

General Plan 2020
Safety Element Update
&
New Environmental
Justice Element

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Presentation Overview

- Introduction to the General Plan 2020 Safety and Environmental Justice Updates
- Project History and Status
- Overview of the Policymaking Approach
- Discussion on Select Policy Topic Areas
- Q&A, time permitting

GENERAL PLAN

- Describes the community's vision for Sonoma County
- Includes goals, policies, and implementation strategies
- Identifies strategies for managing preservation and change
- Sets the foundation for the County's Specific Plans and Zoning Code

Land Use	Agricultural Resources
Open Space and Resource Conservation	Housing
Water Resources	Circulation and Transit
Air Transportation	Public Facilities and Services
Noise	Safety
	NEW Environmental Justice

Safety Element Update

- **Purpose:** Reduce the potential short- and long-term risks to people, property, and systems resulting from hazards
 - Wildfire
 - Flooding
 - Seismic and geologic hazards
 - Sea level rise and other climate-induced hazards
 - Drought
- **New requirements:**
 - Assessments of evacuation route capacity and residential egress
 - Assessment of climate change vulnerability and inclusion of adaptation and resilience policies and implementation measures

New Environmental Justice Element

- **Purpose:** To identify disadvantaged communities in Sonoma County and prioritize improvements in those areas to advance health
 - Pollution burden
 - Access to public facilities, services, and community amenities
 - Health and physical activity
 - Healthy food access
 - Safe and sanitary housing
 - Civic engagement in the public-decision making process
- **Definition of Environmental Justice:** “The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of people of all races, cultures, incomes, and national origins, with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.”

(Government Code § 65040.12(e))

Project History – Community Engagement Strategy

Completed

5 Equity Working Committee (EWC) meetings

6 stakeholder focus groups with community organizations and County staff

1 countywide online survey on climate adaptation

7 pop-ups at events across the county and with interest groups

Upcoming

1 countywide public workshop

1 additional online survey

Municipal/citizen's advisory council/commission meetings

1 Equity Working Committee reflection session



Project History – Background Analysis

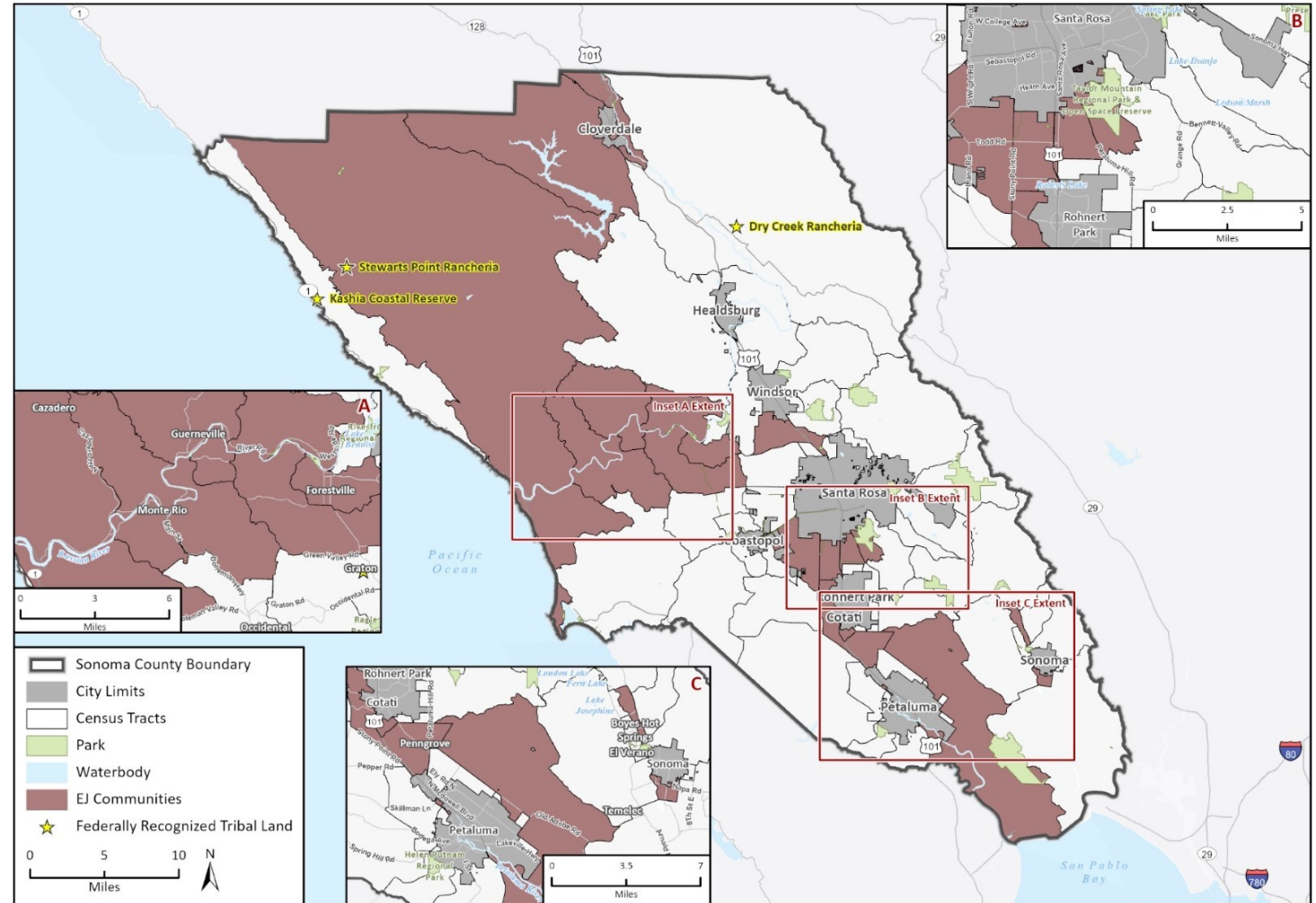
- **Environmental Justice Technical Report**
 - Identifies EJ Communities and explores data on EJ issues
- **Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment**
 - Explores the vulnerability of populations and County assets (such as parks, agriculture) to climate change
- **Evacuation Route Assessments***
 - High level assessments of evacuation route capacities and limitations

