

Chapter 6: Social Equity, Environmental Justice, & Community Resilience

Designing Healthy, Equitable, Resilient, and Economically Vibrant Places

"The future is not someplace we are going to, but a place we are creating. The paths to it are not found, they are made."

--Jane Garvey

Introduction

Addressing equity in policy decisions is vital for community well-being, the economy, and health of the population. Studies show the relationship between zip code and life expectancy, with lower life expectancy frequently in the most disadvantaged areas.^{xxxii} In addition to infrastructure investments and locations, policies to support community engagement and the human capital in local communities is vital to create more thriving, healthy, and equitable places.^{xxxiii} Additionally, there are significant demographic shifts taking place across California including more aging seniors, increasing ethnic diversity, and changing household structures.^{xxxiv}

Using a social equity lens in the general plan process is one important mechanism to ensure more equitable access to opportunity in cities and counties and greater environmental justice throughout California.^{xxxv} Many professional disciplines such as Transportation, Housing, Agriculture, Energy, Economic Development, Land Use, Health, and Education are increasingly using a social equity lens to inform policy.^{xxxvi xxxvii}

Equity has been advocated as a framework for urban planning since the 1960s. The concept recognizes that through expanding choices and services to those with limited options, local jurisdictions could work towards improved planning outcomes.^{xxxviii}

The environmental justice (EJ) movement gained momentum in the 1980s and was strengthened by President Clinton's Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-income Populations" in 1994.^{xxxix} The Environmental Protection Agency acknowledges "equitable development draws on both environmental justice and smart growth."^{xl}

There are several overlapping definitions and frameworks to contextualize social equity, EJ, and disadvantaged communities with ongoing robust conversation to refine these definitions. In fact, EJ as a field has undergone tremendous transition

both in research and on the ground as groups have worked to expand access to services, healthy food, affordable housing, and expand beyond the work that traditionally focused on the disproportionate burden of pollution and contaminants suffered by many communities of color.^{xlix}

AB 1553 (Keeley, Chapter 762, Statutes of 2001) requires OPR to provide guidance for local jurisdictions to incorporate Environmental Justice Considerations

(1) Propose methods for planning for the equitable distribution of new public facilities and services that increase and enhance community quality of life throughout the community, given the fiscal and legal constraints that restrict the siting of these facilities.

(2) Propose methods for providing for the location, if any, of industrial facilities and uses that, even with the best available

technology, will contain or produce material that, because of its quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics,

poses a significant hazard to human health and safety, in a manner that seeks to avoid over-concentrating these uses in proximity to schools or residential dwellings.

(3) Propose methods for providing for the location of new schools and residential dwellings in a manner that seeks to avoid locating these uses in proximity to industrial facilities and uses that will contain or produce material that because of its quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, poses a significant hazard to human health and safety.

(4) Propose methods for promoting more livable communities by expanding opportunities for transit-oriented development so that residents minimize traffic and pollution impacts from traveling for purposes of work, shopping, schools, and recreation.

Incorporating social equity in the General Plan- What does it mean?

It means:

- Improved access to healthy, green places to play
- More reliable transit options
- Increased safe roads and sidewalks
- Ensuring access to affordable housing options
- Creating spaces for all ages and abilities
- Improved access to jobs
- Active inclusion in governmental processes, programs, and decisions

It is impossible to fully separate the concepts of social equity and EJ because they are intertwined. However, for practical reasons, in this chapter we will first consider broader social equity issues. Incorporating equity in land use planning is a key component to achieving EJ and generally more equitable outcomes across

communities. This chapter explores how planning decisions can affect equitable opportunity in a community and how local jurisdictions can incorporate a social equity lens in their planning process with definitions of commonly used terms as related to disadvantaged communities. Using a social equity lens is a first step in addressing EJ considerations, but more specific considerations are necessary to adequately address EJ, which this chapter provides. Additionally, examples are provided for how incorporating social equity in general plans will improve community resilience.

