

Environmental Justice and Health Assessment

August 2021



In 2019, the City of Ventura commissioned a Health and Environmental Justice Assessment by PlaceWorks. This report relies on key sections from that report and has been updated by Raimi + Associates in 2021 to align with new state guidance on implementation of Senate Bill 1000 (SB 1000), the "Planning for Healthy Communities Act." Where necessary, data has been updated to reflect requirements of SB 1000.

Health and Environmental Justice Assessment

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Chapter 1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the report, provides an overview of its purpose, and describes its content.

Background

Across California and the nation, there has been a growing recognition that some communities carry a disproportionate burden of pollution and its associated effects on health. Social inequity has also become a concern as those bearing the costs of pollution are often the same who lack the resources and opportunities to receive community benefits. As such, the urban planning and other allied fields have begun to focus on issues with environmental justice and social equity.

State law defines “environmental justice” 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” (Government Code § 65040.12(e)). From its beginnings in the 1970s, the field of environmental justice has focused attention primarily on reducing the disproportionate burden of pollution. State agencies also must address environmental justice in their various programs.

In 2016, the “Planning for Healthy Communities Act” (SB 1000) was adopted. California law now requires cities and counties with disadvantaged communities to incorporate environmental justice (EJ) policies into their general plans, either in a separate element or by integrating goals, policies, and objectives in other elements. The content must address topics such as improving public facilities, reducing pollution burden, expanding access to food and recreational opportunities, and promoting safe and sanitary housing.

Purpose of the Report

This report is intended to address the statutory requirements of SB 1000, “Planning for Healthy Communities Act.” It provides an assessment of disadvantaged communities in the City of Ventura based on environmental pollution, population characteristics, and public services and infrastructure. This assessment serves as a foundation for the goals, policies, and implementation programs of the general plan.

While SB 1000 explicitly addresses the disproportionate burden of pollution, the bill does not use the term “social equity.” Still, OPR’s revision to the general plan guidelines states that social equity is inter-twined in the bill’s intent. OPR states that the fields of transportation, housing, agriculture, energy, economic development, land use, health, and education all use social equity issues that should be addressed. The general plan should address the causes of inequity and include goals, objectives, and programs to reduce inequity and expand opportunities.

This report analyzes environmental justice concerns to identify disadvantaged communities in the City of Ventura and addresses social equity concerns citywide and, to the extent applicable, in specific areas.

Content of the Report

The report opens with an introduction followed by an overview of the regulatory framework for environmental justice. Each subsequent chapter assesses data related to the topics of SB 1000. The final chapter concludes with implications for the general plan. This report is organized into the following seven chapters:

- **Chapter 1, Introduction**, sets the context for environmental justice and health by reviewing the history of environmental justice, introducing the Healthy Communities Framework, and describing the application of these concepts to the City of Ventura and its vision.
- **Chapter 2, Regulatory Framework**, describes key federal and state laws and regulations governing environmental justice. Additional focus is provided on Ventura County and the City of Ventura.
- **Chapter 3, Disadvantaged Communities Screening**, contains the preliminary results of the disadvantaged communities screening completed for the City of Ventura, as required for SB 1000. It includes an overview of CalEnviroScreen 3.0 results, low-income areas, and related findings.
- **Chapter 4, Demographic and Socioeconomic Assessment**, provides an overview of characteristics of the population and an analysis of the presence of vulnerable populations in the City of Ventura.
- **Chapter 5, Health Profile**, describes the general health of Ventura residents as a prelude to discussing environmental justice concerns and interventions designed to improve health.
- **Chapter 6, Policy Area Analysis**, analyzes the policy issues that must be addressed to comply with SB 1000 and the environmental issues mentioned.
- **Chapter 7, Conclusion**, summarizes requirements of Senate Bill 1000, provides a preliminary determination of the presence of disadvantaged communities in the City of Ventura, and describes issues and opportunities for consideration as part of the General Plan Update arising from this report.

It is important to note that this technical report is not intended to be an exhaustive compendium of all potential environmental justice and social equity issues in the city and the surrounding county. Nor is it intended as a substitute for, or critique of, existing health risk assessments of specific facilities and land uses in the city or ongoing cleanup or investigations being undertaken by regulatory agencies. Rather, this technical report is intended to serve as broader citywide assessment that can serve as a baseline information for the general plan.

In addition, this assessment is not intended to address the requirements of SB 244, which requires that cities and counties analyze and address the needs of unincorporated disadvantaged communities as part of General Plan Update. SB 244 requires cities, counties, and local agency formation commissions to identify disadvantaged unincorporated communities and provide an analysis of water, wastewater, stormwater, drainage, and structural fire protection needs or deficiencies. The City's 2013-2021 Housing Element addressed this requirement and the analysis will be updated as part of the upcoming sixth housing element cycle, which will plan for 2021-2029.

Geography Covered

In accordance with SB 1000, this environmental justice assessment must encompass the area covered by the general plan of the city, county, or city and county. This report therefore focuses on the planning area of the City of Ventura, which includes the incorporated areas and sphere of influence as determined by the Ventura Local Agency Formation Commission. Note, all references to the City of Ventura as a place use “city” and all references to the governing agencies of the jurisdiction use “City” throughout the report.

Census Tracts

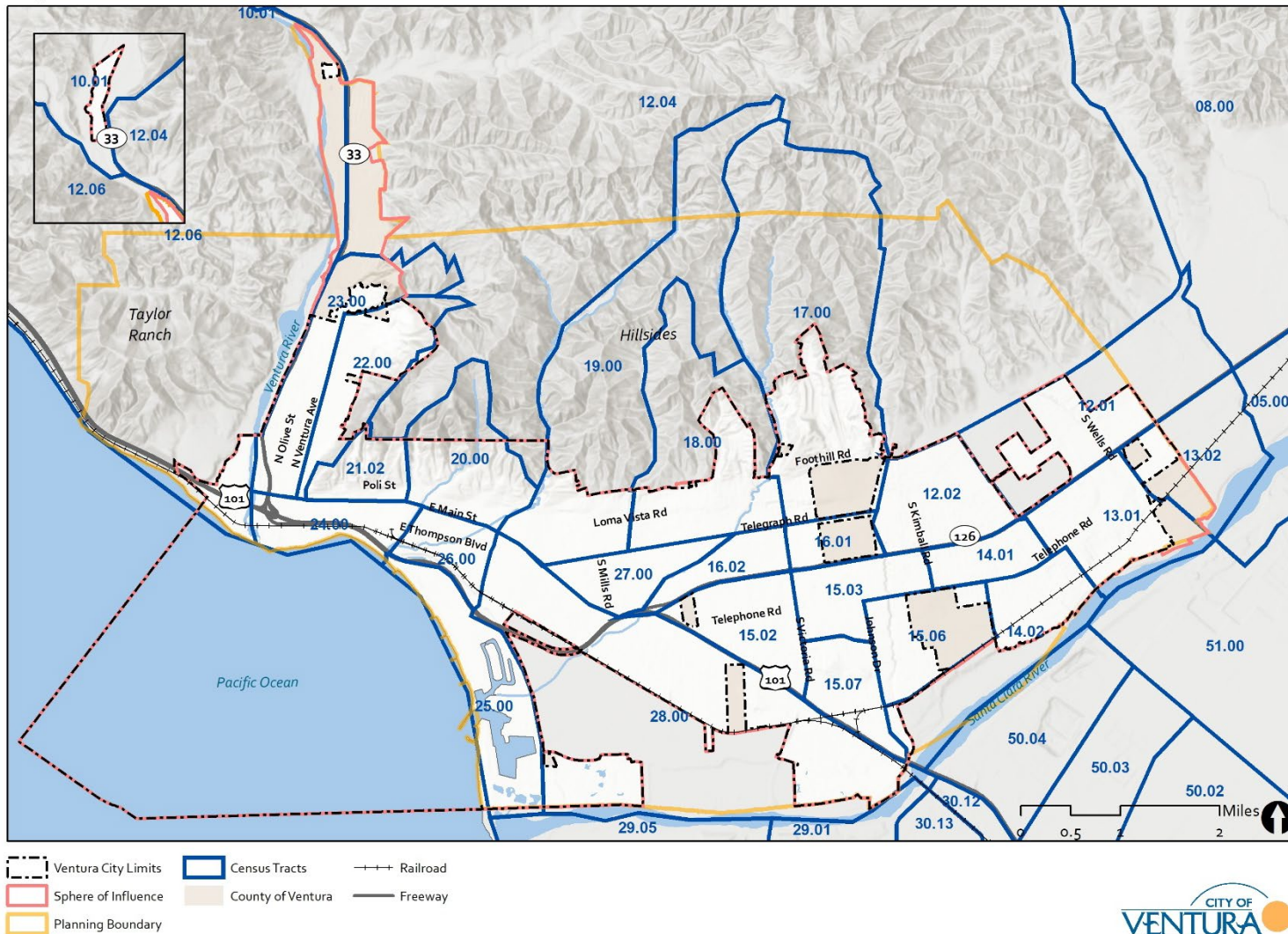
Where data is available, information is provided at the census tract level. Figure 1. Geography Covered shows outlines for the incorporated areas, sphere of influence, and census tracts, which are used for many of the analyses represented in figures throughout the report.

Subareas

In presenting findings, this report uses subareas to refer to different parts of the city. Ventura is home to a rich mosaic of neighborhoods with their own look, feel, and sense of place. Based on extensive research and analysis, informed by community input, twelve (12) distinct subareas were identified in Ventura. These subareas are briefly introduced in the Land Use and Design report and are mapped in Figure 2.

While each subarea has its own distinctive charm, each also faces its own unique set of conditions – such as housing quality, walkability, street environment, and park access – that have implications for residents’ quality of life. To better understand these differences, a series of twelve (12) standalone reports that delineate the predominant uses, overall character, and prevailing issues in each subarea have been developed. These documents will inform the development of area-specific goals, strategies, and policies in the forthcoming General Plan Update (see Subarea Reports for more detailed analysis and findings).

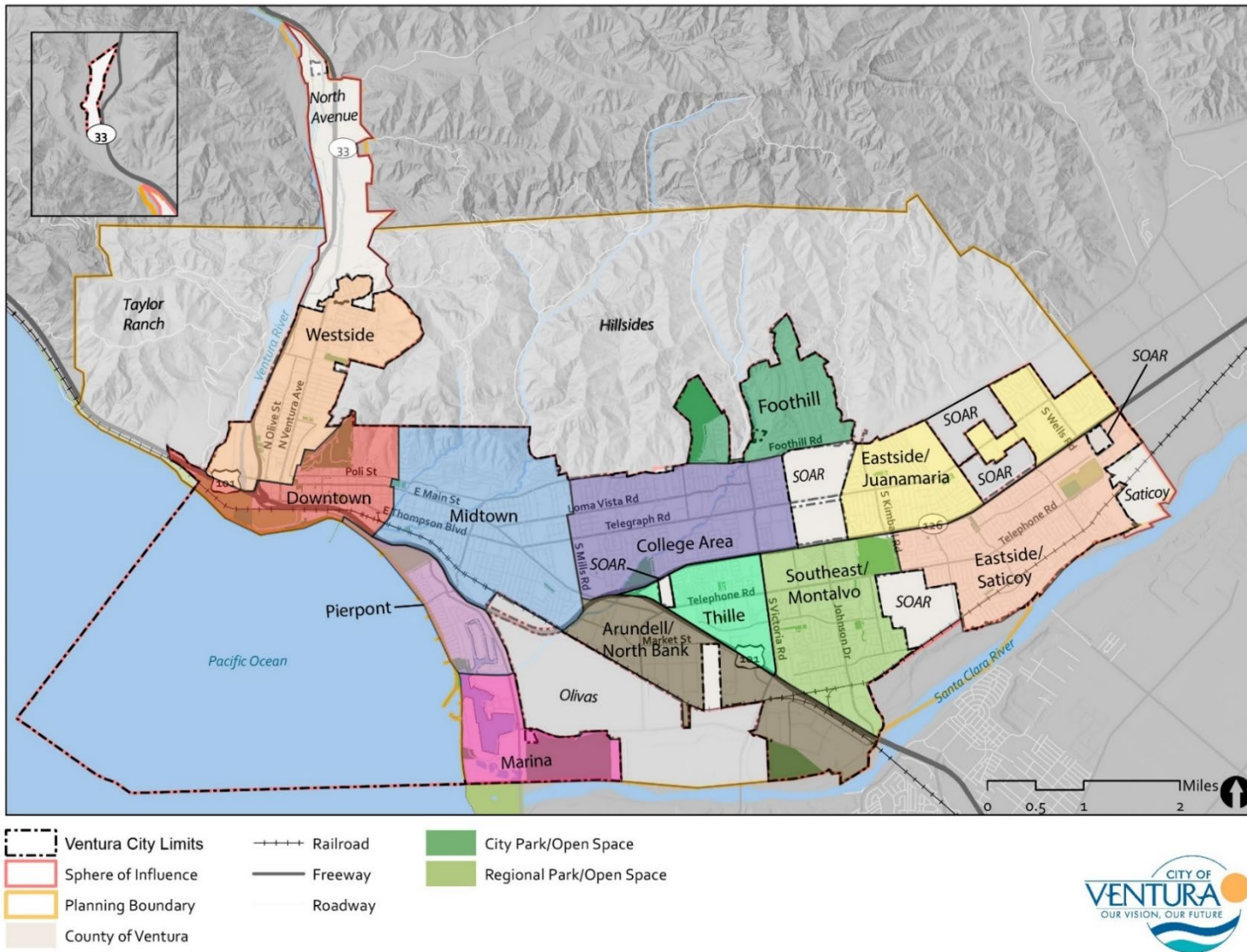
Figure 1. Geography Covered



Data Sources: City of Ventura (2020); County of Ventura (2020); ESRI (2020)



Figure 2. Subareas



Chapter 2. Regulatory Framework

This chapter describes key federal and state laws and regulations governing environmental justice. Additional focus is provided on efforts in Ventura County and the City of Ventura.

Federal and State

Several key federal and state planning efforts provide a framework for addressing healthier communities in urban planning.

Healthy People (HP) 2020

Since the 1990s, the Healthy People Initiative has served as the nation's framework for improving the health of all Americans. It is managed by the federal government. In its third iteration, HP2020's mission is fivefold: 1) identify national health improvement priorities; 2) increase public awareness and understanding of the determinants of health, disease, and disability and opportunities for progress; 3) provide measurable objectives and goals at the national, state, and local levels; 4) engage multiple sectors to strengthen policies and improve practices; and 5) identify research, evaluation, and data collection needs.

HP2020, as was its predecessors, is significant in that it explicitly recognizes the social determinants of health. HP 2020 recognizes that individual health is affected by more than simply genetics but is profoundly influenced by the environment where people live and work. Health is affected by a range of social determinants, be it community design, environmental pollution, socioeconomic status, education, and other factors. Therefore, interventions to improve health must not only target the present medical symptoms but also should address the underlying contributing factors present in a community.

National Prevention Strategy and Action Plan

In 2011, the National Prevention Council released the National Prevention Strategy. This plan is unique as it focuses on tangible measures to prevent injury and chronic disease, rather than relying solely on the traditional paradigm of treatment. The plan encourages partnerships and actions that target prevention efforts in four domains: healthy and safe community environments, clinical and community preventive services, empowering people, and health disparities. Priorities range from active living, healthy eating, injury and violence reduction, and others known to reduce the prevalence of illness.

Executive Order 12898: Environmental Justice

Executive Order (EO) 12898 was issued in 1994 to focus federal attention on the environmental and human health effects of federal actions on minority and low-income populations, with the goal of achieving environmental protection for all communities. The EO directed federal agencies to identify and address the disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects of their actions on minority and low-income populations, to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law. The EO directed each agency to develop a strategy for implementing environmental justice.

Executive Order 12898 led to the creation of the Federal Interagency Working Group (IWG) on Environmental Justice, which consists of 17 federal agencies and White House offices that find facts, receive public

comments, and conduct inquiries into environmental justice issues. The EJ IWG is convened by the EPA to guide, support, and enhance federal environmental justice and community-based activities. Since that time, EPA and many other federal agencies have established programs to advance environmental justice objectives as part of their mission.

Senate Bill 1000

Senate Bill 1000 (SB 1000), the Planning for Healthy Communities Act, was signed into law on September 24, 2016. SB 1000 mandates that cities and counties adopt an environmental justice (EJ) element or integrate environmental justice policies, objectives, and goals into other elements in their general plans after January 1, 2018, when two or more elements of the general plan are updated.

The EJ element—or integrated set of EJ goals, policies, and objectives in other elements of the general plan—is required to do the following:

- Identify objectives and policies to reduce the unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities by means that include but are not limited to:
 - Reduction of pollution exposure
 - Improving air quality
 - Promoting public facilities
 - Promoting food access
 - Promoting safe and sanitary homes
 - Promoting physical activity
- Identify objectives and policies to promote civil engagement in the public decision-making process.
- Identify objectives and policies that prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities.

This groundbreaking legislation is the first of its kind in the nation. SB 1000 institutionalizes health, wellness, and environmental justice into local land use planning and development decisions.

California General Plan Guidelines

California is one of the first states to address environmental justice. Adopted in 1999, SB 115 led to defining environmental justice in statute; establishing the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) as the coordinating agency for environmental justice programs; and requiring CalEPA to develop a model environmental justice mission statement for agency boards, departments, and offices. Assembly Bill 1553, which became effective in 2003, required OPR to develop guidelines for addressing environmental justice in general plans. With the release of the 2017 General Plan guidelines, OPR has expanded its mandate by recommending consideration of broader environmental justice and social equity issues as part of the updates to general plans. In 2020, OPR released subsequent guidance for incorporation of SB 1000 into the planning process.

California Health in All Policies

In 2008, the Strategic Growth Council (SGC) was formed through SB 732. SGC is a cabinet level committee tasked with coordinating the activities of state agencies to advance the vision of an environmentally sustainable, socially equitable, and economically resilient California. As part of this mandate, the Strategic Growth Council established a Health in All Policies (HiAP) Task Force charged with identifying priority programs, policies, and strategies to improve health while advancing goals such as improving air and water quality, protecting natural resources and agricultural lands, increasing the availability of affordable housing, improving infrastructure systems, promoting public health, planning sustainable communities, and

addressing climate change goals. The SGC's efforts helped set the foundation for recommending health and wellness as a priority in state and local government actions.

County of Ventura

Ventura County Health Care Agency is the primary county agency responsible for public health planning and policy, although other departments play a supporting role. The following are key health planning documents related to this effort.

Ventura County Community Health Plan

Ventura County Health Care Agency prepared a Comprehensive Health Needs Assessment (2017) to guide future priorities in promoting health and wellness. The County's Community Health Improvement Plan is a companion implementation plan that consists of 15 priority areas under 5 broad goals, with interventions to improve population health. The five broad goals are as follows:

1. Create healthy communities.
2. Lay the foundation for a healthy life, healthy beginnings.
3. Help people achieve optimal health: living well.
4. Maintain dignity and independence: aging well.
5. Redesign health care system: efficient, safe, & patient centered.

Ventura County Public Health Strategic Plan

Ventura County's Public Health Strategic Plan, 2015–2020, similarly sets forth a vision to be the healthiest county in the nation. As part of the national accreditation process, the County embarked upon a five-year planning process to produce a health strategic plan. The strategic plan sets forth five goals: 1) health equity; 2) healthy and safe community environments; 3) preventive health care; 4) community-driven partnerships; and 5) public health infrastructure. Table 1. Ventura County Public Health Strategic Plan Priority Areas highlights priority areas related to each of the five goals.

Table 1. Ventura County Public Health Strategic Plan Priority Areas

Goals	Priority Areas
1. Health Equity	1.1 Strengthen organizational and staff capacity to implement health equity initiatives.
	1.2 Advocate for new, flexible, and sustainable funding to address social determinants of health.
	1.3 Partner with public and private sector organizations to achieve policy, systems, and environmental changes to promote health where people live, learn, work and play.
2. Healthy and Safe Community	2.1 Increase the capacity of communities to support active and healthy living environments.
	2.2 Increase community safety and decrease potential for injuries and exposure to violence.
	2.3 Increase community wide preparedness levels for all potential public health emergencies and hazards.

3. Preventive Health Care	3.1 Seek new and sustainable funding to further invest in and prioritize prevention, including at the community level.
	3.2 Ensure that vulnerable populations served continue to have access to quality preventive and health care services as part of health care reform implementation.
	3.3 Promote prevention-focused public health, behavioral health, and primary care delivery systems.
4. Community Driven Partnerships	4.1 Maximize opportunities, amongst the public health workforce, to build positive, sustainable partnerships with community organizations and residents.
	4.2 Engage with the community to develop initiatives that address agreed-upon community needs.
	4.3 Improve staff and partner capacity to help consumers understand health information and how to live a healthy lifestyle where the healthy choice is the easy choice.
5. Public Health Infrastructure	5.1 Maintain a skilled, competent, and empowered workforce that is reflective of the communities we serve.
	5.2 Improve VCPH use of, and contributions to, the evidence-base of public health science and practice.
	5.3 Develop an integrated process to monitor program performance/improvement & changes in health outcomes.

City of Ventura

The City of Ventura prepares planning and environmental documents that include goals and policies related to environmental justice. In addition, local programs also target environmental justice as well.

City of Ventura General Plan

Ventura’s General Plan was adopted in 2005. In many ways, the plan was ahead of its time by recognizing themes related to health and wellness. The general plan contained the following chapters:

- Chapter 1: Our Natural Community
- Chapter 2: Our Prosperous Community
- Chapter 3: Our Well Planned and Designed Community
- Chapter 4: Our Accessible Community
- Chapter 5: Our Sustainable Infrastructure
- Chapter 6: Our Active Community
- Chapter 7: Our Healthy and Safe Community
- Chapter 8: Our Educated Community
- Chapter 9: Our Creative Community
- Chapter 10: Our Involved Community

The General Plan “Our Healthy and Safe Community” chapter sets priorities to ensure adequate shelter, sufficient medical services, walkable neighborhoods, and proper nutrition as prerequisites for a healthy

community. Reducing threats to people and property from earthquakes, landslides, floods, and fires was also a high priority.

Other elements of the general plan address other aspects of being a healthier community, such as Chapter 4: Our Accessible Community, which describes infrastructure improvements that provide parks and trails to encourage active living. The Chapter 10 of the General Plan also calls for an ongoing inclusive dialogue with the community.

City of Ventura HEAL Resolution

In 2011, the City of Ventura adopted Resolution 2011–017, setting forth the City’s Commitment to Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL). This resolution committed the City to pursuing several strategies to improve community health and well-being as follows:

1. Direct City departments to work with developers to include health-related improvements such as connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists to their proposals that positively impact public health.
2. Require meals and snacks provided to youth at City-sponsored after-school programs to satisfy nutrition guidelines/standards and implement physical activity skills tests to improve fitness.
3. Provide healthy food options at City meetings and City-sponsored events to promote healthy eating and active living.
4. Implement a shop local campaign that emphasizes purchasing/ consuming fresh fruits and vegetables for health benefits and reducing the environmental damage caused by shipping foods.

Chapter 3. Disadvantaged Communities Screening

This chapter contains the preliminary results of the disadvantaged communities screening completed for the Ventura General Plan Update, as required for SB 1000. It includes an overview of CalEnviroScreen 3.0 results, low-income areas, and related findings.

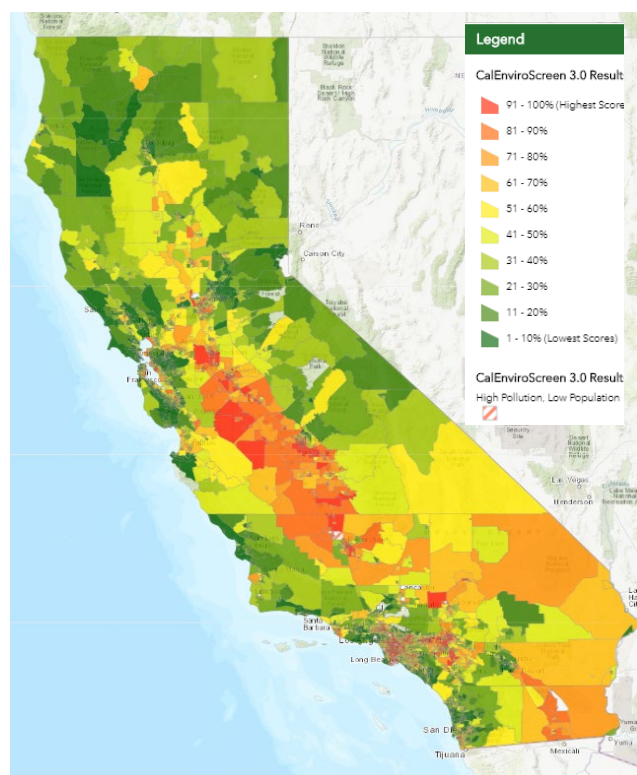
Methodology

The California Environmental Health Screening Tool, or CalEnviroScreen (CES) is a tool developed by CalEPA for analyzing environmental justice issues. The tool is in its third adopted iteration (CES 3.0) as of March 2021. Specifically, CES 3.0 can be used to identify places that are disproportionately burdened by pollution or have higher concentrations of populations vulnerable or sensitive to health hazards, such as pollution. In accordance with SB 1000, jurisdictions are required to use this tool to identify areas where environmental justice concerns exist and where appropriate goals, policies, and programs are warranted.

Historically, the state's traditional approach in environmental impact or risk analysis was to analyze impacts on a facility-by-facility or chemical-by-chemical basis. There lacked a standardized methodology to assess the cumulative impact of environmental hazards for communities across the state. To advance environmental justice, CalEPA sought to change from a single-pollutant and single-polluter focus toward a more comprehensive and precautionary approach.

The Office of Environmental Health Hazards Assessment (OEHHA), on behalf of CalEPA, developed the CES following state legislative changes related to the creation of Cap and Trade to support state agencies with setting priorities for investment of funds from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. Unlike previous models for assessing pollution and other environmental hazards, CES was designed to focus on potential sources and exposures of pollution that have been shown to lead to adverse health effects and are directly connected to the State's climate change goals—such as greenhouse gases like ozone.

Image 1. CalEnviroScreen 3.0: Statewide Results



Through a rigorous formula, this model ranks all census tracts in California. Image 1 shows how these scores are distributed throughout the state. The highest scores, shown in red, indicate a higher concentration of sensitive or vulnerable populations and a greater burden of environmental health hazards. The lowest scores, shown in green, indicate the opposite.

CalEnviroScreen 3.0 Methodology

CalEnviroScreen 3.0 uses a wide range of environmental, health, and socioeconomic data across 20 different statewide indicators to calculate a composite CES score. Prior or future iterations of the index may include more or fewer indicators. The indicators are based on factors that have been identified in academic and scientific literature as significantly impacting health or influencing vulnerability to disease. They are organized into four component categories: Exposures, Environmental Effects, Sensitive Populations, and Socioeconomic Factors (shown in Image 2). Supporting definitions and materials for each of the CES 3.0 variables can be found in technical reports prepared by OEHHA.¹

Once individual scores for each variable are obtained. A calculation is used to arrive at a composite score for two primary metrics—Pollution Burden and Population Characteristics. The overall composite CES score for an entire tract is then calculated by multiplying Pollution Burden and Population Characteristic scores together. All census tracts are then ordered from highest to lowest and are then assigned a percentile rank. The percentile ranking for each census tract demonstrates the tract’s degree of burdens relative to the rest of the state’s census tracts.

Image 3 illustrates the general calculation used to determine the composite score. Additional information about the scoring calculation for pollution burden, population characteristics, and the composite score can be found in CalEnviroScreen technical manuals.

Identifying Disadvantaged Communities

A primary goal of SB 1000 is to identify disadvantaged communities (referred to as DACs) so that effective goals, policies, and programs can be implemented to reduce pollution burden and related health hazards in those areas of the jurisdiction. However, there is significant ambiguity in defining a DAC, including the

Image 2. CES 3.0 Indicators

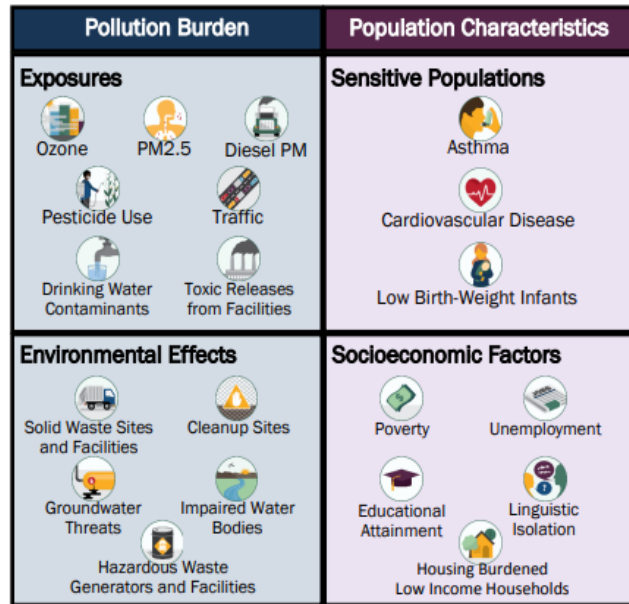


Image 3. CES 3.0 Methodology



* The Environmental Effects component is weighted one-half when combined with the Exposures component.

¹ Supporting information can be found online at: <https://oehha.ca.gov/media/downloads/calenviroscreen/report/ces3report.pdf>

variables used to indicate disadvantaged conditions, the numeric threshold or ranking when comparing areas in a jurisdiction, and other items as well. According to the Government Code Section 65302 (h)(4)(a), a DAC is defined by statute in two ways:

- An area identified by the California Environmental Protection Agency pursuant to Section 39711 of the Health and Safety Code (*which refers to the use of CalEnviroScreen*); **or**
- A low-income area (*defined as "an area with household incomes at or below 80 percent of the statewide median income or with household incomes at or below the threshold designed as low income by the Department of Housing and Community Development's list of state income limits"*) disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation.

As of the June 2020 release of the General Plan Guidelines for Environmental Justice Elements, OPR recommends the following methods and thresholds be used to identify DACs: (1) use CES to examine whether then planning area contains census tracts have a combined score of 75% or higher; (2) Map the household median incomes by census tract in the planning area at or below the statewide median income and examine for disproportionate pollution burden; (3) Map the household median incomes by census tract in the planning area at or below the Department of Housing and Community Development's state income limits and examine for disproportionate pollution burden; and (4) Incorporate and analyze community-specific data and examine for additional pollution burden and health risk factors.

New guidance from OPR does not specify the threshold for "disproportionate pollution burden" or provide direction is as to which or how many other "other hazards" must be considered as potentially leading to negative health effects. A further consideration is that OPR recommends that local governments consider whether there are disadvantaged communities in geographic units that are smaller than a census tract to ensure that all disadvantaged communities are recognized. This last consideration suggests a need to consider block group data in some instances, parcel-level data in other instances, and a range of other units of analysis, depending on the quality and availability of the data.

Results for City of Ventura

The following summarizes results of applying the first three recommended methods, described above, to screen for DACs in Ventura, and presents an approach to applying the fourth method.

Method 1: CES Composite Score

The first method is to align the definition of DACs with that used by Senate Bill 535 in determining eligibility for Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund prioritization.² Under this statute CalEPA classifies any tract with a CES composite score above the 75th percentile of scores statewide as disadvantaged.

Using this method yields two census tracts (23.00 and 24.00) as potential DACs, as shown in Figure 3. CES 3.0 Results: Composite. These two census tracts primarily cover the Westside Planning Area, which is historically known for conditions associated with a DAC.

Method 2: Low-Income Areas (Statewide Threshold) with Disproportionate Pollution Burden

This method aligns the definition of DACs with definitions of low-income households or areas, used to determine disadvantage for other agencies and income-qualified assistance for several state and federal programs. The California median household income in 2019, the year for which the latest readily available

² CalEPA's methodology for designating disadvantaged communities can be found online at <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/sb535>

reliable income data was available at the time of revising this report, was \$82,200.³ The statewide threshold for identification of low-income areas, is therefore calculated at \$65,760 (eighty percent of the state median income). The latest guidelines from OPR recommend the individual pollution burden indicators of CalEnviroScreen be used as a starting point to assess disproportionality of environmental pollution burden. This is interpreted to refer to either the pollution burden composite score or any of the individual indicator scores exceeding the 75th percentile.

Using this method yields nine census tracts (12.06, 13.02, 15.02, 15.03, 16.01, 21.02, 22.00, 23.00, and 24.00) as low-income areas, as shown in Figure 4. One tract (12.06) has no population within the City of Ventura and is excluded from further consideration as a DAC. Only two of the remaining census tracts (23.00 and 24.00) have a composite pollution score above the 75th percentile. All eight of the tracts remaining in the analysis have at least one indicator with a score exceeding the 75th percentile; except tract 21.02, where local data and community engagement is needed to determine if there are any cumulative burdens outside of the CES 3.0.

As a result of this analysis, seven census tracts (after excluding census tract 21.02) are considered as potential DACs throughout the remainder of this report.

Method 3: Low-Income Areas (Countywide Threshold) with Disproportionate Pollution Burden

The next method aligns the definition of low-income areas with the countywide threshold. The Ventura County median household income in 2019, the year for which the latest readily available reliable income data was available at the time of writing this report, was \$97,800.⁴ The countywide threshold for identification of low-income areas, is therefore calculated at \$78,240 (eighty percent of the county area median income). This approach is useful for identifying low-income areas where the countywide area median income exceeds the statewide median income.

Using this method yields an additional four tracts (12.01, 15.07, 27.00, and 28.00) as low-income areas, as shown in Figure 4. Only one of these additional census tracts (28.00) has a composite pollution score above the 75th percentile, as shown in Table 2. All four of the tracts have at least one indicator with a score exceeding the 75th percentile.

As a result of this analysis, four additional census tracts are considered as potential DACs throughout the remainder of this report.

Method 4: Additional Assessments of Disadvantage

In some cases, the CES composite score may not exceed the 75th percentile but residents may still be exposed to environmental pollutants or other health hazards or an area of the jurisdiction may have high concentrations of sensitive populations to consider in the planning process. As an example, census tract 25.00 is not considered a disadvantaged community according to definitions set in the first three recommended methods, discussed above. This tract, overlapping the Pierpont and Marina subareas, is in the 84th percentile for overall pollution burden in California and scores above the 75th percentile for diesel particulate matter, pesticides, traffic density, and impaired water bodies. Despite these high scores for potential pollutant exposure, the tract does not qualify as a DAC because the median household income (\$86,375) is above the thresholds for the state and county. In a case such as this, though there may not be disadvantage in the traditional sense of environmental justice, there remain health hazards that are important for the City to address through its General Plan Update.

³ Based on California Department of Housing and Community Development State Income Limits for 2019, published April 2019.

