

FACT SHEET

Environmental Justice Policy Program

Summary

Los Angeles City Planning recognizes the historical and current need to address environmental justice concerns in Los Angeles. As a commitment to the advancement of local environmental justice and equity policies, City Planning has initiated an **Environmental Justice Policy Program**. The program will address issues related to land use, air quality, sustainability, open space, climate equity and environmental justice, centering the voices of those most impacted by environmental injustices. To achieve this, the Department will conduct extensive outreach with the goal of centralizing and strengthening environmental justice policies in the City's General Plan.

Background

The City Planning Department (Department) is committed to continuing the work and conversations from past and ongoing efforts throughout the City to address environmental justice. The City's Health Element (the Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles), first adopted in 2015 acknowledged the relationship between public health and land use in the City's General Plan. In its most recent update in 2021, the Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles identified its compliance with California Senate Bill 1000, which requires jurisdictions with disadvantaged communities to incorporate environmental justice policies into their general plans.

Today, residents in many of the City's lower income neighborhoods continue to be more likely to live next to incompatible and often harmful land uses, truck routes, and other environmental hazards that affect their health. Combined with poor social and economic environments, many communities face increasing negative impacts on their quality of life and overall health that may be addressed through a continued focus on public health and environmental justice.

The General Plan includes existing policy language that calls for the benefits of growth and investment be distributed equitably, while also ensuring that the costs are not disproportionately borne by over-burdened and under-resourced groups. Recent efforts led by City Planning to implement policies and programs that center on health and environmental justice include the recent adoption of the Oil and Gas Drilling Ordinance and the development of the Healthy Buildings, Healthy Places: Landscape and Site Design Standards to advance healthy building design and climate-adapted site design standards in the City.

State law defines Environmental Justice as the “fair treatment and meaningful involvement of people of all races, cultures, incomes, and national origins, with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.” The principle of environmental justice ensures equal and equitable protection from environmental and health hazards, while giving people fair and equal access to the planning and decision-making process.

Community input will guide the development of stronger environmental justice policies and will inform the prioritization and implementation of programs for the General Plan. Community engagement efforts will target environmental justice communities to uplift the voices of the most negatively impacted communities. Department staff will participate at community events and host a variety of outreach activities, such as pop ups, community workshops, and office hours in accessible locations in these priority communities.

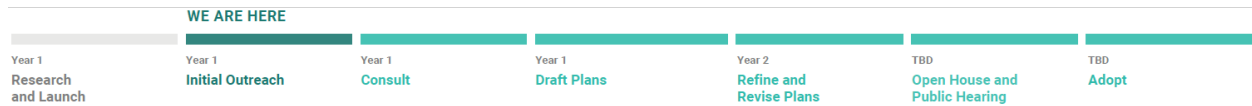
In addition to the environmental justice policy work, the Department has launched a Climate Vulnerability Assessment (CVA). This parallel effort will guide priorities in climate adaptation and community resilience and will promote public awareness.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is the new Environmental Justice Policy Program and what is it doing?

The Environmental Justice Policy Program is a comprehensive review of the General Plan’s goals, policies, and programs related to environmental justice, to strengthen environmental justice policies based on those findings, and to take on work programs that will help achieve the environmental justice vision of the General Plan. Guided by meaningful community engagement, this will entail updates to the Health and Air Quality Elements and targeted updates to the Open Space Element

The Department will convene a working group to guide the review of existing policies and identify opportunities to strengthen environmental justice policies in the General Plan. The working group will consist of representatives from community based organizations that serve environmental justice communities. Through in-person activities and online engagement through social media and other web tools, the Department aims to make this program inclusive, inviting, and accessible throughout this multi-year effort.



A Technical Advisory Committee will also be convened to bring together key City departments and relevant agencies to guide the development and prioritization of implementation programs that are based on community feedback.

What is the General Plan and how does it currently address Environmental Justice?

The General Plan is a comprehensive policy document that informs the future growth and development of a city. It is organized by topics, referred to as Elements, which contain numerous goals, objectives, policies, and implementation programs. A commitment to environmental justice is reflected throughout our current General Plan. For example the Health Element, known as the Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles, elevates health and environmental justice as a priority for the City’s future growth and development. At its core, the Plan acknowledges the relationship between public health and issues such as transportation, housing, environmental justice, and open space, among others. Additional General Plan elements contain policies that support environmental justice, including the Housing Element and the Mobility Element.

How are we expanding Environmental Justice policies in the General Plan?

The Department acknowledges the need to further advance environmental justice goals and to identify policy gaps and needs in the General Plan through a community-led process and is excited for this opportunity to reflect, engage, and develop partnerships in those communities to help bolster environmental justice policies in the General Plan.

As the primary location of environmental justice policies, the Health Element will be revised and updated to further strengthen existing policies related to health and equity

and to address emerging environmental issues identified through the community engagement process. Because air pollution is a major contributor to environmental and health impacts, this effort will also examine the Air Quality Element and seek to bolster policies that promote clean air. Targeted updates will also be made to the Open Space Element to integrate equity and environmental justice concerns as they relate to open space topics.

How can I participate and where can I get more information?

- Take and share the [Community Survey](#)
- Check out the Environmental Justice Program Website
- Sign up for the Interested Parties List
- Sign up for Office Hours coming this Fall
- Look out for more upcoming engagement opportunities!

Please contact staff at planning.envjustice@lacity.org for comments or questions.