Correlations Between Elements

	Land Use	Circulation	Housing	Conservation	Open Space	Noise	Safety
Social Equity and Environmental	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

● Identified in statute ■ Closely related to statutory requirements

Social Equity

Incorporating equity considerations with regard to race, ethnicity, gender, age, income, and physical ability throughout the general plan update from outreach to policy to implementation can have important outcomes at the local, regional, and state level.

Programs are increasingly incorporating an equity lens in the decision and policy-making process to ensure better decisions.^{xliii}

Social equity in the policy context can be defined as “the fair, just, and equitable management of all institutions serving the public directly or by contract; the fair, just and equitable distribution of public services and implementation of public policy; and the commitment to promote fairness, justice, and equity in the formation of public policy.”^{xliiv}

[SB 244](#), passed in 2011, specifically recognized that many disadvantaged unincorporated communities lacked adequate investment in infrastructure such as sidewalks, safe drinking water, and adequate waste processing. This lack of adequate investment threatens both

[Chico's General Plan Vision 2030- Inclusion of Social Equity](#)

“For the purposes of this General Plan, social equity means fair access to housing, transportation, jobs, education, and recreation, and access for all residents to fully participate in the political and cultural life of the community. Social equity is closely connected to the other two sustainability components of economic vitality and environmental protection. It both depends on and supports a local, diverse economy that provides a wide range of work and volunteer opportunities for people of all ages and skills and a healthy environment with clean air and water, open spaces to recreate, and protection from potential hazards. Strategies in this General Plan that promote social equity include ensuring adequate housing for all age and income levels; providing an open government that values public participation; celebrating arts and cultures; assisting the more vulnerable members of the community; supporting the development and preservation of complete neighborhoods, promoting public health through protection from hazards and the provision of a safe multimodal circulation system; and providing parks and quality public services to all members of the community.”

health and safety of residents and creates more inequity in terms of access to quality services.^{xlv} SB244 created procedural requirements to identify these areas of risk and update policies within the local general plan to improve conditions. See OPR’s [Technical Advisory on SB244](#).

In the context of creating a general plan, one can think about distribution and access to resources within a neighborhood that help provide opportunity to thrive and protection from harmful elements that will make it difficult for a particular community to prosper and reach their full potential.

Cities and counties can prioritize access to public facilities and services that enhance quality of life, including, but not limited to, public transportation options connected to job centers,

housing, parks, open space, trails, greenbelts, recreational facilities (including senior and youth centers), community centers, grocery stores, health care facilities, child care centers, libraries, and cultural centers. Considering the number, quality, and access to facilities is important. For example, with regard to access, transportation decisions are informed by commute times. However, commute times are calculated during certain hours. Often service sector commuters travel at later or earlier hours and regular commuter calculations do not adequately capture service sector needs.

Many forms of inequity are not intentional, but manifest themselves in terms of process or results. Therefore, by increasing awareness and modifying practices, jurisdictions can improve processes. Geographic inequity describes a situation in which the burdens of undesirable land uses are concentrated in certain neighborhoods while the benefits are received elsewhere. It also describes a situation in which public amenities are concentrated only in certain areas.

Examples of Procedural Inequity	Examples of Geographic Inequity
"Stacking" commissions or committees with certain interests while not taking into account the interests of other segments of the community, such as minority and low-income residents.	Certain neighborhoods have a disproportionate share of waste disposal facilities, while the benefits of such facilities are received by the community or region as a whole
Holding meetings at times or in locations that minimize the ability of certain groups or individuals to participate.	Certain neighborhoods have ample community centers, parks, and open space and thus experience more of the environmental benefits associated with these amenities, while other neighborhoods have fewer such amenities.
Using English-only written or verbal communication when a non-English speaking population will be affected by a planning decision.	Certain neighborhoods have more access to healthy food retail, banks, or transit options. In contrast, some neighborhoods have an abundance of less healthy retail, due to differing land uses.
Enforcement of city codes and policies	Certain municipal services, such as libraries,

through a complaint system only accessible by some (such as online or during specified hours)	after school programs, and recreation services, are not available in some neighborhoods
Requiring lower levels of mitigation for projects affecting low-income or minority populations.	Certain neighborhoods have a disproportionate share of industrial facilities that handle or produce hazardous waste, while the economic benefits are distributed to other neighborhoods (in the form of jobs and tax revenue).