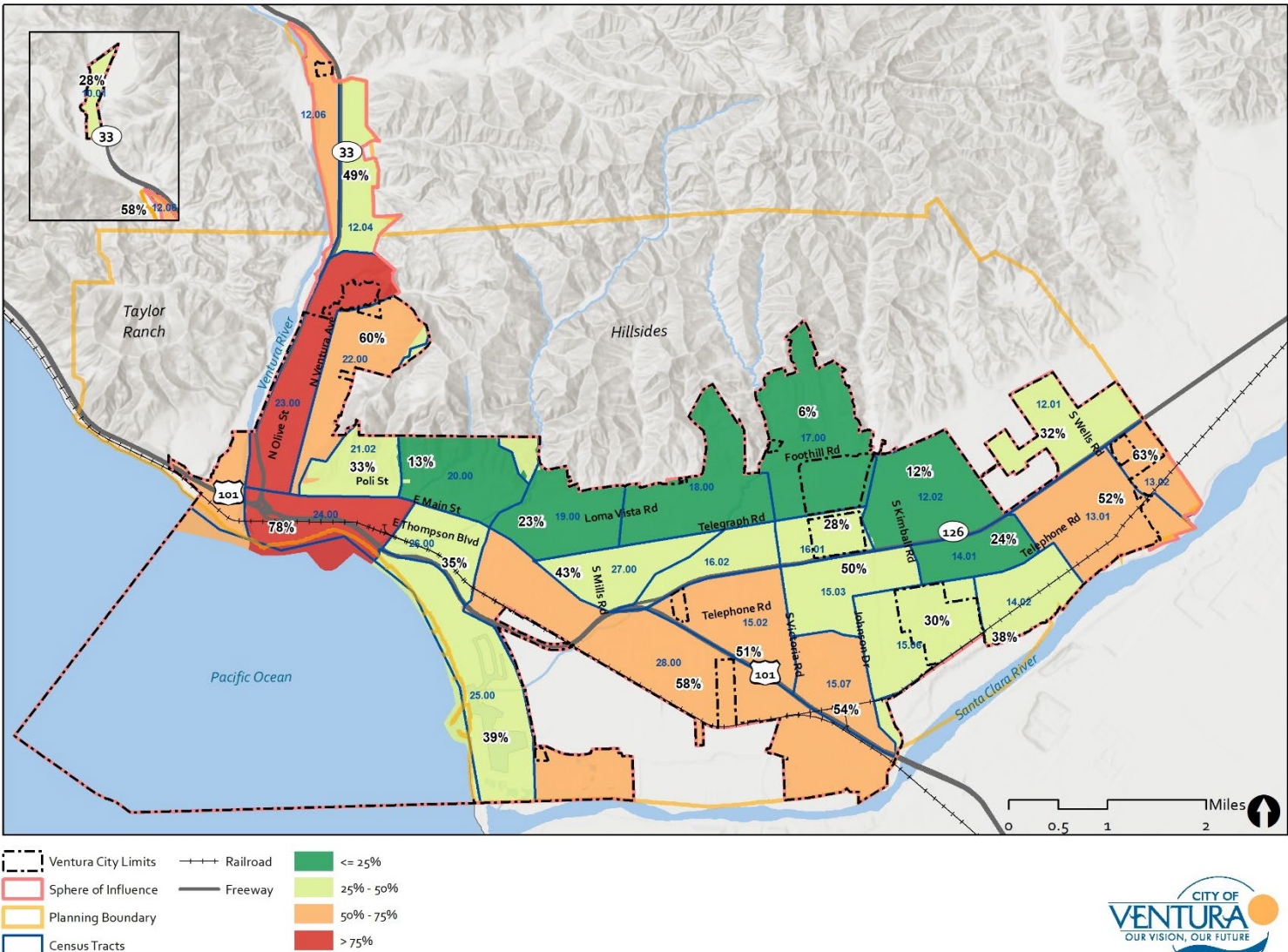
⁴ Based on California Department of Housing and Community Development State Income Limits for 2019, published April 2019.

In other cases, a census tract may be a low-income area but not have high scores in the composite or individual scores of the CES 3.0. For example, census tract 21.02, in the Downtown subarea, has a median household income (\$52,250) below the thresholds for the state and county identification of low-income areas, but no scores exceeding the 75th percentile in CES 3.0. Without assessing conditions with data and engagement outside of the CES 3.0, this area could potentially be excluded from consideration as a DAC.

Thus, two additional assessments of disadvantage should be considered. The first is to assess existing conditions in the city—by census tracts and geographic units smaller than the census tract, as information is available—using local data from the jurisdiction or other sources on infrastructure, land use, housing, health outcomes, or other topics of interest not covered in CES 3.0. The second is to use the community engagement process to engage stakeholders in reviewing potential DACs identified in Methods 1-3, which use technical third-party data, to identify if any areas are missing or if any areas should not be considered as DACs. This approach of reviewing additional data and engaging stakeholders is useful to ensure the spirit of the law is carried out and all potential DACs are considered in the implementation of SB 1000.

To apply this fourth method, the eleven census tracts identified as potential DACs in the first three methods, as depicted in Figure 6, are used as an overlay throughout the remainder of this report when assessing other existing conditions. Census tract 21.02 is considered in the analysis and a conclusion recommending its recognition as a low-income area of concern is presented in Chapter 7. Conclusion and Figure 45, which discusses implications for community engagement in refining the screening results.

Figure 3. CES 3.0 Results: Composite



Note: Two-digit bold numbers in black represent CES composite percentile scores. Four-digit bold numbers in blue represent census tract numbers.
 Data Sources: City of Ventura (2020); County of Ventura (2020); CalEnviroScreen 3.0 (2018); ESRI (2020)



Figure 4. Low-Income Areas

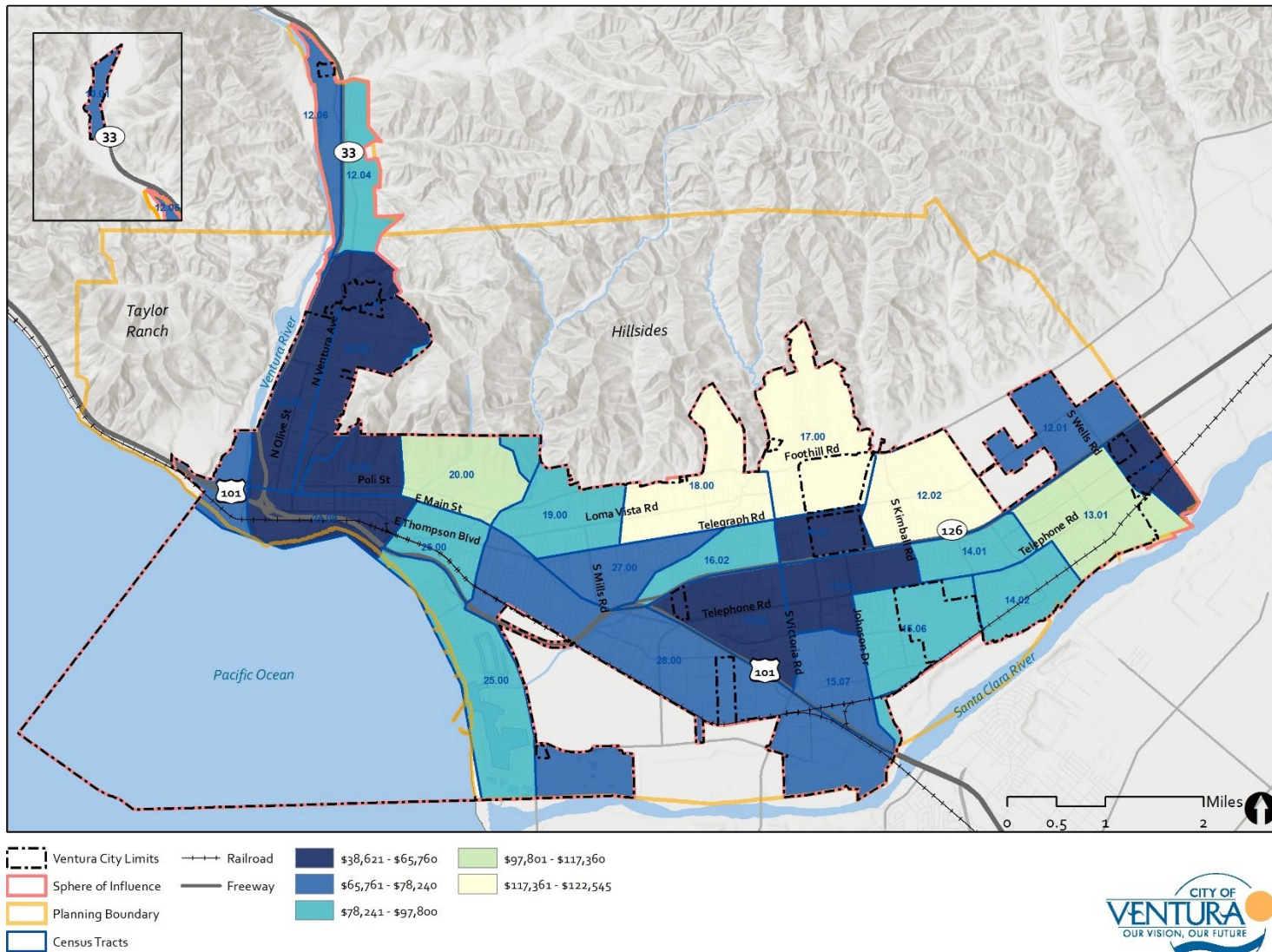


Figure 5. CES 3.0 Results: Pollution Burden Composite

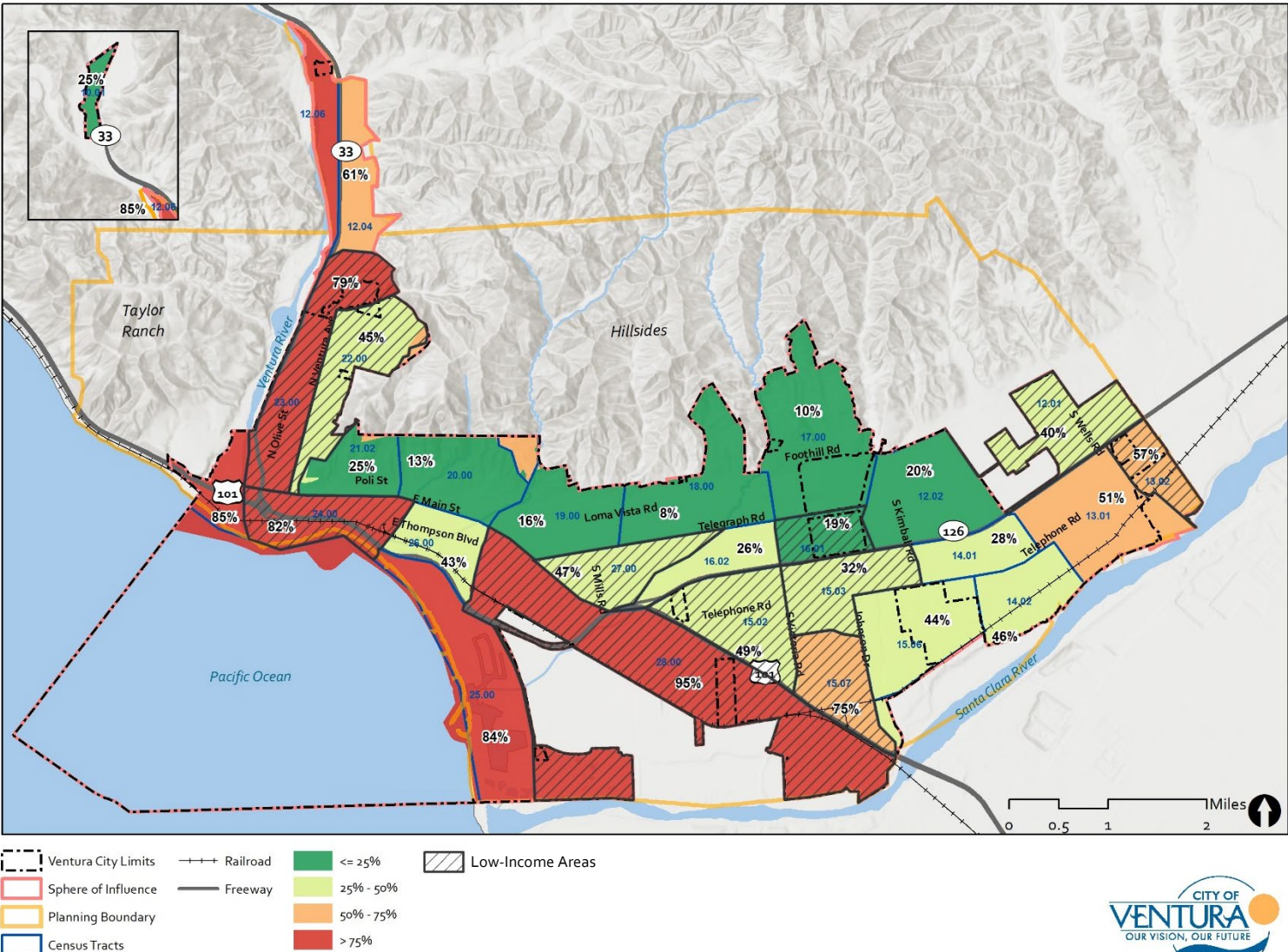
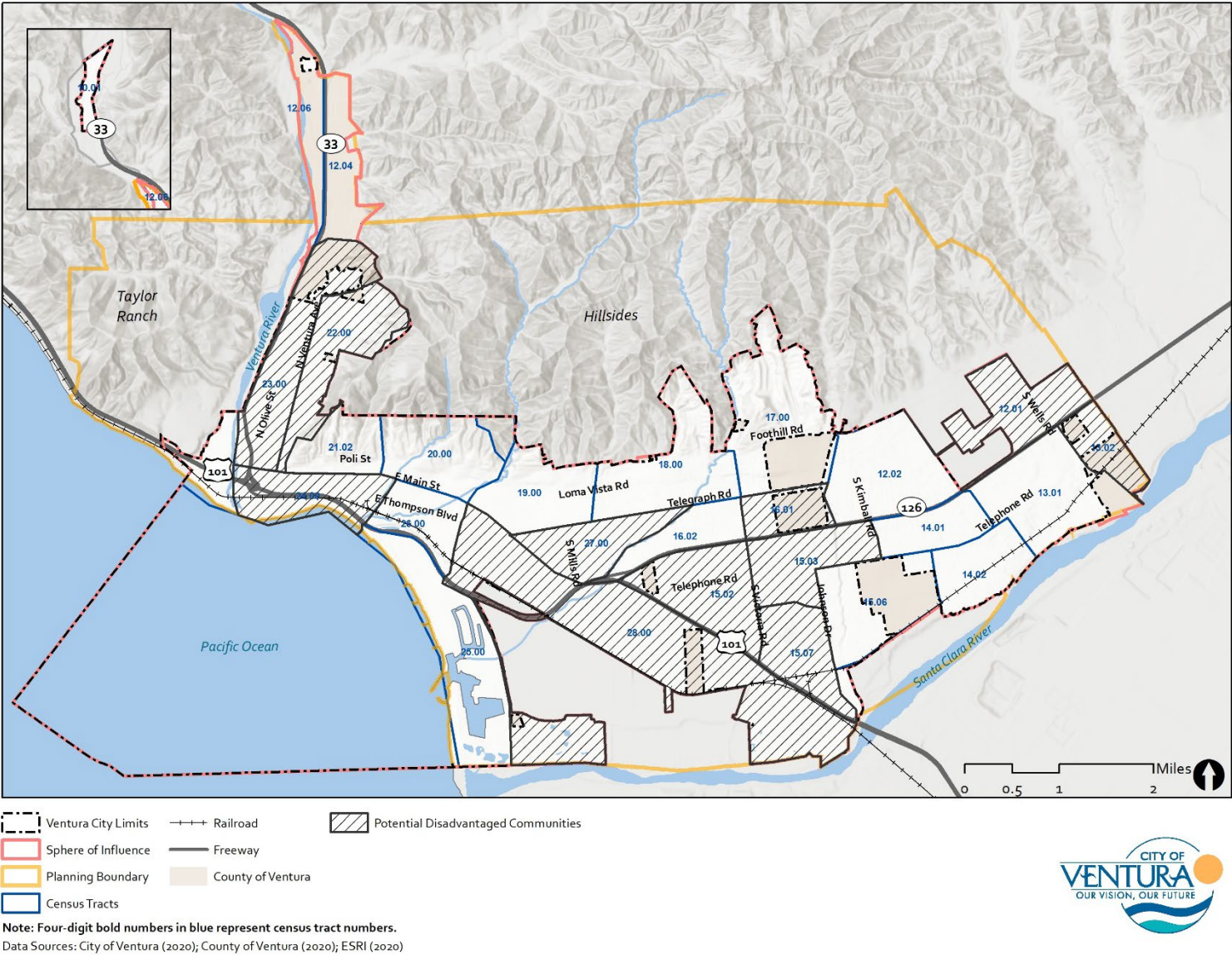


Table 2. Low-Income Areas and Pollution Burden Analyses

Census tract	Low-Income Area Analysis					Pollution Burden Indicators (Percentile Scores) Analysis													
	CES 3.0 Composite Percentile	Low-Income Area?	Median Household Income	Below Countywide Threshold?	Below Statewide Threshold?	Ozone	PM2.5	Diesel	Drinking Water Contaminants	Pesticide Use	Toxic Releases from Facilities	Traffic Density	Cleanup Sites	Groundwater Threats	Hazardous Waste Generators and Facilities	Impaired Water Bodies	Solid Waste Sites and Facilities	Sum of Indicators Exceeding 75th Percentile	Pollution Burden Composite Percentile
12.01	32	Yes	\$ 69,960	Yes	No	40	41	20	61	97	22	31	0	0	77	15	33	2	40
12.02	12	No	\$ 122,545	No	No	40	41	11	36	82	22	27	0	0	66	15	0	1	20
12.04	49	No	\$ 78,818	No	No	65	33	3	73	72	15	18	27	47	89	72	57	1	61
13.01	52	No	\$ 100,344	No	No	40	41	23	65	92	25	37	0	0	71	15	83	2	51
13.02	63	Yes	\$ 45,909	Yes	Yes	40	41	23	62	100	22	55	0	0	61	49	65	1	57
14.01	24	No	\$ 97,679	No	No	40	41	37	62	95	24	34	0	0	26	0	0	1	28
14.02	38	No	\$ 95,938	No	No	40	41	44	88	100	29	54	18	15	0	0	9	2	46
15.02	51	Yes	\$ 62,298	Yes	Yes	40	41	56	61	75	24	76	0	4	28	0	57	1	49
15.03	50	Yes	\$ 53,990	Yes	Yes	40	41	57	62	95	24	49	0	0	0	0	0	1	32
15.06	30	No	\$ 87,778	No	No	40	41	57	64	100	26	27	27	32	26	0	0	1	44
15.07	54	Yes	\$ 72,039	Yes	No	40	41	57	63	89	26	78	39	50	77	0	33	3	75
16.01	28	Yes	\$ 61,667	Yes	Yes	40	41	23	36	92	22	56	0	0	0	0	0	1	19
16.02	28	No	\$ 90,156	No	No	40	41	43	36	71	22	68	0	2	26	0	0	0	26
17.00	6	No	\$ 122,000	No	No	53	41	10	36	73	19	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
18.00	6	No	\$ 122,344	No	No	40	41	7	36	44	21	29	0	0	47	0	0	0	8
19.00	23	No	\$ 84,844	No	No	53	41	12	36	0	18	29	6	92	54	0	0	1	16
20.00	13	No	\$ 100,758	No	No	53	41	29	36	0	17	34	8	89	9	0	0	1	13
21.02	33	Yes	\$ 51,250	Yes	Yes	53	41	30	35	0	16	25	44	65	26	41	20	0	25
22.00	60	Yes	\$ 55,000	Yes	Yes	53	41	30	36	0	16	34	57	91	92	41	20	2	45
23.00	78	Yes	\$ 51,989	Yes	Yes	53	41	29	36	97	15	42	85	89	93	41	33	4	79
24.00	78	Yes	\$ 38,621	Yes	Yes	53	41	51	36	97	15	73	85	84	26	41	50	3	82
25.00	39	No	\$ 86,375	No	No	40	41	90	44	99	20	77	30	38	43	81	52	4	84
26.00	35	No	\$ 84,155	No	No	53	41	86	36	0	18	78	33	80	0	29	0	3	43
27.00	43	Yes	\$ 78,115	Yes	No	40	41	52	36	91	21	55	6	58	67	0	0	1	47
28.00	58	Yes	\$ 76,250	Yes	No	40	41	60	73	99	24	78	44	87	71	72	76	4	95
#	2	12	-	12	8	0	0	2	1	15	0	5	2	7	5	1	2	-	4

Sources: Raimi + Associates; ACS 2015-19; CES 3.0. Notes: Cells highlighted in red are in the top quartile (exceeding 75th percentile of all scores) in CES 3.0. The low-income county threshold is calculated at \$78,240 and the low-income statewide threshold is calculated at \$65,760 per Housing and Community Development 2019 Income Limits.

Figure 6. Potential Disadvantaged Communities (DACs)



Chapter 4. Demographic and Socioeconomic Assessment

This chapter provides an overview of characteristics of the population and an analysis of the presence of vulnerable populations in the City of Ventura.

Population Characteristics Contributing to Sensitivity or Vulnerability to Health Risks

Demographic and socioeconomic factors have a complicated relationship with health and environmental justice. For example, it is well-documented that the United States has a history of segregation that relied on social and economic policies and practices of race-based exclusion to explicitly limit the integration of African Americans and other minority groups into schools, parks, retail, and other facilities designated for “Whites only” before the Civil Rights Movement.

While most of these explicit policies no longer exist, they have had lasting impacts on public health and economic and racial equity throughout the country. This is evident in observed differences between White and non-White populations in socioeconomic and health outcomes. For example, there are economic and racial or ethnic disparities in the incidence and morbidity rates of chronic diseases, like diabetes and asthma, which are often associated with higher likelihood of living in communities with poor physical environment conditions. Race and ethnicity—along with income, educational attainment, age, linguistic isolation, and other factors—are therefore considered as factors in assessing vulnerability to health hazards.

The requirements of SB 1000 include consideration for the following indicators: Median household income (considered for the screening of disadvantaged communities) and the individual factors in the CES 3.0 population characteristics composite score (poverty, unemployment, educational attainment, linguistic isolation, and housing burden). In terms of health, certain cardiovascular and respiratory illnesses are exacerbated by pollution exposure. The requirements of SB 1000 include consideration for emergency department visits for heart attacks and asthma as a measure of populations with health sensitivities. Jurisdictions may also choose additional indicators to assess.

CES 3.0 Population Characteristics Composite Score and Indicators

As discussed in the Methodology section of Chapter 3. Disadvantaged Communities, the CES considers several socioeconomic and health factors associated with sensitivity or vulnerability to health hazards. None of the tracts in Ventura have a population characteristics composite score that exceeds the 75th percentile (Figure 13). Even tracts historically considered disadvantaged do not exceed the 75th percentile for the population characteristics score. Several tracts in the city, however, do exceed the 75th percentile for certain health and socioeconomic factors that comprise the composite population characteristics score. These are summarized below by the number of census tracts that have a score in the top quartile (see Figure 7):

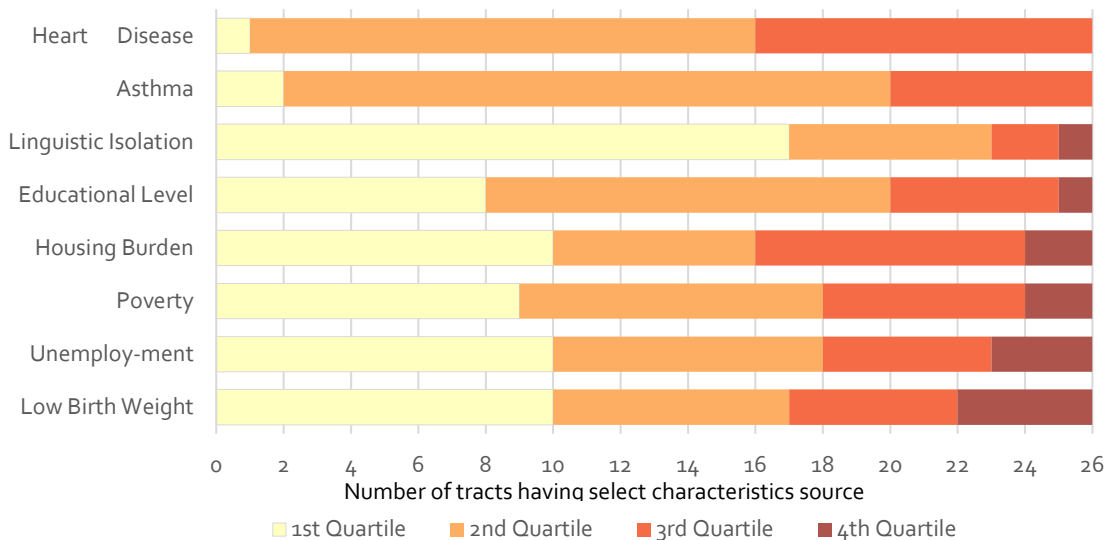
- **Low Birthweight.** Infants born weighing less than 2,500 grams (about 5.5 pounds) are classified as low birthweight (LBW), a condition associated with increased risk of later health problems. Five census tracts (10.01, 12.01, 15.03, 19.00, and 24.00) have scores that exceed the 75th percentile (Figure 14). While these are spread throughout the City of Ventura, those with the highest scores are

in the Downtown (99th percentile, tract 24.00) and Southeast/Montalvo (92nd percentile, tract 15.03) subareas and were identified as Potential DACs.

- **Unemployment.** This refers to the percent of the population in the age range 16–65 years that is unemployed and eligible for the labor force. Four census tracts (10.01, 12.04, 13.01, and 15.07) have scores that exceed the 75th percentile (Figure 15). The highest percentile score (89th) is found in the North Avenue subarea (tract 12.04).
- **Poverty.** This refers to the percent of the population living below two times the federal poverty level. Only two census tracts (22.00 and 23.00) in the Westside subarea have a score exceeding the 75th percentile (Figure 16).
- **Housing Burden.** This refers to low-income households severely overpaying (paying more than half of their income) for housing. Two census tracts (21.02 and 27.00) in the Downtown, Midtown, and College Area subareas have a score exceeding the 75th percentile (Figure 17).
- **Heart Disease.** This refers to the age-adjusted rate for emergency room visits for heart attacks. Although no tracts are in the highest quartile, about one third score in the third quartile (second-highest range of scores). Use of emergency services for cardiovascular disease is highest in the western and eastern areas of the City of Ventura (Figure 18).
- **Asthma.** This refers to the age-adjusted rate of emergency department (ED) visits for asthma. While only six tracts have score in the third quartile (second-highest range of scores), these tracts are concentrated on in the western area of the City of Ventura (Figure 19).

Many of the Potential DACs score in the top or third quartile for indicators in the CES 3.0. While this analysis is helpful for screening for vulnerabilities or sensitivities to health hazards, generally, the data considered in CES 3.0 is not the latest data available. For example, socioeconomic indicators (unemployment, poverty, housing burden, educational level) are based on data from an older product release of the American Communities Survey (ACS), which is updated annually, while CES 3.0 is updated less often. Further considerations for socioeconomic or demographic disadvantage may therefore be needed through the engagement process.

Figure 7. CES 3.0 Results: Population Characteristics (Chart)



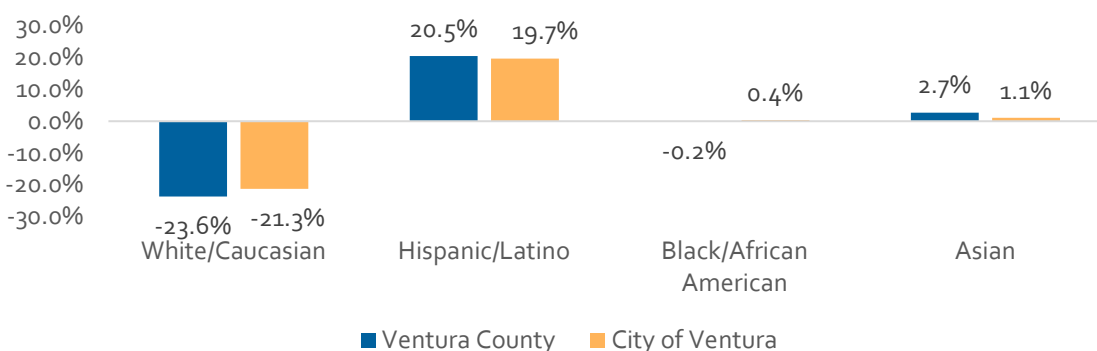
Additional Factors to Consider in Ventura

The population of the City of Ventura declined between 2015 and 2020, however growth is expected to rebound and continue into the coming decades. As the City develops policies to incorporate this growth, the following indicators may be necessary to consider in ensuring growth is equitable and inclusive of people with socioeconomic disadvantages or health vulnerabilities and sensitivities: race and ethnicity, age, low-wage industry workers, and disability status. Chapter 5 considers additional health factors for the City of Ventura as a whole.

Race and Ethnicity

Like the State as a whole, Ventura has become more racially and ethnically diverse over the past two decades (Figure 8). The share of the Hispanic/Latino residents has increased about 20 percent since 2000, now forming 36 percent of the city's population.⁵ Figure 20 shows the percent of the population that is Hispanic or Latino, of any race, by census tract. The Westside and Saticoy subareas and parts of the Thille, Southeast/Montalvo, Eastside/Juanamaria, and Eastside/Saticoy subareas all have higher concentrations of Hispanic or Latino residents (ranging from 40 to 80 percent). These areas overlap closely with areas with the highest CES 3.0 Composite scores as well as scores for individual pollution burden indicators in the CES 3.0, as discussed in the Identifying Disadvantaged Communities section of Chapter 3. Disadvantaged Communities Screening.

Figure 8. Percent Change by Race or Ethnicity



Source: ACS 2015-19

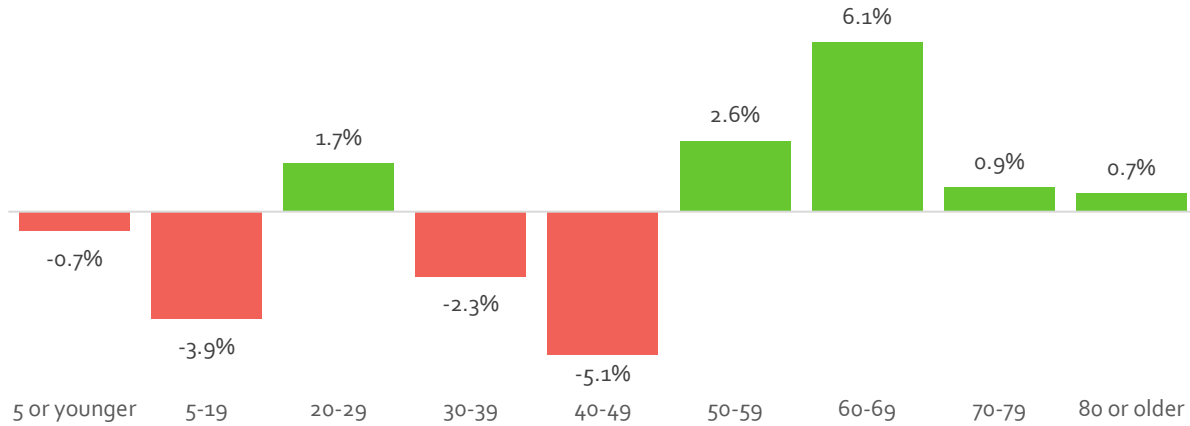
Note: Not all racial or ethnic categories are included due to the small sample size and reliability of the data.

Age

Ventura is an aging community, as the share of people 55 and older has climbed substantially since 2000 (21 to 33 percent) (Figure 9). Nevertheless, in many census tracts in the city, as of 2021, about one quarter of the population is 18 years or younger (Figure 10). Because Ventura has a lower overall concentration of youth (about 23 percent are younger than 19 years old, as seen in Figure 10), areas with the highest concentration of youth should be prioritized for education, jobs, and public facilities and services. Similarly, areas with highest concentrations of seniors will need special attention.

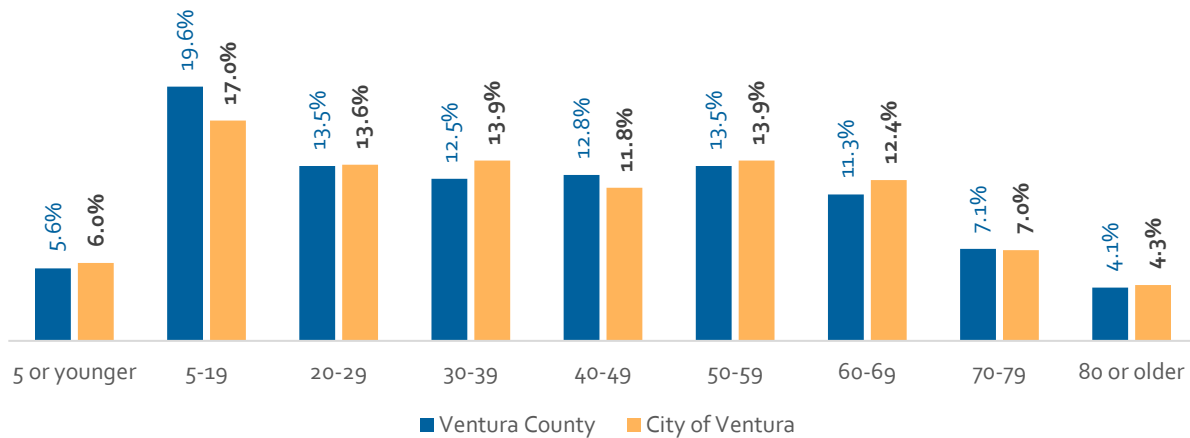
⁵ ACS 2015-19

Figure 9. Percentage Change by Age, City of Ventura



Source: ACS 2015-19

Figure 10. Age



Source: ACS 2015-19

Low-Wage Industry Workers

While the City of Ventura is the seat of Ventura County and hosts many of the regional government agency offices, it is situated within the thriving agricultural economy of the Central Coast region and today continues to be shaped by that regional agricultural context, despite its urbanization. Further, as the County seat, it is a regional draw for retail and entertainment in the region. These economic characteristics of the City of Ventura result in a diversified workforce, though not all workers may have high enough earnings and occupational safety to adjust to exposure to health hazards and short or long-term economic crises, such as that brought on by the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020.

According to the Economic Development existing conditions report, the following industries had the lowest average annual wages in the City of Ventura, as of 2020: Accommodation and Food Services (\$23,286); Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (\$32,220); and Retail Trade (\$37,611). In addition to these three industries, several others—including Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (\$46,816)—also had an average annual wage below the low-income threshold considered for SB 1000 (below \$78,240). Low-wage workers tend to

have less economic and social stability, which is a contributor to vulnerability or sensitive to health hazards and can compound any physical or emotional conditions.