**In Progress*

Environmental Justice (EJ) Communities

Draft EJ Communities include:

1. Low-income census tracts with either:
 - Elevated pollution burden overall
 - Elevated levels of individual pollutants (e.g. pesticides)
 - Elevated housing burden
2. Federally recognized tribal lands

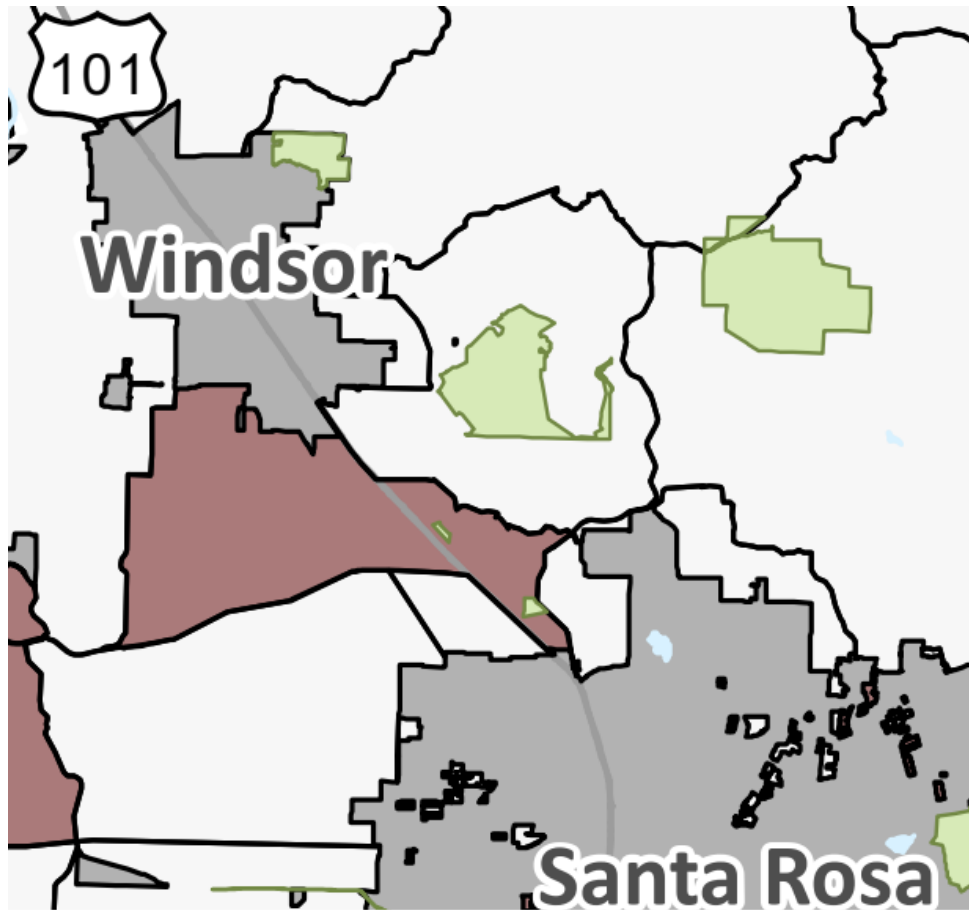


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Additional data provided by Sonoma County, 2022; CalEnviroScreen 4.0, 2022; Priority Population Investments 4.0, 2022; Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2023.

22-12991 EPS Sonoma Co EJ Tech Report.aprx
Fig X Sonoma County DACs

EJ Communities



Shiloh South, Census Tract 1527.02

**Portrait of Sonoma County 2021*

EJ Issues Affecting Mark West Communities

- Exposure to pollutants such as:
 - Pesticides
 - Cleanup sites
 - Solid waste facilities
 - Traffic
- Elevated rates of asthma
- Poor access to food retail options

Next Step: Draft Elements

1. Development of draft policies and measures for the elements
2. Release draft elements for public review
3. Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors public hearings for adoption



Community Engagement

Policy Framework Purpose and Structure

- **Purpose of the Frameworks:** Outline desired outcomes of the General Plan and potential policy strategies
 - **Issue Statement:** Summary of the key concerns related to the topic
 - **Key Existing Plans:** Existing Sonoma County documents and plans that may be leveraged and built upon for addressing the issue
 - **Desired Outcome:** A general statement that expresses the outcomes towards which planning efforts are directed
 - **Community Input:** A summary of input received through community engagement efforts
 - **Strategy Ideas:** Statements of intent or direction on how to achieve the desired outcome, which will inform future iterations of the policies that will be included in the General Plan

General Plan Structure

- Goal
 - Policy