Definitions

In conversations about equity terms such as underserved, low-income, disadvantaged, or environmental justice community are often interchanged but can potentially have different meanings depending on the context.

In discussions about equity, it is important to clarify terminology. For instance, one could reference a disadvantaged community while referring to an elderly or disabled population that does not have adequate access to transit options. Alternatively, disadvantaged could refer to children who do not have access to safe places to play. Several common terms have statutory definitions and others are used more generally. Additionally, many state and federal programs utilize the statutory definitions to determine funding for programs. Some of the most applicable to local planning are below and apply where there is no other prevailing statutory definition: Some of the more common definitions are below:

Statutory definitions

Disadvantaged Community– [Public Resources Code Section 75005, Water Code Section 79505.5](#) A “Disadvantaged Community” is a community with a median household income less than 80 percent of the statewide median household income.

“Severely disadvantaged community” means a community with a median household income less than 60 percent of the statewide average.

Disadvantaged Unincorporated Community as per [SB244/GC Section 65302.10 \(a\)](#)

- **“Community”** means an inhabited area within a city or county that is comprised of no less than 10 dwellings adjacent or in close proximity to one another.
- **“Disadvantaged unincorporated community”** means a fringe, island, or legacy community in which the median household income is 80 percent or less than the statewide median household income.
- **“Island community”** means any inhabited and unincorporated territory that is surrounded or substantially surrounded by one or more cities or by one or more cities and a county boundary or the Pacific Ocean.
- **“Fringe community”** means any inhabited and unincorporated territory that is within a city's sphere of influence.
- **“Legacy community”** means a geographically isolated community that is inhabited and has existed for at least 50 years

Environmental justice [Government Code 65040.12\(e\)](#)

EJ is defined in state planning law as the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

Health Equity [Health and Safety Code 131019.5](#)

Recognizes "determinants of equity" means social, economic, geographic, political, and physical environmental conditions that lead to the creation of a fair and just society. Furthermore, "Health equity" means efforts to ensure that all people have full and equal access to opportunities that enable them to lead healthy lives.

Government Funding Perspectives

Some land use related funding programs also incorporate equity considerations and have slightly different qualifying definitions for disadvantaged communities. AB 32 ([The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006](#)) commits California to reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. A key part of the strategy to reduce GHG was the implementation of the Cap and Trade Program. The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF), established in 2012, receives auction proceeds from Cap and Trade and directs how funds are administered. [SB 535](#)^{xlvi}, signed into law in September 2012, requires that 25% of the proceeds benefit disadvantaged communities and that 10% of project funds be used within disadvantaged communities. The bill requires the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) to identify the disadvantaged communities.

CalEPA developed the [EnviroScreen](#) tool to help define these communities. Several programs, including the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program, administered by the Strategic Growth Council, rely on this tool.

The [Active Transportation Program](#) consolidates many state and federal programs into one program to be administered by the California Department of Transportation. This program ensures that at least 25% of the funds benefit disadvantaged communities. This program allows communities to qualify as disadvantaged if one of three criteria is met including: ^{xlvii}

1. The median household income is less than 80% of the statewide median
2. The area is identified by Cal EnviroScreen in the most disadvantaged 25% of the state
3. At least 75% of public school students in the project area meet eligibility criteria to receive free or reduced-price meals

Incorporating a Social Equity Lens

Cities and counties may incorporate equity into their general plans in several ways. To incorporate equity it is helpful to consider 1) Data, Mapping, and Tools; 2) Community Engagement and Partnership; and 3) Incorporating supportive policies.

Data, Mapping, and Tools

An important step in the process of incorporating equity considerations is to assess baseline conditions and acknowledge existing disparities. Jurisdictions have to collect at least jurisdiction-wide socioeconomic data during the preparation of the housing element, such as income level and persons with special housing needs (elderly, farmworkers, single head of household, etc.). However, a more complete socioeconomic picture of the community can be analyzed using smaller geographic data sets, less than jurisdiction-wide, such as census tracts, which allows a comparison of different areas throughout a community. Many of the suggested data is available in the [GPG mapping tool](#).

Data sources specifically help evaluate equity and EJ considerations:

- **Census Data**: The United States Census collects data on a range of factors. The [American Community Survey](#) is conducted annually.
- **Regional Opportunity Index, UC Davis Tool**^{xlvi}: This tool provides an index based on social, economic, and environmental indicators for review and analysis by local citizens, program managers, and policy makers to inform investment decisions.
- **Local data**: Local data on amenities available.
- **Envirostor**: This program is hosted by the Department of Toxic Substances Control. It is a database that provides data in a GIS form to identify contaminated sites as well as facilities that deal with hazardous waste.
- **CalEnviroscreen**: The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) in the California Environmental Protection Agency created this online mapping tool. It is a tool that can help identify communities that are burdened with high levels of pollution.
- **California Environmental Health Tracking Program**: The California Department of Public Health created this online mapping tool. It is a tool that helps identify environmental risks associated with health outcomes such as poor air quality and asthma.

SAMPLE OF OPR RECOMMENDED DATA FOR CONSIDERATION IN ANALYSIS OF THIS ELEMENT

	<i>Intent of analysis</i>	<i>Recommended Data</i>
	Different segments of the population have	Population by age

Social, Economic, or Environmental	different needs. For instance, elderly populations might need more time to cross the street or need specific accommodations to use public transit.	
	Understanding the ethnic distribution throughout the city and/or county can help inform languages used in outreach and cultural considerations for engagement.	Population by race/ethnicity
	Understanding characteristics such as single parent households, larger family households, age, etc. can help inform priority amenities in an area	Population by household type
	Life expectancy is often used as a good proxy measure for overall health. There can be significant variation by zip code in life expectancy. Resources could be targeted in these areas as well as additional grant opportunities leveraged.	Life Expectancy
	Overall balance of resources is important to create a livable community.	Location of amenities such as parks, health care facilities, housing, job corridors, and water-related services

Community Engagement and Partnerships

Robust community engagement to capture all voices within the community from the beginning of the general plan update is vital to creating a shared vision with significant community support, creating a plan that is more likely to acknowledge community challenges and accurately account for existing community assets. Partnership and engagement with diverse stakeholders also helps create more support for the plan during the approval process. There are many actions a local agency can take to support engagement from all sectors and groups within the local community. Focused outreach effort to specific groups that work on equity issues within the community, such as local community-based organizations, can be an effective way to incorporate an equity lens.

Often, outreach is overseen by consultants assisting with the General Plan update. It is also helpful to have a city or county staff assigned to serve as a liaison or oversee the outreach process for continuity after the consultant finishes the project. This also provides for consistent and ongoing communication after plan adoption and implementation updates with the community.

As emphasized in the second chapter, [A Vision for Long-Range Planning](#), working in partnership with local agencies is important to provide coordination and accomplish many of the policies to provide more equitable access to resources. [The Community Engagement and Partnership chapter](#) provides more detailed guidance on ways to effectively engage with the community.

Incorporating Supportive Policies

An analysis of existing conditions combined with robust community input can help bring particular policy issues to the forefront for discussion. As policy priorities are established, formulating strong policy language is a key first step. For example, rather than “consider implementing” use the word “implement.” Also, instead of using the phrase “consider the development of,” use “develop and implement.” Additionally, to create more actionable policy language use “priority on” rather than “emphasis on” to highlight policy areas of particular focus.

