



# STRIVE SAN MATEO

## GENERAL PLAN 2040

## Environmental Justice in the General Plan

### What is a General Plan?

The General Plan lays out the community's vision for how San Mateo will look, feel, and change over the next 20 years. The General Plan covers many important topics, including where housing and businesses get built, how we travel around the city, adapting to a changing climate, protecting the natural environment, and providing parks and community services. Every City in California has to have a General Plan to guide and plan for growth, change, and conservation over the long term, usually looking about 20 years out. State law says that General Plans must address many different topics that affect our daily lives, such as:

- Housing
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Climate Change
- Natural Resources
- Community Health and Safety
- Public Services and Amenities

### What is Environmental Justice (EJ)?

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 the history of our country. This inequity is the result of many historical factors, such as inappropriate zoning, excluding certain residents from decision-making, and discriminatory housing and lending practices, among others.



Environmental justice is the idea that planning and environmental policies should treat people of all races, cultures, and incomes fairly and equitably. Environmental justice is a State-required topic that must be addressed in the General Plan. The State created new environmental justice requirements under Senate Bill (SB) 1000, acknowledging a history of discrimination through unjust land use policies and practices, and recognizing that planning influences health and equity outcomes across communities.

### What does Environmental Justice address?

Environmental justice addresses our living environments, and specifically the health, safety, and opportunities available in different communities. This may include natural resources like air quality, as well as fresh food, safe housing, civic empowerment, and infrastructure investment. The General Plan must include policies and actions that will lead to an equitable distribution of resources and opportunities and will reduce the impacts of environmental hazards in equity priority communities.

### What is an equity priority community?

Equity priority communities are neighborhoods that experience both higher than average sources of pollution or contamination (such as poor air quality or contaminated groundwater) and population and health characteristics that make them more vulnerable to negative health outcomes from that pollution. State law calls these areas "disadvantaged communities." San Mateo is currently using the term "equity priority community" to identify these neighborhoods.



Governor's Office of  
**Planning and Research**

For more information on General Plans, Housing Elements, and the California planning process, visit: <https://opr.ca.gov/>