City of SACRAMENTO

Discussion Group Input

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE CRITICAL ISSUES RELATED TO ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD IN SACRAMENTO?

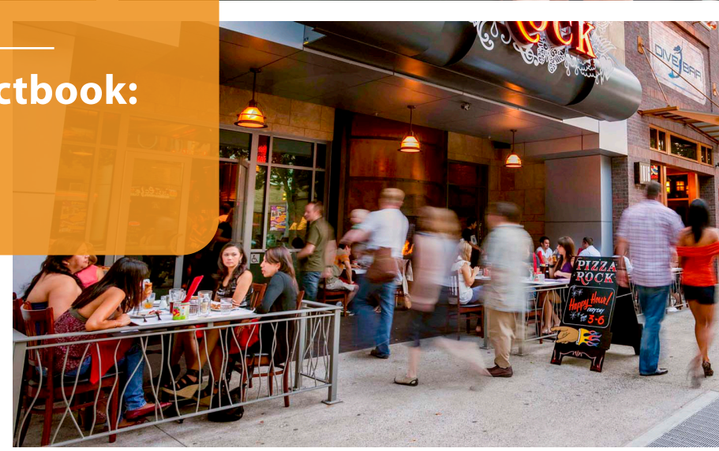
WHAT POLICIES ARE NEEDED AT THE CITYWIDE LEVEL TO ADDRESS HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS ISSUES?

WHAT POLICIES ARE NEEDED AT THE NEIGHBORHOOD LEVEL TO ADDRESS SPECIFIC LOCAL ISSUES?

sacramento | 2040

Environmental Justice Factbook: Access to Healthy Food

December 2020



Introduction

What is Environmental Justice?

The City of Sacramento envisions a place where everyone can live a long, healthy, and opportunity-filled life, no matter who they are or where they come from. People's health and opportunity are shaped by multiple factors, including their environment. Environment doesn't just mean "nature"—it includes all components of our daily lives, including the *social* environment.

However, not all people has the chance to live their healthiest lives because of **environmental injustice**, which means that certain geographies and groups of people unfairly and disproportionately experience **higher exposure to pollution, greater health impacts, and less access** to things that keep people happy and healthy, like parks to play in, safe and affordable places to live, good jobs, schools, and stores that meet basic needs.

Environmental justice is a movement to come to terms with and remedy a history of unjust actions and outcomes. It is about taking concerted action to remedy the inequitable conditions that have led to economic and health disparities. Environmental justice addresses the long standing, disproportionate impact of environmental pollution on vulnerable populations as well as their lack of power in the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws. Ultimately, **environmental justice means the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all groups so that everyone, regardless of their identities, has the chance to live in a healthy environment**.

Environmental Justice in the 2040 General Plan

To achieve Sacramento's vision of becoming a national model of sustainable, equitable growth and community development, we must address equity and environmental justice in our City's comprehensive General Plan. Under California law (SB 1000), cities and other local jurisdictions must address environmental justice by developing policies for issues that affect *disadvantaged communities*, which are communities that experience high levels of pollution, socioeconomic stress, historic disinvestment, and negative health outcomes.

What is Equity?

"Regardless of one's identities, equity is when all people have fair, just treatment, access to the opportunities necessary to satisfy their essential needs, advance their well-being and achieve their full potential, while identifying and eliminating barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups."

This factbook takes a deeper look at different environmental justice issues that impact both the entire city and the disadvantaged communities that are more vulnerable to their negative effects. Environmental justice is a complex, multifaceted topic: the factbooks provide a summary of some of the issue highlights but are not intended to be a comprehensive or definitive resource.

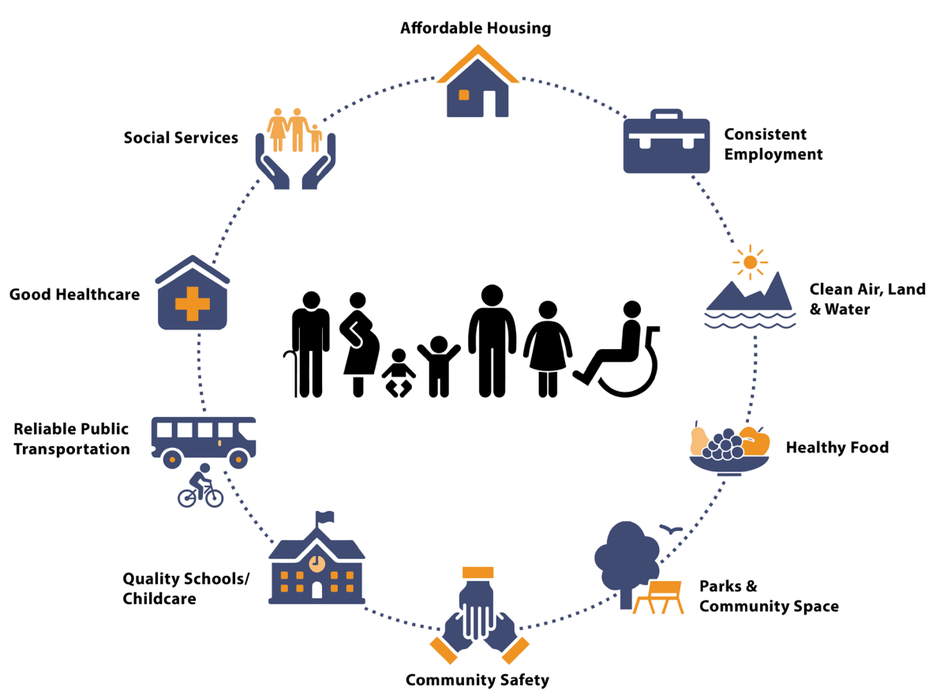
The factbooks use maps and infographics to examine a few aspects of each issue and to identify who is most affected. It then highlights existing City efforts and resources, and outlines potential policy concepts to include in the General Plan. This factbook uses data at the *census tract* level. A census tract is a geographic boundary that is usually either the smallest or most complete geographic scale for which data is available and generally has an average population of 4,000 residents, though it can range from 1,200 to 8,000 people. Census tract boundaries and neighborhood boundaries are not the same—while a neighborhood may fall in the boundaries of a single census tract, others may overlap multiple tracts. To help you understand the maps, some general neighborhood names are identified in comment boxes.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TOPIC AREAS