Environmental Justice

A social equity lens in the planning process is an important initial step towards achieving more equitable outcomes and environmental justice. It tends to be most helpful when planning toward future development. Many EJ issues require specific remediation efforts, or more in-depth policy and siting considerations with regard to specific environmental exposures. Additionally, some jurisdictions have created a stand-alone element that weaves together policy to ensure more equitable access to services, food, safe places to play, and EJ issues. The adoption of an EJ element is consistent with [Section 65303](#) of the State of California Government Code. There are benefits to having a separate EJ element because it

can be easier for the public and decision-makers to see EJ-related policies in one place. At the same time, an integrated approach puts EJ-related policies into the elements that address those issues; for example, including siting of industries into the land use element could make implementation more actionable. Regardless of approach, the EJ-related policies must meet internal consistency rules set forth in [Government Code Section 65300.5](#). EJ policies carry the same legal weight as the required elements once the final general plan is adopted. Ultimately, the best format will depend on the local context, community interest, and should complement the overall general plan update and vision. Whether incorporated into a separate element or addressed throughout the document, explicitly considering siting compatibility, location of industrial facilities, and siting of sensitive populations is important to achieve EJ. Additionally, inserting policies that may help mitigate existing injustices.

Compatibility

At the general plan level, discussions about environmental justice involve a central [land use](#) concept: compatibility. The primary purpose of planning, and the source of government authority to engage in planning, is to protect the public health, safety, and welfare. Incompatible land uses may create health, safety, and welfare issues for the community.

Traditional, rigid separation of land uses has resulted in disconnected islands of activity and contributed to sprawl. Development patterns characterized by single-use result in the automobile being the only viable transportation option, which results in high environmental, economic, health, and social costs.

Incorporating general plan policies to encourage equity while protecting residential and school land uses requires an understanding of compatibility combined with an interest in equity. Encouraging mixed use development, proximity to transit corridors, and access to employment, education, commercial centers, services, and recreation should be considered alongside specific uses that will always be incompatible with residential and school uses.

Residential and school uses are impacted by incompatible land uses that have environmental effects, such as noise, air emissions (including dust), and exposure to hazardous materials. The compatibility problem also operates in reverse. Incompatible uses adjacent to residential units, schools, or environmentally sensitive areas may also suffer

negative consequences in the form of higher mitigation costs or the curtailment of economic activities. Specific examples of land use incompatibility include:

- Residential, childcare, and school uses in proximity to industrial facilities and other uses that, even with the best available technology, will contain or produce materials that, because of their quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, pose a significant hazard to human health and safety.
- Residential, childcare, and school uses adjacent to intensive agricultural uses.
- Residential, childcare, and school uses adjacent to major thoroughfares, such as highways.
- Residential or commercial uses in proximity to resource utilization activities, such as mining or oil and gas wells.

Industrial Facilities and Large Scale Agricultural Lands

Facilities that emit, handle, store, or dispose of hazardous materials are regulated by a variety of agencies. These agencies include local [Certified Unified Program Agencies](#). However, cities and counties, as the local land use authority, are primarily responsible for the location and distribution of potentially hazardous industrial facilities through their general plans and zoning ordinances.

Cities and counties may pursue several strategies within their general plans to address over-concentration which occurs when two or more industrial facilities or uses, which do not individually exceed acceptable regulatory standards for public health and safety, but pose a significant hazard due to their cumulative effects.

Strategies may include incorporating policies for the following areas:

- **Buffer zones between industry and residential land uses.**

Buffer zones are a broad approach to land use compatibility. Buffer zone policies may be approached in one of two ways. The general plan land use diagram may designate transitional land uses between industrial and agricultural and residential areas. Transitional uses may include open space, light industry, office uses, business parks, or heavy commercial uses. The land use policies for these buffer areas should prohibit school uses. Appropriate distances for buffer areas will vary

depending on local circumstances. Factors such as the intensity of nearby residential uses, prevailing winds, geographic features, and the types of facilities and uses allowed in industrial areas should be considered.