Retail workers live and work throughout Ventura County. In the City of Ventura, the Westside, Downtown, Pierpont, Eastside/Saticoy, Saticoy, and smaller parts of the Midtown, College Area, and Southwest/Montalvo subareas all have high concentrations of residents employed in retail trade (ranging from about 16 to 19 percent of the total population).

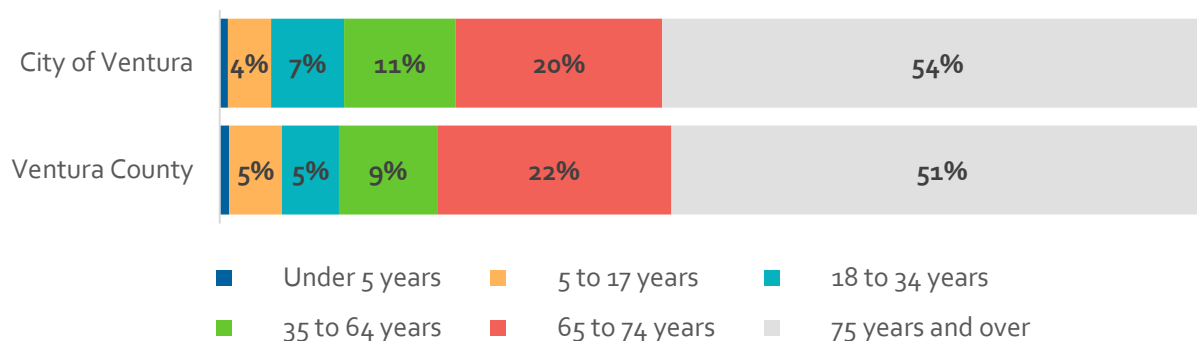
Similarly, farmworkers live and work throughout Ventura County. In the City of Ventura, residents employed in the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining industry are most concentrated in the Westside and Saticoy subareas, which have about 14 and 11 percent of residents employed in those industries, respectively. Farmworkers tend to be lower wage workers, experience more direct occupational exposure to extreme weather and potential pollutant exposures from pesticides, and, because of these socioeconomic factors, experience disproportionate impacts that make them a key population for engagement in identification of health and environmental justice issues and priorities.

People with Disabilities

The City of Ventura has a slightly higher percentage rate (12.3) of people with disabilities than the county (10.9) and the state (10.6).⁶ When looking more closely at the data on disability characteristics, it is clear that seniors aged 65 and older, and particularly those aged 75 years and older, make up the greatest segment of the population with a disability (Figure 11). The types of disabilities of the population in the city are very close to the rates for the population in the County of Ventura overall (Figure 12).

Because most of the older population of Ventura is non-Hispanic White, that means that this racial or ethnic group has the highest rate of disability (14 percent). As the Hispanic or Latino population, which has become a greater share of the overall population, ages, they will likely become a greater share of those with disabilities (currently 9 percent of Hispanic or Latino residents in Ventura have a disability). While data is available for other racial or ethnic groups, the overall share of the population that is Black or Asian, for example, is too small for data on disabilities to be reliable. Based on the estimates in the American Community Survey, this may indicate a need to identify the needs of this segment of the population and ensure accessibility to health-promoting benefits of the General Plan Update and future land use changes, regardless of race or ethnicity or income of the population.

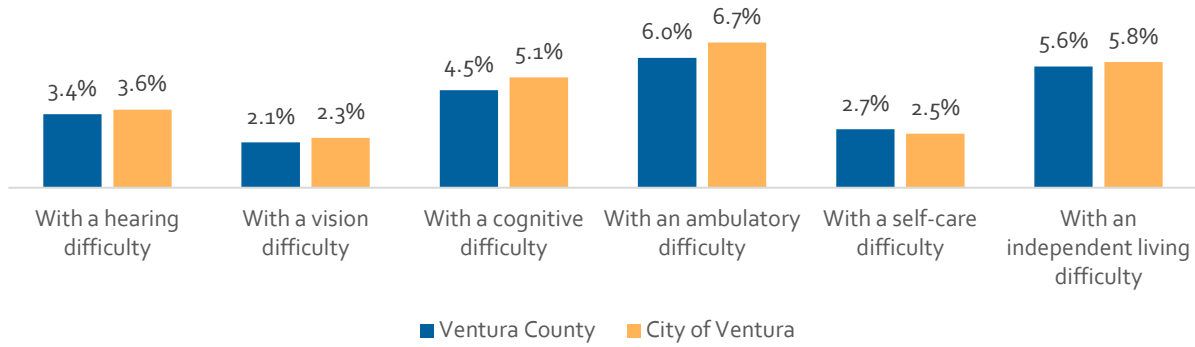
Figure 11. Disability by Age



Source: ACS 2015-19, Table S1810 – Disability Characteristics

⁶ ACS 2015-19, Table S1810 – Disability Characteristics

Figure 12. Disability by Type



Source: ACS 2015-19, Table S1810 – Disability Characteristics

Figure 13. CES 3.0 Results: Population Characteristics Composite (Map)

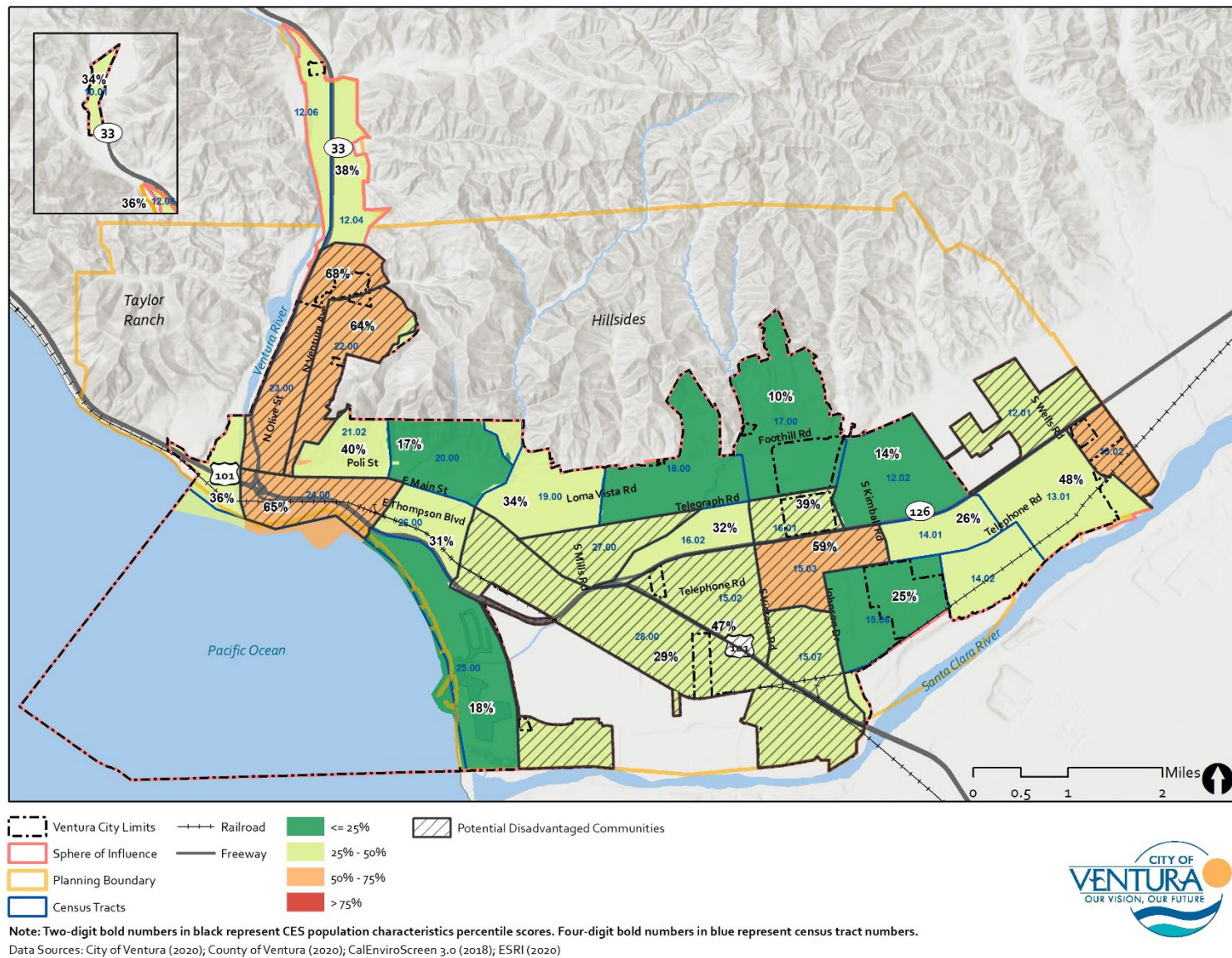


Figure 14. CES 3.0 Results: Low Birthweight

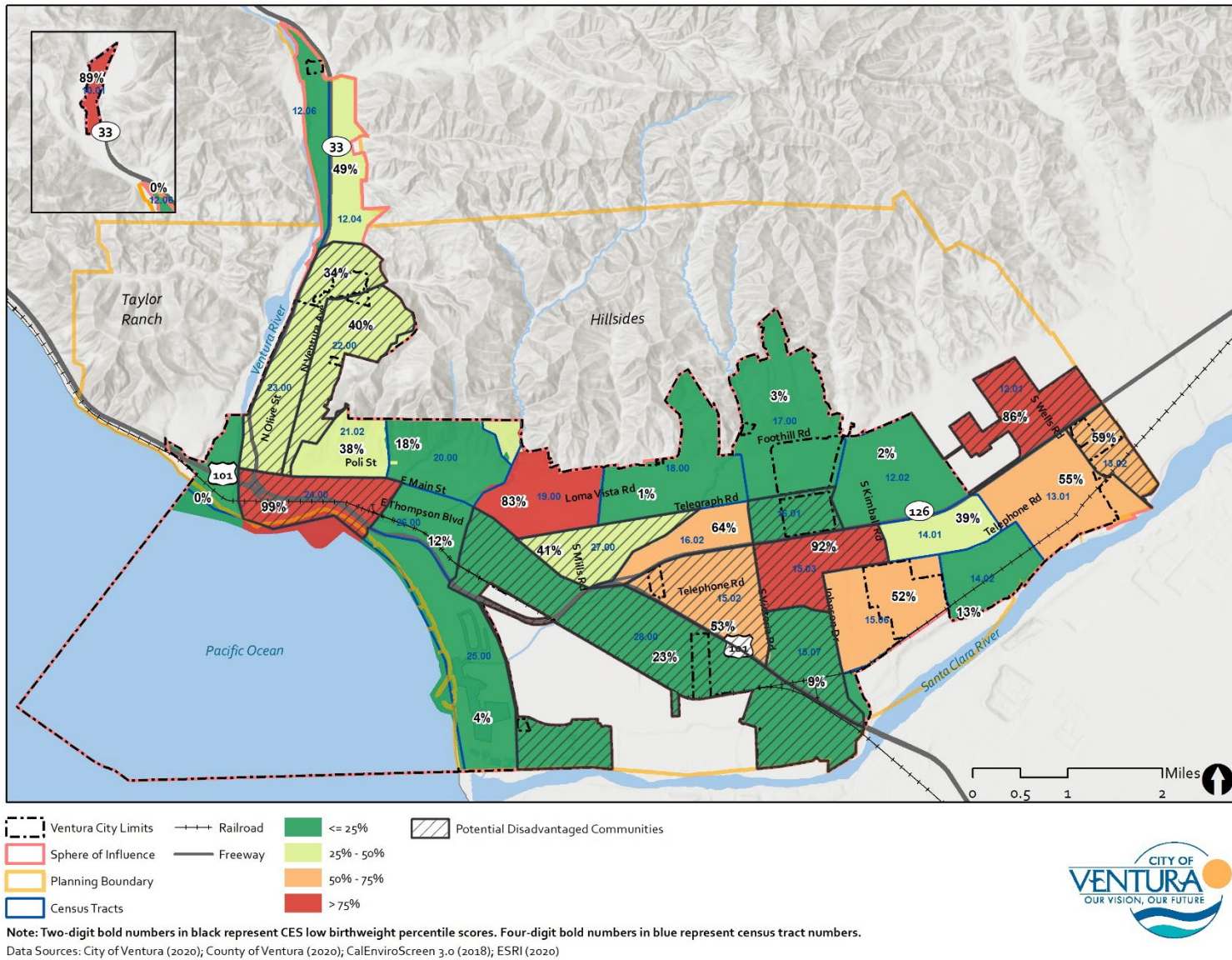


Figure 15. CES 3.0 Results: Unemployment

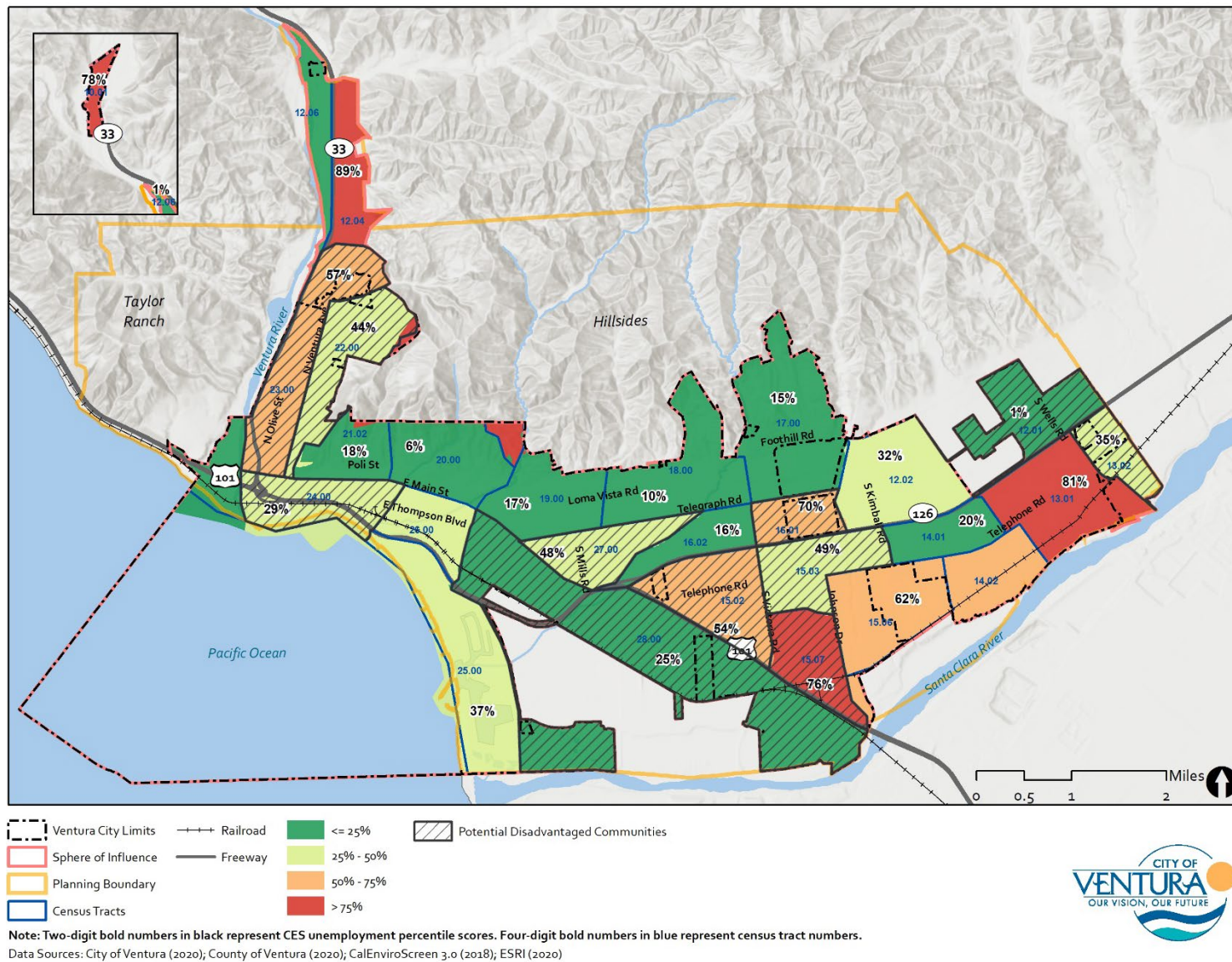


Figure 16. CES 3.0 Results: Poverty

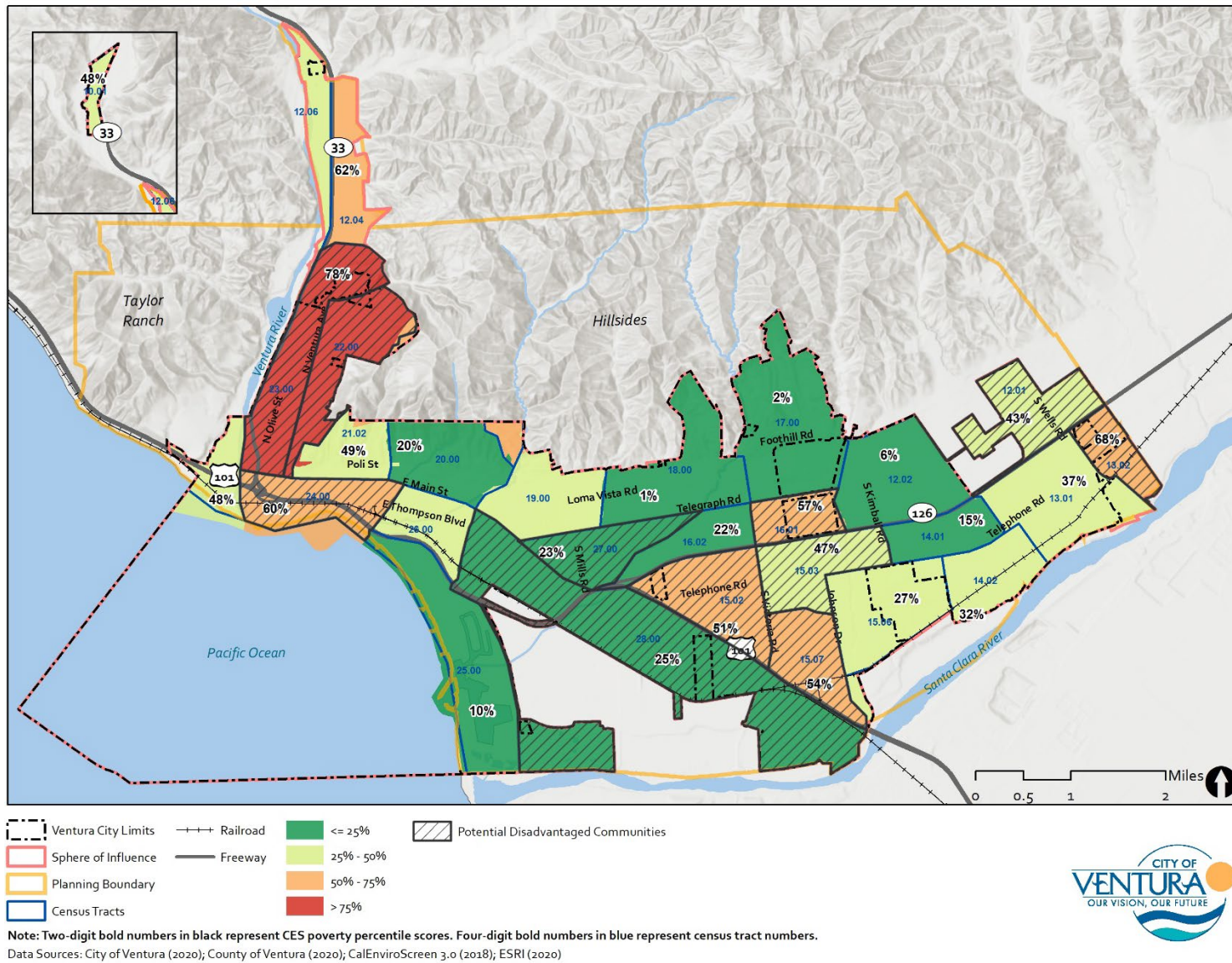


Figure 17. CES 3.0 Results: Housing Burden

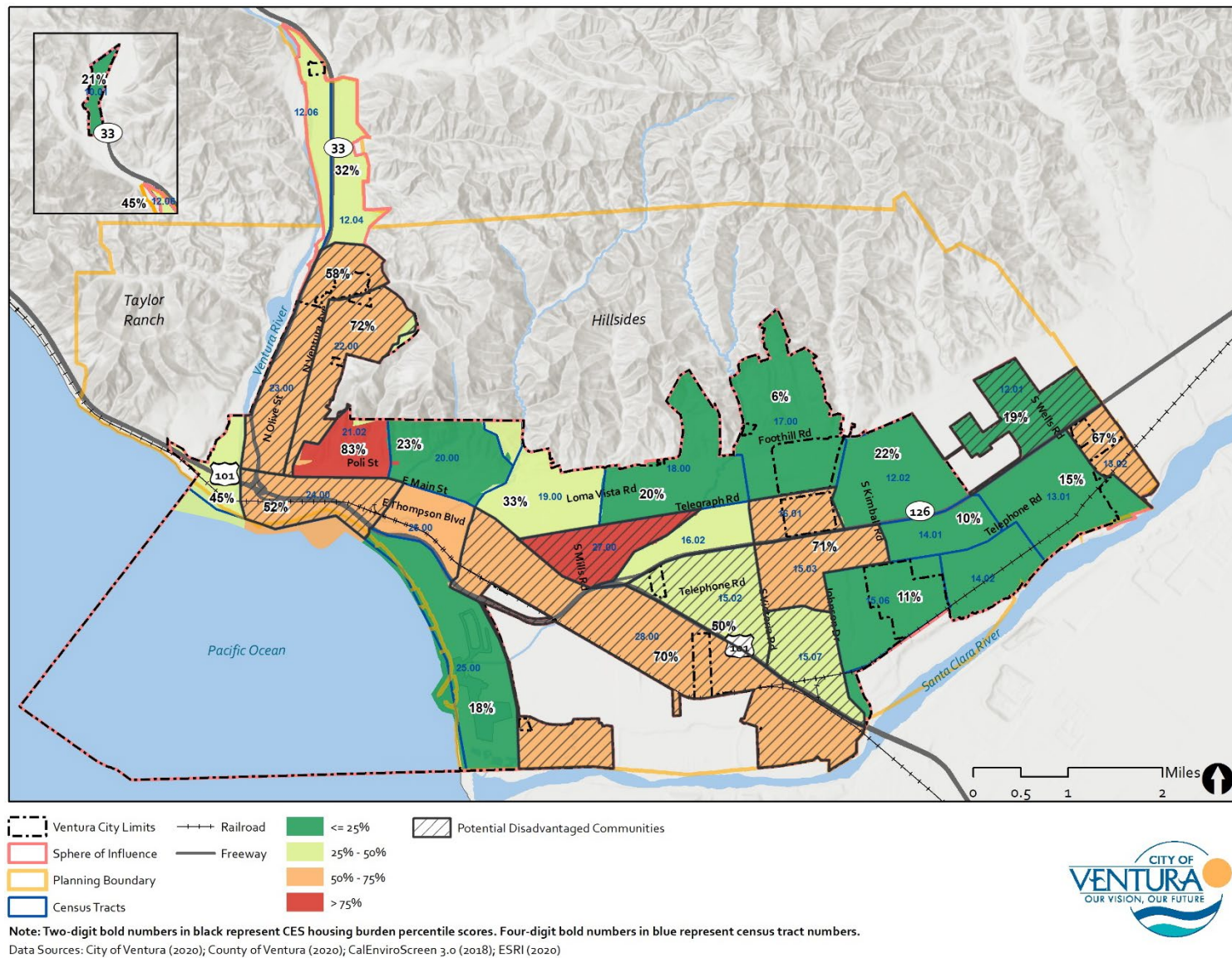


Figure 18. CES 3.0 Results: Cardiovascular Disease (Heart Attack)

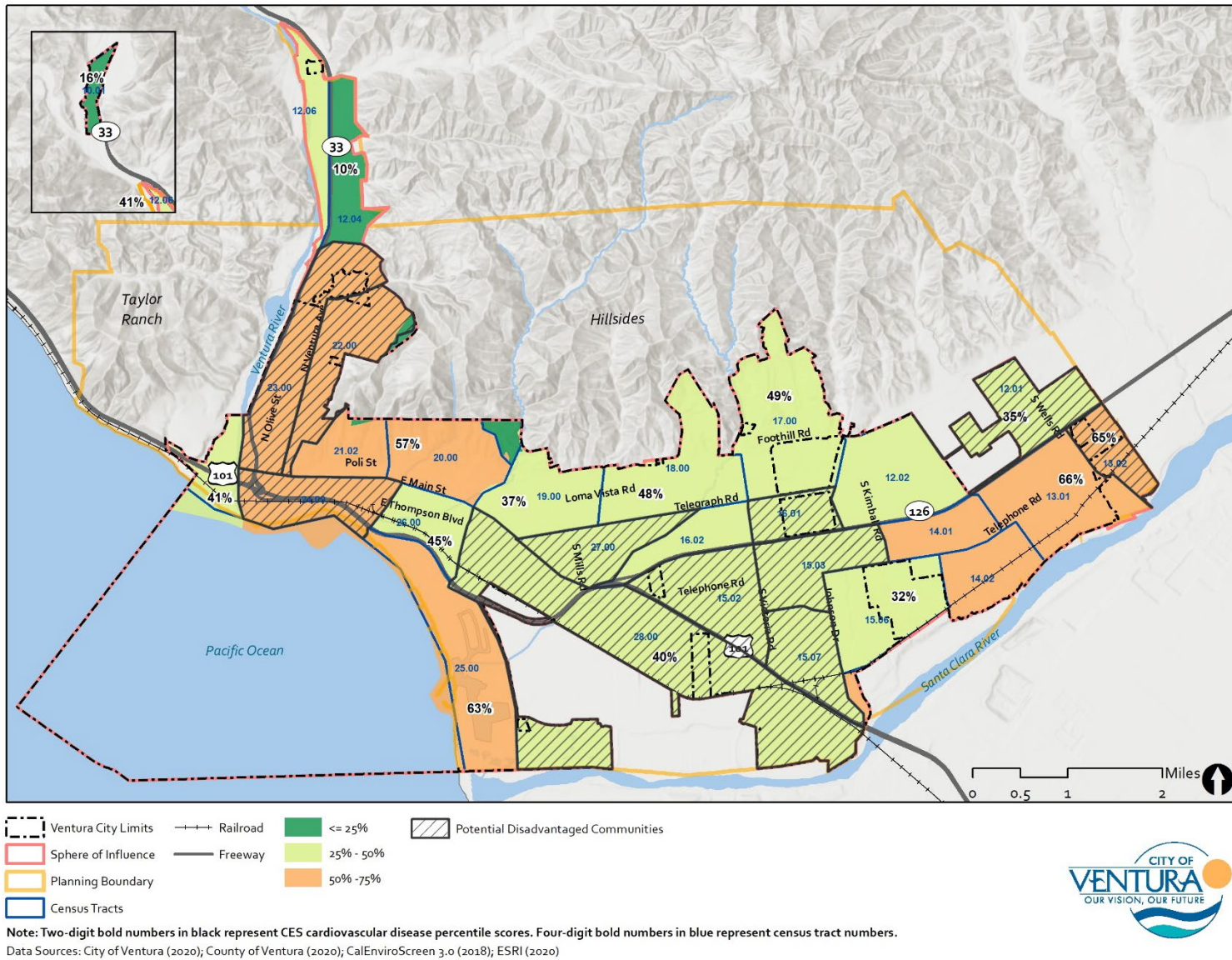


Figure 19. CES 3.0 Results: Asthma

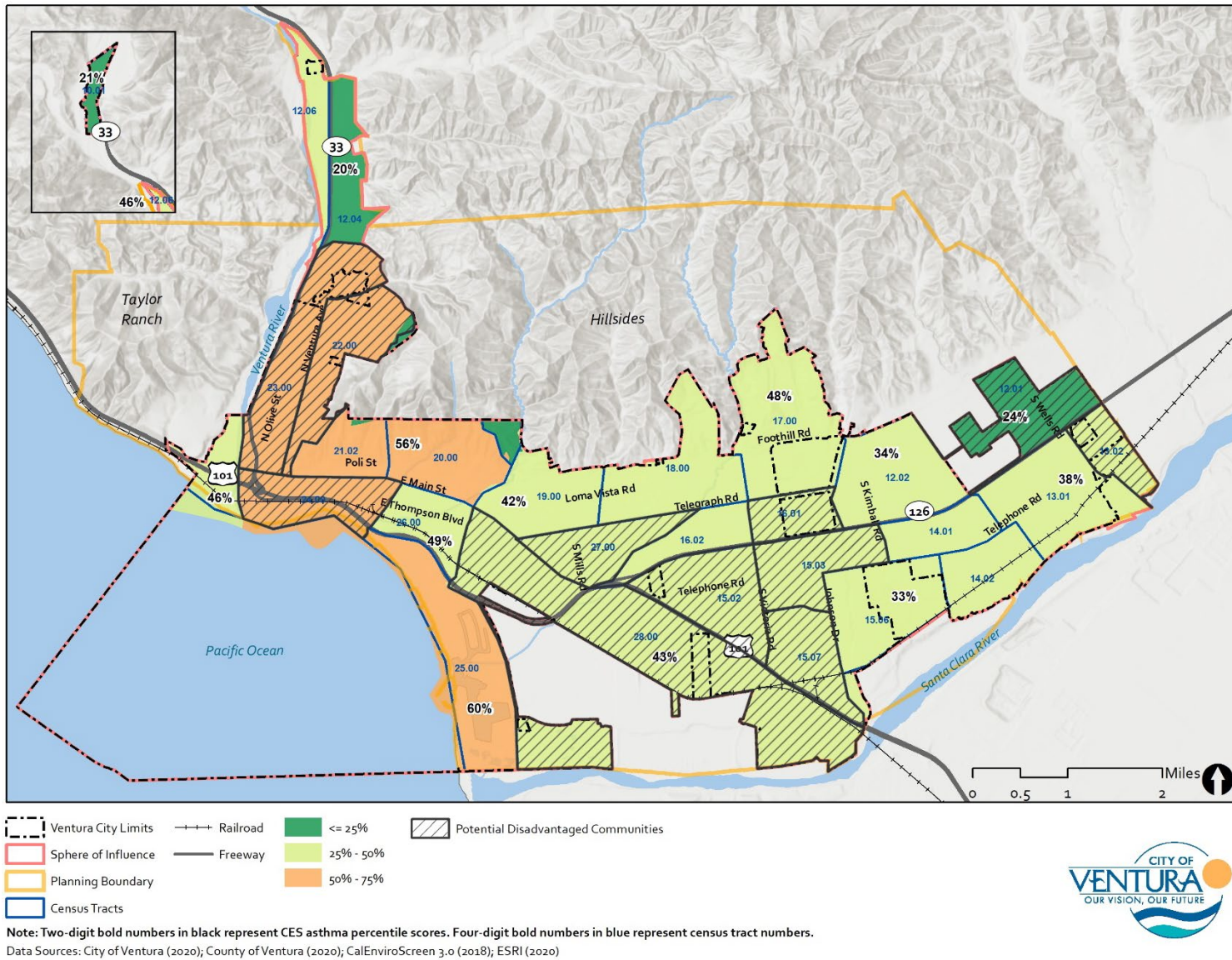
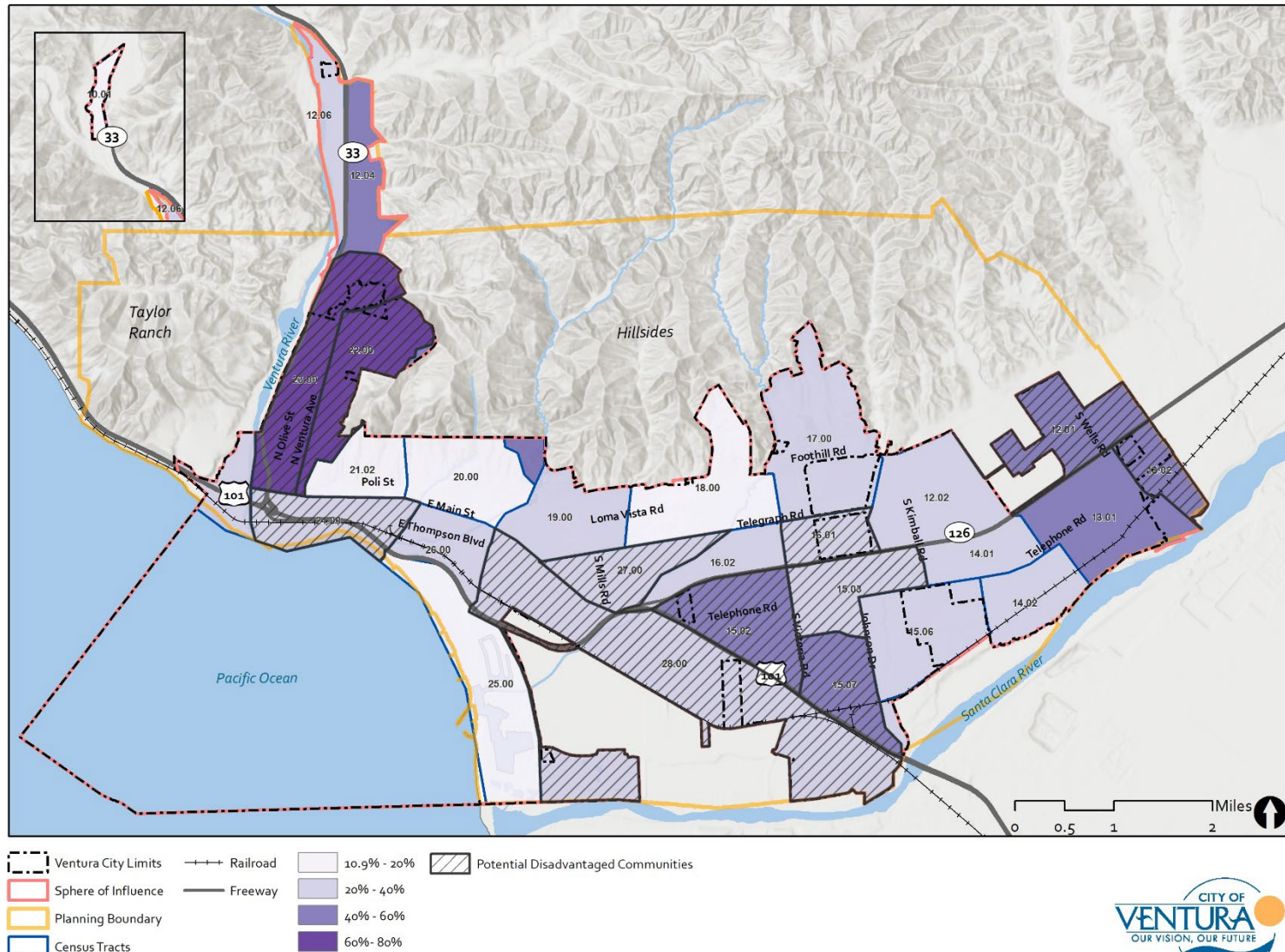


Figure 20. Percent Hispanic or Latino



Chapter 5. Health Profile

This chapter describes the general health of Ventura residents as a prelude to discussing environmental justice concerns and interventions designed to improve health.