Access to Healthy Food: Why It's Important

Even though much of the farmland surrounding Sacramento provides most fresh fruits and vegetables for the entire country, healthy food remains out of reach for some Sacramento communities. Having good food access means that food is affordable and nutritious, and within an accessible distance from home. Healthy food access challenges can lead to a higher risk of obesity and diabetes. Hunger makes it difficult to focus at school or work. And because food is one of the most basic needs, food insecurity can force people to make choices that place food above other necessities, like medicine or other basics.

A HEALTHY, EQUITABLE ENVIRONMENT



Food Insecurity In Sacramento

According to the Feed America, 11.9% of residents in Sacramento County were food insecure in 2018, which directly impacts the health of these residents. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food insecurity as limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods or uncertain ability to acquire these foods in socially acceptable ways. Poverty and unemployment are frequently predictors of food insecurity in the United States.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps,) is a federal anti-hunger program and primary source of nutrition assistance for many low-income people. In California, SNAP is known as CalFresh. SNAP improves food security, offers benefits that enable families to purchase healthier diets, and frees up resources that can be used for health-promoting activities and needed medical care. Conversely, studies have shown that loss of SNAP benefits is associated with food insecurity and poor health in working families with young children.

Food Insecurity Findings

1. **SNAP Usage.** Slightly more Sacramento households receive SNAP than other peer California cities. Households that receive SNAP may be more vulnerable to food insecurity if they were to lose SNAP benefits.

2. **Areas affected.** Areas where a higher percentage of households use SNAP include South Natomas, North Sacramento, South Area, Fruitridge/ Broadway, and parts of the Central City community plan area.

3. **Populations affected.** Sacramento households that receive SNAP are more likely to be lower income, communities of color, unemployed, and headed by a single-parent.

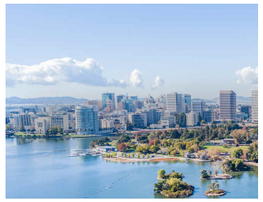
SNAP RECIPIENTS: SACRAMENTO AND PEER CITIES

Sacramento

Population: 508,517

Percentage of households receiving SNAP:

13%



Oakland

Population: 429,114

Percentage of households receiving SNAP:

10%

Long Beach

Population: 467,353

Percentage of households receiving SNAP:

11%

Portland

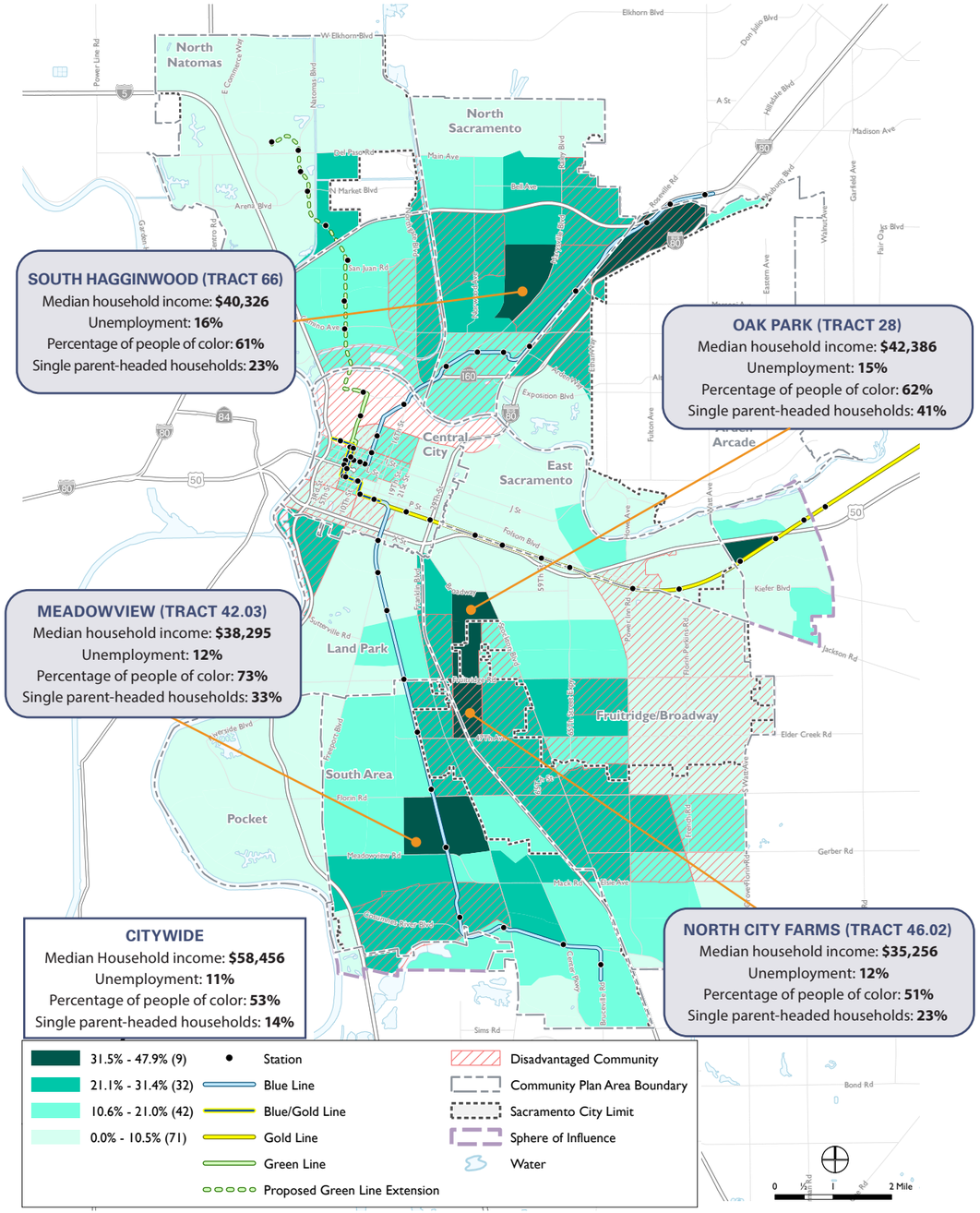
Population: 652,573

Percentage of households receiving SNAP:

17%

Source: American Community Survey, 2018; American Community Survey, 2014-2018.

Households Receiving SNAP



Source: American Community Survey, 2014-2018; City of Sacramento, 2020; Dyett & Bhatia, 2020.

Food Access

People living in low-income neighborhoods, communities of color, and rural communities face greater challenges finding healthy food, especially those who lack good transportation options to reach full-service grocery stores. Grocery stores are important because they provide the most reliable access to a wide variety of nutritious and affordable produce and other foods compared to other types of food outlets such as convenience stores and smaller grocery stores.

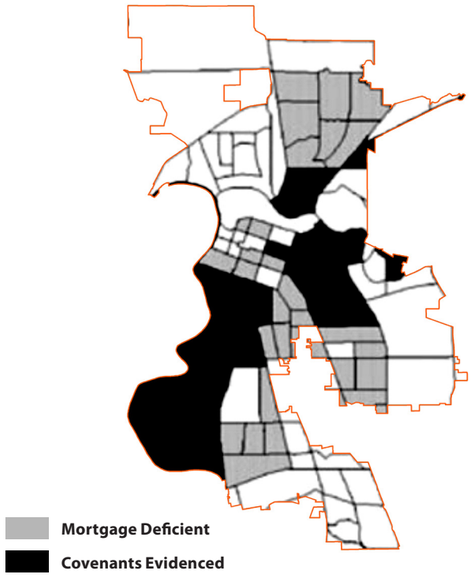
In Sacramento, food access disparities exist across neighborhoods: several areas, especially in North Sacramento, Arden Arcade, and South Area, are classified as being low-income neighborhoods where over 33 percent of the population lives more than a mile from the nearest large grocery store, shown on the map at right. The transparent red circles indicate areas where there are no large grocery stores within a two mile radius.

Food Access Findings

1. **Food Access.** In the first citywide General Plan Update community workshop, participants identified neighborhood food access disparities as a key environmental justice issue.

2. **Areas affected.** North Sacramento, Arden Arcade, and the South Area community plan areas have tracts with low-income neighborhoods where over 33 percent of the population lives more than a mile from the nearest large grocery store.

3. **Populations affected.** Residents who are most affected by lack of access to grocery stores are more likely to people of color and lower-income residents.