Buffer zones may be implemented at the project level. One weakness of general buffer zone policies is the difficulty of making a priori decisions about how much distance is needed to minimize potential health and safety hazards to residential and school uses. A stronger approach may be buffer policies aimed at individual siting decisions.

- **Project siting decisions.**

Approval of certain industrial facilities or uses can be made conditional if they are within a certain distance of residential or school uses and/or contain or produce hazardous materials. This allows the city or county to consider the potential hazards associated with individual facilities or uses on a case-by-case basis. General plan policies can outline consistent standards to be used in approving, conditionally approving, or denying proposed locations for industrial facilities and other uses that may pose a significant hazard to human health and safety. Such standards should be reflected in the zoning ordinance that implements the general plan (see [Implementation Chapter](#)).

- **Capping the number of certain facilities and uses.**

Another policy response to over-concentration is to cap the number of potentially hazardous facilities within a certain distance of each other. For example, the State of Georgia does not allow siting of a new solid waste facility if two such facilities already exist within a two mile radius of the proposed facility. While capping policies are easy to implement and understandable to the public, they have serious drawbacks. Without analyzing the type, quantity, and concentration of materials to be contained or produced at a proposed facility, it is difficult to determine the number of facilities that would create a situation of over-concentration.

- **Changing land use designations in over-concentrated areas.**

One way to address existing or potential future problems of over-concentration is to change the land use designation for existing industrial areas. This approach differs from buffer zones in that buffer zones affect the land use designation of areas adjacent to existing or proposed industrial areas. Changing the allowable land uses in existing industrial areas prevents new industrial land uses from being established and may affect the expansion of existing facilities and uses (depending on how local policies treat pre-existing or "legal non-conforming," land uses).

An important caveat is to consider what new uses will be allowed in the previously industrial areas. A new environmental justice problem could be created if residences and schools are allowed without considering any lingering effects of industrial over-concentration. At the same time, where over-concentration is no longer an issue and effective remediation or clean-up is possible, so-called "brownfield" development is an important tool for a community's continued sustainable development.

New Residential Uses and Schools

Cities and counties should provide for the location of new schools and residential dwellings in a manner that avoids locating these uses in proximity to industrial facilities and agricultural lands and uses that will contain or produce materials that, because of their quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, pose a significant hazard to human health and safety.

The location of new residential and school development is the flip side of the problem discussed in the section above. Given the need for new housing and schools and given the need to make efficient use of land, how do

Legal Requirements: CEQA and School Siting

CEQA requires that the environmental document prepared for a new school identify whether the proposed site is any of the following: a current or former hazardous waste or solid waste disposal facility, a hazardous substances release site identified by DTSC, the site of one or more pipelines that carry hazardous substances, or located within a quarter mile of a facility that emits hazardous air emissions or handles acutely hazardous material (Public Resources Code §21151.8). for sites within 500 feet of a busy traffic corridor, the school board must determine through modeling that neither short term nor long term air quality exposure poses significant health risks to pupils (Ed Code 17213) If such facilities exist, the school board must make findings that the facilities would not endanger the health of those attending or employed by the proposed school or that existing corrective measures would result in the mitigation of any health endangerment.

cities and counties deal with existing over-concentration of industrial uses? When designating areas for residential development, the city or county should identify any areas of over-concentration. Appropriate buffers should be placed between over-concentrated industrial and agricultural areas and new residential areas. Using their authority over the approval and design of subdivisions, cities and counties may develop policies and standards related to industrial over-concentration and new residential subdivision approvals. These policies could include buffer zones, as well as the criteria to be used for rejecting new residential development (such as standards for risk to human health and safety from nearby industrial facilities and uses).

