

Environmental Justice Element 2023

DRAFT



Tulare County Resource Management Agency
Economic Development, Planning Branch, and
Planning Processing Division



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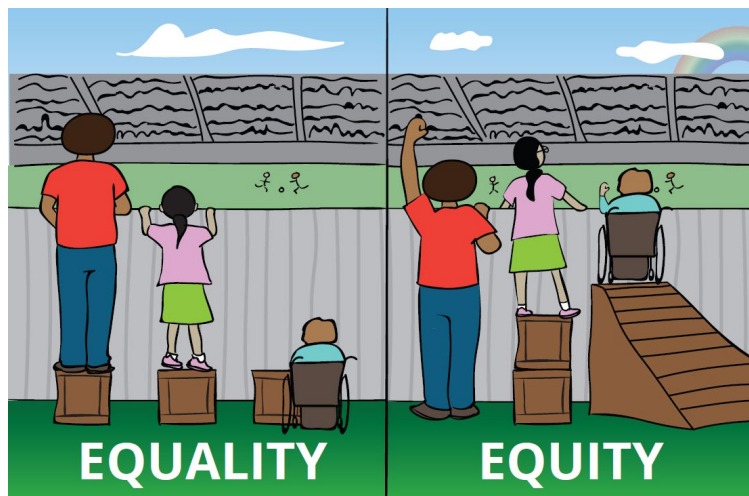
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01 Introduction

What is Environmental Justice?

Environmental justice (EJ) is achieved when a fair balance of *environmental burdens* is shared across all communities regardless of income, ethnicity, race, or any other demographic. California state code defines EJ as “the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental justice laws, regulations, and policies.” (Gov. Code § 65040.12). Ultimately, the environmental justice movement seeks to promote equity across a region through the implementation of fair planning practices and an emphasis on new programs to elevate disadvantaged communities’ health and wellbeing.

Environmental burdens are community characteristics that have a negative impact on community health and wellbeing.



What is Equity? (<https://www.equitytool.org/equity/>)

Environmental burdens create inequities which may include differences in:

- Air, ground, and water quality
- Access to healthy food, good jobs, school, and medical services
- Level of community safety and health

Opportunity to participate in democracy, be physically active, and access public spaces

Disadvantaged communities (DACs) are often low-income areas, which face more burdens than the vast majority of all the other communities in the State of California.

Environmental justice means that no matter where you live or who you are, your neighborhood will share the same level of environmental burden as any other in the region. It is the County of Tulare’s responsibility to identify *disadvantaged communities* and to create policy and programs to lessen the environmental burdens of those communities. By doing this, the County aims to achieve environmental justice in the unincorporated communities throughout Tulare County.

The Guiding Legal Background

Senate Bill 1000 (SB1000), the Planning for Healthy Communities Act (Gov. Code § 65302), enacted by Governor Jerry Brown in September of 2016, required cities and counties to develop a stand-alone environmental justice element or to integrate EJ goals, objectives, and policies throughout other General Plan elements. The requirement to fulfill SB 1000 is triggered “if a local government adopts or updates two or more elements of its general plan after January 1, 2018”. SB 1000 requires the local government to identify any "disadvantaged communities" within its planning area. Gov. Code § 65302(11)(1)-(2). SB 1000 has a broad and flexible definition for "disadvantaged communities" that includes two identification methods:

1

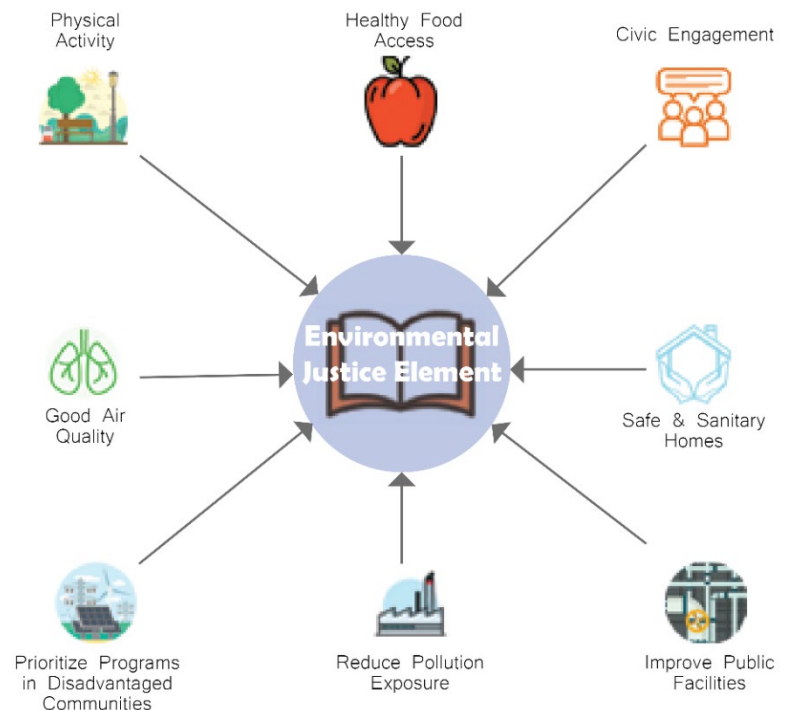
An area identified by the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) as experiencing greater environmental burdens than 75% of all the communities in the

2

A low-income area that is disproportionately affected by environmental pollution that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation.

A general plan's EJ policies must "reduce the unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities" by doing at least the following:

- (1) reducing pollution exposure;
- (2) improving air quality;
- (3) promoting public facilities;
- (4) promoting food access;
- (5) promoting safe & sanitary homes;
- (6) promoting physical activity;
- (7) promoting public engagement in the public decision-making process;
- (8) prioritizing improvements and programs that address the needs of the disadvantaged communities.



Environmental Justice Advisory Committee

In an effort to ensure meaningful engagement, especially when the COVID-19 pandemic restricted in-person outreach, the County of Tulare formed the EJ Advisory Committee to provide technical guidance and ensure meaningful outreach was conducted throughout the development of the element. The Committee consists of 16 members who represent a well-connected community-based organization, local agency, or community group.

Tulare County Resource Management Agency staff **Aaron R Bock, Charles R Przybylski, Susan L Simon, and Michael G Washam.**

CivicSpark fellows **Arlin Benavides, Nicholas Johnston, Evan Brock, Thomas Steensland and Abbygail de Castro.**

Emma De La Rosa and Elvia Olea. Emma is the Regional Policy Manager from Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability. The organization is based in the San Joaquin and Eastern Coachella Valleys, and they work alongside the most impacted communities to advocate for sound policy and eradicate injustice to secure equal access to opportunity regardless of wealth, race, income, and place. Elvia is the former Regional Policy Manager for Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability.

Brenda Guterrez Mora is the DEEP Roots Manager at Foodlink. The organization's goal is to promote equitable and dignified access to nutritious, healthy food while also addressing the root causes of hunger through education, advocacy, and food systems change.

Nayamin Martinez is the Executive Director for the Central California Environmental Justice Network. The organization's mission is to empower communities and secure children's future by eliminating negative environmental impacts in low income and communities of color in the Central Valley.

Hector Hernandez is Executive Director and Gladys Flores is the Project Manager for the organization for the Unidad Popular Benito Juarez. The mission of the organization is to advocate for the health, housing, and basic human rights of indigenous people.

Mari Perez-Ruiz is Executive Director/Board Chair and Arturo Rodriguez is the Communications and Organizing Director for the Central Valley Empowerment Alliance. The organization aims to address economic and educational inequity, advocate for affordable housing and empower underserved communities in the Central Valley.

Patricia Pullen is the Outreach Coordinator for the Tule Basin Water Foundation. The organization's mission is to maintain and improve the quality of life in the Tule River Basin area of California by implementing programs that provide access to safe drinking water for residents

and by engaging in activities to protect and enhance the quality of groundwater drinking water supplies for residents in the region.

Identifying Disadvantaged Communities

The State requires that the Environmental Justice element addresses the environmental burden concerns within identified disadvantaged communities (DACs). There are two legal strategies to classify communities as DACs:

1

Under the first method for identifying disadvantaged communities, an area is a disadvantaged community if it **scores at or above 75 percent on CalEPA's California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool "CalEnviroScreen"**.

2

The second identification method requires a local government to determine whether low-income areas exist in its jurisdiction. SB 1000 defines a "low-income area" as:

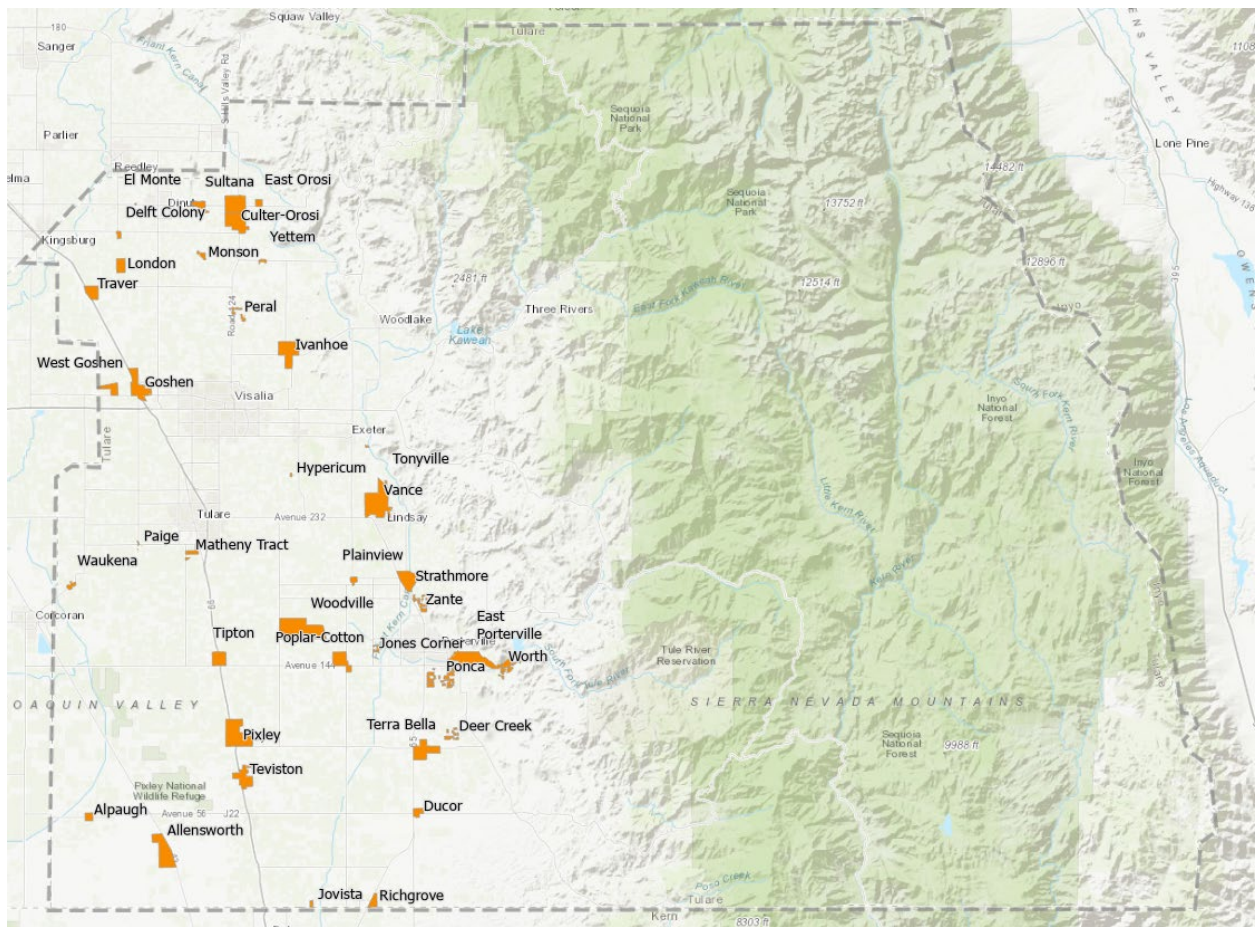
"an area with **household incomes at or below 80 percent of the statewide median income** or **with household incomes at or below the threshold designated as low income** by the Department of Housing and Community Development's list of state income limits adopted pursuant to Section 50093"

After identifying low-income areas, a local government must then evaluate if these areas are **disproportionately affected by environmental burdens** that can lead to negative health impacts, pollution exposures, or environmental degradation¹.

Tulare County utilized both methods to identify a total of 48 DACs throughout the county area. CalEnviroScreen analysis found 38 communities and the County selected an additional 10 low-income communities disproportionately affected by environmental burdens through the second methodology. The Environmental Justice Element seeks to address the specific burdens facing most of these communities. Figure 1.1 indicates 48 DAC locations and names of the communities. Most are within the Valley Region of the County and largely consist of small residential clusters.

¹ Ibid

Figure 1.1 Tulare County Disadvantaged Communities



Name of DAC (CalEnviroScreen disadvantage rating)

El Monte (80%-90%)	Yettem (80%-90%)	Paige (80%-100%)	Poplar Cotton (90%-100%)	Teviston (90%-100%)
Sultana (80%-90%)	Peral (90%-100%)	Matheny Tract (90%-100%)	Jones Corner (90%-100%)	Alpaugh (90%-100%)
Delft Colony (80%-90%)	West Goshen (70%-80%)	Plainview (80%-90%)	East Porterville (80%-90%)	Allensworth (90%-100%)
East Oroqui (80%-90%)	Goshen (70%-100%)	Waukena (90%-100%)	Ponca (90%-100%)	Ducor (80%-90%)
Cutler-Orosi (80%-90%)	Ivanhoe (70%-80%)	Woodville (90%-100%)	Worth (80%-100%)	Jovista (90%-100%)
London (90%-100%)	Hypericum (80%-90%)	Strathmore (80%-90%)	Pixley (90%-100%)	Richgrove (90%-100%)
Monson (80%-100%)	Tonyville (70%-80%)	Zante (80%-90%)	Deer Creek (90%-100%)	Tule River Reservation*
Traver (90%-100%)	Vance (70%-90%)	Tipton (90%-100%)		Tooleville (70%-80%)
Terra Bella*				

*Not listed in CalEnviroScreen

02 Public Participation

Community Outreach

Community Outreach Plan

A community outreach plan (COP) is a collection of strategies to engage with communities to collect the public's ideas, priorities, concerns, and comments about a certain project. In December 2020, the County has adopted a three phased approach for their community outreach plan with tasks groups to ensure the County has the capacity to engage the public.

In phase 1, the Committee and County would engage with the public virtually and employ strategies that would inform the communities that the County is creating an Environmental Justice Element, educate the public on the topics included in the Element and how the planning process works, and ultimately work to repair distrust between the public and local government by building positive relationships with the disadvantaged communities and local leaders.

Phase 2 would consist of both virtual and some in-person engagement strategies aimed at listening to the communities' concerns and lived experiences, learning from the communities' local knowledge, and collecting data on environmental justice topics as well as public preferences and ideas for solutions.

The last phase of engagement would be fully in-person which would allow the County to conduct more traditional engagement strategies such as in-person public meetings, canvassing, and attending local events. The strategies for this phase of the project focus on analyzing data collected in phase 2, reviewing existing conditions and making edits to the Environmental Justice background report, and receiving recommendations and feedback from community members before entering policy development discussions.

Task Groups

The Educational Webinar Task Group (EWTG) has two main objectives. First, it oversaw the creation of an educational video which shared a community definition of environmental justice, explained the role of the Environmental Justice Element, and how the public can influence the development of the element and policy decisions. The group also guided the discussion of talking points and topics to be presented at virtual community meetings.

The Social Media Task Group (SMTG) was tasked to manage a new form of outreach which Tulare County RMA had yet to use for planning purposes. The group piloted an Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter accounts with the handle "TC_EnvJustice". After meeting with several social media experts and managers of successful social media campaigns for local government, the group strategically designed a posing schedule and multiple campaigns to run throughout the entire timeline.

The Spanish Translation Task Group (STTG) worked to ensure all the material produced for the Environmental Justice Element project outreach was linguistically accessible to Spanish speakers who made up a predominant number of disadvantaged community members. The

group also gave directions to County Staff to ensure all language and vocabulary used in written material was accessible to individuals unfamiliar with the technicalities of the subject matter and the jargon associated with city planning. The STTG members volunteered to translate things such as the social media posts, educational flyers, county project webpage, and community survey. The group also advocated for the County to provide Spanish translation services at all EJ community meetings and to translate the Element itself.

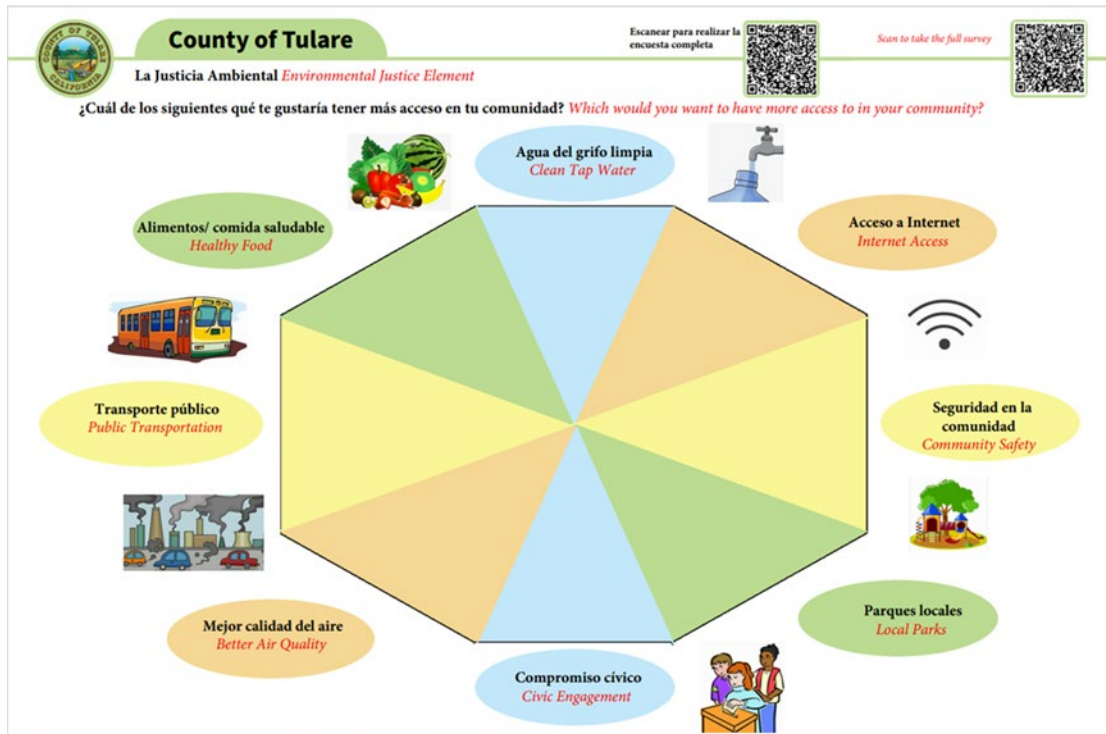
The Survey Task Group (STG) sole purpose was to design, finalize, and distribute a community survey for the EJ Element. The group began by investigating 5 case studies of existing EJ community surveys from other jurisdictions throughout California as well as former surveys produced by Tulare County RMA. From there, the group made design decisions and chose the platform which would be best suited to host the survey.

Community Pop Up Events

To complete Phase 3 of the COP, from March 2023 to August 2023, the Tulare County staff will be focused on in-person public participation to introduce the community to the Environmental Justice Element. So far, staff have been to 10 community outreach events, and one town hall meeting, with Spanish translators to better serve communities where Spanish is the predominant language. With plans to visit more communities within the County. A key environmental justice principle is to involve communities most affected by pollution and other environmental justice issues so that they can have a say in decisions that affect their quality of life.

At these events, community members took a survey to receive prizes. Survey questions covered EJ issues such as access to transportation, healthy food, clean air and water, public facilities, and community safety, etc. To understand which issues are important to the community, the community members participated in a prioritization exercise, where they can voice their concerns. Around average of 44 residents of each of the EJ Communities participated in the surveys with numerous residents of other communities participating as well.

Below are the graphics used throughout the community outreach process. The surveys are meant to be an interactive way to get the community involved in the Environment Justice Element process. Both graphics show Spanish as the main language to better accommodate with the County's demographics. There is also a QR code with the link to the full survey of the Environmental Justice questions, so the County can get the full scope of what the community believes is the most important to them.



Above is the prioritization exercise the community members participated in, with all the related Environmental Justice Element options.

Below is the continuation of the survey, asking community members what they would like to see in their community, and how they would like to give input in County projects.

County of Tulare
La Justicia Ambiental *Environmental Justice Element*

¿Qué tipo de centros/estaciones se necesita en su comunidad? *Which type of facility is needed in your community?*

- Estación de bomberos *Fire Station*
- Centros de salud *Healthcare Facilities*
- Centros Culturales *Cultural Centers*
- Estación de policía *Police Department*

¿Qué tan preocupado estás por la contaminación? *How concerned are you about pollution?*

La contaminación del agua *Water Pollution*

No preocupado *Not concerned* Neutral Muy preocupado *Very concerned*

Contaminación del aire *Air Pollution*

¿Cómo preferiría dar su opinión sobre los proyectos del Condado? *How would you prefer to give input on County projects?*

- Redes sociales/Sitio web *Social Media/Website*
- Correo/tarjetas postales/Volantes *Mail/Postcards/Flyers*
- Correo electrónico *Email*
- Eventos en persona *In-person Events*

Results of In-Person Community Outreach

Poplar-Cotton Center – National Public Health Week (April 2023)



- The top three concerns for the community of Poplar are healthy food access, air quality and pollution exposure, and community safety.
- 22.5% stated that air quality/pollution is their main concern.
- 23.4% stated that community is their main concern.
- 21.5% stated that healthy food access is their main concern.
- The community listed civic engagement and physical activity as their lowest priority, with civic engagement totaling 15.1% of the responses and physical activity getting 17.6% of the responses.

Strathmore – National Public Health Week (April 2023)



- The top two concerns for the community of Strathmore are community safety and air quality and pollution.
- Around 26% of the residents stated that air quality/pollution exposure is at the top of their list of concerns, while around 25% stated that their top concern was community safety.
- The community listed access to healthy food as third in their concerns, followed by physical activity, and civic engagement.
- Around 19% of residents prioritized access to healthy food, while around 17% prioritized physical activity, and around 13% voted that civic engagement is a concern to them.

Earlimart – Spring Health Fair (April 2023)

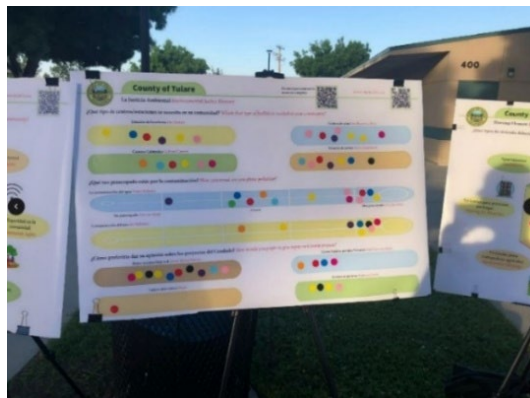


- For the residents of Earlimart, their main concern was air quality and pollution exposure, around 79% stating that their community was affected by it.
- For most of the respondents, they stated that they have access to clean water, healthy food, local parks, health care facilities and the internet.
- When it comes to community safety, the residents were divided, with 49% stating that

they felt safe in their community, while the other half disagreed or felt neutral on the matter.

- The community stated they want to give input through postcards/mail and through in-person events.

Pixley – Dia de los Niños/Dia de los Libros (April 2023)



- For Pixley, their top concerns include internet access, clean tap water, and air pollution. Civic engagement made up 8% of the responses.
- When surveyed on what kind of facilities they would like to see in their community many of the residents chose cultural centers, police departments, and healthcare facilities.
- Most of the community would like to give their input through social media/website and through in-person events.

Porterville – Sequoia 5k Arbor Day and Health Fair (April 2023)



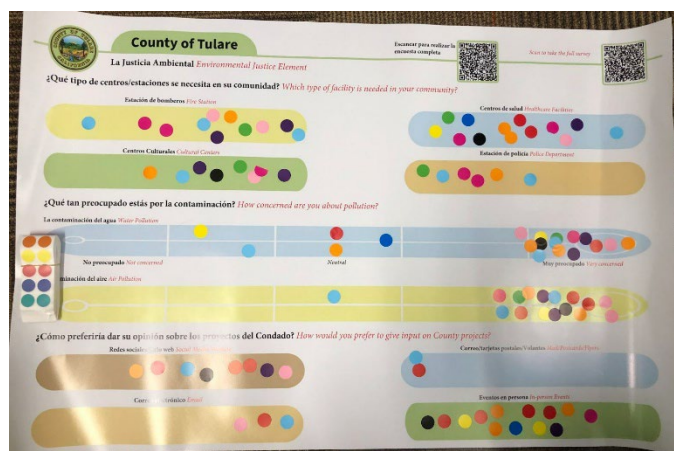
- For Porterville, most of the community members prioritized clean tap water, community safety, and access to local parks as their main concerns. When it comes to pollution, however, many of the residents were more concerned about air pollution than water pollution. 93% of residents stated that they are very concerned about air pollution, while around 36% stated that they are concerned about water pollution. Community members were least concerned about civic engagement, making up 9% of the responses.
- In Porterville, community members wanted to see more cultural centers and healthcare departments in their area. Together, cultural centers and healthcare facilities made up 63% of the responses.
- Community members would like to give input through social media/website and in-person events.

Visalia – Dia de los Niños (April 2023)



- In Visalia, most of the community members were concerned about clean tap water, better air quality, and community safety making up around 49% of the responses. Civic engagement only made up around 4% of the responses.
- Most Visalia residents stated that their community would benefit from having cultural centers and healthcare facilities making up around 56% of the responses.
- When it comes to having input on County projects, most of the community would like to give their input through a website/social media and in-person events.

Dinuba – Cinco de Mayo (May 2023)



- In Dinuba, most of the community members were concerned about clean tap water, healthy food, and better air quality making around 52% of the responses. The community was least concerned about civic engagement since it only made up around 4% of the responses.
- By a slight margin, Dinuba residents were more concerned about water pollution than air pollution, which was a different outcome from most of surrounding cities in the County.
- Most community members prefer to participate in County projects through social media and in-person events.

Woodville – TCSO Youth Services PAL Soccer Kick-off (May 2023)



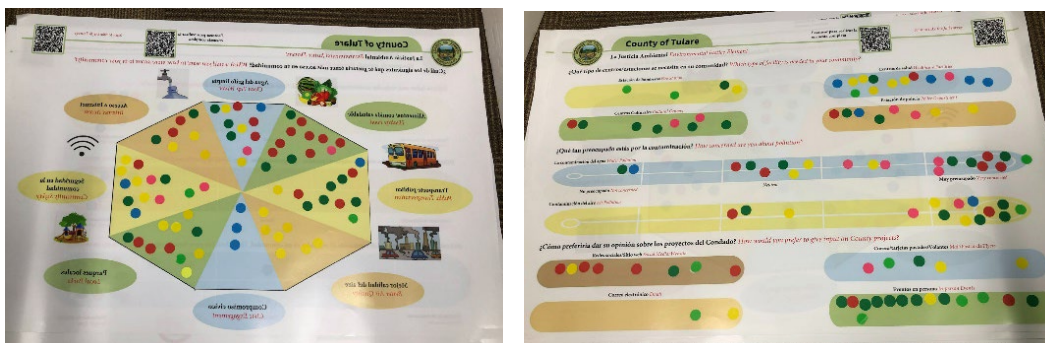
- In Woodville, most of the residents were concerned about healthy food access, clean tap water, and public transportation making up around 49% of the responses. Civic engagement was the least of their concerns, as it only made up around 5% of the responses.
- When it comes to the type of facilities they would like to see in their community, the residents were close to even in their responses. By a narrow margin, fire stations and healthcare facilities made up most of the responses, making up around 54% of the data.
- Social media/website and in-person events were the most common responses for community members to give their input.

Allensworth – Gospel Festival (May 2023)



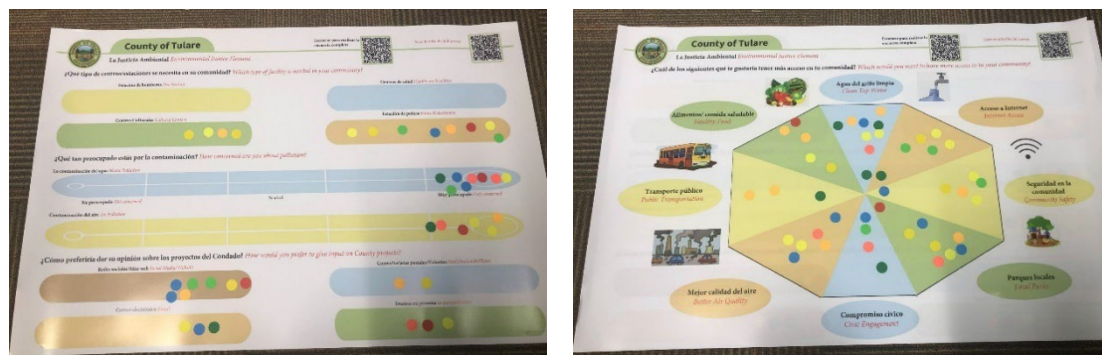
- In Allensworth, clean tap water, healthy food access and internet access made up around 45% of the responses. Civic engagement was the lowest priority of the community making up 5% of the responses.
- Most community members would like to see more cultural centers and healthcare facilities in their area.
- Most community members would like to give their input through social media and in-person events.

Cutler-Orosi – Swapmeet (May 2023)



- In Cutler-Orosi, community safety and access to healthy food were their greatest concerns making up around 33% of the responses. However, public transportation, access to local parks, and clean tap water had the same number of responses, with around 15% each. So, the County should pay close to attention those issues as well.
- Most of the community members say that more healthcare facilities are needed in their area, making up around 39% of the responses.
- The majority of the community members would like to give their input through website/social media and in-person events.

Ivanhoe – Town Meeting (June 2023)



- In Ivanhoe, many of the community members were concerned about clean tap water and access to local parks, making up around 36% of the responses. The least of their concerns was public transportation and civic engagement, making up around 15% of the responses.
- Most of the participants expressed that their community would benefit from having more police departments and cultural centers.
- Most of the community members would like to give input through social media.

Visalia – Pride Walk (June 2023)



- In Visalia, 94 participants took part in the survey, with most of the community members expressing concerns about air quality, clean tap water, and healthy food access, making up around 52% of the responses.
- A majority of the participants has expressed that their community would benefit from more healthcare facilities and cultural centers, garnering 84% of the responses.
- When it comes to giving input for County projects, most of the participants chose social media/website and in-person events as their answer, making up around 77% of the responses.

Richgrove – Community Meeting (August 2023)



- For the community of Richgrove, they are most concerned about air pollution and water pollution. 93% of residents expressed that they are ‘very concerned’ about water pollution. When it comes to air pollution 100% of residents stated that they are ‘very concerned’.
- A majority of the participants expressed that their community would benefit from cultural centers and healthcare facilities, making up 71% of the responses.
- The community would like to give input for County projects through in-person events and mail.

Badger – Community Meeting (August 2023)



- For the community of Badger, residents would like to see more access to local parks and the internet both options made up 50% of the responses.
- When surveyed about what kind of facilities the community needs, a majority of respondents chose cultural centers and police departments making up 75% of the responses.
- When it comes to water pollution, 50% were ‘concerned’ about water pollution. For air pollution 100% of respondents said they are ‘concerned’ about the topic.
- The community would like to give input on County projects through email and in-person events.

In Summary

Feedback from these outreach events can help the County assess what they need to work on and pay particular attention to when it comes to making policies relating to the Environmental Justice Element. Understanding community needs will help the County create capacity in areas that are lacking and foster a sense of community within the residents. During these outreach events the County can gauge the concerns of the community, primarily most of the residents are concerned about air pollution, water pollution and community safety. Community engagement was the least of the residents' priorities, but by surveying the community, the results show a great interest in a social media and online presence from the County, as well as in person events.

Anthony Jackson

03 Demographics



Five Generations,
Tulare, CA, 1940s

Why Demographics Matter

Environmental justice aims to equitably mitigate environmental burdens across all communities and individuals. Before assessing the current status of EJ in the region, the County identified certain populations or demographics that are more vulnerable to negative environmental health burdens. These populations may include:

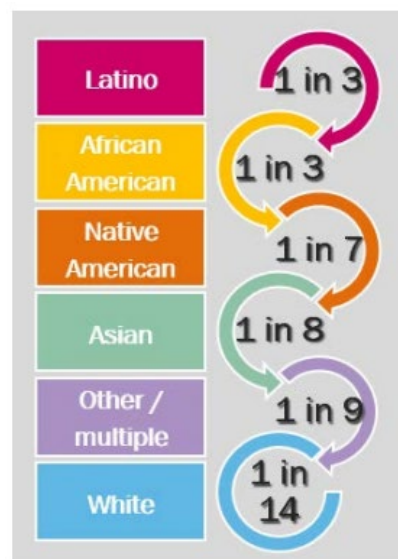
- Lower-income households
- The elderly and children
- Individuals who work outdoors or at pollution sources
- Individuals who do not speak or read English.

Furthermore, the location of neighborhoods is a strong indicator of environmental burden health risk. The demographics who face disproportionate environmental burden by proximity may include:

- Lower-income households
- Communities of color
- Native Americans on sovereign tribe lands

Individuals who are within these demographic sub-categories are more likely to experience greater impacts from pollution, low accessibility to healthy lifestyles, and the effects of environmental injustice than other communities across California.

This plan contains analysis of how specific environmental burdens affect the most burdened communities in the County of Tulare. Special emphasis is given to the vulnerable populations who have less resources and opportunity to avoid or remedy negative health impacts. Understanding the citizenry living in disadvantaged communities provides insight on which portions of the population are experiencing the greatest environmental burden in The County.



Number of people who live in the top 20% burdened communities in California (CalEnviroScreen Report)



Income

Level of household income often correlates with availability of resources for medical services, healthy food, and pollution mitigation strategies.



Age

The oldest and youngest age groups have the highest rates of health conditions and predispositions that may be exasperated by the negative effects of environmental pollution.



Job

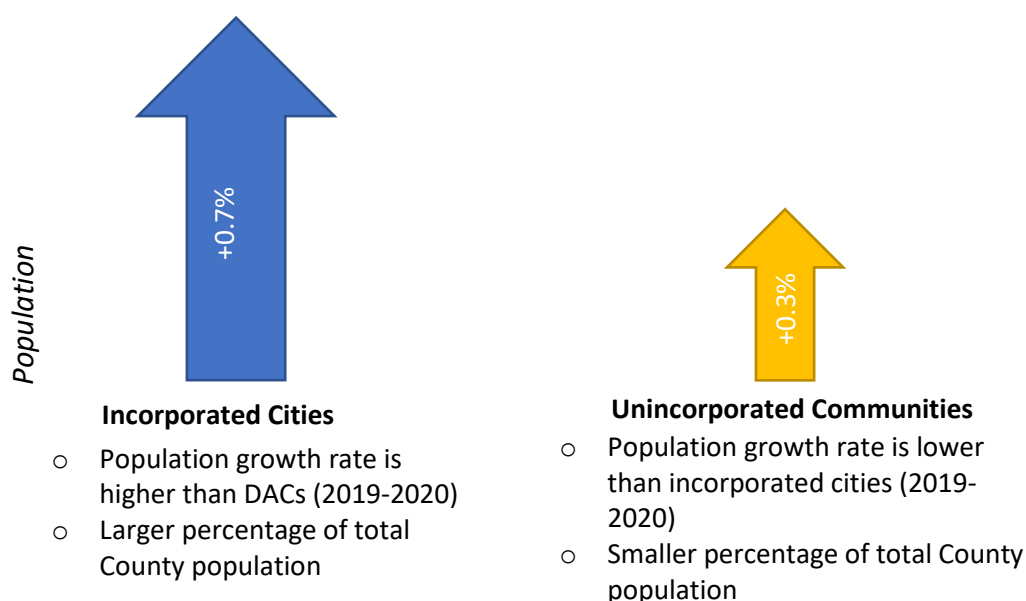
Where an individual works will determine a large portion of their exposure to pollution. Furthermore, physical work in high-risk environments increases the rate of exposure.

Community Profile

Population Growth

Currently, the County of Tulare consists of 8 incorporated cities and over 70 smaller unincorporated communities. The United States Department of Finance (DoF) estimates the unincorporated county's population at approximately 145,000 people. The incorporated cities total approximately 335,000 people. As areas surrounding metropolitan regions within the State of California have become increasingly expensive, counties within the San Joaquin Central Valley have experienced migration and population growth. The DoF estimates that the Cities in Tulare County grew by an average of 0.7%, or roughly 2,500 people, between 2019 and 2020. The more rural, unincorporated areas of the County is estimated to have experienced a 0.3% population growth rate. All of the identified disadvantaged communities (DACs) are unincorporated communities outside of city boundaries.

The difference in growth rates may be attributed to several factors that can include homebuyer's preference, availability of developable lands, neighborhood amenities, and access to essential activities (shopping, work, recreation).

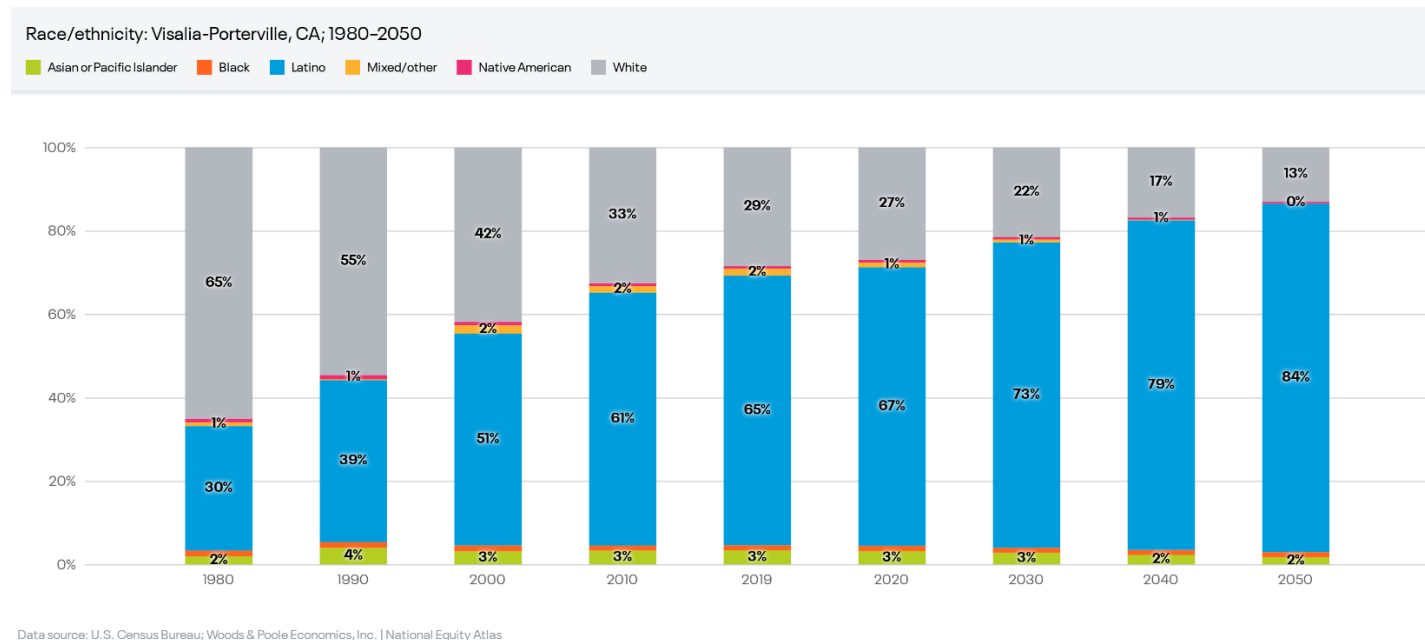


Demographics by Race and Ethnicity

Since the 1980's, Tulare County's ethnic and racial make-up has shifted. The Hispanic and Latino population is growing the most, while other groups, such as Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian, Black, White, and Multiracial groups have undergone minimal growth and even undergo a decrease, as shown in Figure 3.1.

FIGURE 3.1 Race/Ethnicity Composition: Visalia-Porterville, CA Metro Area, 1980-2050

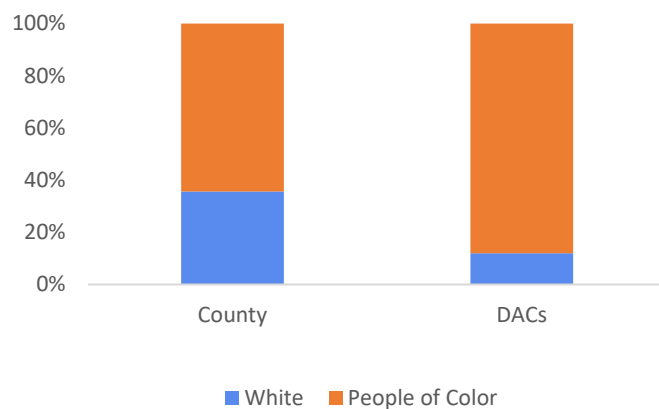
Source: National Equity Atlas



There are approximately 80,000 individuals living within disadvantaged communities in Tulare County, which is just over 50% of the total unincorporated population.

As represented in Figure 3.1, people of color have increasingly made up the population majority since 2000. Furthermore, the Hispanic and Latino population is growing the fastest and is the largest population racial sub-group. California EPA recognizes that communities of color on average experience greater negative environmental burdens than predominately white communities. After an analysis of race/ethnicity demographics in the disadvantaged communities compared to the County as a whole, the County recognizes that there is a greater percentage of people of color in DACs than in the County as a whole (figures 3.2 & 3.3).

In the DACs, there is roughly half of the total County white population percentage and approximately 20% more Hispanic and Latino individuals. The other race/ethnicity percentages remained the same or slightly decreased in the DACs.



Source: U.S Census Bureau

FIGURE 3.2 Disadvantage Communities' Population by Race/Ethnicity, 2017

Source: U.S. Census; 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (Poverty Measures)

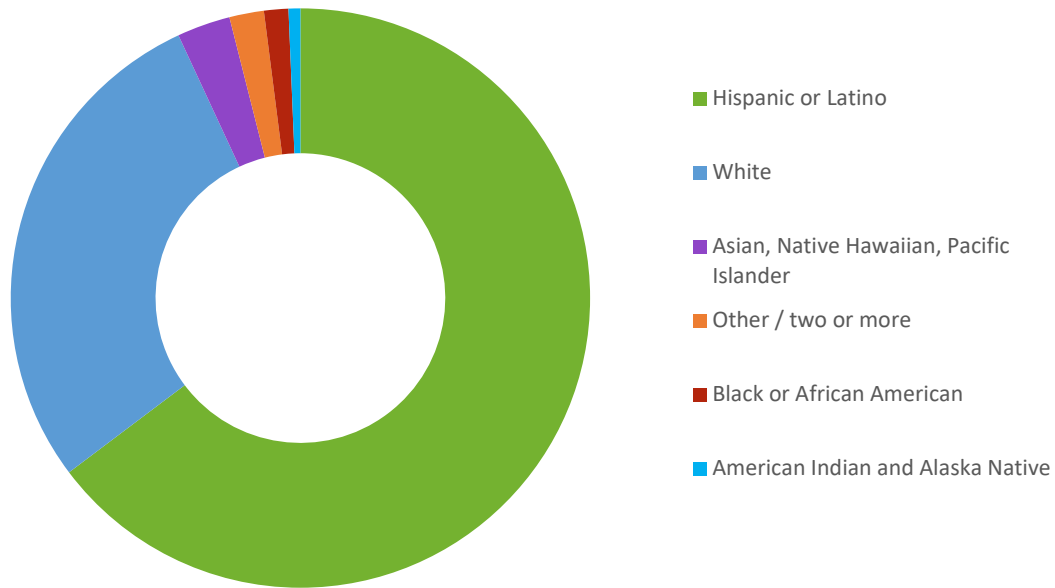
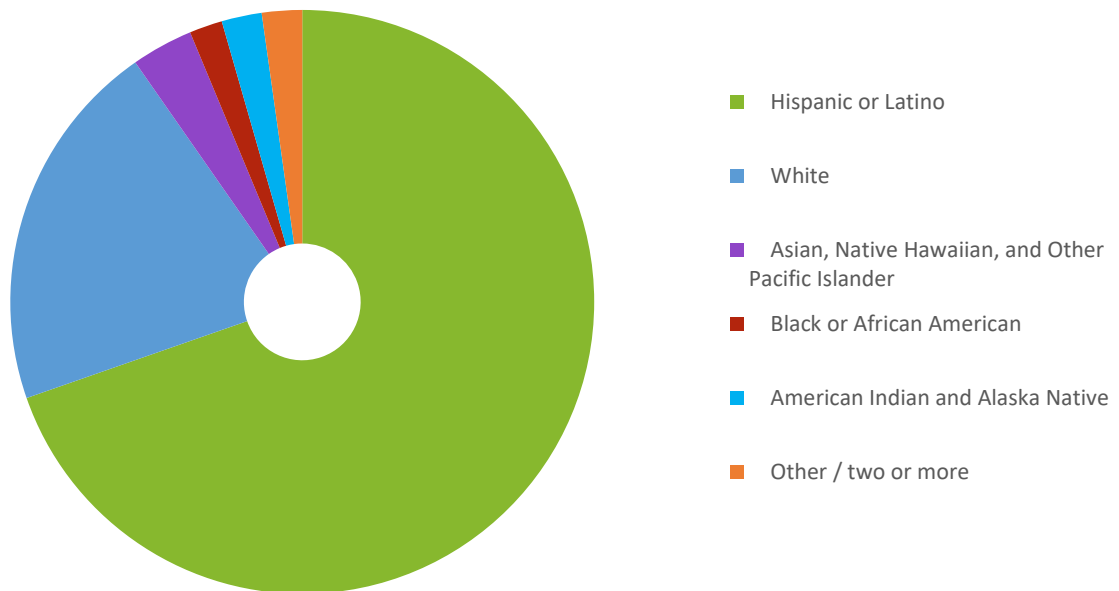


FIGURE 3.3 Tulare County Total Population by Race/Ethnicity, 2021

Source: U.S. Census; 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

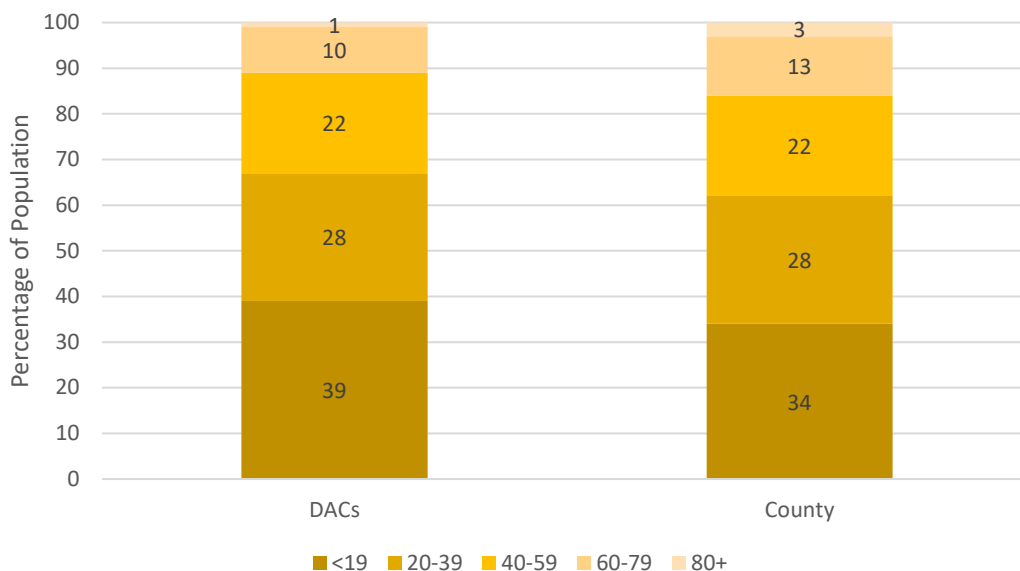


Demographics by Age

As mentioned in the introduction, certain age groups are more vulnerable to environmental health burdens than others. Children and the elderly are more susceptible to the negative health effects of pollution due to weaker immune systems and other biological responses. For example, children develop asthma at a much higher rate than other age groups when exposed to the same poor air qualities². Furthermore, it is important to consider the long-term impacts that growing up in a disadvantaged community may have on physical/mental development. Low access to safe outdoor recreation facilities, education centers, health care, and healthy food all have the potential to negatively affect human health and development through time and across generations. Figure 3.4 below shows that the disadvantaged community populations are heavily skewed towards the youth (under 19 years of age). There are significantly fewer elderly individuals living in the DACs; otherwise, the age proportions are similar between DACs and the County average.

FIGURE 3.4 Population by Age of Total County Average vs DAC Average

Source: US Census; 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.



² CalEPA, C. A. R. B. (2009). Asthma Onset and Exacerbation in Children Exposed to Traffic -Related Air Pollution. <https://ww3.arb.ca.gov/board/books/2009/042309/09-4-1pres.pdf>.

Demographics by Educational Attainment

In Tulare County, residents living within disadvantaged communities have lower educational attainment percentages than comparable, unincorporated communities. In DACs, more residents have less than high school experience; and, in all age groups, fewer higher education (college and post-secondary) degrees. This data indicates that families in DACs may not have the means to afford higher education, work jobs that do not require a college degree, or have not pursued higher education due to some other constraint or lack of motivation. Good access to a primary education and continued academic opportunity may alleviate this disparity.

FIGURE 3.5 Educational Attainment in DACs per Age Group, 2017

Source: US Census; 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-year Estimate

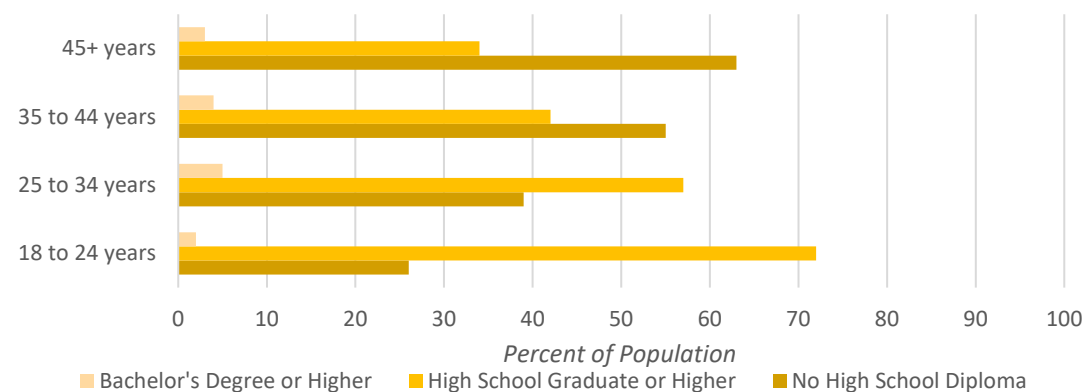
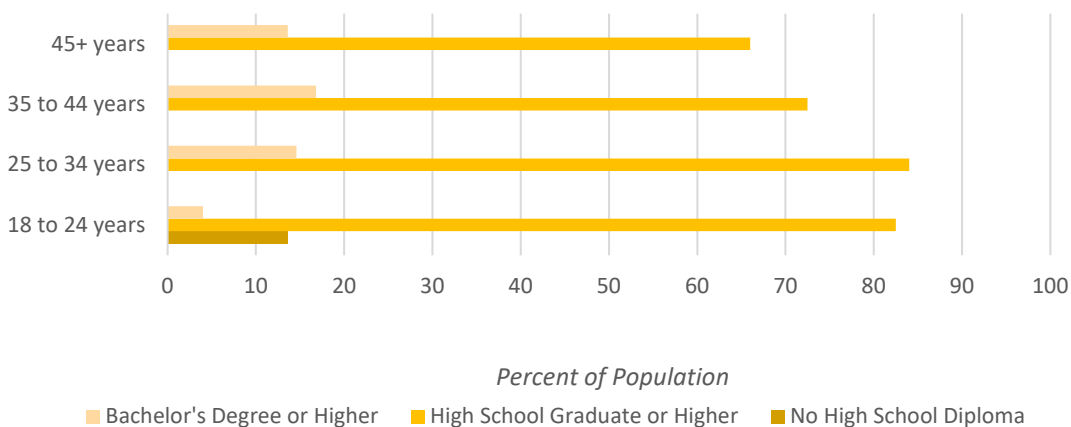


FIGURE 3.6 Educational Attainment in County per Age Group, 2021

Source: US Census; 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-year Estimate

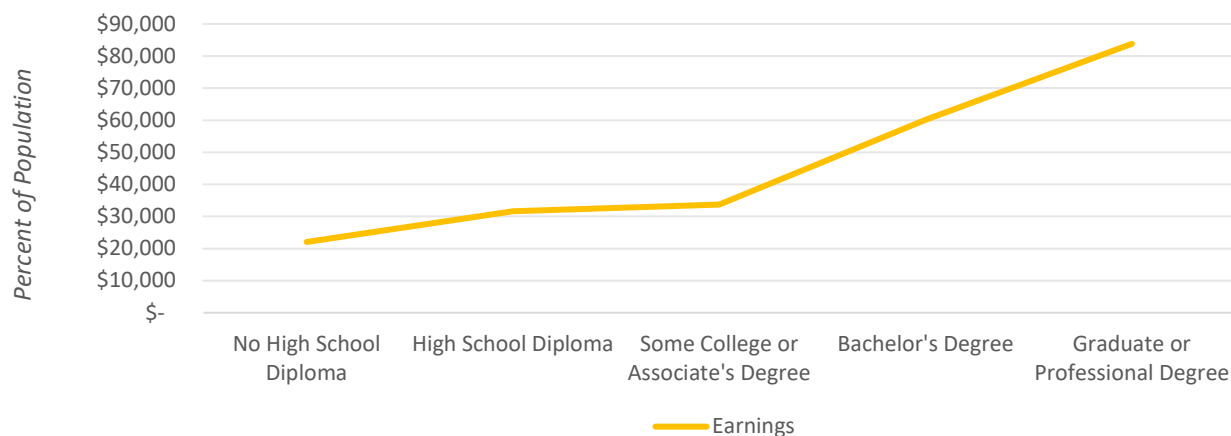


Demographics by Income Levels

According to the U.S. Census, the median annual household income for Tulare County is \$57,395 in 2021³. Whereas, disadvantaged communities have a median annual household income of \$31,300 as of 2017. In the County of Tulare, education levels correlate closely with income.

FIGURE 3.7 Educational Attainment vs Median Earnings, 2019

Source: US Census; 2019 American Community Survey 1-year Estimate



Expendable income can be used to increase access to essential goods and resources that promote healthy lifestyles. For instance, expendable income can go towards air conditioning at home to filter the air and maintain optimum air temperature indoors. However, individuals without expendable income, and those in poverty, do not have such luxuries. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 18.7% of the total county population live within the federal poverty level, and 24% of children fell below the poverty line in 2021.⁴

As noted in the age section, children are especially vulnerable to pollution and illnesses that are often remedied or mitigated by personal investments from expendable income; of which, those experiencing poverty cannot afford. Furthermore, rates of poverty in the County correlate strongly to levels of education. In the disadvantaged communities, there is a lower level of educational attainment than the County Average, suggesting lower household incomes and greater poverty rates in DACs.

³ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/tularecountycalifornia/INC110221#INC110221>

⁴ <https://data.census.gov/table?t=Poverty&g=050XX00US06107&tid=ACST1Y2021.S1701>

FIGURE 3.8 Educational Attainment vs Poverty Rates, 2019

Source: US Census; 2019 American Community Survey 1-year Estimate

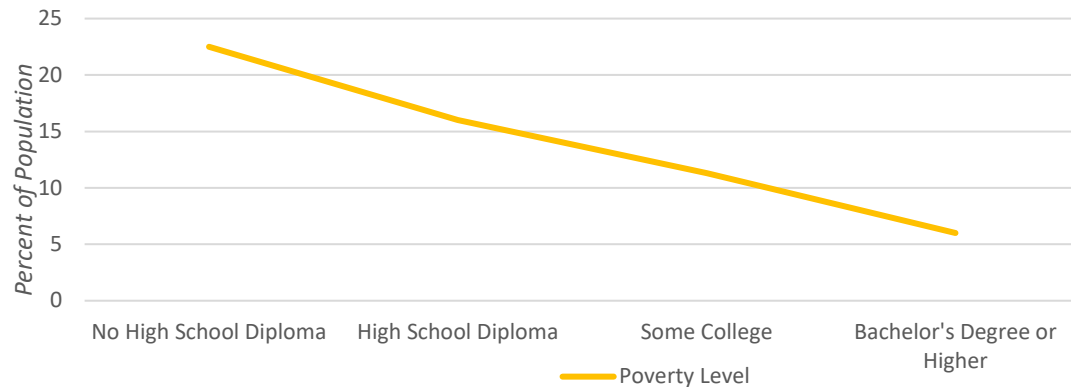
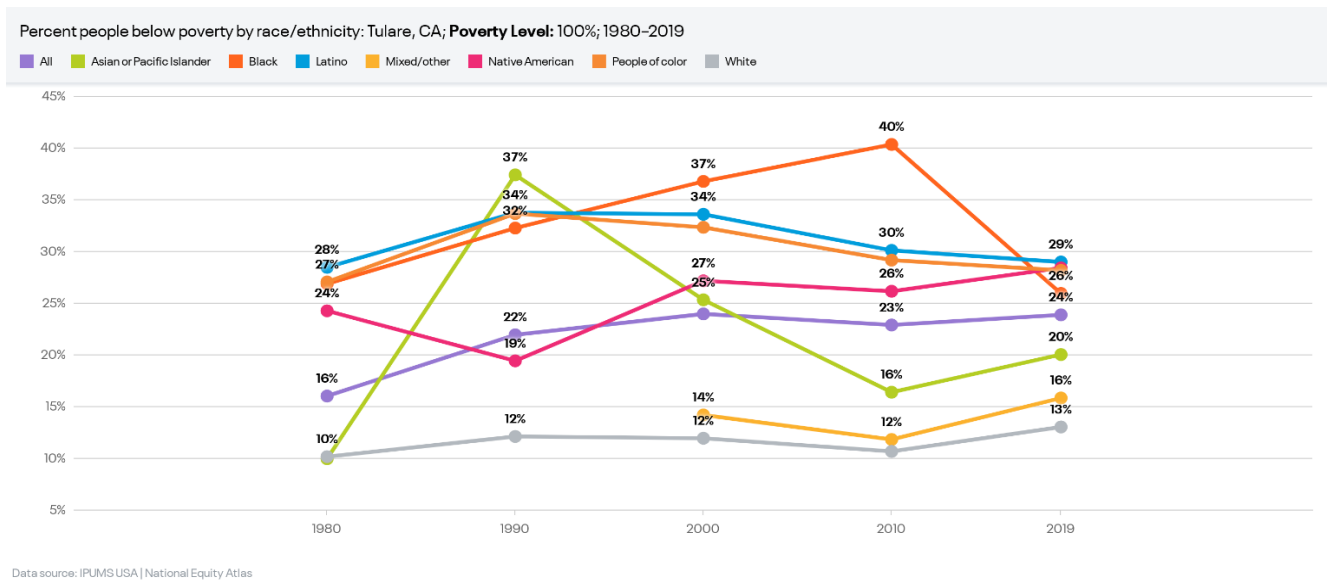


FIGURE 3.9 Poverty Rates by Race/Ethnicity in Tulare County, 1980-2019

Source: American Community Survey; GeoLytics, Inc. | National Equity Atlas



Demographics by Job Category

The type of employment opportunities available to the individuals in disadvantaged communities and the sort of industries in the region can have substantial influence over *community health*. Unfortunately, it is common for disadvantaged communities to deal with the greatest negative impacts from poor working conditions and polluting industries. For instance, in 2018 the lowest-paid occupations in Tulare County included the following:

Community health is the physical and mental wellbeing of a specific community or neighborhood.

- Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Media Occupations
- Food Preparation & Serving Related Occupations
- Personal Care & Service Occupations
- Farming, Fishing, & Forestry Occupations
- Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance Occupations

In particular, the farming, fishing, and forestry industries employ more people than the other four lowest-paid industries combined and employs more people than any other sector in The County. It is important to recognize that working people may be exposed to pollution at the site of their employment.

Working in an environment with risk of pollution exposure, such as in the farming, fishing, and forestry sectors, is not offset by greater incomes. Furthermore, exerting oneself through physical labor in a polluted environment may exasperate the negative impacts. The DACs in the County of Tulare fall within the lowest-income brackets and are likely to work the low-income jobs that pose greater occupational pollution risks. In addition, these communities face inequities such as air pollution from manufacturing, distribution centers, and farming operations that surround them. Figure 3.0 shows that many DACs are located in rural portions of the unincorporated county and fall along major trucking routes and agricultural uses; potentially creating unhealthy living conditions when individuals return home from work.

The Largest Occupation in the County Compared to the Other Four Lowest-Paid Occupations

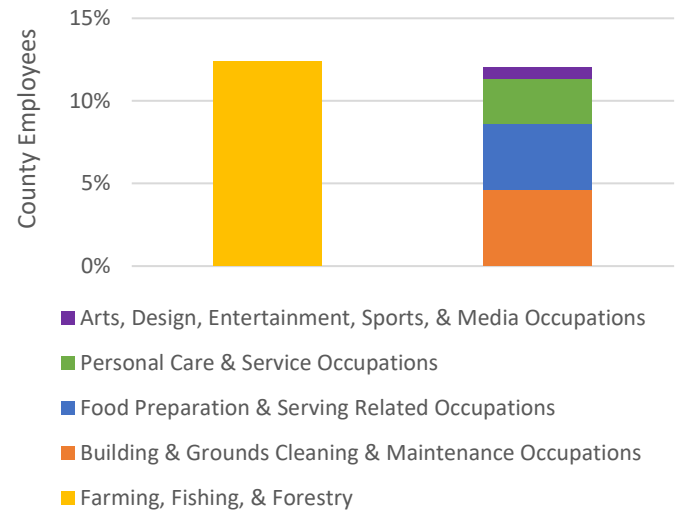


FIGURE 3.10 Location of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Sites, 2019

Source: US Census Bureau; 2019On The Map tool

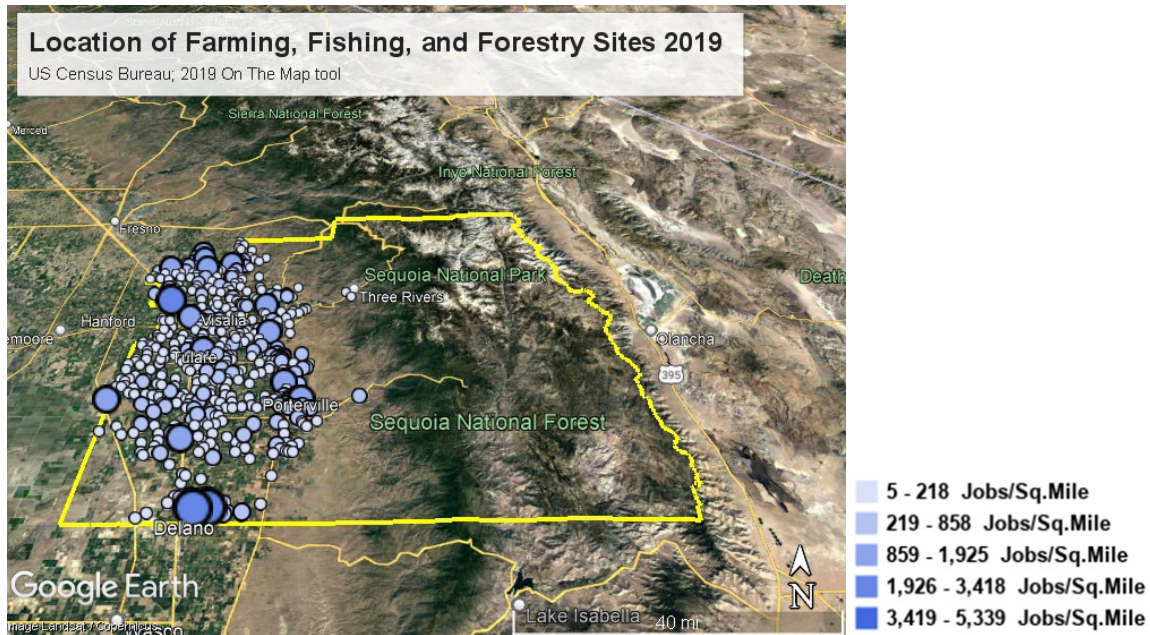
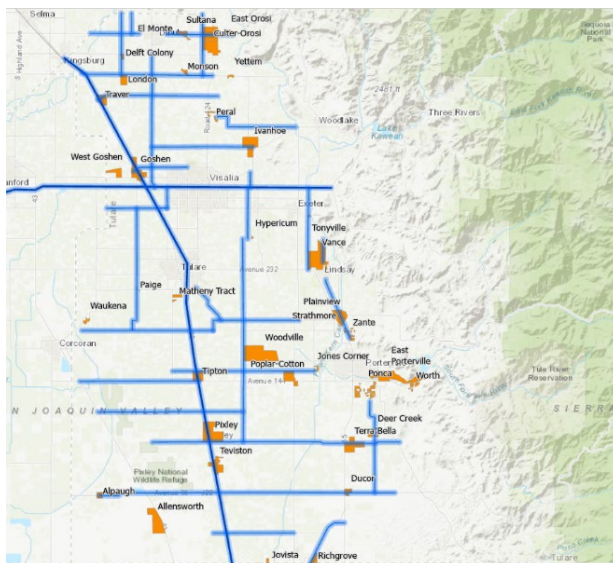


Figure 3.10 above shows the site locations where farming, fishing, and forestry operations occur. Many activities relating to this sector occurs throughout the valley region of Tulare County and are well integrated near DACs.

FIGURE 3.11 DACs in relation to major truck patterns

Source: GIS Mapping Tool



The map above shows the major truck routes in relation to the DACs.

Sovereign Local Tribes

Kern Valley Indian Community (Kawaiisu, Tubatulabals)

The Kern River Valley has been home to three distinct bands which are collectively named Tubatulabal, which loosely translates to “Pine-nut Eaters”. Tubatulabal people have occupied the lower regions of the Southern Sierra Nevada surrounding the North and South Forks of the Kern River. ⁵

According to the Department of Parks and Recreation, both the Kawaiisu and the Tubatulabal homelands straddle the ridge of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Historically, the crest of these mountains has been used as the boundary to distinguish between the Native Americans of California and those of the Great Basin. The Mojave Desert, Owens Valley, Nevada, the eastern part of Oregon, and southern Idaho and western Utah, are all part of the Great Basin. While Kawaiisu traditions are more closely related to those of the central California groups than those of their Numic relatives, they have elements of both the Great Basin and California Indian cultures. ⁶

Santa Rosa Indian Community of the Santa Rosa Rancheria (Tache, Tachi, Yokut)

The Santa Rosa Indian Community of the Santa Rosa Rancheria is located 4.5 miles southeast of Lemoore, California. The Santa Rosa Rancheria belongs to the federally recognized Tachi Yokuts tribe. ⁷

The Santa Rosa Rancheria Cultural and Historical Preservation Department was created to educate people about the cultural ways and values of the Tachi-Yokut tribe. For the Tachi-Yokut tribe, they believe they have a special connection with the land and this connection is used to teach the future generations about the sacred ways of their Ancestors. ⁸

Tule River Indian Tribe (Yokut)

The original inhabitants of the San Joaquin Valley were the Yokut-speaking tribes- about 50 dialect groups occupying the territory along the rivers and creeks flowing from the Sierras and around the Tulare Lake. Their descendants today on the Tule River Indian Reservation continue to have the goal of self-government and self-sufficiency on the land. ⁹

⁵ Tubatulabals of Kern. (2023, May 31). *Home - Tubatulabal Tribe*. Tubatulabal Tribe. <https://www.tubatulabal.org/>

⁶ California, C. S. P. S. O. (n.d.). *The Kawaiisu Culture*. CA State Parks. https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=24579

⁷ *Santa Rosa Indian Community of the santa rosa rancheria, California*. Default Site. (2020a, July 11). <https://data.nativemi.org/tribal-directory/Details/santa-rosa-indian-community-of-the-santa-rosa-rancheria-california-198500>

⁸ Tachi-Yokut Culture. (n.d.). About Us | Tachi Yokut Tribe (tachi-yokut-nsn.gov)

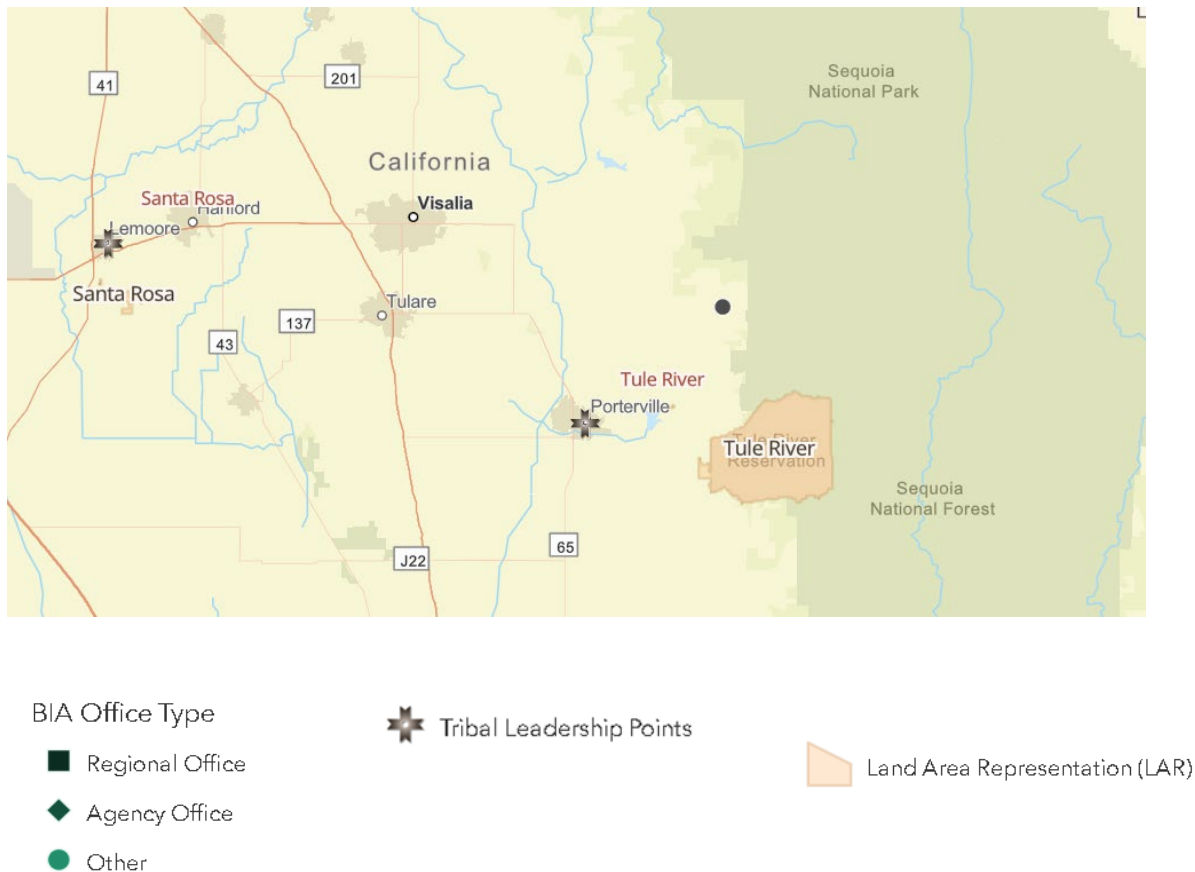
⁹ *History*. Tule River Indian Tribe of California. (n.d.). <https://tulerivertribe-nsn.gov/history/>

Tulare County Treasures

The Tulare County Treasures project was created to showcase all the conserved land within the County. Tulare County Treasures recites the County's history of Native American conservation and the gives recognition those tribes now. The TCT project team began working in August 2011. Their goal is to celebrate the processes and the rich results of the history of conservation in Tulare County, by sharing stories of the land and its people.¹⁰

FIGURE 3.12 Surrounding Native Tribes

Source: Bureau of Indian Affairs



¹⁰ "About Us." *TULARE COUNTY TREASURES*, www.tularecountytrees.org/about-us.html. Accessed 9 June 2023.

04 Prioritize Improvements

Introduction

Government investment and programs may provide solutions to many of the challenges faced by disadvantaged communities. However, these investments can be costly (such as new water infrastructure) and only serve a small population. Unfortunately, the smaller DACs may be neglected due to limited government resources and the greater needs by more populated communities. By creating policies to prioritize investments and programs that assist disadvantaged communities, the County of Tulare will consider this when conducting a cost-benefit analysis for certain projects.

Existing Conditions

During the development of community plans, staff from the County and other non-profit community-based organizations (CBOs) asked communities what their concerns were. Each disadvantaged community has a unique set of characteristics that affect community resident's health, abilities to access employment, public services, and amenities. The following sections describe the greatest and most voiced concerns among disadvantaged communities.

Community Safety

There are multiple concerns related to community safety such as police surveillance, crime, and the availability of transportation options.

Lack of large investments (such as sidewalks and street lighting) cause greater concern for safety during the day and evening. The availability of sidewalks in a community may limit walkability and the opportunity for physical activity. Communities without street lighting have dark zones in the evening that may create areas prone for conflicts or accidents. Due to the seemingly low number of Sheriff Department substations and quantity of police patrol on duty, unincorporated communities have communicated the importance of increased sheriff surveillance. Community residents have also communicated that reducing emergency response time is a critical area for overall community safety. The *Community Safety* chapter in this report outlines possible solutions that have long-range, positive impacts on neighborhood safety and the environment.

Medical Care Access

Medical clinics and hospital facilities of Tulare County are located within incorporated cities and larger unincorporated communities. Residents living in remote communities experience low access to clinics and health care (including medical care, mental health, substance abuse treatment, social services, and dental care). making doctor appointments and getting to them may be challenging for these populations. This is especially true for the elderly, linguistically isolated populations, and households without vehicle access.

Medical care access concerns may include; high transportation costs, job instability for workers with chronic conditions that may have to choose between work or doctor appointments, and lower quality of life for community members who cannot afford medical expenses.

During the Local Public Health System Assessment (LPHSA) in 2016, participants representing multiple disadvantaged communities proposed funding a mobile clinic to provide medical care services to remote areas. Expanding rural clinic locations and chronic disease management centers has also been recommended by community members.

Community Sewer System

Water and wastewater utilities serving unincorporated areas are largely funded through grants, taxes, assessments, or fees and are typically provided by Special Districts or County Service Areas/Zones of Benefit. For small, rural communities raising rates to comply with new treatment requirements and replace aging infrastructure can impose financial challenges. Additionally, California regulations (Proposition 218) and limited County revenues make it difficult for local agencies to pursue water management upgrades.

In 1996 California voters passed Proposition 218 to require voter approval of almost all local taxes, including the assessments, charges, and fees stormwater management agencies had come to rely on. Water and sewer services are exempt from Proposition 218, but a 2002 court case found that stormwater does not qualify for those exemptions.¹¹

Water and wastewater concerns include the following: no water or wastewater connection, failing septic systems that are potentially contaminating surrounding soil and nearby groundwater, failing or insufficient sewer collection systems, and wastewater treatment systems that are not capable of meeting Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs). These issues may be remedied by better maintenance, repairs, or replacement of systems. In past years, water related implementation projects taken on by Special Districts and the County in conjunction with County health departments, State Water Boards and Regional Water Quality Control have provided benefits to disadvantaged communities.

To view existing water and wastewater connections, see the Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities Assessment in the [Tulare County General Plan](#). The list of inventory tables by community are in the appendix section of the Tulare County General Plan.

Local Food Markets

Many disadvantaged communities do not have good access to healthy foods. Community concerns include food vendor regulations, lack of SNAP approved local markets, business management education opportunities, inaccessibility, lack of food nutrition programs, disconnection between food retailers and local growers and the distribution industry, and weak

¹¹ *Water Conservation & Stormwater Funding: Proposition 218 ... - Counties*, www.counties.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/csac_prop_218_issue_paper_-_may_13_2015.pdf. Accessed 4 Jan. 2023.

promotion for community owned food markets (such as co-ops). The *Food Access* chapter in this report outlines existing conditions and healthy food access challenges.

Internet Access

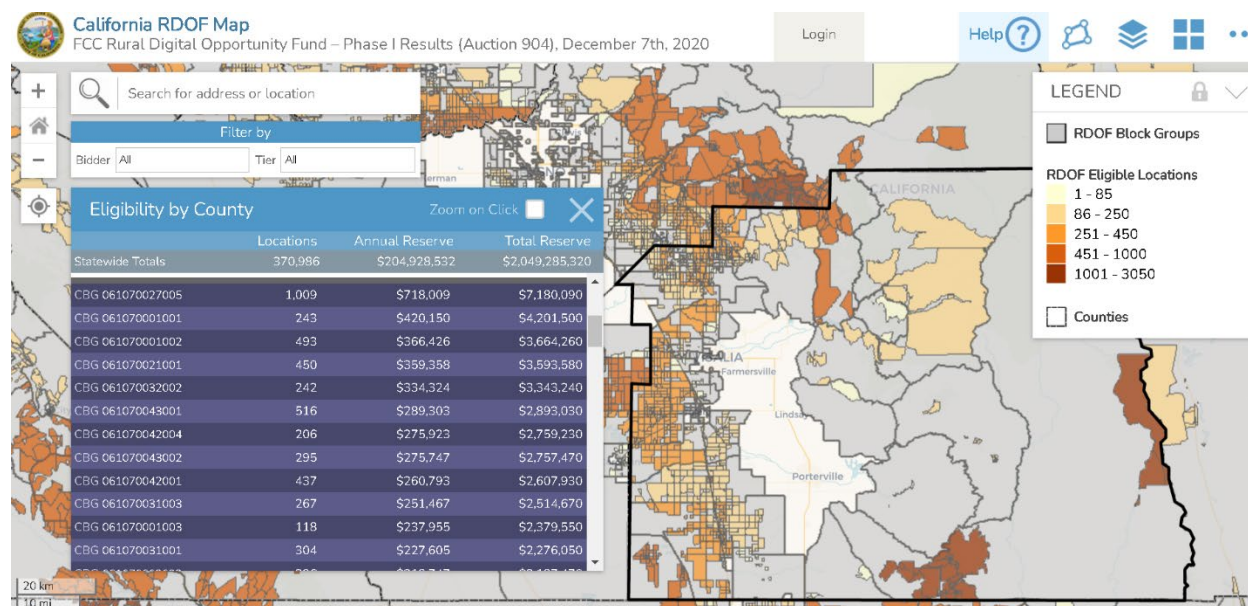
Internet access is unreliable and expensive for households in unincorporated communities due to the lack of cell towers in rural areas within the County. As a result, residents are unable or limited in online productivity. Adults may have more difficulty researching and applying for new employment, working from home, paying bills, and completing course work. Children face the challenge of learning with less resources.

These issues are made worse as some residents in unincorporated communities lack access to news, government websites, and county town hall meetings which allow for civic engagement and voicing of concerns. Without good public services, residents in disadvantaged communities can experience disproportionate burden. Residents in these communities believe internet access and programs that provide technical assistance are a high priority.

For assistance with allocating funding sources to expand internet access, the County can utilize tools such as the California RDOF Eligibility Map created by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The tool identifies highest eligibility for project implementation and amount of funding available through the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) the by census block, as shown in Figure 4.1.

FIGURE 4.1 California RDOF Eligibility Map 2020

Source: California Public Utilities Commission, Broadband Federal Funding



Community Resource Centers

From the 2017 Hamlet Plans, disadvantaged communities now have a mixed-use overlay district. This type of zoning allows the combination of residential, commercial, office, industrial, institutional, or recreational uses. As part the Economic Development Strategy, Chapter 16 of the Zoning Code have been revised to limit the uses that require a Use Permit. Use Permit requirements are streamlined to allow for uses to be developed without discretionary review. That is, proposed uses will not have to undergo an approval process that involves a decision-making action by the Tulare County Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors. Project design features and administrative approval will serve as the mechanism to allow (regulate) land uses, activities, densities, and other conditions typically applied through the special use permit process.

For low-income communities in Tulare County, community centers can serve as a means of relief from increasing hot days (e.g. cool spots) or can be available to the elderly and disabled who are unable to work for long periods of time or commute to areas with more employment opportunities.

During the planning of resource centers, it's important that community residents are involved in the selection of the site, and engaged in discussions with designers to collaborate a center that expresses community specific cultural meaning and assign space to community important activities. More information about community centers is featured in the *Public Facilities* chapter of this report.

Animal Control

Stray dogs are a safety concern for many residents and public servants working within disadvantaged communities. Pedestrians have reported feeling unsafe while walking in their own neighborhood and residents have reported unwanted dogs in their property. Community outreach and civic engagement may be more difficult for this reason. Tulare County Animal Control struggles to meet the county-wide need and is forced to prioritize the cases with greatest safety risk, which often relates to the larger, more dense, incorporated communities.

Coordination between the County and organizations that have a mission to serve animals, promote education about animal care, and sharing the benefits of safe spaying and neutering practices can help reduce the number of stray dogs.

Natural Gas

Many households in isolated rural communities and even a few near incorporated cities do not have access to natural gas. Costs of fees to connect to natural gas lines is expensive for low-income households. Instead, some residents purchase propane as their source of fuel, but this is also an expensive cost over time.

In the San Joaquin Valley, the energy providers test innovative alternatives in disadvantaged communities for affordable clean energy, including switching to all-electric.

A few disadvantaged communities in Tulare County have been selected by the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), alongside SoCal Gas, and Southern California Edison (SCE) to design and implement electrification pilot programs. These communities include Allensworth, Alpaugh and Seville. These were all approved in the California Public Utilities Commission's Decision 18-12-015.¹² In an updated proposal of the pilot program Ducor, and West Goshen were added to the list.¹³ The latest meeting about the pilot program was in 2019, and the California Public Utilities Commission has released a document with research done in San Joaquin Valley in 2021.

SCE also provide energy for the unincorporated areas in Tulare County. Additionally, SCE offers a Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). LIHEAP is a federally funded program aimed to assist low-income households that pay a high portion of their income to meet their energy needs.¹⁴ While SCE does not have its own energy efficient program, they have listed 14 Energy Efficient third-party companies in their website.¹⁵

Green Spaces

Many disadvantaged communities lack public parks and outdoor spaces for physical activity. Additionally, streets and yards have few plants. Unlike in local cities, there are few opportunities to enjoy a walk-through nature.

Existing barriers to greening are related to property rights, low funding for planting projects (specifically for expenses related to purchasing plants and trees and maintenance), and limited coordination and efforts to convert vacant lots into community gardens.

A map featuring park locations can be found in the *Physical Activity* Chapter of this report.

Public Transportation

The existing public transportation system connects smaller communities to larger urban areas that have jobs, food, resources, and public services. However, the system does not provide complete access to all DACs due to the TCAG Unmet Needs Process which plans routes based on projected farebox revenue. At this time, in 2020, other modes of transportation such as bikes lanes, sidewalks, and designated routes for Buses, carpool, or Uber/Lyft have not been fully implemented. One of the greatest concerns is the lack of infrastructure for alternative modes of transit between bus routes and stops that are not connected.

During the annual Unmet Transit Needs public engagement process, residents living in DACs have requested additional transit services to their neighborhoods. Although the County

¹² PG&E's San Joaquin Valley Disadvantaged Communities Pilot Implementation Plan, Public Utilities Commission of the State of California, March 19, 2019, https://www.pge.com/tariffs/assets/pdf/adviceletter/ELEC_5498-E.pdf

¹³ DECISION APPROVING SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES PILOT PROJECTS, <https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M252/K052/252052725.PDF>

¹⁴ "Help Paying Your Bill: Your Home: Home - SCE." *SCE.Com*, www.sce.com/residential/assistance. Accessed 4 Jan. 2023.

¹⁵ <https://www.sce.com/business/savings-incentives/third-party-energy-efficiency-programs>

planners and Tulare County Transit Area Transit (TCaT) coordinate to service areas with low vehicle access, residents continue to experience challenges related to bus schedules, frequency of bus trips, and the burden of long commute times. Additionally, some bus stops lack sunshade structures, street lighting, and signage/schedule map. For residents with visual and tactile disabilities, it can be difficult to identify bus stops without adequate signage and tactile paving. All these concerns may be made worse during seasons that bring rain and flooding especially in DACs without drainage systems.

In 2015, a higher percentage of family households of color experienced lower accessibility to motor vehicles in the Visalia-Porterville, CA Metro Area. The following is a break-down by race/ethnicity for lack of vehicle access: White (5.8%), Latino (6.5%), Asian or Pacific Islander (5.5%), Native American (9.0%), and Mixed/other (8.4%) (National Equity Atlas). These statistics provide evidence that people of color may have a higher dependence on public transportation.

The Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG) conducted an Environmental Justice Analysis for TCAG's 2018 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)/ Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) for the Tulare County Region in 2018. The analysis measured the driving and transit trip times for Environmental Justice areas compared to Non-Environmental Justice areas as seen in Figure 3.2.¹⁶

Environmental Justice communities used in TCAG's study were identified in accordance with SB 535 and the CalEnviroscreen 4.0 by the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA).

According to the study, "there appear to be no disproportionate impacts on disadvantaged communities as a whole with respect to accessibility and mobility within the Tulare County Region." Trip time for residents in environmental justice communities will increase in the future as shown in Figure 4.2, however. Indicating, that people of color in rural communities may experience disproportionately lower access to the workforce in the future.

¹⁶ Regional Transportation Plan, Environmental Justice Report, August 2018, page 16
<https://tularecog.org/tcag/planning/regional-transportation-plan-rtp/rtp-20181/environmental-justice-report/>

FIGURE 4.2 Transit accessibility between EJ and non-EJ communities

Source: Regional Transportation Plan, Environmental Justice Report

ACCESSIBILITY AND MOBILITY 2017				ACCESSIBILITY AND MOBILITY 2042			
ACCESSIBILITY Avg. Peak travel times (minutes) to Major Job Centers				ACCESSIBILITY Avg. Peak travel times (minutes) to Major Job Centers			
	Non-EJ TAZs	EJ TAZs	Difference		Non-EJ TAZs	EJ TAZs	Difference
Drive Alone	14.5	12.1	-2.4	Drive Alone	14	18.3	4
Shared Ride	11.7	10.4	-1.3	Shared Ride	12	14	2.3
Transit	29.3	38.0	8.7	Transit	28	33.3	5.8
ACCESSIBILITY Avg. Peak travel times (minutes) to Medical Facilities				ACCESSIBILITY Avg. Peak travel times (minutes) to Medical Facilities			
	Non-EJ TAZs	EJ TAZs	Difference		Non-EJ TAZs	EJ TAZs	Difference
Drive Alone	15.6	12.7	-2.9	Drive Alone	15	12	-3.3
Shared Ride	12.1	11.1	-1.0	Shared Ride	12	10.3	-2
Transit	33.9	30.1	-3.8	Transit	32	33.5	1.5
ACCESSIBILITY Avg. Peak travel times (minutes) to Parks				ACCESSIBILITY Avg. Peak travel times (minutes) to Parks			
	Non-EJ TAZs	EJ TAZs	Difference		Non-EJ TAZs	EJ TAZs	Difference
Drive Alone	14.2	11.7	-2.5	Drive Alone	14	11.8	-2.3
Shared Ride	11.7	10.4	-1.3	Shared Ride	12	10.8	-0.9
Transit	38.3	39.8	1.5	Transit	35	40	4.7
ACCESSIBILITY Avg. Peak travel times (minutes) to Schools				ACCESSIBILITY Avg. Peak travel times (minutes) to Schools			
	Non-EJ TAZs	EJ TAZs	Difference		Non-EJ TAZs	EJ TAZs	Difference
Drive Alone	16.9	16.2	-0.7	Drive Alone	17	16.2	-0.6
Shared Ride	14.2	13.7	-0.5	Shared Ride	14	13.9	-0.3
Transit	40.8	38.1	-2.7	Transit	39	38.4	-0.1

Active Transportation

Active transportation is not a viable mode of transportation for all residents in DACs, especially for residents living in communities with a long distance between public services and other necessities. To make walking and biking reliable and more convenient, the County has worked with local transportation authorities to expand infrastructure through complete street programs.

“In 2000, TCAG prepared the first Regional Bicycle Plan. As part of implementation of the 2014 RTP/SCS developed the Regional Active Transportation Plan (RATP) which incorporated the purview of the Regional Bicycle Plan and looks more broadly at active transportation and the interactions with other modes such as transit and autos. TCAG adopted the RATP on May 16,

2016. The goal of the plan, called “Walk ‘n Bike Tulare County” for public-outreach purposes, is to make [active transportation] more convenient. Toward that end, the plan identifies the highest-priority pedestrian and bicycle improvements for the county’s eight cities and its unincorporated areas. The plan will be the foundation for the pedestrian and bicycle component of the Tulare County Regional Transportation Plan. The RATP is intended to help secure outside funding for pedestrian and bicycle improvements under the statewide Active Transportation Program (ATP). Walk ‘n Bike Tulare County tries to increase the chances that member agency priority projects will be funded by establishing that all the projects are part of an adopted plan, providing an additional layer of outreach and engagement with the public, and coalescing evidence of the benefits of these projects for public health and in disadvantaged communities.”¹⁷

“In addition to the RATP, the County of Tulare has prepared Complete Streets Plans for 16 of its unincorporated communities with twenty-six (26) roadways designed to 30% (“Projects”). Six Programs were approved through the Community Plan Updating Process, nine were approved independently; and recent plans including, Three Rivers, which was completed upon the adoption of the Three Rivers Community Plan in June 2018 and Lemon Cove adopted in February 2020. The aim of Complete Streets plans is to create a comprehensive and uniform vision for the County with respect to development of a transportation network that supports all modes of travel.”¹⁸

Education Levels and Job Requirements

According to the National Equity Atlas, by 2020, 44 percent of jobs will require at least an AA degree or higher. This is a major concern because students of color, especially the immigrant Latino population, face barriers to higher education which is represented in Figure 4.3. As of 2021, about 23 percent of Tulare County residents are foreign born, about a total 111,404 people, this includes naturalized and non-U.S citizens (U.S. Census Bureau 2021)¹⁹. It is likely that some immigrants are challenged by linguistic isolation. According to the same U.S Census Bureau report, about 49 percent of Tulare County residents speak more than one language and Spanish speakers makeup 44 percent of that. And out of those who speak Spanish, 24 percent “speak English less than very well”. Individuals may take advantage of English as a Second Language (ESL) programs to acquire knowledge and resources that support higher educational attainment.

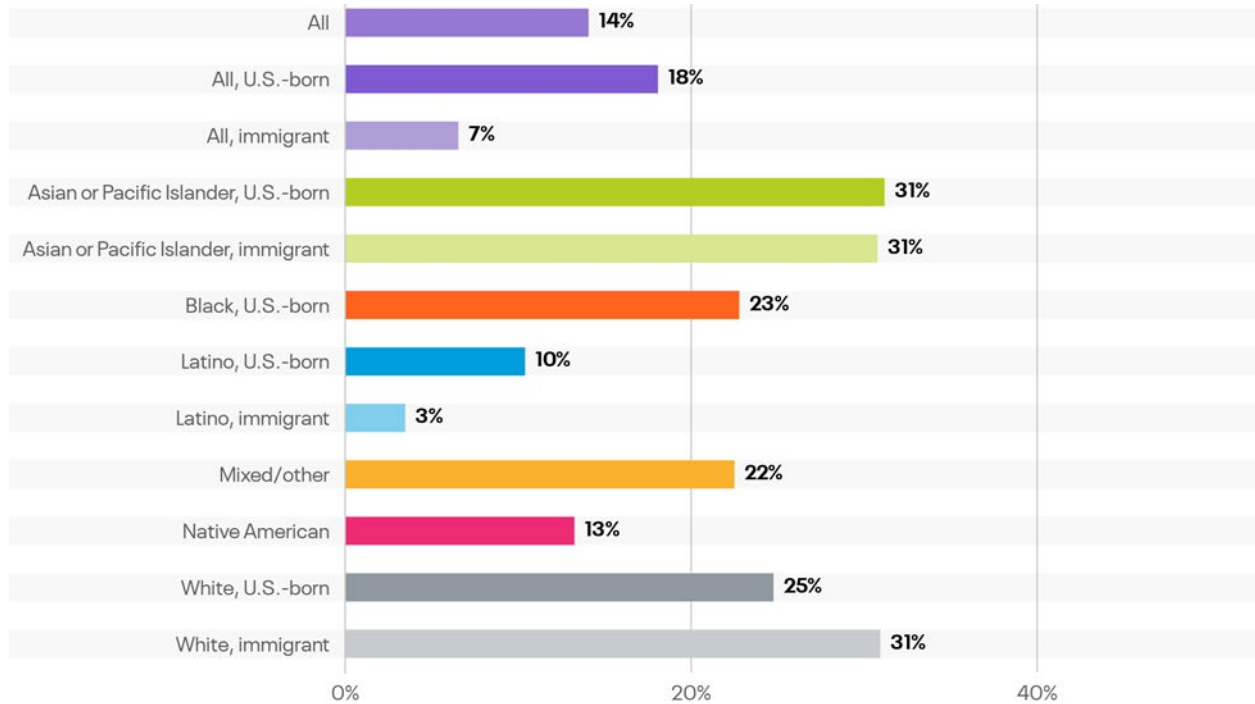
¹⁷ Regional Transportation Plan, Action Element, page B-54

¹⁸ Ibid, page B-55

¹⁹ <https://data.census.gov/table?g=050XX00US06107&tid=ACSDP1Y2021.DP02>

FIGURE 4.3 Education attainment by race/ethnicity and nativity: Visalia-Porterville, CA Metro Area, AA degree or higher, 2019

Source: National Equity Atlas



Other concerns related to education and employment include the following: disconnected youth, job growth, unemployment. In 2015, 10.7 percent of youth 16 to 19 years old were not working or in school. Figure 4.4 shows percentage of disconnected youth by census tract. The *Demographics* chapter in this report contains more information on education levels in DACs.

According to the [2022 Tulare County Economic Forecast](#). The county has 1,000 acres of land zoned for logistics, and if it can attract companies to open new warehousing and trucking operations, job growth could be more rapid during the 2020-2025 forecast period than currently expected. According to the Tulare County Quarterly Trends Report, from April February 2020 to April 2022 Warehousing and Utilities, has been the fastest growing sector in the County.²⁰ Other employment fields with notable increase include Leisure and Hospitality, Education and Healthcare, Natural Resources and Construction and Retail and Trade.

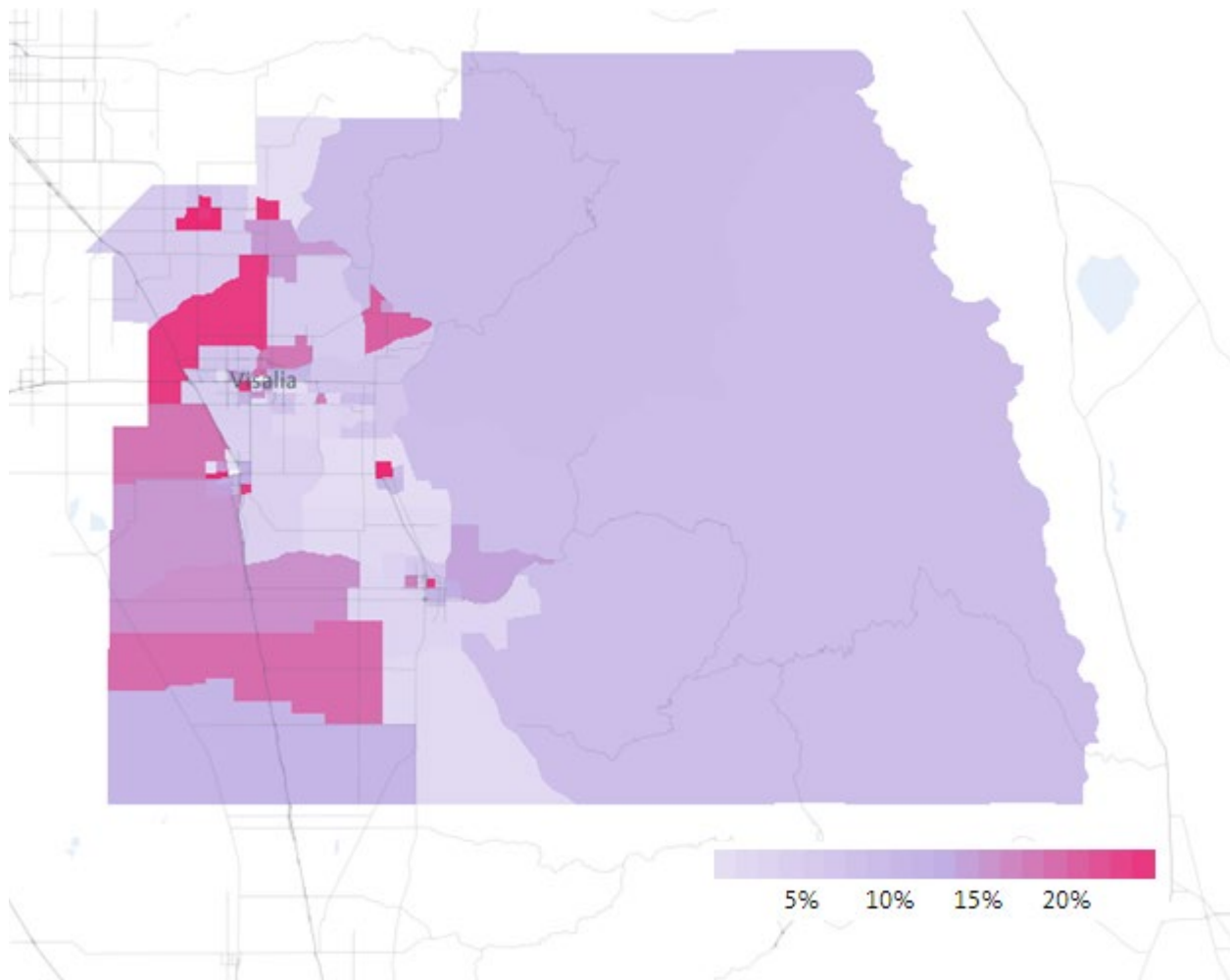
From the same report, sectors with a decrease in employment include Professional and Businesses services, Government, Finance and Insurance, and Farm. To promote financial stability and a healthy quality of life for residents living in DACs, benefits can be drawn from creation and implementation of programs that promote mentoring or training around

²⁰ [Quarterly Trends Report - Tulare - Development \(tularecountyedc.com\)](#)

employment sectors that will experience growth. The *Demographics* chapter in this report contains more information on employment levels in DACs.

FIGURE 4.4 Percent of 16 to 19 years old not working or in school by Tract, 2015

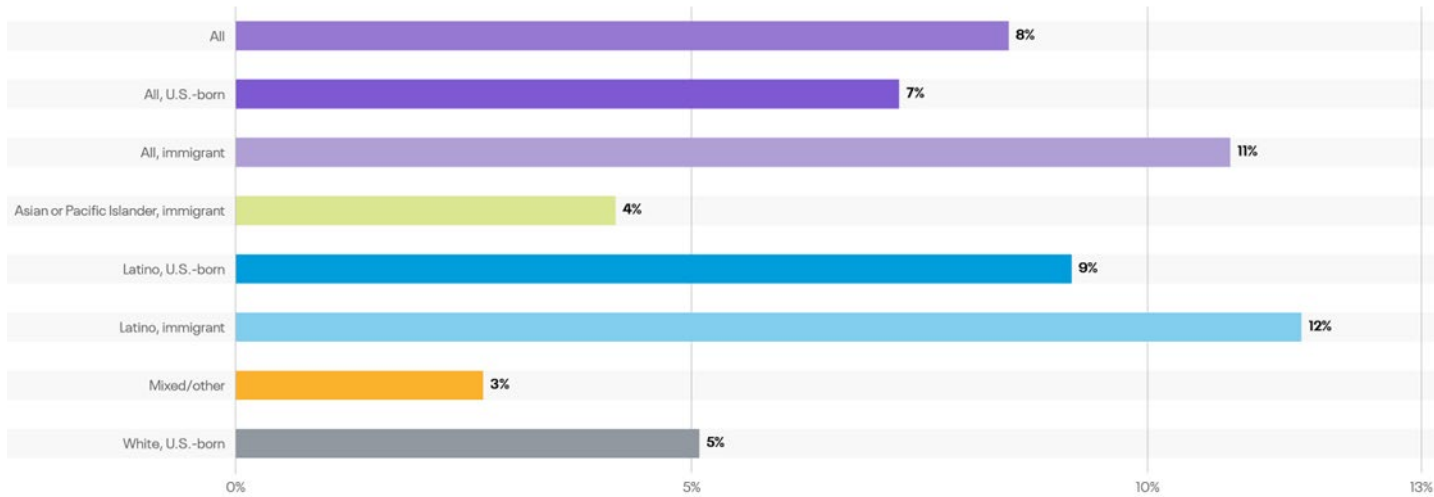
Source: National Equity Atlas



“Racial differences in employment result from differences in education, training, and experience as well as barriers to employment for workers of color such as English language ability, immigration status, criminal records, lack of transportation access, and racial discrimination and bias among employers and institutions.” (The National Equity Atlas)

FIGURE 4.5 Unemployment rate by race/ethnicity and nativity: Visalia-Porterville, CA Metro Area, 2019

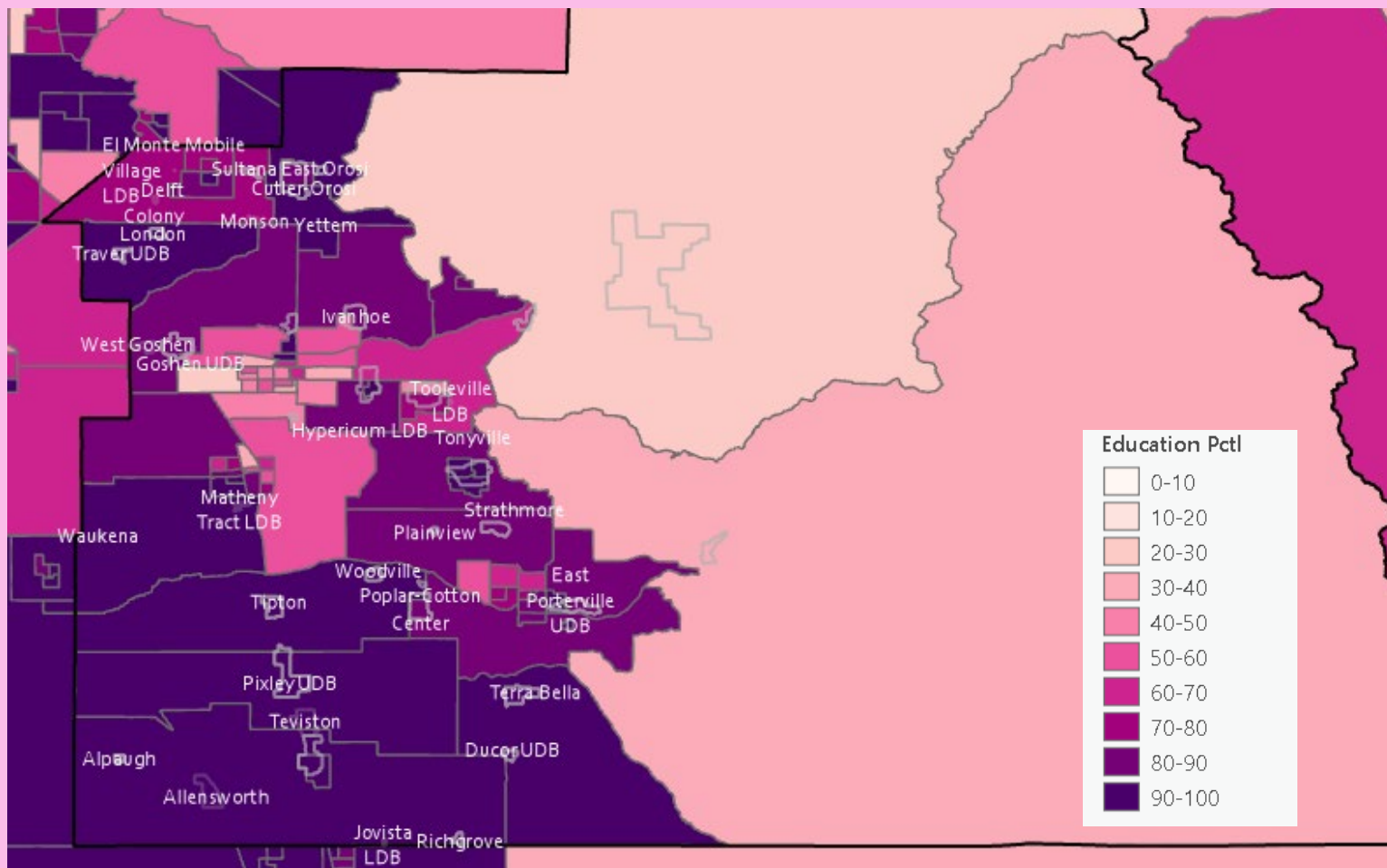
Source: National Equity Atlas



Education is a critical factor that influences likelihood of unemployment. In Tulare County, Black and immigrant Latino populations experience higher unemployment rates, as shown in Figure 4.5. The 2019 county unemployment rate is estimated to be 8 percent which is well above the state average (4.5 percent). Census tracts with low educational attainment are shown in Figure 4.6. Priority for education resources and vocational training is within the lowest scoring census tracts.

Figure 4.6 Educational Attainment

CalEnviroScreen4: “Educational attainment is the highest level of education a person has completed. California has a high percentage of people without high school degrees compared to the rest of the United States, which makes education important to consider. Many studies have found that the health effects of air pollution are worse among people with low educational attainment.”



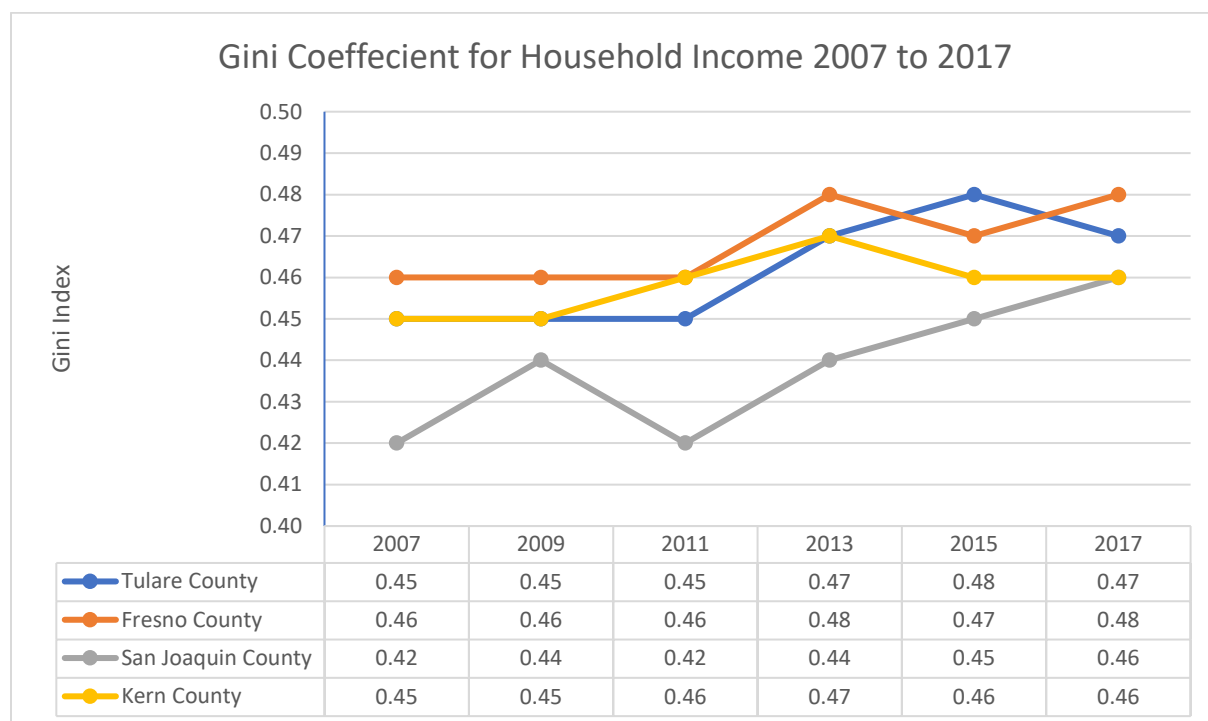
The indicator is the percent of the population over the age of 25 with less than a high school education.

Housing Affordability

Low-income individuals experience higher household cost burden in Tulare County. According to the 2022 Affordable Housing Needs Report:

- Renters in Tulare County need to earn \$21.27 per hour - 1.4 times the state minimum wage - to afford the average monthly asking rent of \$1,106.
- Asking rents in Tulare County increased by 13.9% between Q4 2020 and Q4 2021;
- Low-Income Housing Tax Credit production and preservation in Tulare County increased by 563 homes between 2020 and 2021;
- State and federal funding for housing production and preservation in Tulare County is \$112 million, a 55% increase from the year prior.

Figure 3.9 Gini coefficient by County from 2007 to 2017



The Gini coefficient for household income ranges from 0 (perfect equality—e.g. all households have the same income) to 1 (perfect inequality—e.g. one household has all of the income). Over the last 10 years, all counties in the San Joaquin Central Valley appear to be in a similar range and well below the 1.0 perfect inequality mark.