 - Implementation Action

Safety Element – Policy Frameworks

Extreme Heat,
Air Quality, and
Drought

Emergency
Preparedness
and Response

All Hazards
General Public
Safety

Resilient
Landscapes
(Wildfire)

Sea Level Rise

Seismic and
Flooding
Hazards

Key Thoughts

While we review the policy frameworks, think about:

- Which strategies are highest priority for your community?
- What concerns do you have with the proposed strategies?
- What's missing from the strategies that you think is important?

Emergency Preparedness & Response

Policy Issue

Alerts and Evacuation



Issue: Alerts and Evacuation

Background

- Barriers to safe and timely evacuation include:
 - Deficiencies in the electrical grid
 - Gaps in the transportation system
 - Spotty telecommunication system
 - Differences in language
 - Lack of adequate emergency facilities and services
 - Lack of evacuation locations
 - Inequitable distribution of resources

Input

- Focus on emergency preparedness, not reactivity
- Explore alternative alert systems
- Encourage individual evacuation planning



Issue: Alerts and Evacuation

Desired Outcome

Community members, especially those that face systemic inequities, can evacuate safely and timely due to resilient infrastructure, accessible and effective emergency alerts, and improved access to financial resources before, during, and after disasters for recovery.

Proposed Strategies

1. Prepare Community for Evacuation
2. Retrofit Critical Communications Services
3. Address Accessibility Barriers to Emergency Alert Programs
4. Conduct An Evacuation Needs Assessment
5. Evaluate and Improve Ag Pass Program
6. Advance Worker Evacuation Programs
7. Build Relationships with CBOs to Assist with Evacuation Efforts

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

- Which strategies are highest priority for your community?
- What concerns do you have with the proposed strategies?
- What's missing from the strategies that you think is important?

Wildfire Resilient Landscapes



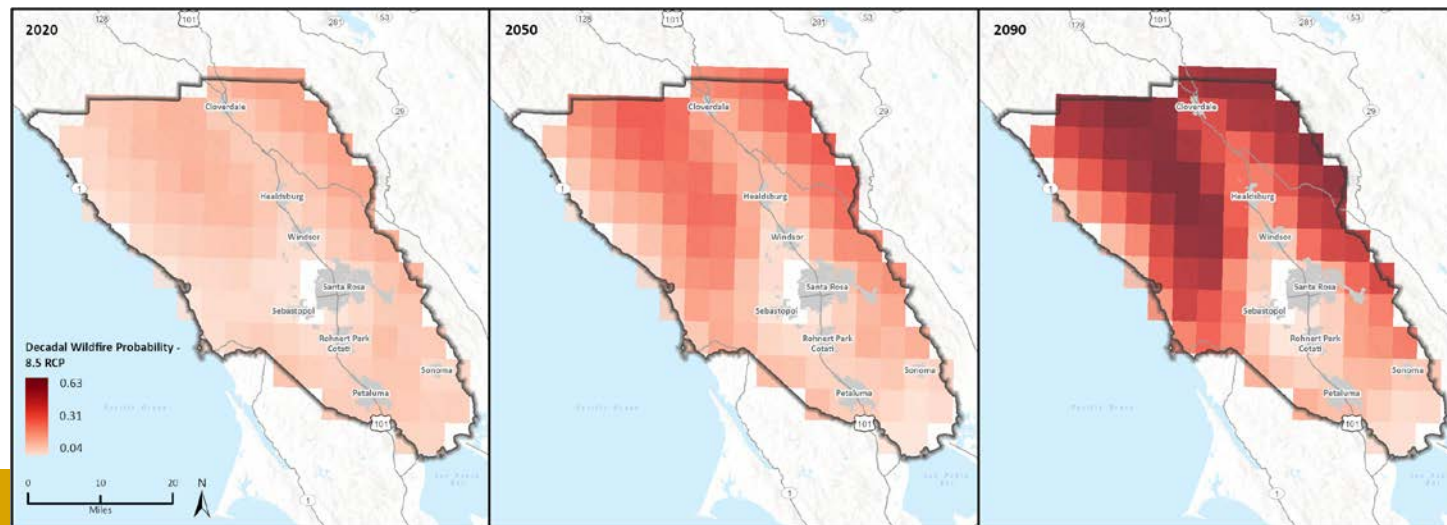
Issue: Wildfire

Background

- Over 400,000 acres burned in Sonoma County since 2015
- Increasing wildfire frequency and severity will result in human and wildlife risk, loss of habitat and agriculture, and loss of available food sources and seed bank
- Habitat loss may not recover depending on the type of land cover that is destroyed in a wildfire and quick succession fires can prevent or delay the recovery of natural systems

Input

- High concern regarding air quality during fire season for both residents and workers
- Improve home hardening and buffers to protect properties
- County needs improved power and communications systems during emergencies
- Concerns regarding the financial burdens fires create





Issue: Wildfire

Desired Outcome

Prevent unnecessary exposure of people and property to risks from wildland and structural fires, with priority on outdoor workers, shelterless populations, and populations most at risk of exposure during fires

Note: An "" indicates an existing Safety Element goal or objective.*

Proposed Strategies

1. *Use Complete Data
2. *Regulate New Development
3. *Utilize the Sonoma County Hazard Mitigation Plan and CWPP
4. Improve Post-Fire Relocation and Other Housing Assistance Programs
5. Promote Community Preparation
6. Explore Alternative Fire Prevention Measures
7. Streamline CEQA Review for Fuel Reduction
8. Equitable Resilience Assistance
9. Safeguard Business Continuity

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

- Which strategies are highest priority for your community?
- What concerns do you have with the proposed strategies?
- What's missing from the strategies that you think is important?