The location of new schools is of particular concern to both local governments and school districts. The general plan should identify possible locations for new schools. Such locations may be approximate and need not indicate specific parcels. Identifying appropriate school locations as part of the general plan process may avoid project-level problems of proximity to certain industrial facilities and uses. Due to the fragmentation of authority in the areas of land use planning and school siting and construction, it is recommended that the planning agency work closely with the school district to identify suitable school locations. Before adopting or amending a general plan, the planning agency must refer the proposed action to any school district within the area covered by the proposed action ([§65352](#)). The city or county should use this opportunity to engage school districts on issues of school siting.

School districts are required to notify the planning commission of the city or county before acquiring property for new schools or expansion of an existing school. School districts are not bound by local zoning ordinances unless the ordinance provides for the location of schools and the city or county has adopted a general plan ([§53091](#)). School districts can override the general plan and zoning ordinances with regard to the use of property for classroom facilities by a two-thirds vote of the school board ([§53094](#)). The school board cannot exercise this power for non-classroom facilities, such as administrative buildings, bus storage and maintenance yards, and warehouses. If the school board exercises their override power, they must notify the city or county within 10 days ([§53904](#)). At least 45 days prior to completion of a Master Plan or other plan relating to the

" Social equity factors, such as disparities in income, linguistic isolation, educational attainment and access to resources can greatly influence the ways populations experience a hazard. Understanding equity and engaging communities that will be most affected before, during and after a hazard event are steps toward building an adequate response to climate change. By helping to facilitate responses that are rooted in the needs of local communities and local challenges, climate change adaptation planning can become more effective. " ART paper

expansion of existing school site or acquisition of new sites, the school district governing board shall notify and provide relevant information to the city/county planning commission and meet with the city/county if requested. ([§65352.2](#))

Community Resilience

Community resilience refers to the ability of a community to respond, recover, and adapt, and do so dynamically. Akin to the circulation of traffic, if power is lost and a traffic light goes out, a bottleneck will occur, slowing traffic down. If the system is vulnerable- for example, if one street light stops working, and that ripples throughout the community with traffic jams – the system is not resilient.

When systems within a community are vulnerable, the effects can ripple throughout the area as well. “Vulnerability is the flip side of resilience: when a social or ecological system loses resilience it becomes vulnerable to change that previously could be absorbed.”^{xlix} Incorporating social equity is a key strategy for local governments to work toward sustainability and create resilient communities. Often, sustainability is discussed in terms of the “three E’s”- environment, economy, and equity.” Although it is one of the central pillars, social equity is often not integrated into planning to the full extent possible.^l

General plan policies provide a unique opportunity to integrate planning priorities across agencies as well as align with other planning initiatives such as climate action planning and regional planning which is needed to incorporate many of the social equity considerations. It is vital to incorporate policies to support community resilience given the growing social, economic, and disaster risks. Some examples of climate action planning include water security planning, drought planning, wildfire planning and hazard mitigation plans.

The following section brings together some example strategies and polices from throughout the General Plan Guidelines and highlights how incorporating social equity considerations strengthens cities and counties as a whole.

Strategies

- Community Engagement
- Partnership with agencies and with community
- Mapping baseline conditions and indicators

OPR Recommended Policies

A full list of recommended policies can be found [here](#)

<i>Sample Policy</i>	<i>Example of Application</i>	<i>Relationship to Other Elements</i>
Attract and retain a diverse mix of businesses and industries that can provide jobs for residents of all skill and education levels to support a thriving community in [city, county]	San Jose	Land use, economic development, healthy communities
Provide a transparent process for public engagement of [city, county]'s diverse stakeholders.	San Jose	Land use, economic development
The [city, county] shall pursue and maximize the use of all appropriate state, federal, local and private funding for the development, preservation, and rehabilitation of housing affordable for extremely low-, very low-, low-, and moderate income households, while maintaining economic competitiveness in the region.	City of Sacramento	Land use, housing, economic development
Hold meetings and workshops at times and locations that are convenient for community members to attend, especially those that may be directly affected by a particular decision.	National City	Economic development