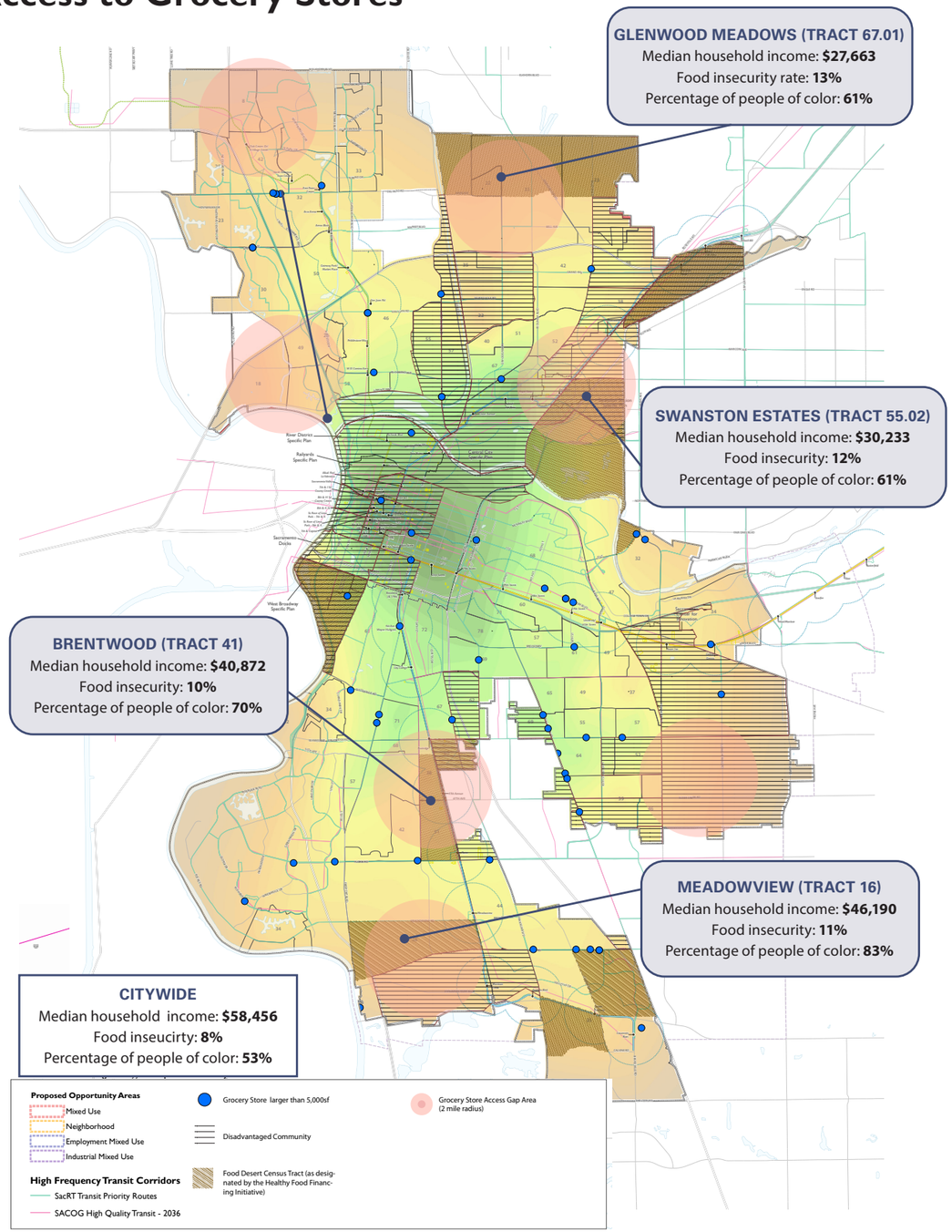
History: "Food Deserts" vs. "Supermarket Redlining"

Like other American Cities, Sacramento has a past of systematic segregation and exlusion. Redlining and racially restrictive covenants limited access to homeownership and wealth creation among communities of color, particularly Black Americans. These practices also contributed to the flight of more wealthy, white homeowners to certain neighborhoods. Supermarkets, along with many other types of businesses, followed white middle-class incomes to these locations. In many ways, biased government policies and resulting incentives of the past continue to play a significant role in shaping the geography of opportunity today. With some exceptions, many areas that are not within a two mile radius of a grocery store are also areas with historically lower rates of home loans (shown as "mortgage deficient", above.)

Researchers use the term "food desert" to describe areas with poor access to fresh food providers like grocery stores. However, critics note that this term tends to frame geographic disparities as only a function of the market. Now, researchers are beginning to use the term "supermarket redlining," a term used to describe a phenomenon when major chain supermarkets are disinclined, because of biased policy or assumptions, to locate their stores in communities of color or low-income neighborhoods.

Source: J. Hernandez. (2009). Redlining Revisited: Mortgage Lending Patterns in Sacramento 1930-2004. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research. 33. 291-313; Eisenhauer E. In Poor Health: Supermarket Redlining and Urban Nutrition, 2001.

Access to Grocery Stores



Source: American Community Survey, 2014-2018; USDA, 2015; City of Sacramento, 2020; CoStar 2020; CA Health Interview Survey (CHIS): Neighborhood Edition, 2018; USDA, 2015; Dyett & Bhatia, 2020.

Community Gardens and Farmers Markets

Community gardens and farmers markets can help to improve fresh food accessibility in areas of lower food access. Community gardens are dedicated plots of land where residents can grow food or other plants- many are started by residents who recognize that their communities are underserved by traditional fresh food retailers. Some research has shown that people who participate in community gardens eat more fruits and vegetables and worry less about running out of food before the end of the month. Sacramento also includes several farmers markets that accept SNAP, which benefits both the farmers and low-income shoppers.