Figure 4.7 shows the trends of household income inequality from some of the Central Valley counties. All the featured counties have a score of over .4, and based on the UNICEF guidelines, 0.4–0.5 corresponds with high income disparity.²¹

²¹ <https://www.unicef.cn/en/figure-27-national-gini-index-20032017#:~:text=Although%20there%20are%20no%20internationally,high%20income%20disparity%2C%20above%200.5>

The difference in income of housing cost burden experienced by race, particularly between owners and renters is feature below. Renters experience higher housing cost burden, as shown in Figure 4.8. Areas with highest housing burden percentile are shown in Figure 4.9. More information and data regarding housing stock conditions, housing affordability, and cost burden can be found in the *Safe and Sanitary Homes* chapter of this report.

FIGURE 4.8 Housing burden by tenure and race/ethnicity: Visalia-Porterville, CA Metro Area, Renter, 2019

Source: National Equity Atlas

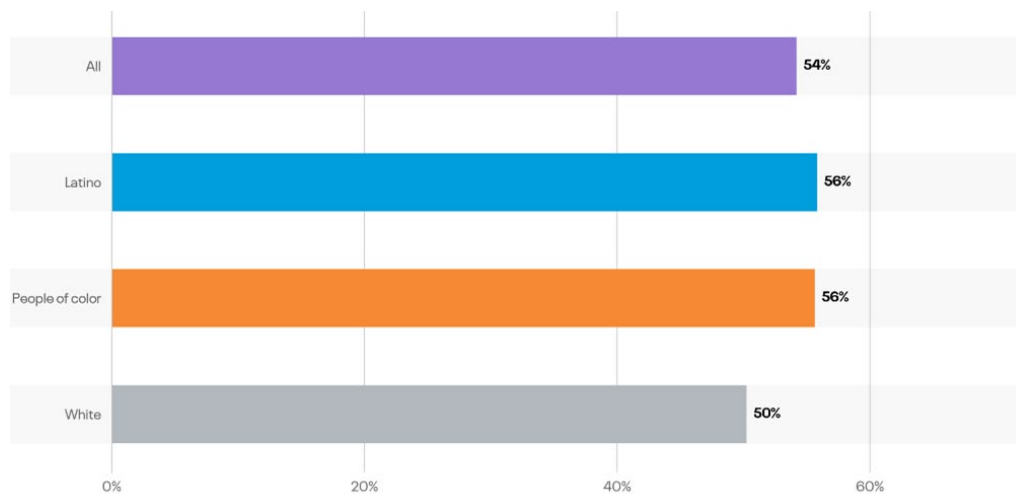


FIGURE 4.9 Housing burden by tenure and race/ethnicity: Visalia-Porterville, CA Metro Area, Owners, 2019

Source: National Equity Atlas

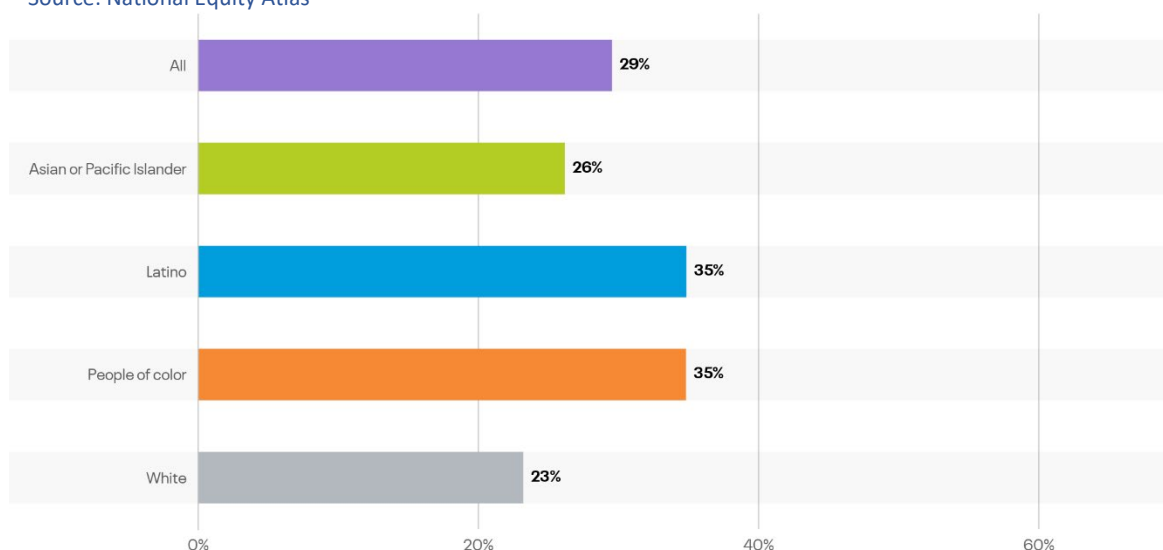


Figure 4.10 Housing Affordability

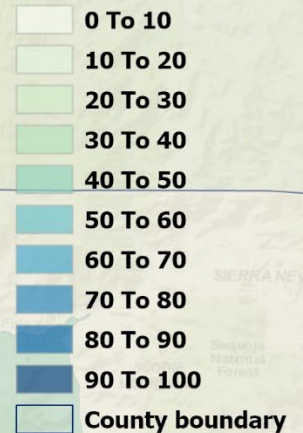
“Housing affordability is an important part of the framework of social and economic conditions that shape the health and well-being of individuals. Low-income and financially vulnerable households that face high costs for housing can potentially suffer from health impacts. Households that experience high rent burden for longer periods of time are associated with greater disadvantage.”

Source: CalEnviroScreen 3.0

Figure 4.10 Housing Affordability

Housing Burden

Housing burden percentile



SB 535 - California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006: Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund.

AB 1550 - Greenhouse gases: investment plan: disadvantaged communities. The California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 designates the State Air Resources Board as the state agency charged with monitoring and regulating sources of emissions of greenhouse gases.

Goal: Prioritize Improvements and Programs that Address the Needs of Environmental Justice Communities.

Policy:

CARP EJ-1 Policy: Limit the impacts of climate change on the most vulnerable populations by focusing planning and intervention in and with communities with the highest need. This can be implemented by ensuring that policies, services, and programs are responsive to community members who are most vulnerable to the potential impacts of climate change.

Implementation Measure:

- A. Prepare a Climate Adaptation Plan that: identifies potential climate impacts, vulnerable populations and assets; and develops and prioritizes strategies that either prevent or mitigate climate impacts, particularly for vulnerable populations.

EJ-2 Policy: The County of Tulare will collaborate with community members within Environmental Justice Communities to best determine and address the unique needs of each individual communities.

- A. **Implementation Measure:** The County will collaborate with non-profit organizations and community leaders within Environmental Justice Communities to create a monitoring strategy that can measure the effectiveness of the EJ policies in place.

EJ-3: Policy: The County will collaborate with non-profits, and other public and private organizations to encourage employers to institute worksite wellness practices and programs and provide adequate health coverage and benefits to employees.

EJ-4: Policy: The County shall collaborate with interested organizations and residents to create a youth job development partnership – connecting local businesses to teens for after school and summer work, volunteer positions, and other skills development opportunities.

05 Civil Engagement

Introduction

Achievements and Public Engagement Practices

With funding awarded by the Strategic Growth Council, for the Sustainable Communities Grant and Incentives Program, under Proposition 84 (2006) and pursuant to Senate Bill 244, Tulare County developed numerous Community, Hamlet, and Legacy plans. All with the intention to conduct analysis within disadvantaged communities to identify key driving factors contributing to disparities related to quality of life and to develop policies, plans, and programs to help guide future decision-making within those areas.

To learn more about Tulare County community plans, please visit the [Tulare County General Plan Update](#) website.

To facilitate a planning program that fosters education and learning from the perspective of a community, the Tulare County Resource Management Agency, in order to gain a deeper understanding of community interests, received feedback and community-based knowledge and opinion regarding local challenges and desires for change. The County collaborated with non-profits to disseminate educational information, canvas communities, and engage in conversation with residents about the potential value they have to offer community planning, and to host meetings where more in depth discussion regarding residential concerns took place.

Community outreach performed in partnership with non-profits included the development of an informational flyer, distribution of such, and alliance among community associations and local service organizations and public utility districts, school districts, as well as community advocate groups. All stakeholders corroborated in reminding community residents about meeting details, their meaning, and reasons to attend, and during meetings, staff from different public service departments were present for discussion and questions and community residents filled out surveys.

Utilizing this model, Tulare County Resource Management Agency has developed more than thirty community plans to date in 2020. Such plans were reviewed during the development of the Environmental Justice Element, as they provide insight to the unique needs of disadvantaged communities.

Outreach & Barriers of the EJ Element

At the beginning stages of planning the program for the development of the Tulare County Environmental Justice Element, the County selected to adopt a model that divided the project into two phases. Phase 1 to be more heavily focused on collating information on existing conditions, which was conducted through extensive outreach during the development of community planning process. Realizing that previous outreach was not entirely focused on environmental justice work but satisfied a preliminary step in the public engagement requirements pursuant to SB 1000, the County decided to wait in conducting robust public engagement until after the development of a working draft of the Phase I Environmental Justice Element for circulation among CBOs, non-profits, government agencies, and disadvantaged communities for feedback and modifications recommendations.

Apart from the approach to wait in conducting extensive public outreach until Phase I of the Environmental Justice Element is completed, the Tulare County Resource Management Agency established an Environmental Justice Advisory Committee. The purpose of the Committee is to facilitate recommendations regarding best practices with communication and outreach in disadvantaged communities, review of the general plan elements and policy modification recommendations, to ensure that issues or conditions affecting low-income neighborhoods are being addressed through an inclusive process and viewed through an equitable lens approach. The various stakeholders worked to develop a strategic plan for community outreach during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, at a time when in-person meetings are not feasible.

During development phases of public engagement plans, Tulare County will consider State regulation requirements (e.g. SB 1000 and AB 1628) and with the best capacity as feasible and appropriate, to adhere to recommendations provided by the Office of Planning and Research (OPR) and the State of California Department of Justice Attorney General's Office. The following factors shall be considered:

Inclusion

- Partner with local community and advocacy organizations to improve and increase community engagement*; and

Principles and Techniques for Community Engagement

Principles

- Inclusion
- Access, Transparency, and Responsiveness
- Accountability
- Broad and Balanced Participation
- Honor and Include Local Community Knowledge
- Long-term Commitment

Techniques

- Consensus-oriented Decision Making
- Education
- Interest-based Facilitation
- Meaningful Questions
- Open Outcomes

Source: California Environmental

- Share preliminary drafts and concepts with communities so that feedback from community members can be incorporated into the County's plans and documents.

*Tulare County has formed an Environmental Justice Advisory Committee to receive guidance on best practices from representatives from local government entities and nonprofit organizations and to begin evaluating the needs of disadvantaged communities. To read more about the steering committee, please refer to Appendices.

Education

- Host meetings and workshops that will provide background information on environmental justice, SB 1000, and the general plan for disadvantaged communities, including educational and training materials, to facilitate an equitable planning process.

Access, Transparency, and Responsiveness

- Make all meetings related to the Environmental Justice Element Update public.
- For every meeting, share the agenda, summarize the comments received, post any decisions made, and provide information on how public comments will be incorporated into the Environmental Justice Element Update;
- Make documents, public notices, and other community engagement tools readily available in both English and Spanish, and shareable on websites, email lists, and social media.
- Provide documents related to the Environmental Justice Element Update in the native language of local disadvantaged communities.
- Provide translation services at all meetings and hearings, even if these meetings and hearings are conducted remotely; and
- Hold meetings and workshops on weekends or weekday evenings and locate the in-person meetings within disadvantaged communities to facilitate attendance.

Honor and Include Local Community Knowledge

- Host meetings and workshops specifically designed for disadvantaged communities to provide updates on the planning process and give interested parties an opportunity to provide feedback; and
- Host online workshops to prepare online survey to determine the top environmental justice-related priorities in disadvantaged communities.
- Consider local participation history between the County and disadvantaged communities, being mindful of previously identified factors to change, respect for cultural norms, being aware of norm changes within community including recommendations which were not implemented which led to communities losing trust and hope, and diminished community participation.

Long-term Commitment

- When and where feasible, post pandemic, host in-person meetings located in disadvantaged communities county-wide.

Existing Conditions

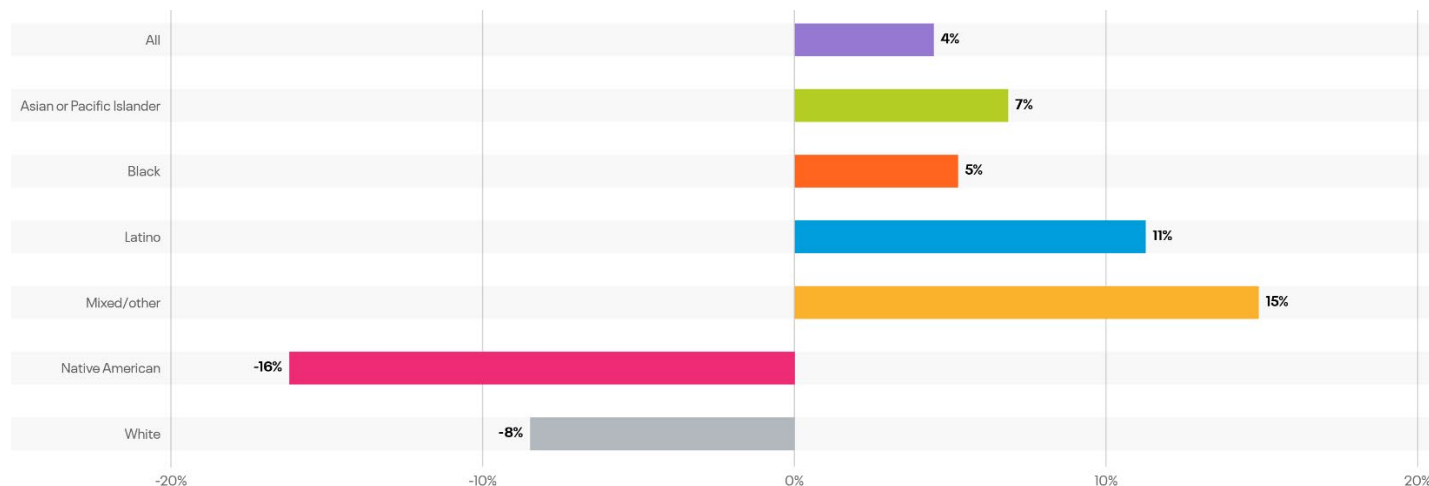
Population by Race and Ethnicity

As the cost of living in the State of California becomes more expensive, the County of Tulare continues to experience a growing population and change in population race/ethnicity. To increase community participation during planning processes specifically in disadvantaged communities, the County will strive to be diligent about conducting research on the demographic statistics to model public engagement activities around such factors.

Additionally, the County recognizes the sensitivity around outreach particularly from the perspective of immigrant status citizenry, who may potentially be more concerned about speaking with County staff about personal quality of life topics. To reduce potential barriers that may arise, an outcome of racial and cultural differences that may be perceived from the householder's perspective, the County will strive to identify and continue existing partnerships with CBOs and non-profits already working within community and to be aware of local cultural norms to collaborate with the County on disseminating information, organizing meetings and workshops in such a manner that facilitates participation with community residents.

FIGURE 5.1 Percent change in population: Visalia-Porterville, CA Metro Area, 2010-2019

Source: National Equity Atlas



Language Spoken and English Proficiency

According to the Tulare County Public Health (TCPH) Community Health Assessment Data Update, in the 2017-2018 school year, the County of Tulare had a higher percentage (26%) of English Learners compared to 20.4% of California students statewide; and approximately 96% speak Spanish as their first language. These statistics make it evident that in order to foster *access, transparency, and responsiveness*, translating educational material into Spanish and

providing translation at community events is critical to maximize participation. As shown in Table 5.1, similar efforts should be pursued for other limited English-speaking households.

TABLE 5.1 Households with Limited English by Language Spoken, 2016

Source: Tulare County, Health and Human Services Agency

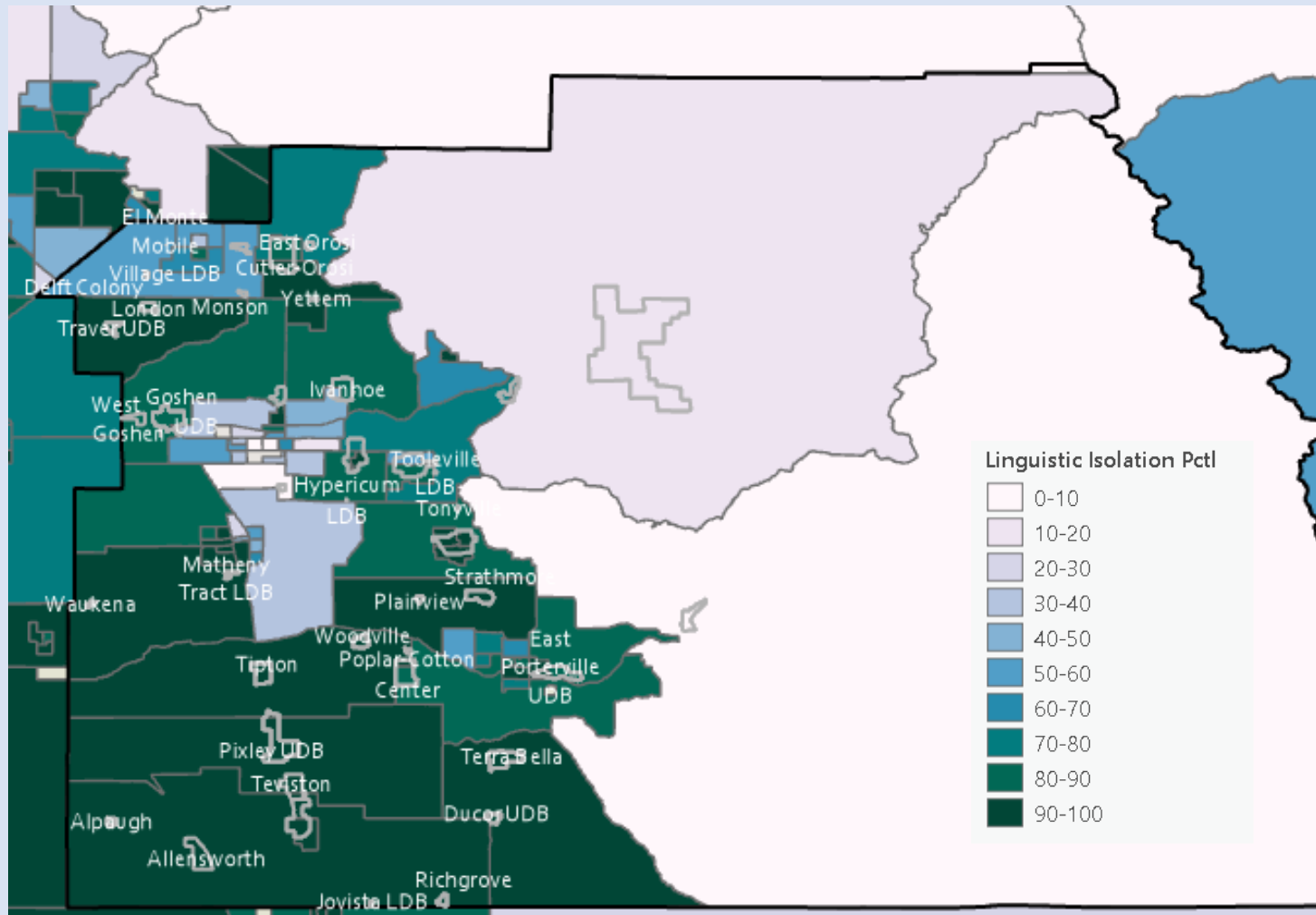
Language	Households with limited English	Total Households
English	0	63,097
Other and unspecified languages	0	36
Other Indo-European languages	344	1,787
Russian, Polish, or other Slavic languages	0	68
German or other West Germanic languages	0	701
French, Haitian, or Cajun	0	213
Arabic	252	488
Other Asian and Pacific Island languages	622	1,664
Vietnamese	40	547
Tagalog (incl. Filipino)	241	999
Chinese (incl. Mandarin, Cantonese)	290	877
Spanish	21,579	65,171
Total Households	23,368	135,648

Moreover, linguistic isolation is another factor within disadvantaged communities that may potentially pose barriers by inducing fear or a level of discomfort to participate in public meetings facilitated by native English speakers. Linguistically isolated households are those where no one over the age of 14 which has English proficiency (see Figure 5.2). In communities with a sizeable quantity of residents who don't speak English, having multiple translation staff at civic engagement events should be considered.

The County shall strive to be considerate of the time community residents allocate to sharing their knowledge of their community, acknowledging that residents may have other priorities or obligations. This can be accomplished by having multiple translation staff at civic engagement meetings, so all attendees understand what is communicated by English speakers and activities can be performed efficiently. Without sufficient staff, participants may lose interest due to long sided conversations that become complex because of translation challenges.

Figure 5.2 Linguistic Isolation

CalEnviroScreen4: “Linguistic isolation is a term used by the U.S. Census Bureau for limited English-speaking households. Adults who are not able to speak English well often have trouble talking to the people who provide social services and medical care. Linguistically isolated households may also not hear or understand important information when there is an emergency like an accidental chemical release or spill.”



Policies and Implementation Measures

AG-2.8 Agricultural Education Programs

The County shall support and participate in on-going public education programs conducted by organizations such as the County Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer's Office, College of the Sequoias, UC Cooperative Extension, Farm Bureau, and industry organizations to help the public better understand the importance of the agricultural industry.

ERM-1.1 Part of Environmental Resource Management Element goals and policies

The County shall encourage and support public education that will alert citizens of the County to the types of plant and animal life which need protection and preservation. Methods of public education could include printed material, speakers, and displays, made available through the news media, local educators, County facilities (such as libraries), or the internet.

The County will strive to promote education for disadvantaged communities to gain a better understanding of native plants, and how to organize and implement greening projects that build community assets while revitalizing environmental habitats.

ERM-4.4 Promote Energy Conservation Awareness

The County shall coordinate with local utility providers to provide public education on energy conservation programs.

ERM-5.14 Park Design

The County shall make efforts to involve community members in the design and development of park facilities.

HS-1.5 Hazard Awareness and Public Education

The County shall continue to promote awareness and education among residents regarding possible natural hazards, including soil conditions, earthquakes, flooding, fire hazards, and emergency procedures.

PF-1.9 Capacity Building and Self Governance

The County shall encourage the residents in unincorporated communities, as defined, to be actively involved in self-governance. This includes:

1. Establishment of local advisory boards to facilitate the development and maintenance of community and hamlet plans,
2. Providing for local input on development applications as part of the County's review process,
3. Expanding local empowerment through expanding the authorized powers of County service areas and community service districts, and

4. Supporting the incorporation of unincorporated communities when determined through the LAFCo process to be fiscally sound.

EJ-5: Policy: The County of Tulare will create a Community Outreach Strategy that will encompass the needs of limited- and non-English-speaking households to ensure active and thorough communication between the community and the County.

Implementation Measures:

- A. The County will continue collaborating and recruiting for the Environmental Justice Advisory Committee to develop strategies for effective community communication and outreach. Examples of strategies include but are not limited to community meetings, educational videos, social media presence, community framework development.

06 Community Safety

Introduction

How community relates to other topic areas addressed in the Element

Various factors can influence the level of criminal activity that may exist in a neighborhood or region, but poverty and community assets, educational attainment, the environment, physical and psychosocial patterns, are widely recognized to be contributors.

The Demographic Section of this Element shows that the median household income of most persons who take up residence in the three categories in unincorporated areas (i.e. community, hamlet, and valley region) are living close to the federal poverty level. The probability that many families who live in unincorporated communities stay there out of necessity to provide shelter for their families at an affordable price is likely and may produce stress. Since grants, taxes, fees, and other funding programs are limited, the resources available to implement capital improvement projects as an investment into low-resourced communities combined with residents not able to pay for substantial home improvements and other measures that increase security, crime has a higher chance to occur.

The connection between educational attainment and income is strong. Experiences that lead students to pursue higher education or technical training to achieve well-paying jobs start early on. How much funding is available to a unified school district can impact the amount to education material made available to the students. Enthusiastic teachers that encourage their students to strive towards progress and take a genuine interest in the well-being of their students, and the physical condition of facilities can all influence a student's belief system that can propel them towards economic stability or discourage them from accomplishing goals. Some communities may contain public facilities, such as libraries and tutoring and youth centers which provide community residents with educational development or recreational opportunities. This discussion relates to the section on public facilities.

It has been identified in the previous paragraphs that educational attainment can determine income, and income can determine where a person lives. And as the section on food access, pollution exposure, and water access show, community residents that live in unincorporated communities face many stressors that may typically not be experienced by persons that live in communities with a greater amount of assets. Criminal activity is a stressor, too. To understand the quality-of-life lead by persons in unincorporated communities, it is critical to evaluate the pertinent external facets that may impact their life.

Since it is likely for crime to take place in disadvantaged communities, it's important to keep in mind the other forces that impact their lives, and to create implementation measures that address multiple issues that residents may confront in their communities. Using a cost benefit approach in addition to crime prevention through environmental design as discussed below, could be considered as an efficient way to plan a more sustainable future for these communities, considering the limited resources that the County can contribute to each community, and since there are many communities that need resources.

Existing Conditions

Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED): Promoting other Environmental Justice Goals

The purpose of CPTED is to reduce the incidence and fear of crime through strategic and effective use of the built environment by four principles: natural surveillance, natural access control, territorial reinforcement, and maintenance and management. The term 'natural' refers to deriving surveillance and access control results as a by-product of normal and routine use of the environment.

Natural Surveillance. To create an environment that portrays to perpetrators the sense that someone may be watching or can see criminal acts being committed, facilities or activities can be coordinated so to increase 'eyes on the street' near potential crime areas. Additionally, it should be encouraged that new housing development include windows that allow residents to be vigilant of their surroundings; lighting can be implemented in underlit areas that attract gatherings; and removal of obstructions to improve sight lines from within buildings.

Natural Access Control. Physical elements, such as doors, fences, and plants, can make accessibility more difficult or prevent unauthorized persons from entering a particular location without a legitimate reason or the consent of property owners. In public or semi-public spaces, to guide foot and vehicle traffic in ways that decrease criminal activity, access control can include clearly visible entrances and exits, fencing, landscaping, and lighting. In public spaces, non-physical or 'psychological' barriers such as signage, paving texture, and nature strips can be effective.

Territorial Reinforcement. Set clear boundaries that make the distinction between public and private areas transparent. This can also be achieved through physical elements such as fences, pavement treatment, signs, and landscaping.

Maintenance and Management. This relates to territorial reinforcement and directing resources to maintain the integrity of the community, which can influence how community residents view their own community and how others perceive the area as being appropriate or inappropriate for criminal acts.

CPTED strategies that are most applicable to unincorporated communities in the County of Tulare are street lighting particularly near community assets (e.g., bus stops). Ensuring the existence of clear sight lines to increase surveillance. In addition, promoting homeowners to exercise ownership through maintenance and management to elevate public opinion towards the community, and potentially decrease disorderly conduct, and improve the overall image of the built environment.

Community residents throughout most unincorporated communities already practice various CPTED strategies. A great quantity of homeowners have implemented gates with lock or fences that reach shoulder height. Further, within most property boundaries watchdogs are highly alert of pedestrians walking by.

Barriers that may hinder moving forward with implementing CPTED strategies are a lack of funding to implement public lighting infrastructure without having community residents incur a tax fee and resources to coordinate routine maintenance. According to the Disadvantaged Communities Infrastructure and Planning Policy Study (Tulare County General Plan, Pages 35-5,35-6) and evaluation of existing infrastructure in disadvantaged communities (Tulare County General Plan, Page 2-2) 22 of 39 which is 56% of environmental justice communities surveyed are deficient in streetlights, and 8 of 10 non-EJ communities are deficient in streetlights.

CPTED Encourages the Realization of other Environmental Justice Goals

Through the implementation of CPTED strategies and other goals that aim to address physical activity, health, and safety considerations are also met. For example, the implementation or improvement of streetlights can promote community residents, particularly youth, to engage in positive physical activity. This may prove beneficial during winter months when solar lighting is reduced in the afternoon. In addition, street lighting may produce a stronger sense of security, thus reducing the severity of stressors that may induce anxiety or depression. Streetlights can promote automobile drivers to slow down – in communities where lighting is present, as drivers may feel more obligated to abide by speed limits, so this in culmination with safety warning signs to increase natural access control may promote better quality road safety.

Crime in Environmental Justice Communities

According to the Tulare County Probation Department, in 2010 gang activity in unincorporated portions of the County — which at the time, minority populations accounted for over 60% of the total population — increased from previous years. Probation facilities experienced a 15% increase in youth bookings for crimes committed between 2008 and 2009. According to Table 6.1 below theft increased by 3%, assault decreased by 5% and homicide decreased by 27% and felony Drugs increased by 16%. All seven youth homicides in 2009 were gang related, and approximately 90% of all crimes involving juveniles in Tulare County were gang related.

TABLE 6.1 Change over time for criminal activity in EJ communities by crime type.

Source: Tulare County Sheriff's Department

	2016-2017	2018-2019	Change over time
Assault	1,207	1,144	-5%
Burglary	1,071	930	-13%
Commercial Vice	2	2	0%
Disorderly Conduct	540	423	-22%
Domestic Violence	702	734	5%
Drugs - Felony	527	612	16%
Drugs - Misdemeanor	814	666	-18%
Embezzlement	6	10	67%
Family Offenses	43	67	56%
Fraudulent Document:	152	137	-10%
Homicide	26	19	-27%
Morals	34	22	-35%
Other Felonies	1,098	1,257	14%
Other Misdemeanors	2,210	2,191	-1%
Rape	34	24	-29%
Robbery	92	89	-3%
Theft	1,775	1,828	3%

In 2017, the Tulare County Community Health Assessment reported that the quantity of homicide cases reported in Tulare County was higher than the state of California. As aforementioned, a notable quantity of crimes is particularly gang related. In 2014, in unincorporated Tulare County, there were approximately 9,800 crimes committed and 2.48% were gang related. In 2015, approximately 3.8% of 9,500 crimes were gang related.

Violence and crime are serious concerns from both advocacy organizations and community residents living in environmental justice communities. Many residents have indicated an interest in a greater presence of surveillance by Tulare County Sheriff's deputies particularly during late hours when there is less visibility due to the limited number of streetlights in certain communities. Response time to dispatch calls is another area of interest for community residents.

TABLE 6.2 Change over time for criminal activity in non-EJ communities by crime type.

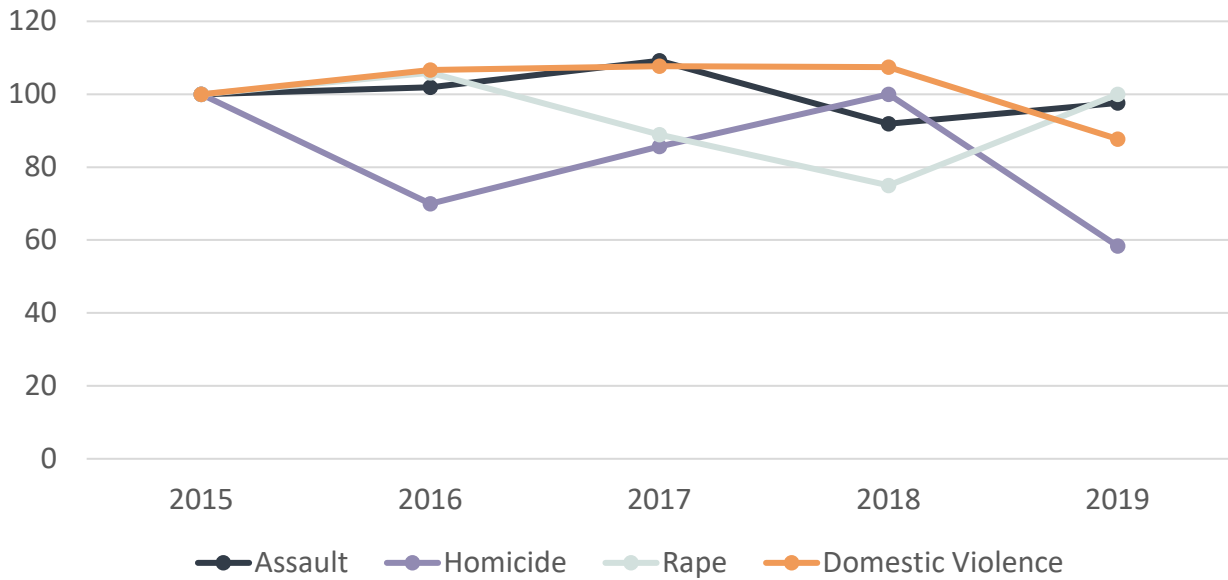
Source: Tulare County Sheriff's Department

	2016-2017	2018-2019	Change over time
Assault	79	80	1%
Burglary	101	89	-12%
Disorderly Conduct	47	38	-19%
Domestic Violence	69	55	-20%
Drugs - Felony	31	43	39%
Drugs - Misdemeanor	88	38	-57%
Embezzlement	3	1	-67%
Family Offenses	12	8	-33%
Fraudulent Documents	12	11	-8%
Homicide	5	1	-80%
Morals	41	3	-93%
Other Felonies	118	83	-30%
Other Misdemeanors	92	186	102%
Rape	2	6	200%
Robbery	76	3	-96%
Theft	68	164	141%

FIGURE 6.1 Number of Personal Crimes per Year, Relative to 2015 (% Change)

Source: Tulare County Sheriff's Department

EJ Communities



Non-EJ Communities

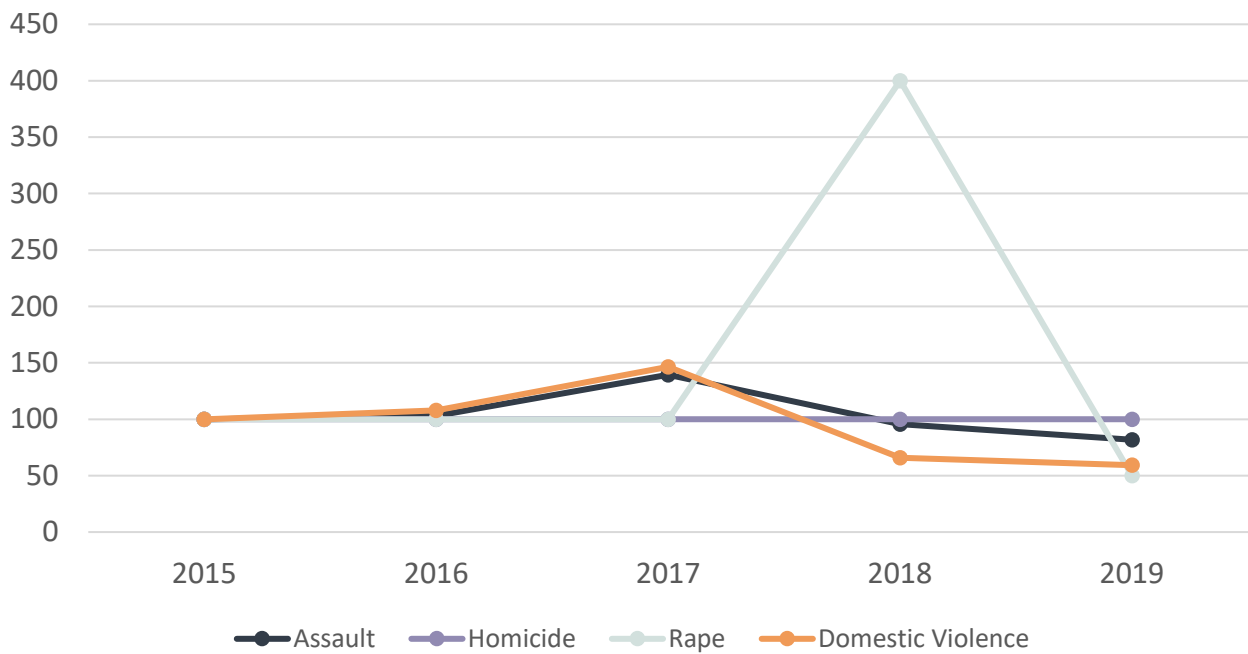
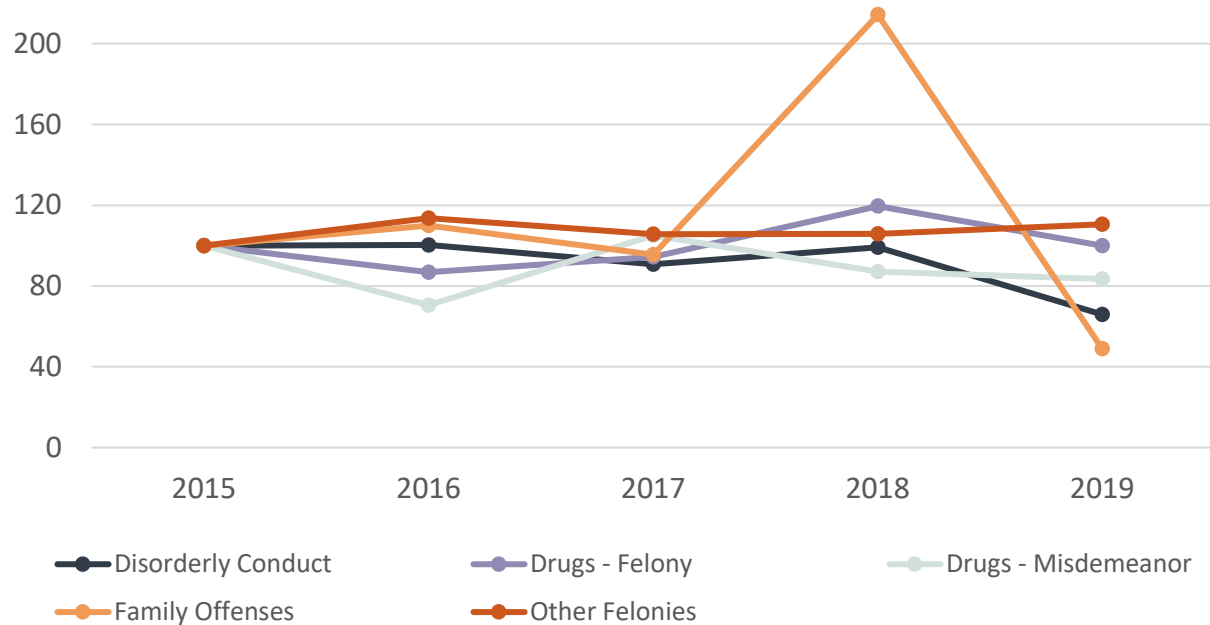


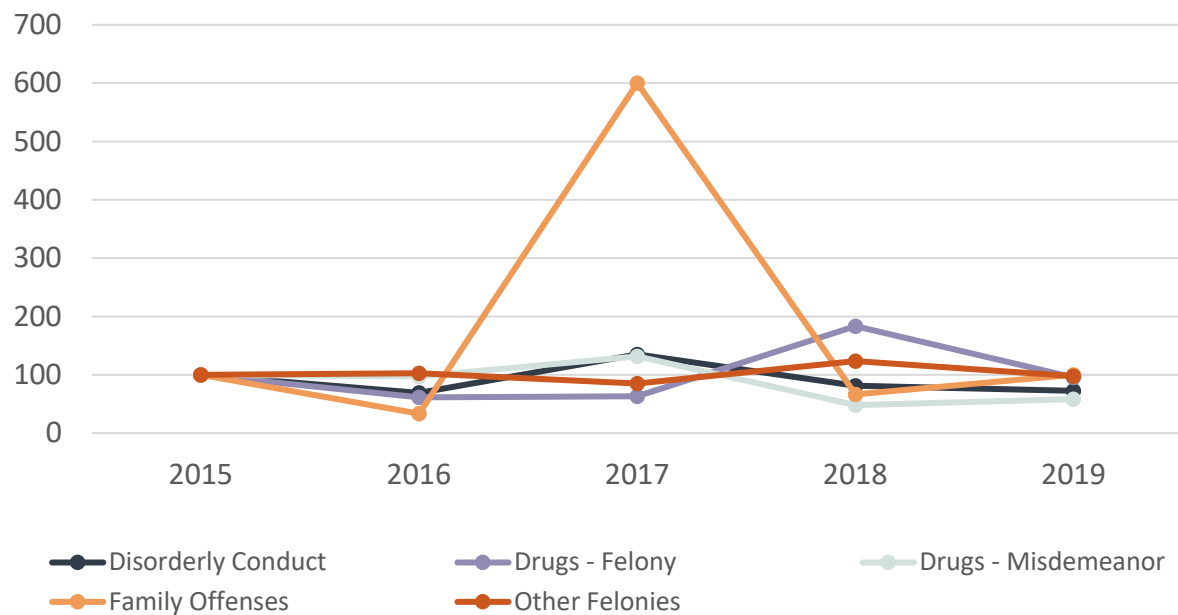
Figure 6.2 Number of Crimes with Potential Impact on Household Health, Relative to 2015 (% Change)

Source: Tulare County Sheriff's Department

EJ Communities



Non-EJ Areas

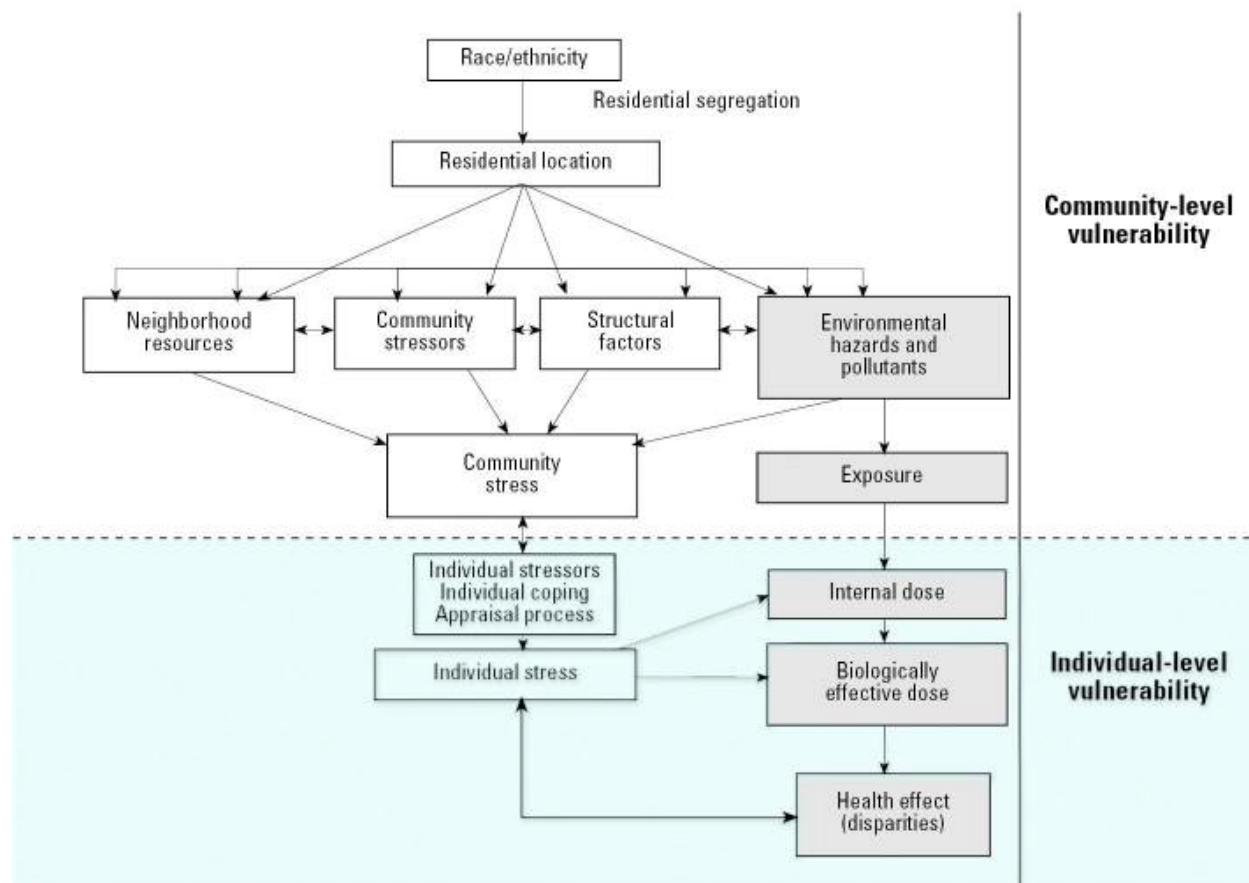


Connections between Community Stress and Hazardous Chemicals

The exposure-disease paradigm has long suggested the effects of toxicants on biological systems may vary depending on how susceptible an individual may be. Some studies on health disparities and the environment agree that psychological stress can lead to acute and chronic changes in the function of the body systems, such as the immune system, which can lead to illness – suggesting that psychosocial stress may be the vulnerability factor that links social conditions with potential environmental hazards.²²

FIGURE 6.3 Exposure-disease Paradigm

Source: Environmental Health Disparities: A Framework Integrating Psychosocial and Environmental Concepts, by Gee (et.al), Environ Health Perspect.2004 December



Psychosocial conditions that can induce stress include violence, crime, disorganization, racial discrimination, fear, and poverty. Based on both observations and neighborhood and secondary

²² Gilbert C. Gee and Devon C. Payne-Sturges, 'Environmental Health Disparities: A Framework Integrating Psychosocial and Environmental Concepts', *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 2004
<<https://doi.org/10.1289/ehp.7074>>.

data, fear of crime is a community stressor in various unincorporated communities in this study. These stressors can become individual stressors, which can alter mood and behavioral patterns.

Residents living in unincorporated communities without access to resources or outdoor spaces may experience more difficulty to relieve stress. Stressors when not ameliorated by locally available resources may directly lead to health disparities, including anxiety, depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, and substance abuse. Altering not only an individual's quality of life but also that of the individual's family and community.

Persons experiencing an unbalanced state of health and living near contaminated and impaired sites may potentially experience greater vulnerability to hazardous chemicals. Where communities are adjacent to agricultural land, residents may be exposed to higher quantities of nitrate from dairy farms and pesticides. In 2013, 24% of reported pesticide illness in Tulare County were non-agricultural (refer to pollution exposure section before this chapter for more).

Impacts of Crime and Violence on Health

Stress may exasperate the internal dose of a given toxicant, influencing susceptibility to illness. Increases in absorption of toxicants in the body through increased respiration, perspiration, and consumption can compromise host defense systems and directly cause illness, which in turn may lead to an amplification loop whereby sick individuals are less likely to cope with environmental toxicants.

Violence jeopardizes health and safety directly, which contribute to unhealthy behavior and diminishes the cohesion with community environments. Violence and fear of violence affect individual behaviors related to healthy eating and active living which may contribute to diabetes. Early trauma may increase the risk of chronic disease, such as heart disease and cancer, as well as other problems related to substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, and mental health disorders.

When fear and crime pervade the environment, promoting walkability, bicycling, public transit, physical activity, and attracting grocery stores in communities that lack immediate and adjacent access to provide affordable fresh fruits and vegetables become important assets that benefit a community. Fear of crime and community disorder may lead community residents to restrict their physical activity and time spent outdoors, and the absence of residents being outdoors can further exacerbate criminal activity. The presence of less neighborhood cohesion has been associated with the increased likelihood of residents not participating in general types of physical activity.

Conversely, strong social networks and connections correspond with significant increases in physical and mental health, academic achievement, and local economic development, as well as lower rates of homicide, suicide, and alcohol and drug abuse. Community cohesion is present when participation in social networks that serve to shape community norms promote healthy eating, physical activity, and reduce violent behavior. Lack of physical activity combined with

higher levels fast food consumption may lead persons to be more sedentary that may in turn lead to increased rates of obesity.

Potential Land Uses that Promote Criminal Activity

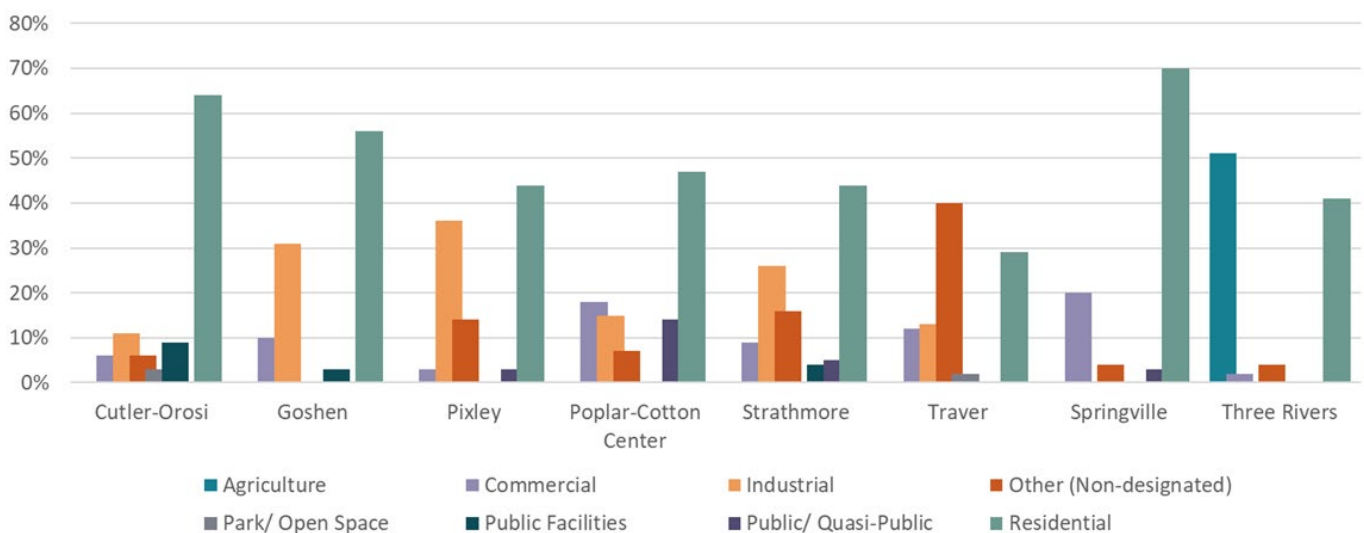
Figure 6.4 shows designated land use by community. Communities with a higher level of criminal activity (on the left) have varying quantities of public services or other types of public/quasi-public land uses, such as parks, open space, libraries, memorial buildings, of satellite public service resources. Some areas with limited commercial and economic development opportunities may contain smaller job markets to support the number of community residents seeking employment.

Conversely, non-EJ communities (Springville and Three Rivers) are located in the foothills and mountain regions of Tulare County where there is more access to open spaces that include hiking trails and lakes. These factors may decrease criminal activity.

FIGURE 6.4 Designated land use by community

Source: 2010 Tulare County Background Report

A community with protective factors is a healthier community.



Policies and Implementation Measures

[From General Plan](#)

FGMP-10.3 Fire and Crime Protection Plan

The County shall require that fire and crime protection plan considerations, including financing, be incorporated into all proposed developments to ensure adequate emergency services are available and able to serve new development.

LU-7.18 Lighting

The County shall continue to improve and maintain lighting in park and recreation facilities to prevent nuisance light and glare spillage on adjoining residential areas.

[From Three Rivers Community Plan](#)

HS-9.1 Healthy Communities

To the maximum extent feasible, the County shall strive through its lands use decisions to promote community health and safety for all neighborhoods in the County by encouraging patterns of development that are safe, and influence crime prevention, promote a high-quality physical environment and encourage physical activity by means of such as sidewalks and walking and biking paths that discourage automobile dependency in existing communities.

LU-7.5 Crime Prevention through Design

The County shall encourage design of open space areas, bicycle and pedestrian systems and housing projects so that there is as much informal surveillance by people as possible to deter crime.

PFS-7.12 Design Features for Crime Prevention and Reduction

The County shall promote the use of building and site design features as means for crime prevention and reduction.

[From Ducor, Alpaugh, London, Earlimart Community Plan](#)

Goal: Preserve and enhance the quality of life for present and future generations of disadvantaged communities.

Objective: Upgrade the level of community health, sanitation and safety.

EJ – 6: Policy: Encourage capital improvements (curbs, gutters, streets paving, lighting, etc.) within existing developed areas which will upgrade the community image and improve safety.

EJ – 7:Policy: Tulare County shall, within its authority, protect the public from danger to life and property caused by fire.

EJ – 8: Policy: Tulare County shall, within its authority, protect the public against crime against people and property.

Goal: Enhance overall community safety by placing more emphasis on preventative measures to reduce crime, including the incorporation of crime prevention features in the built environment of each community to increase overall safety of residents and visitors within these communities.

EJ- 9: Policy: Support programs aimed at intervention with at risk youth as a preventative measure to reduce future crime potential.

Implementation Measure:

- A. The County of Tulare will communicate with the residents of Environmental Justice Communities to determine design and infrastructure improvements (including but not limited to lighting, street signs, traffic lights, bike routes) would best serve the needs of the community.
- B. The County of Tulare will communicate with the residents of Environmental Justice Communities to determine areas of higher crime rates within their communities and develop strategies to alleviate them.
- C. Tulare County Resource Management Agency will develop the means for Tulare County staff members to be CPTED certified.
- D. Tulare County Resource Management Agency will collaborate with Tulare County Law Enforcement to develop a CPTED assessment program for businesses and communities throughout Tulare County.

07 Food Access

Introduction

Environmental justice refers to equity in the distribution of environmental benefits and prevention and reduction of environmental overburdens across all communities. This framework includes other social concerns such as food justice that meet at the intersection of public health and safety, ecological health, and social justice. Food justice aims to encourage food vendors to consider an equal distribution of fresh, healthy food that is culturally appropriate, but also aims to encourage practices in existing food systems that are more equitable as feasible and appropriate.

This section explores existing conditions regarding food access that affect populations living in environmental justice communities in the unincorporated areas of County of Tulare.

Existing Conditions

Food Deserts

AB581: Communities without or have low access to affordable, quality, and nutritious foods are known as food deserts.

- Access to healthy food items is a basic human concern. Lack or low access to healthy, affordable food items may result in higher levels of obesity and other diet-related diseases. Communities without or have low access to affordable, quality, and nutritious foods are known as food deserts.
- Encouraging access to nutritional foods for Californians who currently reside in food desert communities means improved economic health as well as boosting a community's physical health and well-being. Increasing access to healthy foods may generate new jobs and opportunities in the areas of food distribution, retail sales, and store management.

Food Access

The distance residents must travel to reach sources of food can affect the amount of healthy food they purchase. But the purchase price of food increases when travel costs (including both the time spent commuting and costs of gas or public transit fares) are taken into account.

Access to a variety of healthy food choices promotes healthy diets by providing residents with options from which to choose from to prepare meals that align with their cultural customs. It is possible, that residents who have the option to purchase food that is culturally appropriate, or foods that are appropriate for cultural dishes will more often purchase these foods rather than food that is unfamiliar or unhealthy food.