Children and Youth

Health Outcomes for Youth

Information on the health of youth and children in Ventura is limited as most health-related surveys are designed for the adult population. Data on the health of children and youth are derived primarily from surveys administered by the state, school district, and public health department. These health surveys focus on three broad outcomes—physical health, obesity/physical fitness, and mental health.

Key findings of county and state surveys about the health of children and youth are summarized below and in Table 3. Health Outcomes for Children and Youth:

- **Physical Health.** Ventura children and youth experience the same health outcomes as those in other cities. Rates of asthma are similar to county and statewide averages, but the percentage of youth in fair or poor health is nearly double the state average.
- **Obesity.** Ventura has a lower overweight and obesity rate among children and youth compared to the county and State of California. Still, approximately 35 percent of all youth are overweight or obese, leaving significant room for improvement.
- **Physical Fitness.** Physical fitness is a key component of the health of youth and children. According to school surveys, 25 to 30 percent of 5th and 7th graders, respectively, passed all physical fitness test at schools—which is the same rate as the county and state.
- **Mental Health.** School surveys confirm that 22 to 32 percent of youth in grades 7 to 11 experience chronic sadness and hopelessness extending more than 2 weeks straight. Although similar to county/state averages, this leaves room for improvement.

Table 3. Health Outcomes for Children and Youth

Percentage of Youth	Crude Prevalence Rates		
	Ventura	County	State
Ever diagnosed with asthma (ages < 18) ¹	14.8	13.6	14.6
Fair or poor physical health (ages < 18) ¹	9.3	10.1	5.2
Overweight or obese (5th and 7th grade) ²	35	40	40
Students physically fit (5th and 7th grade) ²	25 30	25 30	25 31
Sadness & hopelessness (7, 9, 11th grade) ³	22–32	N/A	24–32
Sources:			
¹ California Health Interview Survey, 2014			
² School District Physical Fitness Tests, CDE, 2015/2016			
³ School Healthy Kids Survey, Ventura Unified School District 2015/2016			

With respect to physical health, the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) did not report significant differences in health conditions between the zip code areas of Ventura. Information at the census tract or subarea level was not available from CHIS or the school district.

Health Behaviors for Youth

Health outcomes in most communities result from lifestyles and choices. According to the federal Centers for Disease Control, health behaviors that have the greatest influence on healthy or unhealthy outcomes are the level of physical exercise, the frequency of alcohol/tobacco/other drug use, diet and nutrition, substance abuse, and violence. Based on surveys taken at Ventura schools, key health behaviors of youth in the community are summarized below and in Table 4:

- **Physical Activity.** While schools have increased requirements for physical activity in recent years, many youths in Ventura need more exercise. Approximately 77 percent of Ventura youth do not exercise regularly—this rate is similar to that for the county and state.
- **Diet and Nutrition.** Limited information is available on nutritional habits of children and youth beyond whether students ate breakfast. Food insecurity, defined as lack of assured access to enough food through socially acceptable means, information is also not available. This is a current gap in data for the City of Ventura.
- **Substance Use.** Ventura Unified District students have lower levels of alcohol and drug use than in the county or state. However, current smoking and E-cigarette (vaping) use is similar or higher. Mirroring data from adult surveys, about 15 percent of students in 11th grade report binge drinking in the last month.
- **Community Violence.** Approximately 26 to 35 percent of junior and senior high students have been harassed or bullied, below rates reported in the county and state. In addition, between 8 and 15 percent of 7th to 11th graders have been in a physical fight. Gang involvement is similar to county and statewide averages.

Table 4. Health Behaviors and Outcomes for Children and Youth

Percentage of Children/Youth	Crude Prevalence Rates		
	Ventura	County	State
Lack of regular exercise (ages 5–17) ¹	77	78	79
Current alcohol/drug use (7, 9, 11th grade) ²	7 18 34	11 24 34	10 23 33
Current smoking E-cigarettes (11th grade) ²	6 17	7 14	7 14
School Harass/Bullying (7, 9, 11th grade) ²	35 34 26	39 37 30	39 37 30
Gang Involvement (7th–11th grade) ²	4.0	6.5	5.4
<i>Sources:</i>			
¹ California Health Interview Survey, 2014			
² California Healthy Kids Survey, Selected Reports			

Adult Population

Health Outcomes for Adults

The average life expectancy of Ventura residents ranges from 79 to 81 years based on zip codes, which is below the average for the County (82 years) and California (81 years). The highest life expectancy in Ventura County, in the Thousand Oaks/Westlake Area, averages 84 to 89 years. Many factors contribute to one's life

expectancy, including health conditions, health behaviors, genetics, injuries and accidents, and conditions of the physical environment in which people live, play, and work.

The 500 Cities Project is the only nationwide survey that tracks the health outcomes of residents in highly populated cities in the nation—Ventura is one of those five hundred cities considered in the project.^{7, 8}

Overall, health outcomes are much better than for the nation. Specific findings are described below and in Table 5:

- **Physical and Mental Health.** Ventura adults show a similar prevalence of not good physical and/or mental health (around 11%) as residents throughout the nation.
- **Chronic Diseases.** Three of the most prevalent chronic diseases (high blood pressure, diabetes, coronary heart disease) are related to diet and nutrition. Ventura’s rates are below that of the nation.
- **Smoking and Air Quality.** Three health indicators (asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and cancer) are related to smoking and air quality. Except for cancer, all fall below national prevalence.
- **Dental Care.** The prevalence of tooth loss among seniors is due to a lack of regular dental care, diet, and nutrition. Ventura’s rates are approximately 40 percent below national estimates.

Table 5. Health Outcomes for Adults

Percentage of Adults	Prevalence Rates		
	Ventura	State	Nation
High blood pressure	26.2	N/A	29.4
Arthritis	19.6	N/A	22.5
Physical health not good for ≥ 14 days	11.0	N/A	11.5
Mental health not good for ≥ 14 days	11.5	N/A	11.6
All teeth lost among seniors	9.0	N/A	15.4
Diagnosed diabetes	8.0	N/A	9.3
Current asthma	8.4	N/A	8.7
Cancer (excluding skin cancer)	6.2	N/A	6.0
Coronary heart disease	4.7	N/A	5.6
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	4.8	N/A	5.7

Source: 500 Cities Project, Local Data for Better Health, CDC, 2015
Note: Prevalence rates for health outcomes are age-adjusted to account for differences in population age between cities and the nation.

Among the various subareas in Ventura, Saticoy (particularly census tract 13.02) appears to have the highest prevalence of poorer health conditions. Prevalence rates are generally double the city’s average for cancer, heart disease, lung disease, and diabetes.

⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. 500 Cities Project Data. Retrieved at <https://www.cdc.gov/500cities>

⁸ The 500 Cities Project was replaced by the PLACES Project in December 2020. It was a collaboration between CDC, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the CDC Foundation. It provided city- and census tract-level small area estimates for chronic disease risk factors, health outcomes, and clinical preventive services use for the largest 500 cities in the United States. These small area estimates allowed cities and local health departments to better understand the burden and geographic distribution of health-related variables in their jurisdictions and assisted them in planning public health interventions.

Health Behaviors for Adults

According to the CDC, unhealthy behaviors such as physical inactivity, excessive drinking, smoking, obesity, poor diet, and insufficient sleep are responsible for many chronic diseases, injuries, and poor health outcomes for adults in communities. Findings from the 500 Cities Project are summarized below and in Table 6:

- **Weight Management.** Being overweight or obese increases the risk for heart disease, stroke, hypertension, diabetes, osteoarthritis, and cancer. Ventura’s obesity rate is significantly below state and national estimates, but the rate varies considerably between tracts (Figure 21).
- **Alcohol Consumption.** Excessive alcohol use can lead to premature death and many health and social problems, including vehicle crashes, violence, suicide, hypertension, heart attacks, and other conditions. Ventura’s binge drinking rates exceed state and national averages (Figure 22)
- **Physical Activity.** Regular physical activity lowers the risk for heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, and depression. While Ventura reports a significantly lower percentage of adults who lack physical activity outside of work than state and national averages, the rate varies considerably between tracts (Figure 23).
- **Smoking.** Current smoking increases the risk for heart disease, stroke, multiple types of cancer, and chronic lung disease. The prevalence of smoking among Ventura residents is similar to that of California (12.6 according to the California Health Interview Survey) but significantly less than the national average and varies considerably between tracts (Figure 24).
- **Sleep.** Insufficient sleep, defined as less than seven hours per night, is associated with diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, obesity, and depression. Although nearly 30 percent of the city’s adult population obtain insufficient sleep, this is significantly better compared to national averages.

Table 6. Unhealthy Behaviors and Related Outcomes for Adults

Percentage of Adults	Prevalence Rates		
	Ventura	State	Nation
Obesity	22.9	N/A	28.7
Binge drinking in past month	18.0	N/A	17.2
Lack of leisure exercise in past month	18.3	N/A	25.5
Current smoking in past month	12.5	N/A	17.1
Insufficient sleep (<7 hours/night)	29.0	N/A	35.1
Regularly eats fruits and vegetables	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: 500 Cities Project, CDC, 2015; America’s Health Rankings, 2015.
Note: Prevalence rates for health outcomes are age-adjusted to account for differences in age characteristics between cities, California, and the nation.

To better understand the magnitude of health behaviors, the prevalence rates for five health behaviors in Ventura were ranked against the prevalence rate for all cities reporting under the 500 Cities Project. Figure 21 through Figure 24 detail Ventura’s ranking compared to the nation. The Westside and Saticoy areas had higher rates of obesity and the lack of leisure outside of work. Smoking prevalence was significantly higher in the Westside, portions of Downtown, and Midtown. The prevalence of binge drinking was highest in Downtown and portions of Midtown and Montalvo in Ventura.

Figure 21. Prevalence of Obesity (Adults)

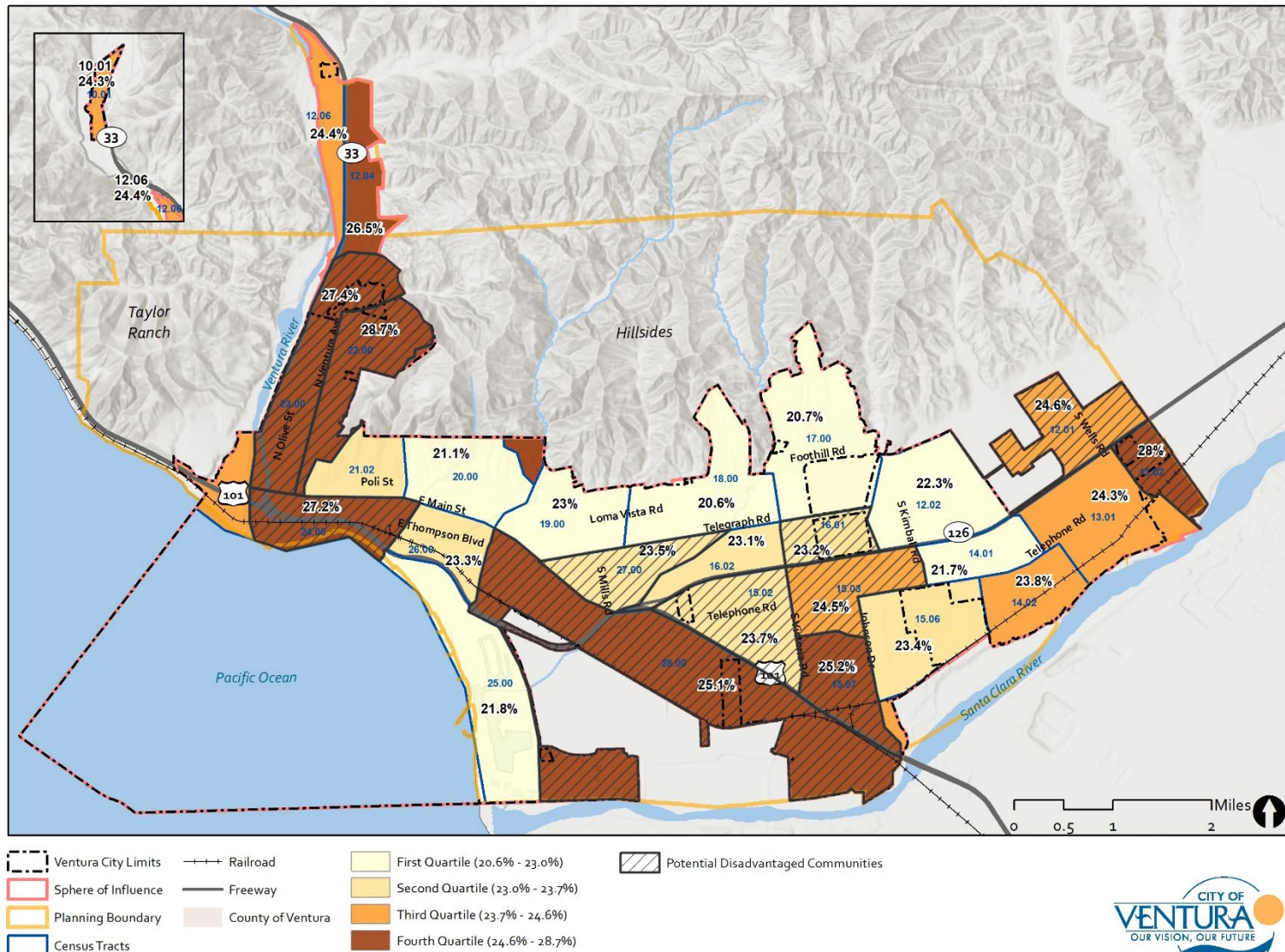


Figure 22. Binge Drinking (Adults), The 500 Cities Project

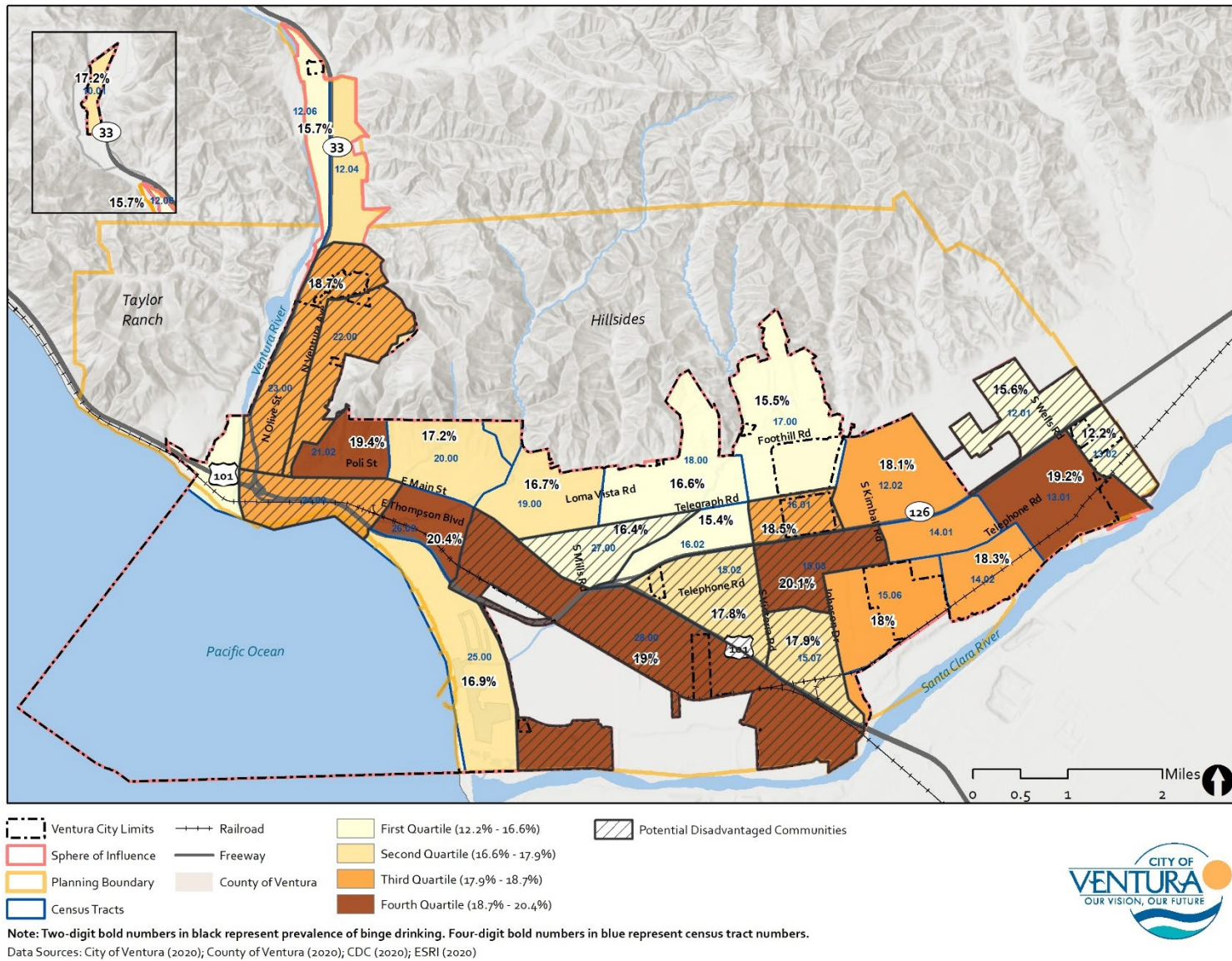
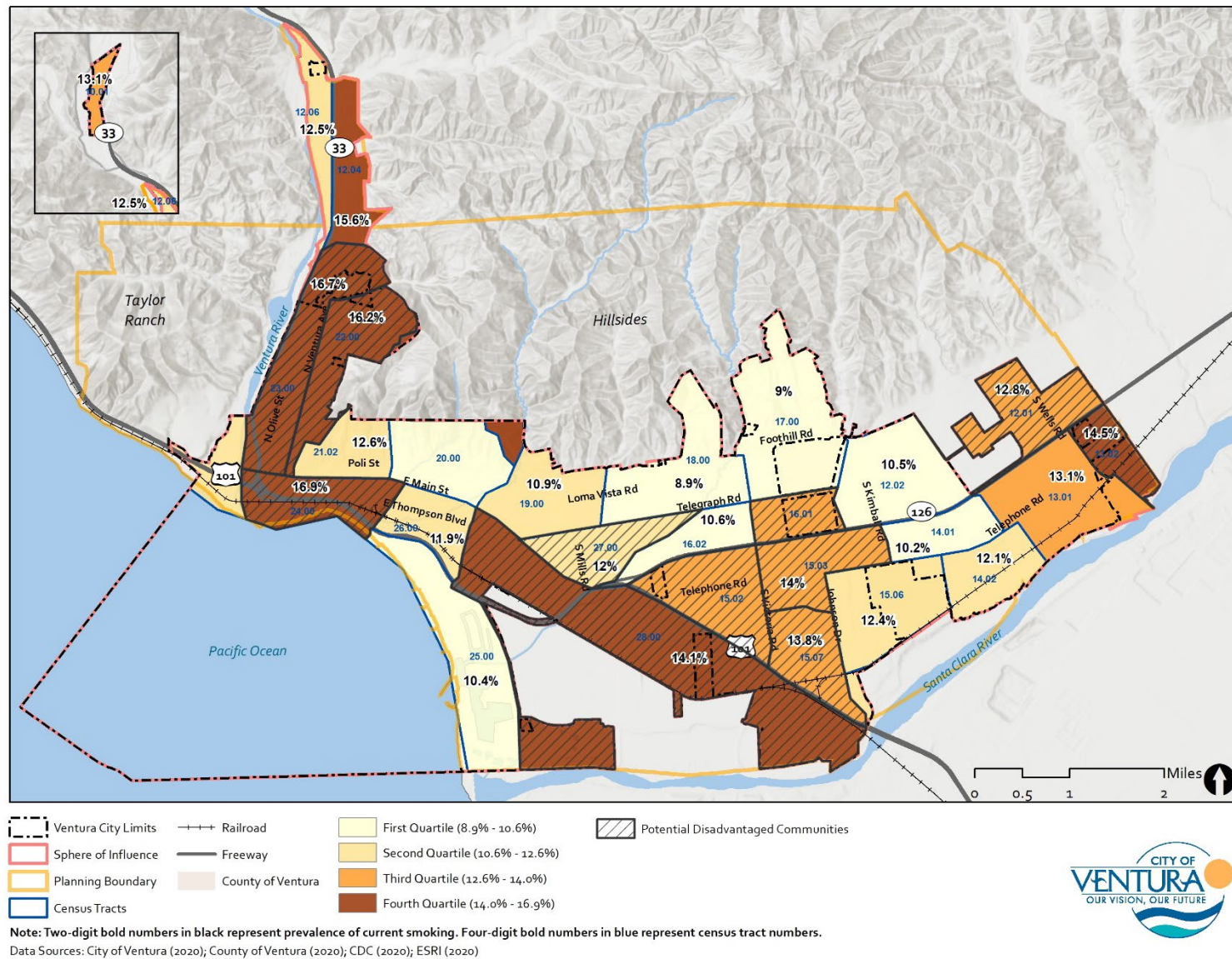


Figure 24. Current Smoking (Adults), The 500 Cities Project



Utilization of Health Services

Access to comprehensive and high-quality health care services is important for promoting and maintaining health, preventing and managing disease, and reducing unnecessary disability and premature death. Ensuring adequate access depends on residents having health insurance and access to conveniently located services as well as residents choosing to utilize those services when needed.

Health Care Facilities

Ventura has a wide range of health facilities, including hospitals, urgent care facilities, community and specialty clinics, and federally qualified health centers (FQHCs). Ventura also has long-term care facilities for people with disabilities and seniors. Available facilities are shown in Figure 25 and include at least:

- 1 private hospital (Community Memorial Hospital)
- 1 public hospital (Ventura County Medical)
- 1 psychiatric hospital (Vista del Mar)
- 1 FQHC in west Ventura - Westside (West Ventura Medical Clinic)
- 1 FQHC in east Ventura - Saticoy (Clínicas del Camino Real)
- 1 pediatric FQHC (Pediatric Diagnostic Center)
- 6 home health agencies
- 4 hospice facilities
- 9 intermediate care facilities for disabled
- 3 skilled nursing facilities
- 5 urgent care facilities
- 5 county-administered behavioral health clinics
- Kaiser professional medical office
- Numerous private practices

Health Care Access

The availability of health care professionals within a reasonable distance of work or home can encourage people to seek appropriate care when needed. This is especially important for seniors or disabled people who may find it difficult to access services. With the tremendous availability of health care facilities, the vast majority of Ventura is well-served by health care professionals specializing in primary care, dentistry, nursing, and mental health services for residents. The one exception is Eastside/Saticoy, as described later in this section.

A common metric for assessing the availability of health care professionals is determining whether there is a shortage of health care professionals. As defined by the federal government, Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) are designations that indicate health care provider shortages in primary care, dental health, or mental health. These shortages are defined in three ways:

1. **Geographic Area.** A shortage of providers for the entire population within a defined geographic area.
2. **Population Groups.** A shortage of providers for a specific group(s) within a defined area (e.g., low income, migrant farmworkers, etc.).
3. **Facility-based.** Specified facilities serving under-represented groups.

According to the federal government, Eastside/Saticoy and Saticoy are a documented health care professional shortage area for primary care, mental health, and dental professionals. Eastern Ventura is about five miles from many of the city's health care facilities in central Ventura. The City and regional providers maintain public transit lines and other door-to-door transit services that residents of the Eastside, Eastside/Saticoy, and Eastside/Juanamaria subareas can use to access health care services in Ventura. Further, the County of Ventura maintains an online list of clinics that residents can use to find services nearby at <http://www.vchca.org/find-a-clinic>. While these services are available, they may not be sufficient to facilitate access to health care. The City may need to consider additional barriers related to cost, cultural awareness of services provided, education and awareness of services, and other factors that relate to access.

Health Insurance

People with health insurance tend to have better health outcomes and have a place for regular medical care, are more likely to visit their doctor for preventive care, are more likely to use health care services, and are less likely to end up in an emergency room due to delays in receiving care. With the continuing expansion of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to a wider population base, an increasing share of Ventura residents have health insurance.

According to the 2015–2019 American Community Survey (ACS), 93.4 percent of Ventura residents are insured—similar to both county and state averages (91.2 and 92.5, respectively). This high rate of health insurance coverage is likely due to lower unemployment rates coupled with changes in the ACA, which extended coverage to residents who previously did not qualify for subsidized coverage in California.

Even under ACA, certain groups are less likely to be covered. In the 2015–2019 ACS, the lack of health insurance was greatest households with incomes in the range of \$50,000 to \$74,999 (11 percent uninsured), individuals between the age of 26 and 34 (13 percent uninsured), unemployed residents (16 percent uninsured), individuals with less than a high school graduation educational attainment (18 percent), and non-citizens (29 percent uninsured). These findings are expected since most adult residents receive health insurance through their place of employment and income-qualified programs are generally available for citizen residents. For residents who are non-citizens, young people, or least able to afford medical care, Ventura is also home to several low-cost clinics, though other accessibility barriers, such as trust in healthcare providers, may remain.

While most residents in Ventura have health insurance, the enrollment rate varies by community planning area. The lowest enrollment rates are found in the Westside subarea (census tract 23.00 has a 21 percent uninsured rate) and the highest enrollment rates are found in the College subarea (census tract 16.02 has a 2 percent uninsured rate).

Use of Health Services

Preventive health care is essential to staying healthy and avoiding costly medical expenditures. The right preventive care at every stage of life helps maintain health, avoid, or delay the onset of disease, keep current diseases from becoming worse or debilitating, and reduce the cost of medical care. Despite the benefits of preventive health care, however, many people go without preventive care and then need treatment at a later stage for a more serious condition.

Ventura residents use preventive health care services at about the same rate as residents nationally. No information is available for the County. About 21 percent of Ventura adults and 8 percent of youth and children delayed or did not get prescriptions or medical care in 2018, the year for which the data in the 500 Cities Project is measured. About two-thirds of adults had an annual checkup by a doctor or dentist for an annual checkup. However, only one-quarter of senior adults were up to date on core preventive services—below national averages.

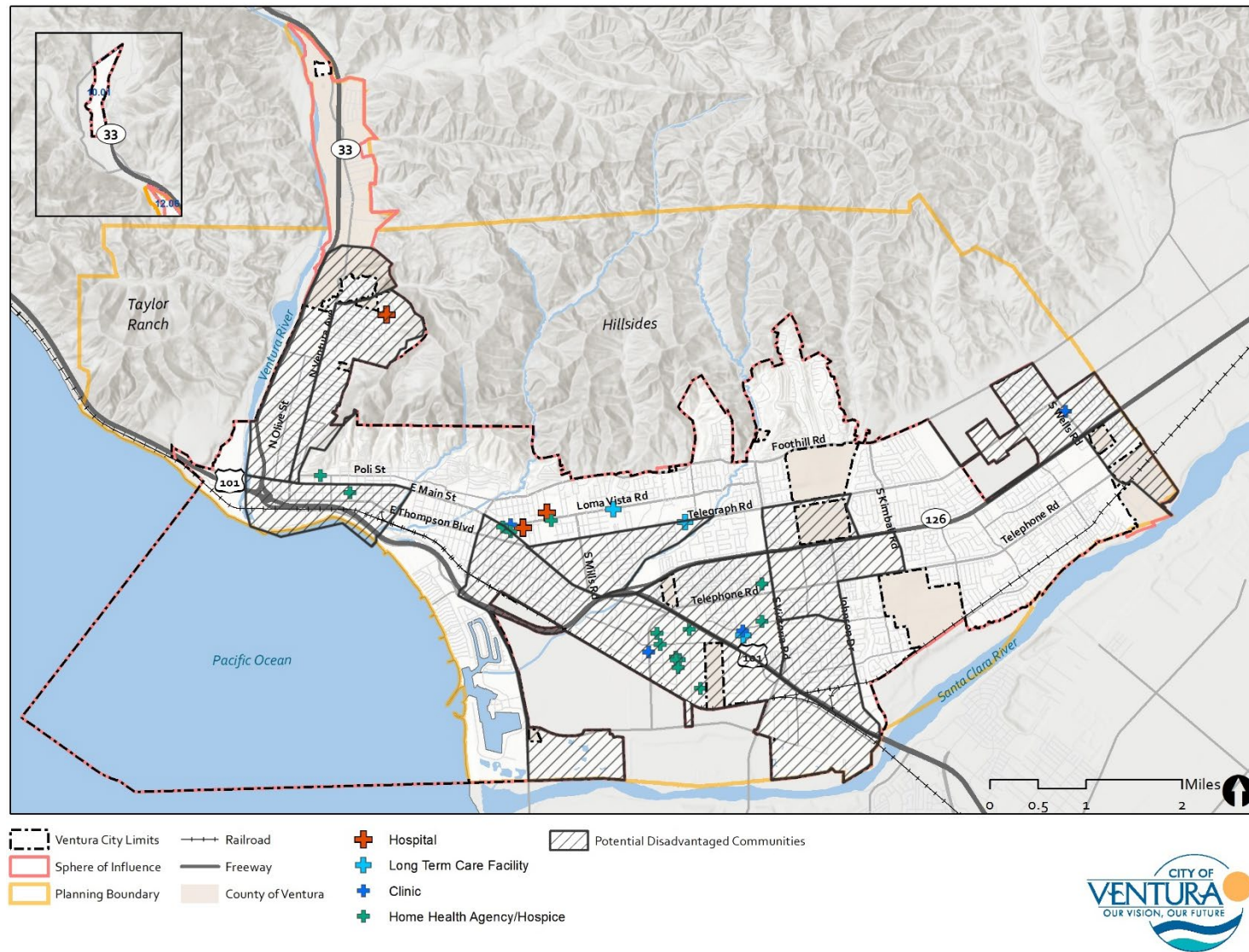
Table 7. Access to Preventive Health Care, summarizes indicators of health care utilization for Ventura residents versus the state and nation.

Table 7. Access to Preventive Health Care

Percentage of Adults	Prevalence Rate		
	Ventura	State	Nation
Lack of health insurance (ages 18–65)	11.3	N/A	15.4
Doctor visit for adults – annual checkup	65.0	N/A	68.6
Dental visit for adults – annual checkup	68.9	N/A	64.1
Sr men up to date on preventive services	28.6	N/A	32.9
Sr women up to date on preventive services	28.4	N/A	30.7

Source: 500 Cities Project, Local Data for Better Health, CDC, 2015
Note: Prevalence rates for health outcomes are age-adjusted to account for differences in age characteristics between cities, California, and the nation.

Figure 25. Health Care Facilities



Data Sources: Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD) (2021); City of Ventura (2020); County of Ventura (2020); ESRI (2020)

Chapter 6.

Policy Area Analysis

This chapter analyzes the policy issues that must be addressed to comply with SB 1000.

Overview of Topics

Senate Bill (SB) 1000 requires that local governments address environmental justice through an environmental justice element or through an integrated series of goals, policies, and programs within a general plan. This chapter is designed to explore these environmental justice policy areas in greater depth and examine their implications for the Ventura General Plan Update. The mandated topics are:

1. **Reduction of pollution exposure and improvement of air quality.** This includes policies to protect sensitive populations by preventing exposure to hazardous materials, other toxic pollutants, and air, water, and soil pollutants.
2. **Promotion of public facilities.** This includes ensuring equitable access to public infrastructure, programs, and improvements, such as parks, community facilities, libraries, internet connectivity, and health care facilities.
3. **Promotion of food access.** This includes policies to promote healthy food access through grocery supermarkets, local agriculture, mobile vending, community gardens, and other programs to ensure equitable access as related to affordability, proximity, and availability, among other factors.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND SOCIAL EQUITY

Social equity is a core value that lies at the heart of all efforts to achieve environmental justice. It includes the crucial concepts of justice and fairness, promotes the inclusion of marginalized and discriminated communities, and takes historical inequities into account when engaging in developing public policy. Those working to comply with SB 1000 should consider social equity during the EJ planning process.

Although social equity is not defined in state law, OPR references several definitions put forth by planning-related organizations in their General Plan Guidelines (2017):

The expansion of opportunities for betterment that are available to those communities most in need, creating more choices for those who have few.

- American Planning Association

The fair, just, and equitable management of all institutions serving the public; 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.

- National Academy of Public Administration.

For comprehensive general plans prepared under California law, social equity simply refers to applying the principles of justice, fairness, and inclusion when developing and implementing a General Plan's vision.

Source: SB 1000 Implementation Toolkit, Planning for Healthy Communities, California Environmental Justice Alliance and PlaceWorks, 2018.

4. **Promotion of safe and sanitary homes.** This includes policies to ensure equitable access to healthy and safe housing, with special attention to sensitive populations—such as children, seniors, and people with compromised immunity—through such actions and programs as addressing the presence of lead-based building materials and asbestos, substandard housing, and overcrowding.
5. **Promotion of physical activity.** This includes policies to promote spaces for physical activity and ensure equitable access to, connectivity to, and distribution of parks, bikeways, trails, and other recreational facilities, programs, and improvements.
6. **Promotion of civic engagement.** This includes policies, programs, and actions to ensure civic engagement in the development and implementation of policies and programs to address the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws.
7. **Prioritization of the needs of disadvantaged communities.** This includes policies, programs, and actions to ensure that needs of disadvantaged communities are prioritized in the development, implementation, and enforcement of planning and other environmental laws.