Sacramento has made great strides to support urban agriculture, making it legal to grow and sell produce to consumers directly from their properties, allowing temporary farm stands, and offering tax incentives to convert vacant lots into agricultural uses.

Community Garden and Farmers Market Findings

1. **Urban Agriculture.** Community gardens and farmer's markets represent other means of access to fresh foods. Sacramento is making it easier for urban agriculture to occur, but areas remain where equitable access is still an issue.

2. **Areas affected.** Most city-operated community gardens are clustered in the Central City community plan area, with a few in the Fruitridge/Broadway area. The North Sacramento and South Area community plan areas lack access to city-operated community gardens, and the South Area lacks access to farmers markets, especially those that accept SNAP.

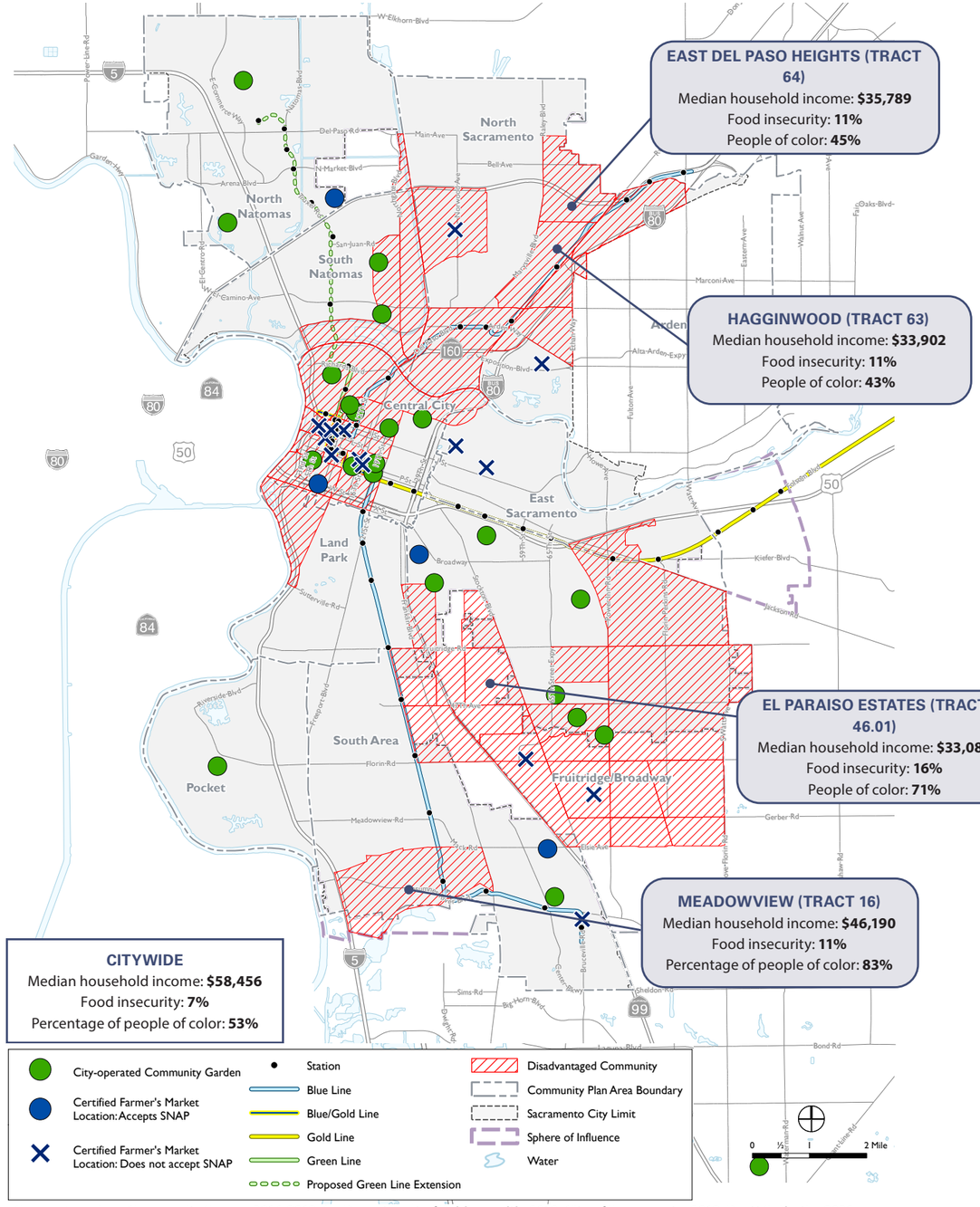
3. **Populations affected.** Many residents who live in tracts without access to farmers markets or community gardens have lower incomes and higher rates of food insecurity than the citywide average.

Fremont Community Garden

Martin Luther King Junior Community Garden

New Era Community Garden

Community Gardens and Farmers Markets



Source: American Community Survey, 2014-2018; CA Department of Public Health, 2019; City of Sacramento, 2019; Dyett & Bhatia, 2020.