The quality of food can either promote or discourage purchasing actions. If food is not fresh at the store, customers may seek other non-perishable items that contribute less to a quality diet. Affordability is more significant to residents that are low-income and challenging regarding the ability to provide for their dependents. Participants with low access to supermarkets near their homes were 25-46% less likely to have a healthy diet than those with the most stores, after adjustment for age, sex, race/ethnicity, and (Moore et al., 2008) socioeconomic indicators.^[1]

Low Access to Healthy Food Impacts on Public Health

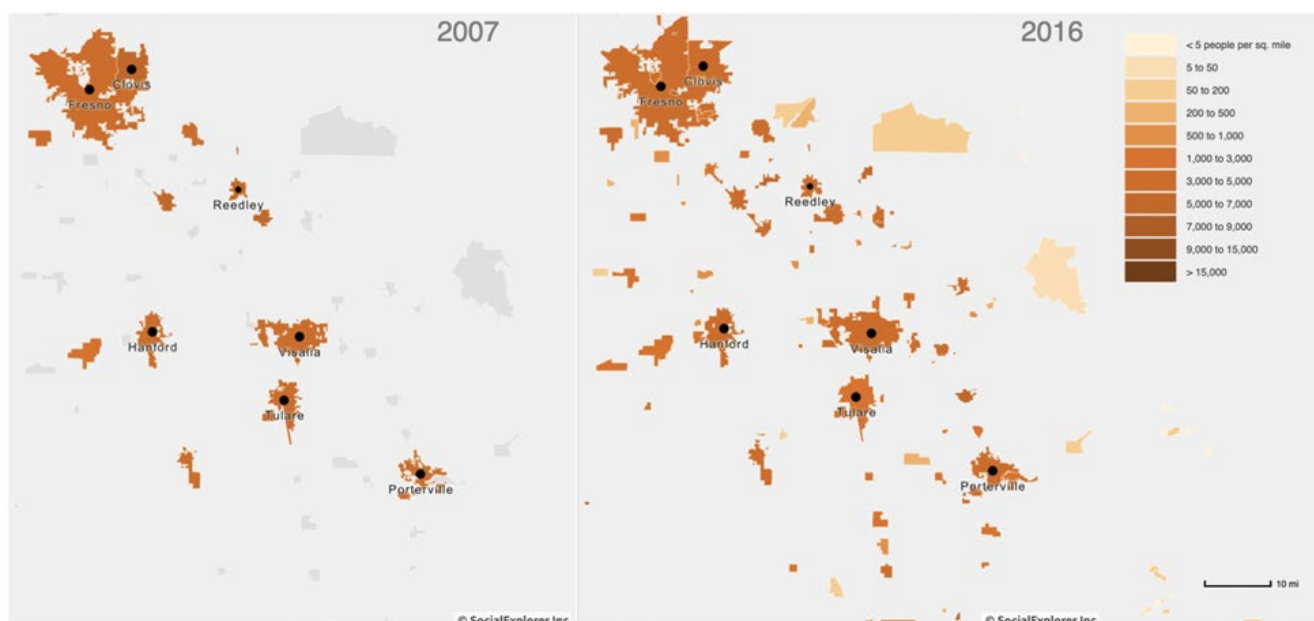
Food deserts are urban neighborhoods and rural towns without ready or have low access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food (USDA, 2015b). Community residents facing food insecurity, who experience barriers to nutritious food are at higher risk for diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and other obesity-related diseases.

The obese percentage of both adults and children is higher in the county than the state of California. According to the 2017 Tulare County Community Health Assessment, higher obesity rates are more frequent among people of color and economically disadvantaged students. Since incorporated cities contain higher supplies of fresh produce, healthy food prices vary and are more accessible, indicating that low-income households in incorporated cities experience less burden to purchase healthy food compared to their counterparts in rural communities.

The prevalence of obesity was lower in areas that had supermarkets and higher in areas with small grocery stores and fast-food restaurants. Residents who frequent grocery stores in disadvantaged communities were more likely to have a higher body mass index (BMI). Individuals who own cars and needed to travel farther to grocery stores were more likely to have a higher BMI. ^[3]

FIGURE 7.1 Population density by census place

Source: Social Explorer, ACS 2007 (3-Year Estimate), ACS 2016 (5-Year Estimate)



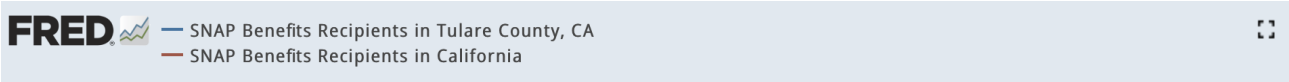
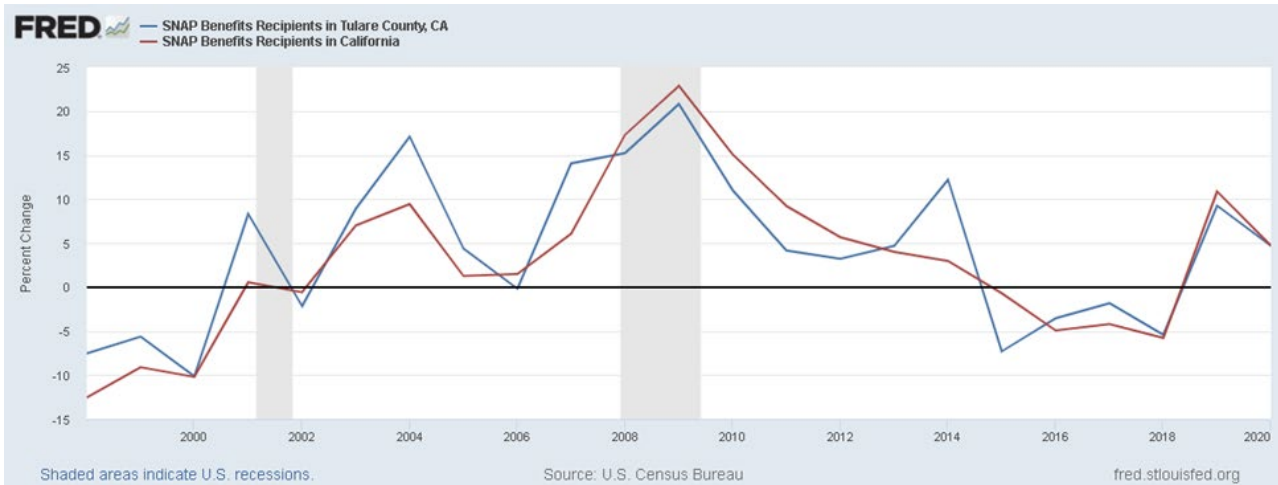
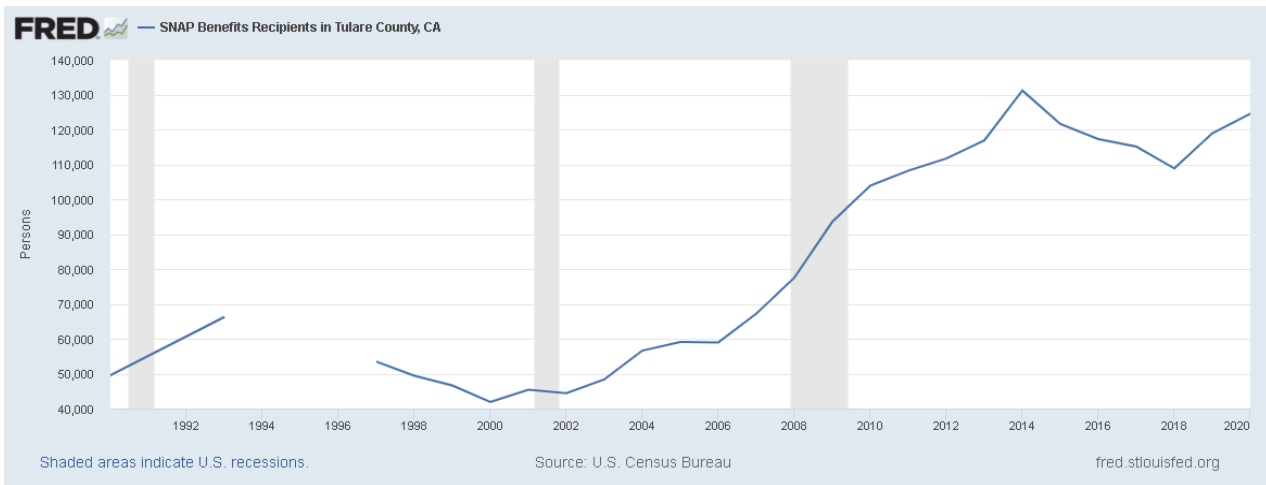
Before the 2008 recession, incorporated cities experienced the highest levels of population density. However, as shown previously in Figure 7-1, Tulare County experienced an influx of migration, in both incorporated cities and unincorporated areas throughout the county. The increase in population density amid the economic downturn, as more people lost jobs or made less income, resulted in a steep incline of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits (CalFresh) recipients, a program which began to take on momentum beginning in 2006 and peaking in 2014.

The most influential factor that prompted an increase in distribution and usage of SNAP benefits was the 2009 Recovery Act, an implementation measure utilized to boost the economy - for every \$1 increase in SNAP benefits it generated about \$1.70 in economic activity. In total, it provided \$45.2 billion into SNAP. Overall, among households with income low enough to qualify for SNAP, very low food security fell in 2009; and among households with somewhat higher incomes, in contrast, very low food security rose.²³ So, the measure prevented low-income households from experiencing severe food access challenges, but greater action was needed to provide more opportunities for healthy food accessibility in rural areas of the county. Challenges that arose, which still remain to be addressed, include the shortage of grocery stores with fresh, healthy produce, promoting the purchasing of high-calorie dense but low-nutrition dense food by community residents living in food deserts.

²³ "SNAP Benefit Boost in 2009 Recovery Act Provided Economic Stimulus and Reduced Hardship," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, March 31, 2015, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-benefit-boost-in-2009-recovery-act-provided-economic-stimulus-and>.

FIGURE 7.2 Percentage of SNAP benefits recipients in Tulare County, 1990-2020/-2000-2020

Source: FRED, U.S. Census Bureau



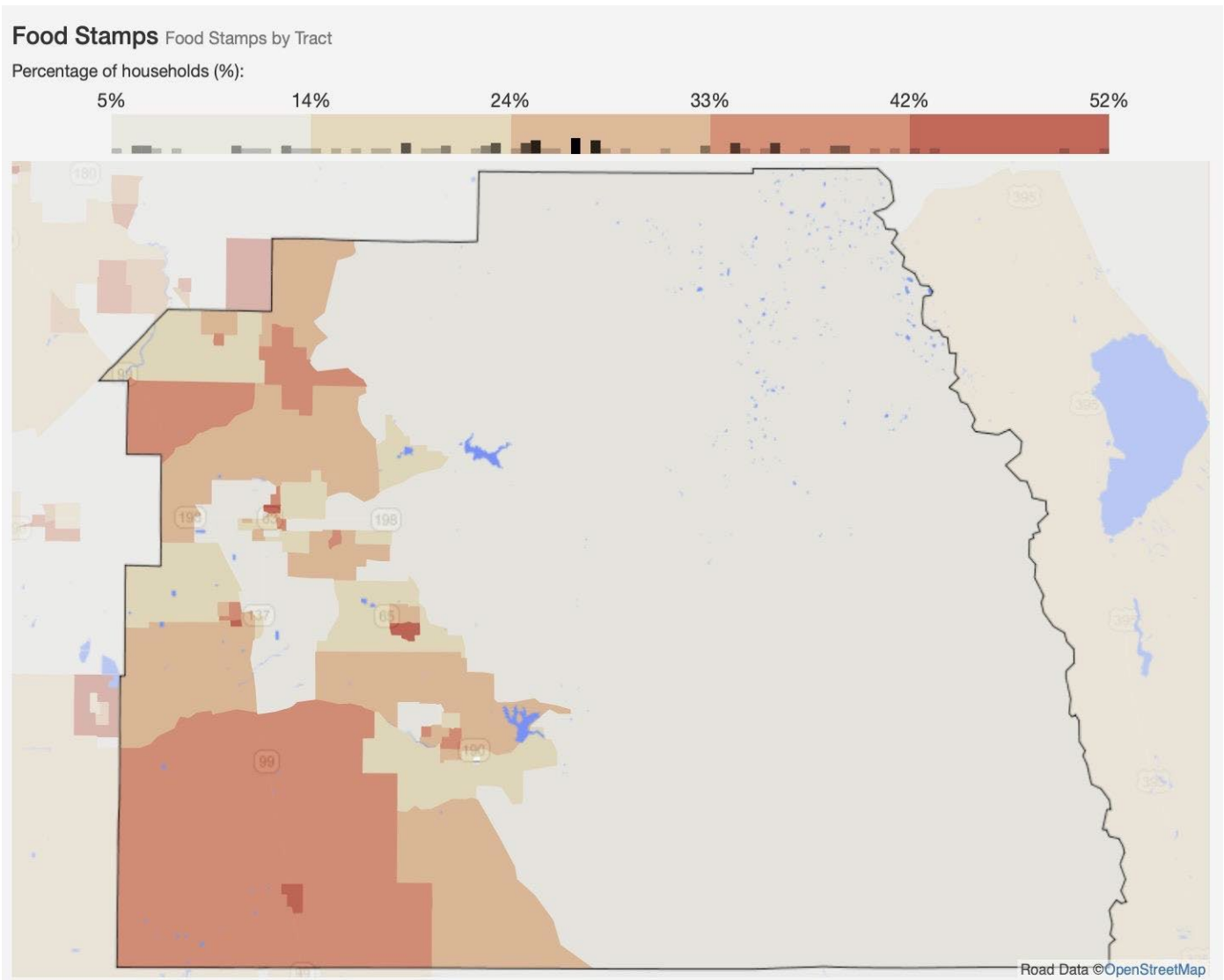
Census tracts with high percentages of households receiving SNAP benefits are also regions within the county that contain a low quantity of food markets, and corresponding low access for residents to access to nutritious food (see Figure 7.2). The limited number of healthy food sources in areas where numerable households received SNAP benefits triggered other forms of concerns. These concerns included, due to the limited number of healthy food options, families experienced a reduction of their purchasing power, and obtained high-caloric foods that sustain sizable families, yet negatively impact physical health.

The areas that contained the highest percentage of households that received SNAP benefits are the North and South ends of the county. Cutler-Orosi and East Orosi contain 35% of households with SNAP benefits. In the south county, an aggregate of communities including Alpaugh, Allensworth, Pixley, and Richgrove contain 38% of households with SNAP benefits. Small

grocery markets exist within these areas, and the majority provide customers with healthy food options to choose. Healthy food accessibility is still variable, however, and persists as an important issue.

FIGURE 7.3 Percentage of Households with SNAP Benefits 2016

Source: Statistical Atlas, 2010 US Census Bureau & ACS 2016 (4-Year Estimate)



Food Distribution Barriers: Challenges between Food Hubs and Local Food Markets

According to the California Department of Food & Agriculture, a food hub is a business or organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of source-identified local and regional food products primarily from small to mid-sized producers to wholesalers, retailers, and/or institutional buyers.

Food hubs allow local vendors to purchase a greater variety of food than they might be able to afford through other distributors located farther away. Because food hubs primarily aggregate and distribute regional food, they have the potential to distribute larger amounts of food to local food markets, which can expand food accessibility. They can also be a direct point of sale for consumers in underserved communities, but regional food from time to time may be directed out of the area based on economic supply and demand influences.

Food hubs can adopt various types of legal status such as the following: privately held, nonprofit, cooperative, publicly held, and informal. As a community entity, community-based food hubs aim to shorten the supply chain, reducing traveling distances of food and time between harvest and the buyers. They may also serve as means to accomplish a social good, like ensuring food accessibility to low-income communities, and increase capacity building for agricultural producers that are not able to distribute food to rural communities. ^[5]

Understanding Food Systems in Tulare County

Many residents in unincorporated communities experience low access to fresh, healthy foods. Locations where they can purchase fresh produce include farmers markets, flea markets, local small businesses, and supermarkets most commonly located in incorporated cities, highlighting the most common concern in the county: distance between residents in low-income neighborhoods and food accessibility.

The Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program (CCROPP) partners have established farmers markets and produce stands to increase access to healthy foods in communities where access is limited. Some of these limited time markets accept supplemental nutrition assistance payment (SNAP) benefits, such as EBT and WIC to help improve access to low access, low-income residents.

Additionally, FoodLink (a non-profit organization) facilitates nutritional programs to assist communities with making smarter eating choices, supplying low-income households with food through food pantries, nutrition on the go sites, and summer lunches distributed to students.

Obstacles to Healthy Food: Distribution Barriers

Many small independently owned grocery stores in rural communities lack the machinery and space capacity to store sufficient amounts of fresh produce for community residents. These storeowners incur high distribution costs if they place large orders with distributors. Vendors who are located farther away from transportation corridors may not have the business connections to purchase fresh produce from multiple suppliers to sustain a steady intake of

healthy food. As a result, many grocery stores in unincorporated communities lack a variety of food options that are less affordable.

Because of these barriers, storeowners may be inclined to increase the prices on healthy food to cover expenses incurred in the process of transportation; thus, it is common that they supply less fresh produce. The resulting higher prices discourage many residents from purchasing fresh produce when other less healthy options are less expensive and available.

Low-income residents in underserved communities who qualify for CalFresh benefits or WIC benefits to purchase healthy food may confront challenges with food access in their local neighborhoods when retailers do not have EBT equipment. The primary reasons for small business not to own this equipment is that EBT equipment can be expensive and the cost of transaction fees on EBT purchases are a disincentive as well.

WIC benefits can be more difficult to process because to process a transaction, store employees need training to verify customers' identification, if the food is included in the WIC package, and check for coupon expiration dates. The vendor must then submit the coupon and wait for reimbursement. The process of exchange and reimbursement may discourage vendors from accepting such methods of payment, therefore, influencing barriers to food access.

How can food hubs increase food access?

As aforementioned, smaller food markets in rural communities face greater challenges when working with multiple distributors and suppliers due to higher costs of food. Food hubs can remove these barriers and enable grocery markets to place food orders with lower volumes from corporate distributors.

Other strategies to retain locally grown food in Tulare County is promoting collaboration between farmers and food processing and packaging manufacturers to supply a percentage of food to be distributed outside of the county to local farmers markets or flea markets. It is unknown how many vendors at outdoor food markets are from Tulare County, however, it's not uncommon for farmers and vendors from all over the San Joaquin Valley to attend farmers' markets in Tulare County.

Unified School Districts: Opportunity for Local Food Distribution

Taking into account the USDA's Regional Food Hub Resource Guide definition of a food hub, school facilities share similarities to food hubs, as not all institutions purchase currently from local farmers, but they do distribute substantial amounts of food a year to students. Nutrition programs aim to satisfy the dietary needs of all students to promote healthy lives. That said, school facilities are an opportunity to maintain and sustain healthy eating practices among residents living in census tracts with high food insecurity challenges.

FoodLink, the county's only independent food bank, serving for over 40 years, promotes equitable and dignified access to nutritious, healthy food while also addressing the root causes of hunger through education, advocacy, and food systems change.

It is the highest performing organization addressing food insecurity in low-income neighborhoods, and during the Covid-19 pandemic beginning at the end of 2019, the organization was spread thin by the 30-150% increase in demand at each pantry. To ensure that the county has a strong structure to supply residents with sufficient food in the occurrence of a natural disaster, pandemic, or population increase, synergy and collaboration between FoodLink and unified school districts holds untapped benefits.

Each educational institution is aware of the number of students that attend their facilities and the number of households and family members in their network. Further, a kitchen for food handling and sitting areas for students are already in place. These provide an opportunity for school facilities to be included in efforts to feed families in communities that contain low access to nutritious food. If this is to be considered through the lens of land use planning, it would be deeply impactful if food organizations or community farmers could facilitate small farmers' markets for community residents. As an example, in exchange for hosting outdoor markets, schools can consider charging vendors reasonable prices to sell their produce at location.

Figure 7.4

Food Access In Tulare County

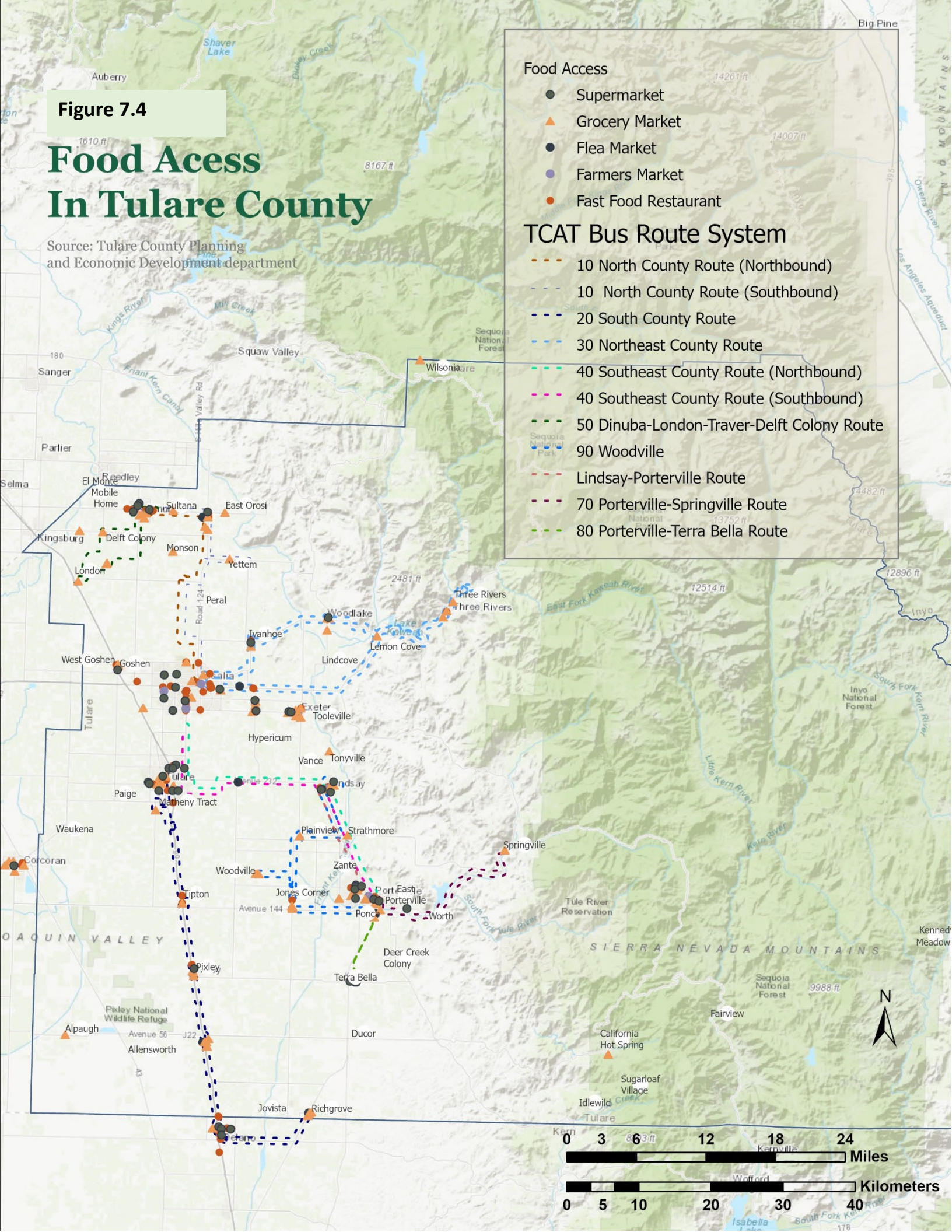
Source: Tulare County Planning
and Economic Development department

Food Access

- Supermarket
- ▲ Grocery Market
- Flea Market
- Farmers Market
- Fast Food Restaurant

TCAT Bus Route System

- 10 North County Route (Northbound)
- 10 North County Route (Southbound)
- 20 South County Route
- 30 Northeast County Route
- 40 Southeast County Route (Northbound)
- 40 Southeast County Route (Southbound)
- 50 Dinuba-London-Traver-Delft Colony Route
- 90 Woodville
- Lindsay-Porterville Route
- 70 Porterville-Springville Route
- 80 Porterville-Terra Bella Route



Food Access Research Atlas

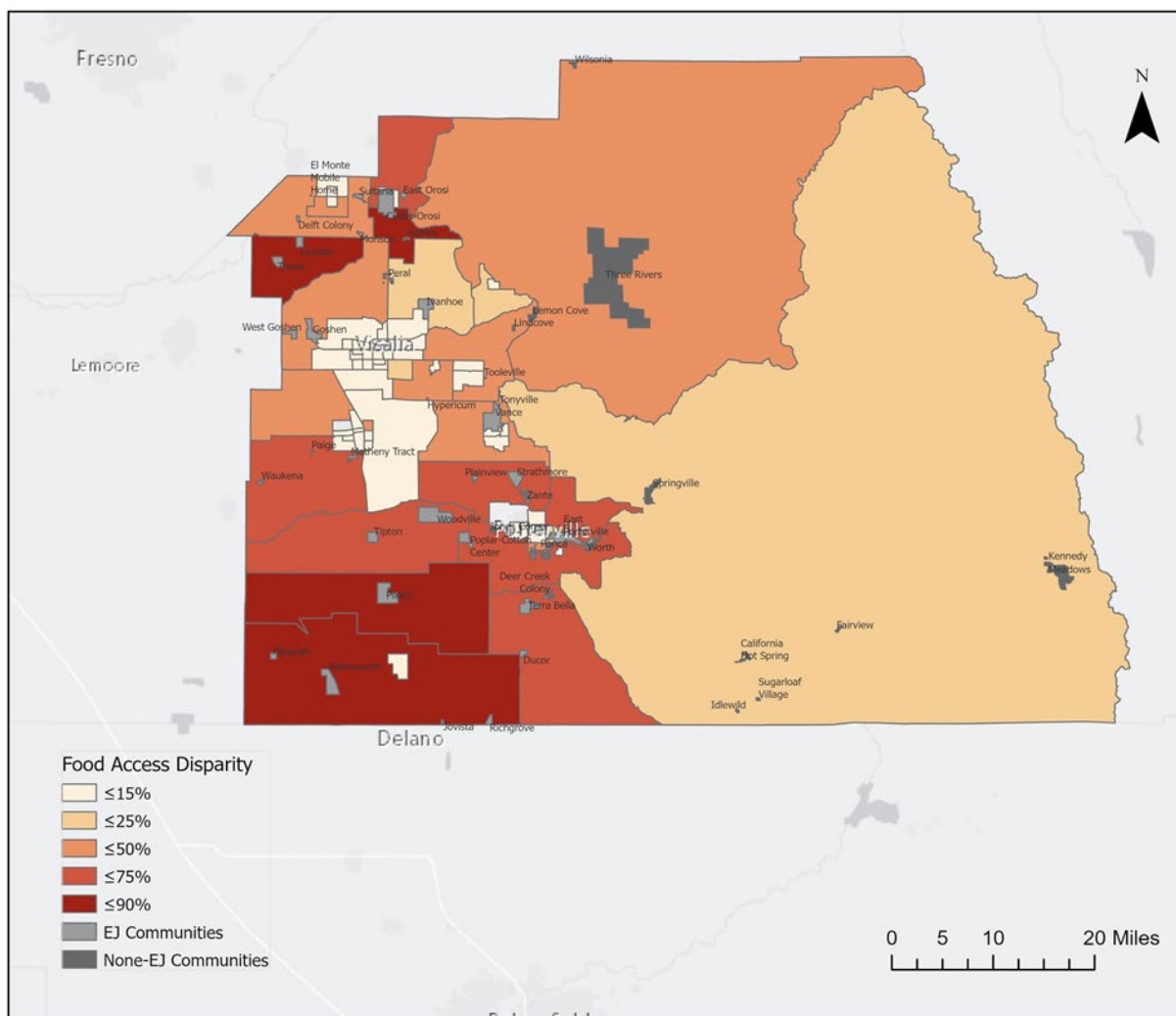
Low access to sources of healthy and affordable food may make it challenging for some residents in Tulare County to eat a healthy diet. Utilizing the United States Department of Agriculture, Food Access Research Atlas to evaluate which areas are considered “food deserts” in Tulare County, which they define as neighborhoods that have low access to healthy food.

It is important to note, however, that ‘food deserts’ should be more broadly considered, especially in a county such as Tulare County, where unincorporated communities are located among agricultural areas. Many community residents who live in these areas do not have the resources to start a local business, but educational materials could be distributed on how to facilitate a local business such as a small grocery store. A substantial number of unincorporated communities do not contain grocery stores to support community residents with all the proper nutrients to maintain a healthy diet. The limited number of stores that do exist have limited or do not contain sufficient quantities of fresh produce. Vacant land within communities is not typically used for community gardens due to lack of funding for investment but could be promoted to implement improved access to healthy food opportunities.

An important issue regarding food deserts is the difficulty for community residents to access markets where they can acquire foods that satisfy their household’s dietary needs, but also offers a variety of other options from which families can pick to cook a variety of nutritious meals. The more options that are affordable and available, the greater the chance that shoppers will purchase alternative items to high-calorie food. Without improved food access, shoppers will continue purchasing food items they normally purchase.

FIGURE 7.5 Low Access, low-income population within 1 mile of supermarket

Source: Food Research Atlas, 2015



“Food insecure households are not necessarily food insecure all the time. Food insecurity may reflect a household’s need to make trade-offs between important basic needs, such as housing or medical bills, and purchasing nutritionally adequate foods.” – Feeding America

Figure 7.6

Low Access, Child Population within 1 mile of Supermarket Share

Source: Food Research Atlas 2015

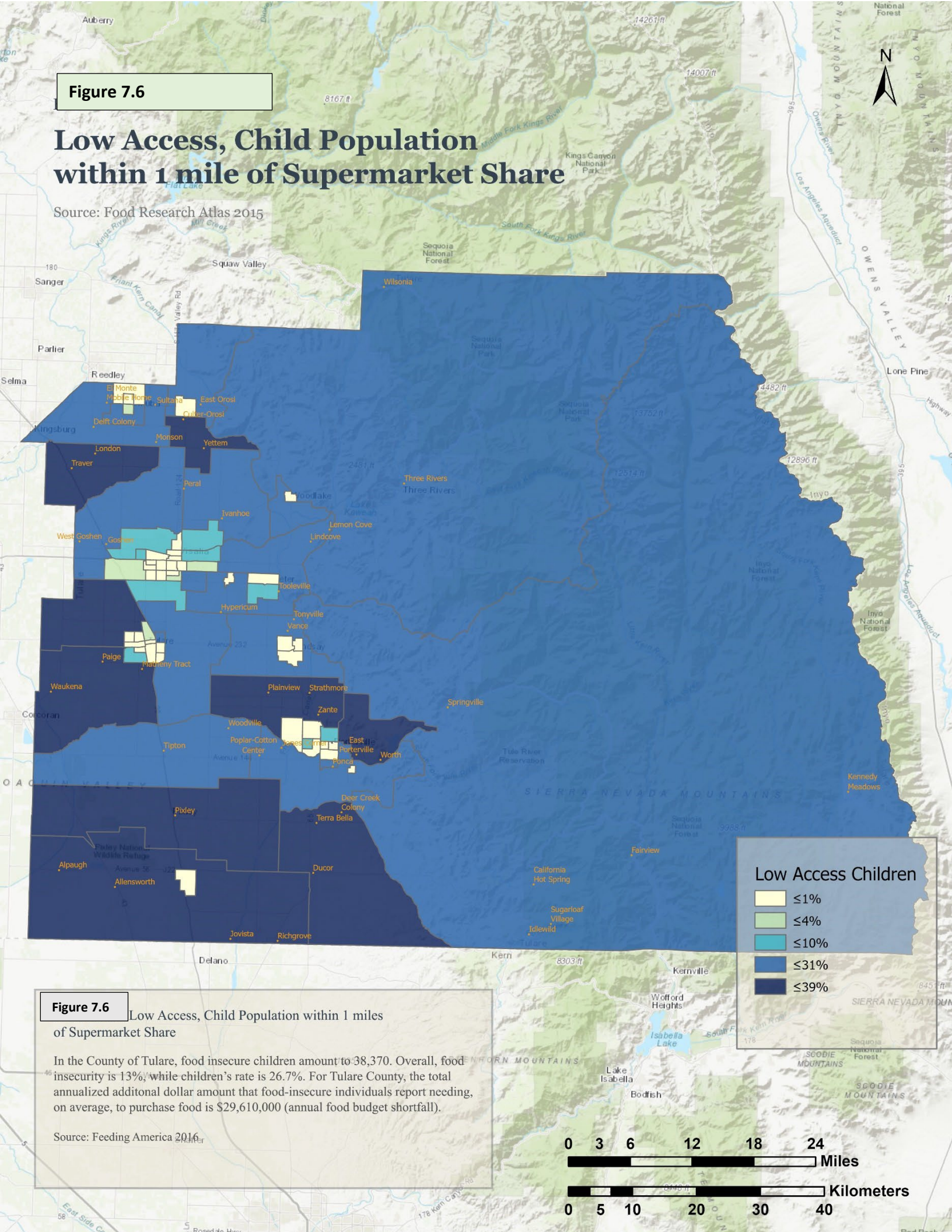
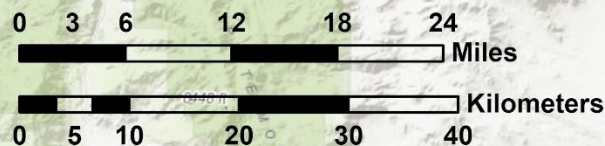


Figure 7.6

Low Access, Child Population within 1 miles of Supermarket Share

In the County of Tulare, food insecure children amount to 38,370. Overall, food insecurity is 13%, while children's rate is 26.7%. For Tulare County, the total annualized additional dollar amount that food-insecure individuals report needing, on average, to purchase food is \$29,610,000 (annual food budget shortfall).

Source: Feeding America 2016



What are the obstacles to healthy food retail?

The rich in minerals and fertile soil in Tulare County has allowed for an abundance of farming practices and activity, and with the growing global economy, the county continues to grow in net exportation (both inbound and outbound) of commodity crops and other consumer goods and services. Growth in various sectors of the economy have attracted numerous production and processing companies to settle in the county to conduct trading. In 2007, the San Joaquin Valley Model Improvement Program Freight Forecasting Models Report, provided logistics on outbound commodity flows, and Tulare County ranked the fourth highest in all eight counties in the San Joaquin Valley (see Table 7.1).

Despite Tulare County containing a productive environment for agricultural production, it contains a substantial number of children and adult populations living in unincorporated communities that contain limited locations and poor access from where to purchase food and in many instances, insufficient quantity and quality of fresh produce. Further, many residents in EJ communities of color work in the agricultural and packing sector, meaning there is a close connection between communities and farms and production facilities. This points to a disconnection between harvesting, production, and distribution in the fact that persons working in this industry harvest and process agricultural products but may have low food access to purchase these commodities.

Food that is being locally cultivated by low-income populations, may not be reaching their communities, even though in many instances they are near the produce compared to the distance the produce is being shipped to. Local grocery stores near unincorporated communities may lack vegetables, fruits, leafy greens, and protein including packaged meat and nuts. The few locations that may potentially have these items in stock are because vendors personally travel to supermarkets to purchase food items. Uncertainty is a factor that discourages some vendors to practice the former, but if they do, the price of time, travel, and resources is typically paid for by buyers through increased prices of food prices.

It is more likely that vendors may abstain from purchasing fresh, healthy products due the uncertain probability that community residents will not purchase items before items expire. In warm summer months, produce has a shorter shelf life, causing a greater risk of loss of revenue for store vendors. Thus, items that are more readily available are products that are packaged products processed by companies that have the means to deliver to rural communities. More often than not, small grocery stores will have contracts with such companies, receiving opportunities to rent machinery for food storage, and receive deliveries of processed food and sugar products with reduced health benefits to consumers.

TABLE 7.1 Agricultural Commodity Flows from SJV Counties (Annual Tonnage)

Source: Resource Systems Group, Inc., San Joaquin Valley Model Improvement Program Freight Forecasting Models

County	Outbound		Inbound	
	2007	2040	2007	2040
Fresno	14,580,941	36,833,824	14,389,946	28,300,754
Kern	8,540,037	21,164,870	8,187,089	16,219,467
King	2,470,125	616,996	2,437,623	4,778,408
Madera	2,552,727	6,347,714	2,419,101	9,186,829
Merced	4,689,841	11,871,724	4,700,235	25,449,918
San Joaquin	13,137,206	33,351,182	12,882,310	25,449,918
Stanislaus	5,791,719	35,263,601	5,595,756	26,984,934
Tulare	7,041,665	17,744,880	6,965,034	13,675,009

As previously mentioned, there is a disconnection between processing and distributing and the availability at the local level of locally grown fresh produce. From a policy standpoint, it may potentially be difficult to influence the facilitation and operations of chain supermarkets who receive food deliveries from food produced in other regions, but the county and other organizations can promote economic policy development to encourage smaller, independent grocery stores to create partnerships that have of the resources to transfer food and maintain and sustain markets with local produce. The County has adopted mixed-use zoning districts and By-Right Uses which help to promote economic development and could lead to the development of larger scale grocery markets.

The major externalities that this could produce are increases in employment opportunities within the county as more employees would be needed to conduct short-trip deliveries and food insecurity would be addressed while also supporting local farmers and maintaining food prices at lower prices than imported food. In addition, freight carbon emissions may be decreased due to the decrease in Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) for freight transportation, and by decreasing air pollution more commonly affecting minority populations living in neighborhoods near warehouses or major transport corridors.

Creating new policies that promote food processing facilities to distribute locally may permit local growers to offer greater diversity of products in the local marketplace and could increase and extend the market viability of these value-added products thereby generating new revenue prospects.

Economic development opportunities facilitated by adopted mixed-use zoning districts and By-Right Uses may reduce food insecurity by addressing the food production net exportation treadmill that has been running for decades. Addressing food insecurity will continue to be a challenging task if the current framework of food exportation is sustained. Evaluating the existing food distribution structure to conceptualize new economic development policies to encourage and boost local business does not indicate current exportation patterns will come to a halt; rather, new policies will aim to open new opportunities where local trade and barter can be incorporated to fortify the local economy within the county, to improve food access opportunities. The following discussion provides examples of best practices to address food insecurity.

Creating business partnerships between Community, Markets, and Farmers

Evaluating and influencing the current structure of farming, processing, and distribution is difficult. Since businesses create contracts that extend out to years in the future, a more plausible method of increasing food accessibility in census tracts, specifically EJ communities, is to encourage a framework to create partnerships between community grocery stores and local farms. The benefits include the promotion of transportation patterns, creating a steadier stream of revenue for family-owned farms who don't produce high quantities of products to buy in to the larger trade and barter, agricultural economy. Shorter transportation distances also benefit vendors by reducing the costs compared to the prices they would pay to have goods imported from out of the country. Furthermore, this structure could promote business for local residents; interested parties could convert part of their property to farming to support their families and low-income families in communities where food access is low.

Opportunities around Farmers' Markets

Farmers' markets and flea markets are alternative venues where local farmers are able to sell their harvested goods, and for consumers to develop a relationship with producers; allowing people interested to know more about where their food comes from, their farming methods, and, perhaps, the farmers' story. These are all interactive and informative methods to gain awareness of local farming practices.

Furthermore, farmers' markets also provide opportunities for a closer connection to develop between vendors and consumers. Residents are able to receive fresh seasonal produce from local farmers, while the local farmers gain customers through the process. However, additional research is recommended to determine if populations in Tulare County have equal access to farmers markets, both physically in terms of having access to public transportation, availability to attend such venues due to distance, and if there is a range of food prices that allow different socio-economic status groups to afford locally grown fresh, healthy produce.

Increasing Access to Farmers' Markets through Alternative Currencies

According to the CalFresh website, four farmers' markets in Tulare County currently accept EBT currency. However, this does not include farmers' markets in the incorporated cities of Lindsay and Porterville. The implications of the lack of CalFresh services at alternative food markets,

and places where more genuine connection can be cultivated between consumer and farmer, and where food sold is potentially travelling less from farm to fork, can potentially mean that fewer low-income families have access to locally grown fresh produce.

A case study of Visalia Farmers' Market mentioned its EBT program began in April 2011.²⁴ The program only generated a small amount of revenue in the first year of being launched, but in 2012, in collaboration with the Downtown Association, the program resulted in \$2,000 per month in EBT transactions. According to the account, the Visalia Farmers' Market 'had some initial concerns within their farmer-run board about promoting EBT at their two successful markets.'

To discourage discriminatory actions, careful evaluation should be conducted regarding potential barriers that may be influencing the ability of low-income populations from attending local markets, and accessing the benefits offered through the EBT program and educational services related to nutrition and disease prevention.

Some outdoor flea markets in Tulare County do offer EBT and SNAP benefits to their customers, but availability to such services may vary depending on the vendor. In other words, these benefits have not been universally adopted. Indicating that not all in Tulare County have access to these provisions. Thus, it's strongly recommended that a EBT/script system be implemented at all alternative markets, so households with EBT benefits can purchase fresh produce.

²⁴ Farmers' Markets America, "Maximizing CalFresh Usage at Farmers Markets Through Incentives: Market Match, SNAPing Up Benefits for Farmers & Shoppers" (Roots of Change (ROC), 2013), <http://ecologycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/ROC-final-upload-2.pdf>.

Examples of Best Practices to Address Food Insecurity

- Collaborate with local organizations to organize delivery of healthy food, cultivated in local farms, to neighborhood stores in unincorporated communities with a high food-insecure population.
- Promote organizations to invest in providing neighborhood stores with refrigerators, support storeowners with optimizing store space by increasing shelf space, and providing owners with information on how to handle fresh produce to ensure that items are fresh.
- Support neighborhood storeowners to create a shipment cost plan to maintain and sustain shipments of healthy produce.
- Continue to utilize as feasible and appropriate by right zoning and mixed-use rezoning of land to enable supermarkets to enter neighborhoods that experience limited access to food. Additionally, supporting the creation of grant and loan programs to decrease financial barriers to establishing supermarkets.
- Encourage the creation and establishment of food cooperatives in neighborhoods with low access to employment and food, to promote partnerships between owners and regional producers and farms. Additionally, encourage local health organizations and co-ops to collaborate to provide classes in cooking, gardening, and personal health, etc.
- Promote unified school districts to get connected to the National Farm to School Network to support local growers, perhaps colored family farmers.
- Implement farm-to-school programs, which may differ by location, but typically include one of the following: development of policies or programs as feasible and appropriate that focus on encouraging, purchasing, promoting, and serving local foods in school cafeterias; education as students participate in activities related to agricultural, food, health, or nutrition; and school gardens where students can engage in hands-on learning.
- Provide support to unified school districts to fundraise to acquire more funds to spend a larger share of their annual food budgets on locally sourced foods to integrate in school cafeterias, classrooms, and communities.

[Resource tool: The California Farmer Marketplace](#)

Step-by-Step Process to Establishing EBT at Local Flea Markets as provided by the USDA

Step 1: Establish Sound Repertoire and Relationships between Consumer and Vendor

- Establish relationships between flea market vendors/ owners to create a safe and culturally diverse environment to promote a healthy environment.
- Produce branding material to effectively publicize SNAP eligibility and benefits, promote nutrition education series, weight loss and disease prevention programs, and other social services.
- Promote opportunities for families to use their Food Stamp benefits through press and media coverage.

Step 2: Meet Certification Requirements

A Farmers' Market within a flea market must:

- Form a Farmers Market Business Association before applying to the USDA.
- Meet the United States Department of Agricultural eligibility requirements.
- Qualify for a Food & Nutrition Service Number.

Step 3: Get Organized

- Complete the USDA Application (Call 1-877-823-4369). *It takes approximately 45 days to process applications.*
- Copy of Business Licenses, photo ID and Social Security Card.
- Create a centralized office (POS), Electricity, and Phone Line.
- Designate staff to process EBT requests. Consider someone who is bilingual and can best meet the communication needs of customers.

Step 4: Identify a Cashier

- Designate selected personnel to process monetary transactions to reduce fraudulence.

Note: Different EBT machines have dual purposes and can be used to accept both food stamps (EBT) and debit or credit card payments.

Step 5: Establish a Currency System

- Develop a scrip system - scrip is used as form of currency (e.g. wooden tokens).
- The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) must approve the scrip system before it can be implemented in the Farmers Market program.

[Continued]

Step 6: Design, Create and Order Scrip

- Wooden tokens have been proven to be most durable and cause least amount of opportunities for counterfeit exchange.

Step 7: Educate Produce Vendors

- Educate all produce market vendors on token redemption rules and procedures.
- This may potentially be an ongoing process as vendors may change weekly.
- Maintain bilingual staff readily available to assist non-English speakers.

Step 8: Promote Acceptance of EBT Benefits

- Promote the project at local produce markets.
- Send direct mail, radio PSAs, newspaper ads, Facebook, listserv newsletters, and banners - all proclaiming “EBT Acceptance.”

Step 9: Partner with other Organizations

- Partner with organizations such as your Human Services Agency-Food Stamp Program, WIC (Women, Infant and Children), and Nutrition Network programs.

Step 10: Celebrate your success

Funding sources

- The federal healthy food financing initiative.
- Non-profits have expertise in food access issues and can provide effective models.
- Community development financial institutions.
- Farm-to-family program.
- CHIFFI
 - Can connect communities to the appropriate funding sources and to organizations that offer technical assistance on sourcing, storage, store design, display, and marketing assistance.

To help facilitate an expansion of food access in rural communities, the County can consider utilizing the following resources to encourage local food market businesses to expand employment opportunities, purchase and develop land, and equipment.

- Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program.
 - This program offers loan guarantees to lenders for their loans to rural businesses.
- Healthy Urban Food Enterprise Development Center.
 - HUFED is unique in its focus on developing solutions that created jobs, offered economic incentives to farmers, and increased long term economic sustainability.
- California FreshWork.
 - California FreshWorks is a loan and grant program that provides financing to food enterprises who are working to increase access to affordable, healthy food in low-income and underserved communities in California.
- American Community Gardening Association
 - ACGA a grassroots organization help ensure food security, better health, a thriving environment, and stronger neighborhoods throughout the United States and Canada through community gardening.

Policy and Implementation Measures

Goal: Ensure that healthy food access programs effectively serve the needs of Environmental Justice Communities.

LU-4.1 Neighborhood Commercial Uses

The County shall encourage the development of small neighborhood convenience and grocery facilities to meet the everyday shopping and personal needs of immediately surrounding residential land uses in communities and hamlets.

Implementation Measure: The County shall collaborate with organizations who hold educational workshops regarding starting a business to encourage entrepreneurship within Environmental Justice Communities.

EJ-10: Policy: The County shall promote the development of smaller, independent grocery stores and prioritizes distribution of locally grown and locally processed produce to alleviate the burden of food deserts.

Implementation Measure:

- A. The County shall encourage food providers throughout Tulare County to devote space towards healthy food options through mixed use zoning.

EJ-11: Policy: The County shall encourage use of alternative currencies such as EBT at local flea and farmers markets to encourage lower income residents to buy local produce.

Implementation Measure:

- B. Encourage food providers throughout Tulare County to accept alternative currencies such as EBT and WIC using the strategies outlined in *“Step-by-Step Process to Establishing EBT at Local Flea Markets as provided by the UDSA”*

EJ-12: Goal: Support Local Food Production. Promote local food production in agricultural zoning districts, as well as on appropriate urban and suburban lands.

EJ-13: Policy: The County shall encourage Community Gardens. Allow community gardens on County property that is underutilized or where such use would complement current use and amend the Development Code to require space for on-site community gardens in new residential developments of 10 units or greater. Work with community-based organizations to manage such gardens using ecologically sound techniques and to provide on-site water if available (find more information at www.communitygarden.org).

- [1] Latetia V. Moore and others, 'Associations of the Local Food Environment with Diet Quality—A Comparison of Assessments Based on Surveys and Geographic Information Systems', *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 167.8 (2008), 917–24
<<https://doi.org/10.1093/aje/kwm394>>.
- [2] Kimberly B. Morland and Kelly R. Evenson, 'Obesity Prevalence and the Local Food Environment', *Health & Place*, 15.2 (2009), 491–95
<<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2008.09.004>>.
- [3] Sanae Inagami and others, 'You Are Where You Shop: Grocery Store Locations, Weight, and Neighborhoods', *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 31.1 (2006), 10–17
<<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2006.03.019>>.
- [4] Sarah Samuels and others, 'Increasing Access to Healthy Food in the Central Valley through Farmers Markets and Produce Stands' (Samuels & Associates, 2010)
<http://www.cultivalasalud.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/B_CCROPP_FM.pdf>.
- [5] James Matson, Martha Sullins, and Chris Cook, 'The Role of Food Hubs in Local Food Marketing', 56.

08 Physical Activity

Introduction

A substantial number of unincorporated communities in Tulare County are located in rural agricultural areas, where there is limited access to parks, public transportation, and complete streets infrastructure (e.g., sidewalks/bike facilities), creating challenges related to accessibility. According to the Tulare County Community Health Assessment (2017), community residents in unincorporated communities show deep concern around limited opportunities for physical activity and the impacts it has on their health and overall well-being.

This section analyzes existing conditions of various factors: tree cover, green spaces, transportation, street walkability, and obesity rates in the County of Tulare. Additionally, this section assesses how these may potentially affect the health of community residents in environmental justice communities (EJ) to evaluate the gaps that exist, the barriers community residents have identified and new ones uncovered through data gathered, and how these may influence active lifestyles and pose challenges to community vitality and individual health.

Promotion of Physical Activity through the Built Environment

Physical conditions that exist within our surrounding environment construct social norms, as some activities seem more appealing than others, and influence how frequently and for how long residents engage in selected activities. Community residents in environmental justice communities particularly benefit from outdoor spaces and residential greenery, as they may experience anthropogenic stressors and potential environmental hazards associated with living in rural areas.

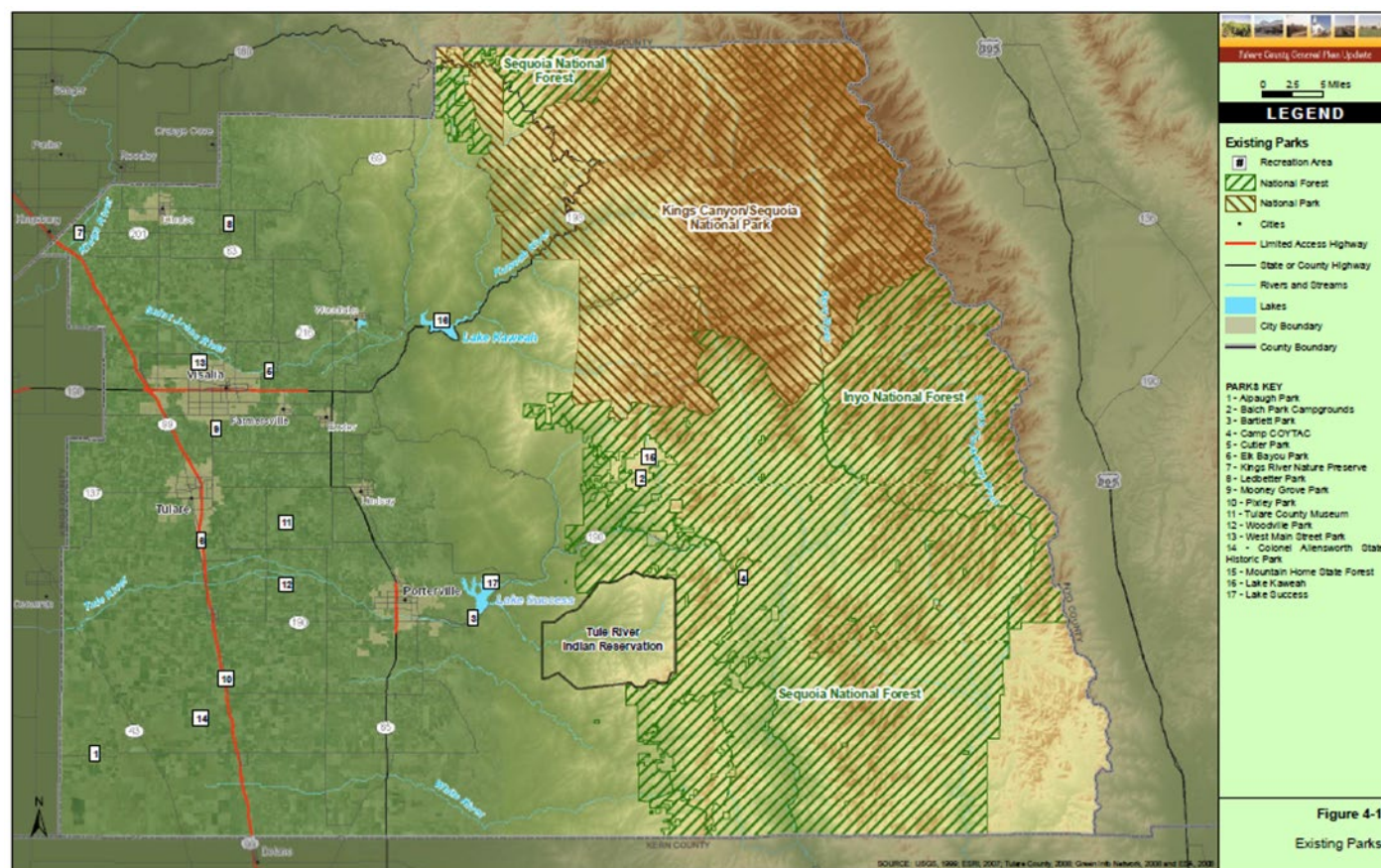
Green spaces, such as parks, playgrounds, and residential greenery, can promote mental and physical health and reduce morbidity and mortality in residents by providing psychological relaxation and stress alleviation, stimulating social cohesion, supporting physical activity, and reducing exposure to air pollution, noise and excessive heat. However, the extent to which these benefits are experienced and influence the quality of life of residents in environmental justice communities is dependent on accessibility, park acreage, the availability of complete streets, and tree cover and greening to allow for comfortable and enjoyable active transportation.

Existing Conditions

There are a total of 13 park and recreation facilities that are owned and operated by Tulare County. The location, acreage and features of these parks (along with other State and federal park and recreation facilities) are indicated in Table 8.1. Figure 8.1 shows the locations of parks located inside the county's boundaries.

FIGURE 8.1 Location of parks in Tulare County

Source: Tulare County General Plan



The Effects of Greening and Vegetation on Health

Investing in natural environments through greening projects has become increasingly important to create visually appealing environments that promote community safety and organization by lowering crime levels and incentivizing the important benefits of walkability and physical activity. Greenery can have a positive effect on human experiences because individuals are intrinsically connected to nature, and as research and evaluation studies discuss, greening and tree cover has a beneficial impact on health.

A study that looked at selected neighborhoods in Sacramento, California, evaluated the effects of tree cover on residents. The study found that for adults of ages 18 to 64, the more tree cover that exists within a neighborhood, residents dedicated more time to vigorous physical activity, obesity and asthma levels were less substantial, better general health was experienced, and social cohesion was more prevalent (Ulmer).

TABLE 8.1 Recreational areas in Tulare County

Source: Tulare County General Plan

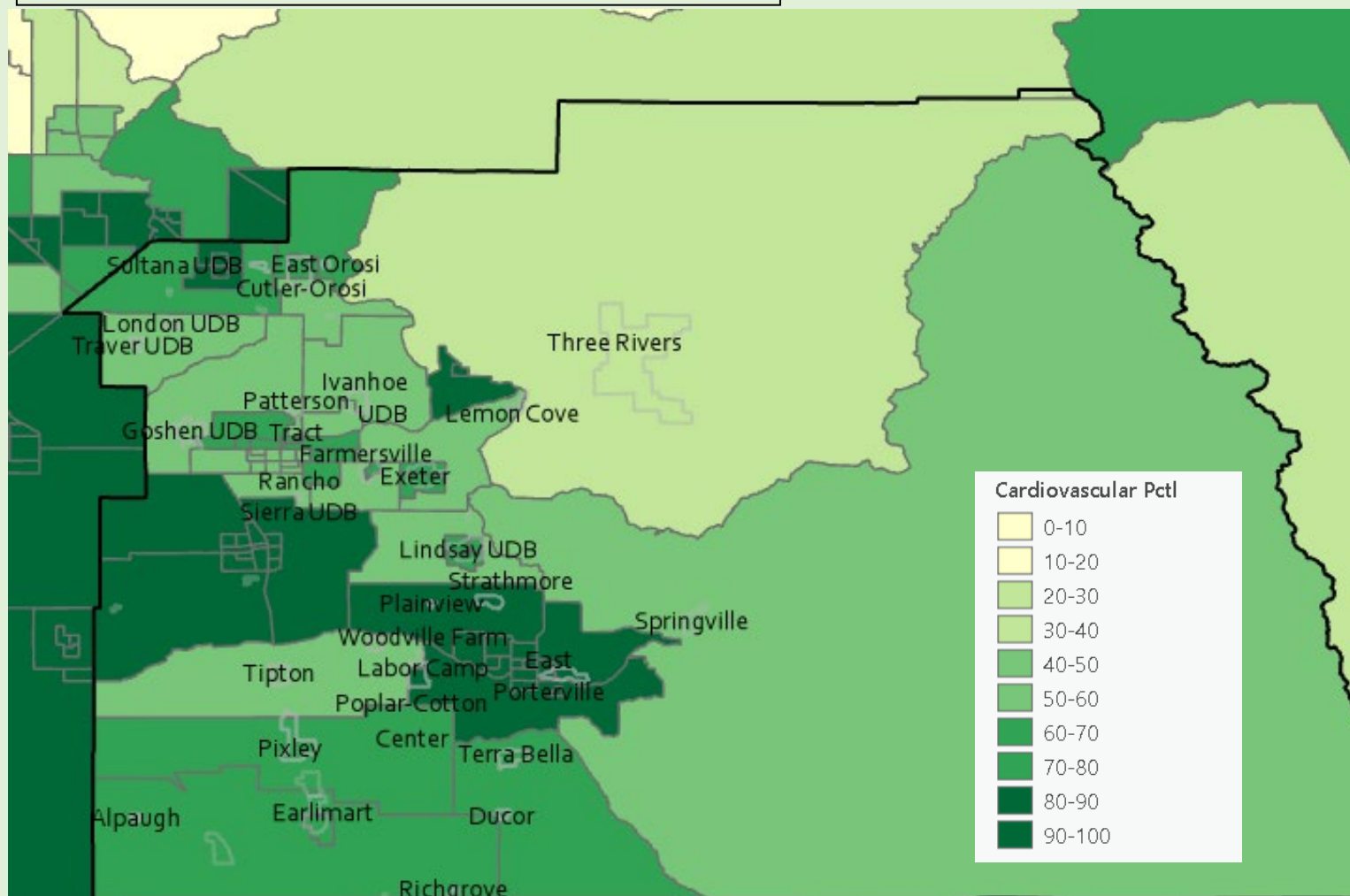
ID	Recreation Area	Location	Aores	Type of Use/Features
County				
1	Alpaugh Park	Located in Alpaugh on Road 40.	3.0	Reservations for picnic areas are taken. No entrance fee.
2	Baich Park Campgrounds	20 miles NE of Springville in the Sierras.	160.0	71 Campsites. No reservations taken; first come first serve basis. Entrance fee for vehicles.
3	Bartlett Park	8 miles east of Porterville on North Drive.	127.5	Reservations for picnic areas are taken. Entrance fee for vehicles.
4	Camp COTYAC	Near Ponderosa in Eastern Tulare County.	8.0	County of Tulare Youth Adventure Camp (Camp COTYAC). Cabins, lodge with kitchen, restrooms and showers.
5	Cutler Park	5 miles east of Visalia on Highway 216 to Ivanhoe.	50.0	Reservations for picnic areas are taken. Entrance fee for vehicles.
6	Elk Bayou Park	6 miles SE of Tulare on Avenue 200.	60.0	Reservations for picnic areas are taken. No fee for day use.
7	Kings River Nature Preserve	2 miles east of Highway 99 on Road 28	85.0	This park is only for school environmental programs.
8	Ledbetter Park	1 mile northwest of Cutler on Road 124/Hwy 63	11.0	Reservations for picnic areas are taken. No fee.
9	Mooney Grove Park	2 Miles south of Caldwell Avenue on Mooney Blvd. in South Visalia.	143.0	Reservations for picnic areas are taken. Paddle boats, playground, baseball diamonds. Home of the End Trail statue. One of the largest oak woodlands in Tulare County. Location of the Agriculture and Farm Labor Museum.
10	Pixley Park	1 mile NE of Pixley on Road 124.	22.0	Reservations for picnic areas are taken. No fee.
11	Tulare County Museum	In Mooney Grove Park, South Visalia.	8.5	Free admission with park fee. Museum is opened Thursday thru Monday (closed Tuesday and Wednesday).
12	Woodville Park	Located in Avenue 166 in Woodville.	10.0	Reservations for picnic areas are taken. Day use no entrance fee.
13	West Main Street Park	2 blocks west of County Courthouse on Main Street in Downtown Visalia.	5.0	Day use no entrance fee.
State				
14	Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park	7 miles west of Earlimart on County Road J22.	na	15 campsites, open year round.
15	Mountain Home State Forest	Located in Sequoia National Forest	na	No reservations taken for campgrounds.
Federal				
16	Lake Kaweah	25 miles east of Visalia on Highway 198.	2,558.0	Horse Creek Campground, boat ramps, picnic areas, swimming, and hiking.
17	Lake Success	10 miles SE of Porterville on Highway 198.	2,450.0	Tule Campground, boating, fishing, picnic areas, playgrounds, and softball field. Hunting is permitted in the Wildlife Management Area.
18	Sequoia National Forest	Southeastern portion of Tulare County.	na	Campgrounds include Gray's Meadow, Oak Creek, Onion Valley, Stony Creek, Sunset, and Whitney Portal with over 300 campsites.
19	Giant Sequoia National Monument	Covers areas north and south of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.	na	
20	Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks (SEKI)	Northeastern portion of Tulare County.	na	Campgrounds include Abwell Mill Campground, Buckeye Flat, Cold Springs, Crystal Springs, Dorst Campground, Lodgepole, Moraine, Potwisha, Sheep Creek, and South Fork with over 800 campsites.
Total Aores			6,781	

In Denmark, a study found an association between streetscape greenery and better mental health status, better social cohesion, and reduced stress. Not related to tree cover but in the context of vegetation, in a series of studies of public housing residents in Chicago, residents with vegetation outside their windows reported less stress, less mental fatigue, and lower severity of life issues, had more social ties, used common spaces more, and reported lower levels of fear, violence, aggression, and other incivilities. Conversely, in the northern Midwest U.S., communities that experienced loss of tree cover were associated with increased mortality related to cardiovascular disease and experienced higher levels of lower-respiratory-tract illness (Kuo and Sullivan).

Figure 8.2 shows the prevalence of cardiovascular disease by census tract, and if cross-referenced with Figures 8.3 and 8.4, various communities that experience low tree cover and have low access to outdoor spaces contain more residents with cardiovascular disease. These environmental justice communities include areas on the perimeter of the Cities of Porterville and Visalia, census tracts on the southwest of the county like Pixley, Alpaugh, and Allensworth, and the community of Cutler-Orosi.

Figure 8.2 Cardiovascular Health

CalEnviroScreen4: “Cardiovascular disease refers to conditions that involve blocked or narrowed blood vessels of the heart. A heart attack is the most common result of cardiovascular disease. Exposure to outdoor air pollution following a heart attack has been shown to increase the risk of death. In addition to people with a past heart attack, the effects of air pollution may also be greater in the elderly and people with other preexisting health conditions.”



Tree Cover and Air Quality

Forests absorb carbon and release oxygen into the atmosphere. This fact supports the commonly known truth that trees reduce pollutants in the air, but the amount of contamination that trees intake varies by location.

Trees have the capacity to take in contaminants at the cellular level through the stomata of foliage. They directly affect particulate matter in the atmosphere by capturing particles, emitting particles (e.g. pollen) and causing resuspension of particles settled on plant surfaces. The accumulation of particles on tree foliage, however, can affect photosynthesis; therefore, potentially affecting pollution removal.

An evaluative study on tree cover and forest effects on air quality and human health in the United States explored and measured how much pollution, including carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), Ozone (O_3), lead (Pb), sulfur dioxide (SO_2), and particulate matter (PM), which includes particulate matter less than 10 microns (PM10) and particulate matter less than 2.5 microns (PM2.5), are extracted from the atmosphere and reduced by the quantity of trees (Nowak).

In 2010, trees located in the rural areas of California were estimated to have removed more than 962 tons of pollution in the atmosphere as compared to urban lands. Tulare County experienced a pollution removal of 3.38-4.50 tons per square kilometers (Nowak).

As Tulare County predominantly contains agricultural land, there are lower quantities of tree cover on certain areas of the valley floor specifically on the west side of the county where row crops and dry farming are more prevalent. Disadvantaged communities throughout the county may experience greater disparities regarding tree cover since there is limited implementation funding that can be directed towards urban greening projects, not reducing pollution in the air circulating above environmental justice communities.

Further, Tulare County is located within close proximity of four major transportation corridors - Interstate 5, Highway 99, the Union Pacific Railroad and Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Railroads. As the agricultural industry is dependent on the transport of farm to market commodities. The emissions from the net-exportation of these goods, as well as pollution transported from northern California that settles in the San Joaquin Valley, combined with the lack of tree cover in certain areas can contribute to respiratory health effects on vulnerable populations living in environmental justice communities.

Tree Cover: Walkability and Community Resiliency

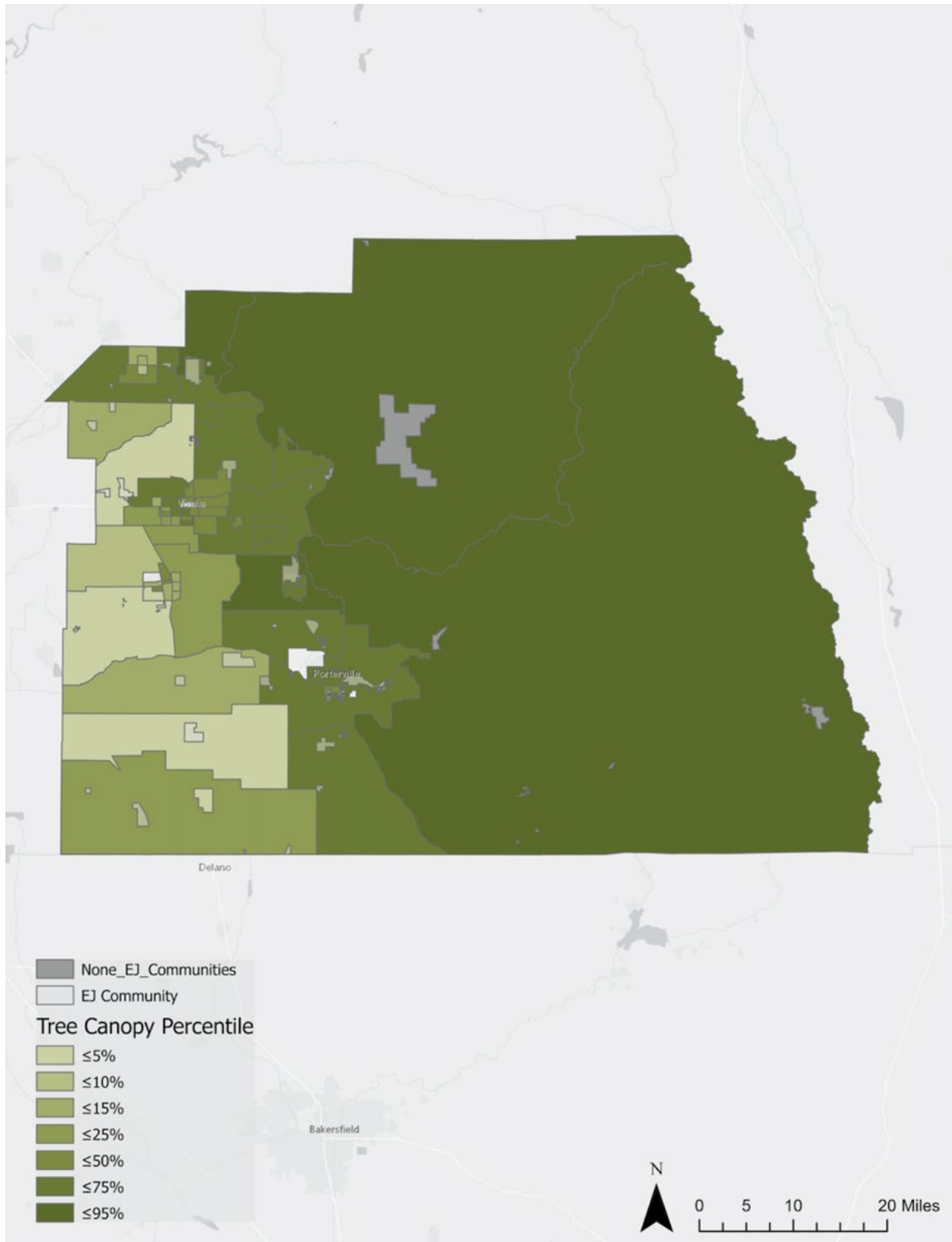
Regarding increasing opportunities for walkability, a number of EJ communities are not within close proximity of incorporated cities. Additionally, there is limited tree cover along transportation corridors, so the combination of limited funding for streetscaping, sidewalks, bike lanes and warrant-based recommendations that determine the placement of stop signs and pedestrian crossings with flashing beacons, as well as the general lack of tree cover in certain areas, may discourage individuals from choosing modes of active transportation.

Another aspect worthy of consideration is how trees may impact the environment in terms of creating more resilient communities. Tulare County experiences high temperatures during summer months, averaging at 97 degrees Fahrenheit. The general lack of shade by tree cover in certain areas can create hot spots in EJ communities, resulting in low-income households having to endure uncomfortable temperatures, as many households cannot afford to run swamp coolers or air conditioners. While residents who elect to run cooling systems, may experience financial burdens. Electric bills in EJ communities vary, during winter months residents may pay \$20-\$60 for heating and \$60-\$1,000 during summer months for cooling (as per anecdotal comments).

Figure 8.3 shows the percentile of tree canopy by census tract, demonstrating that communities on the west side of the county experience the least amount of tree cover while non-EJ communities on the Foothills and Mountain areas of Tulare County have the highest percentile of tree cover. Census tracts, however, are not the best indicator to gauge if disadvantaged communities have adequate tree coverage, because census tracts include incorporated cities that have received more funds through property and sales taxes to implement greenery projects. Consideration can be given to create an inventory of tree cover to have a dataset to analyze which EJ communities will be most impacted by climate change and are least resilient in the face of increasing temperatures.

FIGURE 8.3 Percentile of tree canopy by census tract, 2011

Source: CDPH/National Land Cover Database



Strategic Considerations to Promote Greening Projects

- Identify and collate potential tree champions (residents, nonprofits, businesses, elected officials, etc.) who may be cultivated and empowered to be advocates.
- Solicit public input on needs and values related to community trees, from a diverse and representative set of stakeholders, through implementing surveys, convening a tree commission or advisory team, and involving residents in hands-on activities such as plantings.
- Establish clear and consistent messaging around the value that trees provide to the community, through community engagement, and connecting with unified school districts to invite students to participate in plantings to become aware of environmental impacts and planning processes.
- Develop programming and activities that involve various groups in the community, such as informational workshops.
- Promote local urban forestry programs like CSET to highlight successes and enhance the program's visibility and credibility.
- Promote coordination and communication among community advocates working in environmental justice communities and community forestry programs.

Existing Opportunities to Physical Activity

According to the Tulare County Community Health Assessment, community residents that participated in working groups during the Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) process mentioned opportunities for physical activity was an aspect of healthy communities that they perceived to be lacking in unincorporated communities. Further, they considered school facilities as assets, which could be leveraged as part of public health initiatives. In addition, such initiatives could focus on nutrition and physical education. Opportunities around physical activity include creating joint-use agreements so that community residents can use school facilities for recreational and physical activity.

In EJ communities, factors that hinder physical activity are fear of crime and violence and park access – measured by distance and travel time to parks. The gaps of pedestrian infrastructure also discourage community residents from practicing active modes of transportation. Factors that influence the establishment of parks in unincorporated communities are limited funding from the General Fund and grant programs, and limited ability for community residents to pay fees for park maintenance. Implementing recreational spaces can be difficult, too. Implementation may require an organization, special district, homeowner association or community group to assist or be responsible for park maintenance, and many are not able to accept that responsibility due to various considerations.

Further, as discussed in the crime prevention section, some EJ communities experience criminal activity due to low levels of neighborhood surveillance. In these parts of the county, outdoor spaces may host criminal activity due to the existing locations of lighting and various community considerations that may influence neighborhood surveillance. Anecdotally, some communities have been reluctant to request green spaces due to concern that it will attract criminal activity into their communities.

Park access is a disparity amongst EJ communities. Figure 8.4 and Figure 8.5 show that most parks are located within incorporated cities. These receive maintenance through funding collected by imposed household taxes on the local community residents. Many EJ communities contain a number of vacant lots, which provide prospects for green spaces.

TABLE 8.2 Public Park acres per population

Source: City and County Parks Department (2016), Tulare County Community Assessment Report (2017)

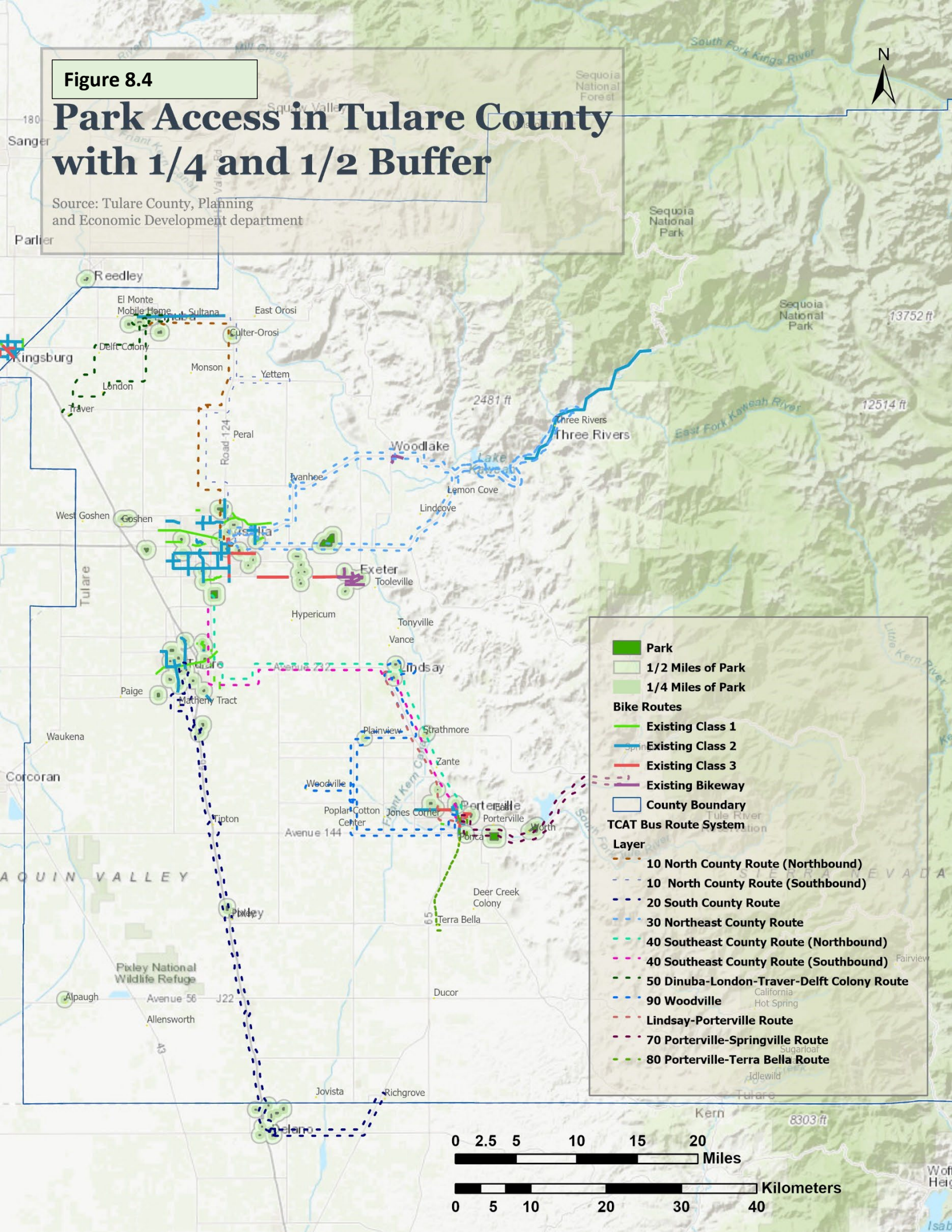
Geography	Acres	Population	Acres per 1,000 residents
Tulare County Unincorporated	460	145,050	3.17
Visalia	132	130,231	1.01
Tulare	363	63,515	5.72
Porterville	295	60,070	4.91
Lindsay	52	12,960	4.01
Dinuba	80	24,657	3.24
Exeter	32.2	11,047	2.91
Farmersville - current	21.3	11,161	1.91
Farmersville (with new sports park, Phase 1)	47.3	11,161	4.24
Woodlake	10.9	7,648	1.43

In 2016, 68 percent of the population in Tulare County were estimated to have access to exercise opportunities compared to 94 percent Statewide. The Table 8.2 shows that the ratio between park access and acres per 1,000 residents is not the lowest for unincorporated communities in Tulare County; however, parks are predominantly located within city boundaries with higher population density, as seen in Figure 8.4.

Figure 8.4

Park Access in Tulare County with 1/4 and 1/2 Buffer

Source: Tulare County, Planning and Economic Development department



Transportation Availability and Infrastructure

Bike lanes predominantly exist within incorporated cities, with Class II bike routes being the most common. Regional bike route systems that connect EJ communities with public service facilities, food markets, or outdoor space has not been fully implemented due to limited funding opportunities. Agricultural land separates these small communities, so implementing bike routes would be a large expenditure. And as already mentioned, there are typically no sidewalks along major transportation corridors either, which could serve both pedestrian and bike riders.

Pedestrian networks that are not fully implemented influence EJ communities and may create barriers to active transportation and for citizenry with disabilities to access necessities. Residents that do not have appropriate accommodations to support independent living experience burden by not being able to access community-based services, facing challenges to get to work to earn an income, and lacking opportunities to enjoy the outdoors without assistance.

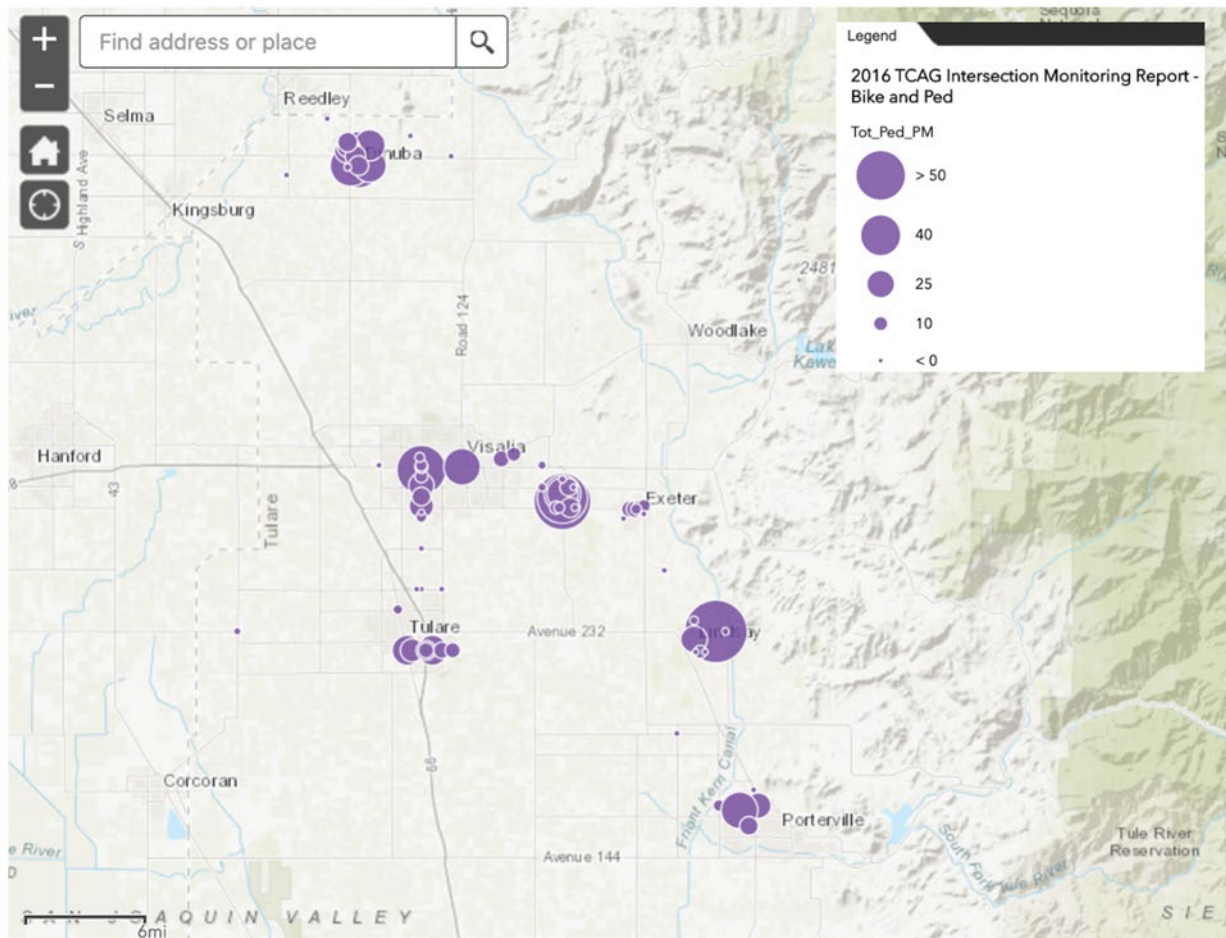
It is a goal for all unincorporated communities to have active transportation infrastructure for all residents to be able to commute to health services, work, and have access to opportunities for physical activity. As for future considerations, it is a priority to identify which census tracts contain a high number of residents with disabilities to create awareness around challenges citizenry with disabilities face. Encouraging community residents to advocate for implementation measures that would satisfy the implementation of complete streets design and planning practices, too. Coordination with disability organization groups to advocate for assistive technology would be beneficial as feasible and appropriate.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Collisions and other Traffic Hazards

Figure 8.5 shows bike and pedestrian traffic patterns, which demonstrate that most active transportation is taking place within incorporated cities where pedestrians may perhaps feel more confident to take up active transportation, since there is typically interconnected infrastructure for walkability and biking, crosswalks, stops and stoplights that provide pedestrians with opportunities to cross streets safely. Additionally, services and facilities are located in close proximity to one another.

FIGURE 8.5 Bike and pedestrian traffic, 2016

Source: Tulare County Association of Governments



In the last 10 years, areas that have seen the highest amount of pedestrian and bicycle collisions include Cutler-Orosi, Strathmore, East Porterville, Terra Bella, and Ivanhoe (see Figure 8.6). Most of these accidents occur on arterial streets, where there is a higher probability of pedestrian and automobile contact. As shown in Figure 8.5, many of these communities do not contain complete bicycle route infrastructure, which influences the risk related to traffic incidents for pedestrians and bike riders.

FIGURE 8.6 Number of collisions in unincorporated Tulare County, 2008-2018

Source: The Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS), SafeTREC, UC Berkeley

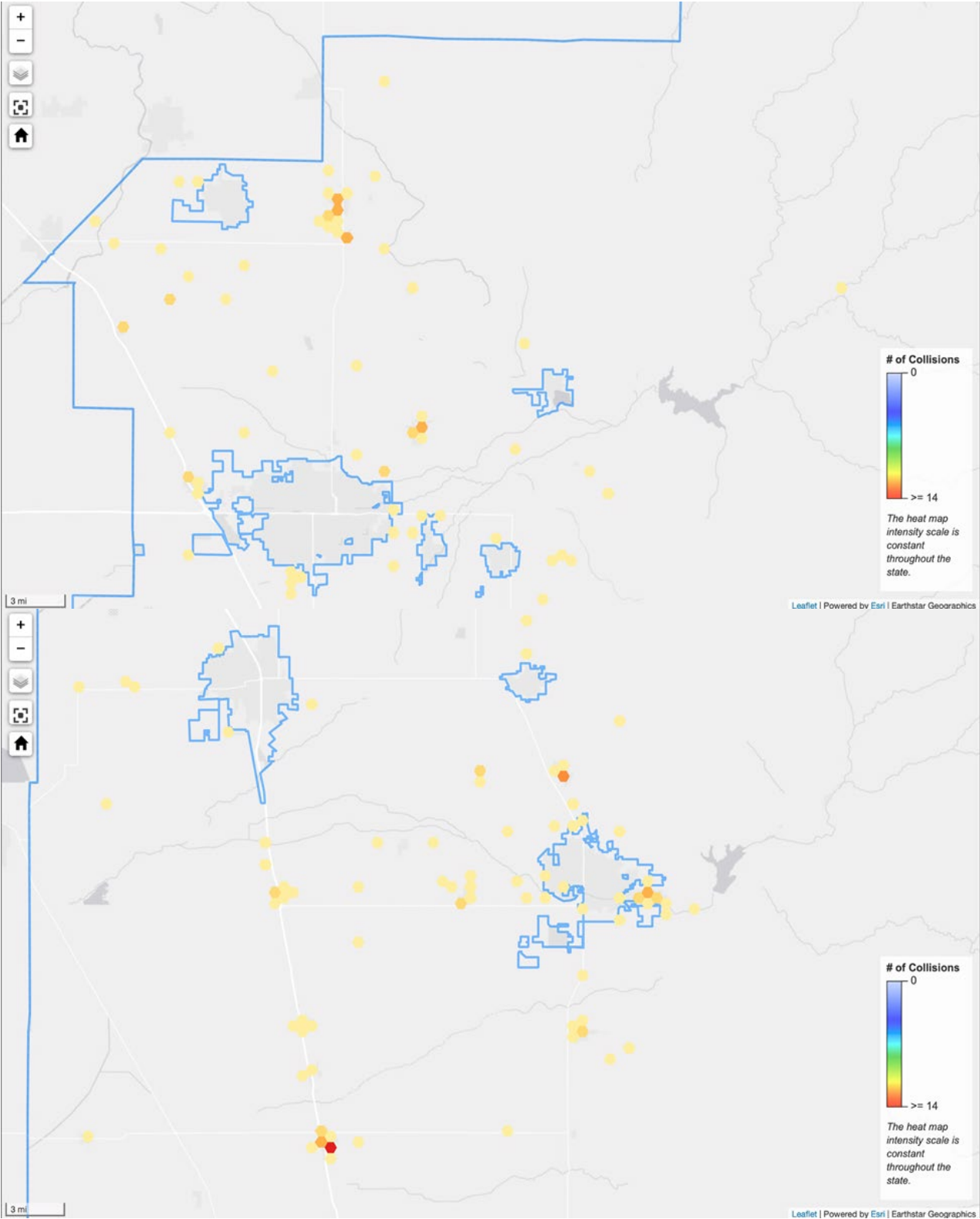


TABLE 8.3 Number of collisions by collision severity, Tulare County unincorporated, 2008-2018

Source: The Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS), SafeTREC, UC Berkeley

Involved With	Fatal		Severe Injury		Visible Injury		Complaint of Pain		Total	
	2008-2013	2013-2018	2008-2013	2013-2018	2008-2013	2013-2018	2008-2013	2013-2018	2008-2013	2013-2018
Bicycle	3	5	10	6	30	26	10	7	53	44
Pedestrian	21	22	18	25	57	54	27	27	123	128

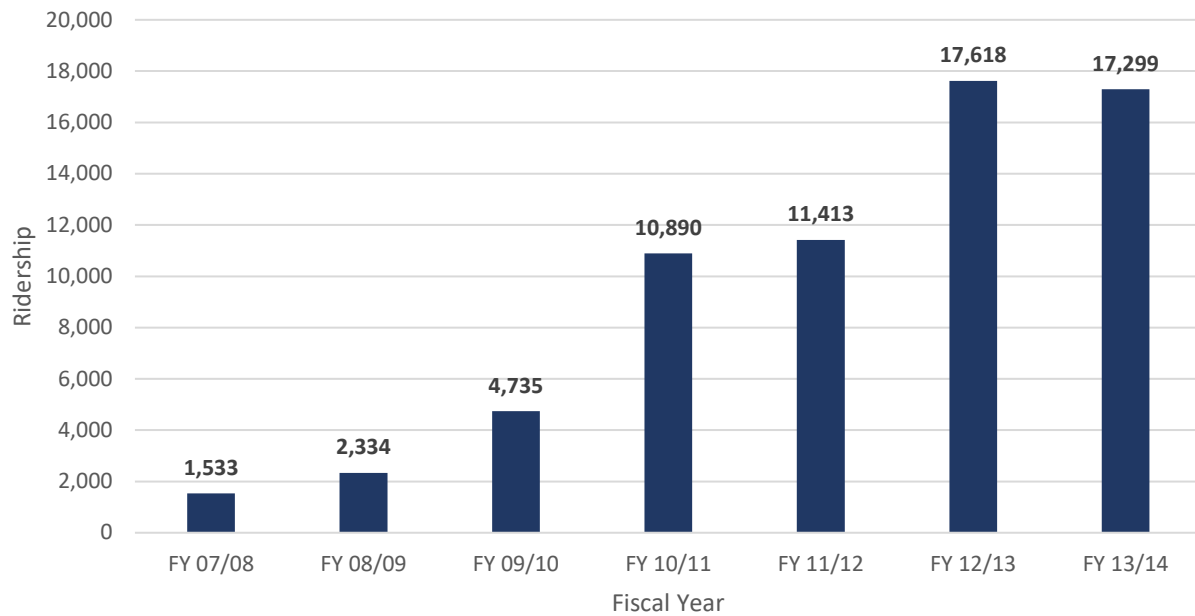
From 2013 to 2018, the number of pedestrian and bicycle collisions has decreased. Factors that may have potentially contributed to this decrease are the expansion of TCaT transit services funded by Measure R, the half-cent sales tax approved by voters in November 2006, including the Demand-Response Service and the LOOP Bus Service.

The Demand-Response Service was an implementation measure pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), specified in section 49CFR37. This demand-response, or dial-a-ride service, is provided to all residents within unincorporated areas of the county. It is meant to provide accessible curb-to-curb service to provide complementary paratransit service to residents with disabilities, but also is available to the general public on a space-available basis.

The Loop Bus is operated by the county's Resource Management Agency Transit Division and was originally implemented to provide at-risk youth with free transportation to connect them to mentoring and gang prevention programs throughout Tulare County. Additionally, the service is meant to provide low-income students in grade school with accessibility to free-of-charge public transportation. The loop service is also available to community and faith-based organizations, school districts for after school and non-school related programs only and local government entities. According to the County of Tulare 2015-2020 Transit Development Plan, the program currently has four Loop buses available for service 7 days a week but requests must be submitted two weeks prior to service.

FIGURE 8.7 Loop bus annual ridership, FY 07/08 – FY 13/14

Source: County of Tulare LOOP Bus Statistics, County of Tulare 2015-2020 Transit Development Plan (June 2015)



Because Loop Bus service requests have to be submitted 2 weeks prior, this may hinder community residents from utilizing the service for spontaneous outings; however, the need for planning may promote equity, providing all residents with the opportunity to utilize bus services. Further research is needed to understand which EJ communities have a significant quantity of residents that use Loop Bus services frequently and to expand services to communities most in need and to assess if prior to service requirements are equitable.

Obesity

Environmental justice communities may be disproportionately affected by the availability of opportunities for physical activities, as well as the availability of clinics and other health service facilities. Additionally, due to the varying availability healthy food supply within local markets located in rural areas, low-access and low-income populations may have challenges in finding healthy food options to sustain a well-balanced diet to optimize brain function, strengthen the immune system to reduce chances of disease and illnesses, and support a healthy quality of life.

In Tulare County, Health and Human services recorded in the Community Health Assessment found that adult obesity was at 36.6 percent (2011-2014) and child obesity, specifically elementary school students in 5th grade, were 23.3 percent obese (2014-2015) and the highest rates were found among Native American, African American, and Hispanic populations (see Figure 8.8). These statistics are higher than some neighboring counties and California obesity rates in 2014. According to the 2016 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), 20.9 percent of California 5th grade students were obese in the 2014-2015 school year, and 27.0 percent of adults in California were obese.

FIGURE 8.8 5TH grade students with an unhealthy weight, 2014-2015

Source: Community Health Assessment (2017), Health and Human Services Tulare County

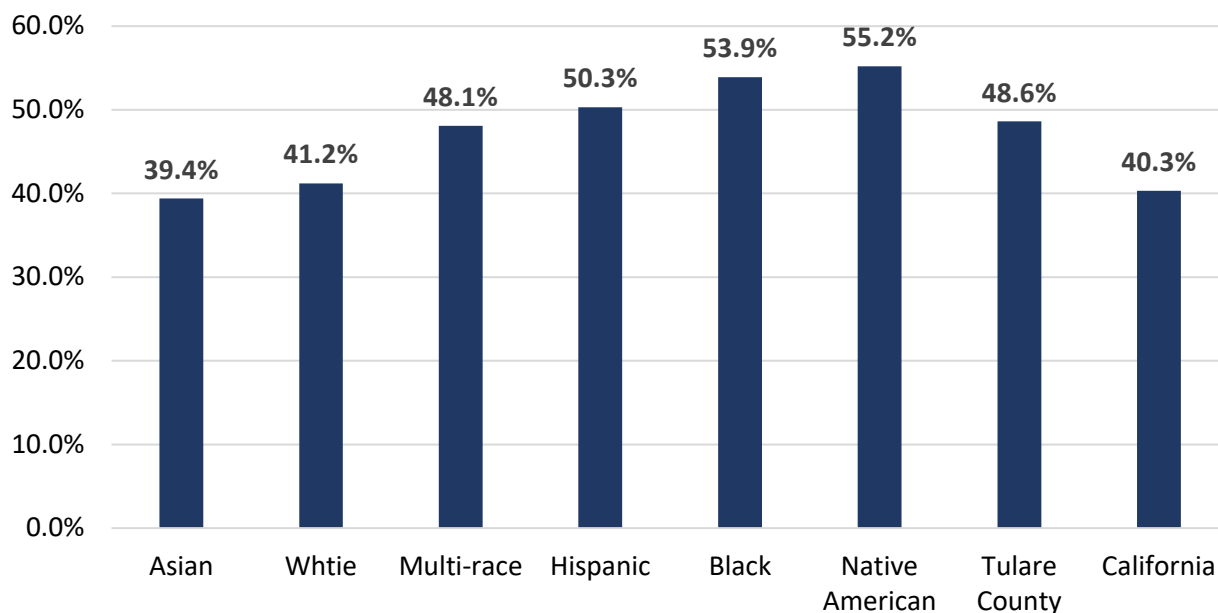


FIGURE 8.9 Male obesity, 2001 & 2011

Source: US Health Map data visualization

Obesity rates increased from 29.72 percent in 2001 to 38.51 percent in 2011 among males.

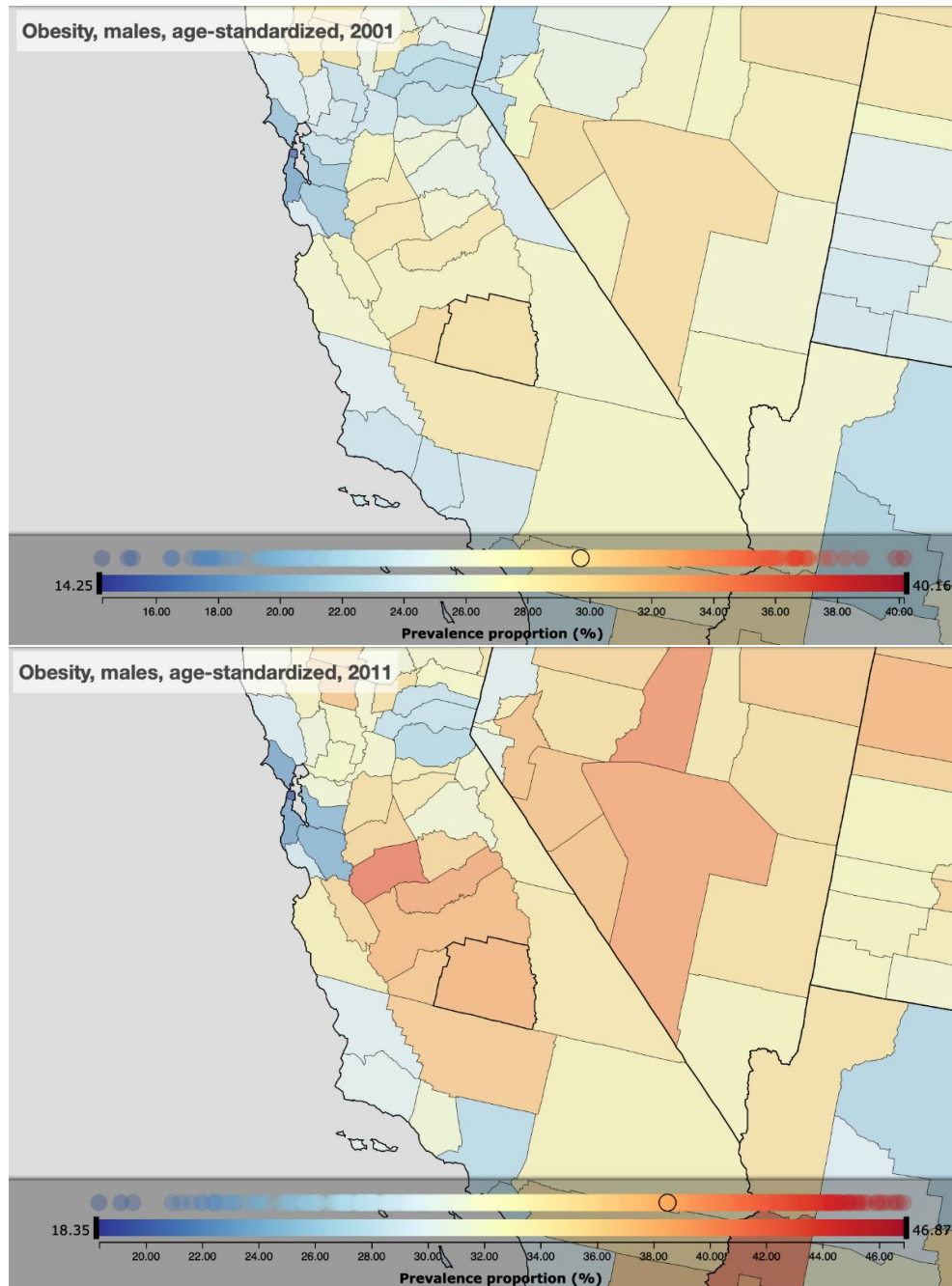
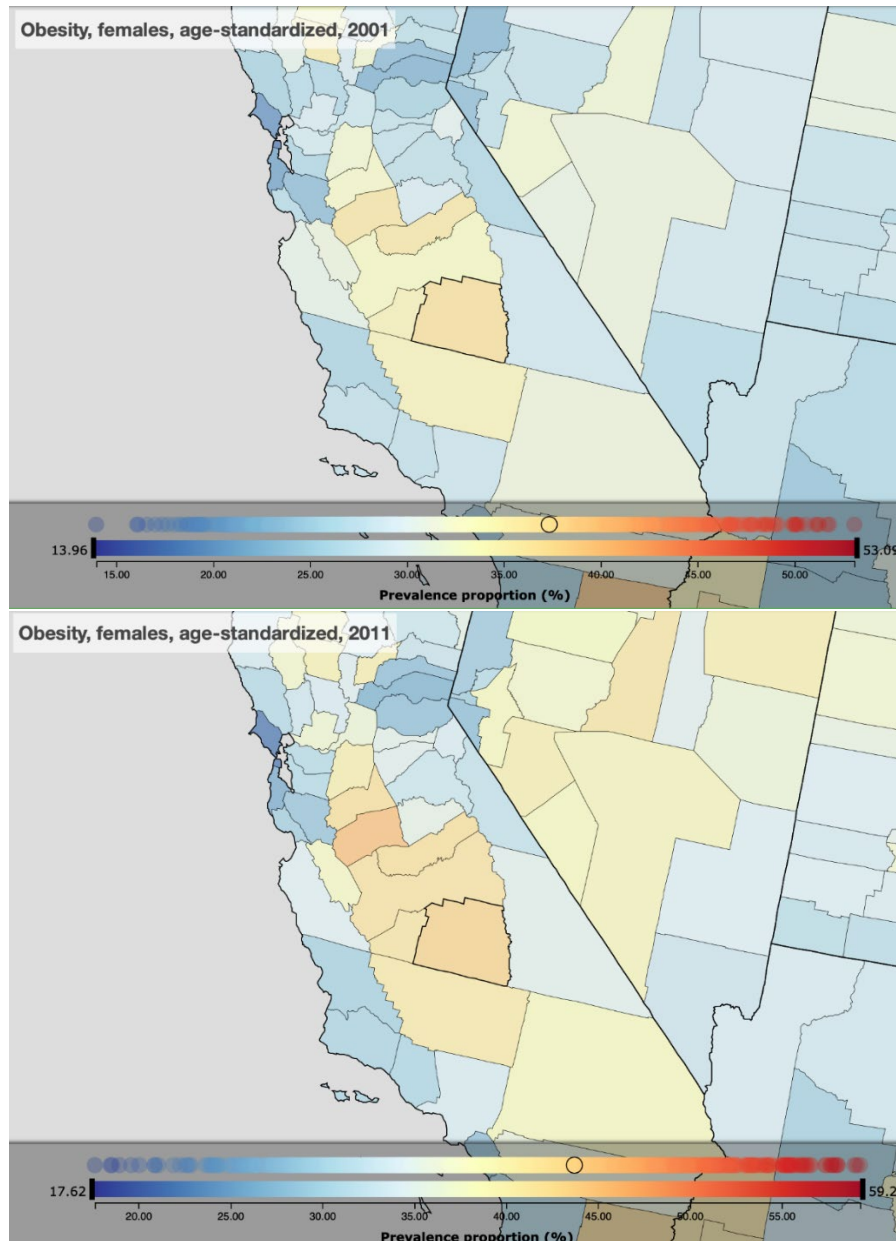


FIGURE 8.10 Female obesity, 2001 & 2011

Source: US Health Map data visualization

Obesity rates increased from 37.34 percent in 2001 to 43.72 percent in 2011 among females. Indicating obesity is more prevalent among females in Tulare County



Summary

In culmination, factors reviewed in this section that may potentially be affecting physical activity levels, which may contribute to obesity percentages, are tree cover along transportation corridors, the presence of complete streets including sidewalks and bike lanes, and availability of public transportation, and outdoor spaces for physical activity. Other notable factors reviewed in other sections are crime, supply of healthy foods in local markets, and availability of recreational facilities that influence cultural norms within community.

Aforementioned components are commonly located within incorporated cities. Without such assets in EJ communities, residents must seek alternative, which may be located miles away, requiring higher expenditures of time and finances. These conditions make it difficult to practice a healthy and active routine.

Policies and Implementation Measures

LU-5.2 Industrial Park Development

The County shall encourage the development of visually attractive, well-landscaped, and carefully-planned industrial parks in areas with suitable topography and adequate infrastructure.

ERM-5.1 Parks as Community Focal Points

The County shall strengthen the role of County parks as community focal points by providing community center/recreation buildings to new and existing parks, where feasible.

AQ-3.3 Street Design

The County shall promote street design that provides an environment which encourages transit use, biking, and pedestrian movements.

HS-9.1 Healthy Communities

To the maximum extent feasible, the County shall strive through its land use decisions to promote community health and safety for all neighborhoods in the County by encouraging patterns of development that are safe and influence crime prevention, promote a high-quality physical environment and encourage physical activity by means such as sidewalks and walking and biking paths that discourage automobile dependency in existing communities.

HS-9.2 Walkable Communities

The County shall require where feasible, the development of parks, open space, sidewalks and walking and biking paths that promote physical activity and discourage automobile dependency in all future communities.

EJ-14: Policy: Encourage capital improvements as outlined in 6 - Crime Prevention that will increase the community safety through CPTED measures, reducing rates of criminal activity and encouraging public use of outdoor spaces.

Implementation Measure:

- A. Analyze Environmental Justice communities through map examination and community engagement to determine accessibility of nearby parks.

EJ-15: Policy : Prioritize improvements to active transportation infrastructure within EJ Communities, such as bike routes and pedestrian networks, that allow access to important community services

Implementation Measure:

- B. Communicate with Environmental Justice Communities to best determine what forms of transportation would best serve the community, including but not limited to Sidewalks, Bus Routes, and Bike Routes

EJ-16: Policy: Tulare County shall examine the accessibility of parks and recreational areas within Environmental Justice communities, and should prioritize eliminating barriers to use of those recreational areas to ensure all community members, particularly those with limited mobility, can enjoy the services provided.

Implementation Measure:

- C. Use information from accessibility of nearby park to prioritize improvements to Environmental Justice Communities that improve accessibility to nearby parks without the need for personal vehicular transportation, such as sidewalks, bike lanes, and bus stops.

EJ-17: Policy: Continue research into the usage of Loop Bus services within EJ Communities to determine validity of need for an expansion of services to those regions.

EJ-18: Policy: Assess and prioritize new development within Environmental Justice Communities that will contribute to physical activity and an active lifestyle.

Implementation Measure:

- D. Coordinate with Tulare County Health and Human Services, Tulare County Parks and Recreation to develop educational materials that encourage active lifestyles.

EJ-19: Policy: The County shall give priority focus to EJ communities to promote walkable projects in their communities.

09 Promote Public Facilities

Introduction

Unincorporated communities in the County of Tulare, including communities selected for this environmental justice analysis, hold varied access to and quantity of public facilities.

Development of comprehensive public facilities has predominantly been implemented in incorporated cities with funding from property and sales taxes. Public Facilities within UDBs, HDB's, and LDB's include services provided by both County and Special Districts. The distance between public facilities and residents in rural communities, however, is challenging depending on the distance, causing such residents to have limited use of public facilities.

The volume and broad geographical distribution of unincorporated communities has made it difficult to provide public services in each community. Historically, limited capital project funding has necessitated a sub-regional approach where larger unincorporated communities serve a broader geographical population than the unincorporated community itself. In any event, many environmental justice communities lack immediate local access to facilities that are essential for economic development, health and wellness, and assets to promote a good quality of living.

Existing Conditions

Educational Institutions: Placement, Assessment & Improvements

Many environmental justice communities do not contain school facilities within their community boundaries. Some communities are limited to elementary school sites and as students are promoted to higher education, they commute or use bus transportation to access school sites outside of the boundaries of their community of residence, which may prohibit the possibility of selecting active transportation. At the time this element was developed, an inventory assessing the resources of school facilities has not been created.

Historically, on a national basis, environmental justice advocates have expressed concerns that school facilities in low-income neighborhoods are not receiving sufficient resources, the materials, or have adequate facilities to provide students with the best quality education. For better understanding of this matter, the County will strive to evaluate which school sites near EJ communities are in greatest need of funding, to create a program of next steps to promote a quality environment at schools and instruction in collaboration with the County Office of Education as feasible and appropriate.

Areas of needed improvement are transportation. Many environmental justice communities, specifically ones without school sites and amid agricultural land, do not have capital investments (i.e. sidewalks) that promote active transportation. Additionally, stop signs and crosswalks are placed based on warrant studies and may not be located at intersections to facilitate active transportation. As a result, there may be an increased use of motor vehicles, and difficulty for low-income families who do not have the commodity of being available to pick up their children from school in sync with the bell schedule. Further, school bus routes are not available to all students, since routes to all environmental justice, or unincorporated communities, may not be available.

Moreover, as mentioned in the section regarding air pollution, various communities – incorporated, unincorporated, and environmental justice communities – have reasonable concerns about pesticide spraying near school sites located amid agricultural crops. Further investigation is worth conducting to assess which school sites are most vulnerable to pesticides to implement buffers where needed to ensure children are not inhaling chemicals that can diminish their health vitality.

According to the 2017 Tulare County Community Health Assessment, educational institutions were viewed as community assets. Participants that contributed to the development of the Community Health Assessment, provided testimonies stating community advocacy for public health initiatives to focus on leveraging resources at school sites, including nutrition education and physical activity. It is advisable that the County utilize policies to promote the use of school sites as spaces for community gatherings, for either planning or celebration of community and ethnic culture.

Internet Access

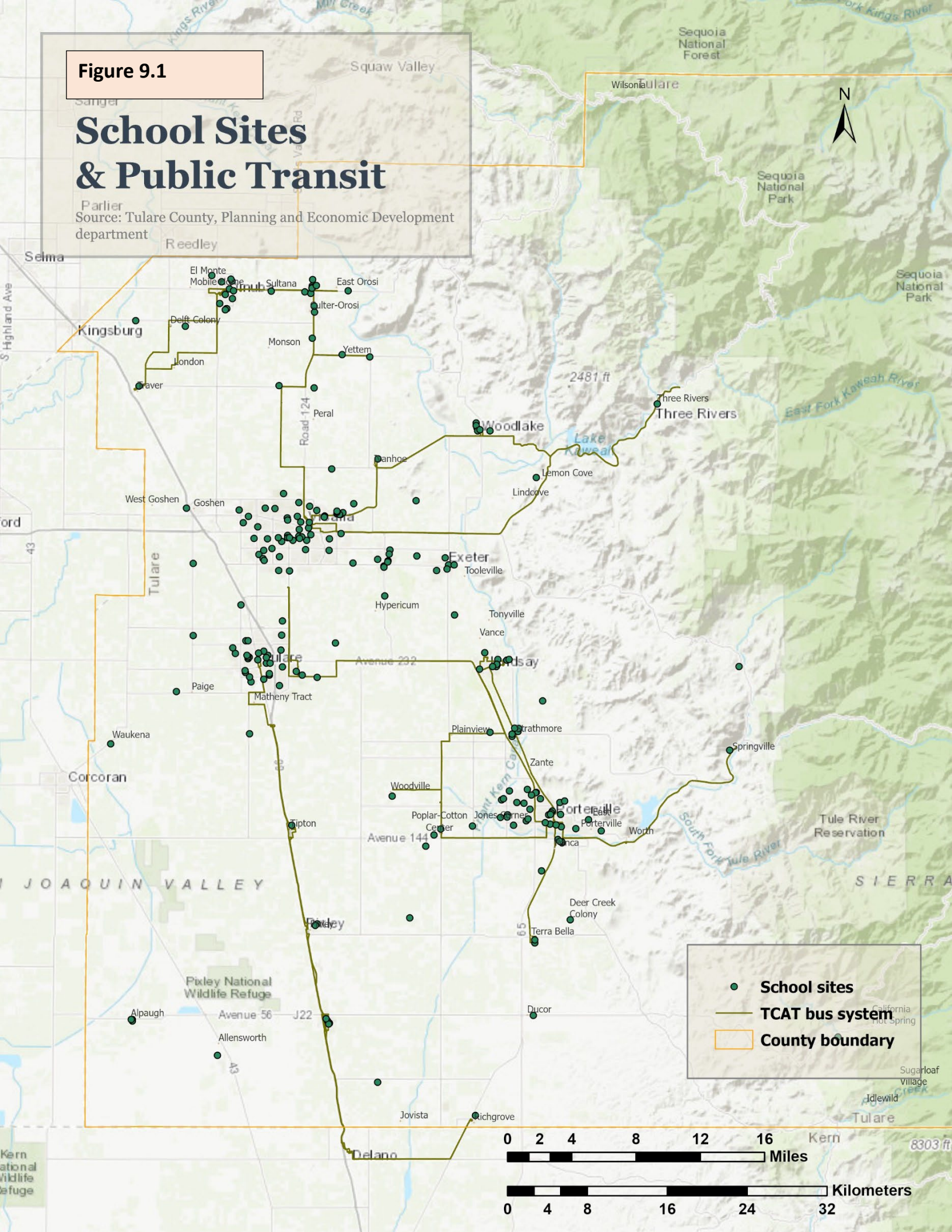
According to Tulare County General Plan, most families in [unincorporated communities] do not have internet access at their homes. Any available internet service is unreliable and cost prohibitive. Residents are told by internet providers that there is not a tower in their area and that is why internet service is either unreliable or expensive compared to what it costs in nearby cities. This is considered to be a problem for residents, as without access to the internet, they are unable to do things such as online job hunting, applying for resources, or provide homework help to their kids.

During the Covid-19 Pandemic, students at households without internet access were limited to how much they were able to participate in virtual classrooms. Even when there is no pandemic, students living in communities without a strong internet connection have less of an opportunity to succeed in academics due to the lack of access to resources. For this reason, it is important that internet access be available at public facilities. Figure 9.1 shows the location of cell towers and signal lines.

Figure 9.1

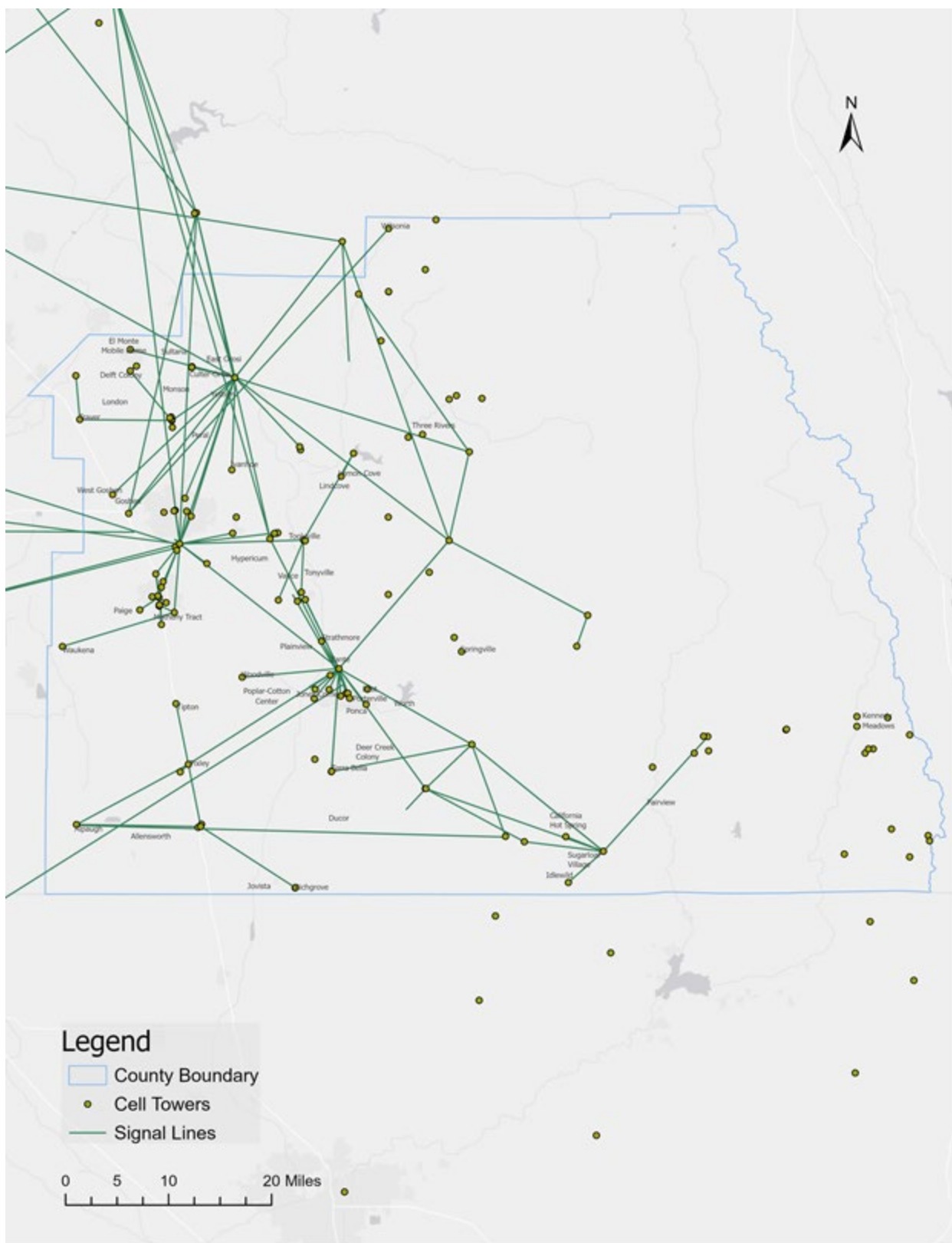
School Sites & Public Transit

Parlier
Source: Tulare County, Planning and Economic Development
department



Source: Tulare County, Planning and Economic Development Division

Source: Tulare County, Planning and Economic Development Division



Public Libraries and Cultural Centers

Communities that currently hold a County branch library include: Orosi, Ivanhoe, Strathmore, Springville, Terra Bella, Alpaugh, Pixley, and Tipton.

Extending Library operation hours would help to facilitate expanded internet capabilities. In Alpaugh, for example, the branch library is open twice a week. With limited funding, the county should continue to seek grant funding to create more employment or paid volunteer hours for community residents that would like to support with operating, cleaning, and organizing library facilities. The County can also consider collaborating with organizations that can support with creating and implementing educational programs, tutoring services, employment search and other civic resources, to increase the value of libraries to surrounding communities.

The library system is comprised of interdependent branches, grouped by services. Grant funding to ensure that all residents in different communities have access to the quality resources should be considered.

The need for libraries may potentially become increasingly important during summer months. Households without air cooling systems, and communities without nearby outdoor spaces with tree cover, may experience more burden. The County recognizes the usage of library facilities as cooling spots and should continue to collaborate with library associations to evaluate community needs around library facilities, and promote the expansion of operation hours, services and programs accessible through libraries, and availability of internet services and other needed resources as feasible and appropriate.

Items worth Inventorying

- Services offered at library branches – understanding accessibility of resources and services can promote equitable distribution.
- Quantity of books on shelves and available for takeout to promote donations or grant funding to supply all libraries with a variation of book genres.
- How frequent community residents use library facilities, what for, and any areas of improvement they recommend.

Cultural Centers

Unincorporated communities range in size and distance to more dense communities with a variation of public facilities. For communities that house a small number of families and that are situated at distance from other communities, it can be costly to implement facilities that will service a few, and not be equally accessible to neighboring communities.

In the past and more recent years, Tulare County has been required — due to limited funding — to determine which projects to fund, and where to implement facilities and resources to benefit multiple communities. Traditionally the availability of funding for cultural centers has

been limited in EJ communities, creating barriers that hinder low-income families from accessing public services with the same level of frequency as other county residents.

In 2020, there is a limited quantity of cultural centers in the County of Tulare, including the following types of facilities: libraries, museums, art galleries, community centers, convention centers, and exhibition halls. These types of facilities are more commonly located in incorporated cities, as shown in Figure 9.3. Access to cultural centers can be difficult through public transportation. This system acts as a lifeline for county residents in various communities, but not all, communities have access to services and employment. A countywide network that permits users to access to many parts of the county in a single day is currently not provided in certain areas due to limited ridership and the inability to meet minimum farebox ratio requirements through analysis contained in the unmet transit needs evaluation process.

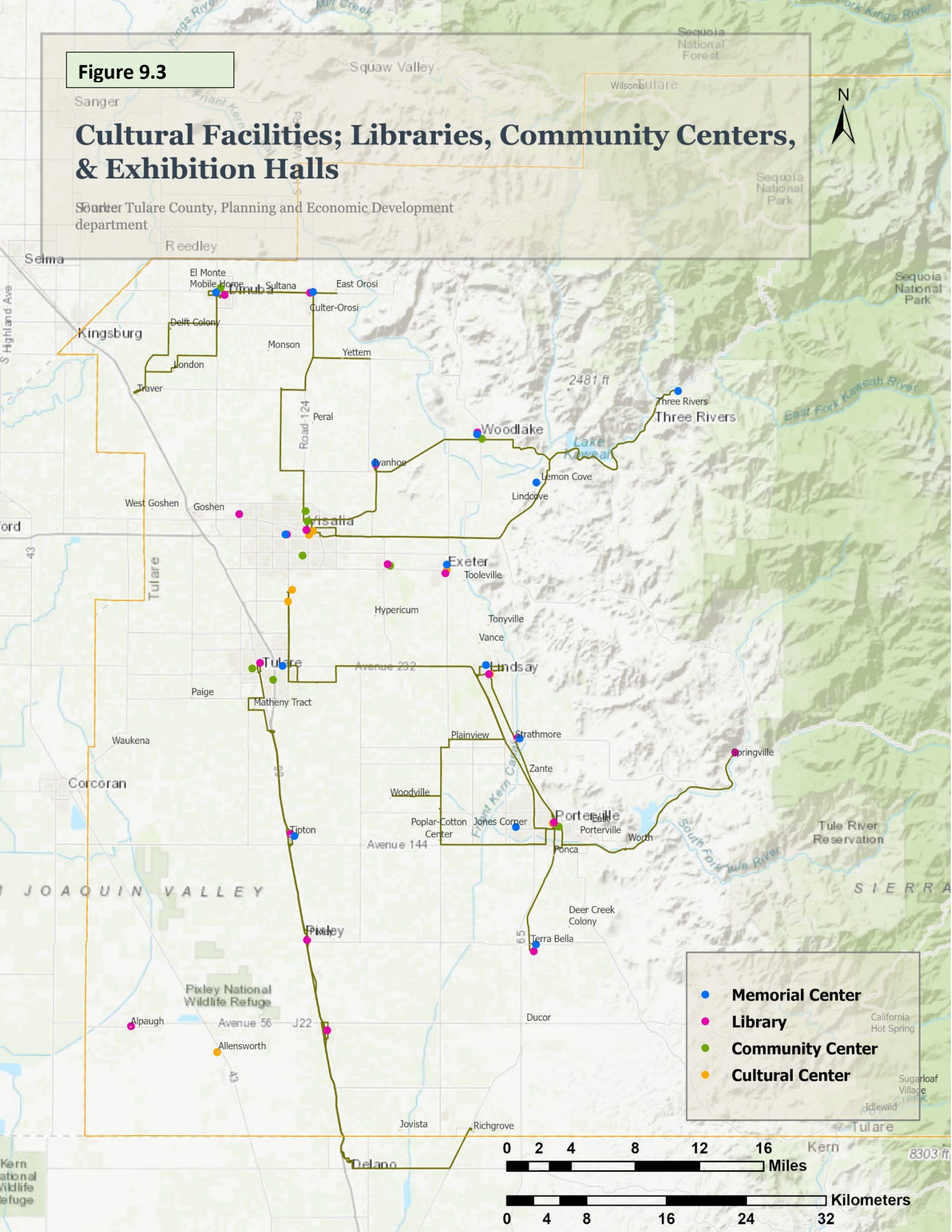
With the current public transit network model, residents living in environmental justice communities may potentially experience more difficulty accessing cultural centers and public services located throughout the county – residents without vehicle access experience more difficulty, and residents with disabilities even more so.

Opportunities to ensure an increasing availability of cultural centers in all unincorporated, environmental justice communities is to assess vacant lot availability, abandoned buildings or housing structures, and existing facilities that can either be retrofitted to host culture, or be evaluated to strategize new collaboration partnerships, and programs to promote existing facilities to provide more resources and attain multi-purpose usage. Without these assets, network ties and the sense of ‘community’ is difficult to cultivate.

Figure 9.3

Cultural Facilities; Libraries, Community Centers, & Exhibition Halls

Source: Tulare County, Planning and Economic Development department



Access to Emergency Facilities

County residents who participated in the 2017 Community Health Assessment shared the following concerns regarding health care facilities. “[There is a need for more culturally sensitive care. [Community health workers] discussed a general lack of cultural sensitivity in many of the health care facilities along with a need for better customer service. The lack of cultural sensitivity was specifically mentioned for the Hispanic community, and they perceive a lack of understanding of provider understanding of their traditions and family relationships.

There was a belief that people with private insurance, however, receive better care and customer service than those with Medi-Cal. Participants reported that people in the community put off getting care because they know they will be treated differently by all personnel: from intake to medical provider, to discharge. These issues are especially apparent when there is a difficulty in communicating in the patient’s language. Participants discussed that clinics and hospitals are not adequately resourced with bilingual staff and people are met with language barriers.

In a similar discussion with the LGBTQ+ focus group members, participants felt that providers in Tulare County need training to become more LGBTQ-friendly. This could be included in a more global approach to culturally competent care that would address specific needs and respect for the diverse populations within the county, reducing barriers for those seeking services.”²⁵

The County acknowledges the concerns of such experiences and importance of promoting cultural competence within the medical field to improve the quality-of-care County residents receive. In regard to health insurance, specifically Medi-Cal and quality of service, reviewing policies for health care facilities is vital, and the County will strive to promote the creation of new policies, if needed, or strongly recommended by community residents and other health related organizations, and implement measures where feasible to improve the quality of service in health care facilities.

Access to health insurance by unauthorized populations – in 2017, 58% of unauthorized populations were uninsured, approximately 80% of which are Hispanic – is an aspect that requires further consideration, including how to provide affordable health care services to uninsured populations, as well as a clearer understanding of how the uninsured are meeting medical needs, and measure the quality of life uninsured families or individual residents may be experiencing.²⁶ As shown in Figure 9.4, Tulare County contains three hospital facilities. Health care facilities such as clinics are located along major transportation corridors and within urban boundaries. Families living in low-income census tracts may experience more difficulty to reach health services due to limited bus routes, and the distance between environmental justice communities and incorporated cities where most facilities are located.

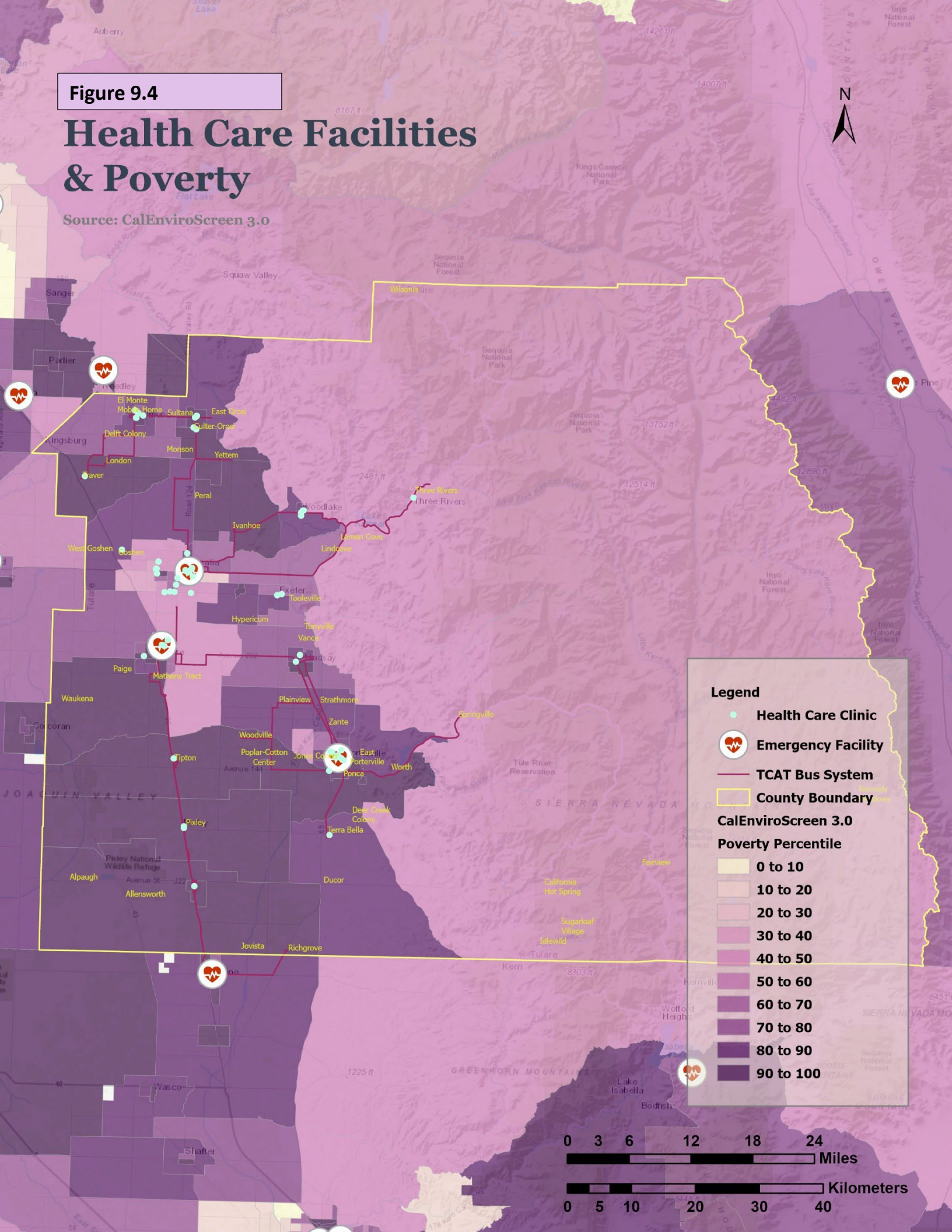
²⁵ 2017 Tulare County Community Health Assessment, page 41

²⁶ Ibid

Figure 9.4

Health Care Facilities & Poverty

Source: CalEnviroScreen 3.0



Public Services: Sheriff & Fire Services

Substations are in locations that allow emergency services to be implemented efficiently to various communities. Table 9.1 shows the location of Sheriff's Department Substations, the community they serve, and the number of public servants in the field at those locations.²⁷

While most unincorporated communities have police and fire services, community residents at environmental justice communities have shown interest in increasing the capacity for police patrol to conduct surveillance at various time of day, but specifically in the evenings. In addition, anecdotally, response time to emergency calls is varied. At the time of this draft, it is unknown how all environmental justice communities and non-EJ communities perceive the quality of service they are receiving from Tulare County Sheriff Departments. Further analysis will be conducted through strategic outreach and online surveys to assess areas where improvement can be made to promote safety.

²⁷ The number of deputies encompasses the total number of deputies of all shifts; however, the minimum number of deputies in the field varies on time of day.

TABLE 9.1 EJ and non-EJ community sheriff department assignation

Source: Tulare County General Plan

Sheriff Station	Location	Area Covering (Sq miles)	Serving Community	Deputies	Sergeants	Lieutenant
Tulare Conty Sheriff's Department substation	40765 Road 128, Cutler	289	Cutler, New London, Orosi, Seville, Sultana, Traver and Yettem, Monson, El Monte Mobile Home, East Orosi	19	5	1
Tulare County Sheriff's Department Substation	833 Akers St. Visalia, CA		Lemon Cove, Ivanhoe, Three Rivers, Delft Colony, Lindcove, Teviston, West Goshen, Hypericum, Matheny, Goshen, Ivanhoe	25	5	1
Tulare County sheriff's Department Pixley Substation	161 N Pine St, Pixley	552	Alpaugh, Allensworth, Teviston, Earlimart, Pixley, Tipton, Woodville, Waukena, Jovista	13	5	1
Tulare County Sheriff's Department Substation	379 N 3rd St., Porterville		Plainview, Ducor, Richgrove, Springville, Strathmore, Terra Bella	19	5	1
Tulare County Sheriff's Department Substaton	379 N 3rd St., Porterville		Jones Corner, Deer Creek Colony, East Porterville, Ponca, Peral, Zante, Worth, Paige, Vance, Wilsonia, Fairview, Idlewild, Kennedy Meadows, Sugarloaf Village, California Hot Spring	19	5	1

TABLE 9.2 EJ and non-EJ community assignment to fire station

Serving Community	Station	Location	Equipment
Lemon Cove	Tulare County Fire Department Station #13	3240 State Route, Lemon Cove	1 Patrol 13, Engine 13, Water Tender 13
Pixley	Fire Station #27	200 N Park Dr, Pixley	Patrol vehicle, Fire Engine, Water Tender
Ivanhoe	Tulare County Fire Department Station #8	32868 Hawthorne Road, Ivanhoe	1 Battalion, Patrol 8 & Engine
Plainview, Strathmore	Tulare County Fire Department Station #16	22908 Avenue 196, Strathmore	Patrol 16, Engine 16
Poplar/Cotton Center, Woodville	Tulare County Fire Department Station #19	22315 Avenue 152, Porterville	Patrol 19, Engine 19, Water Tender 19
Ducor, Terra Bella	Tulare County Fire Department Station #21	32658 Ave 95, Terra Bella	
Richgrove, Jovista	Tulare County Fire Department Station #10	20892 Grove Drive, Richgrove	Engine 10
Springville	Tulare County "Schedule A"	highway 190 and Bridge Street	
Sultana, Monson, El Monte Mobile Home	Tulare County Fire Department Station #3	40404 Road 80, Dinuba	
Three Rivers	Tulare County Fire Department Station #14	41412 South Fork Drive, Three Rivers	750 gallon pumper
Tipton	Tulare County Fire Department Station #26	241 S Graham Rd, Tipton	
Traver, Delft Colony	Tulare County Fire Department Station #2	3811 Avenue 400, Kingsburg	1 Fire Engine
Lindcove	Lemon Cove Fire Station	32490 Highway 198	Patrol 13, Engine 13, Water Tender 13
Teviston	Tulare County Fire Department Station #27	200 N. Park Drive, Earlimart	
Tonyville	Tulare County fire Department Station #15	19603 Avenue 229, Lindsay	
Waukena	Tulare County Fire Department Station #25	2082 Foster Drive, Tulare	

FIGURE 9.5 Emergency public service facilities

Source: Esri Crime Index; Tulare County, Planning and Economic Development Division

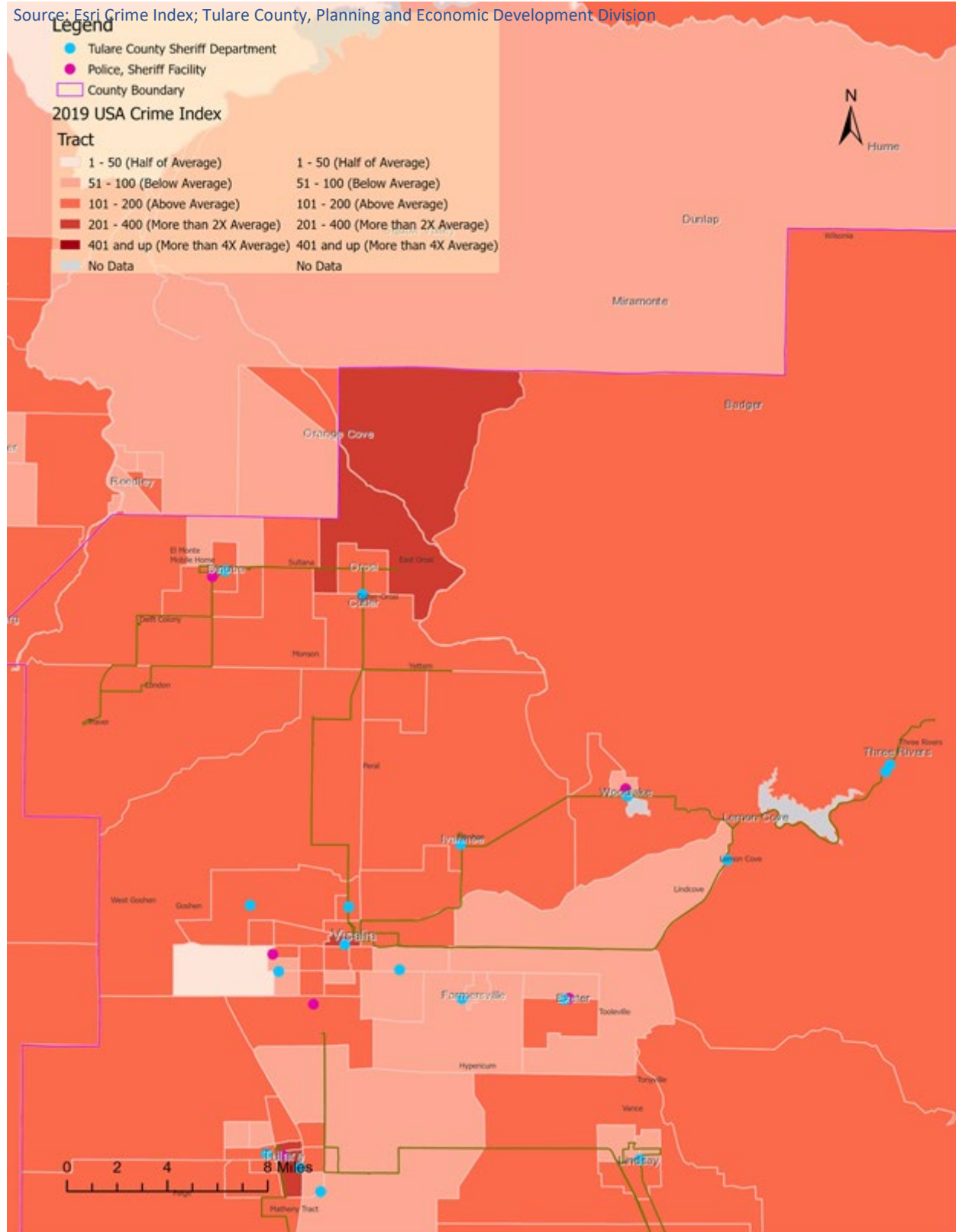


FIGURE 9.6 Emergency public service facilities

Source: Esri Crime Index; Tulare County, Planning and Economic Development Division

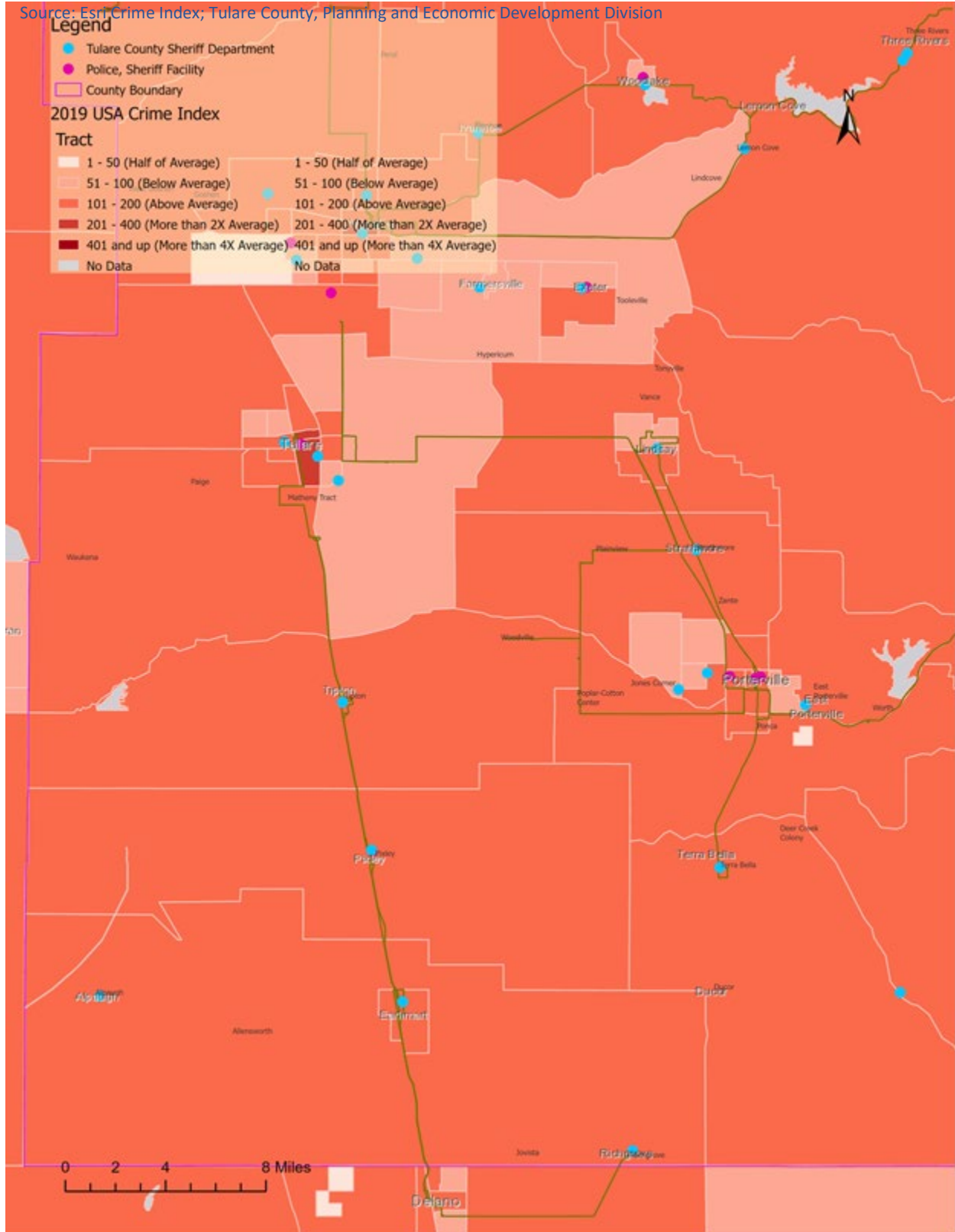
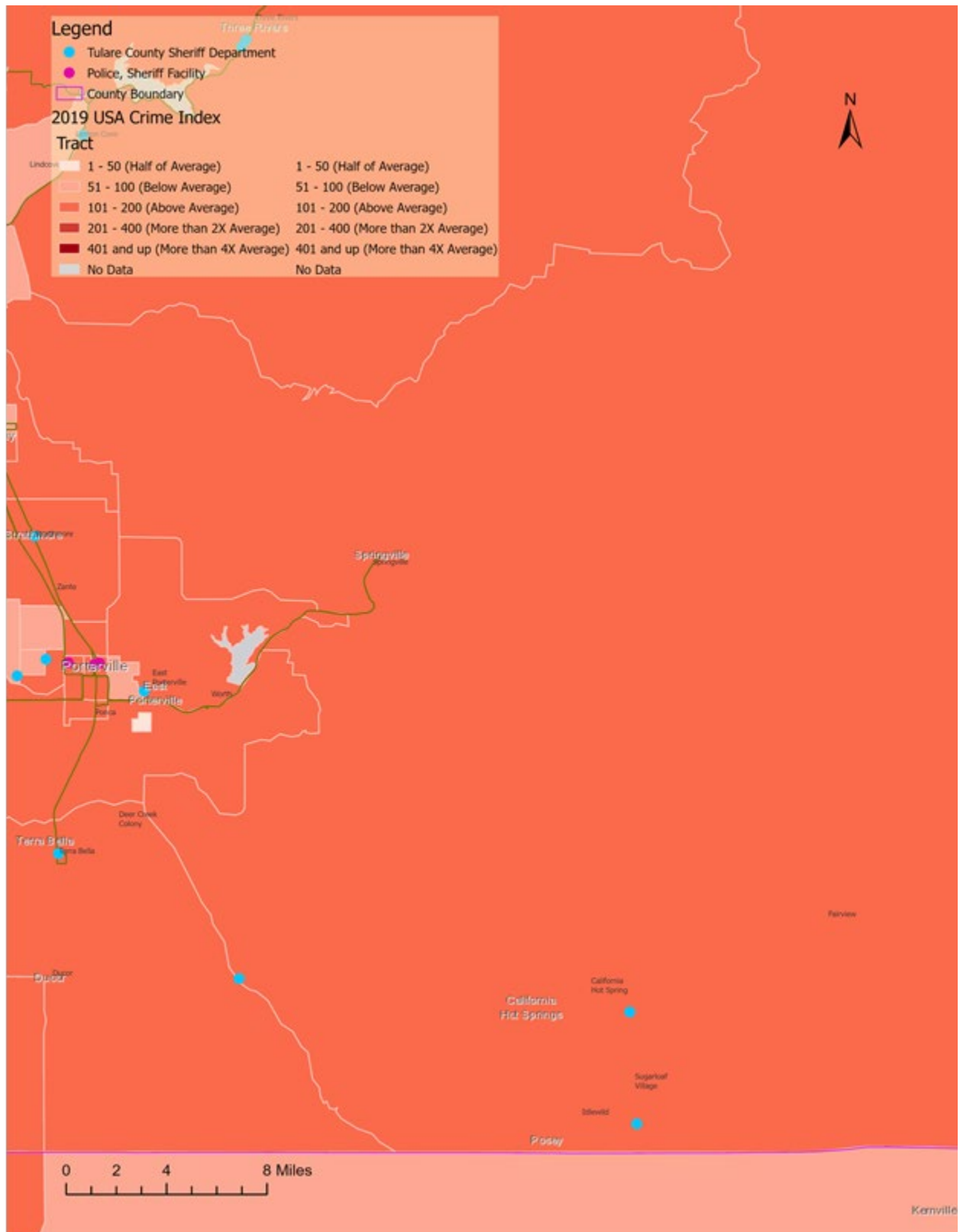


FIGURE 9.7 Emergency public service facilities

Source: Esri Crime Index; Tulare County, Planning and Economic Development Division



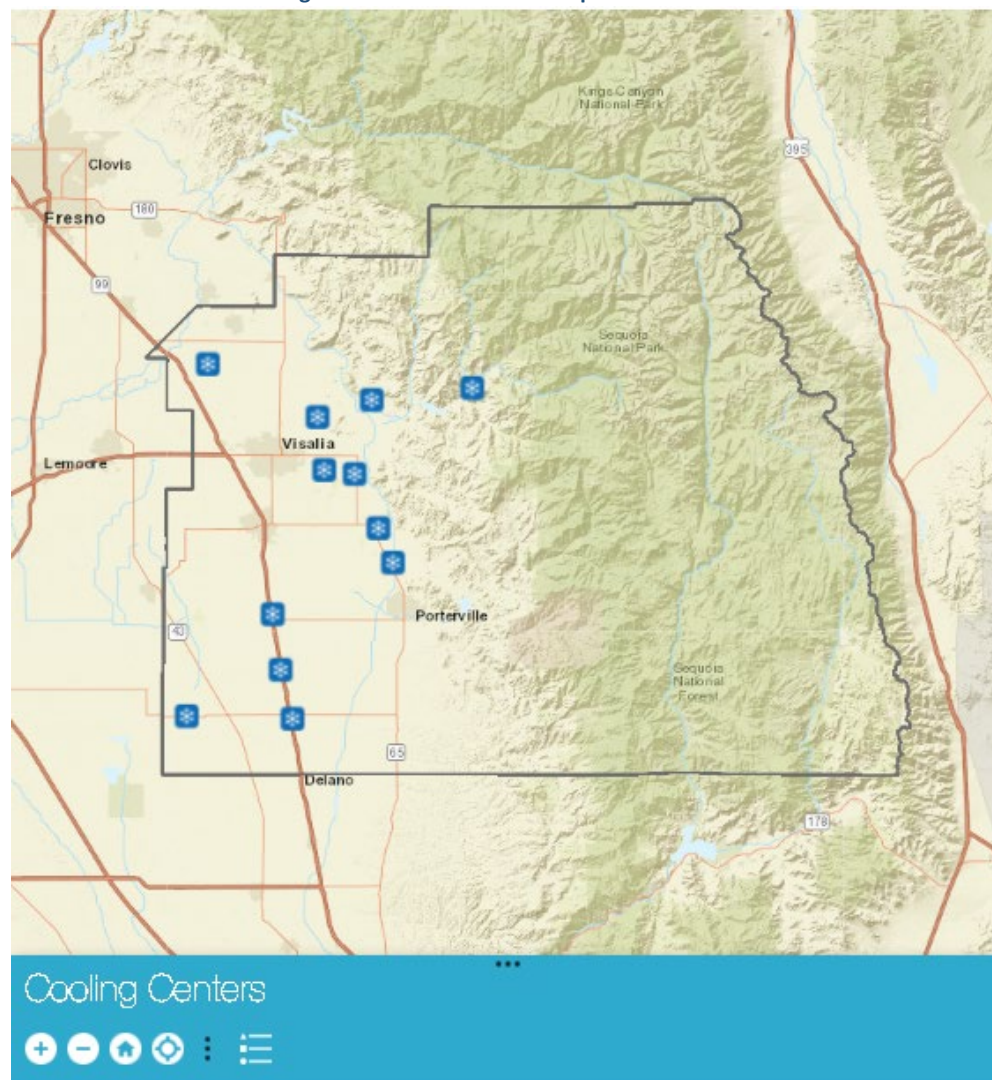
Public Services: Cooling Centers

The Tulare County Health and Human Services have identified 12 cooling centers scattered throughout the Unincorporated Areas of Tulare County. These centers are located in Farmersville, Ivanhoe, Lindsay, Strathmore, Three Rivers, Tipton, Woodlake, Alpaugh, Earlimart, Exeter, London, and Pixley (Figure 9.8). These centers are open to anyone in the public the most centers being open Monday-Friday from 10:00am to 6:00pm.

During 2023 Tulare County experienced 26 days of daily temperatures over 100°. Typically, the hottest months of the year are June-September with daily average temperatures being over 80°. According to the Nation Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) possible heat disorders for People in High-Risk Groups can happen when the Heat Index/Apparent Temperatures reach 80° or more. It is important that the County continues to inform and support Cooling Centers within Environmental Justice Communities.

FIGURE 9.8 Cooling Centers

Source: HHSA website Cooling Center Live Interactive Map



Policies and Implementation Measures

AQ-3.2 Infill Near Employment

The County shall identify opportunities for infill development projects near employment areas within all unincorporated communities and hamlets to reduce vehicle trips.

ED-1.6 Develop Public/Private Partnerships

The County shall pursue partnerships to encourage the development of public facilities and infrastructure improvements that benefit communities.

ED-2.6 Agency Support for Small Businesses

The County shall coordinate with other agencies to provide well-tailored services and job creation resources for small businesses, such as incubator zones.

ED-4.4 Workforce Programs

The County shall support programs that prepare the hard-to-serve unemployed for job readiness.

ERM-5.5 Collocated Facilities (Ivanhoe Community Plan)

The County shall encourage the development of parks near public facilities such as schools, community halls, libraries, museums, prehistoric sites, and open space areas and shall encourage joint use agreements whenever possible.

HS-1.2 Development Constraints

The County shall permit development only in areas where the potential danger to the health and safety of people and property can be mitigated to an acceptable level.

HS-8.8 Adjacent Uses

The County shall not permit development of new industrial, commercial, or other noise generating land uses if resulting noise levels will exceed 60 dB Ldn (or CNEL) at the boundary of areas designated and zoned for residential or other noise-sensitive uses, unless it is determined to be necessary to promote the public health, safety, and welfare of the County.

HS-8.17 Coordinate with Caltrans

The County shall work with Caltrans to mitigate noise impacts on sensitive receptors near State roadways, by requiring noise buffering or insulation in new construction.

LU-1.1 Smart Growth and Healthy Communities

The County shall promote the principles of smart growth and healthy communities in UDBs and HDBs, including:

1. Creating walkable neighborhoods,
2. Providing a mix of residential densities,
3. Creating a strong sense of place,
4. Mixing land uses,
5. Directing growth toward existing communities,
6. Building compactly,
7. Discouraging sprawl,
8. Encouraging infill,
9. Preserving open space,
10. Creating a range of housing opportunities and choices,
11. Utilizing planned community zoning to provide for the orderly pre-planning and long-term development of large tracks of land which may contain a variety of land uses, but are under unified ownership or development control, and
12. Encouraging connectivity between new and existing development.

LU-3.5 Rural Residential Designations

The County shall not re-zone any new areas for residential development in the RVLP area, unless it can be shown that other objectives, such as buffers and the relationship of the development to surrounding uses, can be achieved.

LU-5.4 Compatibility with Surrounding Land Use

The County shall encourage the infill of existing industrial areas and ensure that proposed industrial uses will not result in significant harmful impacts to adjacent land uses.

LU-6.2 Buffers

The County shall ensure that residential and other non-compatible land uses are separated and buffered from major public facilities such as landfills, airports, and sewage treatment plants.

LU-6.3 Schools in Neighborhoods

The County shall encourage school districts to locate new schools in areas that allow students to safely walk or bike from their homes.

LU-7.10 Gateways/Entry-points

The County shall identify key entry points on the edges of the communities and support programs and projects that enhance gateways and transitional zones between communities to make each community more distinctive and inviting for residents and visitors.

PF-3.3 Hamlet Plans

The County shall ensure that Hamlet Plans are updated and maintained for each of the identified hamlets. These plans shall include the entire area within the HDB. The plans will provide a Land Use Diagram with a discussion of allowed uses and densities/intensities. A discussion of the hamlet's short- and long-term ability to provide necessary urban services, including the availability and sufficiency of long-term water supplies will also be provided.

PF-3.5 Improvement Standards in Hamlets

The County shall require development within the designated HDBs to meet context sensitive standards for improvements. Typical improvements could include curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and community sewer and water systems.

EJ-20: Policy: Encourage the use of existing library services to ensure community members have access to the services they offer, including but not limited to internet connection, educational resources, and indoor cooling.

Implementation Measure:

- A. Collaborate with Tulare County library organizations to create a more accessible space for Environmental Justice community members.

EJ-21: Policy: Promote the development or revitalization of public community centers on vacant lot or abandoned buildings in EJ Communities.

Implementation Measures:

- B. Communicate with Environmental Justice Communities to best determine what locations within the community would benefit from revitalization or development of community spaces.

EJ-22: Policy: Collaborate with mobile healthcare clinics to implement and coordinate services with primary care clinics in priority areas.

EJ-23: Policy: The County shall encourage Environmental Justice community residents to enroll in an affordable healthcare program.

Implementation Measures:

- C. The County shall collaborate with Tulare County HHSA to promote the Tulare County Medical Services (TCMS) program for qualified community members.

EJ- 24: Policy: The County shall encourage access to emergency and non-emergency health services for Environmental Justice Communities.

- D. Collaborate with Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency, Tulare County Transportation Authority, and the community-based organizations to analyze accessibility of emergency and non-emergency health services to Environmental Justice Communities.

EJ-25: Policy: Continue research and analysis through surveys and strategic outreach to determine the most effective improvements, such as new developments or employment growth, to promote community safety and response of Sheriff and Fire Services to EJ Communities.

EJ-26: Policy: When developing new public facilities within Tulare County, the County will consider accessibility of Environmental Justice Communities to the services provided by the new public facility.

Implementation Measure:

- E. Communicate with Environmental Justice Communities to best determine what forms of transportation infrastructure would allow residents of those communities to best access public facilities.

10 Reduce **Pollution** **Exposure**

Introduction

Tulare County's basin is about 4% urban and land is primarily used for agriculture and petroleum extraction (U.S Geological Survey, May 2023). According to the Tulare County Farm Bureau from the summary of their latest crop report, the County's total gross production value for 2021 is \$8,089,621,300, with milk, poultry, and livestock being its greatest commodity.

²⁸While the abundance of agriculture has provided the County with much of its revenue, it has also wreaked havoc in its water system and is one of the causes of air pollution. This section will explore the County's exposure to water and air pollution.

Existing Conditions: Air Pollution

Ambient Air Quality Standards

"Ambient air quality is described in terms of compliance with Federal and State standards. Ambient air quality standards are the levels of air pollutant concentrations considered safe to protect the public health and welfare. They are designed to protect people most sensitive to respiratory distress, such as asthmatics, the elderly, very young children, people weakened by other disease or illness, and persons engaged in strenuous work or exercise. National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) were established by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 1971 for six air pollutants as identified below. States have the option of adding other pollutants, to require more stringent compliance, or to include different exposure periods.

The California Air Resource Board (CARB) is required to designate areas of the State as attainment, non-attainment, or unclassified for any State standard. An "attainment" designation for an area signifies that pollutant concentrations did not violate the standard for that pollutant in that area. A "non-attainment" designation indicates that a pollutant concentration violated the standard at least once, excluding those occasions when a violation was caused by an exceptional event, as defined in the criteria. An "unclassified" designation signifies that data does not support either an attainment or non-attainment status.

State and Federal ambient air quality standards have been established for the following pollutants:

- Ozone (O₃),

²⁸ *Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner's Annual Crop Report:*

- Carbon Monoxide (CO),
- Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂),
- Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂)
- Fine Particulate Matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM₁₀), and
- Lead

For some of these pollutants, notably O₃ and PM₁₀, the State standards are more stringent than the Federal standards. The State has also established ambient air quality standards for:

- Sulfates,
- Hydrogen Sulfide, Vinyl Chloride, and
- Visibility Reducing Particles.

The above-mentioned pollutants are generally known as “criteria pollutants.”

In 1997, the EPA announced new ambient air quality standards for O₃ and PM₁₀. The new standards were intended to provide greater protection of public health. The EPA proposed to phase out the 1-hour O₃ standard and replace it with an 8- hour standard. The EPA also announced new PM_{2.5} standards. Industry groups challenged the new standard in court and the implementation of the standard was blocked. However, upon appeal by the EPA, the U.S. Supreme Court reversed this decision and upheld the EPA’s new standards. Beginning in 2002, based on three years of monitoring data, the EPA will designate areas as non-attainment that do not meet the new PM_{2.5} standards.

On June 20, 2002, CARB adopted amendments for statewide annual ambient particulate matter air quality standards. The ambient annual PM₁₀ standard was lowered from 30 micrograms per cubic meter (µg/m³) to 20 µg/m³. As no ambient annual state standard existed for PM_{2.5}, a new annual standard was established at 12 µg/m³. A 24-hour average standard for both PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} was retained. These standards were revised/established due to increasing concerns by CARB that previous standards were inadequate, as many people in California may be exposed to levels at or above the current State PM₁₀ standards during some parts of the year, and the statewide potential for significant health impacts associated with particulate matter exposure was determined to be large and wide-ranging. Particulate matter impacts primarily effect infants, children, the elderly, and those with pre-existing cardiopulmonary disease.”

Existing Emission Sources

Tulare County falls within the southern portion of the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin (SJVAB), which is bordered on the east by the Sierra Nevada range, on the west by the Coast Ranges, and on the south by the Tehachapi Mountains. These features restrict air movement through and out of the SJVAB.

Pollution emissions of the SJVAB are generated over many moderate sized communities. Emissions levels in the San Joaquin Valley have been decreasing overall since 1990; however,

despite improvements, Tulare County still ranks as one of the most polluted counties in the state and the nation.

The primary source of carbon monoxide (CO) and nitrogen oxides (NOx) emissions are vehicle miles traveled. The largest contributor to reactive organic gases (ROG) emissions focuses on the oil and gas production area located in the lower part of the SJVAB, which includes Tulare County. ROG emissions from vehicles have been decreasing since 1985 due to more strict standards even though the vehicle miles have been increasing.

Direct PM10 emissions decreased between the years 1975 to 1995 and have remained relatively constant since 2000. Vehicles traveling on unpaved road and agricultural activities are a substantial source of PM10 emissions in the SJVAB.

Local Ambient Air Quality

Responsibility for meeting California's standards is addressed by the CARB and local air pollution control districts (such as the eight county SJVAPCD, which administers air quality regulations for Tulare County). Compliance strategies are presented in district-level air quality attainment plans.

The California CAA requires that air districts prepare an air quality attainment plan if the district violates State air quality standards for criteria pollutants including carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, PM2.5, or ozone. Locally prepared attainment plans are not required for areas that violate the State PM10 standards. The California CAA requires that the State air quality standards be met as expeditiously as practicable but does not set precise attainment deadlines. Instead, the act established increasingly stringent requirements for areas that will require more time to achieve the standards.

The air quality attainment plan requirements established by the California CAA are based on the severity of air pollution caused by locally generated emissions. Upwind air pollution control districts are required to establish and implement emission control programs commensurate with the extent of pollutant transport to downwind districts.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District operates several ambient air monitoring stations within Tulare County, three of which are located in the mountains areas at Sequoia National Park: Lower Kaweah (measures ozone); Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park ([SEKI]), measures ozone); and Lookout Point at Sequoia National Park (measures ozone). An air monitoring station is also located in a low-lying area of the County in Visalia (North Church Street - measures ozone, PM10, PM2.5, and CO). The air monitoring station at SEKI typically records the highest levels of ozone in Tulare County.*

* Refer to the Recirculated Draft EIR, Tulare County General Plan, Air Quality Section, page 3.3-11, Table 3.3-2 to view ambient air quality data for maximum concentrations of the non-attainment pollutants at each of the air monitoring stations located in Tulare County.

The federal non-attainment designation is subdivided into five categories (listed in order of increasing severity): marginal, moderate, serious, severe, and extreme. The degree of an area's non-attainment status reflects the extent of the pollution and the expected time period required in order to achieve attainment. Designated non-attainment areas are generally subject to more stringent review by CARB and EPA. In summary, the attainment status of SJVAB is presented in Table 10.1.

TABLE 10.1 SJVAB Attainment Status

Pollutant	Designation/Classification	
	Federal Standards	State Standards
Ozone – one hour	No Federal Standard ¹	Nonattainment/Severe
Ozone – eight hour	Nonattainment/Serious ²	Nonattainment ²
PM10	Attainment ³	Nonattainment
PM2.5	Nonattainment ⁴	Nonattainment
CO	Attainment/Unclassified	Attainment/Unclassified
Nitrogen Dioxide	Attainment/Unclassified	Attainment
Sulfur Dioxide	Attainment/Unclassified	Attainment
Lead	No Designation/Classification	Attainment
Hydrogen Sulfide	No Federal Standard	Unclassified
Sulfates	No Federal Standard	Attainment
Vinyl Chloride	No Federal Standard	Attainment
Visibility Reducing Particles	No Federal Standard	Unclassified

1 Effective June 15, 2005, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) revoked the federal 1-hour ozone standard, including associated designations and classifications. However, EPA had previously classified the SJVAB as extreme nonattainment for this standard. Many applicable requirements for extreme 1-hour ozone nonattainment areas continue to apply to the SJVAB.

2 On April 30, 2007 the Governing Board of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District voted to request EPA to reclassify the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin as extreme nonattainment for the federal 8-hour ozone standards. The California Air Resources Board, on June 14, 2007, approved this request. This request must be forwarded to EPA by the California Air Resources Board and would become effective upon EPA final rulemaking after a notice and comment process; it is not yet in effect.

3 On September 25, 2008, EPA redesignated the San Joaquin Valley to attainment for the PM10 National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) and approved the PM10 Maintenance Plan.

4 The Valley is designated nonattainment for the 1997 federal PM2.5 standards. EPA released final designations for the 2006 PM2.5 standards in December 2008 (effective in 2009), designating the Valley as nonattainment for the 2006 PM2.5 standards.

SOURCE: SJVAPCD, 2008, *Ambient Air Quality Standards and Valley Attainment Status*, available at <http://www.valleyair.org/aqinfo/attainment.htm>; accessed June 5, 2009.

Generally, the air quality in Tulare County is not optimal. Although mitigation measures have been implemented and pollution has decreased, geographic characteristics (Sierra Nevada Mountain Range) enclose pollution, keeping it stagnant, on the valley floor. Incorporated cities and environmental justice communities are pollution burdened. Socioeconomic factors within environmental justice communities, however, affect the strength of resilience residents are able to exercise against the effects of, air pollution, pesticides, and groundwater contamination.

Environmental justice communities do not necessarily have a disproportionate quantity of facilities releasing pollution or toxins into the ambient air. Incorporated cities, based upon CalEnviroScreen 4.0 information, generally contain more quantities of cleanup sites, toxic release facilities, etc. Challenges regarding low or poor access to health care services, nutritious food to maintain and sustain a healthy immune system, and limited tree cover and spaces for environmental justice communities than some comparable communities that do not exhibit similar characteristics.

The CalEnviroScreen 4.0, Tracts Experiencing Highest Pollution Burden

Considered as one of the most challenged locations in the nation, emission sources in the San Joaquin Central Valley include transportation corridors (State Highway 99 and 198); vehicle miles traveled by motor vehicle and freight traffic, and combustion sources such as railroads; industrial sites releasing greenhouse emissions; dairies releasing methane and nitrous oxide and carbon dioxide; and manufacturing and processing facilities driving freight traffic to export goods.

In 2014, residential areas in Tulare County that experienced the highest pollution burden were census tracts adjacent to incorporated cities, where a concentration of manufacturing facilities, packing warehouses, and distribution centers release GHG emissions, as seen in Figure 9.1. Indicators included in the pollution burden score are: Ozone, PM2.5, Diesel PM, Toxic Releases, Traffic, Drinking Water, Cleanup Site, Groundwater Threat, Solid Waste Sites, Hazardous Waste Sites.

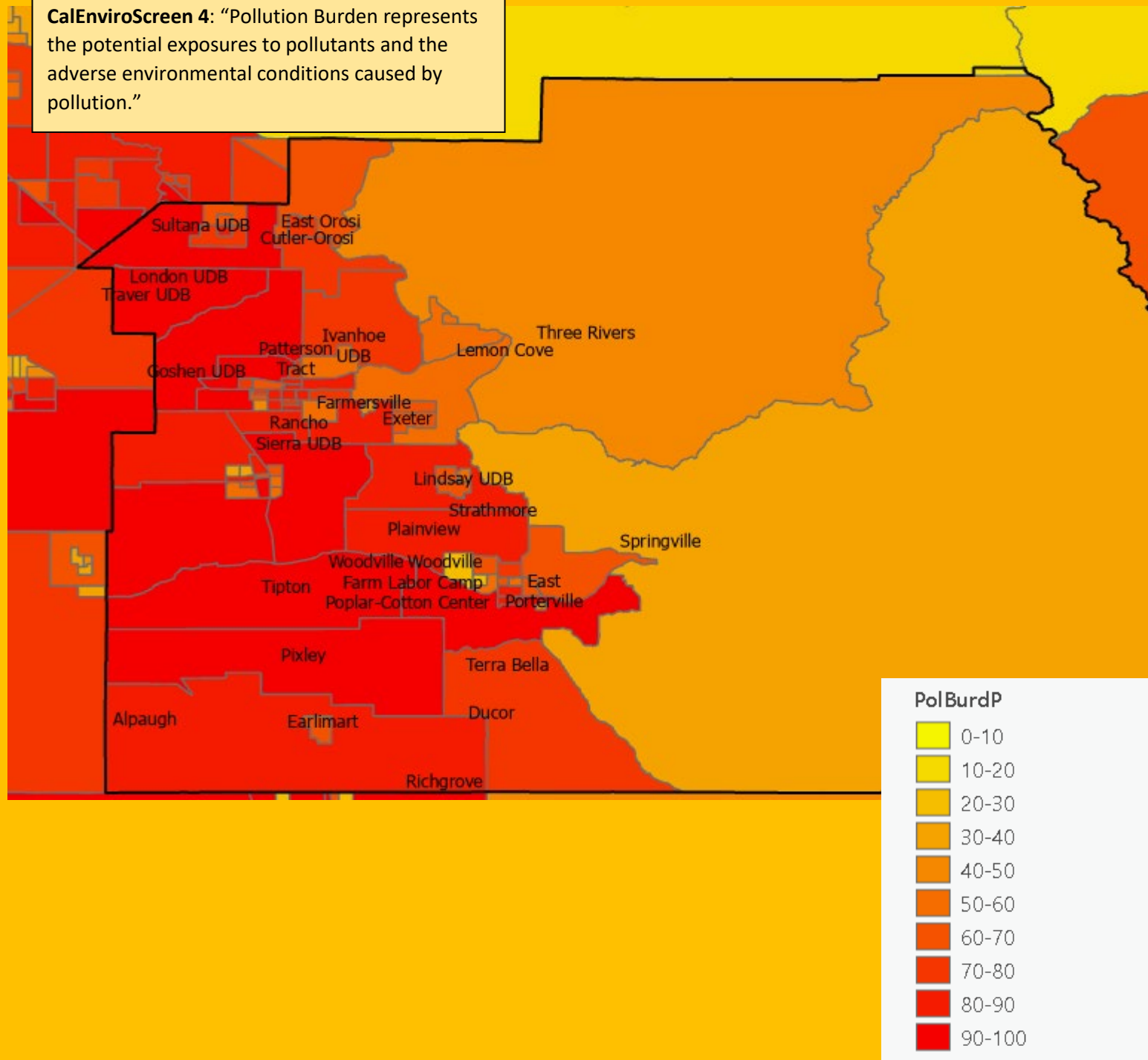
The following contains information on the different indicators included in the CalEnviroScreen Pollution Burden score, as well as criteria pollutants.

Figure 10.1 Pollution Burden

CalEnviroScreen 4: “Pollution Burden represents the potential exposures to pollutants and the adverse environmental conditions caused by pollution.”

Figure 10.1 Pollution Burden

CalEnviroScreen 4: “Pollution Burden represents the potential exposures to pollutants and the adverse environmental conditions caused by pollution.”



Air Pollutants of Concern

Ozone

Ozone is a colorless, odorless gas formed by three pollutants: nitrogen oxides (NO_x), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and carbon monoxide (CO). In the stratosphere, ozone absorbs ultraviolet rays, but due to its extremely reactive nature, it creates smog in the lower atmosphere. High temperatures and stagnant wind conditions favor ozone formation, so between May and September is when ozone levels tend to occur in the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin.

According to the American Lung Association State of the Air 2017 report, based on air quality monitoring data collected in 2013-2015, Tulare County ranked fourth among all cities in the United States, and third in the state of California for ozone pollution: second in short-term particle pollution and first in year-round particle pollution.

In 2018, Tulare County had 41.6 fewer High Ozone days since 1996. The TCAG 2018 RTP/SCS used updated models, traffic data, and demographic data to estimate Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT). This has resulted in more accurate VMT estimates that are substantially lower VMT than was used to develop the 2012 CAP emission inventory. The estimated VMT for 2015 in the 2012 CAP was 4.38 million VMT per day. The VMT from the TCAG 2018 RTP/SCS for unincorporated Tulare County is 2.47 million, a difference of 43.6 percent below 2012 CAP projections.

In addition to the TCAG modeling changes, growth is well below projections as illustrated by comparing the percentage VMT growth projected in the CAP with actual population growth that has occurred between 2015 and 2019 in unincorporated Tulare County. The 2012 CAP predicted growth averages 3.1 percent per year, which would result in a 15.5 percent increase in 5 years. The 2018 CAP Updates uses a 1.3 percent per year growth rate that reflects the lower current growth projections.

This results in projected growth of 6.5 percent in 5 years, which is 7.9 percent more than has actually occurred during this period. The growth in unincorporated Tulare County between 2015 and 2019 based on changes in population reported by the DOF was -1.4 percent, meaning that growth in VMT was negative over the last 5 years as provided in Table 8 of the 2018/19 Progress Report.

The adverse effects that ozone has on human's health include irritation of the respiratory tract, causing breathing difficulty, coughing, and throat irritation. Exposure to elevated levels of ozone can also increase the lung's susceptibility to infections, allergens, and other air pollutants. The greatest threat is to those spending time outdoors during periods of high ozone levels.

Spikes in particle pollution are attributed to diesel engine exhaust, wood-burning devices and wildfires. In 2017, the Lung Association noted that 85 percent of the smog forming in the Valley was correlated to diesel trucks and buses. Ozone continues to be a problem due to warming

temperatures and increased traffic. Air regulations in the valley aim to mitigate wood burning by setting regulations in 2011 limiting farmers from burning trees that were turned over for new plantings.

FIGURE 10.2 Tulare county ozone levels by year (1996-2021)

Source: American Lung Association

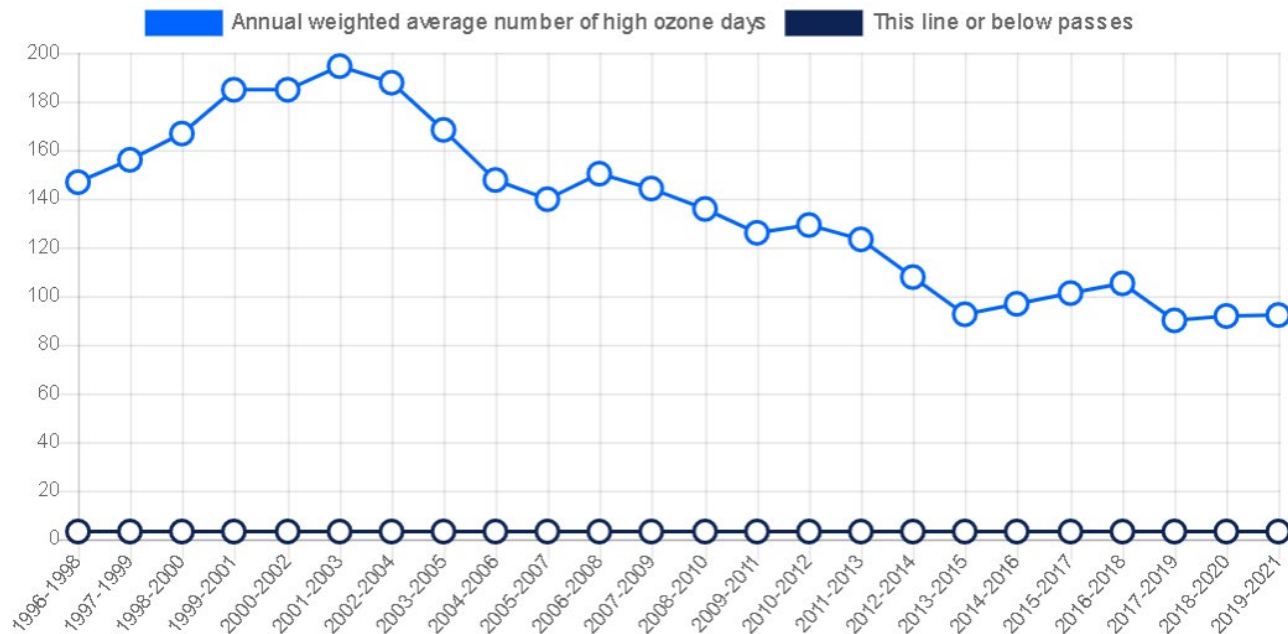
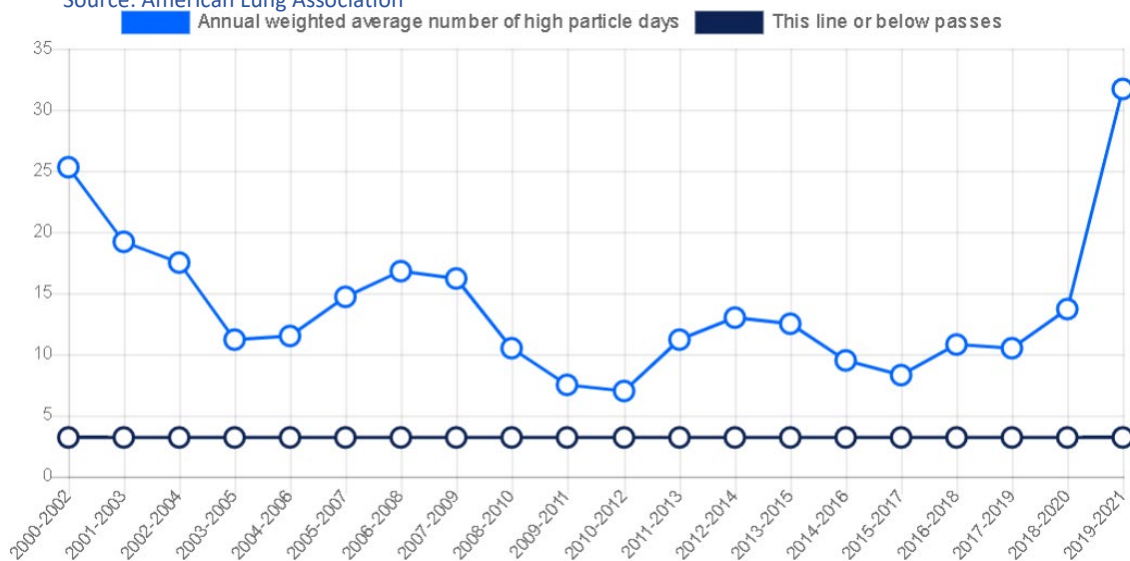


FIGURE 10.3 Annual particle pollution changes, (2000-2021)

Source: American Lung Association



Diesel Particulate Matter

Particulate matter (PM) is a generic term used to describe a complex group of airborne solid particles and liquid droplets (aerosols). The size of particulate matter can vary from coarse windblown dust particles to fine particles directly emitted or formed from chemical reactions occurring in the atmosphere. PM₁₀ comprises particles with an aerodynamic diameter less than or equal to a nominal 10 microns. PM_{2.5} comprises particles with an aerodynamic diameter less than or equal to a nominal 2.5 microns.

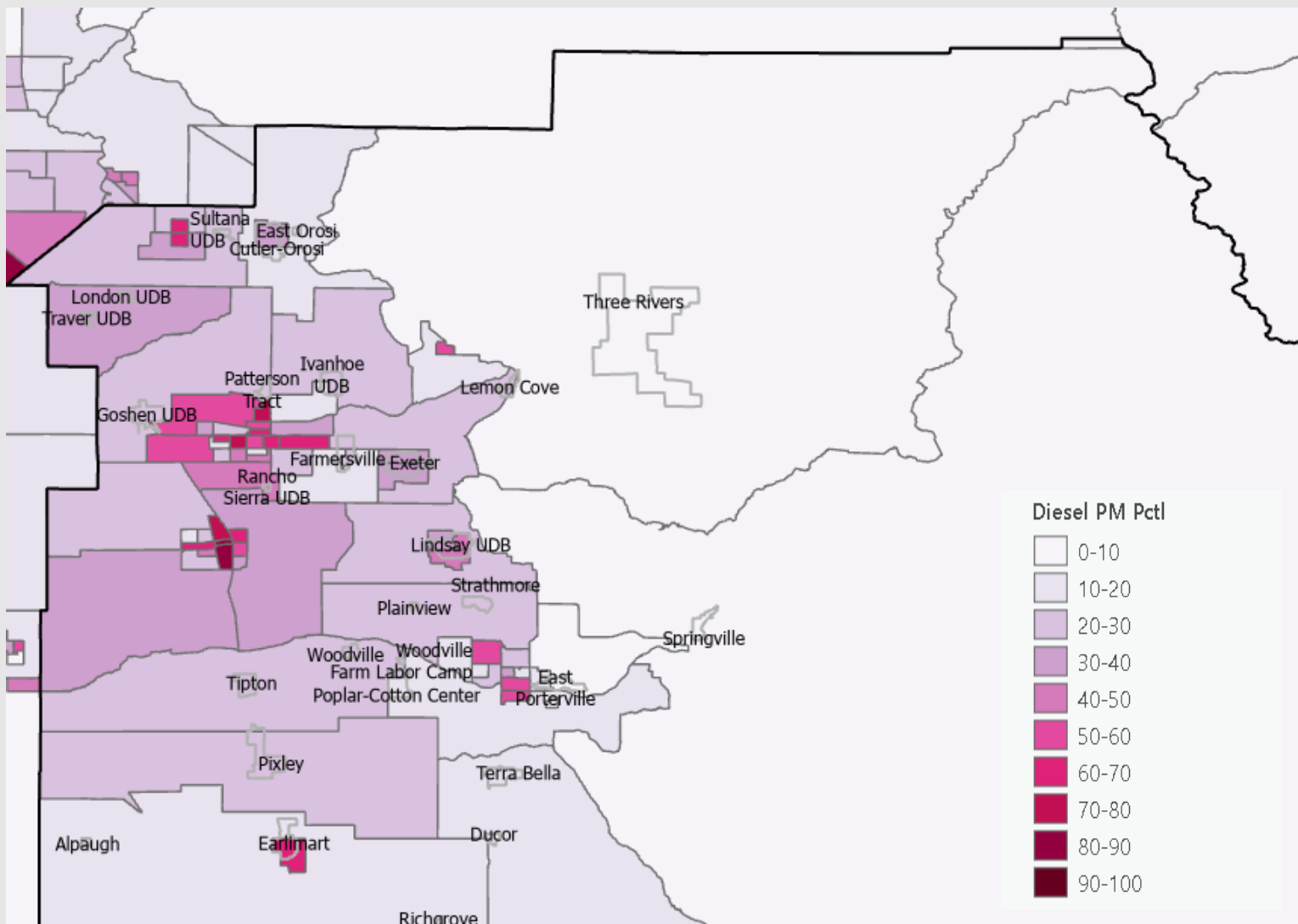
Components of particulate matter include small particles such as dust, fly, ash, soot, smoke, aerosols, fumes, and mists and condensing vapor that can be suspended in the air for extended periods. Particles originate from a variety of anthropogenic sources (primary emissions) and once in the atmosphere, by transformation of gaseous emissions, contaminants form or help form PM (secondary emissions). For example, sources such as freight transportation and locomotive engines emit diesel particulate matter.

Exposure to diesel PM, or inhalation of, through the upper respiratory airways can lead to particulate deposits in the lungs causing adverse health effects and increased likelihood of death from other causes. If finer particles are absorbed, they can be absorbed in the bloodstream, which can carry toxic materials to other parts of the body. Populations that are at greater risks from exposure include children, people of all ages with asthma, and the elderly with illnesses like bronchitis, emphysema, and pneumonia.

The highest emissions of particulate matter are experienced in cities such as Visalia, Tulare, and Porterville. In 2010, two environmental justice communities (Delft Colony, Ponca) were within or near census tracts that emitted approximately 7.0-13.0 kilograms per day of diesel PM, with percentile scores between 32-47 percent, the highest of all environmental justice communities. In 2012, those communities experienced a decreased in diesel particle pollution, while emissions increased in census tracts located in NW Visalia, increasing from 34 to 62 percentile. These tracts are within proximity to Goshen and West Goshen. Starting January 1, 2020, California Senate Bill 1, the Truck and Bus Regulations requires heavy-duty diesel vehicles that operate in California to reduce toxic air contaminants (TACs) emissions from their exhausts. This is done by requiring all trucks and buses to have a 2010 or newer model engines to reduce particulate matter (PM) and oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) emissions.

Figure 10.4 Diesel Particulate Matter

CalEnviroScreen4: “Exhaust from trucks, buses, trains, ships and other equipment with diesel engines contains a mixture of gases and solid particles. These solid particles are known as diesel particulate matter (diesel PM). Diesel PM contains hundreds of different chemicals. Many of these are harmful to health. The highest levels of diesel PM are near ports, rail yards and freeways. The particles in diesel PM can reach deep into the lung, where they can contribute to health problems including eye, throat and nose irritation, heart and lung disease, and lung cancer. Children and the elderly are most sensitive to the effects of diesel PM.”



Pesticides

The State of California has the authority to regulate pesticides as per Food and Agricultural Code 11501.1. Essentially, the law states that no ordinance or regulation of local government "may prohibit or in any way attempt to regulate any matter relating to the registration, sale, transportation, or use of pesticides, and any of these ordinances, laws, or regulations are void and of no force or effect." It also describes that steps the director takes if such an ordinance or regulation is enacted.

In Tulare County, the Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner Pesticide Use Enforcement Division is responsible for the enforcement of regulations by the Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC) dealing with the safe use of pesticides. This includes the issuance of restricted materials permits, the supervision of applications and the surveillance of dealers, pest control advisors, and pest control businesses.

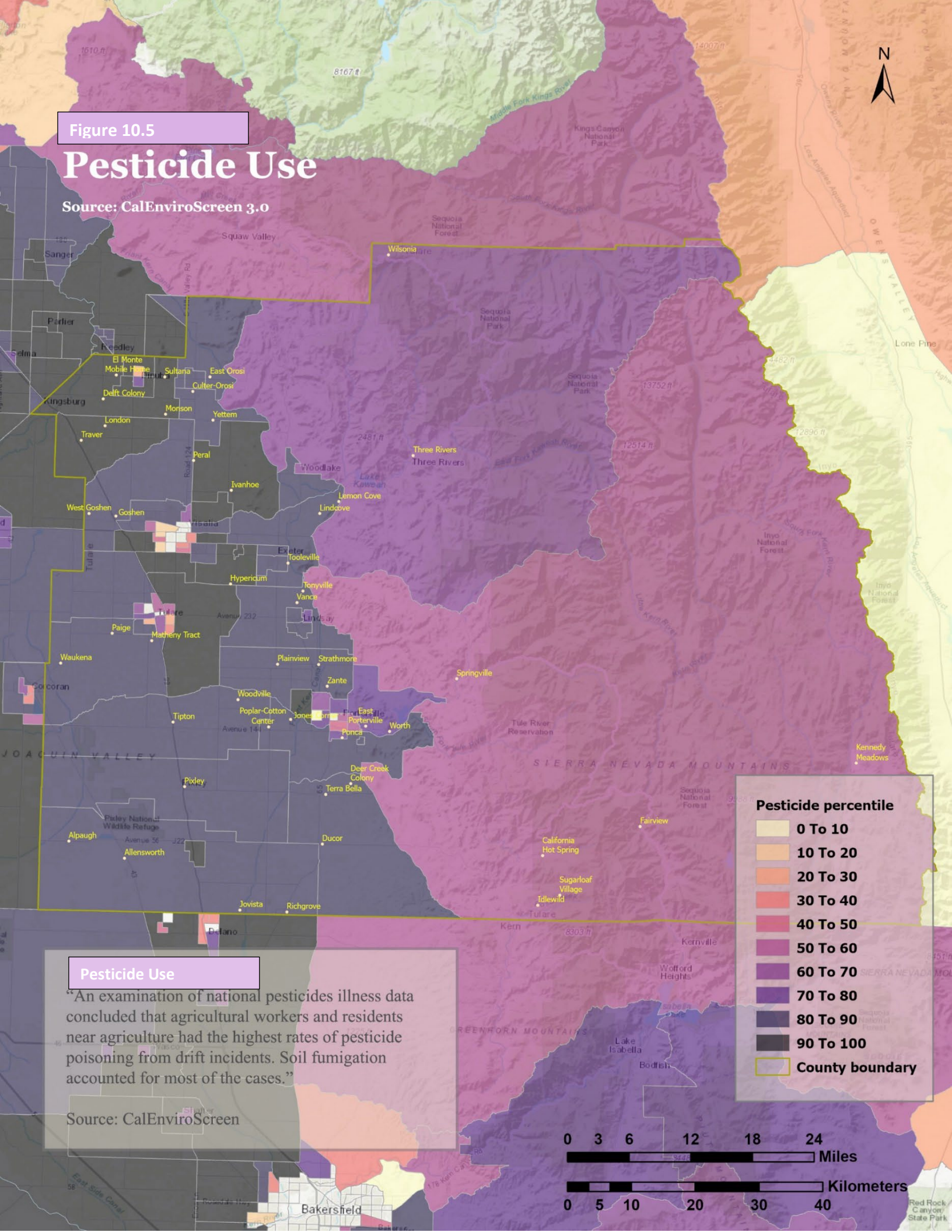
There are various forms of pesticides which include insecticides (bug killers), herbicides (weed killers), and fungicides (fungus killers). Insecticides, which are toxic, mean to target the brain and nervous system of insects, with the potential to have neurotoxic effects in humans that can cause neurodevelopment effects like autism and ADHD. Herbicides may also contribute to chronic risk related to exposure. Exposure to small amounts of pesticides may increase the risk of diseases or disorders such as cancer, Parkinson's disease or can cause harm to infertility and the reproductive system.

Agricultural workers have reported cases related to pesticide contamination in Tulare County. However, according the 2017 Community Health Assessment, nearly one quarter of pesticide related illnesses reported are not agriculture-related. Rather pesticides affect community residents near agricultural fields, experiencing aftereffects of exposure, and not reporting or seeking health care due to economic means or other factors. Health advocates are concerned that not all residents are aware of the effects pesticides may potentially have on health.

Figure 10.5

Pesticide Use

Source: CalEnviroScreen 3.0



Evaluation, the CalEnviroScreen Assessment

The California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) performed an assessment from data gathered by the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) from 2012 to 2014. The analysis review a subset of 70 variations of pesticides known to be hazardous and volatile, factors that make for higher risk of residents contracting pesticide-related illnesses and potentially chronic disease.

Figure 10.5 shows the severity of potential exposure to not only environmental justice communities, but to a high proportion of the county in valley floor areas. Each census tract was designated a pesticide score, which was calculated by taking the total pounds of selected active pesticide ingredients during 2012-2014 by the area of the census tract.

Pesticides found consistently throughout environmental justice communities and their counterparts are: 1, 3-Dichloropropene, Buprofezin, Carbaryl, Chlorothalonil, Chlorpyrifos, Dimethoate, Fenpropathrin, Flumioxazin, Hydrogencyanamide, Malathion, Metam Sodium, Methidathion, Methomyl, Methyl Bromide, Methyl Parathion, Sodium Tetrathiocarbonate, Trifluralin, Ziram. These are identifiable through the Pesticide Indicator map (CalEnviroScreen), which provides a list of pesticides in highest use by census tract.

Pesticides of Concern

1, 3 Dichloropropene (1,3-D) is a fumigant used to control diverse, soil dwelling pests. The chemical is absorbed in the lower and upper respiratory tracts leading to systemic toxicity. Exposure estimates indicate that “while short-term public exposures to 1,3-D [do] not exceed DPR’s level of concern, seasonal and annual ambient exposures to children, exposures to adults and children adjacent to applications, and exposures to some workers involved in 1,3-D applications [do].”

Chlorpyrifos is a broad-spectrum insecticide. Short-term symptoms include headaches, agitation, inability to concentrate, weakness, tiredness, nausea, diarrhea and blurred vision. And Longer-term health impacts may include the following:

- **Adverse effects on neurodevelopment:** Chlorpyrifos has been shown to cause neurodevelopment effects, such as impacting genes that control essential processes in developing brain cells.
- **Reduced birth size:** Women who used indoor insecticides containing chlorpyrifos, before its phase out, and experienced utero exposure to the chemical had decreased birth length and birth weight (See Tables 3-A and 3-B below).

- **Lung and prostate cancer:** According to the Center for Disease Control, it is not known whether chlorpyrifos can cause cancer. However, the EPA has classified chlorpyrifos as a carcinogen.²⁹

Communities in Tulare County are commonly susceptible to chlorpyrifos, an insecticide used in the production of fruits, specifically orange groves. In July 2015, EPA had planned to eliminate the product to take it off the market, based on recommendations of agency scientist in March 2017, but administration reversed this decision. Many community residents living near orange groves may potentially be exposed to chlorpyrifos, while some residents living in the incorporated community of Lindsay, CA, can attest to chemical exposure.

²⁹ Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). 1997. [Toxicological Profile for Chlorpyrifos](#). Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service.

Case Study: Increasing Rates of Chlopyrifos in Lindsay, CA

Between 2014 and 2016, members from community and statewide organizations sampled the air in the City of Lindsay for pesticides, specifically chlopyrifos, by setting up “Drift Catchers,” an air sampling system, at various sites, and collected over 100 air samples, of which a quarter had detectable levels of chlopyrifos. Eleven percent of the samples were above the levels determined to be “acceptable” for a 24-hour exposure by children.

The EPA have set “acceptable” levels of chlopyrifos at 170 ng/m³. Data collected for this study indicated that every household in Lindsay, CA, near an orange grove, inhaled measures of the chemical above the acceptable standard. One household described to be nearly surrounded by orange groves experienced chemical levels at 1902 and 1017 ng/m³ on two consecutive days.

Environmental justice communities near agricultural fields, and other rural communities, are at greater risk of inhaling pollution from pesticide spraying. Many community residents in EJ community residents are low-income and are unable to attain appropriate medical care to treat symptoms. It’s not uncommon for household heads having to choose between ensuring their families are food secure than paying medical fees, imposing an overburden of health illness.

EJ Community advocates have expressed an interest in promoting notifications entailing what pesticides will be sprayed and when, and are necessary to provide residents with the opportunity to seek shelter to avoid airborne pollution exposure. Further, to protect the well-being of the of future generations, not only for residents living in environmental justice communities, and to avoid overburdening limited health care facilities and the County health care system, further collaboration is recommended to reduce exposure regarding the use of pesticides.

AB 947, Jackson. Pesticides: School Sites

Assembly member Hanna-Beth Jackson wrote the Assembly Bill (AB) 947, a pesticide penalty for spraying $\frac{1}{4}$ miles of school sites bill, signed into law by the Governor of California on September 11, 2002. AB 947 would increase the penalties of not more than \$1,000 for each violation of any provision body of law relating to pesticides to not more than \$5,000 for each violation determined to be a serious violation. This bill would also authorize a county agricultural commissioner to charge a fee for monitoring subsequent pesticide applications made within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of a school by a person who has received a civil penalty for a specified violation of law relating to pesticides.

State and local organizations and Tulare County community residents have directed their attention to Assembly Bill (AB) 947, recognizing the bill's adoption into state legislation in 2002.

Community residents in living in neighborhoods located adjacent to or within close proximity of agricultural fields express concerns for the safety of children at school facilities near fields where pesticides such as Chlopyrifos are sprayed.

Implementing measures that set time restrictions on when farmers can spray pesticides, sensitive to times of day when people are outdoors and active, is a top priority for the County, especially when criteria pollutants combined with pesticides overwhelm all clean air measures and lead to high pollution concentrations. Under these circumstances, consideration of buffers between agricultural land uses and incompatible land uses, and provide notifications to residents so that sensitive individuals, in particular, can take precautions to minimize exposure should be evaluated as feasible and appropriate.

TABLE 10.2 A. Emergency department visits for asthma and heart attack per 10,000 people & percent of low-birth-weight babies by census tract

Source: CalEnviroScreen 4.0

Census Tract	EJ Community	Asthma		Heart Attack		Low Birth Weight	
		Ppl.	%ile	Ppl.	%ile	%	%ile
6107000201	Orosi	55	63	15.68	70	4.96	51
6107000202	East Orosi	53	61	14.94	65.94	7.27	92
6107000301	Delft Colony	58	66	15.27	68.20	4.16	30
	El Monte Mobile Home						
	Monson						
	Sultana						
6107000302	London	59	68	12.37	49.50	6.48	83
	Traver						
6107000600	Culter	48	54	13.52	57.49	5.86	72
	Yetter						
6107000800	Ivanhoe	33	31	12.73	52.28	5.09	55
6107000900	Goshen	40	41	13.12	54.79	4.88	49
	Peral						
	West Goshen						

TABLE 10.2.B Emergency department visits for asthma and heart attack per 10,000 people & percent of low-birth-weight babies by census tract

Source: CalEnviroScreen 4.0

Census Tract	EJ Community	Asthma		Heart Attack		Low Birth Weight	
		Ppl.	%ile	Ppl.	%ile	%	%ile
6107001400	Tooleville	39	41	13.30	55.7	4.61	41
6107001602	Hypericum	42	44	12.88	53.14	5.79	71
6107002100	Paige	62	71	18.62	82.99	4.70	44
6107002500	Tonyville	40	41	13.34	56.12	4.23	32
6107002601	Vance	49	56	16.34	73.03	3.09	10
6107003100	Matheny Tract						
	Waukena	65	75	19.94	87.23	5.80	71
6107003200	Tipton						
	Woodville	37	37	13.17	55.10	4.77	46
6107003300	Plainview						
	Strathmore						
	Zante	44	47	18.70	83.35	4.84	48
6107003400	Jones Corner						
	Poplar-Cotton Center			19.64	86.04		
	Ponca			21.22	91.55		
	Worth	57	66	18.1	83.64	4.72	44
6107003902	East Porterville	54	61	18.81	83.64	6.13	78
6107004200	Pixley						
	Teviston	41	43	16.40	73.62	4.83	48
6107004300	Allensworth						
	Alpaugh						
	Jovista	45	49	14.57	64.02	5.46	64

	Richgrove						
6107004500	Deer Creek Colony	65	75	15.23	67.93	3.59	18
	Ducor						
	Terra Bella						

TABLE 10.2.C Emergency department visits for asthma and heart attack per 10,000 people & percent of low-birth-weight babies by census tract

Source: CalEnviroScreen 4.0

Census Tract	Non-EJ Community	Asthma		Heart Attack		Low Birth Weight	
		Ppl.	%ile	Ppl.	%ile	%	%ile
6107000100	Lemon Cove	27	19	11.21	39.64	6.60	85
	Lindcove						
	Wilsonia						
	Three Rivers						
6107002700	Springville	30	25	12.85	53.03	5.95	74
	Fairview						
	Idlewild						
	Kennedy Meadows						
	Sugarloaf Village						
	California Hot Spring						

Considerations for Mitigation Policies and Implementation Measures Related to Pesticides

To protect communities from pesticide pollution the Safe Air for Everyone (SAFE) campaign launched in 2003 provided the following recommendations:

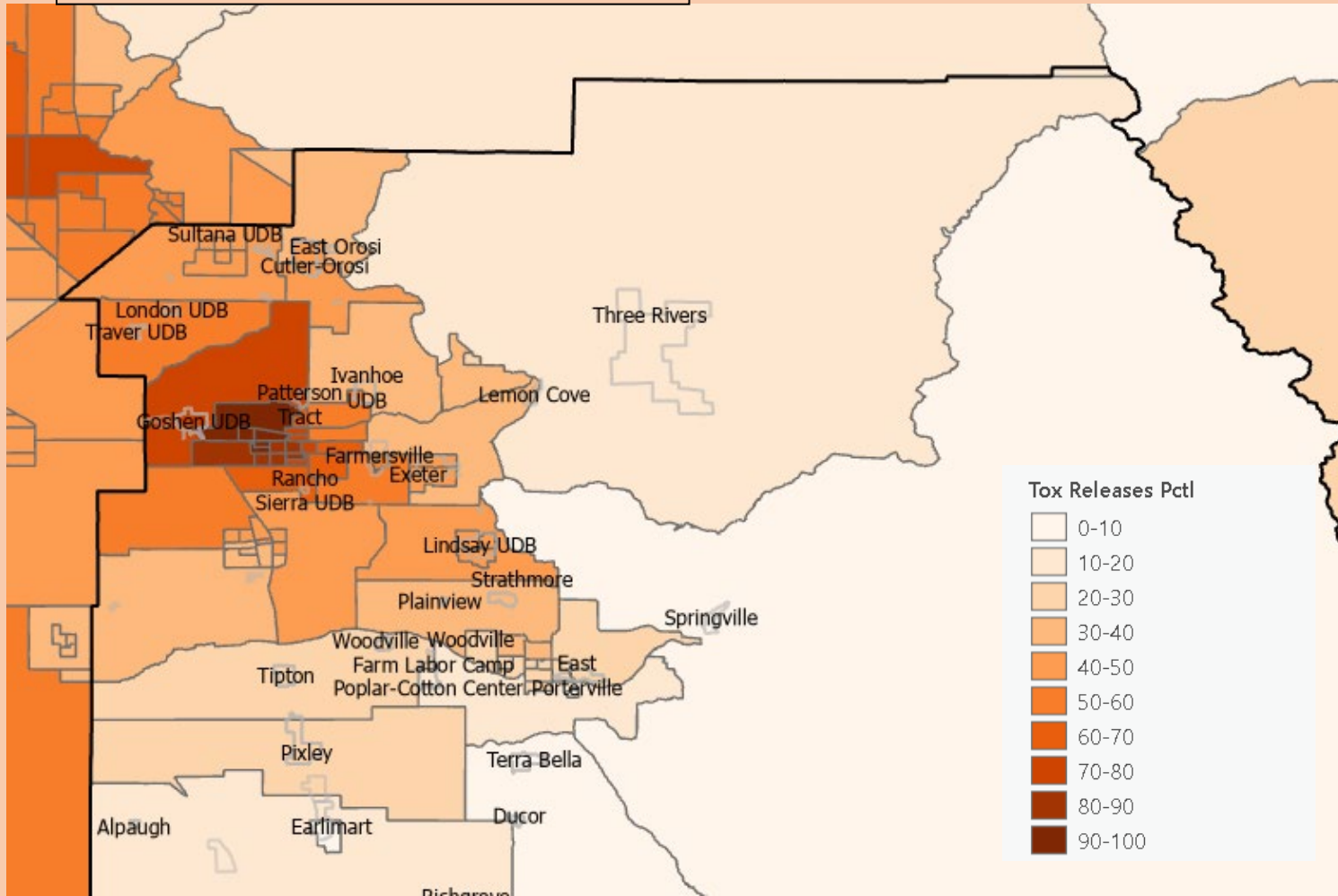
- Establish no-spray Protection Zones around sensitive sites. Sensitive sites include school facilities, communities, day cares, and hospitals.
- Phase out all uses of chlorpyrifos and other pesticides prone to pollute air.
- Establish state government support for farmers transitioning away from the use of synthetic pesticides.
- Implement neighbor notifications laws for all pesticides applications near homes, schools, businesses or public areas.

Pollution Emission, Toxic Missions Facilities

Facilities that make or use toxic chemicals can release these chemicals into the air. These chemicals are sometimes detected in the air of communities nearby. People living near the indicator represents modeled air concentration of chemical releases from large facility emissions in and nearby the census tract. This indicator takes the air concentration and toxicity of the chemical to determine the toxic release score. Figure 10.6 shows the CalEnviroScreen 4.0 data below which indicates that the higher percentages of these concerns are located in and around the urbanized areas on the valley floor.

Figure 10.6 Toxic Releases from Factories

CalEnviroScreen4: Facilities that make or use toxic chemicals can release these chemicals into the air. These chemicals are sometimes detected in the air of communities nearby. People living near facilities may breathe contaminated air regularly or if contaminants are released during an accident.



Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The County of Tulare adopted the Tulare County Climate Action Plan (CAP) in August 2012. The CAP includes provisions for an update when the State of California Air Resources Board (CARB) adopts a Scoping Plan Update that provides post-2020 targets for the State and an updated strategy for achieving a 2030 target. Governor Brown signed Senate Bill (SB) 32 on September 8, 2016, which contains the new 2030 target.

The CARB 2017 Scoping Plan Update for the Senate Bill (SB) 32 2030 targets was adopted by the CARB on December 14, 2017 which provided new emission inventories and a comprehensive strategy for achieving the 2030 target (CARB 2017a). With the adoption of the 2017 Scoping Plan, the County proceeded with the update and adoption of the 2018 CAP Update.

The 2018 CAP Update incorporates new baseline and future year inventories to reflect the latest information and updates the County's strategy to address the SB 32 2030 target. The 2030 target requires the State to reduce emissions by 40 percent below 1990 levels from the 2017 Scoping Plan and County data. The CAP identifies the County's fair share of reductions required to maintain consistency with the State target.

The 2018 CAP Update follows the format of the adopted CAP and includes much of the original content of the 2012 CAP. Major updates to the emissions inventories were prepared to reflect the latest information. The regulatory environment section has been updated to reflect new legislation and replace items that have been superseded by updated regulations. This CAP follows a four-step process recommended by the Institute for Local Government. First, an inventory of greenhouse gas emission sources was developed for a base year (2015) to identify the most important categories and potential for emission reductions. Second, future year inventories for 2020 and 2030 were generated to illustrate what emissions would be in the future accounting for projected growth, but without controls on the sources.

The future year inventory is referred to as a "business-as-usual scenario." The year 2020 projection was used to allow comparison to the State's target year in the 2008 CARB Scoping Plan. The General Plan planning horizon year and the new 2017 CARB Scoping Plan 2030 target year used the year 2030 projection to identify the growth in emissions that would occur. The 2020 and 2030 inventories were projected by interpolating emissions growth predicted between the 2015 base year and 2030. The third step was to identify and describe policies, regulations, and programs that apply to sources in the County's emission inventories and will achieve reductions by the target years.

The policies, regulations, and programs considered in the CAP include those by federal, state, and local governments. These were then quantified to the extent possible using best available methodologies and data to determine the amount of reductions that are needed by the target years from Tulare County to achieve consistency with State targets. The last step was the development of a monitoring program that tracks implementation progress and emission reductions over time and identifies a process for taking corrective actions, if needed.

Tulare County's Role

One of the key issues to resolve in developing a CAP is defining the County's role in reducing emissions from the different source categories. The County's focus is on emission sources within its regulatory authority, which are mainly related to land use and the local transportation system. To some extent, the County can influence activities that provide greenhouse gas reductions such as water conservation and solid waste diversion and recycling.

The County also can require feasible mitigation measures for new projects as a Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The County has land use regulatory authority regarding designating areas in the General Plan Land Use Element as agriculture, but very limited authority over the vast majority of agricultural activities and cultural practices that are consistent with agricultural zoning and many agricultural related support activities.

Most intensive agricultural activities such as confined animal facilities, including but not limited to, dairies, feedlots, poultry, swine, sheep, horses, rabbits, and other facilities require County land use approvals that are subject to CEQA. These and other new projects are required to address greenhouse gas and climate impacts under CEQA during the approval process. Please note that the County has prepared a separate Animal Confined Facilities Plan (ACFP) and Dairy and Feedlot Climate Action Plan to address GHG emissions from those facilities. The ACFP was adopted as General Plan Amendment (GPA) 10-002 on December 12, 2017 (Tulare County 2017).

The table below compares the 2021 actual GHG emissions to the 2013 baseline emissions. The table shows that, from 2013 to 2021, the total CO₂e emissions decreased by 1,439,864 metric tons per year, or 19 percent. The table below shows that some source categories increased emissions since 2013 while others decreased emissions. These emissions changes resulted from a combination of factors that developed since 2013, including (a) implementation of the voluntary solar, digester, and AMMP; (b) changes in animal population; and (c) promulgation of climate change-related regulations. For example, most of the large decrease in emissions from dairy manure decomposition resulted from new digester projects and a reduction in the dairy cow population.

TABLE 10.3 Comparison of 2021 Actual GHG Emission to 2013 Baseline GHG Emissions

Source Category	2013 Baseline CO2e Emissions (MT/yr)	2021 Actual CO2e Emissions (MT/yr)	2021 Actual minus 2013 Baseline CO2e Emissions (MT/yr)
Farm Equipment Exhaust	38,129	41,549	3,420
Farm Agricultural Soil	812,050	286,262	-525,788
Farm Electricity Consumption	79,480	60,908	-18,572
Dairy Equipment Exhaust	99,406	118,967	19,561
Truck Trips	23,137	22,409	-728
Automobile Trips	15,851	11,403	-4,448
Dairy Electricity Consumption	145,335	75,962	-69,373
Dairy Refrigeration	63,640	71,818	8,178
Dairy Manure Decomposition	3,496,077	2,591,217	-904,859
Dairy Enteric Digestion	2,463,071	2,205,767	-257,304
Feedlot Manure Decomposition	29,598	71,683	42,085
Feedlot Enteric Digestion	227,068	495,033	267,964
Total Emissions	7,492,843	6,052,979	-1,439,864

The following tables include information from CARB regarding facilities releasing GHG emissions.

TABLE 10.4.A CARB report of facilities releasing GHG emissions

Year	Tract	City	Facility	Primary Sector	Cap-and-Trade	Total GHG	Non-Biomass GHG	Biomass CO2
2010	CA06107001302	Reedley	Dinuba Energy	Electricity Generation	No	173,698	4,530	169,168
2016	CA06107001302	Reedley	Dinuba Energy	Electricity Generation	No	25	25	0
2010	CA06107000900	Visalia	MM Tulare Energy LLC	Electricity Generation	No	10,489	5	10,484
2010	CA06107004500	Terra Bella	Sierra Power Corporation, 93270	Cogeneration	No	95,550	2,218	93,332
2010	CA06107002901	Tulare	Saputo Cheese USA Inc. - Paige	Other Combustion Source	Yes	56,697	56,697	
2016	CA06107002901	Tulare	Saputo Cheese USA Inc. - Paige	Other Combustion Source	Yes	66,350	66,350	0
2010	CA06107001003	Visalia	California Dairies, Inc. Visalia	Other Combustion Source	Yes	48,217	48,217	
2016	CA06107001003	Visalia	California Dairies, Inc. Visalia	Other Combustion Source	Yes	60,423	60,423	0
2010	CA06107002901	Tulare	Land O' Lakes, Inc.	Other Combustion Source	Yes	72,453	72,453	
2016	CA06107002901	Tulare	Land O' Lakes, Inc.	Other Combustion Source	Yes	55,228	55,228	0
2010	CA06107003200	Tipton	California Dairies, Inc. Tipton	Other Combustion Source	Yes	44,844	44,844	
2016	CA06107003200	Tipton	California Dairies, Inc. Tipton	Other Combustion Source	Yes	38,944	38,944	0
2010	CA06107004200	Pixley	Pixley Cogeneration Partners / Calgren Renewable Fuels	Cogeneration	Yes	63,119	63,119	
2016	CA06107004200	Pixley	Pixley Cogeneration Partners / Calgren Renewable Fuels	Cogeneration	Yes	127,860	66,188	61,671
2016	CA06107003100	Tulare	Kraft Heinz Foods Company - Tulare	Other Combustion Source	No	21,265	21,265	0
2016	CA06107001200	Visalia	Kaweah Delta Medical Center	Other Combustion Source	No	16,551	16,551	0
2016	CA06107003002	Tulare	Saputo Cheese USA Inc.- Levin	Other Combustion Source	No	11,372	11,372	0
2016	CA06029004800	Delano	Delano Energy Center, LLC	Electricity Generation	No	6,991	6,991	0
2016	CA06107003902	Porterville	Foster Farms Porterville Plant	Other Combustion Source	No	9,948	9,948	0
2016	CA06107000302	Traver	Foster Farms Traver Complex	Other Combustion Source	No	9,276	9,276	0
2016	CA06107000900	Goshen	Western Milling, Goshen CA	Other Combustion Source	No	8,678	8,678	0
2016	CA06107000900	Visalia	Ventura Coastal	Other Combustion Source	No	8,768	8,768	0
2016	CA06107001100	Visalia	Milk Specialties Global	Other Combustion Source	No	12,658	12,658	0

TABLE 10.4.B CARB report of facilities releasing GHG emissions

Year	Tract	City	Facility	CO2	CH4	Covered		NOx	SOx	PM10	PM2.5
						GHG	VOC				
2010	CA06107001302	Reedley	Dinuba Energy	170,573	50.13	0			2.4	157.2	146
2016	CA06107001302	Reedley	Dinuba Energy	25	0	0			0	0	0
2010	CA06107000900	Visalia	MM Tulare Energy LLC		0.09	0	0.9		13	1.7	0.6
2010	CA06107004500	Terra Bell	Sierra Power Corporation, 93270		35.58	0	9.9		63.8	5.7	33.2
2010	CA06107002901	Tulare	Saputo Cheese USA Inc. - Paige	56,643	0.96	0	3.7		7.5	9.6	18
2016	CA06107002901	Tulare	Saputo Cheese USA Inc. - Paige	66,285	1.25	66,350	3.5		7.4	8.7	22.1
2010	CA06107001003	Visalia	California Dairies, Inc. Visalia	48,172	0.81	0	1.8		4.6	0.9	8.7
2016	CA06107001003	Visalia	California Dairies, Inc. Visalia	60,364	1.14	60,423	2.9		5.5	1.5	10.2
2010	CA06107002901	Tulare	Land O' Lakes, Inc.	72,386	1.22	0	3.8		13.3	1.5	20.7
2016	CA06107002901	Tulare	Land O' Lakes, Inc.	55,174	1.04	55,228	2.6		4.8	1.4	18.2
2010	CA06107003200	Tipton	California Dairies, Inc. Tipton	44,800	0.76	0	0.9		5.3	0.7	12.3
2016	CA06107003200	Tipton	California Dairies, Inc. Tipton	38,906	0.73	38,944	1		3.4	0.8	8
2010	CA06107004200	Pixley	Calgren Renewable Fuels Pixley Cogeneration Partners /	63,060	1.07	0	0.5		1.2	2.4	1.6
2016	CA06107004200	Pixley	Calgren Renewable Fuels	127,781	1.41	66,188	0.9		3.4	1.9	6.7
2016	CA06107003100	Tulare	Kraft Heinz Foods Company - Tulare	21,244	0.4	0	0.8		1.6	0.5	6.2
2016	CA06107001200	Visalia	Kaweah Delta Medical Center	16,535	0.31	0	0.2		1.2	0.2	0.3
2016	CA06107003002	Tulare	Saputo Cheese USA Inc.- Levin	11,361	0.21	0	0.3		0.4	0.2	0.7
2016	CA06029004800	Delano	Delano Energy Center, LLC	6,984	0.13	0					
2016	CA06107003902	Porterville	Foster Farms Porterville Plant	9,939	0.19	0	0.2		0.4	0.1	2.1
2016	CA06107000302	Traver	Foster Farms Traver Complex	9,267	0.17	0	0.4		1.2	0.2	7.9
2016	CA06107000900	Goshen	Western Milling, Goshen CA	8,670	0.16	0	0.4		0.4	0.2	1.1
2016	CA06107000900	Visalia	Ventura Coastal	8,759	0.17	0	0.3		0.2	0.2	0.8
2016	CA06107001100	Visalia	Milk Specialties Global	12,645	0.24	0	0.3		1.6	0.3	1

TABLE 10.5.A. CARB report of facilities releasing GHG emissions

Source: CARB

Row #	Facility	Address	Total On-site Disposal or Other Releases	Total Off-site Disposal or Other Releases	Total On- and Off-site Disposal or Other Releases
1	BLUESCOPE BUILDINGS NA INC	7440 DOE AVE, VISALIA	247.92	7,993.40	8,241.32
	CHROMIUM		58.02	2,255.00	2,313.02
	COPPER		11.2	431	442.2
	LEAD		1.32	51.4	52.72
	MANGANESE		137.59	3,712.00	3,849.59
	NICKEL		39.79	1,544.00	1,583.79
2	CALIFORNIA DAIRIES INC TIPTON.	11894 AVE 120, TIPTON	17,390	.	17,390
	PERACETIC ACID		17,390	.	17,390
3	CALIFORNIA DAIRIES INC VISALIA	2000 N PLAZA DR, VISA	24,963	1,186.20	26,149.20
	NITRATE COMPOUNDS		0	1,186.20	1,186.20
	NITRIC ACID		0	.	0
	PERACETIC ACID		24,963	.	24,963
4	CEMEX FARMERSVILLE PLANT.	532 TERRY AVE, FARME	0	.	0
	LEAD COMPOUNDS		0	.	0
	NITRATE COMPOUNDS		.	.	.
5	CHAMPION HOME BUILDERS CO DIV 09	840 W PALM AVE, LIND	.	.	.
	DIISOCYANATES		.	.	.
6	CROP PRODUCTION SERVICES	3201 AVE 54, ALPAUGH	800	6,740	7,540
	AMMONIA		260	.	260
	COPPER COMPOUNDS		15	15	30
	MANGANESE COMPOUNDS		15	562	577
	NITRATE COMPOUNDS		5	.	5
	ZINC COMPOUNDS		505	6,163	6,668
7	FOSTER FARMS PORTERVILLE PLANT	770 N PLANO ST, PORT	0	27,329	27,329
	NITRATE COMPOUNDS		0	27,329	27,329
	NITRIC ACID		.	.	.
8	FOSTER FARMS TRAVER FEEDMILL	4107 AVE 360, TRAVER	.	.	.
	COPPER COMPOUNDS		.	.	.
	MANGANESE COMPOUNDS		.	.	.
	ZINC COMPOUNDS		.	.	.
9	HYDRITE CHEMICAL CO	1603 CLANCY CT, VISAL	7	.	7
	CERTAIN GLYCOL ETHERS		.	.	.
	NITRIC ACID		7	.	7
	ZINC COMPOUNDS		.	.	.
10	JD HEISKELL & CO	11518 RD 120, PIXLEY C	.	.	.
	COBALT COMPOUNDS		.	.	.
	COPPER COMPOUNDS		.	.	.
	MANGANESE		.	.	.
	MANGANESE COMPOUNDS		.	.	.
	ZINC (FUME OR DUST)		.	.	.
	ZINC COMPOUNDS		.	.	.
11	KAWNEER CO INC.	7200 DOE AVE, VISALIA	926	.	926
	DIISOCYANATES		0	.	0
	TOLUENE		240	.	240
	XYLENE (MIXED ISOMERS)		686	.	686
12	KRAFT HEINZ FOODS CO.	10800 AVE 184, TULARE	0	566,046	566,046
	NITRATE COMPOUNDS		0	565,198	565,198
	NITRIC ACID		0	848	848

TABLE 10.5.B. CARB report of facilities releasing GHG emissions

Source: CARB

Row #	Facility	Address	Total On-site	Total Off-site	Total On- and
			Disposal or	Disposal or	Off-site
			Other Releases	Other Releases	Disposal or
					Other Releases
13	LAND O LAKES - TULARE DAIRY	400 S M ST, TULARE CA	48	.	48
	AMMONIA		48	.	48
	NITRATE COMPOUNDS		0	.	0
	NITRIC ACID		0	.	0
14	MILK SPECIALTIES GLOBAL - VISALIA	715 NORTH DIVISADER	0	363	363
	NITRATE COMPOUNDS		0	363	363
	NITRIC ACID		0	.	0
15	PFFJ LLC--CALIFORNIA DIV FEED MILL.	10990 ANGIOLA AVE, C	.	.	.
	ZINC COMPOUNDS		.	.	.
16	SAPUTO CHEESE USA INC.	901 E LEVIN AVE, TULA	0	192,968	192,968
	NITRATE COMPOUNDS		0	192,968	192,968
	NITRIC ACID		0	.	0
17	SAPUTO CHEESE USA INC.	800 E PAIGE AVE, TULA	9,000.00	1,581,123	1,590,123
	AMMONIA		9,000.00	.	9,000
	NITRATE COMPOUNDS		0	1,581,123	1,581,123
	NITRIC ACID		0	.	0
	PERACETIC ACID		0	.	0
18	SAPUTO DAIRY FOODS USA LLC.	605 N J ST, TULARE CAL	0	.	0
	NITRIC ACID		0	.	0
19	UNIVAR USA INC.	7625 WEST SUNNYVIEW	.	.	.
	NITRIC ACID		.	.	.
20	VOLTAGE MULTIPLIERS INC.	8711 W ROOSEVELT AV	17	8,126	8,143
	NITRATE COMPOUNDS		0	8,126	8,126
	NITRIC ACID		17	.	17
21	WATERMAN VALVE LLC.	25500 ROAD 204, EXETE	2.08	2,190.62	2,192.70
	CHROMIUM		0	1,497.42	1,497.42
	MANGANESE		1.66	.	1.66
	NICKEL		0.42	693.2	693.62
	Total		53,401.00	2,394,065.22	2,447,466.22

Existing Condition: Water Pollution

Water Contamination

In the County, the top chemicals of concern are arsenic, hexavalent chromium, nitrates, perchlorate, tetrachloroethane, trichloroethene, uranium, and total dissolved solids. Most of these chemicals are found in agricultural sites and these chemicals pose a danger to human health.

Nitrates are our county's most prevalent contaminant. They are found extensively throughout the valley and to a lesser extent in the foothills. The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) sets drinking water standards and has determined that nitrates poses an acute health concern to infants and pregnant women at certain levels of exposure. Nitrates have several sources. They are found in fertilizer, sewage and waste from humans and/or farm animals.³⁰

Uranium, radium and other radionuclides occur naturally at low levels in many types of rocks and soils and can be present in water due to leaching from natural deposits. The MCL for Uranium is 20 pCi/l and it is 5 pCi/l for Radium 226/228. Over a long period of time, and at elevated levels, cancer and uranium may increase cancer risk and illness from kidney toxicity.³¹

Arsenic when exposed to long term, through drinking-water and food, can lead to chronic arsenic poisoning. Skin lesions and skin cancer are the most characteristic effects. In addition to skin cancer, long-term exposure to arsenic may also cause cancers of the bladder and lungs.

Visalia District

The Visalia District of the Division of Drinking Water (Division) consists of more than 200 public water systems in four counties located in the Central Valley of California, including Kern, Tulare, Kings, and Fresno counties. The district shares the regulation jurisdiction of public water systems in three counties with three other district offices.

In Kern County, the Visalia District regulates public water systems on the valley floor while the Tehachapi District regulates the remaining water systems in the county. The Visalia District also shares regulatory oversight in Tulare County with the Tulare District and in Fresno County with the Fresno District. The Visalia District covers a large geographical portion of the southern Central Valley in California with large influences from the agriculture and dairy industries. The water systems face a high diversity of water quality and water quantity challenges with many of the water systems providing water to small rural economically disadvantaged communities.

³⁰ *Common Contaminants and Their Health Effects*, tularecountyeh.org/eh/our-services/water-wells/voluntary-water-well-testing-program/water-testing-for-individual-water-wells/.

³¹ "Radiological." *Home - Environmental Health*, tularecountyeh.org/eh/our-services/water-wells/voluntary-water-well-testing-program/water-testing-for-individual-water-wells/.

SB 88

In June 2015, Governor Jerry Brown, signed Sb 88. This bill would authorize the state board to order consolidation with a receiving water system where a public water system, or a state small water system within a disadvantaged community, consistently fails to provide an adequate supply of safe drinking water. This bill would authorize the state board to order the extension of service to an area that does not have access to an adequate supply of safe drinking water so long as the extension of service is an interim extension of service in preparation for consolidation.

The bill would require the state board, prior to ordering consolidation or extension of service, to conduct an initial public meeting and a public hearing and to make specified findings. The bill would limit the liability of a consolidated water system, wholesaler, or any other agency in the chain of distribution that delivers water to a consolidated water system, as specified.

Tule Basin Management Zone (TBMZ)

The Tule Basin Management Zone (TBMZ) group includes those dischargers that have selected to be regulated under the Pathway B Nitrate Compliance by the Central Valley Water Board regulatory requirements within the Tule Subbasin and a small portion of Kern County. The TBMZ is responsible to comply with the requirements of the Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability (CV-Salts) Nitrate Control Program.

A part of compliance with the Nitrate Control Program, the TBMZ has prepared an Early Action Plan to begin implementation of providing availability of safe drinking water for residents within the Management Zone whose drinking supply has been contaminated by nitrates.

FREE-SAFE drinking water programs are being offered by the Tule Basin Management Zone (TBMZ) to residents with elevated nitrate concentrations in their drinking water. To begin the process for verifying whether your water is contaminated by nitrates and if you are eligible to enroll in the TBMZ Safe Drinking Water Program, fill out the Safe Drinking Water Program Inquiry Form at the link under the Bottled Water Delivery and In-Home Water Treatment Section at the bottom of this page. The Management Zone's address and email address are provided on the contact page.

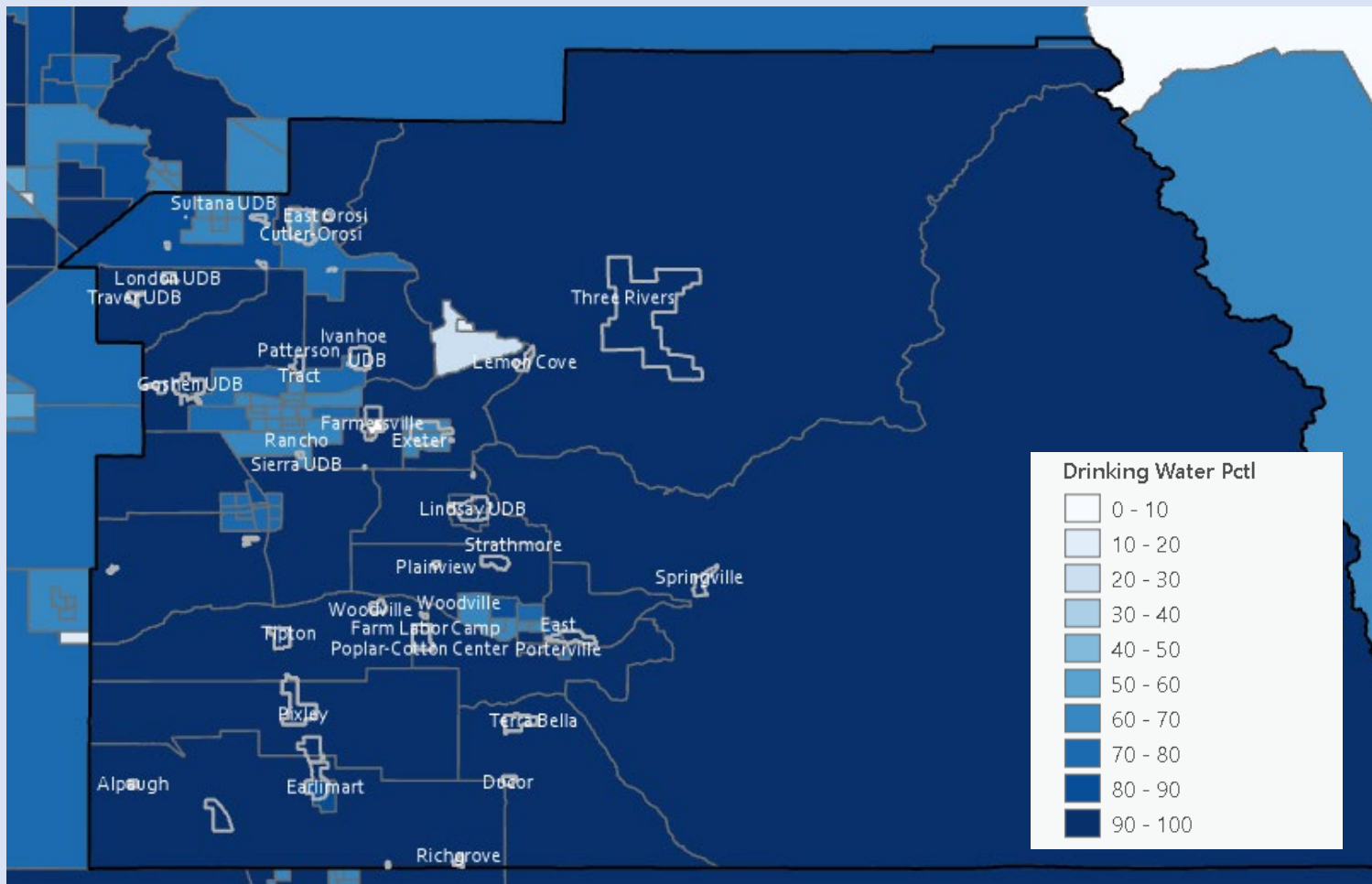


Figure 10.7 Drinking Water Contaminants

CalEnviroScreen4: Most drinking water in California meets health standards. However, drinking water sometimes becomes contaminated with chemicals or bacteria above the standards. Both natural and human sources can contaminate drinking water. Natural sources include rocks, soil, wildlife and fires. Human sources include factories, sewage, and runoff from farms.

Policy and Implementation Measures

Air Pollution

ERM-2.7 Minimize Adverse Impacts

The County will minimize the adverse effects on environmental features such as water quality and quantity, air quality, flood plains, geophysical characteristics, biotic, archaeological, and aesthetic factors.

ERM-2.8 Minimize Hazards and Nuisances

The County will minimize the hazards and nuisances to persons and properties in the area during extraction, processing, and reclamation operations.

AQ-1.2 Cooperation with Local Jurisdictions

The County shall participate with cities, surrounding counties, and regional agencies to address cross-jurisdictional transportation and air quality issues. One way the County will enforce this policy is by enforcement of California Senate Bill 743 (SB743) passed in 2013 and implemented in 2018 through the adoption of new CEQA regulations. SB743 changed the assessment of transportation impacts from that caused by traffic congestion to the amount of driving measured as vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

AQ-1.3 Cumulative Air Quality Impacts

The County shall require development to be located, designed, and constructed in a manner that would minimize cumulative air quality impacts. Applicants shall be required to propose alternatives as part of the State CEQA process that reduce air emissions and enhance, rather than harm, the environment.

AQ-2.4 Transportation Management Associations

The County shall encourage commercial, retail, and residential developments to participate in or create Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) that may assist in the reduction of pollutants through strategies that support carpooling or other alternative transportation modes.

AQ-3.4 Landscape

The County shall encourage the use of ecologically based landscape design principles that can improve local air quality by absorbing CO₂, producing oxygen, providing shade that reduces energy required for cooling, and filtering particulates. These principles include, but are not limited to, the incorporation of parks, landscaped medians, and landscaping within development.

PFS-5.8 Hazardous Waste Disposal Capabilities

The County shall require the proper disposal and recycling of hazardous materials in accordance with the County's Hazardous Waste Management Plan.

AG-1.11 Agricultural Buffers

The County shall examine the feasibility of employing agricultural buffers between agricultural and non-agricultural uses, and along the edges of UDBs and HDBs. Considering factors include the type of operation and chemicals used for spraying, building orientation, planting of trees for screening, location of existing and future rights-of-way (roads, railroads, canals, power lines, etc.), and unique site conditions.

- Distance,
- Stabilization of edge condition,
- Types of operation,
- Types of land uses (i.e. schools, etc.)
- Building orientation,
- Planting of trees for screening,
- Location of existing and future rights-of-way,
- Types of uses allowed inside the buffer-zone,
- Unique site conditions,
- Responsibility for maintenance,
- Scale of development,
- Mechanism for exemptions.

EJ-27: Policy: Collaborate with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to develop strategies for meeting air quality attainment throughout Tulare County

EJ – 28: Policy: Ensure air quality improvements throughout the region do not come at the expense of EJ Communities.

Implementation Measure:

- A. When developing and implementing strategies with the goal of improving air quality throughout Tulare County, further examination will be made to determine the effect of these strategies on Environmental Justice Communities

EJ-29: Policy: Establish pesticide pollution prevention practices through Safe Air for Everyone (SAFE) policy recommendations, including no-Spray protection zones, phasing out of Chlorpyrifos, supporting farmers transitioning away from pesticide use, and encouraging notification of pesticide use around public areas.

EJ-30: Policy: Develop feasible Greenhouse Gas mitigation strategies for new project development using regulatory authority granted by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Goal: Conserve energy to lower energy costs and improve air quality.

EJ-31: Policy: Encourage developers to be innovative in providing landscaping that modifies microclimates, thus reducing energy consumption.

EJ-32: Policy: The County shall encourage new urban development to provide and maintain shade trees and other landscaping along streets and within parking areas to reduce radiation heating. However, solar access for solar panels shall not be blocked.

EJ-33: Policy: Coordinate with local utility providers to provide public education on energy conservation programs.

Water Pollution

Goal: Protect drinking water in Environmental Justice Communities from contamination.

EJ -34: Policy: The County will support efforts by the California Department of Water Resources, compliance with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), and the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board to improve water quality in Environmental Justice Communities.

EJ-35: Policy: The County will support efforts made from non-profit organizations that provide safe drinking to the Environmental Justice Communities.

Implementation Measures:

- A. The County will continue to assist Self-Help Enterprises with obtaining grants that help to provide safe drinking water for the Environmental Justice Communities.

EJ-36: Policy: The County shall collaborate with local watershed groups to inform the public about practices and programs to minimize water pollution and provide educational and technical assistance to agriculture to reduce sedimentation and increase on-site retention and recharge of stormwater.

EJ-37: Policy: The County shall support reduction of the volume of urban runoff from pollutants — such as pesticides from homes, golf courses, cleaning agents, swimming pool chemicals, and road oil — and of excess sediments and nutrients from agricultural operations by continuing to review all applications for compliance with State CEQA guidelines pursuant to Appendix G pertaining to Hydrology and Water Quality.

EJ-38: Policy: The County shall support local stormwater and community watershed group efforts to inform the public about practices and programs to minimize water pollution.

11 Safe and Sanitary Homes

Introduction

State environmental justice element law (Government Code Section 65302, relating to land use) provides mandates to identify objectives and policies to reduce the unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities. To understand the kind of barriers to safe and sanitary homes that exist within disadvantaged unincorporated communities, in an EJ context, this section will analyze housing conditions, housing affordability, and land-use compatibility.

Existing Conditions

Housing conditions entails the physical characteristics of housing stocks, specifically when structures were built. Housing structures in Tulare County have been built during various periods of growth over many years, as necessary to accommodate the needs of residents and the business community. This has resulted in a variety of structures, construction methods, and materials. As a result, many rural subdivisions were developed with a variety of materials and construction methods under the building standards and regulations present at the time of their construction. Modern building codes adopted after 1980 included regulations to ensure homes were free from pollutants such as lead and asbestos which were banned and phased out by the Environmental Protection Agency in the late 1970's. This section will address the following items:

- Housing conditions (sound, deteriorating, dilapidated)
- Potential health threats of households built before 1980.
- Household overcrowding and spread of diseases.

The section on household affordability provides information on the quantity homeowners or tenants that are paying more than 30 percent of their income towards housing. Those who allocate a large proportion of their income to housing have reduced resources for bare necessities like health care and nutritious food, and often are obligated to make difficult financial decisions with significant short-term and long-term implications for adults and children.³² Persons of color, low-income, and legal status more often than not experience persistent differences in the likelihood of being cost burdened, justifying an analysis of housing affordability in the context of these considerations. This section will analyze:

- Household cost burden by income
- Household cost burden by race

Land use compatibility relates to how close in proximity neighborhoods may be to sources of pollution or health hazards, and consideration of existing or lack of adequate public

³² Eileen Diaz McConnell, 'Who Has Housing Affordability Problems? Disparities in Housing Cost Burden by Race, Nativity and Legal Status in Los Angeles', *Race and Social Problems*, 5.3 (2013), 173–90 <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12552-013-9086-x>>.

infrastructure services and facilities, such as landfills and wastewater systems, which can host and disperse chemical compounds that can permeate deep in soil and contaminate groundwater cavities or wells. For more information on the topic of hazardous waste exposure refer to the Reduce Pollution Exposure and Improve Air Quality discussion in Section 10.

Why does place matter?

Planners and social justice advocates have identified that a person's neighborhood or zip code can influence his or her life outcomes. For connections between various aspects of neighborhood and poverty, educational achievement and crime rates have shown to be correlated with neighborhood effects. Further, where housing is located can hinder or facilitate access to resources, employment, and public facilities which highlight the importance of equitable neighborhood investment.

Historical Context that impact Tulare County's housing today

After the Gold Rush, the San Joaquin Valley was rapidly transformed into a great agricultural region- this still stands today as Tulare County is one of the largest agriculture producers in California. Throughout the 1900s, the prospects of agricultural and industrial jobs brought Dust Bowl migrants, Black farmers from Great Migration, Latino farm workers, Pilipino migrants, Japanese former internees, and Hmong and Laotian refugees to the Valley.³³

Many historical rural settlements in Tulare County were originated to support agricultural activities and were located in small urban clusters in five-mile intervals along major transportation routes. The five-mile interval provided a comfortable distance that could be travelled by horse and buggy in approximately 20 to 30 minutes. In addition, early communities were established along railroad lines at 7–10-mile intervals as steam locomotive stops were required as necessary water stops. Many of these communities established as rural service centers became less prominent with the advent of modern transportation, but maintained an important role to provide housing adjacent to the agricultural areas where agricultural employment opportunities still exist today. Limited funding availability through grants and other equivalent mechanisms has historically limited the implementation of infrastructure and many of these communities lack basic infrastructure such as water, sewer, and storm drainage which contribute to their designation as disadvantaged communities. These communities still exist today, and many of them are without essential infrastructure services, including drainage systems and water and sewer services.

³³ Camille Pannu, 'Drinking Water and Exclusion: A Case Study from California's Central Valley', *California Law Review*, 100.1 (2012), 223.

2015 Housing Element Questionnaire

As part of the preparation of the 2015 Tulare County Housing Element a questionnaire was produced and distributed via various methods to obtain the public's input about housing problems in Tulare County. The questionnaire was printed in both English and Spanish and proved to be an effective tool in achieving public participation across all economic segments of the County.

The questionnaire layout consisted of five main parts:

- Information about the person/organization filling in the form.
- A checklist ranking of housing problems.
- Space to write comments on housing problems.
- A checklist ranking of possible housing solutions.
- Space to write comments on housing solutions.

The Community Questionnaire was sent to all Housing Element Advisory Committee members and those invited to or in attendance at all stakeholders/community meetings. The questionnaires were also available at Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors meetings, as well as in the Permit Center located in the Government Plaza Building. In addition, the questionnaire could be accessed from the County's website.

As a result, 187 questionnaires were completed and returned to Resource Management Agency –85 surveys or 45% responses were in Spanish with the remaining 102 in English; and 33% of the respondents lived within city limits. Respondents specified housing interests as “*vivienda de bajas recursos*” (low-income housing), affordable housing, “*reconstruccion o reavilitacion*” (reconstruction and rehabilitation) and real estate development.

The respondents were asked to rank housing problems into three categories: rarely a problem, occasionally a problem, or frequently a problem. In addition, housing solutions were ranked into three categories: do not support, neutral, and strongly support. Table 11.1 lists the percentages of the housing problems and the housing solutions response.

TABLE 11.1 Ranking of questionnaire responses

Source: Tulare County, Housing Element, page 2-5

Questionnaire Responses				
Housing Problems	%Rarely	%Sometimes	%Often	%No Vote
Lack of infrastructure (that is, water, sewer, stormwater drainage, sidewalks, roads)	27	17	50	7
Lack of housing located close to transit (bus service), work sites and/or shopping areas	27	22	32	13
Safe neighborhoods	22	20	47	11
Lack of affordable housing; housing is too expensive for my income	23	19	42	11
Houses are in poor condition	16	19	43	17
Housing Solutions	%Strong	% Neutral	% Not Support	% No Vote
Explore fund source for loans, grants, etc. for housing	64	15	3	12
Explore options for housing rehabilitation programs	61	17	4	13
Explore funding sources for sewer, water, wastewater, and lighting services	65	13	3	14
Explore funding sources for bike, pedestrian, bus and safe routes to schools	71	13	2	10
Mixed Uses (Housing and Commercial together)	46	22	8	19

Housing Conditions

According to the Tulare County Housing Element, disparity in housing stock is higher in the census designated places but is lower in the smaller and less populated unincorporated areas of the County. The rates of deterioration and dilapidation are more prevalent in the unincorporated communities compared to deterioration and dilapidation in the county island and fringe areas. The housing stock outside of areas adjacent to incorporated cities exhibit a greater need for housing rehabilitation.

For the purpose of calculations, in 2009, Tulare County surveyed the housing conditions of 7,532 residential units, including 21 census designated places and 29 unincorporated communities – 29 out of 39 (74 percent) EJ communities and 4 out of the 10 non-EJ communities were surveyed (refer to Table 3-56 Housing Conditions by Survey Area, Housing Element, page 3-67). The survey demonstrates that 28 percent of EJ communities surveyed were in the top 50 percentile that were rated as sound; 54 percent of EJ communities were in the top 50 percentile that were rated deteriorated; and 41% of EJ communities were in the top 50 percentile that were rated dilapidated (see Table 11.2 and Table 11.3 to view percentile rank by survey area).

TABLE 11.2
Percentile Rank of Housing Conditions by Survey Area

	Sound	Deteriorated	Dilapidated
Allensworth	15%	40%	92%
Alpaugh	7%	55%	90%
Cutler	27%	95%	35%
Delft Colony	10%	55%	85%
Ducor	8%	55%	35%
Earlimart	77%	43%	30%
East Orosi	20%	75%	55%
East Porterville	43%	63%	60%
Goshen	78%	38%	32%
Hypernicum	57%	50%	58%
Ivanhoe	52%	85%	25%
Lemon	37%	93%	18%
Lindcove	20%	78%	68%
London	10%	63%	83%
Matheny	20%	63%	80%
Monson	20%	83%	68%
Orosi	88%	18%	25%
Pixley	50%	90%	20%

TABLE 11.3
Percentile Rank of Housing Conditions by Survey Area

	Sound	Deteriorated	Dilapidated
Plainview	27%	72%	72%
Poplar-Cotton	70%	2%	72%
Richgrove	75%	42%	43%
Springville	80%	37%	32%
Strathmore	45%	85%	43%
Sultana	83%	32%	35%
Terra Bella	35%	92%	35%
Teviston	15%	55%	82%
Three Rivers	87%	22%	2%
Tipton	53%	77%	35%
Tonyville	15%	47%	88%
Tooleville	30%	33%	92%
Traver	57%	72%	43%
West Goshen	42%	98%	2%
Waukena	30%	97%	25%

Woodville	48%	53%	62%
Yettem	13%	30%	95%

NOTE: Non-EJ communities are highlighted in green

Source: Tulare County 2015 Housing Condition Survey; 2009 Housing Survey Data

Housing Maintenance

Age of housing stock is a major factor in the need for housing maintenance. According to Table 11.4 and Table 11.5, there is a commonality between non-EJ areas and communities in the Community and Hamlet category³⁴, approximately 60 percent of housing units were built before 1980 in all categories. However, not all EJ communities are accounted for in Table 11.4 and Table 10.5. The census bureau did not survey 11 out of the 13 communities in the Valley category. The available data for the two surveyed communities would not present an accurate representation of all communities so the Valley category was emitted from this analysis. According to the Housing Element, 72 percent of housing stock in unincorporated communities throughout Tulare County was built prior to 1980.

Any home built before 1978 potentially contains lead-based paint. That was the year the federal government banned consumer use of these paints because they were found to be the leading cause of lead poisoning, which can cause life-threatening damage in children and adults. The County does not have direct evidence of the specific housing units built before 1980 that contained lead paint. Efforts will have to be taken to conduct lead-based paint inspections to count the quantity of households that contain lead-based paint, and risk assessments to determine if the lead is a hazard.

TABLE 11.4 Housing Units Built Pre-1980

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 2013-2017 Census of Physical Housing

	Non-EJ Areas			
	Owner Occupied Housing	Percentage	Renter Occupied Housing	Percentage
Year Structure Built				
2014 or later	30	1%	3	0%
2010 to 2013	24	0%	54	3%
2000 to 2009	711	13%	192	11%
1980 to 1999	1,610	29%	547	32%
1960 to 1979	1,546	27%	438	25%
1940 to 1959	1,373	24%	447	26%
1939 or earlier	349	6%	46	3%

³⁴ The introduction section includes a description of which communities are in the Community, Hamlet, and Valley category.

TABLE 11.5 Housing Units Built Pre-1980

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 2013-2017 Census of Physical Housing

Year Structure Built	Community				Hamlet			
	Owner occupied	Percentage	Renter Occupied Housing	Percentage	Owner Occupied Housing	Percentage	Renter Occupied Housing	Percentage
2014 or later	46	1%	3	0.0%	-		-	
2010 to 2013	103	1%	170	2%	12	3%	33	4%
2000 to 2009	559	8%	874	11%	64	14%	89	11%
1980 to 1999	1,840	26%	2,389	31%	125	27%	181	23%
1960 to 1979	2,720	38%	2,438	32%	137	29%	234	29%
1940 to 1959	1,416	20%	1,226	16%	115	25%	158	20%
1939 or earlier	453	6%	563	7%	16	3%	104	13%

Household Overcrowding

Household crowding is a condition where the number of occupants exceeds the capacity of the dwelling space available, whether measured as rooms, bedrooms or floor area, which may contribute to adverse physical and mental health outcomes. Crowded households can indicate that household residents do not have adequate space for their needs, as they may struggle to afford housing that is in good condition or have the resources to purchase or rent homes with adequate heating and cooling. In addition, crowding increases exposure to risk factors associated with home injury and social tension. Infectious diseases that can be transmitted due to overcrowding can include types of pneumococci, such as pneumonia, and tuberculosis (TB), respiratory diseases, diarrhea and gastroenteritis.³⁵

³⁵ National Center for Biotechnology Information and others, *Household Crowding, WHO Housing and Health Guidelines* (World Health Organization, 2018) <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK535289/>> [accessed 28 March 2020].

The United States Census Bureau defines an overcrowded household as a housing unit occupied by more than one person per room (not including kitchens and bathrooms). Units with more than 1.5 persons per room are considered to be severely overcrowded.

In 2000, 19 percent of all households in Tulare County were living in overcrowded conditions. That was a decrease from the 1990 that showed 23 percent of the population was living in overcrowded conditions. The 2013-17 American Community Survey reports a total of 16,000 households in unincorporated communities to be living in overcrowded household conditions – this does not include 13 communities in the Valley category. For owner-occupied residences, the percentage of homes that are overcrowded in EJ communities is 11 percent compared to 4 percent in non-EJ areas. For renter-occupied residences, the percentage of homes that are overcrowded in EJ communities is 26 percent compared to 4 percent in non-EJ areas.

TABLE 11.6 Persons per Room

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 of Tenure by Occupant per Room

	Community		Hamlet		Non-EJ Areas	
	Households	Percent	Households	Percent	Households	Percent
Total Housing Units	14,800		1,268		8,074	
Total Owner Occupied Units	7,137	48%	469	37%	5,643	70%
1.01 to 1.50 counts per room	783	5%	26	2%	226	3%
1.51 to 2.00 counts per room	199	1%	28	2%	120	1%
Total Renter Occupied Units	7,663	52%	799	63%	1,727	21%
1.01 to 1.50 counts per room	1,355	9%	137	11%	173	2%
1.51 to 2.00 counts per room	274	2%	52	4%	130	2%

Housing Affordability

The data in this section uses this Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data from the United States Housing and Urban Development (HUD) website. Household income groups shown in the CHAS tabulation are based on the HUD-adjusted area median income (AMI). The list below shows the definition of housing income limits as they are applied to housing units in Tulare County.

- Extremely Low-Income Unit is one that is affordable to households whose combined income is less than 30 percent of the area median income (AMI) for Visalia as established by HUD using the Visalia-Porterville Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). A 4-person household is considered to be extremely low-income in Tulare County if its combined income is \$24,300 or less in 2016.
- Very Low-Income Unit is one that is affordable to a household whose combined income is between 31 and 50 percent of the AMI as established by HUD for the Visalia-Porterville MSA. A 4-person household is considered to be very low-income in Visalia if its combined income is between \$24,301 and \$29,450 in 2016.
- Low-Income Unit is one that is affordable to a household whose combined income is at or between 51 and 80 percent of the AMI as established by HUD for the Visalia-Porterville MSA. A 4-person household is considered to be low-income in Visalia if its combined income is between \$29,451 and \$47,100 in 2016.

According to HUD, the median family income for a household in the Visalia-Porterville MSA was \$41,800 in 2016. Income limits based on persons per household are calculated using a formula developed by HUD (see Table 11.7).

TABLE 11.7 HUD income limits based on person per household Visalia-Porterville, CA MSA, FY 2016

Source U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2019. <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il/il2016/2016summary.odn>

Income Categories	Persons per Household							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Extremely Low-Income	\$ 12,400	\$ 16,020	\$ 20,160	\$ 24,300	\$ 28,440	\$ 32,580	\$ 36,550	\$ 38,900
Very-Low Income	\$ 20,650	\$ 23,600	\$ 26,550	\$ 29,450	\$ 31,850	\$ 34,200	\$ 36,550	\$ 38,900
Low-Income	\$ 33,000	\$ 37,700	\$ 42,400	\$ 47,100	\$ 50,900	\$ 54,650	\$ 58,450	\$ 62,200
Median Family Income	\$ 41,800							

Housing Cost Burden

The impact of high housing costs falls disproportionately on extremely low-, very low-, and low-income households, including renters and populations of color. Low-income households, who are overpaying for housing, frequently have insufficient resources for other critical essentials, including food and medicine.

Table 11.8 and Table 11.9 shows the Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data from the 2012-2016 American Community Survey (ACS) regarding the percentages of households with a moderate housing cost burden (greater than 30) percent and severe cost

burden (greater than 50 percent) by income group, tenure, and race for disadvantaged communities in the both the Community and Hamlet category. Table 11.10 and Table 11.11 shows the data for non-EJ areas.

The 2012-2015 data is the most recent data offered by CHAS. Approximately 11,383 households in DUCs in the Community and Hamlet category had extremely low-, very low-, or low-incomes. That is, they earned less than 80 percent of the median income for Tulare County. Of the lower income households in DUCs, about 74 percent were renters and 26 percent were owners. Based on CHAS data, the Hispanic population is experiencing significant rates of house cost burden. Conversely, of the lower income households in non-EJ areas, about 38 percent were renters and 62 percent were owners. Populations classified as American Indian or Alaska Native alone experience higher rates of cost burden.

TABLE 11.8 Housing cost burden by household income and race classification, EJ communities

Source: US Census; 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year Estimate; HUD Consolidated Planning/ Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) database, 2016.

	White alone		Black or African-American alone		Asian alone	
	Owners	Renters	Owners	Renters	Owners	Renters
Household Income <= 30% HAMFI						
Number with any housing problems	261	417	0	30	14	55
Percent with any housing problems	21%	12%	0%	1%	1%	2%
Household Income > 30% to <=50% HAMFI						
Number with any housing problems	326	255	0	0	4	24
Percent with any housing problems	27%	11%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Household Income >50% to <=80% HAMFI						
Number with any housing problems	318	151	8	20	14	0
Percent with any housing problems	21%	11%	1%	1%	1%	0%
Household Income >80% to <=100% HAMFI						
Number with any housing problems	186	46	0	0	25	25
Percent with any housing problems	33%	18%	0%	0%	4%	10%

TABLE 11.9 Housing cost burden by household income and race classification, EJ communities

US Census; 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year Estimate; HUD Consolidated Planning/ Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy
 atabase. 2016.

	American Indian Or Alaska Native alone		Pacific Islander alone		Hispanic		Other (including multiple races, non-hispanic)	
	Owners	Renters	Owners	Renters	Owners	Renters	Owners	Renters
Household Income <= 30% HAMFI								
Number with any housing problems	0	29	0	0	955	3040	25	29
Percent with any housing problems	0%	1%	0%	0%	76%	84%	2%	1%
Household Income > 30% to <=50% HAMFI								
Number with any housing problems	0	23	0	0	860	2069	19	39
Percent with any housing problems	0%	1%	0%	0%	71%	86%	2%	2%
Household Income >50% to <=80% HAMFI								
Number with any housing problems	0	0	0	0	1144	1225	4	20
Percent with any housing problems	0%	0%	0%	0%	76%	86%	0%	1%
Household Income >80% to <=100% HAMFI								
Number with any housing problems	0	20	0	0	367	167	0	0
Percent with any housing problems	0%	8%	0%	0%	65%	67%	0%	0%

TABLE 11.10 Housing cost burden by household income and race classification, non-EJ communities

Source: US Census; 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year Estimate; HUD Consolidated Planning/ Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) database, 2016

	White alone		Black or African-American alone		Asian alone	
	Owners	Renters	Owners	Renters	Owners	Renters
Household Income <= 30% HAMFI						
Number with any housing problems	0	50	20	0	4	30
Percent with any housing problems	0%	31%	8%	0%	2%	19%
Household Income > 30% to <=50% HAMFI						
Number with any housing problems	0	0	10	0	69	4
Percent with any housing problems	0%	0%	4%	0%	24%	2%
Household Income >50% to <=80% HAMFI						
Number with any housing problems	0	0	35	0	4	30
Percent with any housing problems	0%	0%	21%	0%	2%	32%
Household Income >80% to <=100% HAMFI						
Number with any housing problems	0	4	4	0	4	0
Percent with any housing problems	0%	3%	3%	0%	3%	0%

TABLE 11.11 Housing cost burden by household income and race classification, non-EJ communities

Source: US Census; 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year Estimate; HUD Consolidated Planning/ Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) database, 2016

	American Indian Or Alaska Native alone		Pacific Islander alone		Hispanic		Other (including multiple races, non-hispanic)	
	Owners	Renters	Owners	Renters	Owners	Renters	Owners	Renters
Household Income <= 30% HAMFI								
Number with any housing problems	120	105	0	10	4	0	0	4
Percent with any housing problems	45%	66%	0%	6%	2%	0%	0%	3%
Household Income > 30% to <=50% HAMFI								
Number with any housing problems	50	34	0	0	0	0	15	4
Percent with any housing problems	18%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	2%
Household Income >50% to <=80% HAMFI								
Number with any housing problems	40	19	0	0	4	0	15	0
Percent with any housing problems	24%	20%	0%	0%	2%	0%	9%	0%
Household Income >80% to <=100% HAMFI								
Number with any housing problems	15	15	0	0	0	0	0	0
Percent with any housing problems	10%	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Policies and Implementation Measures

The Tulare County Housing Element adopted in 2015 serves as a policy guide to address these issues, as well as the comprehensive housing needs of the unincorporated areas of Tulare County during the 2015 to 2023 planning period and beyond. The provision of decent, safe, sanitary and affordable housing for current and future residents of the unincorporated areas of Tulare County is the primary focus of the Housing Element.

Additionally, the Housing Element places special emphasis on certain segments of the population, such as the elderly, the disabled, single-parent households, teenage parents, large families, farmworkers, overcrowded households, residents of group quarters, ethnic or racial minorities, veterans, and the homeless; as these groups may have more difficulty in finding decent and affordable housing due to their special needs and the challenges presented by living in disadvantaged communities for many of those residents.

Housing Guiding Principle 1.1

Endeavor to improve opportunities for affordable housing in a wide range of housing types in the communities throughout the unincorporated area of the County.

Housing Policy 1.11 Encourage the development of a broad range of housing types to provide an opportunity of choice in the local housing market.

Housing Policy 1.12 Encourage Federal and State governments to expand and adequately fund housing programs for very low-, low- and moderate-income households, to stimulate mortgage financing for such programs, and to revise program requirements that preclude certain programs from being utilized.

Housing Policy 1.13 Encourage the utilization of modular units, prefabricated units, and manufactured homes.

Housing Policy 1.14 Pursue an equitable distribution of future regional housing needs allocations, thereby providing a greater likelihood of assuring a balance between housing development and the location of employment opportunities.

Housing Policy 1.15 Encourage housing counseling programs for low-income homebuyers and homeowners.

Housing Policy 1.16 Review community plans and zoning to ensure they provide for adequate affordable residential development.

Housing Policy 1.17 Maximize the County's attainment and use of public and private grants, low interest loans, in kind donations, and other resources to meet the need for affordable housing and suitable living environment for all residents.

Fair Housing

Housing Guiding Principle 1.2

Promote equal housing opportunities for all persons regardless of race, religion, sex, marital status, ancestry, national origin, color, family status, disability, or any other arbitrary basis.

Housing Policy 1.21 The County will act within its jurisdiction and affirmatively coordinate or refer fair housing opportunities in accordance with the Federal Fair Housing Act, and the California Fair Employment and Housing Act and other applicable state and federal fair housing and civil rights law.

Housing Policy 1.22 Actively discourage through communication housing discrimination based upon race, religion, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, family status, disability, language, or other factors.

Housing Policy 1.23 The County will take all measures reasonably available to it to ensure the provision of affordable housing and a suitable living environment for residents of low-income communities.

Healthy and Safe Housing

Housing Guiding Principle 1.3

Strive to meet the housing needs of migrant and non-migrant farmworkers and their families with a suitable, affordable and satisfactory living environment.

HS-1.3 Hazardous Lands

The County shall designate areas with a potential for significant hazardous conditions for open space, agricultural, and other appropriate low intensity uses.

HS-4.5 Increase Public Awareness

The County shall work to educate the public about household hazardous waste and the proper method of disposal.

HS-4.6 Pesticide Control

The County Shall monitor studies of pesticide use and the effects of pesticide on residents and wildlife and require mitigation of the effects wherever feasible and appropriate.

EJ-39: Policy: Encourage the maintenance of homes within Environmental Justice Communities that would be considered Deteriorated or Dilapidated or built with hazardous materials.

Implementation Measures:

- A. Develop or utilize programs that encourage Environmental Justice Community home improvements including but not limited to air conditioning units, solar panel, insulation, and window repair or replacement.

- B. Apply for Grants and provide referrals to Organizations with Environmental Justice Communities to improve residential properties through weatherization assistance programs.
- C. Continue to phase out and replace hazardous materials used within old buildings, such as lead or asbestos.
- D. Communicate with Environmental Justice Communities to best determine most necessary improvements to homes within those communities.

EJ- 40: Policy: Support development of new housing within Environmental Justice Communities to reduce the rates of overcrowded units.

Implementation Measure:

- A. Collaborate with the community-based organizations within Environmental Justice Communities to analyze rates of overcrowding within those communities, utilizing resources of immigrant advocacy organizations to allow for more accurate overcrowding numbers.

EJ-41: Policy: Encourage the development of affordable housing within Environmental Justice Communities.

EJ-42: Policy: Implement the policies of the Housing Element that promote a range of housing types and affordable housing units integrated into mixed-income neighborhoods throughout the County.

Appendices

DRAFT Tulare County Environmental Justice Element Steering Committee Charter

I. Background and Purpose:

- a.** Tulare County is updating its General Plan per the requirements of SB 1000 and has elected to create a standalone Environmental Justice Element
- b.** To support as much public engagement as possible and create a formal body to advise the Tulare County Board of Supervisors. In addition to support engagement, another purpose is to ensure the adoption of a strong Environmental Justice Element to improve the quality of life for Environmental Justice communities.
- c.** Definition of EJ: [The Committee can adopt a definition or create their own]

II. Relationship of the Group to the Board:

- a.** This Group is a consultative body that advises the Tulare County Board of Supervisors and Resource Management Agency planning staff on the development of the Environmental Justice Element.

III. Membership

- a. Composition:** This group consists of 18 members from various communities and stakeholders in Tulare County.
 - i.** Membership distribution is as follows:
 - 1. Disadvantaged communities
 - 2. Federally and non-federally recognized Tribal Communities
 - 3. Community based organizations
 - 4. Public health experts
 - 5. Tulare county representatives
 - 6. Others

- b. Equitable and Inclusive Representation:** To the extent possible, the committee will ensure that appointments consist of ethnically, culturally and geographically diverse backgrounds throughout the county. There should be at least 3 to 5 representatives from each County District on the Committee.
- c. Appointment and Term:** Members of the committee are appointed by staff. Members serve until the completion of the Environmental Justice Element.
- d. Application:** Potential Committee candidates will be able to apply via general application made available in the language needed. The current members of the committee are expected to submit an application.

IV. Members Responsibilities:

- a.** Members will be expected to review draft documents and provide written and oral feedback on policy development, community engagement, and all other relevant decisions in the Environmental Justice Element development process to Board staff.
- b.** Members are expected to attend all Group meetings and are encouraged to contact the Board Staff lead if an absence is expected.
- c.** Members who can no longer actively participate in group activities must inform the Board Staff lead via written notification and their membership in the group will end. Members can appoint alternates to serve in their position if their community will be excluded from the planning process resulting from their inability to serve on the Committee.

V. Procedure

- a. Meetings:** The Committee meets each month (?) from 5:30pm – 7:30pm (?) or during an accessible time for residents who are unavailable during working hours.
- b. Meeting Locations:** Committee meetings are held online via Zoom for the time being (COVID-19) but shall shift into in-person meetings when it is safe to do so. However, teleconferencing and remote participation opportunities should be made available in good faith for those who wish to participate.
- c. Agendas:** Agendas and meeting information shall be posted online and in-person at Tulare RMA's office building at least 72 hours prior to each Committee meeting.

- d. **Facilitation:** Board staff and committee members can facilitate Committee Meetings. Interpretation/Translation will be provided by the County as well as all agendas and materials be provided in Spanish and English (or other languages as needed). Participants should have the opportunity to provide comments and feedback in languages other than English.
- e. **Interpretation/Translation:** Interpretation and translation services will be provided by the County as well as all agendas and materials be provided in Spanish and English (or other languages as needed).
- f. **Quorum:** A quorum consist of a simple majority of Members. Absent a quorum, the Committee cannot conduct business.
- g. **Voting:** The committee shall review the Draft plan for approval before taken to the Board of Supervisors for action. Decisions relevant to the operations of the Committee will be decided by a majority vote by EJ community and tribal nation members.
- h. **Public Comment:** Meetings include opportunities for public comment on all agenda items.
- i. **Minutes:** Minutes of each meeting are kept by Board staff. Copies are electronically mailed to Committee members within one week of each meeting.

VI. Community engagement and outreach

- a. The Committee shall advise and guide the County on best practices for community engagement and outreach. * Note: A separate document on best practices for engagement and outreach shall be provided.

Tulare County Housing Element Comments

Reviewed by Environmental Justice Working Group in March 2020

1. Summary Housing Goal: “Attainment of a suitable, affordable, safe and sanitary living environment for every present and future resident in the unincorporated areas of Tulare County, regardless of race, age, religion, sex, marital status, ethnic background, source of income or personal disability.”
 - a. ADD: gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, citizenship status, language
 - i. These lists are inconsistent throughout the Element, including for example when listed in 1.21 and 1.22.
2. Housing Policy 1.22: “Actively discourage through communication housing discrimination based upon race, religion, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, family status, disability, language, or other factors.”
 - a. How else can this be discouraged? How can County Counsel get involved? How can the California Department of Justice get involved? “Through communication” is not strong enough.
3. Housing Policy 1.34: “Encourage and support a balance between housing and agricultural needs.”
 - a. This language concerns me. This seems to suggest that there is a tradeoff between assuring housing needs versus agricultural needs. I suggest this policy be eliminated.
4. Housing Policy 1.54: “Encourage cooperation between the County and private housing providers to direct private resources to areas where housing needs are not being met.”
 - a. ADD: “in close coordination and communication with existing community groups and residents.”
5. Housing Guiding Principle 1.6. This could be where to add something about “Analyze past practices, processes and standards and their lasting impacts on unincorporated areas.”
6. Housing Policy 2.14: I would like to see this matrix if a copy can please be sent to me.
7. Housing Policy 2.24: “Improvement requirements should reflect a balance between housing needs and the protection of public health and safety.”
 - a. In what scenario do housing needs outweigh the protection of public health and safety?
8. Housing Policy 2.26: “The County shall continue participation in State, regional, and local water resource planning efforts affecting water resource supply and quality.”
 - a. ADD: “and prioritize public health and safety, especially for unincorporated communities.”

9. Housing Element Goal 2: I suggest adding a policy like I suggested under Housing Guiding Principle 1.6 about “Analyze past practices, processes and standards and their lasting impacts on unincorporated areas.”
10. Housing Element Goal 3: Add a policy that requires, to the extent allowed by law, community notification and involvement when permitting expansion, renovation or construction of facilities that can impact the quality of life of communities within a certain (5-mile?) radius, including noise, water or air contamination, traffic, and including such facilities including animal lots, industrial manufacturing sites, and transport depots.
 - a. This would be good to discuss further with the Working Group.
 - b. Such permitting should also require investigation of and encourage mutual benefit opportunities (such as, in the case of an industrial manufacturing site, the creation of a wastewater treatment plant that a community can connect to).
11. Housing Guiding Principle 4.1: Add a policy about “Facilitate, with community participation and agreeance, the conversion of households that rely on propane and wood-burning for their energy needs to more sustainable sources of energy, including electrification and natural gas.”
 - a. This reflects an ongoing effort, which the County has been supportive of – the San Joaquin Valley Pilot Project CPUC Proceeding.
12. Housing Guiding Principle 4.2: Add a policy about “Facilitate efforts that create electric vehicle ride sharing programs in unincorporated areas to improve transit options and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.”
 - a. This reflects an ongoing effort, which the County has been supportive of – Miocar.

Tulare County Water Resources Element Comments

Reviewed Environmental Justice Working Group in April 2020

1. There's no mention of the [Human Right to Water](#) in the Water Resources Element. The Human Right to Water, in my view, absolutely must be incorporated in the EJ Element (and also a future addition to the Water Resources Element the next time it is amended/modified).
2. There is no mention of any County policy to specifically promote, prioritize or protect community drinking water interests, both in terms of supply/quantity and quality. Unincorporated communities – by nature of their unincorporated status – and their residents rely on County action. It may be appropriate to amend WR-1.1 and create a new policy; 1-1 should reflect the high priority of communities' drinking water supplies when thinking about groundwater (the source for most systems in the County), and a new policy (including groundwater and surface water) may also be appropriate to emphasize this. This general position of priority is in addition to the specific commitment to action in my next item.
3. ADD a policy to the effect of "The County shall actively support unincorporated communities in their efforts to improve their drinking water supplies, by partnering with them and others in or facilitating planning and construction efforts including technical, legal and political elements thereof, by encouraging consolidation of water systems or extension of drinking water service in order to improve water quality or reliability of water supply, and by empowering local leadership to effectively manage community water systems, all at the direction of the affected community."
4. WR-1.2 ADD: "including residential, industrial and agricultural (including animal-rearing) development."
 - a. Agriculture is a large contributor to nitrate contamination of groundwater, as well as activity through which pesticides have been introduced to groundwater (including recognized contaminants with human impacts such as DBCP and 123-TCP, both found in Tulare County). Dairies also contribute to nitrate levels in groundwater.
5. General Introduction, "Responsible Agencies" section: Nothing may need to change here, but do be aware that CDPH is no longer involved in regulation of water systems; it is now the State Water Resources Control Board. This has changed since 2012 when this Element was written.

Environmental Justice Element Survey

The following questions are grouped into topic chapters found within the Environmental Justice Element. For any “other” answer, please describe.

First, help us get to know you.

Please answer all of the questions that you feel comfortable responding to. The more you answer, the more it will help when we look at the responses.

Do you live or work in Tulare County?

(outside of a city / unincorporated county community)

- Live
- Work
- Both
- Neither

Which community do you live in?

What is your household / family income?

Add together all of the annual incomes for one year.

- Choice Less than \$10,000
- \$10,000 to \$14,999
- \$15,000 to \$24,999
- \$25,000 to \$34,999
- \$35,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$74,999
- \$75,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to \$149,999
- \$150,000 to \$199,999
- \$200,000 or more

Does your household include any of the following?

Please check all of the options that apply.

- Children (under the age of 10)
- Teenagers (between the age of 11 and 18)
- Seniors (older than 65)
- A person or people with chronic health concerns (such as asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, etc.)

- A person or people with a sensory impairment (vision or hearing)
- A person or people with a mobility impairment
- Disabled family member(s)
- Large family or multiple families (more than 5 people)
- None of the above

How many people live in your home?

Please select your age group.

- Under 5 years
- 5 to 9 years
- 10 to 14 years
- 15 to 19 years
- 20 to 24 years
- 25 to 29 years
- 30 to 34 years
- 35 to 39 years
- 40 to 44 years
- 45 to 49 years
- 50 to 54 years
- 55 to 59 years
- 60 to 64 years
- 65 to 69 years
- 70 to 74 years
- 75 to 79 years
- 80 to 84 years
- 85 years and over

Which race/ethnicity category best describes you?

Select all that apply to you.

- American Indian or Alaska Native—For example, Kumeyaay, Luiseño, Juaneño, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Inupiat, Eskimo
- Asian—For example, Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese
- Black or African American—For example, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali
- Latino—For example, Mexican or Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian
- Hispanic—For Example, with origins from Spain
- Middle Eastern or North African—For example, Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan, Algerian
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander—For example, Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese
- White—For example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Polish, French
- I prefer not to answer
- Other

What is your highest education level?

- Elementary School
- Middle School
- Some high school
- High school diploma or equivalent
- Vocational training
- Some college
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Graduate or professional degree
- I prefer not to answer

What is your gender identity?

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary

Pollution Exposure

Tulare County wants to increase community health by lowering residents' contact with pollution.

Air Pollution

From the following categories, please rank how each affects your household and community.

Pesticides

- No impact / unsure
- Minimal impact
- Some impact
- Large impact

Dust (from farming activity, Valley Fever, etc.)

- No impact / unsure
- Minimal impact
- Some impact
- Large impact

Traffic Corridors (cars, trucks, agricultural equipment emissions)

- No impact / unsure
- Minimal impact
- Some impact
- Large impact

2nd hand smoke

- No impact / unsure
- Minimal impact
- Some impact
- Large impact

Factories & industrial operation emissions

- No impact / unsure
- Minimal impact
- Some impact
- Large impact

Trash, wood, and/or agricultural burning

- No impact / unsure
- Minimal impact
- Some impact
- Large impact

Water Pollution

From the following categories, please rank how each affects your household and community.

Contaminated drinking water (private wells and/or domestic water systems)

- No impact / unsure
- Minimal impact
- Some impact
- Large impact

Pollution in streams and rivers

- No impact / unsure
- Minimal impact
- Some impact
- Large impact

Old or damaged pipes

- No impact / unsure
- Minimal impact
- Some impact
- Large impact

Community Pollution

From the following categories, please rank how each affects your household and community.

Illegal dumping/trash

- No impact / unsure
- Minimal impact
- Some impact
- Large impact

Graffiti

- No impact / unsure
- Minimal impact
- Some impact
- Large impact

Loud noise (traffic, airplanes, agriculture/industrial operations)

- No impact / unsure
- Minimal impact
- Some impact
- Large impact

Smell (wastewater, agricultural processing facilities, farm animals/CAFOs)

- No impact / unsure
- Minimal impact
- Some impact
- Large impact

Vacant/Blighted properties

- No impact / unsure
- Minimal impact
- Some impact
- Large impact

Invasive species (grasses, pests)

- No impact / unsure
- Minimal impact
- Some impact
- Large impact

Are there any forms of pollution in your community that are not represented in the list above?

What would decrease pollution in your neighborhood?

Opportunity for Physical Activity

Tulare County wants to increase community health by encouraging residents' to partake in exercise.

Is there a park in your community?

- Yes
- No

Where is the nearest park?

- Walking or biking distance
- Accessible by transit?
- 5 minute drive or less
- 5-10 minute drive
- 10-20 minute drive
- 20-30 minute drive
- 30+ minute drive

Do you use nearby parks, farmland, community centers, other outdoor play areas or sports fields to get exercise? How frequently?

- Yes, I utilize nearby recreation areas frequently--sometimes multiple times per week.
- Yes, I recreate somewhat frequently (at least once or twice per month).
- Yes, but only on a very limited basis (once or twice every six months).
- I rarely, if ever, visit nearby recreation.

What would help encourage you to use nearby parks or other outdoor recreation options more frequently?

What areas do you use if there are no green spaces in your community?

Select all that apply.

- Farmlands
- Gyms
- Other communities
- Community gardens
- Vacant properties
- Lightly traveled roads
- Schools
- Cemetery grounds

- Swimming pools
- Other

How often do you visit Tulare County's National Parks and other Public Lands?

(e.g. Sequoia National Forest, Pixley Wildlife Refuge)

- Never
- At least 1-3 times a year
- 3-5 times a year
- More than 5 times a year

What would encourage you to partake in more physical activity?

Healthy Food Access

Tulare County wants to make it easier for residents to buy and eat healthier, more affordable, and culturally appropriate foods.

Do you use WIC/CalFresh/Food stamps?

- Yes
- No

Select the places that sell food within your community?

(e.g. grocery stores, food bank, farmers market, food stand, local stores ...)

- Convenience store/gas station
- Grocery store
- Fast food restaurant
- Community gardens
- Seasonal markets
- Pop-up food stand/truck
- Food bank
- No places to buy food
- Other

How many places in your community sell/hand-out food?

- There are no places to get food
- There is one place to get food
- There are two places to get food

- There are more than two places to get food

What kind of place do you get most of your groceries from?

- Convenience store/gas station
- Grocery store
- Fast food restaurant
- Community gardens
- Seasonal markets
- Pop-up food stand/truck
- Food bank
- Other

Can you find all of the foods you want for your cultural (religious and/or traditional) and health needs from the stores in your community?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

Usually, how long do you travel to get to the place(s) you get food from?

- Under 10 minutes
- 11-20 minutes
- More than 20 minutes
- Usually, how many times a week do you cook or eat homemade/healthy meals?
- Just about every meal
- About 75% of the meals
- About half of the meals
- About a quarter of the meals
- Usually do not cook/eat homemade meals

What are the greatest challenges to maintaining a healthy diet?

Select up to five.

- How long it takes to get to the store
- Lack of transportation to shop at the store
- Lack of healthy food in stores
- Healthy food is too expensive
- Can't find the ingredients I use to cook with/eat
- I am too busy to cook
- I have a disability
- I do not have a kitchen that I can prepare healthy foods in
- I am not sure how to cook fruits, vegetables and healthy meats
- Fast food restaurants are nearby
- I do not have a way to get to the store

- I do not have any problems that keep me from getting fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy food
- Other

What would encourage you and your family to eat more healthy foods such as fruits or vegetables?

Safe and Sanitary Housing

The County of Tulare wants to improve the safety and maintenance of residents' homes.

How safe do you think the housing in your neighborhood is?

1 (Least Safe)

2

3

4

5 (Most Safe)

How well maintained is the housing in your neighborhood?

1 (Poorly Maintained)

2

3

4

5 (Well Maintained)

Please select all of the housing issues that exist in your neighborhood.

- People trying to rent or buy a home are discriminated against (race, ethnicity, country of origin, gender, disability, being pregnant or having children, age...)
- There are not enough choices of places to live for people with disabilities.
- Utilities (heating, gas, etc.) are too expensive.
- Landlords do not adequately maintain the property
- Houses and apartments are not comfortable, not safe, in poor condition, or dangerous.
- Too many people live together in one home because it is too expensive to rent or buy your own.
- Lack of adequate cooling.
- Exposure to tobacco smoke and/or other pollution.
- Lack of stable housing and fear/occurrence of evictions and displacement.
- Renters do not have enough money for things like food and clothes after paying expensive rents.

- Lack of affordable housing.
- I do not think there are any housing problems in my neighborhood.
- Other

Do you rent or own your home?

- Rent
- Own
- Other

If you rent, do you plan to buy a home in your community?

- Yes
- No

What is the condition of the home you live in?

1 (Poor Condition)

2

3

4

5 (Good Condition)

Do you have suggestions on how to improve the safety or level of maintenance in your neighborhood?

Community Safety

Tulare County wants to increase the residents' feel of safety in their community.

Do you feel prepared for a disaster?

(e.g. dry wells, power outage, extreme heat, fire, flood, earthquake, etc.)

- Yes, I practice some level of preparedness in case of an emergency.
- No, I do not feel prepared in case of an emergency.

How can the County help your community feel more safe?

Public Facilities

The County of Tulare wants to make it easier for residents to use public services and get to public buildings.

Which public facilities do you think your community needs the most?

Please select your top three choices.

- Multi-use community centers
- Cooling/Heating centers
- Library/Computer center
- Daycare, community learning centers
- Healthcare facilities
- Complete streets (sidewalks, bike lanes, etc.)
- Affordable and reliable internet
- Water system
- Electricity/Gas
- Senior center
- Youth center
- Parks
- Public swimming pools
- Bus service and bus stops
- Homeless shelters
- Other

Do you believe your neighborhood lacks attention, resources, or opportunities compared to other neighborhoods in Tulare County? If so, in what ways can the shared spaces be improved?

Civic Engagement

Tulare County wants to make it easier for residents to voice their concerns, ideas, and opinions about government programs and projects.

When was the last time you attended a County public meeting?

- This month
- In the past 6 months
- This year
- In the past 2 years
- More than 2 years ago

- I have never attended a public meeting

What are the main barriers to attending public meetings?

Please select the main three.

- Agenda items are not relevant to the concerns in my community
- I cannot get time off work
- The location of the meetings are too far away
- Transportation to the meeting location
- The time of the meetings is inconvenient
- Meetings are too long
- Comfort level (nervous of setting/intimidated)
- Language/communication barriers
- Don't know about the meetings
- I need child care
- I do not trust the government
- I do not think they will take my opinions seriously
- Other

Would you like to learn more about future public meetings?

- Yes
- No

Have you ever received mail with an informational flyer or survey from Tulare County?

Regarding a project or program.

- Yes
- No

What is your preferred method of participating in public decision making processes?

- Watch/listen to the meetings (in-person/online)
- Call-in, attend in-person, or submit written comments to read aloud at live meetings
- Answering a survey
- Being interviewed by County Staff
- Participating in an interactive workshop in your town
- Virtually/online (email, mapping activity, social media, video conferencing, etc.)
- I choose not to participate
- Other

What are the best ways to reach you and ask for your input on County projects?

Please select three.

- Email
- In-person events
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- Mail, postcards, flyers
- County website
- Word of mouth
- Community/neighborhood organizations
- Other

Do you contact the County when there is an issue in your neighborhood? If not, what might encourage you to contact the government or attend a public meeting?

Post Survey Questions

What are qualities about the neighborhood you live in that you would like to preserve?

Prior to this survey, were you familiar with what environmental justice is?

- Yes
- No

Prior to this survey, were you aware that the County of Tulare is creating an Environmental Justice Element?

- Yes
- No

Was this survey easy to understand?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Thank you for your input, we will incorporate it into the Environmental Justice Element.

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