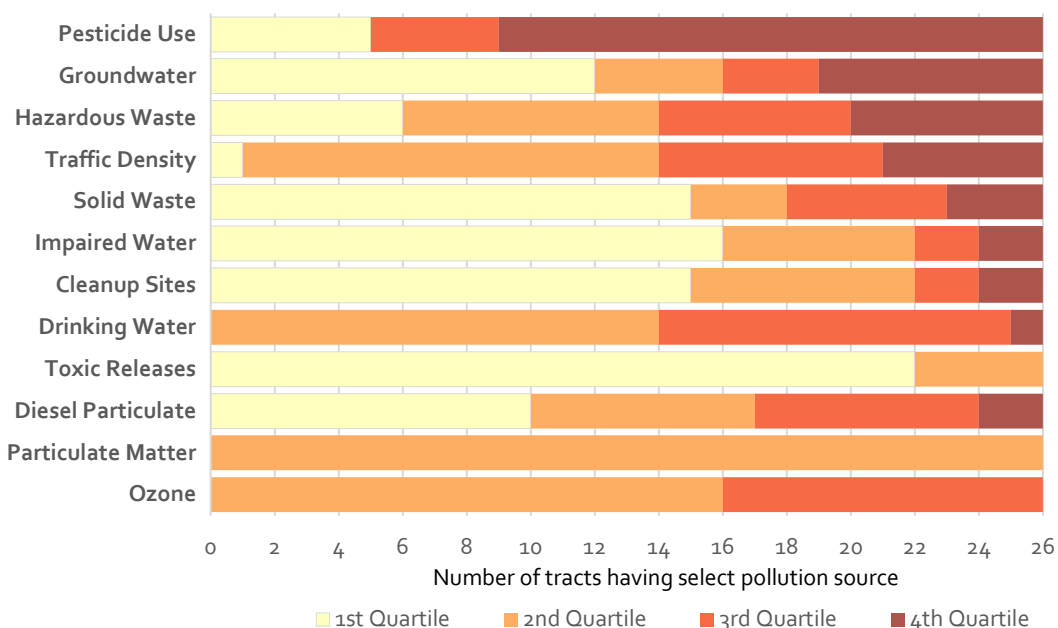
Pollution Exposure

Within the CES 3.0, five pollutants make up most the city’s census tracts’ indicator scores that exceed the 75th and 50th percentiles (see Table 2 in Chapter 3. Disadvantaged Communities for more details). Figure 26 and the following list summarize the top five indicators of citywide concern, with a brief description of what is considered by OEHHA and CalEPA:

- **Pesticide use.** Total pounds of selected active pesticide ingredients (filtered for hazard and volatility) used in production-agriculture per square mile in the census tract. High rankings for census tracts in the planning area (Figure 27) are due to the city’s adjacency to agricultural fields.
- **Groundwater threats.** Sum of weighted GeoTracker leaking underground storage tank sites (USTs) and cleanup sites within buffered distances to populated census blocks. State agencies are responsible for ensuring cleanups of any USTs. Several tracts are in the top quartile of CES 3.0 (Figure 29).
- **Hazardous waste generators and facilities.** Sum of weighted hazardous waste facilities and large quantity generators within buffered distances to populated blocks of census tracts. High scores (Figure 28) are due to the city’s industrial sector proximity to residential areas.
- **Traffic density.** In vehicle-kilometers per hour per road length, within 150 meters of the census tract boundary. High percentile scores in the City of Ventura (Figure 30) are likely due to the adjacent presence of the freeway and higher speed and volume roadways near residential neighborhoods.
- **Drinking water contaminants.** Drinking water contaminant index for select contaminants based on average concentrations for a system. This indicator does not measure the quality of drinking water consumed by residents nor compliance with state health standards. Widespread high scores (Figure 31) are likely connected to the existing land use patterns and historical development of the City.

In addition to these indicators identified within CES 3.0, one factor to consider for environmental justice and health in Ventura is oil and natural gas facilities—both active and inactive—and operations. This is discussed following the CES 3.0 results.

Figure 26. CES 3.0 Results: Pollution Burden (Chart)



Pesticide Use

Pesticide application is a component of the CES pollution burden score. For decades, communities near agricultural fields, primarily farm worker communities, have been known to be at risk for exposure to pesticides. Drift or volatilization of pesticides from fields can lead to pesticide exposure and a host of adverse health effects that are significant. Similarly, unintended environmental damage from the use of pesticides to soil and underground aquifers may increase in areas with greater use.

Pesticide use that can become airborne can cause potential exposure. The CES uses pounds of selected active pesticide ingredients (filtered for hazard and volatility) used in production-agriculture per square mile. According to CES 3.0, 17 of the 26 census tracts considered for this analysis of the City of Ventura showed pesticide scores ranking above the 75th percentile statewide; indeed 13 of those scores exceeded the 90th percentile statewide, making this the highest-ranking pollutant in Ventura's pollution burden score.

Pesticide rankings are based on a method called aerial apportionment. The California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) provides pesticide use data, which is extrapolated to one-square-mile grids drawn in the 1800s by the federal government when land was surveyed in California. OEHHA then apportions pesticide use data to any census tract that intersects a one-square-mile grid. This method could result in tracts receiving a high pesticide score even though a field may be located many miles away from a neighborhood.

In addition, the pesticide indicator is not designed to measure "drift" from fields to residential areas or residual drift on the area where the pesticide is applied. The measurement of pesticide drift would require a model that considers weather, type of pesticide used, application method, and prevailing winds among other factors. The CES model is not intended to measure pesticide drift from fields nor pesticide residual remaining in the air following applications, it is intended to provide a screening of potential exposure.

Although CES has limitations on pesticide mapping, the issue is still of great concern in Ventura. Many schools and residential areas abut agricultural fields where high levels of pesticides are applied. In 2018, the California Department of Pesticide Regulation policy DPR 16-004 Pesticide Use Near School Sites went into effect. It bars the spraying of certain pesticides within a quarter mile of schools and daycare centers from 6am to 6pm

during school weeks. Farmers must also provide 24-hour notification to officials prior to spraying of pesticides near schools.

The DPR is the state administrative body that is charged with the responsibility for creating regulations and enforcing laws related to pesticide use. Every county in California has a County Agricultural Commissioner (CAC), who is responsible for the on-the-ground enforcement of state pesticide laws and regulations. It is worth noting that state law gives the County Agricultural Commissioner authority to adopt county pesticide regulations that are more stringent than state regulations, with the approval of DPR's Director.

Recent issues in pesticide regulation include classifying chlorpyrifos, widely used in strawberry fields, as a toxic contaminant and cause of brain defects in children. In 2018, a federal appeals court ordered the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to ban the pesticide within 60 days, citing a decade of research. The ruling overturned former EPA Chief Pruitt's decision to reject a ban. An October 2019 announcement from DPR affirmed the ruling and required that all agricultural use of the chlorpyrifos pesticide end by December 31, 2020, impacting the majority of Ventura and its sphere.⁹

Groundwater Quality

Groundwater quality in CES 3.0 is measured by identification of potential groundwater threats from underground storage tanks (UST) and cleanup sites, assessment of the status of USTs or related cleanup activities, and proximity of these sites to populated census blocks. Leaking tanks can affect drinking water and expose people to contaminated soil and air and cleanup or remediation can be costly and take many years to complete, therefore proximity to the sites is considered a potential exposure to pollution burden. All information regarding leaking tanks and cleanup sites in CES 3.0 comes from the GeoTracker Database of the State Water Resources Control Board (SWCRB). The screened database shows that virtually all sites identified in CES 3.0 as potential groundwater threats are located on the western and southern half of the city. Figure 29 shows how these sites have been summed and assigned a percentile score, with several census tracts in the city scoring in the top 25 percentile for potential groundwater threats.

There are many other sources of groundwater contaminants not included in CES 3.0 which impact drinking water on the eastside of the city. Some of the sources of contaminants are natural, others were introduced into aquifers through human activities. While the city's water sources are within current and anticipated CalEPA and SWCRB Division of Drinking Water (DDW) levels for primary water quality standards, contaminants are present and outside of levels for secondary water quality standards.¹⁰

According to the City's 2020 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP), the city's eastside receives its water from groundwater wells and has significantly higher levels of total dissolved solids (TDS) and minerals (hardness) compared to the water delivered to Ventura's west end. As such, TDS levels in excess of 1,000 parts per million (ppm) are experienced on a daily basis in the eastern portions of the system. To meet secondary water quality standards, the DDW encourages the City to explore ways to limit TDS levels to 1,000 ppm. Groundwater from multiple wells in both the Mound and Oxnard Plain basins are treated and blended at the Bailey Treatment Plant to achieve the lowest TDS levels possible without sacrificing supplies. The City's initial target is to lower TDS levels in the eastern portion of the system to 1,000 ppm by 2025 with possible further reductions in the future.

In addition to groundwater in the Mound Basin being known for high concentrations of TDS, the 2020 UWMP identifies high concentrations of sulfate in some portions of the Mound Basin which exceed the state sulfate secondary maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 500 ppm. The Ventura Water 2021 Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) for Drinking Water shows an average of 655 ppm and a range of 563-797 ppm for sulfate concentration in groundwater, an increase from the average of 557 ppm and range of 445-669 identified in

⁹ For more discussion of the topic, see: <https://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/chlorpyrifos/index.htm>

¹⁰ Primary water quality standards refer to protection of public health thresholds and secondary standards refer to thresholds for aesthetics, taste, and odor.

2015. While the content and concentration of minerals in water is not static and there is variance over time in the ppm measured for groundwater in Ventura, the average ppm has increased and remained above the secondary MCL of 500 ppm almost every year between the 2015 and 2021 CCRs. Nevertheless, this is not considered a limitation for using groundwater supplies from the Mound Basin, according to the 2020 UWMP.

Lastly, the SWRCB and the United States Geological Service (USGS), as part of the Groundwater Ambient Monitoring and Assessment (GAMA) Priority Basin Project, have conducted additional studies to examine the quality of groundwater in the Santa Clara River Valley that serves the City of Ventura. The GAMA Priority basin Project sampled wells for common contaminants and non-regulated constituents to assist public and private groundwater stakeholders in managing California's groundwater resources. The SWRCB has established a water quality control plan and objectives for reductions in pollutants to be achieved for the Santa Clara River.

Hazardous Waste Sites and Generators

Hazardous waste by definition is potentially dangerous or harmful to human health or the environment. Hazardous waste can be liquids, solids, or contained gases. It can include manufacturing by-products, and discarded materials such as cleaning fluids (solvents) or pesticides. Most hazardous waste must be transported from waste generators to permitted recycling, treatment, storage, or disposal facilities by registered and specialized hazardous waste transporters.

Concerns are often expressed for both human health and the environment with regard to sites that process or dispose of hazardous waste. Many newer facilities are designed to prevent the contamination of air, water, and soil with hazardous materials, but even newer facilities may negatively affect perceptions of the surrounding areas. Cleanup sites are often a concern, particularly legacy sites that were in use or operation before more modern regulations were in place to prevent such hazards.

According to CES 3.0, 12 of the 26 census tracts considered in Ventura score in either the 50-75th percentile or above the 75th percentile. Of those factors that contribute to these high percentile rankings, half of the hazardous waste facilities are located in the Westside, North Avenue, Arundell/North Bank subareas. The Westside and North Avenue subareas include about 30 brownfields, sites that may possess contaminated soils but also have potential for reuse. The Westside is home to historic industrial activities that have included hazardous waste sites and brownfields. The Arundell/North Bank subarea is the main industrial and warehouse district of Ventura.

When interpreting these results, it is important to note that the presence of a hazardous waste generator or a cleanup site does not indicate that the public or business community are being exposed to pollutants. Rather, it means that certain areas are in proximity to such uses. Both hazardous waste generators and cleanup sites are subject to state and federal regulatory agencies to ensure proper protocols are followed.

Traffic Density

Traffic density in CES 3.0 is measured as the sum of traffic volumes (vehicle-kilometers per hour per road length) within 150 meters of a census tract boundary. This indicator concerns vehicle exhaust and the toxic chemicals—such as nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, and others—that are associated with this byproduct of gasoline combustion and that are known to account for more than half of particulate matter emissions in urban areas. High percentile scores in the City of Ventura (Figure 30) are likely due to the adjacent presence of the freeways and higher speed and volume roadways near residential neighborhoods. Scores exceeding the 75th percentile are concentrated in census tracts nearest to the industrial cluster located in the southern part of the City Limits, near the Arundell/North Bank and Marina subareas. Health concerns, generally shown through years of research, associated with the impacts of traffic density include heart and lung disease onset and complications, cancer, and increased mortality.

Drinking Water Contaminants

In the CES 3.0, the drinking water indicators assigns an index score for select contaminants based on average concentrations for a system. This indicator does not measure the quality of drinking water consumed by residents nor compliance with state health standards. Data from sources that do measure quality of drinking water and compliance show, as of 2014, that approximately 97% of Californians using public drinking water systems receive water that meets state and federal standards.¹¹ Nevertheless, because drinking water systems are complex and their quality is known to vary by location, water source, treatment method, contaminant removal efficiency, and other factors—and because access to clean and safe drinking water is essential for health—drinking water contamination is a major concern in environmental justice. When contaminants are introduced into drinking water sources, whether through accidental or natural occurrence, the potential exposure may be widespread and immediately impact health.

Census tract 14.02 in the Eastside/Saticoy subarea is the only census tract exceeding the 75th percentile within the City Limits (Figure 31), though several other tracts score in the third quartile (second-highest range of scores). These additional tracts in the third quartile of CES 3.0 are concentrated across the portion of the City of Ventura, nearest to the Santa Clara River. Two census tracts (12.06 and 24.00) in the western portion of the City of Ventura also score in the third quartile and are near the Ventura River. Because the CES 3.0 indicator combines data on relative concentrations of different contaminants and whether multiple contaminants are present, the higher score in Eastside/Saticoy may reflect an overlap of data from multiple systems. For additional discussion of groundwater sources of drinking water, see the Groundwater Quality section.

Additional Factors to Consider in Ventura

These oil and gas fields have operated in the City and County of Ventura for decades. Indeed, the oil boom of the 1920s has been identified as a key driver of growth and development patterns in the City of Ventura.¹² While the oil and gas industries have bolstered the growth of the City of Ventura and the coastal region since then and these industries are heavily regulated by local, regional, and state agencies, health and environmental justice research has found, over time, the long-term impacts of these extraction activities are not evenly distributed across the population or geography of California, including in Ventura County, and can pose serious hazards to health and quality of life.

Oil and Natural Gas Facilities and Operations

The City of Ventura lies between several active oil and gas fields, most of which have active facilities and operations on-site, in Ventura County. The Ventura Oil and Gas Field is the largest of these; it overlaps a norther part of the Westside subarea and fully transects the North Avenue subarea. The Montalvo, West Oil and Gas Field lies to the south of the city and part of its boundaries overlap with the Marina and Arundell/North Bank subareas; the concentration of facilities and operations activities within the City Limits is very limited. Lastly, while not overlapping with City Limits, the Saticoy Oil and gas Field lies to the east of the Saticoy and Eastside/Santa Maria subareas; it has active facilities and operations activities a little bit over one mile outside of the city.

Living close to oil drilling activities can have serious health impacts on residents, particularly on children, the elderly, or those with chronic health conditions. Exposure to the contaminants typically produced by extracting, processing, or distributing oil-production materials is believed to impact human health. According to some studies, living even within 1,500 feet from active oil wells can result in higher incidences of: throat irritation, sinus problems, nasal irritation, eye burning, severe headaches, loss of sense of smell, persistent

¹¹ For more discussion, see the CalEnviroScreen 3.0 Documentation at: <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-30>

¹² For discussion of this period and the historical development of the Westside subarea, see “Westside Historic Context & Survey Report” prepared by Galvin Preservation Associates for the City of Ventura, which was prepared in January 2011 as part of an effort to implement the goals of the 2005 General Plan and to help inform the Westside Community Plan and Code.

cough, frequent nose bleeds, and swollen painful joints.¹³ While the health data reviewed in this report does not indicate whether or not City of Ventura residents and workers experience these adverse impacts, more study may be needed through community engagement or other parts of the general plan update process.

Oil drilling and related production activity can also impact water systems and other natural resources. Though a direct correlation is not conclusively documented through this report, these impacts could pose additional health hazards to residents and workers who already live or work in communities impacted by some of the worst groundwater threats scores in the state. Oil and gas facilities and operations are therefore deemed a potential threat for pollution exposure and environmental effects to be considered in the implementation of SB 1000 in the City of Ventura.

Sample of Local Policies and Programs

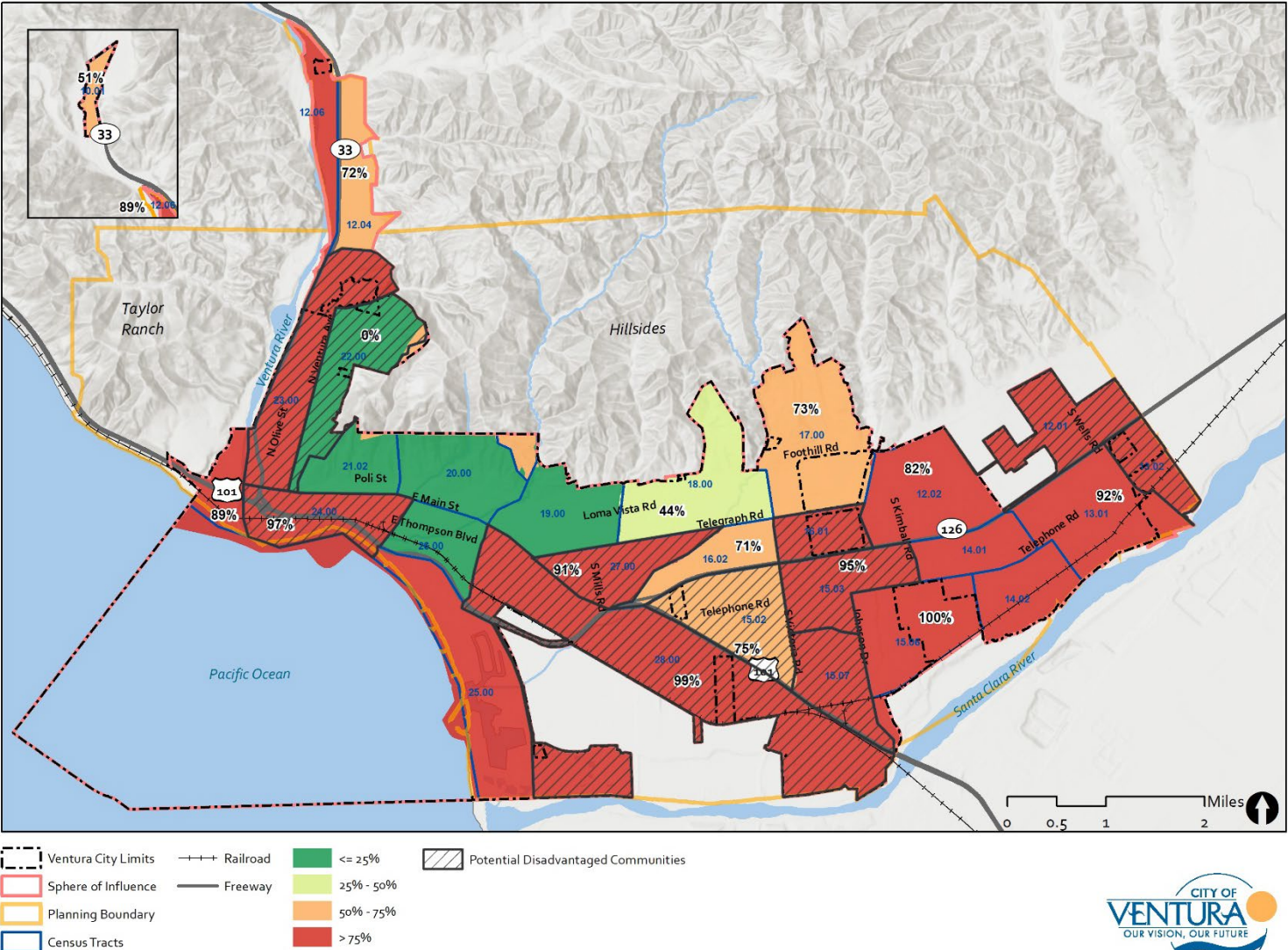
The Ventura General Plan, Chapter 7, Our Healthy and Safe Community, articulates the City's commitment to protect the community and environment from exposure to pollution. Policy 7D sets forth the City's commitment to minimize exposure to air pollution and hazardous substances. Key actions to implement that policy are:

- Action 7.21: Require air pollution point sources to be located at safe distances from sensitive sites such as homes and schools.
- Action 7.22: Require analysis of development projects for air quality impacts and, when significant impacts are identified, require implementation of air pollutant mitigation measures determined to be feasible at the time of project approval.
- Action 7.24: Only approve projects involving sensitive land uses (e.g., homes, schools, daycare centers, playgrounds, medical facilities) within or adjacent to industrial areas if an analysis demonstrates that the health risk will not be significant.
- Action 7.25: Seek funding for cleanup of sites within the Brownfield Assessment Demonstration Pilot Program and other contaminated areas in West Ventura.
- Action 7.27: Require proponents of projects on or immediately adjacent to lands in industrial, commercial, or agricultural use to perform soil and groundwater contamination assessments, and if contamination exceeds regulatory action levels, require remediation procedures prior to grading and development.
- Action 7.29: Educate residents and businesses about how to reduce or eliminate the use of hazardous materials, including by using safer non-toxic equivalents.
- Action 7.30: Require non-agricultural projects to provide all necessary buffers, as determined by the Agriculture Commissioner's Office, from agricultural operations to minimize potential for pesticide drift.
- Action 7.31: Require all users, producers, and transporters of hazardous materials and waste to clearly identify the materials they store, use, or transport, and to notify the appropriate City, County, State, and Federal agencies in the event of a violation.
- Action 7.32: Work toward voluntary reduction or elimination of aerial and synthetic chemical application in cooperation with local agricultural interests and the Ventura County agricultural commissioner.

These policies and actions are comprehensive and target requiring new project proponents to conduct appropriate studies to ensure that the public is protected from exposure to pollutants. Several of these action statements also mirror requirements under state and federal law.

¹³ Nicole J. Wong, MPH. Existing scientific literature on setback distances from oil and gas development sites (version 2). November 2017.

Figure 27. CES 3.0 Results: Pesticide Use



Note: Two-digit bold numbers in black represent CES pesticides percentile scores. Four-digit bold numbers in blue represent census tract numbers.
 Data Sources: City of Ventura (2020); County of Ventura (2020); CalEnviroScreen 3.0 (2018); ESRI (2020)



Figure 28. CES 3.0 Results: Hazardous Waste Sites and Generators

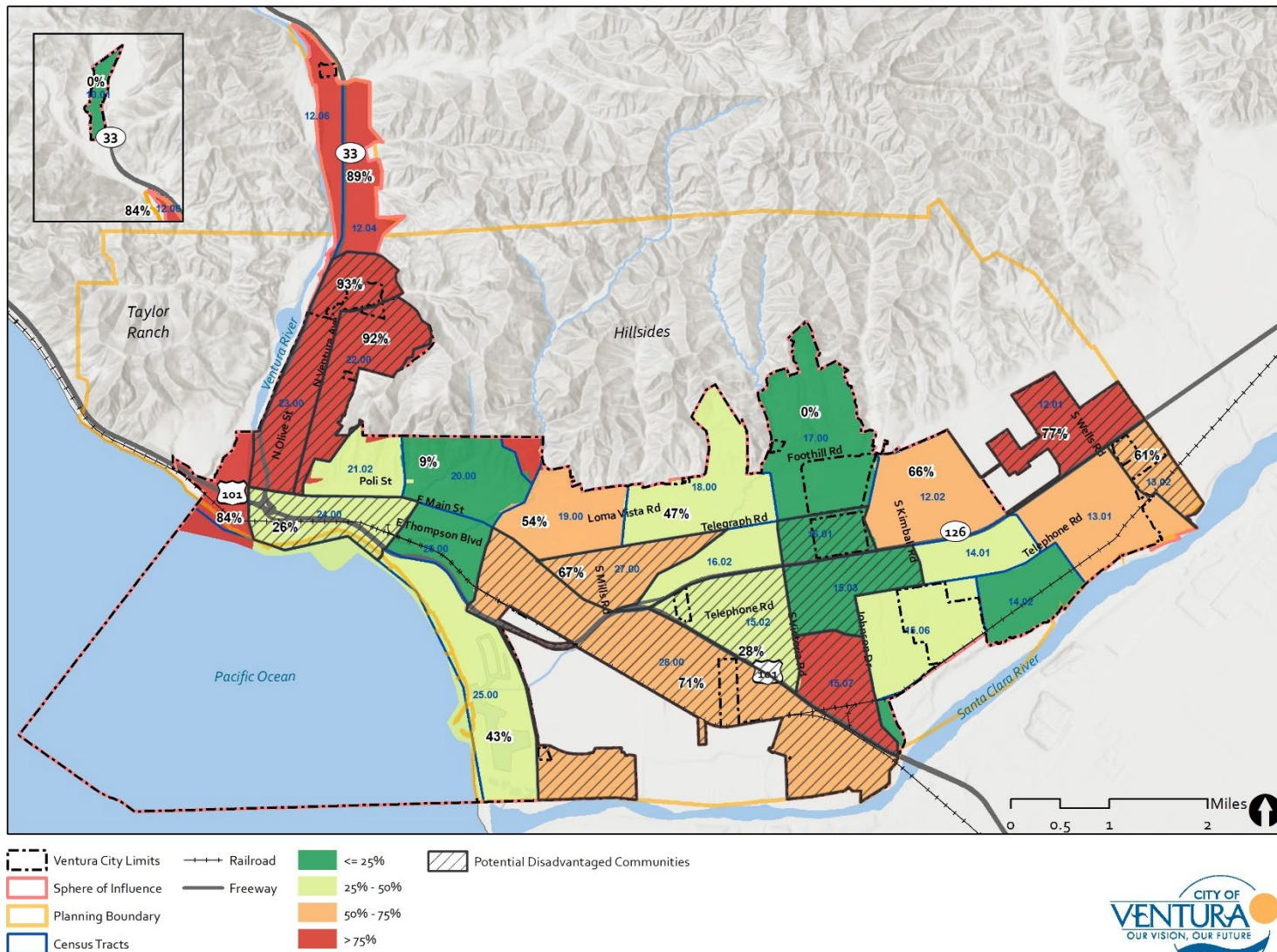
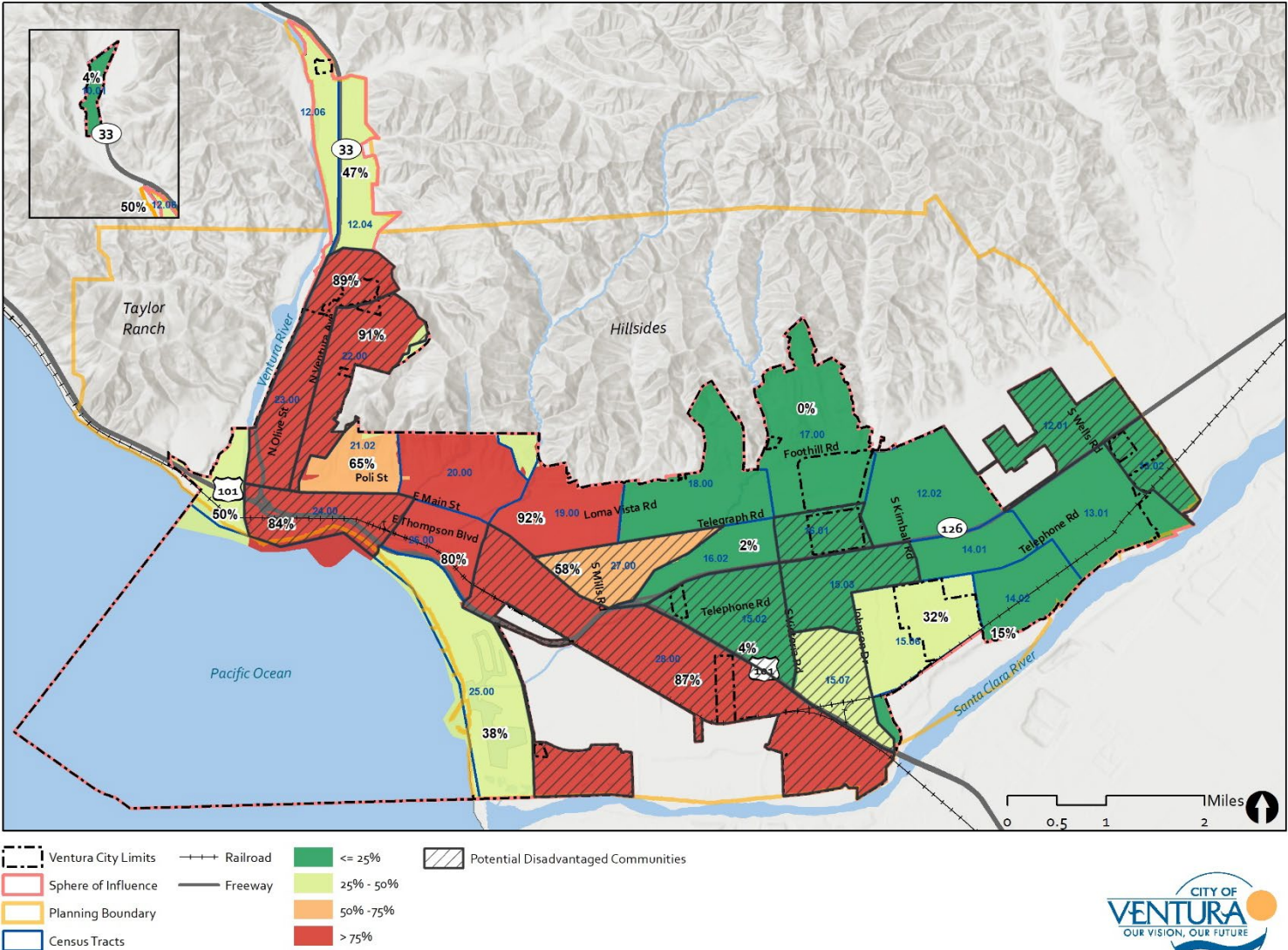


Figure 29. CES 3.0 Results: Groundwater Threats



Note: Two-digit bold numbers in black represent CES groundwater threats percentile scores. Four-digit bold numbers in blue represent census tract numbers.
 Data Sources: City of Ventura (2020); County of Ventura (2020); CalEnviroScreen 3.0 (2018); ESRI (2020)



Figure 30. CES 3.0 Results: Traffic Density

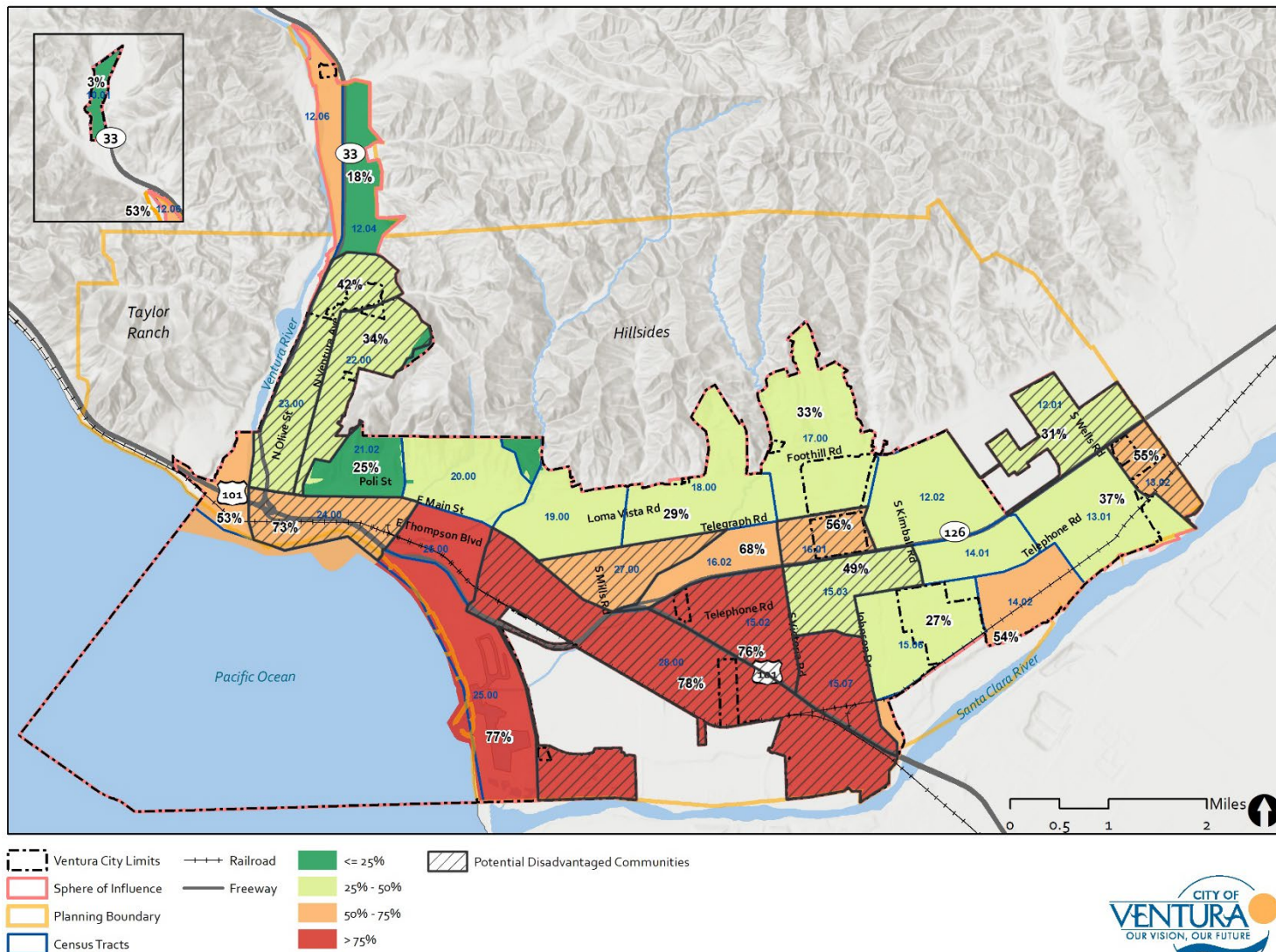
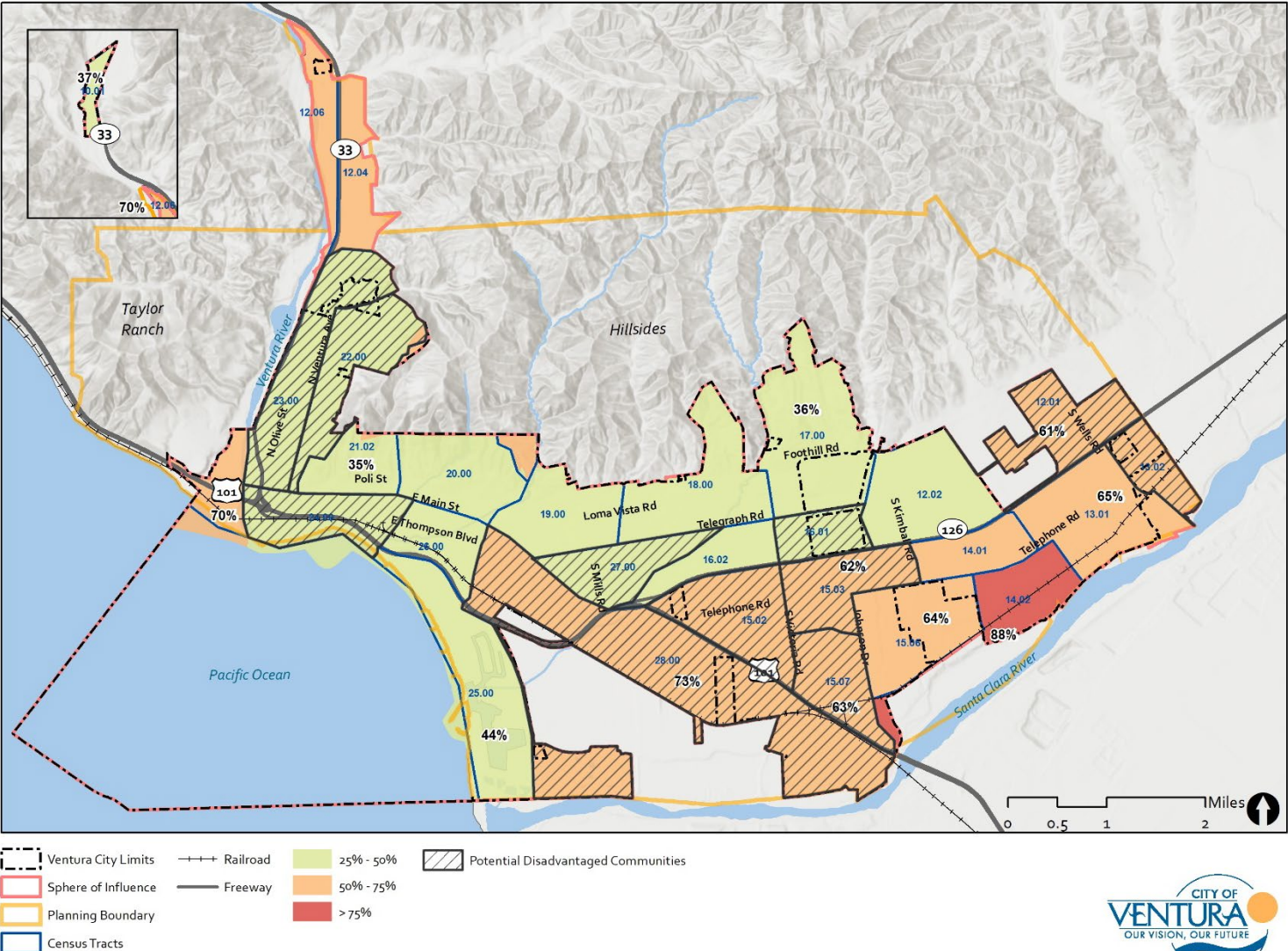


Figure 31. CES 3.0 Results: Drinking Water Contaminants



 Ventura City Limits
 Railroad
 25% - 50%
 Potential Disadvantaged Communities
 Sphere of Influence
 Freeway
 50% - 75%
 Planning Boundary
 > 75%
 Census Tracts

Note: Two-digit bold numbers in black represent CES drinking water contaminants percentile scores. Four-digit bold numbers in blue represent census tract numbers.
 Data Sources: City of Ventura (2020); County of Ventura (2020); CalEnviroScreen 3.0 (2018); ESRI (2020)



Food and Nutrition

Food and proper nutrition are essential for all ages. Having healthy food available and affordable in retail settings (e.g., grocers) and service settings (e.g., restaurants) allows people to make healthier food choices. When healthy foods are not available, when insufficient time is available to purchase and prepare food, or when it is unaffordable to make healthy choices, people may settle for foods higher in calories and lower in nutritional value. Because food directly affects nutrition and weight, a healthy food environment is a prerequisite for a healthy city.

Food Availability and Affordability

The City of Ventura is generally well-served with respect to food choices. According to the Economic Development Existing Conditions Report, Ventura has 39 stores classified as supermarkets or other grocery stores, and an additional 78 specialty markets, convenience stores and beverage stores. This is an increase from the 2018 data analyzed by PlaceWorks, which showed Ventura had 17 larger chain grocery stores (e.g., Traders Joe’s, Albertsons, Smart & Final, etc.) with additional ethnic grocers nearby. Taken together, in the 2018 data, Ventura had 1.4 larger grocery stores per 10,000 residents—the second highest ratio of all cities in the county and 40 percent higher than the county average of 1 store per 10,000 residents. In addition, as of 2019, the city had four farmers’ markets and three active community gardens, with two more under construction. Image 4 shows community members at one of these gardens.

Image 4. Cornucopia Community Garden



The Cornucopia Community Garden is Ventura’s largest community garden, with approximately 145 plots available for growing healthy organic food.

Figure 32 shows select food sources in Ventura and data on access and resources that is provided at the federal level, through the US Department of Agriculture. While food outlets are located throughout the City of Ventura, reaching lower-income and special-need households is a key policy goal. The State of California offers two key food programs—Women, Infants, Children (WIC) and CalFresh (food stamps)—which are available for households that earn incomes below twice the poverty limit. As of 2018, more than 75 percent of major grocers accept WIC coupons for food and more than 75 food outlets accept CalFresh food vouchers.

The lack of availability of healthy food is often measured by the term “food desert.” Food deserts are defined as places with limited fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful foods. These are usually found in areas, where there is a lack of grocery stores, farmers markets, and healthy food providers. Portions of the Westside and Saticoy subareas are not well-served by a full-service grocery store and are defined as food deserts.¹⁴ As of 2019, these two census tracts total 9,200 residents, 8 percent of the city’s population, and are within areas designated as food deserts.

¹⁴ US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Food Access Research Atlas. Retrieved at <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas.aspx>

Sample of Local Policies and Programs

The General Plan contains two policies—Policy 2.14, Partner with local farms to promote farmers markets and high-quality locally grown food and Policy 6.1, develop new neighborhood parks, pocket parks, and community gardens as feasible and appropriate to meet citizen needs—with emphasis on food access goals. The City’s HEAL Resolution also affirms the City’s commitment to expanding opportunities for healthy food choices for residents.

A sample of programs that provide food for residents in the city are summarized below:

- **Children’s school nutrition.** The school district offers low-cost or free meals for children of parents that earn low-income. At least 15 participating schools are in Ventura, many concentrated in lower income neighborhoods.
- **School education.** The Ventura Unified School District offers integrated, garden enhanced nutrition education, Farm to School salad bars, environmental education, and agricultural literacy. VUSD operates a produce garden in all 17 elementary schools.
- **Senior nutrition.** The Senior Nutrition Program is administered by the City, Ventura County Area Agency on Aging, and California Department of Aging. The Program offers subsidized meals at the Westside/Eastside Cafes and through home-delivered meals.
- **Access to healthy food.** The City of Ventura continues to make strides to expand access to healthy food to community residents through its four farmers markets, two community gardens, and a wide variety of other programs held throughout the city.
- **CalFresh vouchers.** More than 75 retailers accept CalFresh, formerly known as food stamps. Of the 17 full-service grocery stores, 13 of those major stores also accept WIC vouchers. This ensures that people of all incomes have access to healthy food.
- **Community-supported agriculture.** CSAs allows consumers to buy a share in a farm’s production and receive weekly boxes of vegetables, fruit, and other products. Some CSAs deliver to drop-off points; others require that each week’s box be picked up at the farm. Ventura has several drop-off locations for local CSAs.
- **Local food banks.** Food Share distributes more than 12 million pounds of food annually from its distribution site through neighborhood and church food distributions, soup kitchens, and other locations. Fifteen drop-off sites are in Ventura. Food Share is also developing a drop-off program for homebound seniors.

Image 5. School-Based Farm



Figure 33. Food Deserts and Assistance, shows the location of healthy food sources in Ventura and sources for food for lower-income households overlaid with areas designated as food deserts. Overall, food resources are spread throughout the community.

Figure 32. Food Access

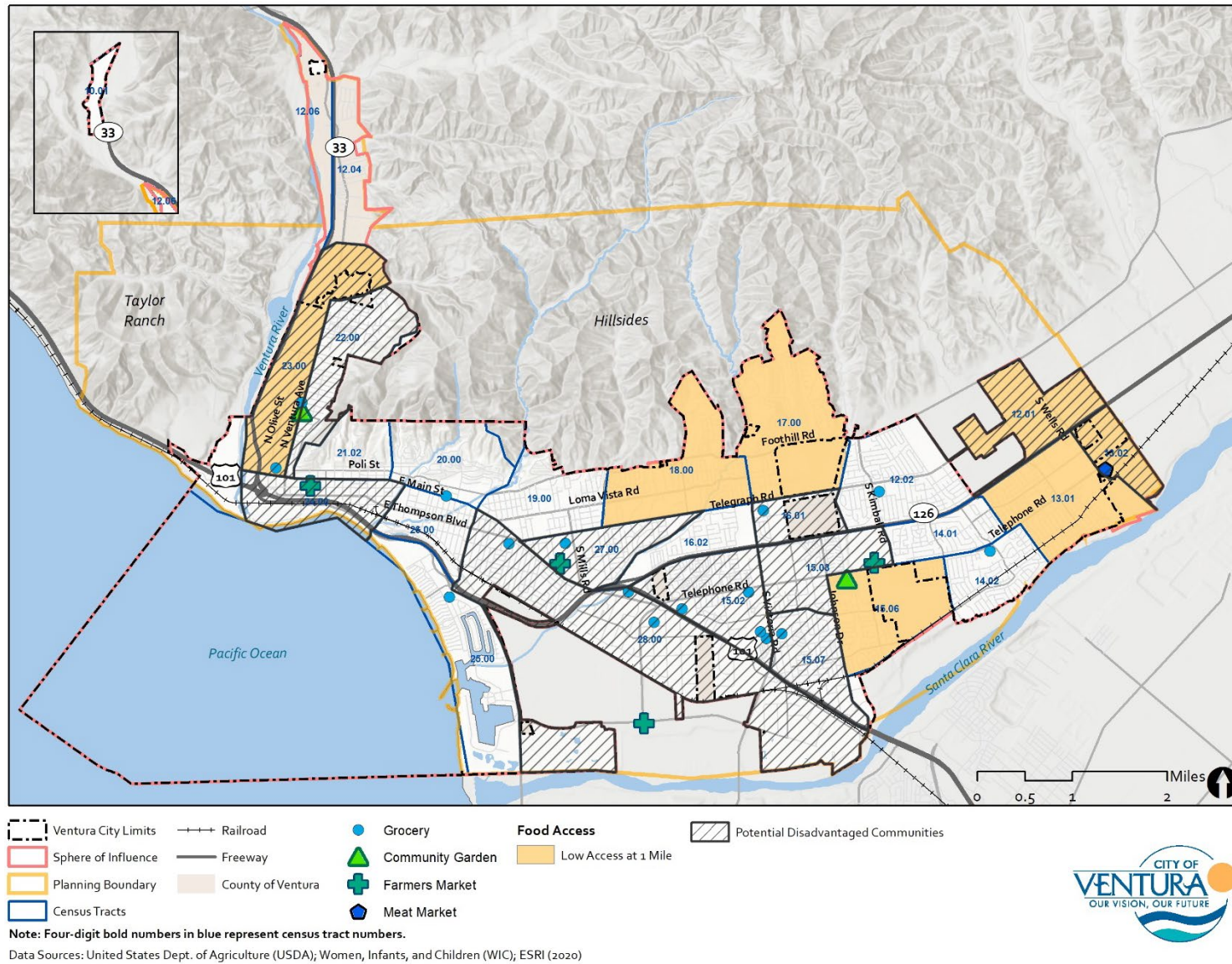
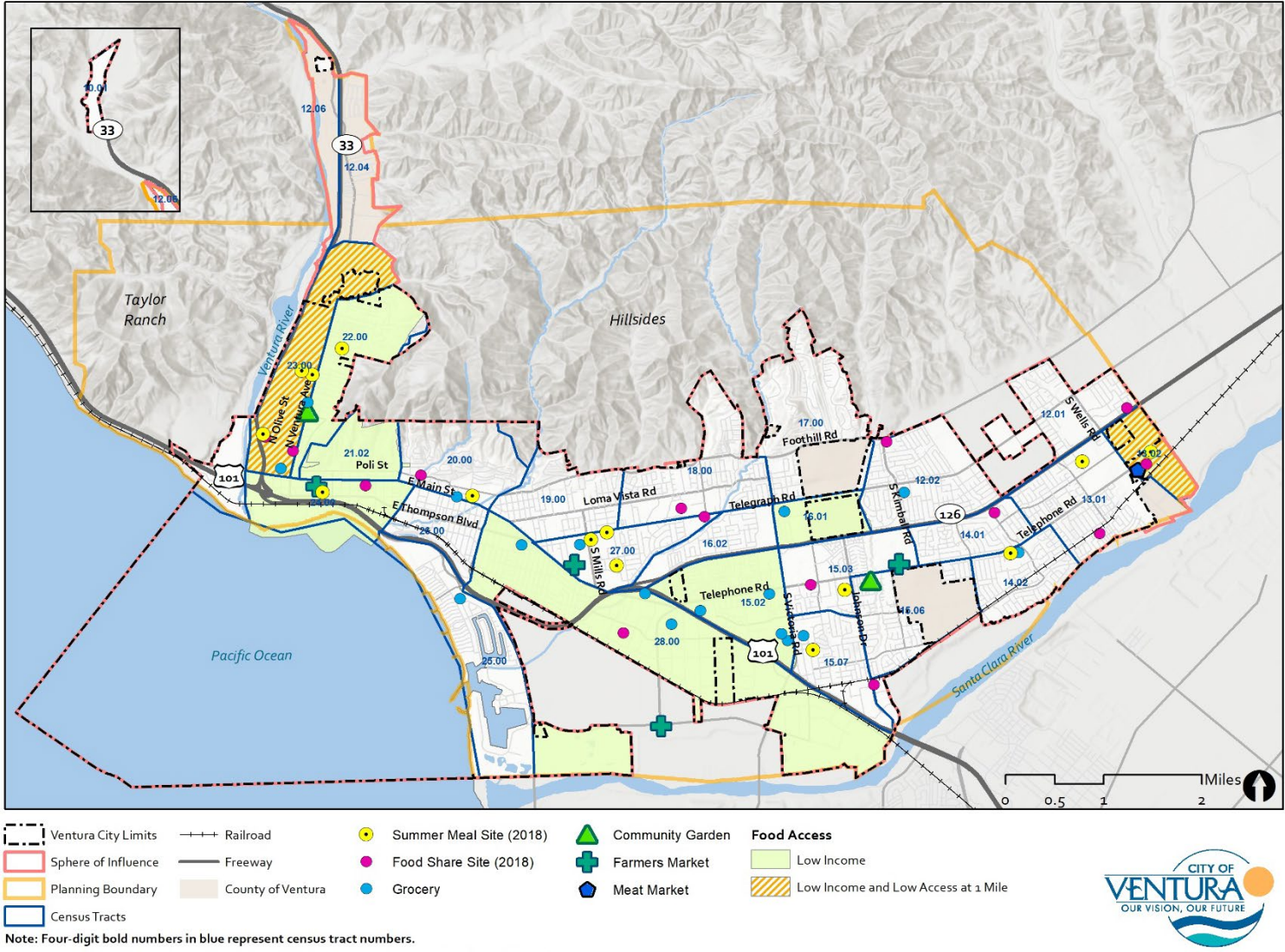


Figure 33. Food Deserts and Assistance*



Retail Alcohol Environment

Although not typically considered part of a city's food environment, alcohol consumption is among the greatest public health concerns, due to its link to preventable and chronic diseases. Alcohol misuse is associated with high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, liver disease, and digestive problems among many others. Other concerns include traffic accidents and unintentional injuries as well.¹⁵

School district and national surveys provide data on alcohol use. For alcohol use, 18 percent of Ventura adults binge drink (more than 5 drinks in a single setting for men and 4 for women), similar to the national estimate of 17 percent. Alcohol use is also prevalent among youth. Among 11th graders in the Ventura Unified School District, 15 percent binge drink, and 34 percent report alcohol/drug use.¹⁶

The California Alcohol Beverage Control Board (ABC) requires that all establishments selling alcohol secure a state-issued permit prior to operation. As of 2019, Ventura had 414 retail licenses to sell wine, beer, and spirits; or 37 locations per 10,000 people. This is the highest ratio per 10,000 residents countywide, except for Ojai. The city's high prevalence is due in part to the many eating places located in the city. To prevent the overconcentration of such uses, state law authorizes a moratorium if the licenses per capita exceeds the following:

1. One on-sale license (beer, wine, or spirits) per 2,000 residents.
2. One general off-sale license for every 2,500 residents.
3. One off-sale beer and wine license for every 2,500 residents.
4. One beer, wine, general off-sale license for every 1,250 residents.

Ventura has not been under a state moratorium for several years; however, there is an undue concentration of retail alcohol licenses in numerous census tracts in Ventura. An undue concentration is defined as census tracts where the per capita retail alcohol licenses exceed the countywide average for census tracts. Shown in Figure 34. Concentration of Alcohol Retailers for early 2019, the majority (18 of 26) of census tracts have an undue concentration of retail alcohol licenses. The Westside has an undue concentration of off-sale licenses. Central Ventura has an undue concentration of off- and on-sale licenses. In contrast, east Ventura has the least number of impacted tracts.

Sample of Local Policies and Programs

With respect to health policy and programs, the 2005 Ventura General Plan does not contain policy direction regarding alcohol control policy. However, Chapter 7, Our Healthy and Safe Community, Policy 7A states that the City will "encourage wellness through care and prevention." Two implementing actions are related to alcohol regulation:

- Action 7.3, to participate in school and agency programs to combat tobacco, alcohol, and drug dependency, and

Image 6. Ventura Police Department Conducts Periodic Sobriety Checkpoints



Source: Ventura PD

¹⁵ Alcohol Retail Outlet Density Affects Neighborhood Crime and Violence. Ventura County Behavioral Health Alcohol & Drug. Issue Brief 2008. In 2015, the City ranked the 10th highest of 57 comparable jurisdictions statewide in the number of people killed or injured in alcohol-related vehicle crashes.

¹⁶ Ventura Unified School District. California Healthy Kids Survey, 2015-16: Main Report. San Francisco: WestEd Health & Human Development Program for the California Department of Education.

- Action 7.4, to enhance or create ordinances which increase control over ABC licensed premises.

The City of Ventura implements a wider range of programs that regulate the use and consumption of alcoholic beverages in the community and implement the above two general plan action items. These include:

- **Local use permit.** In 2005 the Ventura City Council approved an Alcohol Sales Permit Ordinance to provide for the regulation of alcohol licenses and establishments within the City of Ventura. The City requires businesses be operated in accordance with permit requirements, which include employee training.
- **Social Host ordinance.** In 2007 the City adopted a Social Host ordinance, where residents are fined if they host a party that turns into a loud/unruly gathering where alcoholic drinks are served to or are consumed by underage persons. The program has been active for years and has been shown to reduce underage drinking.
- **Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over Campaign.** Ventura Police Department implements DUI checkpoints, educational campaigns, and other programs to keep and prevent intoxicated or medicated drivers from driving.
- **Responsible beverage training.** The City sponsors Responsible Beverage Service (RBS) Training to promote public safety and to reduce risks associated with the retail alcohol environment. The City hosts ABC's training program, called L.E.A.D, which is their Responsible Beverage Service (RBS) Training.
- **Drinking in public places.** The City bans possession of open containers of alcoholic beverages, prohibits consumption of alcohol in public places (such as parks or any other public place), and prohibits intoxication in public places. Prohibitions against drinking in public places is similar in nature to the City's no smoking laws.
- **Decoy programs.** To ensure that alcohol laws are followed, the City operates shoulder-tap and minor decoy programs. These efforts monitor whether individuals are illegally buying alcohol for minors or whether businesses are illegally selling alcohol to minors. This is an ongoing program for stores throughout the city.
- **Alcohol treatment.** The City permits a variety of alcohol and drug treatment facilities, both inpatient and outpatient, in the community through its land use and permitting processes. The City's ordinances are designed to comply with applicable state laws governing the siting and regulation of group homes.
- **School programs.** Ventura Unified School District (VUSD) maintains a No Use Policy for any alcohol, tobacco, or drugs in all VUSD facilities. Significant financial, educational, and training resources are dedicated to the implementation of prevention, reduction, and treatment programs for alcohol, tobacco, and drugs.

Tobacco Availability

Smoking, vaping, and tobacco use are linked to heart disease, lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, emphysema, asthma, and other chronic diseases. Moreover, the use of vaping and E-cigarettes among youth is increasing and a precursor to smoking. Tobacco use is prevalent among Ventura adults and to a lesser degree among youth, of which vaping is particularly more prevalent. If the City is to address the issues of tobacco use in the community, efforts will need to be directed at retail access, cost, social norms, and advertising.¹⁷

17 A General Causal Model to Guide Alcohol, Tobacco, and Illicit Drug Prevention: Assessing the Evidence, Pacific Institute for Research Evaluation, Journal of Drug Education, 2003.

In 2016, Ventura had approximately 125 retailers licensed to sell tobacco products, not including additional larger distributors and wholesalers. As of 2019, Ventura had the second highest rate of tobacco outlets in the county, with 11 retail tobacco licenses issued per 10,000 residents, slightly above the county average. However, state law does not regulate tobacco licensing in the same way as alcoholic beverage licensing. The state does not establish areas of overconcentration nor requires cities to deny new stores that exceed a “moratorium” threshold.

Shown on Figure 35. Concentration of Tobacco Retailers, census tracts along the south, west, and east portions of Ventura have a higher per capita rate of retail tobacco outlets than the average in Ventura County. Several of the undue concentrations, such as the Arundell and North Bank planning communities, are primarily nonresidential in nature. However, other tracts have significant residential populations. Tobacco outlets in some areas are also located close to schools.

In 2018, Ventura received a policy grade of ‘C’ from the American Lung Association for its tobacco control efforts.¹⁸ In Ventura, only Oxnard received a ‘B’ grade and none of the cities received an ‘A’ grade. However, the grade does not fully recognize all the smoke free programs currently active in Ventura.

A sample of Ventura programs are summarized below:

- **Smoking in public places.** Pursuant to the municipal code, the City has a comprehensive ban on smoking in all public places within the city, including but not limited to means of public transit; public parks and beaches; public restrooms; any open space; and many other locations.¹⁹ A full list of public locations is available online.
- **Tobacco availability.** Ventura currently does not have a tobacco retailer licensing program or location restriction program, unlike its alcohol license program. However, there are state prohibitions in terms of sales to minors. The City also requires businesses that sell tobacco products to adhere to municipal code requirements.
- **Smoke-free housing.** The Housing Authority of the City of San Buenaventura maintains a smoke-free policy for residents, visitors, and employees in all HACSB multiunit properties. As of 2019, the City of Ventura does not have a citywide smoke-free policy that prohibits smoking in multifamily housing.²⁰
- **School policies.** As is the case with schools in California, the VUSD maintains a tobacco-free policy at all its school sites in Ventura. In addition, significant resources are dedicated to programs that are intended to prevent and reduce smoking by all youth in the district.

18 American Lung Association. State of Tobacco Control: California Local Grades, 2018. Retrieved at: <http://center4tobaccopolicy.org/tobacco-money-politics/tobacco-policy-grades>.

19 Division 8 – Public Health and Safety Regulations, Chapter 8.350 – Smoking Regulations, San Buenaventura City Charter and Municipal Code, Volume 1.

20 Smoke-Free Policy, Chapter 17 of the Admission and Continued Occupancy Policy, 2014. Housing Authority of the City of San Buenaventura.

Figure 34. Concentration of Alcohol Retailers

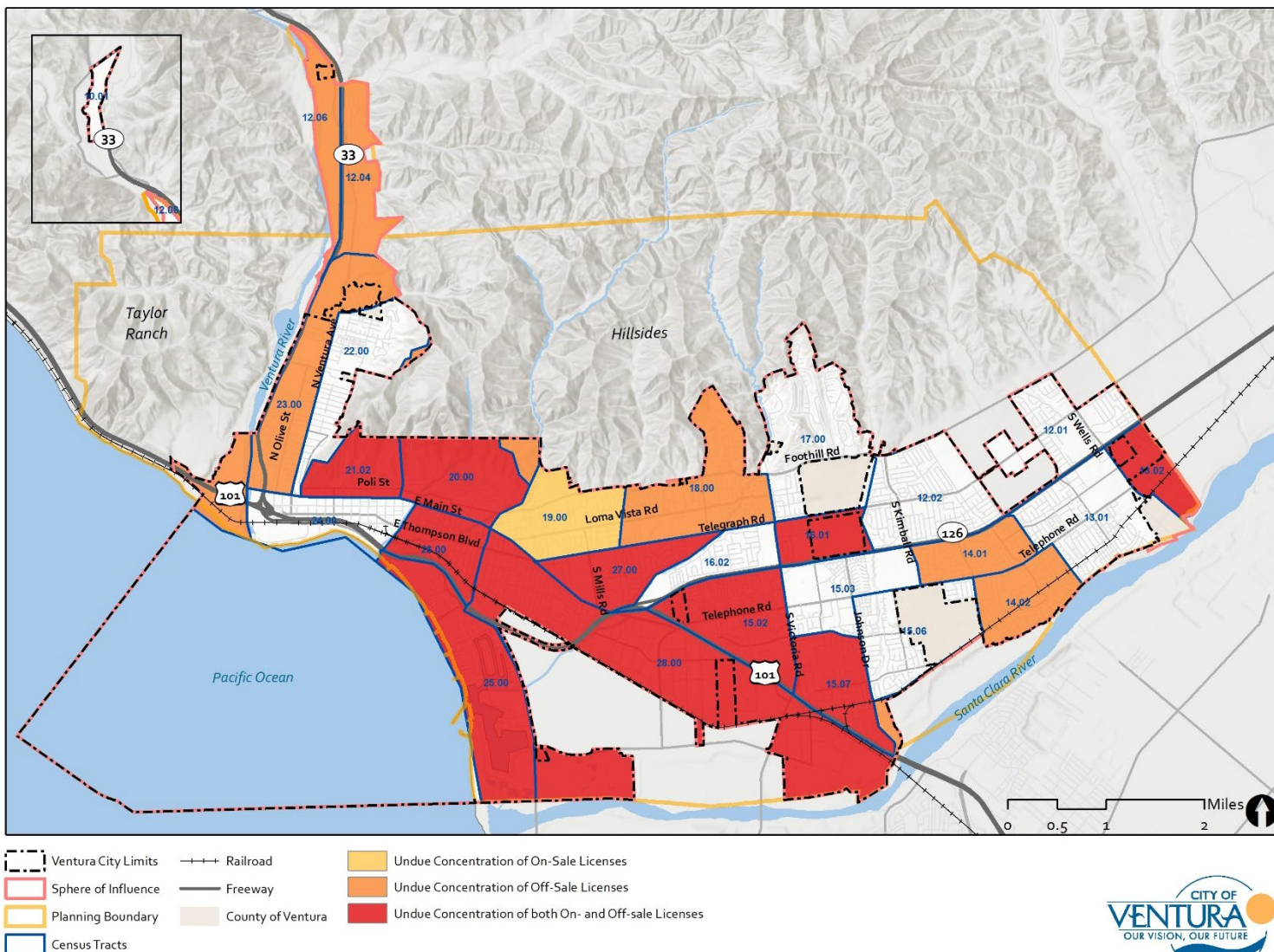
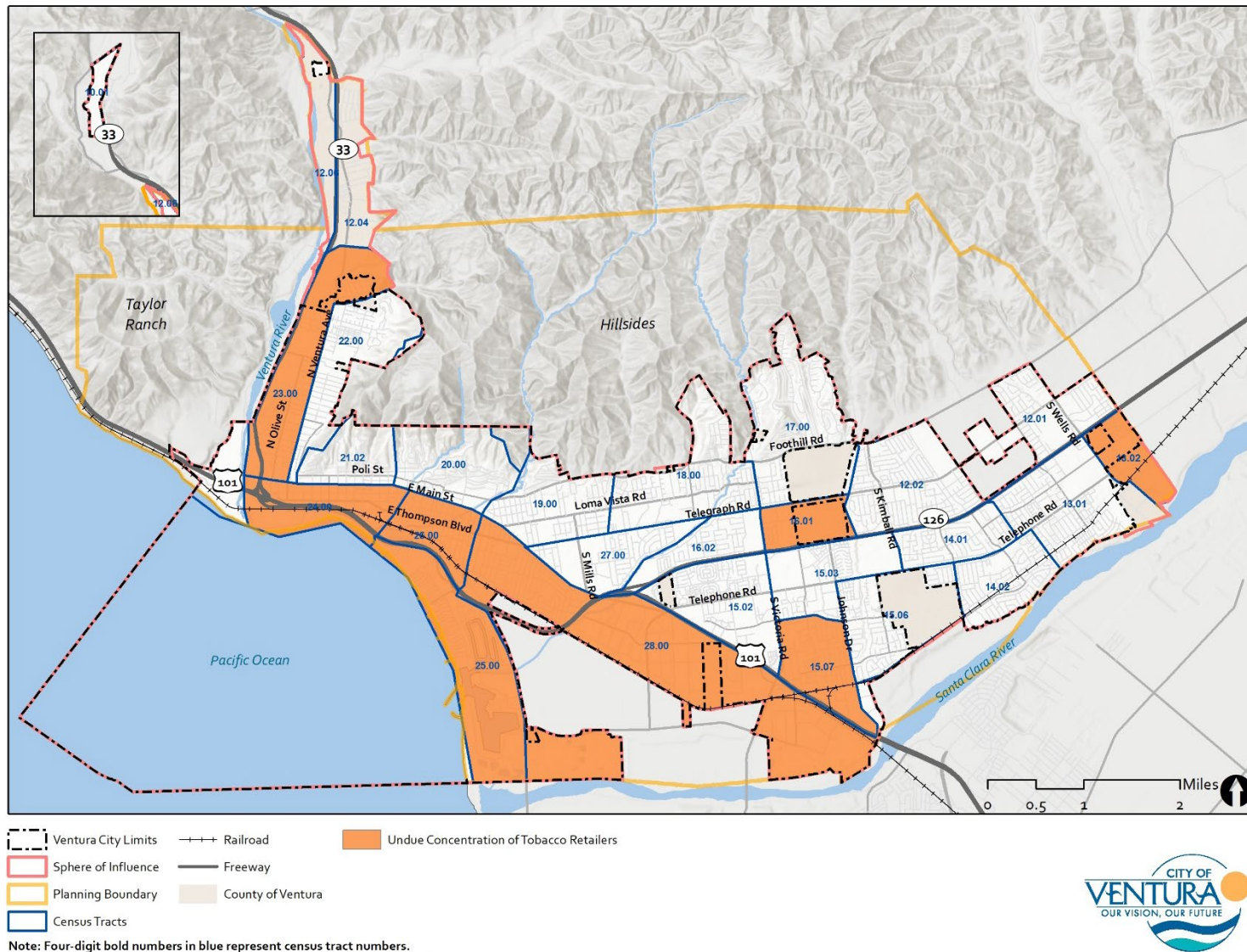


Figure 35. Concentration of Tobacco Retailers



Physical Activity

Convenient access to a park or recreational facility is known to increase the chances of residents being physically active. Ventura has more than 30 parks that provide more than 600 acres of parkland for active and passive recreation. In addition, numerous bicycle trails and linear parks traverse the city and both the State and County manage several beaches within City Limits. Other open spaces in the planning area, such as the Harmon Canyon Preserve, are publicly accessible but privately owned. Ventura has strived to maintain an environment that encourages and promotes active living described below.

Park Availability and Access

The adequacy of a park system is largely a function of availability, diversity, access, appropriateness of amenities, and conditions. The City has established a functional classification of parks designed to meet neighborhood, community, citywide, and special uses. Public parks in Ventura can broadly be classified into the following tiers:²¹

- **Community Parks**, which serve residents of more than one neighborhood and are intended to offer more specialized recreation options. Community parks may include amenities such as athletic fields, courts, youth play structures, picnic areas, landscaped areas, as well as indoor recreational facilities. Community parks are typically between 20 and 50 acres in size.
- **Neighborhood Parks**, which are intended to serve specific residential areas, providing for active and passive recreation and are generally up to eight (8) acres in size.
- **Mini-Parks**, which are small parks also intended to serve specific residential areas. Mini-parks typically do not exceed three (3) acres in size and may be equipped with benches, picnic tables, and/or playgrounds.
- **Linear Parks/Greenways**, which include both programmed and undeveloped strips of green space. Many of these amenities run alongside barrancas and may include shared-use paths. This forms an extensive bicycle and pedestrian network throughout the city.

The City offers additional park and recreational opportunities through special use parks (such as golf courses and wilderness areas), linear parks, state parks, and even local schools. Foremost among these are the seven miles of beach that line the western boundary of the city. Although not owned by the City, the waterfront open space provides valuable recreational opportunities for Ventura residents. These facilities make up the majority of parks and recreational opportunities in Ventura.

Figure 36, from the Land Use and Urban Design Report, shows the location of all parks and recreation facilities. For more discussion of these facilities, please see the Land Use and Urban Design Report.

Park and Recreational Facility Access

Access is an important part of park and recreational facilities. Access refers to the ability of residents, visitors, or workforce to access public parks conveniently. While standard measures exist for measuring access, applying a singular measure can be a challenge in cities due to the topography, presence of major barriers such as freeways, or design of street networks. Figure 37, also from the Land Use and Urban Design Report, shows walking distances from each park in 5-minute increments.

As of 2018, overall, half (47%) of the city's residential areas (including downtown) are within a half-mile (10-minute walk) distance to a park. This distance standard is common for cities that are more built out as there

²¹ Note: These typologies differ slightly from those presented in the 2005 General Plan. Instead, this framework is adapted from recent City data that presents a more robust classification system.

are fewer areas remaining for development. Access to parks also varies based on different land uses. As shown in Table 8, single-family residential areas have the lowest access to parks within a one-quarter or one-half mile radius. This is expected given the curvilinear streets and topography in the Foothill subarea. Residential planned developments have greater access due to how projects were permitted. Higher density projects have the best access to parks due to their location, topography, and street network.