Food Quality

A person's food environment is more than just physical access to fruits, vegetables, and other nutritious foods. Economic access and the affordability of healthy foods in the neighborhood is also important. The price of food—in addition to taste, nutrition, convenience, and other factors—affects people's food choices.

Food "swamps", or areas where there is an oversaturation of fast food outlets and unhealthy retailers, contribute to high rates of obesity and other health issues. Healthier foods have been found to be more expensive than less healthy foods when measured per calorie. For this reason, low cost diets are associated with higher calorie intake at the expense of fewer nutrients, while healthier diets tend to be more expensive. Studies have shown that fast food outlets are more common in lower-income neighborhoods, and that these food "swamps" are more directly tied to obesity than lack of healthy food access.

Food Quality Findings

1. **High Rates of Obesity** Sacramento has higher rates of obesity and diabetes than other peer cities. Eating fast food more than once or twice a week has been linked to obesity and type 2 diabetes.

2. **Areas affected.** Fast food restaurants tend to be concentrated along major corridors, including Fruitridge Road, Florin Road, Northgate Boulevard, Stockton Boulevard, and Mack Avenue. A majority are located in the Fruitridge/Broadway community plan area.

3. **Populations affected.** Residents who live in areas with higher concentrations of fast food have higher rates of obesity and diabetes and are more likely to be lower income and from communities of color. Many of these oversaturated corridors border disadvantaged communities.

DIABETES AND OBESITY RATES: SACRAMENTO AND PEER CITIES, 2016

Sacramento, CA

11% DIABETES

30% OBESITY

Oakland, CA

10% DIABETES

25% OBESITY

Long Beach, CA

10% DIABETES

27% OBESITY

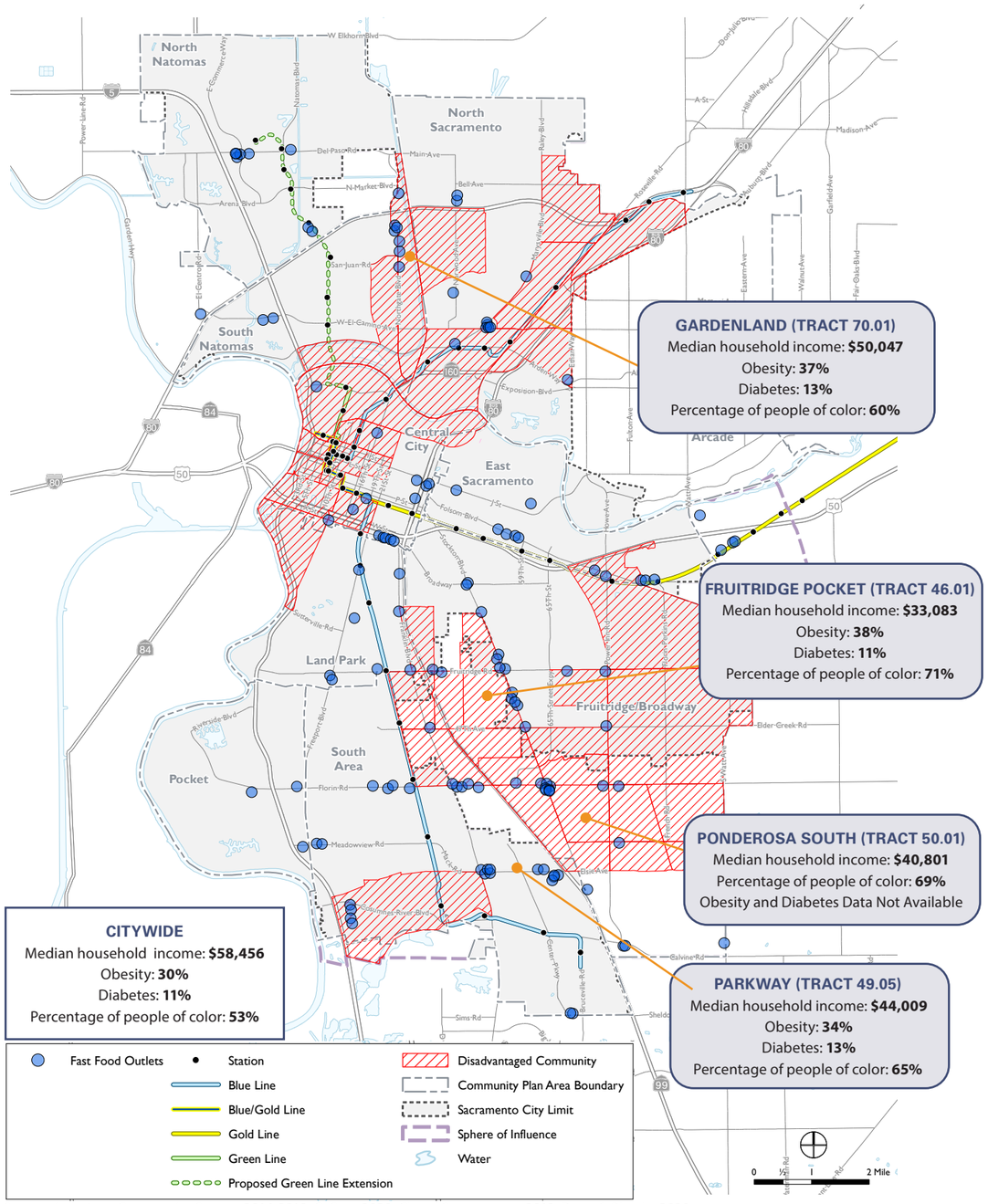
Portland, OR

7% DIABETES

25% OBESITY

Source: 500 Cities; 2016.

