

Environmental Justice Element

Authority

Senate Bill 1000 (SB 1000), the Planning for Healthy Communities Act, was signed into law by Governor Edmond G. Brown, Jr. on September 24, 2016, mandating that cities and counties with disadvantaged communities (defined below) adopt an Environmental Justice (EJ) Element or integrate EJ goals, objectives, and policies into other elements of their General Plans, with the intent to create healthier cities and counties by protecting sensitive land uses and prioritizing the needs of disadvantaged communities.

The term “disadvantaged community” is a broad designation that includes any community disproportionately affected by environmental, health, and other burdens or low-income areas disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards. In relation to environmental justice, disadvantaged communities typically disproportionately face the burdens of environmental hazards. Government Code Section 65302, as amended by SB 1000, defines a disadvantaged community as follows:

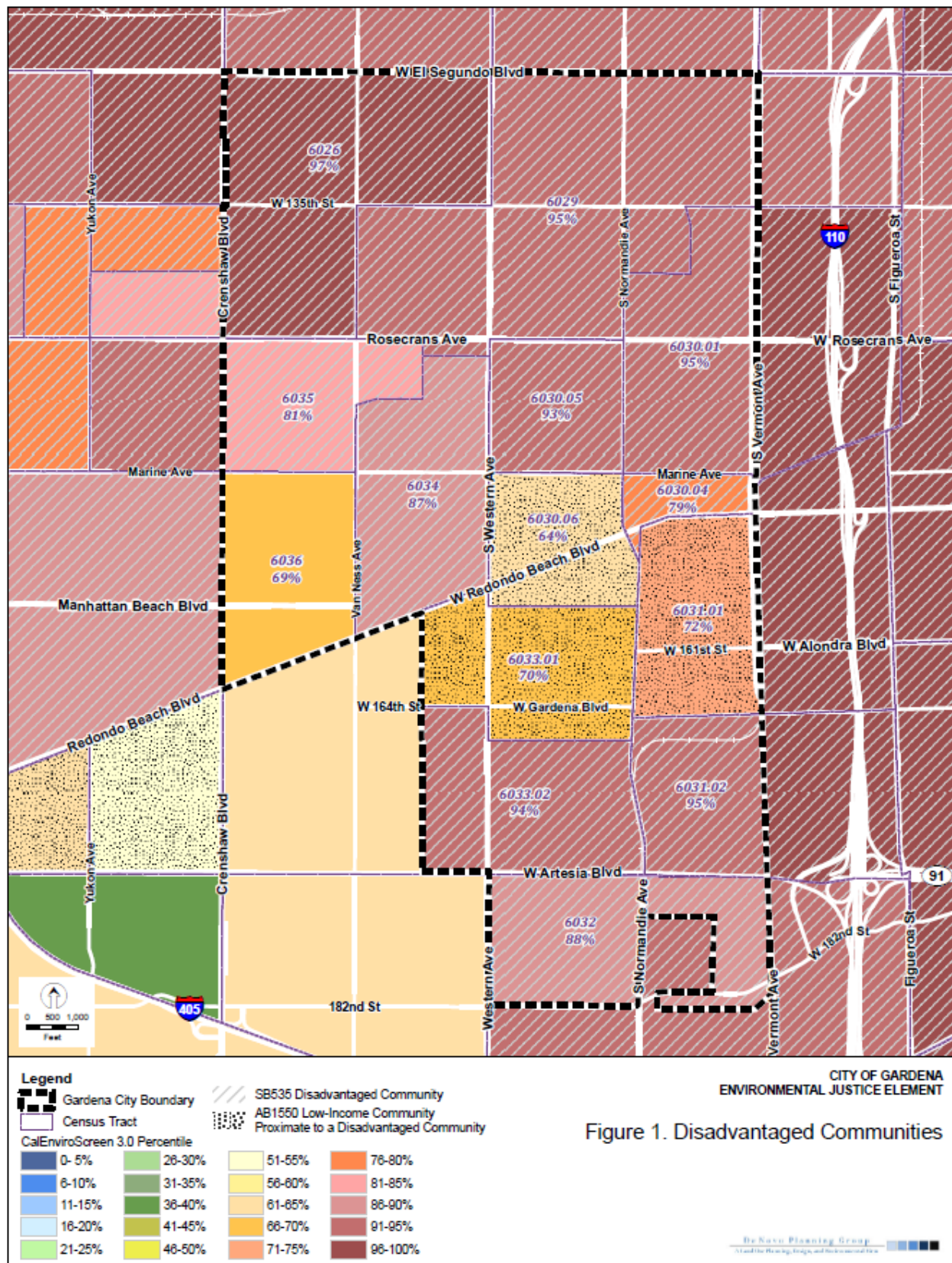
A **Disadvantaged Community (DAC)** is “An area identified by the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) pursuant to Section 39711 of the Health and Safety Code or an area that is a low-income area that is disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation.”

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), on behalf of the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), produces an online map called the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen). CalEnviroScreen identifies communities that are disproportionately affected by environmental hazards. It is a science-based tool that uses existing environmental, health, and socioeconomic data to rank all census tracts in California with a CalEnviroScreen score. CalEPA designates the tracts with a CalEnviroScreen score in the top 25 percentile as DACs.

Based on CalEnviroScreen, 10 out of 14 census tracts within the City of Gardena have a CalEnviroScreen score in the top 25 percentile, as illustrated in Figure 1, qualifying them as DACs. This means that Gardena is required to prepare an EJ Element to satisfy SB 1000. This determination will be regularly evaluated and updated, as necessary.

Under Assembly Bill 1550, low-income communities located within ½ mile of a CalEPA-identified DAC are also considered an ‘environmental justice community’. These communities can be identified using the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Priority Populations Mapping Tool. Based on this assessment, three more census tracts in Gardena (beyond the 10 identified via CalEnviroScreen) can be considered DACs and are also shown in Figure 1. In total, the City has 13 census tracts (out of 14) that are considered disadvantaged communities. More information about each DAC census tract in Gardena can be found in the Environmental Justice White Paper (Appendix A).

Environmental Justice Element



Environmental Justice Element

Purpose

The purpose of the EJ Element is to identify goals and policies that promote environmental justice citywide with a focus on reducing disproportionate impacts on DACs.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 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.”

The City is committed to supporting the long-term needs of our community's most vulnerable populations. Low-income residents, communities of color, indigenous peoples, and immigrant communities have disproportionately experienced some of the greatest environmental burdens and related health problems throughout this region. This inequity is the result of many historic and social influences, including those related to zoning, land ownership, lending practices, economics, public health, and politics. This document hopes to contribute toward remedying environmental injustices and problems caused by:

- Zoning and land use planning practices that promote development patterns which tend to concentrate pollution and environmental hazards in certain communities, and the placement of economic and environmental benefits in areas outside of environmentally burdened communities;
- Red-lining, deed restrictions and other discriminatory housing and lending practices, as well as a failure to enforce proper zoning or conduct regular inspections resulting in intersecting structural inequalities that persist still;
- Limited political and economic power among certain demographic groups competing against the priorities of powerful business interests for public infrastructure spending in health, safety, open space, transportation, and other public goods resulting in disadvantaged communities having little or no say in how their neighborhoods were developed.

Working with community stakeholder and regional partners, the City of Gardena looks forward to promoting a more equitable, safe, and healthy lifestyle for all residents.

Community Engagement

The City convened a focus group of Gardena residents and conducted a city-wide online survey to gather information on resident concerns related to environmental justice. The input received was used to develop new policies contained within this EJ Element. A summary of the input received from the survey and the general themes that emerged is included as Appendix B.

Environmental Justice Element

Element Organization

This EJ Element addresses the following issue areas:

1. Reduce Pollution Exposure and Improve Air Quality
2. Promote Access to Public Facilities
3. Healthy Food Access
4. Safe and Sanitary Homes
5. Promote Physical Activity
6. Promote Civic Engagement

The Gardena General Plan addresses most of these topics within the context of other elements, especially in the Community Development Element, Housing Element, and Community Resources Element. This EJ Element serves to highlight those existing policies contained in other elements as they relate to environmental justice by duplicating them here, within the priority areas identified above. In addition, new policies are included to supplement the City's existing policy direction. New policies are included first under each priority area, followed by relevant policies from other General Plan elements along with a reference to that policy's original location. By presenting the EJ Element in this way, the City seeks to further demonstrate the deep connections between these important priorities and other City goals, priorities, programs, and objectives. As illustrated throughout this EJ Element and the General Plan more broadly, the City of Gardena values its role in promoting environmental justice for current and future residents.

