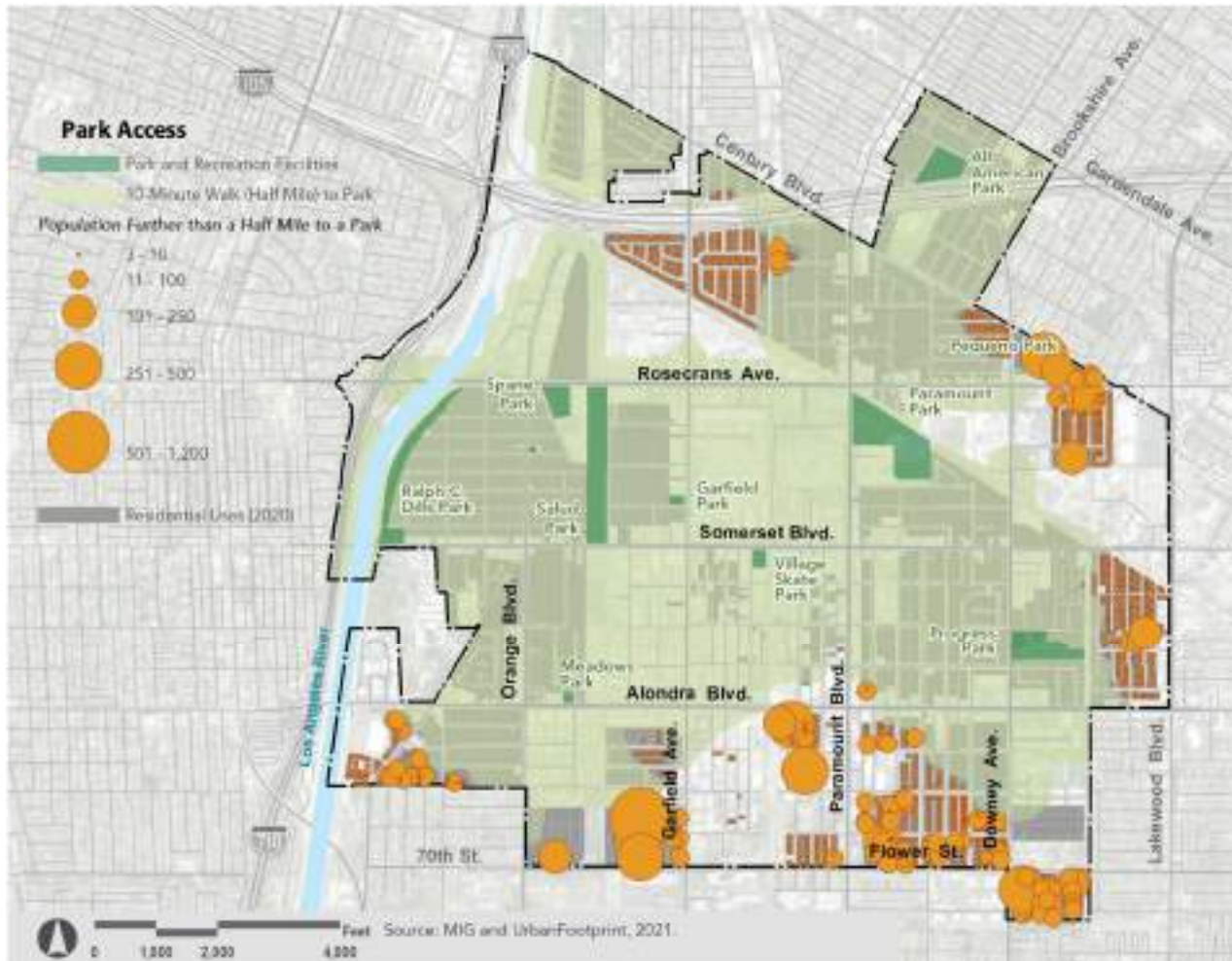
According to the most recent 2010-2014 American Community Survey (ACS), nearly 43 percent of Californians speak a language at home other than English, about 20 percent of the state's population speaks English "not well" or "not at all," and 10 percent of all households in California are linguistically isolated. The Census Bureau uses the term "linguistic isolation" to measure households where all members 14 years of age or above have at least some difficulties speaking English. A high degree of linguistic isolation among members of a community raises concerns about access to health information and public services, and effective engagement with regulatory processes. Information on language use is collected annually in the ACS. In