EJ Element – Policy Frameworks



Healthy Environments (Pollution Burden)

Policy Issues

Pollution Exposure

Clean Water and Water Stewardship



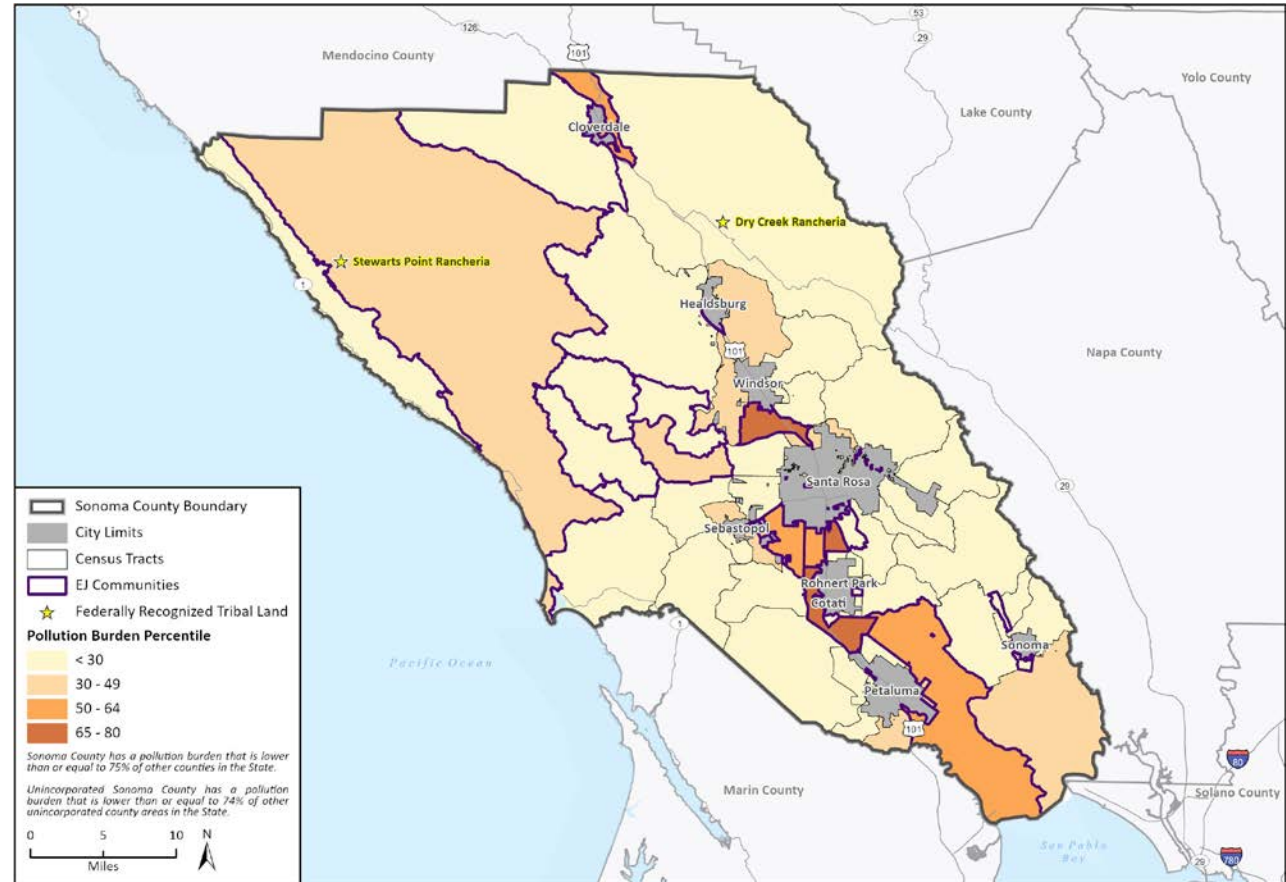
Issue 1: Pollution Exposure

Background

- 13 EJ Communities score notably high (75th percentile or higher) relative to all other census tracts
- Areas impacted most by solid waste are in the central and southern portions of the county
- Taylor Mountain EJ Community has significant levels of Diesel Particulate Matter
- Russian River Valley, Shiloh South, and Sonoma City South/Vineburg have moderately elevated levels of pesticides

Input

- Protect farmworkers from pollution and provide disaster pay (air quality from wildfires, pesticide exposure, impaired water)
- Include protection of groundwater resources from fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides
- Provide free lead tests to households and remediation if discovered



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Additional data provided by CalEnviroScreen 4.0, 2021; Priority Population Investments 4.0, 2021; Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2023.

02-122161-EP3-Sonoma-CE-EJ-Team-Report.aprx
Fig 4 Sonoma County Pollution Burden



Issue 1: Pollution Exposure

Desired Outcome

All residents of Sonoma County, especially EJ Communities, are safe from pollution exposure and its effects.

Potential Strategies

1. Site Polluting Sources Away from Communities
2. Require Buffer Zones
3. Green Highways with Native Plants and Trees
4. Develop a County-wide Food Recovery Program to reduce food waste in landfills
5. Partner with Local Agricultural Community Members to Reduce Pesticide Pollution
6. Work with Agricultural Producers to Implement Organic Growing Practices
7. Work with CalTrans to Reduce or Eliminate Pesticide Use Along Roadways
8. Work with Cal/OSHA to Enforce Health and Safety Standards
9. Reduce Pesticide Use on County-owned Properties




Issue 2: Clean Water and Water Stewardship

Background

- EJ Communities in Sonoma County have moderate impacts from impaired water bodies
- Drinking water contamination is not considered impacted
- Petaluma Airport/Arroyo Park EJ Community has the highest score for groundwater threats heavily impacted by leaking underground storage tanks (USTs)

Input

- All people should have safe access to drinking water
 - Promote and develop a groundwater and well testing and remediation program
 - Partner with local organizations to create water stewardship programs
- 




Issue 2: Clean Water and Water Stewardship

Desired Outcome

Achieve safe groundwater and surface water standards in EJ Communities

Potential Strategies

1. Host Cleanup Events
 2. Develop a Multi-Lingual Watershed Education Campaign
 3. Explore Partnerships for Water Stewardship Programs
 4. Minimize Agricultural Spray and Runoff
 5. Minimize Roadway Runoff
 6. Identify Funding Sources for a Well Testing Program
 7. Seek Funding for Water Toxin Removal
 8. Develop a Displacement Reduction Program to Incentivize Landlords to Address On-Site Water Issues
 9. Identify Strategies to Enforce Water Protection
 10. Encourage Residents to Apply for the State Water Resource Control Board (SWRCB) Replacing, Removing, or Upgrading Storage Tanks (RUST) Program
- 

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

- Which strategies are highest priority for your community?
- What concerns do you have with the proposed strategies?
- What's missing from the strategies that you think is important?

Community Engagement and Language Access

Policy Issues

Systemically Marginalized Communities

County Connections with Community Organizations

Varying Age Demographics

Limited or Non-English Speakers

Intergovernmental relations

Issue 1: Systemically Marginalized Communities

Background

- Historically marginalized groups have, and continue to be, underrepresented in public decision-making processes
- Governmental and institutional systems often do not account for diverse and intersectional identities and lived experiences
- Sonoma County is home to many communities whose identity markers put them on the margins of public decision-making

Input

- Important to reward people for their efforts and provide stipends to nonprofit organizations who are working directly with impacted communities
- EJ Stakeholders expressed concerns about the underrepresentation of BIPOC individuals among elected officials and the perceived treatment of BIPOC residents by some officials and community leaders

Issue 1: Systemically Marginalized Communities

Desired Outcome

Equitable engagement opportunities for people from all systemically marginalized communities within Sonoma County.

Potential Strategies

1. Consider Various Scheduling and Location Options for Engagement
2. Implement the Racial Equity Action Plan
3. Identify and Provide Stipends for Participants
4. Be Considerate in Police and Emergency Service Officer Presence



Issue 3: Varying Age Demographics

Background

- The largest age group in Sonoma County is the older adult aged population (55 to 59 years old). Roughly one in every five people is 65 or older.
- 12 EJ Communities have greater than 15% of their population at or above the age of 65, including all 4 EJ Communities within the central west region of the planning area

Input

- Ask for input from community groups and residents
- Age and access to technology, or understanding the use of technology, is a potential barrier



Issue 3: Varying Age Demographics

Desired Outcome

Ensure that residents of all ages and abilities are able to meaningfully participate in the public decision-making process.

Potential Strategies

1. Improve Accessibility for Elderly and Differently Abled Residents
2. Identify Alternative Engagement Activities



Questions?

- Environmental Justice and Safety Element Updates
 - Katrina Braehmer, Katrina.Braehmer@sonoma-county.org
 - Claudette Diaz, Claudette.Diaz@sonoma-county.org
- General Plan Update
 - GeneralPlan@sonoma-county.org
- Resources:
 - [July 23, 2024, Board of Supervisors Workshop Materials](#)
 - [Environmental Justice and Safety Element Update Webpage](#)

Thank you!