Environmental Justice Element

Goals and Policies

1. Reduced Pollution Exposure and Improve Air Quality

EJ Goal 1	Reduce greenhouse gas emissions, enhance air quality, and reduce impacts associated with climate change.
------------------	---

Pollution exposure occurs when people come into direct contact with air, food, water, and soil contaminants and is often the result of incompatible land uses sited adjacent to each other. Sensitive populations (such as children, the elderly, and those with compromised immune systems) are the most susceptible to pollution exposure. Pollution can come from many sources including storage tanks leaking hazardous chemicals into soil and groundwater, agricultural land uses applying pesticides, mobile sources such as vehicles emitting exhaust, and stationary sources such as diesel generator exhaust.

Policies

EJ 1.1: Manage illegal dumping of trash and other items in waterways and other areas of the City.

EJ 1.2: Attract new clean industry to the City which do not emit smoke, noise, offensive odors, or harmful industrial wastes.

EJ 1.3: Require the mitigation or remediation of hazardous conditions in the City. (See also Policy LU 3.7)

EJ 1.4: Promote innovative development and design techniques, new material and construction methods to stimulate residential development that protects the environment. (See Policy DS 2.15)

EJ 1.5: Prioritize long-term sustainability for the City of Gardena, in alignment with regional and state goals, by promoting infill development, reduced reliance on single-occupancy vehicle trips, and improved multi-modal transportation networks, with the goal of reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, thereby improving the health and quality of life for residents. (See Policy CI 1.1)

EJ 1.6: Encourage citizens to report illegal dumping and vigorously prosecute illicit dumping of toxic or hazardous materials into the ground water. (See Policy CN 2.5)

EJ 1.7: Encourage and support the proper disposal of hazardous waste and waste oil. Monitor businesses that generate hazardous waste materials to ensure compliance with approved disposal procedures. (See Policy CN 2.6)

Environmental Justice Element

EJ 1.8: Ensure that the storage, processing, and transfer of hazardous materials are not located in areas that could potentially harm resident and other sensitive receptors (i.e., schools, parks, hospitals) and are adequately buffered from environmentally sensitive areas. (See Policy PS 3.1)

EJ 1.9: Encourage and support innovative technologies that treat and dispose of hazardous waste or use alternative sources to hazardous materials. (See Policy PS 3.2)

EJ 1.10: Maintain an updated inventory of businesses that handle, store, process, and transport hazardous materials/waste within the City. (See Policy PS 3.3)

EJ 1.11: Maintain planning procedures for the handling and transportation of hazardous materials and ensure that the procedures are in compliance with applicable county, state and federal regulations. (See Policy PS 3.4)

EJ 1.12: Incorporate noise considerations into land use planning decisions. (See Goal N 2)

EJ 1.13: Reduce communitywide greenhouse gas emissions locally by actively supporting regional efforts to reduce greenhouse gases (See PS Policy PS 6.11)

Environmental Justice Element

2. Promote Access to Public Facilities

EJ Goal 2	Locate public facilities and services equitably throughout the community.
------------------	--

The adequate provision of public facilities is a critical component to the current and future prosperity of a community. Under state law (SB 1000), “public facilities” is an umbrella term that includes “public improvements, public services, and community amenities.” This covers a wide spectrum of publicly provided uses and services including infrastructure, school facilities, parks, and transportation and emergency services. These amenities and services act to improve the health, safety, and well-being of a community by either enhancing the public sphere or providing services that are available to every resident.

Policies

EJ 2.1: Ensure that the development of parks and recreation facilities and services keep pace with development and growth within the City.

EJ 2.2: Work with the community to identify gaps in the bicycle and pedestrian network.

EJ 2.3: Explore the possibility of adding more recreation classes to meet the needs of the community.

EJ 2.4: Consider distributing City events across multiple parks as feasible.

EJ 2.5: Coordinate with the Police Department to address safety in parks.

EJ 2.6: Coordinate with partnering agencies that provide public facilities and services within the City to ensure effective, efficient, and equitable service delivery.

EJ 2.7: Work with GTrans to establish and maintain routes and services that provide the community with convenient access to jobs, shopping, schools, parks, and healthcare facilities.

EJ 2.8: Evaluate City facilities for health hazards or major sources of contamination and create a strategy to address any contamination or health hazards identified.

EJ 2.9: Provide the highest quality of public facilities possible to meet the needs of the City’s residents and businesses and promote the City’s image and cultural heritage. (See Goal LU 4)

EJ 2.10: Design public improvements to encourage pedestrian activity and access and to provide safe and convenient pedestrian circulation. (See Policy LU 4.3)

Environmental Justice Element

EJ 2.11: Provide adequate public facilities and services for the convenience and safety of each neighborhood. (See Policy LU 4.7)

EJ 2.12: Promote a safe and efficient circulation system that benefits residents and businesses and integrates with the greater Los Angeles/South Bay transportation system. (See Goal CI 1)

EJ 2.13: Promote a safe and efficient local street system that is attractive and meets the needs of the community. (See Goal CI 2)

EJ 2.14: Develop Complete Streets to promote alternative modes of transportation that are safe and efficient for commuters, and available to persons of all income levels and disabilities. (See CI Goal 3)

EJ 2.15: Provide adequate public facilities and infrastructure that support the needs of City residents and businesses. (See CI Goal 4)

EJ 2.16: Maintain and upgrade the existing parks and recreation facilities to meet the needs of all residents. (See OS Goal 1)

EJ 2.17: Increase the City's supply and quality of parkland, open space, and recreational programs. (See OS Goal 2)

EJ 2.18: Maintain a high level of fire and police protection for residents, businesses, and visitors. (See PS Goal 1)

EJ 2.19: Promote an attractive, clean, and well-maintained environment in commercial areas, especially in public meeting places, transits stops, and public buildings by providing pedestrian amenities such as attractive permanent trashcan enclosures and benches. (See Policy DS 4.4)

EJ 2.20: Promote pedestrian-friendly corridors by improving traffic and pedestrian safety and by providing pedestrian amenities such as benches and outdoor seating, potted plants, decorative paving, and detailed lighting elements along the street frontage. (See Policy DS 4.6)

Environmental Justice Element

3. Healthy Food Access

EJ Goal 3 Promote access to healthy food and nutritional choices.

Food plays a critical role in the health of a community. Therefore, it is essential that all residents have access to food that is healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate. Disadvantaged populations may face constraints related to accessibility to nutritional food, and this lack of accessibility has a direct impact on personal health and well-being. Food access is not only associated with the physical accessibility of affordable and culturally appropriate food, but also with food security, defined as access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security includes the availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods as well as the ability to acquire foods.

Policies

EJ 3.1 Identify vacant lots and underutilized public land that can be used for neighborhood-run community gardens including coordination with Los Angeles Unified School District.

EJ 3.2 Explore ways to expand healthy food options in the northern portion of the City.

EJ 3.3: Encourage the establishment and operation of a farmer's markets, farm stands, mobile health food markets, and Community-Supported Agriculture programs.

EJ 3.4: Expand walkable and bikeable healthy food options in areas of the City, especially DACs, with limited access to vehicles.

EJ 3.5: Ensure transportation systems link customers to grocery stores and other sources of healthy foods.

EJ 3.6: Coordinate with local markets to reduce food waste.

EJ 3.7: Implement the requirements of SB1383 to coordinate the recovery of edible food from various types of industry with organizations that distribute the food.

Environmental Justice Element

4. Safe and Sanitary Homes

EJ Goal 4	Foster healthy living conditions for people of all backgrounds and incomes.
------------------	--

The housing conditions of homes in a community have direct health implications for those who live in them. Lower-income or otherwise disadvantaged residents may live in dwellings built before standards and regulations were established to ensure that new homes are free from pollutants such as lead and asbestos. Older housing often has other problems such as poor ventilation, which leads to uncomfortable indoor temperatures and mold-producing moisture, as well as pest and vermin infestations.

Overcrowded housing is another issue that affects the safety and cleanliness of homes. Overcrowding is typically measured by determining the persons-per-room in a dwelling unit, with more than one person per room considered overcrowded.

Lastly, housing affordability also influences whether homes in a community are safe and sanitary. When a tenant or homeowner spends more than 30 percent of their income toward housing (including utilities), they are generally considered to be cost-burdened. When a household is cost-burdened, there is less money for housing maintenance or other needs such as healthcare and healthy food. These issues are further discussed and addressed in the City's Housing Element.

Policies

EJ 4.1: Raise awareness about the risks associated with lead-based paint and other housing hazards, including by distributing information about remediation of lead and best practices to reduce and eliminate other housing hazards.

EJ 4.2: Conduct periodic absentee owner outreach to inform owners of their legal requirements to maintain and upkeep their rental properties.

EJ 4.3: Distribute information with City newsletters or other periodic publications about protecting tenant rights so they are not penalized for reporting or living in a dwelling unit that does not meet health and safety standards.

EJ 4.4: Promote smoke-free multifamily housing properties to reduce secondhand and thirdhand smoke-related death and disability.

EJ 4.5: Encourage the upkeep, maintenance, and rehabilitation of existing housing units. (See Policy HE 1.1)

EJ 4.6: Continue to explore programs and funding sources designed to maintain and improve the existing housing stock. (See Policy HE 1.2)

Environmental Justice Element

EJ 4.7: Preserve the affordability of assisted rental projects located in the City. (See Policy HE 1.3)

EJ 4.8: Encourage room additions in the existing housing stock to alleviate overcrowding. (See Policy HE 1.4)

EJ 4.9: Promote sound housing and attractive and safe residential neighborhoods. (See Policy LU 1.1)

EJ 4.10: Protect existing residential neighborhoods from incompatible uses and development. (See Policy LU 1.2)

EJ 4.11: Encourage rehabilitation or upgrade of aging residential neighborhoods. (See Policy DS 2.6)

EJ 4.12: Incorporate quality residential amenities such as private and communal open spaces into multi-unit development projects in order to improve the quality of the project and to create more attractive and livable spaces for residents to enjoy. (See Policy DS 2.11)

Environmental Justice Element

5. Promote Physical Activity

EJ Goal 5 Encourage physical activity and improved physical fitness.

Physical activity is a large contributor to the physical and mental health of Gardena residents. Research by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that physically active people tend to live longer and have lower risk for heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, depression, and some cancers. Physical activity is promoted by the built environment through providing places that encourage walking, biking, and other forms of exercise. These places include parks, open space, trails, urban green spaces, areas with robust tree canopies, and active transportation networks. If a community has facilities that promote physical activity, community members are more likely to be physically active within that community.

Policies

EJ 5.1: Prioritize increasing opportunities for physical activity within DACs.

EJ 5.2: Provide neighborhood commercial centers with convenient and safe pedestrian access. (See Policy LU 2.4)

EJ 5.3: Design public improvements to encourage pedestrian activity and access and to provide safe and convenient pedestrian circulation. (See Policy LU 4.3)

EJ 5.4: Traffic-calming measures and devices (e.g., sidewalks, streetscapes, speed humps, traffic circles, cul-de-sacs and signals) should promote safe routes through neighborhoods for pedestrians. (See Policy CI 2.5)

EJ 5.5: Maintain and expand sidewalk installation and repair programs, particularly in areas where sidewalks link residential neighborhoods to local schools, parks, and shopping areas. (See Policy CI 3.3)

EJ 5.6: Maintain a citywide bicycle route and maintenance plan that promotes efficient and safe bikeways integrated with the MTA's regional bicycle system. (See Policy CI 3.4)

EJ 5.7: As roadways are repaved or otherwise improved, evaluate opportunities to enhance the quality and safety of the roadway by implementing new or improved walking, bicycling, or public transit infrastructure. If no walking, bicycling, or public transit improvements are being provided, a report to the City Council should provide an explanation for why such improvements are not needed along this roadway segment. (See Policy CI 3.5)

Environmental Justice Element

EJ 5.8: Encourage walking, biking, carpooling, use of public transit and other alternative modes of transportation to minimize vehicular use and associated traffic noise. (See Policy N 1.8)

EJ 5.9: Promote pedestrian amenities in mixed-use developments and along arterials. (See Policy DS 3.2)

EJ 5.10: Support mixed-use developments that include adequate open space areas and a full range of site amenities. (See Policy DS 3.4)

EJ 5.11: Promote pedestrian-friendly corridors by improving traffic and pedestrian safety and by providing pedestrian amenities such as benches and outdoor seating, potted plants, decorative paving, and detailed lighting elements along the street frontage. (See Policy DS 4.6)

EJ 5.12: Increase the City's supply and quality of parkland, open space, and recreational programs. (See Goal OS 2)

EJ 5.13: Encourage the conversion of utility easements and right of ways to multi-purpose parkland, trails, and bicycle routes (i.e., the Southern California Edison right-of-way between Artesia Boulevard and 178th Street, storm channel side roads, and Vermont Avenue median strips). (See Policy OS 2.3)

EJ 5.14: Expand the City's bicycle route plan and integrate the routes with other local and regional bike routes. (See Policy OS 2.5)

Environmental Justice Element

6. Promote Civic Engagement

EJ Goal 6	Support accessible and culturally appropriate opportunities for all people regardless of race, color, national origin, language, or income to engage in the decision-making process.
------------------	---

Civic or community engagement is an important goal across all local planning and decision-making processes. It can help foster a strong sense of place within a neighborhood and can deepen the investment of stakeholders in working toward neighborhood improvements. Environmental justice issues will be more effectively identified and resolved if accessible and culturally appropriate opportunities to engage in local decision-making are created for low-income, minority, and linguistically isolated stakeholders. Effective civic engagement not only provides the City with an opportunity to strengthen its relationship with the community but provides for sound investment in better decision-making by ensuring decisions are informed by community needs and aspirations.

Policies

EJ 6.1: Support an equitable and comprehensive approach to civic engagement and public outreach on all aspects of City governance and delivery of services.

EJ 6.2: Promote, sponsor, and support a variety of community events to strengthen social cohesion and the overall identity of the City.

EJ 6.3: Make City information such as numbers to call for code enforcement, programs offered through the City, and housing needs easily accessible.

EJ 6.4: Specifically invite residents from traditionally underrepresented demographic groups to become board, commission, and committee members as openings occur.

EJ 6.5: Coordinate with the school district, neighborhood groups, and religious institutions to distribute information and promote input opportunities.

EJ 6.6: Explore ways to provide information to older residents who don't use computers or social media through the Senior Citizens Bureau, Nakaoka Community Center, and Gardena Senior Center.

EJ 6.7: Ensure meaningful cross-cultural participation in local planning and decision-making processes by:

- Providing City-sponsored material in multiple languages.
- Organizing outreach events and conducting surveys directly to specific demographic groups.

Environmental Justice Element

- Partnering with community-based organizations that have relationships, trust, and cultural competency with target communities to conduct outreach for local initiatives and issues.

EJ 6.8: Ensure that meetings and other public engagement forums are accessible to a wide range of residents and encourage greater attendance by:

- Holding meetings at different locations and times and in different formats.
- Targeting outreach to communities that will be most impacted by an issue or decision.
- Ensuring any materials are distributed far enough in advance of meetings to allow sufficient time for review and comment.
- Using communication methods that convey complex or technical information in an easily understandable manner.
- Facilitating meetings using diverse methods that can engage all participants and can appeal to multiple styles of learning.

EJ 6.9: Utilize Channel 22 to advertise opportunities for community input.

EJ 6.10: Publish the information booklet called “Gardena Live, Work and Play” at least twice a year so residents can be aware of City events and services.

EJ 6.11: Consider establishing an Environmental Justice Committee to monitor the City’s progress on implementation of the Environmental Justice Element.