contrast to the decennial census, the ACS surveys a

demographic makeup still consists of 70 percent

**Figure 5: Park Access**

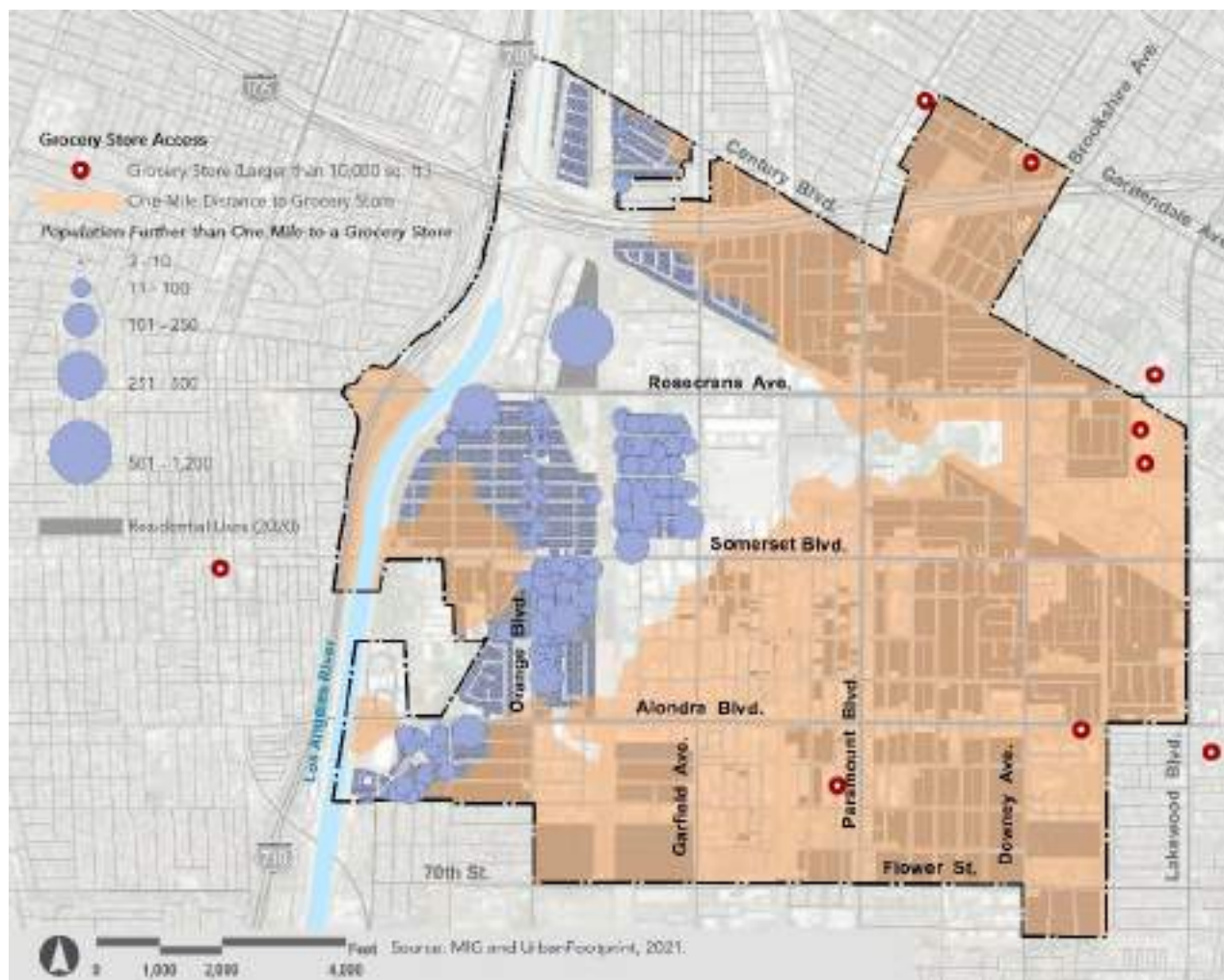


small sample of the U.S. population to provide more current and detailed economic and social information regarding the country's population.

Hispanic/Latino population.