Fast Food Locations



Source: American Community Survey, 2014-2018; CoStar, 2020; City of Sacramento, 2019; Dyett & Bhatia, 2020.

Unhealthy Retail

Tobacco and alcohol retail outlets also sell products for consumption that affect health. Tobacco and alcohol use are associated with a variety of public health concerns, including shorter life expectancy and an increase in chronic disease.

The number of physical locations in which alcoholic beverages are available for purchase is also linked to higher rates of alcohol consumption, increased violence, crime, and traffic accidents/ injuries. Higher densities of tobacco retailers have been linked to increased rates of youth smoking, which makes it harder to quit in the long-term.

Research from various cities have found that low-income communities have higher concentrations of alcohol and tobacco outlets than wealthier areas.

Unhealthy Retail Findings

1. **Tobacco and Alcohol Use.** Overall, Sacramento's binge drinking and tobacco usage rates are comparable with other peer cities in California, and lower than Portland's.

2. **Areas affected.** Most tobacco and alcohol retailers are concentrated in the Central City community plan area. Clusters of unhealthy retailers can be found in the Fruitridge/Broadway community plan area along Fruitridge Road and Stockton and Franklin boulevards.

3. **Populations affected.** Mirroring trends in nationwide research, residents in Sacramento who are most affected by an oversaturation of unhealthy retailers are lower-income residents. Many oversaturated areas or corridors border disadvantaged communities.

RATES OF SMOKING AND BINGE DRINKING, SACRAMENTO AND PEER CITIES:

Sacramento, CA

SMOKING **15%**

BINGE DRINKING **18%**

Oakland, CA

SMOKING **15%**

BINGE DRINKING **18%**

Long Beach, CA

SMOKING **14%**

BINGE DRINKING **18%**

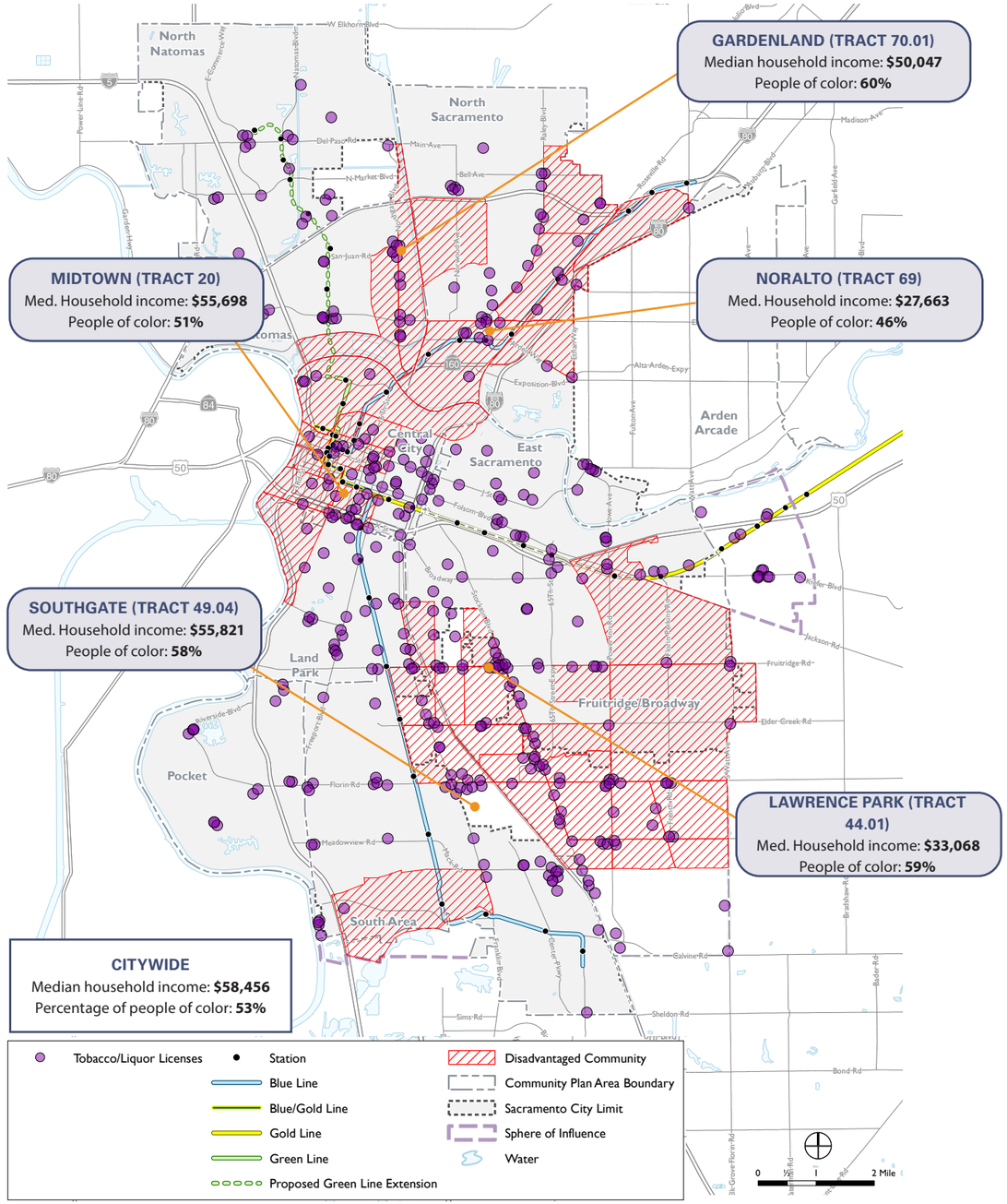
Portland, OR

SMOKING **17%**

BINGE DRINKING **21%**

Source: 500 Cities; 2016.

Tobacco and Alcohol Retail Outlet Locations



Source: CalEnviroscreen 3.0, 2018; American Community Survey, 2014-2018; CoStar, 2020; City of Sacramento, 2019; Dyett & Bhatia, 2020.

Strategies

Root Causes Of Environmental Injustice

SOCIAL INEQUITIES

Differences in power and dominating interests can lead to discrimination, which can be codified in institutions that make policy. This has led to ingrained, implicit bias despite laws that have banned explicit discrimination in government.

To address this root cause, policies should reduce differences in power and representation.

INSTITUTIONAL INEQUITIES

These biased policies affect living conditions, including distribution of harms (like polluting facilities) and goods (like jobs, homes located in safe places, parks, etc.)

Policies that aim to address the unequal distribution of goods and harms can help to improve equity.

LIVING CONDITIONS

These living conditions, which also influence the resources we have, interact with our health to affect how long we live and what opportunities we have in life.

Policies and programs that address immediate effects that people experience can improve people's ability to meet basic needs, and remain healthy and safe.

DIFFERENCES IN HEALTH AND OPPORTUNITY

Adapted from BARHII's Public Health Framework for Reducing Health Inequities Framework.

Access to Healthy Food Issues

1 **Food Deserts.** In Sacramento, food access disparities exist across neighborhoods. Several areas, especially in North Sacramento, Arden Arcade, and the South Area, lack access to a grocery store. Access to grocery stores are often used as a measure of access to fresh food.

2 **Need for other food opportunities.** The City of Sacramento has made great strides in improving access to non-traditional food sources, including making it legal to grow and sell produce to consumers directly from their properties, allowing temporary farm stands, and offering tax incentives to convert vacant lots into agricultural uses. Despite these efforts, areas of Sacramento remain that lack access to fresh food and disproportionately affect lower income residents and residents of color. Many of these areas also have higher rates of food insecurity.

3 **Food/Retail Swamps.** Sacramento has higher rates of obesity and diabetes than other peer cities and tobacco and binge drinking rates comparable with other Bay Area cities. Most of this unhealthy retail, including fast food outlets and alcohol/tobacco outlets, are concentrated along Sacramento's major corridors. Tobacco and alcohol outlets are also concentrated in the Central City community plan area. These unhealthy retail outlets disproportionately affect the health of low income residents and already underserved communities within Sacramento.

Existing/Ongoing City Efforts

1

- Policies that encourage planning to achieve improvements in overall public health that include healthy foods.
- Coordination with several Sacramento nonprofits and community-serving organizations, including meal programs, food closets, and emergency food access.

2

- Operation of several permanent community gardens by the Department of Youth, Parks, & Community Enrichment
- Adoption of the Urban Agriculture Ordinance, which allows “market gardens”, or gardens or orchards where fruits and vegetables can be to be sold, as a primary or accessory use in all zones, and agriculture allowed by right in industrial zones.
- Passage of the Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone Ordinance to provide tax incentives to promote urban agriculture (expired Jan 2019 and was not continued due to lack of interest).

3

- A 1,000-foot proximity requirement, requiring that new tobacco retailers operating in the city limits be more than 1,000-feet away from an existing tobacco retailer.
- A tobacco policy in the City restricting the sale of tobacco within 1,000 feet of schools and restricting the sale of flavored tobacco.
- Special use regulations for alcoholic beverage sales, including consideration of whether proposed alcoholic beverage sales will not adversely affect the peace or general welfare of the surrounding neighborhood and will not result in undue concentration of alcohol retailers.

Access to Healthy Food Actions: What is Needed

ADD YOUR IDEAS TO THE BOXES BELOW AND ON THE BACK OF THIS FACTBOOK.

1 Improve access to healthy food outlets.

Example policies could include: Support the development of transportation options that residents can utilize to promote convenient food access.

2 Explore other opportunities for additional healthy food options.

Example policies could include: Prioritize and facilitate the development of healthy food establishments and local food growers, particularly in communities that lack access to healthy food.

3 Create environments for healthy food choices.

Example policies could include: Engage in public outreach to promote healthy eating habits and food assistance programs.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS OR ISSUES: