



# 2024 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ELEMENT

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CITY OF LA PUENTE  
15900 E. Main Street  
La Puente, CA 91744

CITY COUNCIL ADOPTED  
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# Table of Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>                                    | <b>3</b>  |
| PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ELEMENT ..... | 3         |
| RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS.....                | 4         |
| COMMUNITY OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT .....                           | 4         |
| LA PUENTE AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITY .....           | 4         |
| <b>2. EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS .....</b>               | <b>7</b>  |
| METHODOLOGY .....   | 7         |
| POLLUTION AND AIR QUALITY.....                                  | 7         |
| ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOODS.....                                    | 12        |
| HOUSING.....  | 14        |
| ACCESS TO PUBLIC FACILITIES .....                               | 14        |
| <b>3. GOALS AND POLICIES.....</b>                               | <b>16</b> |
| <b>4. REFERENCES .....</b>                                      | <b>21</b> |
| <b>5. APPENDIX A.....</b>                                       | <b>23</b> |
| <b>6. APPENDIX B.....</b>                                       | <b>24</b> |
| <b>7. APPENDIX C .....</b>                                      | <b>25</b> |

# 1. INTRODUCTION

La Puente, located in the San Gabriel Valley, is a vibrant community with a rich history and diverse population of nearly 40,000 residents. It is situated on the ancestral land of the Tongva Tribe and was once renowned for its fruit and walnut groves, boasting the world's largest walnut packing plant. The landscape has changed over time, and La Puente now embraces its identity as an urban community, attracting families of all backgrounds. However, the city faces several environmental justice concerns and challenges that impact community members.

## PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ELEMENT

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) defines environmental justice as “the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.” In 2016, the State of California passed Senate Bill 1000 (SB 1000) SB 1000 requiring cities to develop an Environmental Justice element, or related environmental justice goals and policies to reduce the unique or compounded health risks in “disadvantaged communities.” The goal of SB 1000 is to help identify and reduce risks in communities disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation. In doing so, SB 1000 offers an opportunity to address existing community health concerns and mitigate the impacts of future health issues, including increasing access to healthy food, preventing chronic disease, improving transportation facilities and infrastructure, promoting healthy land use design, and encouraging physical activity.

To address these issues, the City of La Puente has prepared this Environmental Justice Element as part of The City of La Puente General Plan. This element aligns with the California state policy on environmental justice, recognizing the disproportionate impact of pollution and environmental hazards on marginalized communities. While the city is not responsible for the pollution and environmental hazards outlined in this plan, it is firmly committed to address the issues to ensure the health, equity, and prosperity of its residents. Through collaboration with community stakeholders and engagement with local residents, La Puente's Environmental Justice Element strives to create a healthier and more inclusive environment, enhancing the quality of life and safeguarding the well-being of future generations.

Place, income, living conditions and education are all significant contributing factors to the health of a community. How cities plan and prioritize growth for the future can determine how healthy residents are in the long term. The City's physical, social, and economic environments combine to make specific individuals and groups more vulnerable to long-term changes and short-term shocks. A guiding principle of environmental justice is that all members of a community should benefit from understanding the risks of environmental harms and protections to mitigate their impacts.

The City of La Puente recognizes the significance of prioritizing environmental justice and seeks to promote fairness and equity in environmental decision-making, ensuring a sustainable and thriving future for all residents. This Environmental Justice Element is part of the city's general plan and will serve as a roadmap and foundation for addressing the environmental justice concerns that residents have been facing. The Environmental Justice Element is organized into three sections:

1. Identification of environmental justice communities within La Puente
2. Assessment of La Puente's need and environmental justice concerns
3. Compile list of goals and policies to advance environmental justice

## RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

The 2004 La Puente General Plan currently includes five elements: community development, circulation and infrastructure, housing, community resources, and community safety. As the new addition to the general plan, the Environmental Justice Element aims to align with these five elements and state regulations. It seeks to ensure consistency with the broader framework of the general plan.

As new policies are introduced, they will undergo a review to ensure alignment with existing elements. If any updates or modifications are made to the existing general plan elements, the Environmental Justice Element may also be revised. This approach guarantees that the Environmental Justice Element remains consistent with the goals and direction of the general plan and reinforces the City's commitment to integrated and unified planning.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

To inform this element and ensure it addresses the needs of La Puente residents, the city conducted community engagement to seek input from the community. The engagement was split into two phases. In the first phase, the city conducted an online and paper survey in Spanish and English, spoke to several community stakeholders, utilized listservs and city's social media platforms to inform the community about this planning initiative and attended community events to gather input from residents. During the second phase, the city hosted two community workshops, one in-person on February 29, and one virtual on March 9, and posted information about the environmental justice draft online for public review. The city outreached to the community about the workshops and draft via social media and posters at various city buildings across the city.

A more extensive summary of the outreach and engagement activities can be found in Appendix A. The survey results can be found in Appendix B, and a feedback matrix which details feedback received by residents and stakeholders during the second phase of engagement can be found in Appendix C.

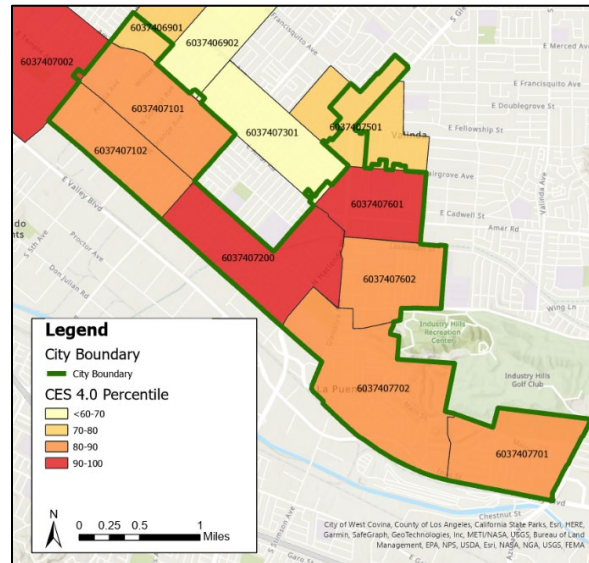
## LA PUENTE AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITY

The first task for this environmental justice element is to better understand which characteristics make up the definition for an environmental justice community in La Puente. The definition of an environmental justice community in California is typically derived from frameworks established by the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) and the California Office of Environmental Health Hazards Assessment (OEHHA), which utilize CalEnviroScreen to assess environmental and socioeconomic factors.

Focusing OEHHA's CalEnviroScreen 4.0 data to La Puente, it shows that a majority of census tracts within the City of La Puente limits are in the 80<sup>th</sup> and 90<sup>th</sup> percentiles. This indicates that the tracts exhibit a relatively higher level of vulnerability and exposure to environmental hazards compared to other areas across the state. This exposure and vulnerability can be attributed to a combination of factors, including

exposure to pollution sources, health risks, socioeconomic challenges, and other environmental stressors. In general, areas in the 80<sup>th</sup> and 90<sup>th</sup> percentiles are considered to have a higher pollution burden and require targeted environmental justice interventions and resources to address the disparities and improve overall community well-being. Using the data from CalEnviroScreen 4.0, the state considers all census tracts within La Puente as “Disadvantaged Communities”<sup>1</sup>.

**Figure 1: CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Percentiles and City of La Puente Boundary**



Additional sources use different characteristics to identify communities of concern. According to the California Department of Housing and Community Development, all census tracts in La Puente are designated low-income<sup>2</sup>. La Puente is also considered an area of focus per the Southern California Association of Governments’ definition for Communities of Concern<sup>3</sup>.

The Los Angeles County Climate Vulnerability Assessment Social Vulnerability Index highlights La Puente as having medium to high sensitivity census tracts<sup>4</sup>. Figure 2 shows that the majority of census tracts are also found to have medium to high sensitivity to the impacts of climate change in the Los Angeles County Climate Vulnerability Assessment Social Vulnerability Index.

Based on the various sources, characteristics and definitions, the entire City of La Puente is considered an environmental justice community.

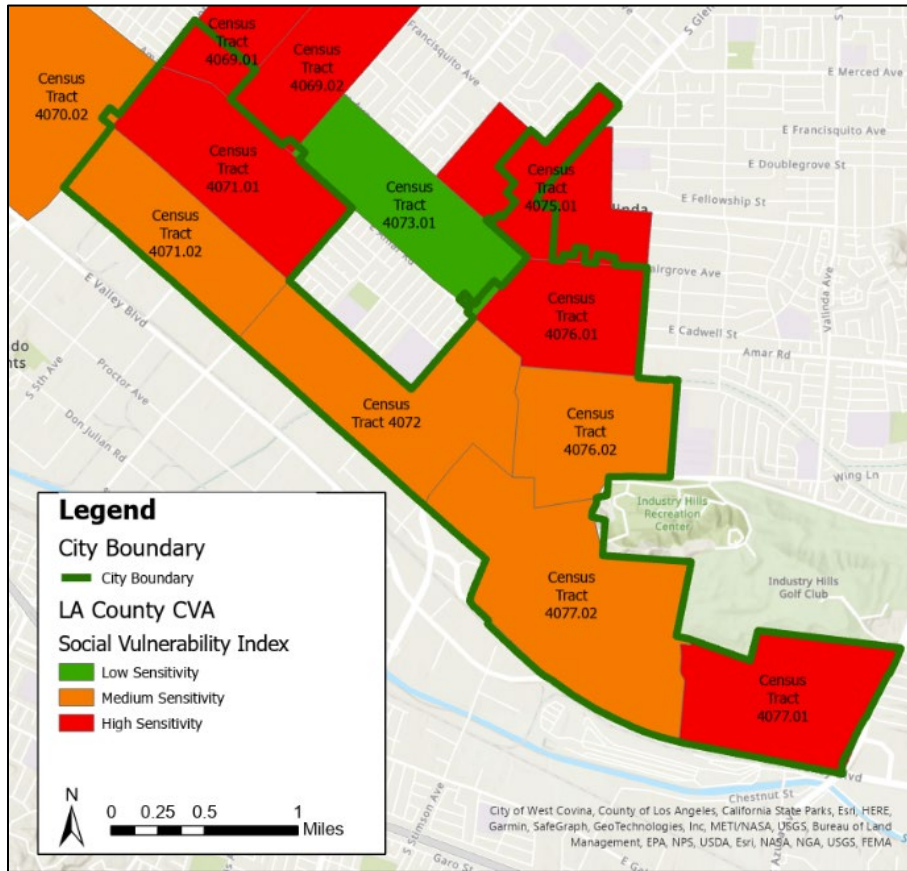
<sup>1</sup> (SB 535 Disadvantaged Communities, n.d.) <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/sb535>

<sup>2</sup> (State of California Department of Housing and Community Development, n.d.)

<sup>3</sup> (Southern California Association of Governments)

<sup>4</sup> (Los Angeles County, 2021)

**Figure 2: La Puente & LA County Climate Vulnerability Assessment Social Vulnerability Index**



## 2. EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

### METHODOLOGY

To assess the existing conditions within La Puente, this report relies on data from the State of California and County of Los Angeles that is available at the census tracts level for La Puente. Using the 2010 census data, La Puente covers twelve census tracts, however only seven of those tracts are entirely within the city boundary. Whenever census tracts are listed, an asterisk (\*) shall note tracts only partially within the City of La Puente and included in calculating averages.

Data from CalEnviroScreen 4.0 is primarily utilized when assessing the environmental pollution and exposure assessed. When available, county data will also be used to showcase the performance of the La Puente census tracts in relation to the County and State.

As data from the state and county levels assess census tract level data, this report also assesses and presents the data at the census tract level and measures the performance of each census tract in relation to either the state or County of Los Angeles, unless otherwise noted. A percentile is a comparison score between one census tract's performance and the performance of the rest of census tracts within the State of California or County of Los Angeles. It shows the percentage of scores that a particular score surpassed. For example, if a census tract in La Puente shows to be in the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile, it means it performs above 80% of other census tracts (for better or worse).

Various environmental concerns negatively impact the health of residents in the City of La Puente. While contaminants can be naturally occurring or man-made, both impact the environment and human health. It is also important to note that some of the contamination and pollution affecting residents of La Puente come from outside the city boundaries. While this may be the case, the city will strive to mitigate the impacts as much as possible and collaborate with other agencies and industry to address resident concerns and improve the quality of life for residents of La Puente.

### POLLUTION AND AIR QUALITY

Per CalEnviroScreen 4.0, La Puente residents are exposed to higher levels of pollution relative to the rest of California. Census tracts within the City of La Puente, on average fall within the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile. However two census tracks fall within the 90- percentiles, including census tract, 4070.02 (partially located within La Puente), which falls into the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile and census tract 4077.02 (wholly within the City of La Puente) which falls within the 96<sup>th</sup> percentile.

CalEnviroScreen 4.0 uses 13 different pollution indicators to assess the pollution burden across the state and develop the scores and percentiles for comparison. The indicators are Ozone, PM 2.5, Diesel Particulate Matter, Drinking Water Contaminants, Lead Risk, Pesticides, Toxic Releases from Facilities, Traffic Impacts, Clean Up Sites, Groundwater Threats, Hazardous Waste, Impaired Waters, and Solid Waste Sites.

In assessing how La Puente is impacted by pollution burden, Figure 3.1 illustrates the La Puente census tracts average percentiles and the value of the most vulnerable city census tracts in relation to the state

per CalEnviroScreen 4.0. This figure demonstrates that La Puente census tracts face a higher average of pollution exposure from Toxic Release from Facilities, Drinking Water Contaminants, and Children’s Lead Risk from Housing.

**Figure 3.1: Average and Max Percentile Value of Pollution Indicators within La Puente Census Tracts**

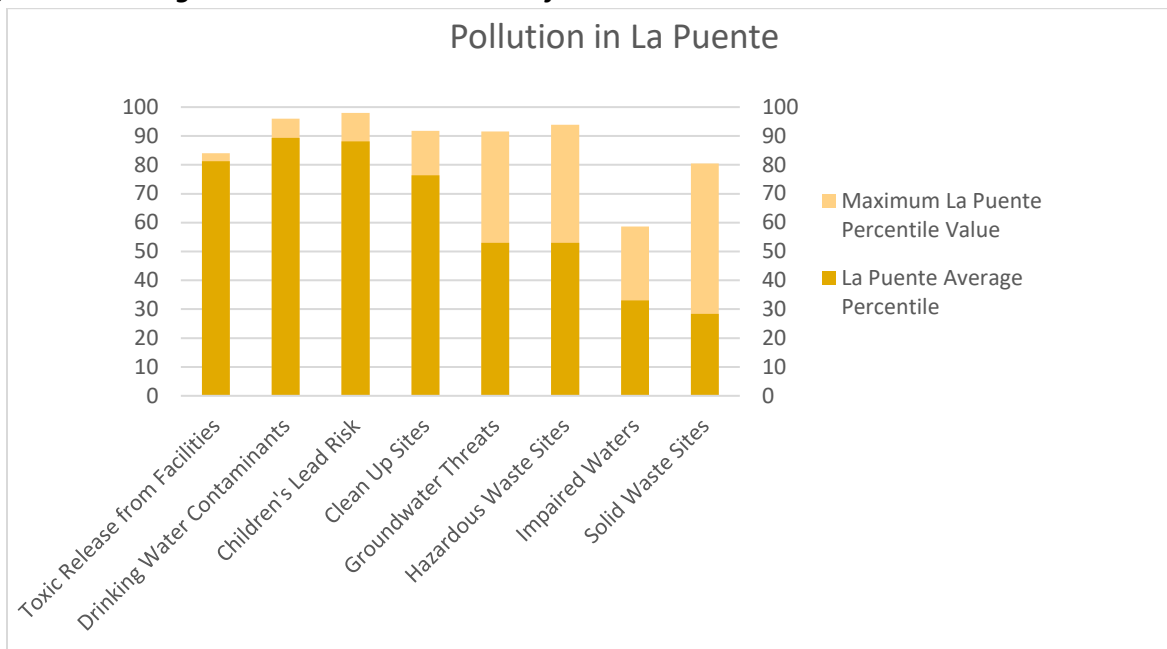


Figure 3.1 demonstrates that the average performance of La Puente census tracts are near the maximum, particularly for Drinking Water Contaminants and Children’s Lead Risk. These indicators will be of particular focus, as they are of particular concern in La Puente.

Taking a more localized view at the county level, it is understood that many residents within the County of Los Angeles face higher levels of pollution than others across the state, on average<sup>5</sup>, particularly around air quality which is covered below.

### Drinking Water

Safe, affordable, and accessible drinking water is integral to health, dignity, and justice. The accessibility and quality of the water is often determined by the geographical location of the city. The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally-occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material. CalEnviroScreen scores LA County in the 14<sup>th</sup> percentile, meaning 86% of California census tracts performed better than those within the county. The City of La Puente, performs slightly lower – registering in the 13<sup>th</sup> percentile. Five census tracts within La Puente face higher levels of drinking water contaminants than 95% of census tracts statewide.

Figure 3.2 shows CalEnviroScreen 4.0 percentile map of Drinking Water Contaminants..

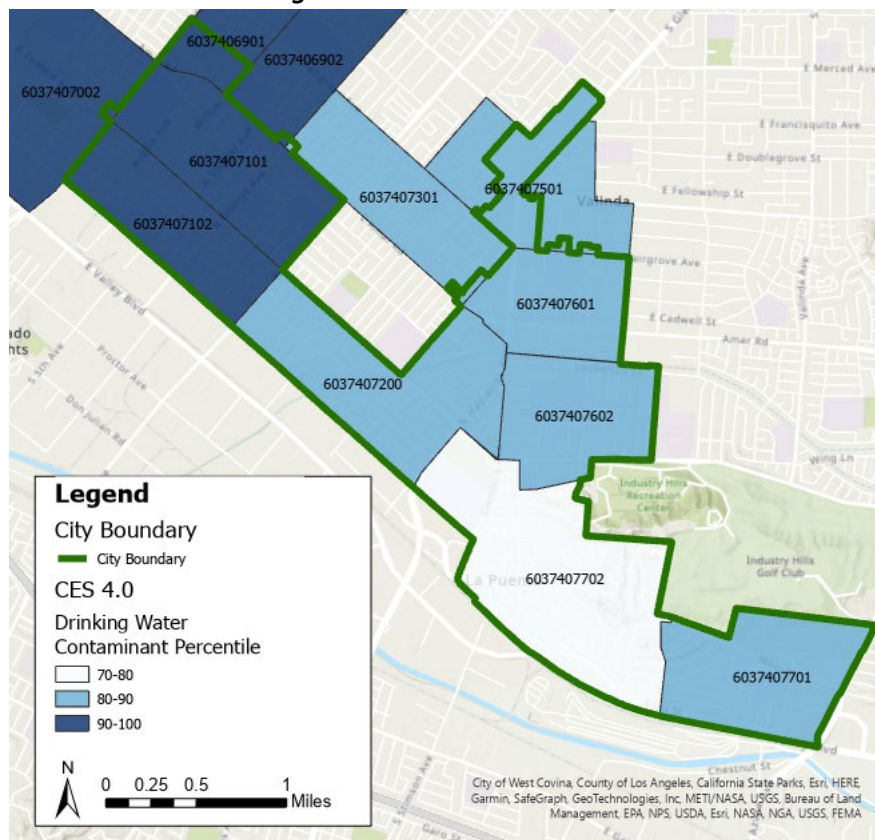
<sup>5</sup> (State of California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, 2021)



A commonly found contaminant arsenic - a naturally occurring groundwater contaminant – poses a cancer risk. Another commonly found contaminant, nitrate, can lead to a blood disorder in infants called blue baby syndrome. The most recent water quality reports for the three water utilities serving La Puente showed that arsenic tested at low levels; well within the maximum levels allowed by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). However, these levels are still above the EPA’s Maximum Contaminant Level Goals (MCLG)<sup>6</sup>. The MCLGs are levels of a contaminant in drinking water, which there is no known nor expected risk to health.

While not posing an immediate health risk, it is worth noting that La Puente residents are more vulnerable when compared statewide.

**Figure 3.2: CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Drinking Water Contaminant Percentile**



### Children’s Lead Risk

Lead is a toxic metal that has been used in many products over time. Even in small amounts, lead can have harmful effects on the body, which may lead to lifelong learning, behavioral, reproductive,

<sup>6</sup> (La Puente Valley County Water District, 2023) [https://lapuentewater.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/LPVCWD-FINAL2022CCR\\_LaPuenteWater\\_WebEmail.pdf](https://lapuentewater.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/LPVCWD-FINAL2022CCR_LaPuenteWater_WebEmail.pdf); (San Gabriel Valley Water Company, 2022) <https://www.sgvwater.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/CCR-2022.pdf>; (Suburban Water Systems, 2022) <https://www.swwc.com/wp-content/uploads/files/ca/ccr/ccr-sanjosehills-2022.pdf>

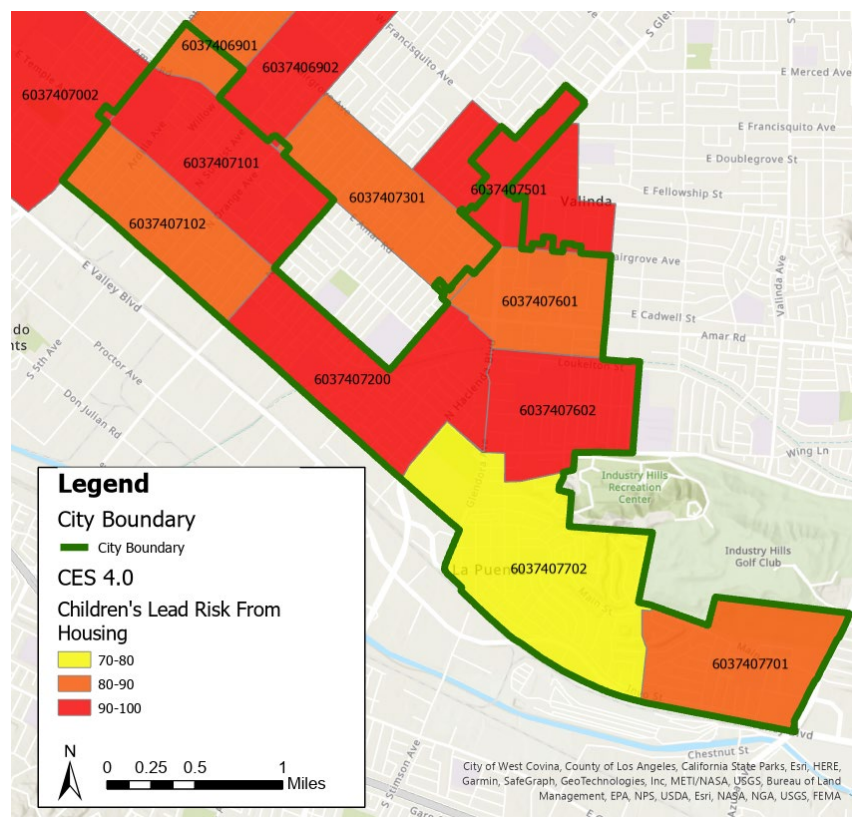
cardiovascular, and other health problems. While many leaded products have been phased out, lead may still be found in and around older homes and buildings, and some consumer products and foods.

Children in La Puente face a high level of lead risk within six census tracts. La Puente children are more likely than 90-98% of other children statewide, to be exposed to lead within their homes...

CalEnviroScreen 4.0 determines this by calculating the “percentage of households within a census tract with likelihood of lead-based paint hazards from the age of housing (2017 California parcel data and 5-year estimates 2015-2019) combined with the percentage of households that are both low-income (household income less than 80% of the county median family income) and have children under 6 years old (5-year estimates 2013-2017)”.<sup>7</sup>

Young children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of lead exposure and can suffer adverse health effects, particularly in the brain and nervous system. Even at low levels, exposure to lead can increase the likelihood of lower IQ, hinder educational performance, and contribute to symptoms associated with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

**Figure 3.3: CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Children’s Lead Risk from Housing Percentile**



## Air Quality

Outdoor air pollution comes from many sources, such as vehicle exhaust, construction and industrial activities, smoke from fireplaces and wildfires, and pollen from local plants. High air pollution exposure

<sup>7</sup> (State of California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, 2021) Pg. 66 - 73

has a direct impact on human health, leading to disproportionate levels of negative health outcomes like asthma, cardiovascular disease, or cancer in communities burdened by pollution. Southern California residents, particularly those in Los Angeles County, are some of the most vulnerable to poor air quality-particulate matter such as diesel PM, ozone, and PM 2.5.

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.

Ozone is a reactive form of oxygen that protects against the sun’s ultraviolet rays in the stratosphere but can be harmful closer to the ground. Tropospheric ozone at the ground level is the primary component of smog and reactive with other pollutants at the ground level, typically highest in the afternoon and on hot days<sup>8</sup>. Ozone has been found to exacerbate asthma, decrease lung function, and other respiratory concerns.

Particulate matter finer than 2.5 micrometers in size is referred to as PM2.5, and poses the greatest health risk because they can penetrate deep into the lungs or even get into the bloodstream, resulting in a wide range of health effects. PM2.5 commonly comes from combustion of all fuel types, including diesel, along with particulates such as from road dust.

Many cities within Los Angeles County are vulnerable to all three of these pollutants.

As shown in Table 1, La Puente performs better than the county average in exposure to diesel particulate matter (Diesel PM). La Puente also meets the county’s average exposure to particle pollution from fine particulates (PM 2.5) while performing worse when it comes to exposure from ozone<sup>9</sup>.

**Table 1 – Average Performance on Key Air Pollution Indicators**

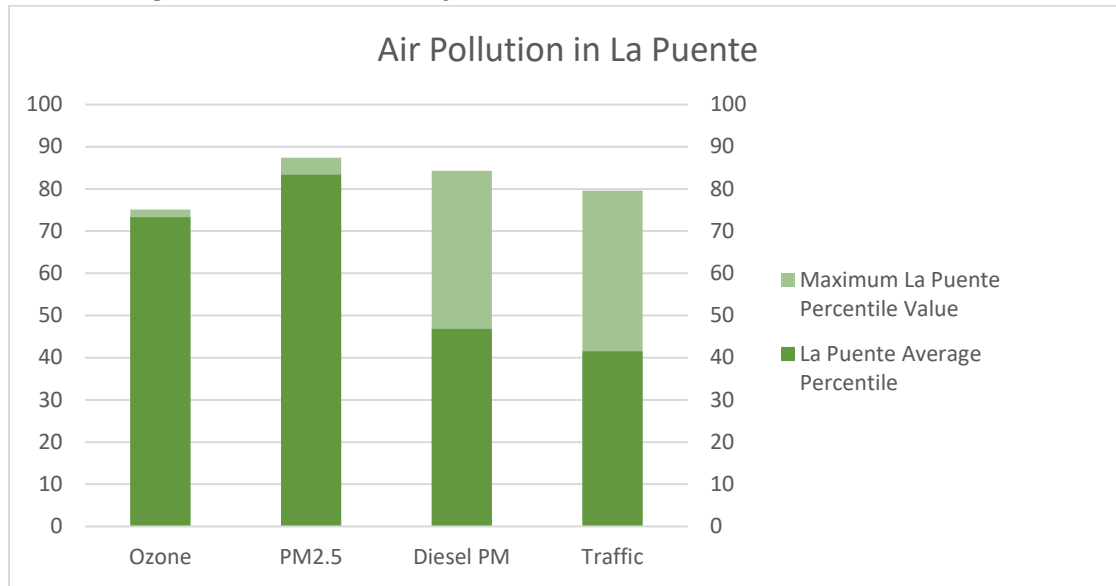
| Indicator | La Puente Average Percentile (higher value is better) | LA County Average Percentile (higher value is better) |
|-----------|---|---|
| Diesel PM | 19.1  | 3.6   |
| Ozone     | 29.2  | 32.1  |
| PM 2.5    | 10.8  | 10.7  |

Figure 3.4 graphs the average percentile performance of La Puente census tracts, along with the maximum percentile value of particular census tracts in La Puente.

<sup>8</sup> (State of California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, 2021)

<sup>9</sup> (Public Health Alliance of Southern California)

**Figure 3.4: Average and Max Percentile of Air Pollution Indicators within La Puente Census Tracts**



## ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOODS

Healthy communities have access to affordable and healthy food at grocery stores, produce markets, community gardens, and farmers’ markets. Residents of communities with access to a full-service grocery store tend to eat more fruits and vegetables, have lower body weights, and lower rates of chronic diseases. Local food production can also reduce the distance food is shipped, lowering the environmental footprint of food production and distribution. Healthy retail programs in cities bring together health departments, community-based organizations, and businesses to increase access to healthy food. These types of partnerships are also important to changing retail environments to include more businesses that support access to healthy foods and help address food insecurity.

Food insecurity is defined as a community, household, or individual’s inadequate access to affordable, healthy and nutritious food. This can have several health consequences, including increased consumption of calorie dense foods, poor academic performance, anxiety and depression, and early-onset obesity. Inadequate access to nutritious and affordable food is particularly relevant among low-income communities.

La Puente has eight full-service grocery stores and supermarkets with produce departments, such as Smart & Final, Northgate Market, El Super, Walmart Neighborhood Market, ALDI, R-Ranch Bodega Market, and others, some of which also cater to Hispanic groceries and meals. Additional full-service grocery stores are situated in the neighboring city of West Covina and the City of Industry. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Access Research Atlas, “at least 33% of the population in La Puente lives farther than 1/2 mile from the nearest supermarket.”<sup>10</sup> Residing further than half a mile from a supermarket indicates less walkable and less convenient access to full-service grocery stores for

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2019.

the most vulnerable population group. Close access to a nearby supermarket can promote better dietary habits, lower the costs of obtaining food, reduce chronic diseases, and mitigate the risk of food insecurity. Unequal access, which includes factors like distance, is closely linked with health behaviors and outcomes.

The City of La Puente and the neighboring area have one certified<sup>11</sup> farmers market, La Puente Live, which is unlike traditional farmers markets in that it primarily focuses on prepared food and community activities rather than fresh produce from local farmers. La Puente Live market is not listed on the California Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children or Senior Authorized Farmers Market List.<sup>12</sup> Nor is it on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Authorized Farmers Market List.<sup>13</sup> Market vendors do not accept Electronic Benefit Transfer payment cards used by the low-income recipients of CalFresh and other government assistance programs.<sup>14</sup>

Another significant aspect of food access pertains to the availability of free or reduced-price meals for eligible students in public schools and participation in programs like CalFresh, a government assistance program aimed at reducing food insecurity. In 2018, the estimated number of qualified for CalFresh individuals in La Puente was 5,339<sup>15</sup> (1.34% of the total population). Approximately 68.6% of enrolled public-school students in La Puente were eligible for free or reduced-price meals for the 2022-2023 school year<sup>16</sup>, a slight decrease from the pandemic levels. These numbers highlight the importance of school meal programs of ensuring adequate nutrition for students from low-income backgrounds. Currently, the Hacienda La Puente School District provides breakfast and school lunch to all students for free for the 2022-2023 school year under the Community Eligibility Provision for the School Breakfast and National School Lunch Programs.

For families requiring additional food support, food banks and pantries can be vital resources. The La Puente Outreach Center Food Pantry and Il Adam Ministries provide free food assistance with varying distribution frequencies to individuals and families in need. Moreover, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank and community partners such as neighboring cities, school district and local businesses, partnered to provide additional food distribution opportunities reflecting a concerted effort to promote food security in La Puente. The work of the La Puente Outreach Center Food Pantry, Il Adam Ministries, the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank highlights the ongoing efforts to combat food insecurity yet underscores the imperative for continuous improvement and expansion of food services to better meet the diverse needs of individuals and families in La Puente.

Upon assessing the state of healthy food access in La Puente, it becomes apparent that there are certain areas that require attention and improvement. Although the community is involved in addressing food insecurity and there are full-service supermarkets and grocery stores nearby, further initiatives are necessary to ensure that vulnerable populations have equitable access to nutritional meals and fresh produce.

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<sup>11</sup> (California Department of Food and Agriculture, 2023)

<sup>12</sup> (California Department of Public Health, 2023)

<sup>13</sup> (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2023)

<sup>14</sup> (Ecology Center, Farmers' Market Finder, n.d.)

<sup>15</sup> (Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, 2018)

<sup>16</sup> (California Department of Education, 2023)

## HOUSING

As part of addressing environmental justice, housing must also be considered, due to the impacts on environmental justice communities. According to the Public Health Alliance of Southern California, “every person should be able to live in housing with enough space for everyone living there. Uncrowded housing can improve mental health including stress and depression, decrease the spread of communicable diseases like tuberculosis, and improve children’s wellbeing and educational outcomes”.

Using data from the 2019 American Community Survey, roughly 16% of La Puente residents live in overcrowded conditions, on average. This places La Puente within the top 25<sup>th</sup> percentile compared to other communities across the state<sup>17</sup>. This means that La Puente has more overcrowded homes than ¾ of the cities in California. Table 2 lists the estimated percent of residents in uncrowded housing in La Puente census tracts, per the U.S. Census, and their percentile when compared across the state.

**Table 2 – Percent Of Residents In Uncrowded Housing And Percentiles**

| Census Tract<br>(2010 Census) | % of residents in<br>uncrowded housing | Uncrowded Housing<br>Percentile |
|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Citywide Avg.                 | 83.9%                                  | 21.7                            |
| 4069.01*                      | 85.3%                                  | 22.2                            |
| 4069.02*                      | 88.9%                                  | 30.8                            |
| 4070.02*                      | 78.3%                                  | 10.1                            |
| 4071.01                       | 80.0%                                  | 12.4                            |
| 4071.02                       | 82.2%                                  | 16.0                            |
| 4072.00                       | 85.3%                                  | 22.1                            |
| 4073.01*                      | 94.9%                                  | 55.5                            |
| 4075.01*                      | 82.4%                                  | 16.5                            |
| 4076.01                       | 78.5%                                  | 10.4                            |
| 4076.02                       | 88.0%                                  | 28.5                            |
| 4077.01                       | 74.0%                                  | 6.3                             |
| 4077.02                       | 88.6%                                  | 29.9                            |

The La Puente Housing Element dives deeper into the housing needs of the City and can provide additional information on the existing conditions of housing in the city.

## ACCESS TO PUBLIC FACILITIES

The built environment actively shapes health outcomes in communities. Access to recreational opportunities and parks is an important factor that affects community health, as parks can promote outdoor activity, provide ways to remain cool during heatwaves, serve as a community gathering place, and improve the quality of life for residents. A report from the Public Health Alliance of Southern California says, “everybody should have access to parks and other open spaces near their home. Parks can encourage physical activity, reduce chronic diseases, improve mental health, foster community connections, and support community resilience to climate change and pollution.”

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<sup>17</sup> (U.S Census Bureau)

Data from the California Department of Public Health, indicates that approximately 36% of La Puente residents live within a half-mile of a park, beach, or open space greater than one acre. Two census tracts that are entirely within the city boundary, which fall well below that number are census tracts 4076.01 with only 10.2% of residents with park access and 4077.01 with no access (0%) to parks. Table 3 lists out the percentage of residents with park access per census tract and their percentile score in relation to the state.

**Table 3 – Percent Of Residents with Park Access and Percentiles**

| <b>Census Tract<br/>(2010 Census)</b> | <b>% of residents<br/>w/ Park Access</b> | <b>Park Access<br/>Percentile</b> |
|---------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Citywide Avg.                         | 36.2%                                    | 22.2                              |
| 4069.01*                              | 14.3%                                    | 8.2                               |
| 4069.02*                              | 0%                                       | 1.7                               |
| 4070.02*                              | 100.0%                                   | 80.1                              |
| 4071.01                               | 38.4%                                    | 16.0                              |
| 4071.02                               | 43.5%                                    | 17.7                              |
| 4072.00                               | 100.0%                                   | 80.1                              |
| 4073.01*                              | 53.3%                                    | 21.5                              |
| 4075.01*                              | 0%                                       | 1.7                               |
| 4076.01                               | 10.2%                                    | 7.0                               |
| 4076.02                               | 50.1%                                    | 20.2                              |
| 4077.01                               | 0%                                       | 1.7                               |
| 4077.02                               | 24.5%                                    | 11.2                              |

### 3. GOALS AND POLICIES

This Environmental Justice Element demonstrates the City of La Puente’s commitment to support the development of equitable goals and policies that promote environmental justice and respond to the needs of our disadvantaged communities. These include goals and policies that improve the quality of our built environment, increase access to parks, facilities and services that promote a healthy lifestyle, ensure safe housing, and prioritize programs that educate and engage our residents so that the entire community can participate and promote a just and healthy community.

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Goal 1: Promote efforts to improve the quality of the built and natural environments to reduce disparate health and environmental impacts.

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- Policy 1.1* Promote land use patterns that reduce driving and promote multimodal transportation and pedestrian access, cycling and transit use which promotes physically active and healthy lifestyles.
- Policy 1.2* Develop a streetscape enhancement plan that addresses street trees, signage, and other landscaped amenities within residential neighborhoods that will make pedestrian access safer and more convenient and enjoyable for residents of all ages.
- Policy 1.3:* Prioritize Urban Greening, particularly along major pedestrian thoroughfares and residential neighborhoods, with an emphasis on native plants to support the regional biodiversity.
- Policy 1.4:* Assess sidewalk inventory to ensure connectivity throughout the city and ensure proper streetlight covering. Maintain and expand sidewalk installation and repair programs, particularly in areas where sidewalks link residential neighborhoods to local schools, parks, and shopping areas.
- Policy 1.5:* Consider a citywide bicycle route and maintenance plan that promotes efficient and safe bikeways integrated with regional bicycle systems and connects residents to major mobility hubs.
- Policy 1.6:* Continue to participate with the South Coast Air Quality Management District and neighboring cities in supporting local and regional projects that improve mobility on freeways and railways, reduced emissions, and improve air quality.
- Policy 1.7:* Assess feasible methods to enhance the built and natural environment to mitigate pollution and noise from railroads and freeways.



*Policy 1.8:* Explore need and feasibility of establishing buffer zones between industrial zoning and residential to mitigate impacts of pollution.

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**Goal 2:** Ensure that public facilities and services are located and distributed throughout the city to allow for easy access for and enjoyment by residents.

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*Policy 2.1:* Ensure safe and well-maintained routes to public facilities are available for pedestrians and cyclists.

*Policy 2.2:* Ensure public spaces feel safe to use during the day and night for everyday play, family gatherings, and community events.

*Policy 2.3:* Regularly assess community needs and identify funding opportunities for public facilities and services responsive to those needs.

*Policy 2.4:* Continue ADA compliance and assess all public facilities to ensure they serve all the different ability levels of residents.

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**Goal 3:** Ensure access to healthy food.

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*Policy 3.1:* Promote urban farming or methods to support residents in growing fruits and vegetables by hosting outreach and educational efforts such as community workshops or classes, when feasible.

*Policy 3.2:* Support measures to improve access to healthy food and food assistance programs.

*Policy 3.3:* Partner with and support the local school district to promote healthy diet programs.

*Policy 3.4:* Increase awareness of fruit trees in La Puente Park to educate the public about healthy eating, and prevent the displacement of these trees or use of harmful chemicals whenever possible.

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**Goal 4:** Ensure safe and sanitary housing.

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- Policy 4.1:* Assist in the improvements and rehabilitation of unsafe housing, by partnering with community organizations and private entities to reduce unsafe housing, while actively preventing displacement.
- Policy 4.2:* Encourage property maintenance, rehabilitation and housing replacement activities, where appropriate, to improve neighborhood conditions.
- Policy 4.3:* Continue to provide proactive code enforcement activities to maintain and improve housing and neighborhood qualities, and consider alternative forms for mitigating violations when families are unable to pay fines or afford corrective action.
- Policy 4.4:* Prevent the encroachment of incompatible commercial and industrial uses into residential neighborhoods.
- Policy 4.5:* Continue to educate the community regarding the safe use and disposal of household hazardous wastes, and continue to conduct annual collection events.
- Policy 4.6:* Work with water utility providers to identify feasible and necessary solutions to improve water quality and mitigations at no to low cost to La Puente residents.
- Policy 4.7:* Identify potential programs to provide air purifiers to residents at no to low cost, to mitigate poor air quality.
- Policy 4.8:* Explore methods and programs to assess and address lead contamination in La Puente.

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**Goal 5:** Provide and improve parks and recreation centers that serve all ages and abilities.

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- Policy 5.1:* Continue to improve existing park quality by providing amenities and programs for play, exercise, and enhanced safety.
- Policy 5.2:* Pursue the creation of additional parks, including pocket parks, through lot consolidation, recycling of underutilized parcels, and purchasing or converting existing plots no longer utilized or underutilized, when available.
- Policy 5.3:* Seek and develop joint-use agreements, and other methods to collaborate with local school districts to use playgrounds and ball fields as public parks during non-school hours, as well as the potential for establishing community gardens and other green spaces.

*Policy 5.4:* Promote and prioritize the expansion of open space and green space across the city whenever possible.

*Policy 5.5:* Leverage the La Puente Parks Master Plan to ensure greater access to parks within the city's boundaries for all residents.

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**Goal 6:** Promote and ensure meaningful and effective participation and community capacity building, especially when developing, adopting, implementing, and enforcing plans and policies related to public health and environmental issues or any plans or programs that affect residents.

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*Policy 6.1:* Continue efforts to increase transparency of City processes and make forms accessible to all residents.

*Policy 6.2:* Support inclusive opportunities to build capacity and leadership skills for residents and organizations through continued civic engagement.

*Policy 6.3:* When feasible, provide interpretation services or inform of their availability for engagement events and provide information in primary languages.

*Policy 6.4:* Authorize an existing or new commission, committee, or working group to support the city and oversee the implementation of environmental justice policy integration, and ensure community voices are represented appropriately.

*Policy 6.5:* Include responsibility of addressing/implementing environmental justice policy requirements into appropriate staff designations and executive leadership positions.

*Policy 6.6:* Provide methods for residents to learn about benefits of urban farming, promoting healthy trees, and utilizing drought tolerant landscaping to encourage best practices and ways to highlight and celebrate resident successes.

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**Goal 7:** Prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of residents.

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*Policy 7.1:* Support programs and services that address Environmental Justice (EJ) issues, and foster partnerships with city and countywide programs.

*Policy 7.2:* Prioritize funding and fiscal decisions for recreation, air quality and other environmental improvements, public infrastructure investments, community programming, and engagement opportunities.

*Policy 7.3:* Engage in educational efforts to eliminate groundwater and urban runoff pollution.

*Policy 7.4:* Monitor progress of the goals and policies from this EJ Element.

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## 5. APPENDIX A

### PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH SUMMARY

## 6. APPENDIX B – LA PUENTE SURVEY RESULTS



## 7. APPENDIX C – COMMUNITY FEEDBACK MATRIX