Paramount presents some tracts in which Latino populations make up to 93 percent of the demographic makeup in that census tract. Tracts like this often present the highest linguistic isolation, a pattern that is also observable in nearby cities like South Gate and Bell. Tract 536.02 presents the least linguistic isolation in the city, but its racial

Figure 6: Grocery Store Access

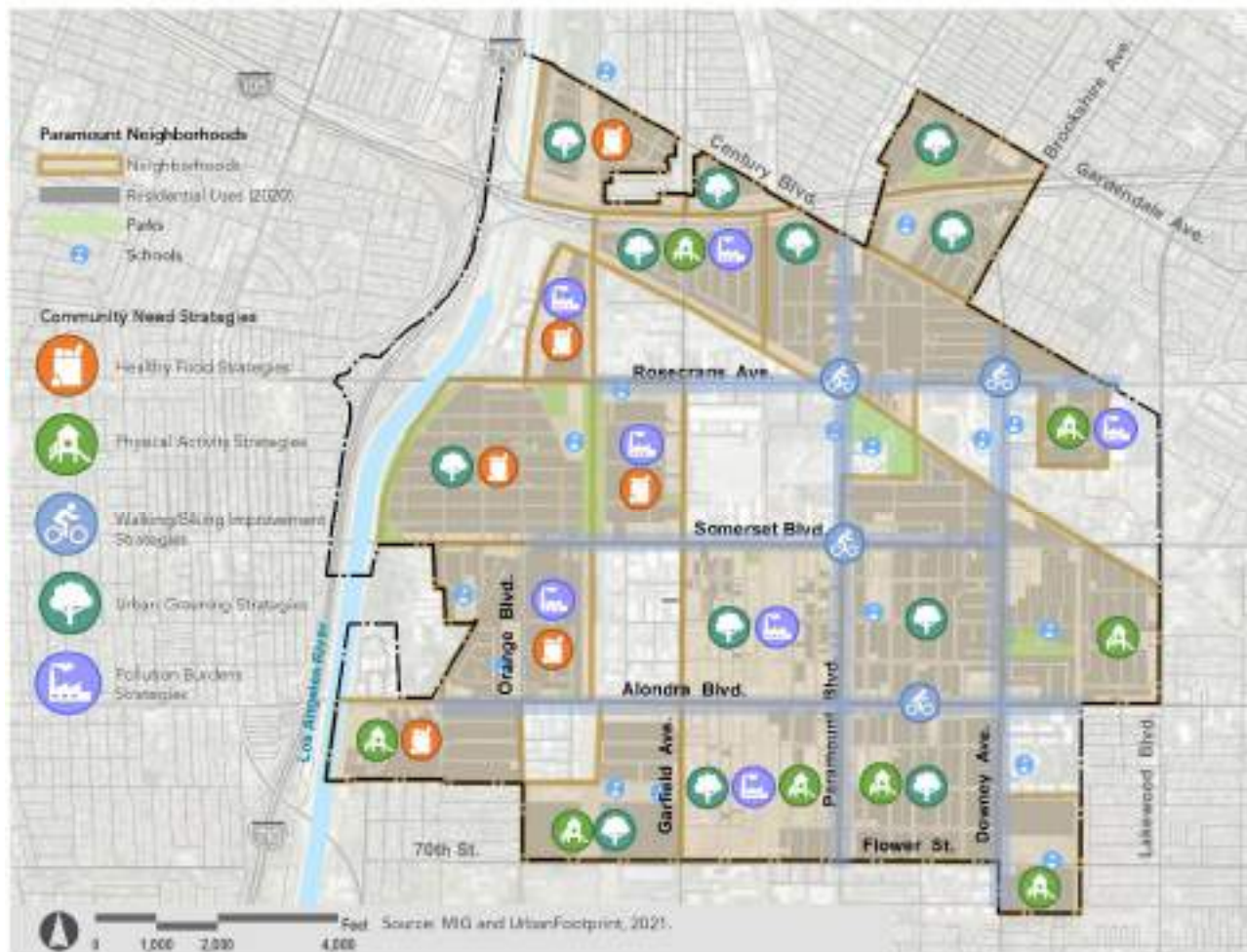


### Neighborhood Community Needs

Based on the strategies identified in the previous pages, a prioritization of community needs has been developed at the neighborhood level. Figure 7 identifies healthy foods, physical activity, walking/biking improvements, urban greening, and pollution burden strategies within Paramount's neighborhoods. In conjunction with the goals and policies on the following pages, together these strategies and policies form the City's approach in addressing Environmental Justice challenges.

Each of the icon illustrates a recommended strategy within each neighborhood. Implementing these strategies will be based on feasibility and available funding resources

**Figure 7: Neighborhood Community Needs**







## Goals and Policies

### Addressing Pollution Burdens

#### GOAL EJ-1: REDUCED EXPOSURE TO AIR POLLUTION AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

**Policy EJ-1.1: Truck Idling Restrictions.**

Designate acceptable and unacceptable areas for freight trucking and diesel truck idling to limit impacts on residential neighborhoods overburdened by air pollution. Require businesses to install signs prohibiting idling. Promote contact information of regulatory agency for reporting violations.

**Policy EJ-1.2: Industrial Pollution.** Reduce pollution exposure in residential neighborhoods by limiting industrial operations that generate potentially hazardous air pollutants.

**Policy EJ-1.3: Enforcement/ Monitoring.** Consult with California Air Resources Board and the South Coast Air Quality Management District to ensure the appropriate monitoring and enforcement of mobile and stationary source emissions and to receive aid and assistance in reducing exposures to harmful air pollutants.

**Policy EJ-1.4: Emission Data Collection.** Coordinate with the South Coast Air Quality Management District to explore ways to initiate data collection efforts for a community emissions reduction and/or community air quality monitoring plan, including the identification of: information needed (new or updated), potential data sources and the resources needed, and strategies to engage residents and

#### GOAL EJ-2: IMPROVE PHYSICAL CONDITIONS OF RESIDENTIAL AREAS ADJACENT TO POLLUTIONS SOURCES

**Policy EJ-2.1: Industrial Air Pollution and Noise.**

Mitigate impacts on residential neighborhoods immediately adjacent to industrial areas by utilizing tree and green buffers, and sound walls, and similar strategies.

**Policy EJ-2.2: Minimizing Pollution Burdens.** Require new residential development and encourage established residential units to include building design features, equipment, and/or site planning measures to protect occupants from air pollution.

**Policy EJ-2.3: Weatherization Programs.** Assist residents in retrofitting their homes to be more energy efficient, weatherproofed, and better protected from air and noise pollution.

**Policy EJ-2.4: Community Complaints.** Develop a proactive process that allows the City to quickly connect with City departments and regional agencies in order to promptly respond to community complaints concerning odors, emissions, noise, and vibration from industrial businesses.

**Policy EJ-2.5: Public Education.** Develop community programs to improve public awareness of State, regional and local agencies, and resources to assist with air quality and other environmental quality concerns.

**Policy EJ-2.6: World Energy Paramount Consultation.** Consult with World Energy Paramount for development of a community education campaign about the use of biodiesel at the former Paramount Petroleum Refinery.





**GOAL EJ-3: PROPER MANAGEMENT AND DISPOSAL OF HAZARDOUS WASTE FROM INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES**

**Policy EJ-3.1: Hazardous Waste Siting.** Discourage the siting of facilities that utilize hazardous materials or generate hazardous wastes within one-quarter mile of any private or public school, park, or similar place where people congregate in numbers.

**Policy EJ-3.2: Hazardous Materials Locations.** Monitor and evaluate commercial and industrial uses that generate, store, and transport hazardous materials to determine the need for buffer zones or setbacks to minimize risks to residential neighborhoods, schools, parks, and community facilities.

**Policy EJ-3.3: Contamination Protection.** Protect natural resources—including groundwater—from hazardous waste and materials contamination, and leaking underground storage tanks.

**Policy EJ-3.4: Agency Collaboration.** Consult with State, federal, and Los Angeles County agencies to develop and promote best practices related to the use, storage, transportation, and disposal of hazardous materials.

**Policy EJ-3.5: Hazard Mitigation.** Coordinate and integrate hazard mitigation activities with emergency operations plans and procedures.

**Policy EJ-3.6: Proper Hazardous Materials Management.** Promote the proper collection, handling, recycling, reuse, treatment, and long-term disposal of hazardous waste from households, businesses, and government operations.

**Open Space and Physical Activity**

**GOAL EJ-4: ACCESSIBLE OPEN SPACES AND INCREASED LEVELS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES**

**Policy EJ-4.1: Park Facility.** Develop park facilities in residential neighborhoods that are lacking park opportunities within a 10-minute walk.

**Policy EJ-4.2: Active Recreation Programming.** Develop methods to provide active recreation programming for resident in neighborhoods that are lacking park opportunities within a 10-minute walk.

**Policy EJ-4.3: Park Enhancements.** Improve existing parks to include active recreational opportunities, such as additional exercise equipment or walking trails and tracks.

**Community Facilities and Public Improvements**

**GOAL EJ-5: PRIORTIZING COMMUNITY NEEDS**

**Policy EJ-5.1: Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety.** Prioritize pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements along major corridors, focusing on the following roadways: Rosecrans Avenue, Paramount Boulevard, Downey Avenue, Somerset Boulevard, and Alondra Boulevard.



**Policy EJ-5.2:** **Tree Canopy.** Expand the tree canopy and improve the urban forest in areas without a lot of trees to promote healthier communities and expand shade opportunities along sidewalks and parking areas.

**Policy EJ-5.3:** **Urban Greening.** Encourage urban greening and green infrastructure elements to increase groundwater recharge, reduce urban runoff, improve water quality, and create public green spaces.

**Policy EJ-5.4:** **Gathering Spaces.** Support expansion of new community gathering spaces with flexible areas to allow for special events and activities.

**Policy EJ-5.5:** **Supporting Health Services.** Collaborate with community-based organizations and local health providers engaged in improving public health and wellness, expanding access to affordable quality health care, and providing medical services offer fresh foods, where feasible.

**Policy EJ-5.6:** **Equitable Programming and Services.** Ensure educational, recreational, and cultural programs and activities of local interest that are inclusive and affordable to all.

## Expanding Access to Healthy and Nutritious Foods

### GOAL EJ-6: IMPROVED COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS THROUGH HEALTHIER FOOD OPTIONS

**Policy EJ-6.1:** **Community Gardens.** Work with organizations and other community groups to build and manage community gardens throughout the City, specifically on unique properties that cannot be developed or are vacant.

**Policy EJ-6.2:** **Access Healthy Foods.** Encourage the provision of safe, convenient opportunities to access healthy food products by ensuring that sources of healthy foods are easily accessible from all neighborhoods.

**Policy EJ-6.3:** **Urban Agriculture.** Promote and expand urban agricultural opportunities, including home gardens, community gardens, urban orchards, and small-lot urban agricultural projects on underutilized sites, park or community facilities, schools, and remnant vacant properties.

**Policy EJ-6.4:** **Food Education.** Support food education programs and messaging about healthy eating habits, food choices, culinary classes, nutrition, and related food education programs.

**Policy EJ-6.5:** **Grocery Stores.** Encourage new grocery stores and small markets that offer fresh foods, where feasible.



## Expanding Community Engagement

### GOAL EJ-7: INCREASED CIVIC ENGAGEMENT THAT IS INCLUSIVE AND TRANSPARENT

**Policy EJ-7.1: Outreach Strategy Plan.** Create a comprehensive Community Outreach Strategy that serves as a framework for all departments to participate in meaningful two-way communication with the public, prioritizing residents with language barriers.

**Policy EJ-7.2: Youth Engagement.** Encourage community engagement activities that connect with youth and young adults.

**Policy EJ-7.3: Multimedia Engagement.** Connect with the community by using multimedia and other technologies.

**Policy EJ-7.4: Connect with Community Based Organizations.** Consult with community-based organizations to expand outreach and connect with residents and community members. Assist with development of new community-based organizations.

**Policy EJ-7.5: Multilingual Engagement.** Support multilingual community engagement including Spanish translators at meetings and publishing digital and paper materials translated in Spanish.

**Policy EJ-7.6: Civic Engagement.** Support an equitable and comprehensive approach to civic engagement and public outreach on all aspects of City governance and delivery of services.

**Policy EJ-7.7: Special Meetings.** Conduct special informational meetings for projects that could pose an impact on residential neighborhoods, including projects that may affect specific neighborhoods.