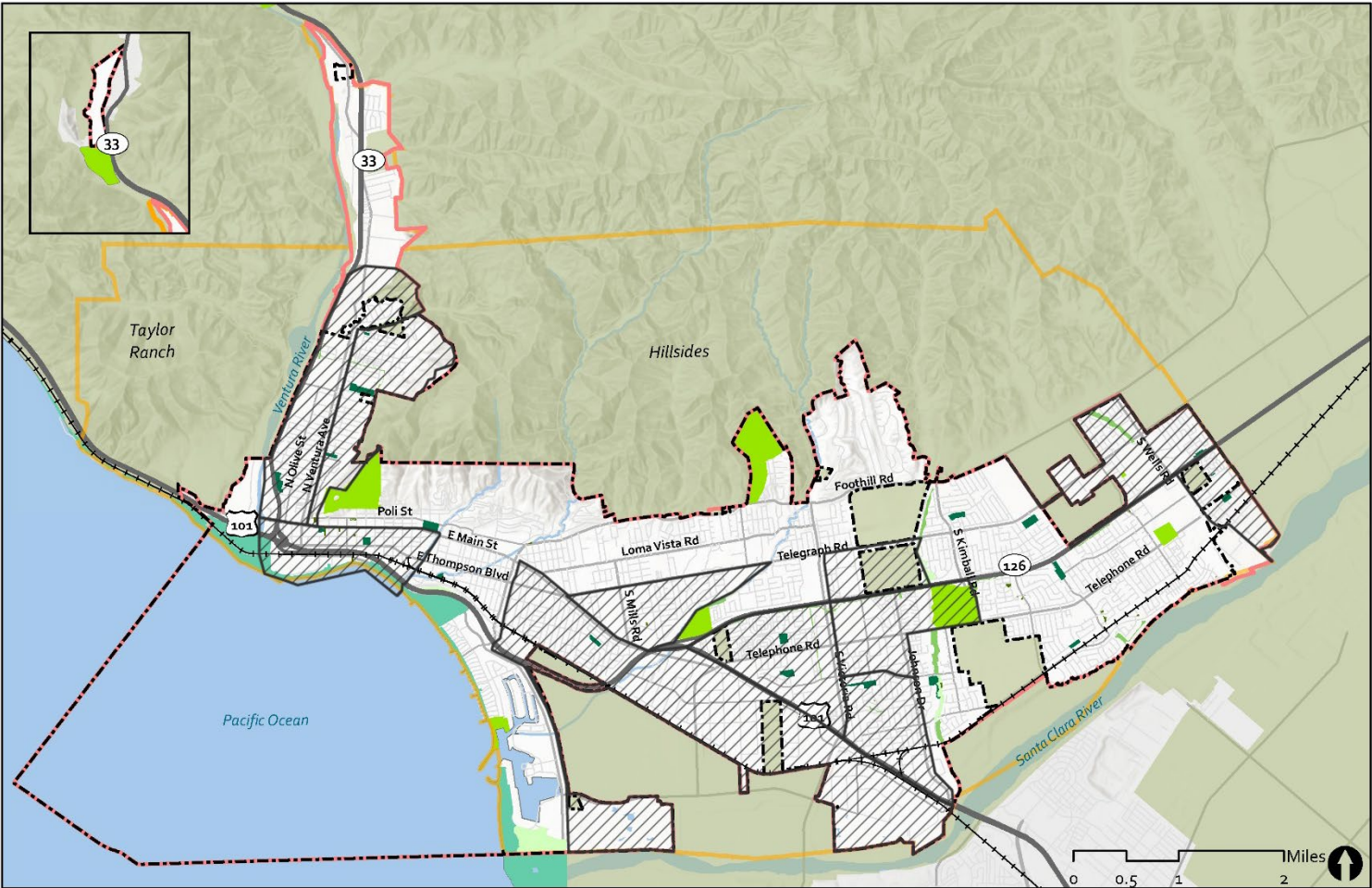
Table 8. Park Access Analysis in Ventura

Type of Residential Use	Percent of Residential Land		
	Within one-quarter mile	Within one-half mile	Outside one-half mile
Single-Family Residential	15%	41%	59%
Res. Planned Development	24%	52%	48%
Multiple-Family Residential	23%	61%	39%
Urban/Mixed Use	35%	73%	27%

Source: City of Ventura, PlaceWorks, 2018
Note: Proximity based on walkshed analysis along public right of ways (streets).

The City operates three community centers with recreation activities and community services: Ventura Avenue Adult Center serves adults and seniors only; Barranca Vista Center serves youth only; and Westpark Community Center serves children only. The City's sports programs include youth and adult sports programs, classes, aquatics, and corporate games. Other City-sponsored recreational activities include arts and environmental education, community gardening, recreation programs for special-needs residents, and after-school activities and summer camps.

Figure 36. Parks & Recreation Facilities

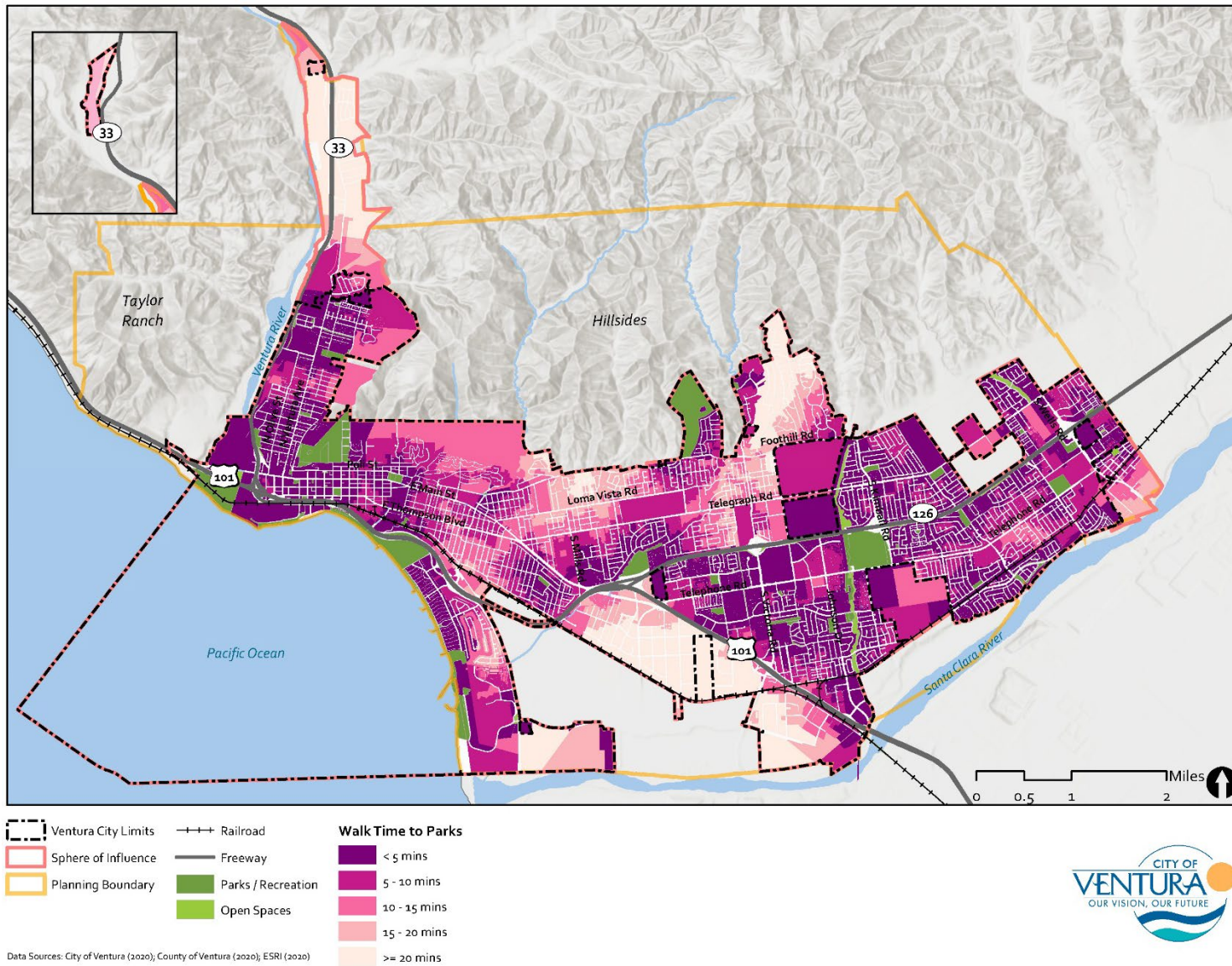


Ventura City Limits	Parks and Recreation Facilities	Mini Parks	SOAR Lands	Potential Disadvantaged Communities
Sphere of Influence	Beaches	Open Space		
Planning Boundary	Community Parks	Linear Parks/Greenways		
Railroad	Neighborhood Parks			
Freeway				

Data Sources: City of Ventura (2020); County of Ventura (2020); ESRI (2020)



Figure 37. Pedestrian Access to Parks



Sample of Local Policies and Programs

The General Plan contains a chapter, Our Active Community, which sets forth goals and policies regarding parks and recreation. Providing quality spaces for enriching recreation options for our entire community is a vital component of the general plan. The policies and actions in this chapter seek to further expand local park and recreation choices by:

- Identifying sites for new parks
- Increasing access to open space, including via linear park trails
- Collaborating with schools and other agencies and organizations
- Ensuring universal, equal access to parks and recreation facilities
- Allowing appropriate revenue-generating activities at City parks

The City has also been active in expanding access to parks, particularly in historically disadvantaged communities. The City built a large community park/aquatic center near the Eastside/Montalvo subarea. In 2018, Kellogg Park was built in the Westside subarea, serving a traditionally disadvantaged area of Ventura, as described in the box below.

KELLOGG PARK: VENTURA'S NEWEST PARK

The City recently completed Kellogg Park, a 2.4-acre neighborhood park with a community garden. The site is located in the Westside subarea, a traditionally disadvantaged community in Ventura. The lot upon which the park resides was purchased by The Trust for Public Land in 2013 and gifted to the city. The park design was developed in partnership with The Trust for Public Land, Kaiser Permanente HEAL Zone, and the community.

Grants to fund the \$4.5-million park project included \$1 million from California Natural Resources Agency, \$815,650 from the California Department of Housing and Community Development, \$1.5 million from the California Department of Parks and Recreation, and \$30,000 from Aera Energy. The Ventura community also contributed approximately \$166,000 in funds to the project.



Active Transportation – Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

The City of Ventura encourages active modes of transportation such as biking and walking in order to improve the quality of life. Active transportation can promote healthier citizens, cleaner environment, safety for all roadway user types, and economic development.

Bicycle Facilities

Ventura is known countywide for its extensive bikeway network and supporting facilities and has received designation as a Bronze Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists. The City of Ventura offers a complementary mix of bikeways tailored to the residential or nonresidential setting and the intended type of travel. Currently, the city has more than 100 miles of bikeways of varying types. Most neighborhoods have a variety of options for bicycle use and there does not appear to be lack of current and planned bikeways in the city. The three primary bikeways in the city are:

- **Bicycle Paths (Class I).** A paved route expressly reserved for bicycles traversing an otherwise unpaved area. Bicycle paths may parallel roads but typically are separated from roads by landscaping. Ventura has 32 lane miles of Class I paths and 25 miles planned.
- **Bicycle Lanes (Class II).** A corridor expressly reserved for bicycles, existing on a street or roadway in addition to any lanes on the street or roadway for use by motorized vehicles. Ventura has 49 lane miles of Class II bicycle lanes with an additional 13 lane miles proposed.
- **Bicycle Routes (Class III).** A facility shared with motorists and identified only by signs, a bicycle route has no pavement markings or lane stripes. These are typically found in neighborhoods. Ventura has 18 lane miles (37 miles) of Class III bicycle routes.

In addition to these routes, the city is known for the Pacific Coast Route that winds along the Ventura coastline. The city also has a prominent segment of the 50-mile Grand Loop, which is a scenic bicycle loop that extends through scenic portions of the county. Lastly, there is a protected bike lane (Class IV or facility with physical separation from vehicle and pedestrian traffic) designated with signs and markings where Ventura has about 1.7 miles of lane segments within the City Limits, near the Eastside/Saticoy and Eastside/Juanamaria subareas.

One of the greatest concerns for bicyclists in Ventura is safety. Residents want to be assured that bicycle travel is safe and efficient. According to the Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), an average of 55 bicycle-related injuries/fatalities occurs each year on Ventura roadways. Compared to 57 similar cities tracked by OTS, Ventura ranks the second lowest (least safe) among 57 cities for bicycle injuries and fatalities. Part of the reason for a higher prevalence of bicycle accidents is the elevated levels of bicycle ridership in the community, the elevated levels of pedestrian and bicycle activity, concentration of land uses, and tourist industry.

Many of the bicycle accidents are occurring in the Downtown and Midtown subareas, where the density of vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians are greatest. The City is improving the local bicycle network by following recommendations of the General Bikeway Plan, which include:

- Connecting schools, parks, activity areas, housing areas, and employment centers with bike paths and lanes;
- Constructing additional Class I or Class II bikeways in a number of locations, including along the Santa Clara River and the coastline;
- Installing bicycle racks;
- Updating bicycle facility standards to ensure proper design and maintenance;
- Constructing improvements to resolve bicycle/automobile conflicts;
- Establishing a highly visible route identification and signage program that fits the character of the community; and

- Mitigating impacts on bicyclists from new development and during and following construction of roadway projects.

Figure 38 shows existing and proposed bikeways in Ventura. More discussion of bicycle facilities is provided in the Mobility Existing Conditions Report.

Pedestrian Facilities

Ventura's pedestrian system consists of sidewalks, access ramps, crosswalks, linear park paths, and overpasses and tunnels. Special corridors such as the Beachfront Promenade, California Plaza, and Figueroa Plaza have been designated especially for pedestrians. The pedestrian system also includes neighborhood and park path systems, and dedicated trail facilities that are shared with bicyclists. Based on current GIS resources, no maps are available for the sidewalk system.

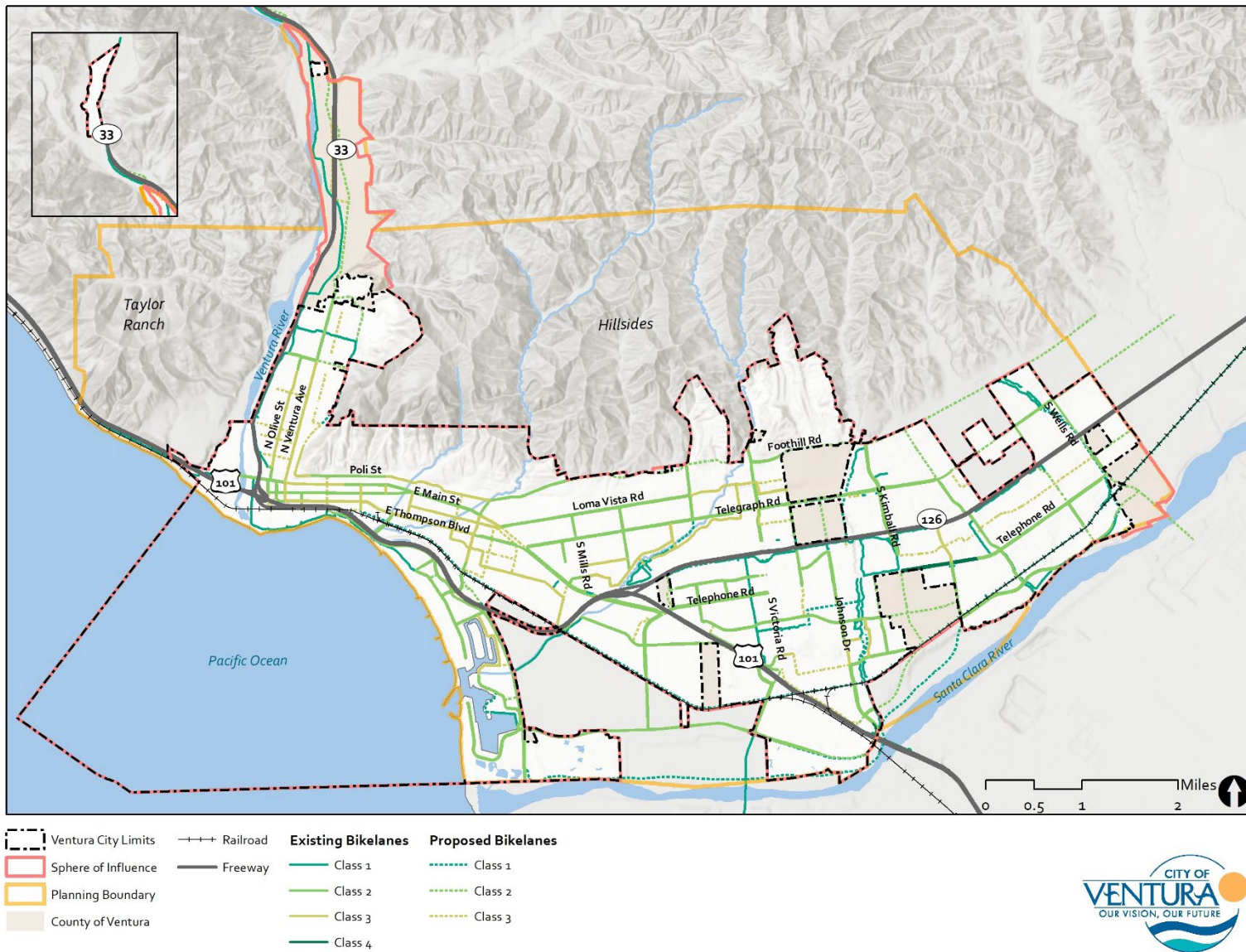
The California Streets and Highway Code § 5610 and Section 18.010.060 of the City's Municipal Code requires that all sidewalks be maintained by adjacent property owners. The City does provide a level of maintenance for sidewalks that addresses issues in the interest of public safety. However, the program is underfunded. The City's sidewalk maintenance program is based on an established priority system. The main objective of the current sidewalk maintenance plan is to prevent as many trip-and-fall incidents as possible with available funds.

According to the 2005 General Plan, the main deficiency of Ventura's pedestrian system is its discontinuity. Some sections of thoroughfares lack sidewalks, and pedestrian connections between key use areas need repair. Crosswalks are prohibited along some corridors, and pedestrian signal phases are not always long enough for all walkers. Traffic-calming measures also are needed to improve walkability in many neighborhoods. Citizens place a high emphasis on improving the pedestrian network, recommending specific improvements such as:

- Narrowing selected thoroughfare segment;
- Improving sidewalks and road crossings;
- Lengthening pedestrian signal phases;
- Adding marked crossings at key intersections;
- Developing safe and attractive walkways from Downtown and Midtown to the beach;
- Ensuring that new development provides ample pedestrian access;
- Creating trails along watercourses and through the hillsides; and
- Improving pedestrian facilities near schools.

Safety also remains a concern for pedestrians in Ventura. According to the Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), an average of 54 pedestrian injuries/fatalities occurs each year on Ventura roadways. Compared to 57 similar cities tracked by OTS, Ventura ranks the 10th lowest (least safe) for pedestrian injuries and fatalities. Similar to bicycle safety statistics, the highest number of collisions and associated injuries and fatalities occur in the Westside and Downtown subareas.

Figure 38. Existing and Proposed Bikeways



Public Facilities and Services

SB 1000 also requires local general plans to include goals, policies, and programs to promote the provision of public facilities in disadvantaged communities. This includes public improvements, public services, and community amenities, as defined in § 66000(d) of the Government Code. The range of facilities can be broad, from water services to libraries, and from community centers to hard infrastructure. Typical issues analyzed include the type, distribution, condition, and access to facilities.

Fire Services

The Ventura Fire Department (VFD) provides paramedic, fire prevention, fire suppression, hazardous materials inspection and response, ocean rescue, and urban search and rescue throughout the city. Ambulance service is provided by contract. The VFD is primarily responsible for initial response to the North Ventura Avenue area outside City Limits. General Plan Policy 7C calls for optimizing firefighting and emergency response capabilities.

The City has six fire stations, spread evenly throughout the community. The VFD's response objective is to achieve a target of 90 percent for emergency response arrival within 5 minutes. As of 2017, this standard is achieved 55 percent of the time throughout the community. The last station, Station 6, was built in 1988 when the VFD responded to 5,854 calls for service with 77 sworn field staff. In 2017, the VFD responded to 16,220 calls for service with 69 sworn field staff. With emergency response call loads increasing by 177% since 1988, and with a 10% workforce reduction, VFD staffing levels are inadequate. From 1980 to 2017, Ventura's population has increased from 73,774 to 111,085 (a 50% increase) and the projected population for 2020 was 123,397. In 2017 alone, Ventura Fire received 146 calls per 1,000 residents, compared to 95, 92, and 75 in nearby Thousand Oaks, Oxnard, and Simi Valley, respectively. The 2016 National Fire Experience Survey indicates the national median rate of firefighters per 1,000 population is 1.34, and regionally, the number of firefighters per 1,000 population is .99. Within the VFD, the rate of firefighters per 1,000 citizens is .61; as per the 2005 General Plan, the VFD in 2005 was operating at approximately .69 firefighters per 1,000 residents. The needed increase to fire services, as specified in the 2005 General Plan, did not occur; see 2005 General Plan Policy 7C (Optimize firefighting and emergency response capabilities) Action 7.13, "Resolve extended response time problems by adding a fire station at the Pierpoint/Harbor area" for more details.

In 2018 there were 2,516 residential units in development in the city. As these residential units are added and development continues in the city, there will be a significant impact to the Fire Department's already depleted resources. In addition, the VFD is tasked with completing annual state mandated inspections of occupancies (schools, apartments, hotels, motels, high-rises) along with performing construction inspections and plan reviews, complaint investigation inspections, defensible space inspections intended to reduce fuel load and mitigate risk in high and very high fire hazard areas of the City, and administering a hazardous materials enforcement program. As development occurs in the community and state mandated occupancies and other occupancies are added to the building stock, a sustained annual increase in Fire Prevention staff workload will occur. The VFD's occupancy inspection objectives, based on the National Fire Protection Association 1730 Standard, are to perform annual inspections of high-risk occupancies, two-year inspections of moderate hazard occupancies, and three-year inspections of lower risk occupancies in addition to performing other inspections and plan reviews as per this standard for construction, fire clearance, fire hazard reduction (defensible space), and hazardous materials inspections.

The recent fires in Ventura County, in particular the Thomas Fire, has underscored the issue of fire prevention and suppression efforts. The City's Fire Department staffing levels do not meet the recommendations provided in the Ventura Fire Department and Police Department Operational Details Report.

Police Services

Ventura Police Department (VPD) provides a variety of law enforcement services, including patrol, traffic enforcement, Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT), school resource officers, and investigations. Police response to calls are divided into 4 “beats,” each of which handle between 20,000 and 25,000 calls annually, with the greatest number in the Westside. General Plan Policy 7.16 sets for the City’s commitment to “improve community safety through enhanced police service.”

Beginning in 2009, the number of authorized officers funded fell to 122, for a ratio of 1 officer per 878 residents. The City subsequently experienced a 24 percent increase in violent crime, as well as substantial increases in gang activity and other criminal behavior between 2010 and 2011. Staffing levels have been increased since then. For FY 2017-18, the city has a ratio of 1 officer per 842 residents. From 2018-19 crime fell 13 percent and average response times improved across all priority levels.

Emergency response to public safety is an utmost priority for the City. The VPD’s response objective is to achieve a target of 90 percent for arrival on scene for emergency and in-process calls within 5 minutes. Since 2014, achievement of this goal has declined from 74 percent to 50 percent last year. In addition, the city has the highest per capita number of Part 1 calls countywide. Additional efforts are underway to study changes in operations to further improve service levels.

Until recently, making tangible improvements in police and fire service has been constrained by funding. In 2016, the city passed Measure O, a 25-year, 1/2 cent transaction and use tax that will raise nearly \$10 million annually. Significant funds have already been earmarked for fire and police protection services in an effort to raise the level of services to all subareas in the community.

Libraries

Ventura County Library System operates four public libraries in the city. In May 2012, the City adopted a Library Strategic Plan, which identified a five-year plan for enhancing current services and facilities. The Saticoy Library, within the City’s sphere of influence, opened in 2015 and likely serves city residents within the eastern part of the city, an area designated as a disadvantaged community according to LAFCO.

The Ventura College Library serves the students, faculty, and staff of the college districts and the general public. The College Library serves a student population of 10,500, 625 faculty, and is open to the community as well. In support of academic curriculum, the library holds within its collection 63,529 book volumes, 341 periodical titles, and 142 microfilm titles. It also provides access to several online databases.

Chapter 8 of the General Plan, Our Educated Community, articulates the City’s goal to encourage academic excellence and lifelong learning resources to promote a highly educated citizenry. Providing library services is an important means to further the ends of the General Plan.

Three specific policies relate to library service:

- Policy 8A: Reach out to institutions and educators to advance lifelong learning.
- Policy 8B: Increase the availability and diversity of learning resources.
- Policy 8C: Reshape public libraries as 21st Century learning centers.

The Ventura Library Strategic Plan (2012) is the implementing arm of the library system for the community. This strategic plan sets forth the goal of continuing to provide library service in the community, including the Westside and Saticoy subareas. The plan also seeks to develop additional creative means to expand access to libraries and educational services to all segments of the Ventura community.

Health Care Facilities

Ventura offers a range of health facilities—hospitals, urgent care facilities, and community and specialty clinics. Facilities include: a private hospital (Community Memorial Hospital), a public hospital (Ventura County Medical), a psychiatric hospital, two federally qualified health centers (in Westside and Saticoy), and Kaiser offices. Supplemental health facilities include home health agencies, hospices, intermediate care facilities for disabled, skilled nursing facilities, urgent care facilities, etc. These facilities are spread throughout the city.

The General Plan, Policy 7A, is to encourage wellness through care and prevention. As discussed earlier in this report, with the wealth of health care services in the community, there is no shortage of health care professionals in mental health, dental, or primary care. Lower cost clinics are also available in the community where there is a high prevalence of low income and uninsured residents.

Image 7. Rehabilitated Community Memorial Hospital



Source: Community Memorial Health System

Water and Sanitation

The City provides retail water service within its jurisdictional boundaries, as well as to the unincorporated areas of Saticoy, and North Ventura Avenue. The City water system is a geographically complex system of 16 pressure zones, 10 active wells, 19 booster stations, approximately 385 miles of pipelines, three purification facilities, and a total storage capacity of approximately 52 million gallons (MG) in 27 tanks and reservoirs. Water sources for the City include the Casitas Municipal Water District, the Ventura River, groundwater, and recycled water. The western portion of the City is within the service area of the Casitas Municipal Water District, which provides wholesale water to the City. Water service is provided to all residential, commercial, industrial, and irrigation customers, including fire protection users.

The City and The Saticoy Club are co-owners of the Saticoy Country Club (SCC) water system, a separate water system which serves the SCC water service area. The SCC water service area receives water from the Las Posas Groundwater Basin.

The City provides wastewater conveyance and treatment services to 98 percent of the residents within the city, limited areas outside the city within Ventura County Service Area No. 29, and services previously provided by the Montalvo Community Services District. The City may eventually assume water treatment services from the Saticoy Sanitary District upon annexation of Saticoy. The City's wastewater collection system consists of approximately 300 miles of gravity sewers, 10 miles of force mains, 11 lift stations, and the Ventura Water Reclamation Facility for wastewater treatment and reclamation.

The General Plan has limited policy guidance for water and sanitation. While most areas of the city are served, a key issue is maintenance and rehabilitation of infrastructure. In response, the City takes a proactive approach to ensure safe, clean, affordable, and reliable water and wastewater services through the following actions:

- **Safe & Clean Water.** The City complies with local, state, and federal water regulations and has plans to improve its secondary water quality standards.

- **Reliability.** The City has a diverse water supply portfolio but it is vulnerable to regulatory, operational, legal, and other challenges. The City therefore is pursuing drought resilient water supply (VenturaWaterPure) and a backup supply (State Water Interconnection Project). These two projects will further diversify the City's water supply portfolio and improve disaster resiliency and are further discussed in the Water Resources chapter.
- **Affordability.** Every five years, the City conducts a water and wastewater cost of service study to continue to ensure fair and equitable rates across all customer classes. In the 2020 to 2021 rate study, residential water tiers wastewater flow caps, and other rate components were redesigned to keep essential water use affordable. Rates generated also fund maintenance and rehab of infrastructure to ensure reliability for all customers. The City also offers a Customer Assistance Program that provides a discount on the water service charge for eligible households.

The City's Water and Wastewater Master Plans are currently being updated and will be completed at the end of 2021. They will be informed by the issues identified in the 2020-2026 Capital Improvement Plan,²² adopted March 30, 2020, including:

- **Water.** "The economy and quality of life in Ventura are dependent on a reliable water supply. A number of challenges face Ventura's existing water supplies including changes in precipitation, lower groundwater availability due to management changes required by the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), and water supply limitations associated with environmental protections. The City continues to promote water conservation as a way of life and is continuing a program to replace meters with advanced metering infrastructure. Southern California Edison's Public Safety Power Shutdown policy has created the need to increase system redundancy. Replacing aging infrastructure and meeting increasingly stringent water quality and regulatory requirements for drinking water continue to challenge the utility. The focus of this CIP is to increase system reliability by adding water supply sources that are not dependent on local climatic conditions, adding pipelines to provide operational flexibility in the utilization of supply sources, adding additional generators and other improvements for use during power shutdowns, continuing to replace aging infrastructure, and completing installation of the advanced metering infrastructure."
- **Wastewater.** "The rapid evolution of regulatory requirements and associated legal challenges, aging wastewater infrastructures, and the search for operational and energy efficiencies are all factors driving fundamental changes in the long-term capital program. By terms of a settlement agreement, the City will be working to expand its reclaimed water program to reuse this valuable resource to decrease the amount of water released into the Santa Clara River Estuary. The reuse of wastewater will help address anticipated future drinking water supply constraints from environmental needs as well as impacts of climate change. With the average age of over 60 years, much of the collection system pipeline will be nearing the end of its useful life in the next 20 years. Rising energy costs associated with meeting plant processing needs, along with future effluent and sludge disposal requirements, are also major elements in the development of this capital improvement program."

²² Feasibility Study Pursuant to Senate Bill 244 For Unincorporated Saticoy, City of Ventura, 2012. Available at: <https://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1413/Feasibility-Study-Pursuant-to-Senate-Bill-244-for-Unincorporated-Saticoy-PDF>.

Transit Accessibility and Availability

As many of the City's public facilities are spread throughout the city to serve the community, the ability to access these facilities via transit is important for residents who do not own a vehicle or choose not to drive. Transit service in Ventura includes primarily bus routes, although rail service via Metrolink and Amtrak is also available. See Transportation and Mobility report. The City of Ventura does not provide public transit services. Instead, transit services are provided by three entities:

- **Local Service.** Gold Coast Transit District (GCTD). The GCTD's service area includes the cities of Ojai, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, and San Buenaventura, as well as the unincorporated County area.
- **Regional Service.** VCTC Intercity (formerly or VISTA) provides an intercity bus service between the cities in Ventura County, and to communities in Los Angeles and Santa Barbara counties.
- **ACCESS/Dial-A-Ride.** GCTP operates GO ACCESS, which provides transit for people with disabilities that prevent from using fixed-route bus service. ACCESS serves the cities of Ojai, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, and Ventura.

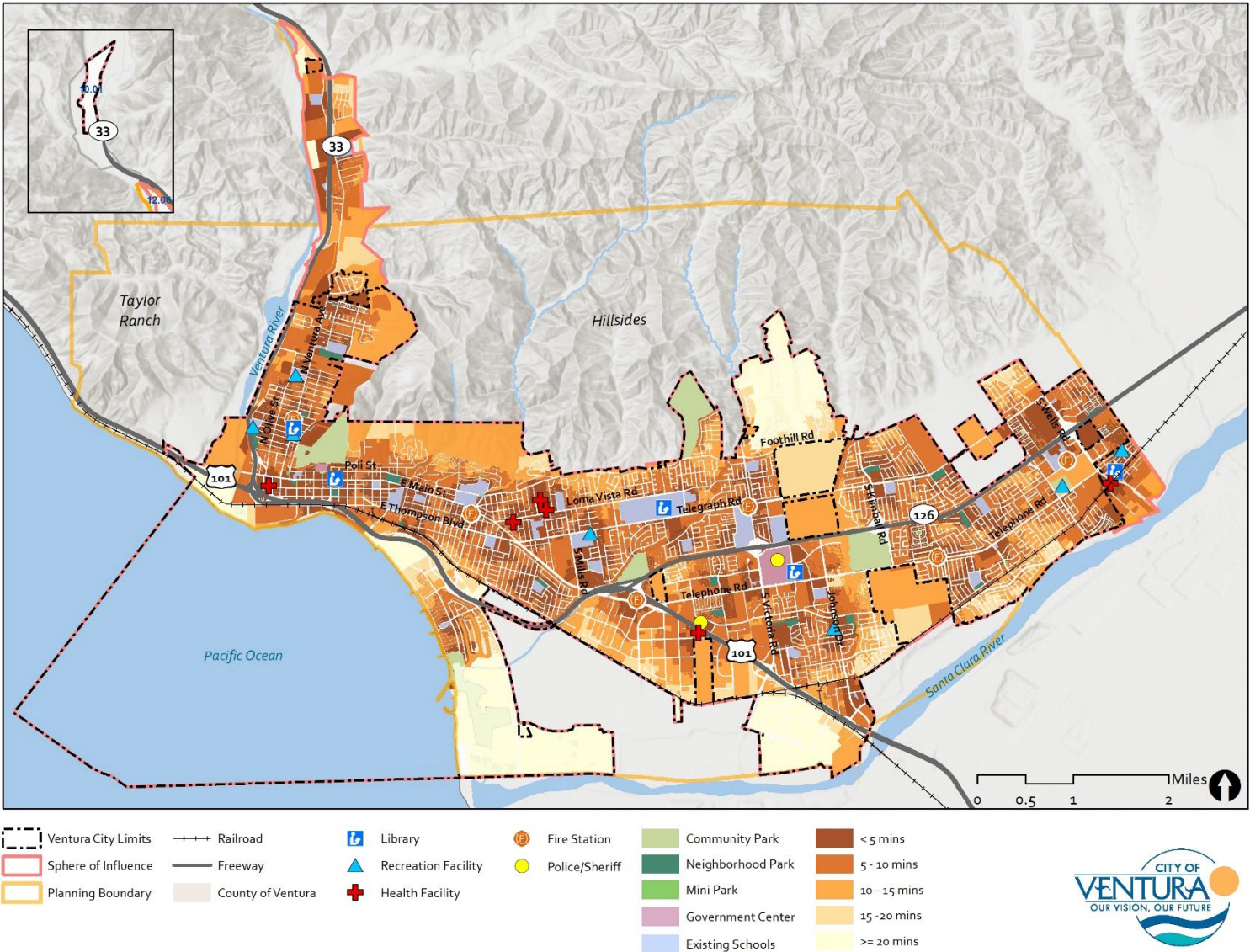
While most areas of the city are served by public transit, there is limited frequency on key arterials and corridors. There are opportunities for improved service frequencies as identified by GCTD's Short Range Transit Plan adopted by the GCTD Board in 2015. Additionally, while the City does not provide public transit, it owns and maintains transit facilities. There are opportunities for improvements to transit facilities as well completing sidewalks, improving lighting, and expanding passenger waiting areas to make transit use more attractive. A good example of this is currently under design for the Wells Road / Citrus Rd (Well Center).

In areas well-served for public transit, residents have access to many parks, libraries, health care, and other facilities in Ventura. Figure 39. Public Facilities & Services, and Figure 40. Transit Accessibility to Public Facilities & Services, illustrate the location of public facilities and accessibility to transit services.

Figure 39. Public Facilities & Services



Figure 40. Transit Accessibility to Public Facilities & Services



Data Sources: City of Ventura (2020); County of Ventura (2020); ESRI (2020)



Safe and Sanitary Housing

Over the past decade, there has been increasing awareness of the importance of safe and sanitary housing to the quality of life experienced by residents and a community as a whole. The healthy homes movement is a concept that promotes safe, decent, and sanitary housing as a means for preventing disease, injury, and illness. It seeks to reduce conditions of asthma, lead poisoning, and unintentional injuries caused by unsafe, unsanitary, and substandard housing. Table 9, Common Housing Conditions, provides descriptions of typical unhealthy housing conditions and their adverse health effects.

Table 9. Common Housing Hazards

Health Hazards	Typical Sources of Health Hazards at Home	Sample of Adverse Health Effect
Radon, VOC, Asbestos	Underground gas, paints, flooring, and other chemically treated surfaces	Lung cancer
Pests, Mold, Mildew	Leaking plumbing systems, poor ventilation, poor heating/cooling, etc.	Respiratory disease/illness
Physical Defects	Condition of electrical, heating, fire, plumbing, and other building systems	Injuries and potential fatalities
Over-crowding	Too many individuals living per habitable rooms in a home	Poor living conditions
Substandard Housing	This includes lack of kitchens, heat, or complete plumbing facilities	Injuries and illness
Lead Exposure	Lead-based paint, lead from older water pipes, soil, and other sources	Learning disabilities; poor physical health
Smoking	Tobacco smoke or poorly designed fireplaces or furnaces	Respiratory Disease; Lung Cancer

The American Housing Survey is the most authoritative source of housing conditions in California, but the information is not available for smaller areas, such as the City of Ventura. The Census Bureau does not include questions on the number of substandard housing units. However, inferences can be made based on the prevalence of lack of heating, incomplete plumbing or kitchens, and overcrowding.

Radon Gas

Radon gas is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that is colorless and odorless. It forms from the radioactive decay of small amounts of uranium naturally present in rocks and soils. Breathing air with an elevated level of radon gas can result in an increased risk of lung cancer. Radon gas typically moves from the soil into buildings through cracks in slabs or basement walls, pores, and cracks in concrete blocks, and through floor-wall joints and openings around pipes. Limited tests have shown no elevated levels of radon in homes in Ventura.

Volatile Organic Compounds

Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are emitted as gases from certain solids or liquids. VOCs include a variety of chemicals, some of which may have short- and long-term adverse health effects. VOCs are emitted by thousands of products. Paints, varnishes, wax all contain organic solvents, as do many cleaning, disinfecting, cosmetic, degreasing, and hobby products. Treated furnishings and carpets can also contain VOCs. Currently, there are no datasets available from which to estimate the incidence of VOCs in homes in communities across California.

Smoking

Secondhand smoke is a serious health hazard, particularly for children living in a home where residents smoke. No information is available on the prevalence of units affected by smoking. The problem is also associated with multiple-family units (apartments and condominiums) where smoke from a unit drifts into adjacent units. While all public housing units in Ventura are required to be smoke-free, this prohibition does not apply to privately owned housing. Pursuant to SB 332 (adopted in 2012), landlords are allowed to adopt a smoke-free policy for apartments. The Towbes Group have adopted a smoke-free policy in the three apartment projects (nearly 500 units) located in Ventura.

Lead Hazards

The Health and Safety Code declares that lead exposure is the most significant childhood environmental health problem within California. Lead hazards are a significant concern as there are no safe levels. Lead can be present in housing, particularly those built prior to 1978, when lead paint was banned by the federal government. Similarly lead can be found in deteriorated older pipes that contained lead materials. Lead can also be found in soil due to leaded gasoline that was banned by the federal government in 1996 but is still present in soil. In California, lead testing is only required for low-income children receiving certain state or federal funding; testing of all children and youth is not required.

The California Department of Housing and Community Development recommends assessing the age of housing and it is common practice in the field of health assessment to identify housing built prior to 1980 as a potential source of lead hazards for young children, particularly in low-income areas. Figure 41 shows the age of all housing in Ventura. While housing built prior to 1980 is located throughout Ventura, the lowest income areas—below \$65,760—have the highest concentration of housing built prior to 1940. These include the Westside, Downtown, Southeast/Montalvo, and Eastside/Saticoy subareas. Areas with the second lowest income—in the range of \$65,761 to \$78,240, which is still below the low-income threshold for the disadvantaged communities screening required by SB 1000—have the highest concentration of housing built between 1940 and 1960. Areas that are not low-income—in the range above \$76,801—have the least concentration of housing built prior to 1980.

Physical Defects in Housing and Property Maintenance

Substandard housing is a blighting influence for many communities. However, there are few universal definitions of substandard housing adopted in California and most cities do not track these conditions. One common measure of substandard housing is units that lack complete plumbing, lack kitchens, or lack heat/cooling. Currently, about 0.3 percent of all homes lack complete plumbing, 2.1 percent lack full kitchens, and 3.0 percent lack heating fuel. These conditions are often found in older homes built before 1940, where current building standards or in unpermitted additions do not apply. Housing in the Westside, Downtown, Saticoy, and Eastside/Juanamaria subareas have the highest prevalence of housing conditions mentioned above, as seen in Figure 42 and Figure 43.

Overcrowding

Overcrowding occurs when housing costs are so high relative to income that families “double or triple” up to devote income to other basic needs, like food and medical care. Overcrowding also tends to result in accelerated deterioration of homes, a shortage of street parking, increased strain on public infrastructure, and additional traffic. According to the ACS, a household is overcrowded if there are more than 1.0 occupants per room and severely overcrowded if there are more than 1.5 occupants per room.

As shown in Table 10, nearly 4 percent of all households in Ventura are overcrowded, including approximately 1 percent of owner-occupied households and 7 percent of renter-occupied households. Renter households were also more likely to be severely overcrowded.

Table 10. Overcrowding by Household (HH) Tenure

	Renter		Owner		Total Households	
	Number	% of Renter HH	Number	% of Owner HH	Number	% of all HH
Overcrowding	1,290	6.8%	280	1.3%	1,570	3.8%
Severely Overcrowded	485	2.6%	50	0.2%	535	1.3%

Source: American Community Survey 2014-2018 5-year estimates

As expected, the prevalence of overcrowding is much higher in lower-income areas. Figure 44 shows census tracts by prevalence of overcrowding; subareas in which it nears 10 percent include the Westside, Saticoy, and portions of Eastside/Juanamaria and Southeast/Montalvo. For more discussion of housing conditions, see the Housing Needs Report.

Figure 41. Age of Housing

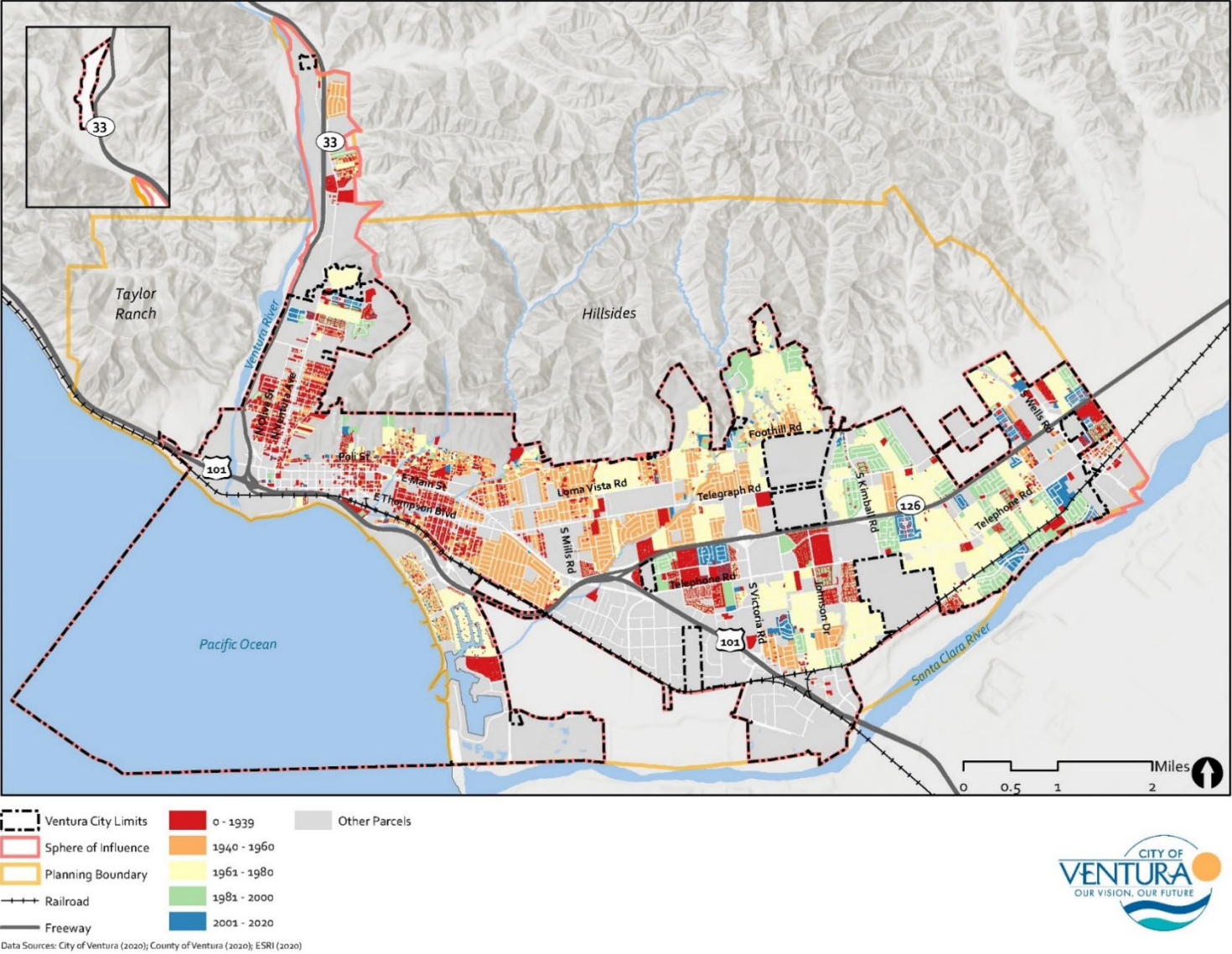


Figure 42. Housing without Kitchen Facilities

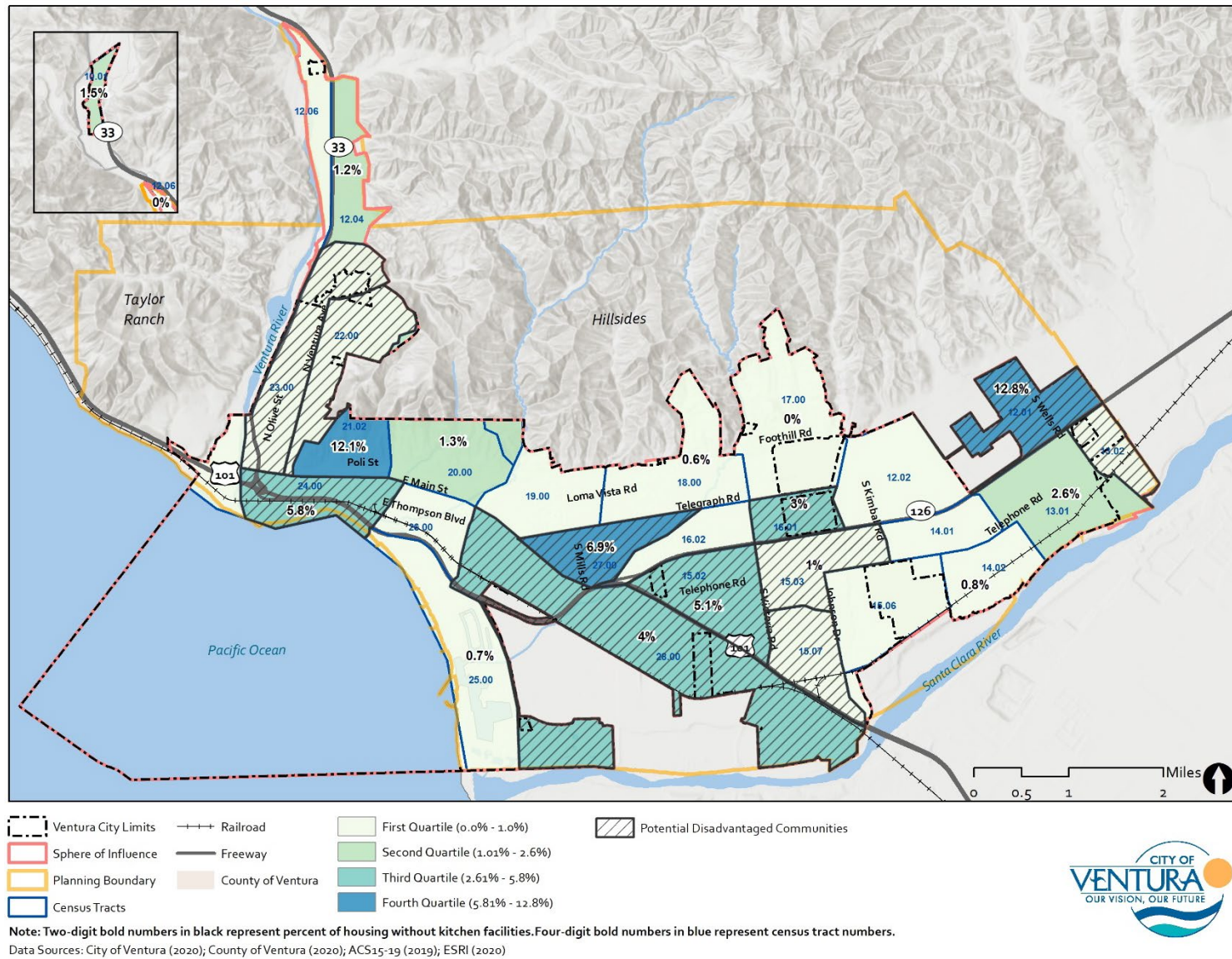
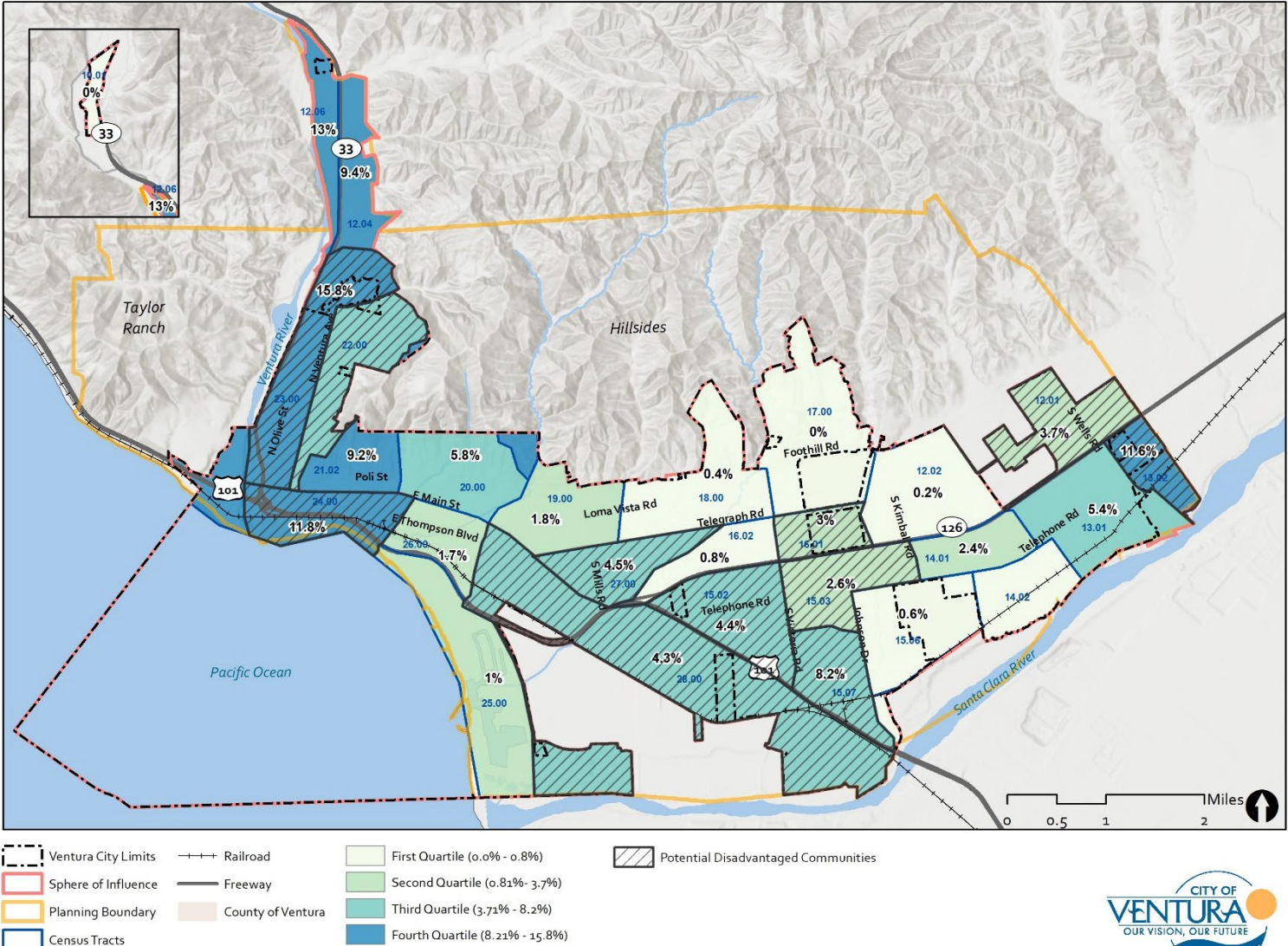


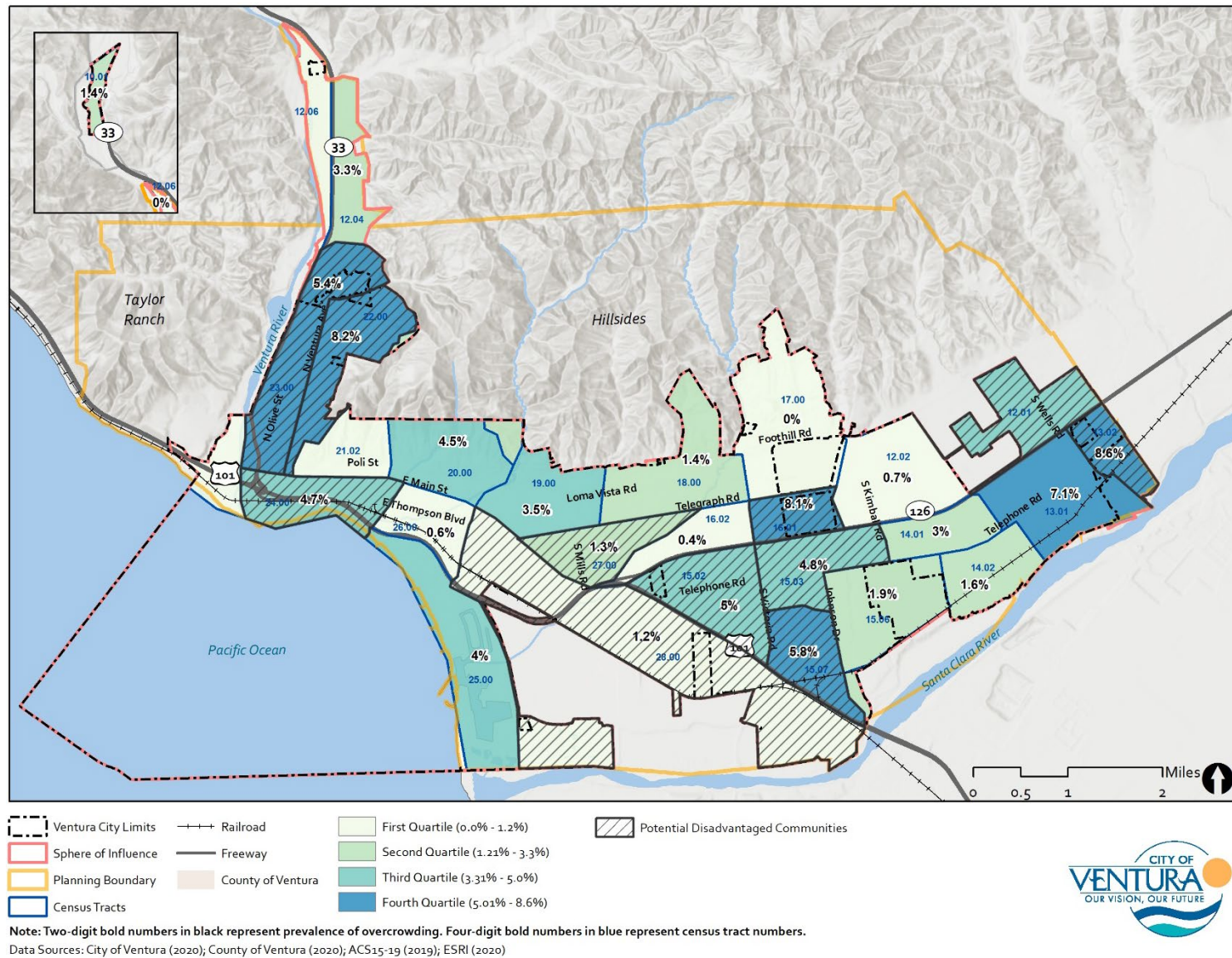
Figure 43. Housing without Heating Fuel



Note: Two-digit bold numbers in black represent percent of housing without heating. Four-digit bold numbers in blue represent census tract numbers.
 Data Sources: City of Ventura (2020); County of Ventura (2020); ACS15-19 (2019); ESRI (2020)



Figure 44. Prevalence of Overcrowding



Sample of Local Policies and Programs

The Ventura General Plan, Housing Element, sets forth goals and policies regarding ensuring the availability and affordability of decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the community. This state-mandated chapter of the General Plan sets the City's goals, policies, and programs for ensuring that housing meets the needs of Ventura residents.

Image 8. Housing Rehabilitation Efforts in Ventura



Goal 1, Housing Conservation, states the City's commitment to: Maintain and improve the quality of existing housing and residential neighborhoods in Ventura. It is supported by the following policies:

- Policy 1.1: Encourage citizen involvement in addressing the maintenance and improvement of the housing stock and neighborhood quality.
- Policy 1.2: Continue to preserve and maintain the city's historical and architecturally significant buildings and neighborhoods.
- Policy 1.3: Encourage the maintenance of properties in sound condition through residential rehabilitation assistance programs and code enforcement/neighborhood preservation efforts.
- Policy 1.4: Cooperate with housing providers in the acquisition, rehabilitation, and maintenance of residential properties as long-term affordable housing.

To advance these policies, the City has implemented four programs described in the 2014-2021 Housing Element and Housing Element Technical Report, some of which are currently not active:

- **Housing Preservation Program (HPP).** "The HPP program provides low-interest loans to eligible homeowners to make necessary repairs, which may include plumbing/sewer, electrical, re-roofing, termite damage repair, structural repairs, and kitchen and bathroom remodeling. The City's approach is to educate and provide awareness rather than being punitive. This approach has been very effective, usually resulting in compliance with a single letter."²³ The HPP has not been in effect for many years.
- **Code Enforcement.** "The Code Enforcement Division works with residents, business owners, and neighborhood and professional associations to respond to complaints of violations that include substandard buildings, property maintenance, inoperative vehicles, weed abatement, land use and other violations. When violations are identified, the responsible parties are contacted and requested to abate the conditions. Failure to correct violations could result in a citation or a referral to the City Attorney's office."²⁴
- **Mobile Home Rehabilitation Grant Program (MHRGP).** The CDBG-funded MHRGP issues an average of 15 forgivable loans each year to income-eligible owner-occupants for mobile home rehabilitation activities.

²³ City of Ventura 2014-2021 Housing Element Technical Report, Adopted by City Council September 16, 2013 and Amended October 2017.

²⁴ City of Ventura Code Enforcement Division Page available at:

<https://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/320/Code-Enforcement>

- **Rental Acquisition and Rehabilitation Program.** Under this program, the City assists eligible nonprofit organizations or public agencies with acquiring and rehabilitating deteriorating and/or problem properties. After rehabilitation, affordability restrictions are placed on units.

Despite these efforts, the need for housing rehabilitation far exceeds available funding given cutbacks in federal and state grants for housing rehabilitation. The City's code enforcement efforts continue to address property and housing maintenance issues citywide and in focused neighborhoods. The City also implements broader improvement projects for neighborhoods.

Ventura County administers additional programs to address health problems such as ones due to lead-based paint. All homes built before 1978 likely have some degree of lead paint hazards. Ventura has one of the oldest housing stocks in the county. As part of the recent 2018 settlement of the Sherwin-Williams and ConAgra lead paint lawsuit, Ventura County will be receiving millions in settlement funds earmarked for abating lead paint hazards. Additional housing programs administered by Ventura County are described in their Housing Element.

Civic Engagement

Ventura is known for its robust efforts to diligently seek the input of the community regarding matters affecting their health, safety, and welfare. The City's General Plan is unique in that few general plans in the state of California have dedicated a separate element for community involvement. Chapter 10, Our Involved Community, is anchored around the goal to work together as a community to achieve the Ventura Vision through civic engagement, partnerships, and volunteer service.

The vision of an involved community was described in the Ventura Vision report as: seeking “broad community collaboration; more widely publicizing city government services, planning processes, and policies; better involvement of typically under-represented groups such as youth, seniors, and ethnic minorities in community planning; and developing public parks, plazas, neighborhood greenways, and other spaces that promote civic interaction and events.”

The Element is anchored by three policies:

- Policy 10A: Work collaboratively to increase citizen participation in public affairs.
- Policy 10B: Raise awareness of City operations and be clear about City objectives.
- Policy 10C: Work at the neighborhood level to promote citizen engagement.

Key programs to advance the City's civic engagement goals include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Seven (7) community councils
- Fifteen (15) appointed or elected committees/commissions
- District-based voting to ensure broad-based citizen representation
- Public records online portal
- City Council agenda and staff report online portal
- Outreach efforts undertaken for planning initiatives
- Public outreach specialists in City departments

Ventura's commitment to civic engagement extends to its general plan. The City of Ventura is currently embarking on a General Plan Update to address changes in needs and policy direction desired since the last plan was adopted in 2005. City staff has commenced in soliciting community input and reflection on the current Community Vision and General Plan to reaffirm or further develop the Community Vision, Goals, Policies, and Actions for the next 25 years.

Image 9. Civic Engagement in the Classroom
[Ask for confirmation from City]



Chapter 7. Conclusion

This chapter summarizes requirements of Senate Bill 1000, provides a preliminary determination of the presence of disadvantaged communities in the City of Ventura, and describes issues and opportunities for consideration as part of the General Plan Update arising from this report.

Compliance with Senate Bill 1000

This Environmental Justice and Health Assessment (report) is intended as a first step in addressing the requirements of SB 1000, the Planning for Healthy Communities Act. Effective 2018, this legislation requires the inclusion of health and environmental justice goals, policies, and programs as part of the update of a comprehensive general plan. This legislation was intended to set in motion a framework for cities to begin incorporating responsive ways to reduce the unique compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities and improve quality of life overall.

Subsequent to preparation of the first draft of this report by PlaceWorks in early 2019, the California Office of Planning and Research (OPR) released final guidelines in summer 2020 for how to address environmental justice in general plans. These guidelines address legislative priorities to promote public facilities, food access, safe and sanitary homes, physical activity, and civic engagement while reducing pollution exposure and other environmental hazards. They outline recommended methods for identification of disadvantaged communities and include several recommended metrics, datasets, resources, and case studies for jurisdictions to consider in addressing the required topics, per the legislative priorities of SB 1000. This report has been revised with attention to these latest guidelines.

It is recognized that no single report can study all issues present in the city. This chapter, therefore, raises opportunities for consideration based on the analysis contained in the report. The City has initiated an outreach program to seek public input that will build upon the findings of this report and offer ideas about how to integrate environmental justice concerns into the General Plan Update.

Disadvantaged Communities

Four methods recommended by OPR were used to conduct a technical screening for disadvantaged communities in Ventura: (1) use CES to examine whether then planning area contains census tracts have a combined score of 75% or higher; (2) Map the household median incomes by census tract in the planning area at or below the statewide median income and examine for disproportionate pollution burden; (3) Map the household median incomes by census tract in the planning area at or below the Department of Housing and Community Development's state income limits and examine for disproportionate pollution burden; and (4) Incorporate an analyze community-specific data and examine for additional pollution burden and health risk factors.

The results of methods 1-3, summarized in the Results for City of Ventura section of Chapter 3. Disadvantaged Communities, show that eleven census tracts are Potential DACs in the planning area. Chapters 4-6 included an overlay of these eleven Potential DACs for several indicators considered. The findings from those analyses confirm the eleven Potential DACs as areas with cumulative environmental burdens that may be impacting community health. The City is therefore required to comply with SB 1000.

While these Potential DACs have been screened with the best available data, significant gaps exist in such sources. For example, census tract 21.02 in the Downtown subarea (Figure 4.5), which was identified as a low-income area, was found to face several health hazards and census tract 25.00 in the Marina and Pierpont

subareas was found to have several scores exceeding the 75th percentile in CES 3.0 but not found to be low-income or have high concentrations of vulnerable or sensitive populations.²⁵ Therefore, it will be necessary to continue the DAC screening process through the engagement activities of the General Plan and to ensure that community members and other stakeholders, particularly those from areas identified as potential DACs, can shape the priorities for each area of the city.

Opportunities to Consider

In updating the general plan, SB 1000 will require the City to address, at minimum, the following: objectives and policies to reduce the unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities; objectives and policies to promote civil engagement in the public decision-making process; and objectives and policies that prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities. The following sections describe how these objectives can be addressed throughout the general plan.

General Plan Vision

The 2005 General Plan was founded on a product and process called “Vision Ventura.” In 2000, the Vision declared that in order to remain successful, Ventura must periodically renew itself, re-examine its goals, and create a shared vision to guide the community. The Ventura Vision was meant to serve as the shared vision for the community. This vision was built from four principles and expressed in four domains (e.g., environmental, economic, social, and planning and design). Goals and policies were then developed for each element to achieve the vision.

The Ventura Vision includes items that naturally fall within the rubric of environmental justice, social equity, and sustainability. Beyond the topic of improving access to city services and overall quality of life, however, there is no discussion of improving or prioritizing “population health” or its critical link to the physical environment. Since one’s health is a prerequisite to fully enjoying the benefits Ventura offers, it may be appropriate to consider supplementing the Ventura Vision to clearly articulate the theme of environmental justice and health.

General Plan Policies and Programs

While the City of Ventura’s general plan provides policy guidance that is applicable to SB 1000, the practice of environmental justice has greatly evolved since the general plan was prepared in 2005. Singular policies of that day (e.g., making housing safer or addressing food insecurity) have evolved into comprehensive frameworks. In other cases, the regulatory frameworks and technology underpinning such topics have changed, all of which should influence general plan content.

As Ventura embarks on its General Plan Update, the general plan will need to contain an integrated set of goals, policies, and programs to address environmental justice in accordance with state law. City may also choose to add additional topics of concern beyond those explicitly stated in SB 1000. Considerations for mandated topics follow.

Safe and Sanitary Homes

Traditionally, the topic of housing is primarily addressed through the Land Use and Housing Elements. Because of state mandates, the primary focus of the housing element is often affordable housing. In the past decade, however, there has been a surge of interest in the concept of “healthy” housing and its relationship

²⁵ Note that Figure 46 shows census tract 12.06 which is excluded from the analysis of SB 1000 because it does not have population within the City Limits.

to health and environmental justice. Under the federal Healthy People 2020 framework, the quality of housing is a key domain within the social determinants of health.

As the field of safe and sanitary housing has expanded into the arena of social determinants of health, so has its focus. Safe and sanitary housing is no longer viewed as simply ensuring structural safety. Housing is viewed within a broader set of factors—including its affordability (“housing security”), its physical design, presence of contaminants (e.g., lead, mold, smoke, chemicals), and the condition of its neighborhood. Including a focus on age-appropriate housing, in the design and type of housing, should also be a priority for the General Plan Update.

Food Access

Food access is often not addressed to a great degree in general plans. While some general plans forage into the subject of community gardens or address the food environment through land use policy, it is rare. However, the topic of food access involves more than simply being able to access a grocery store. It involves the affordability of food, the availability of culturally appropriate food choices, the convenient access to food, and availability of nutritious food options. The food environment sometimes extends to beverages, including alcohol.

The Ventura General Plan provides limited guidance on food access, though state and federal governmental agencies play a stronger role. Moreover, other community institutions (schools, nonprofits, and other groups) provide a wealth of opportunities for residents of all ages and income levels to obtain food. As the City seeks to update its general plan, it can provide focused policy to support these efforts, partner with community-based organizations at the program level, and, where feasible, include City-initiated programs where City action is desired.

Physical Activity

Ventura is known for its active living environment. While Ventura has more limited neighborhood parks, the combination of beaches, hills, and bike routes provide additional opportunities for physical activity. The City also partners with schools to provide afterschool opportunities for parks and recreation. In addition, active living can be improved in other ways, including reducing the incidence of on-street bicycle and pedestrian accidents, and repairing and installing sidewalks citywide. The current General Plan supports these and other similar efforts.

Over the past decade, the AARP and the World Health Organization have sensitized civic leaders regarding how residents of different age levels—from children to seniors—have diverse needs. Among many others, one such arena is physical activity and recreation. As the general plan is updated, consideration should be given to integrating policies and programs that not only continue to build upon the recreational assets provided in Ventura, but that are also age friendly. Simply put, the general plan can adopt an “age lens” that invokes consideration of all ages—from birth to death—in the design and current operation of programs, services, and policies throughout Ventura.

Environmental Pollution

Exposure to pollution is a reality for communities of all sizes and types. Pollution exposure occurs daily in virtually every community when people come into direct contact with air, food, water, and soil contaminants. Historically, certain communities in Ventura have borne a greater concentration of polluting land uses. However, most areas of the of the city face some level of pollution exposure. SB 1000 was intended to address disadvantaged communities but protection from pollution exposure is arguably a right, regardless of community status.

With the update to the general plan, goals and policies will need to be drafted to protect residents, business, and visitors from exposure to pollution. Such efforts must target individual sources of pollution and contaminants from groundwater, the air, transportation sources, point sources, and specific industries. Among others, these may include: land use incompatibilities through the potential separation of incompatible land uses; mitigation of situations where sources of pollution currently affect sensitive land uses (housing, schools, parks, medical facilities, etc.); working with responsible parties to ensure cleanup and remediation of existing sources of pollution in a timely manner; and enforcing existing regulations from the initial permitting of facilities to the proper operation of facilities to prevent pollution.

Public Facilities and Services

Ventura provides a broad range of facilities and services, including water services, sanitation, libraries, community centers, art and culture, roads, and others. The City also provides public safety services, such as police and fire service. The quality of these is what distinguishes Ventura from other municipalities and are what residents associate with quality of life. Issues germane to policies to promote public services and facilities should focus on the availability, type, distribution, condition, and access to such public facilities and services.

While the City provides an ample level of public services, additional focus can be placed on ensuring residents in all subareas have equal access to equivalent services. Moreover, focus should be placed on addressing disadvantaged unincorporated communities in the SOI. This includes areas within the Saticoy subarea. Finally, broader funding solutions can be explored to increase the level of community services provided on a citywide basis, particularly for services that have been historically underfunded or where extenuating situations merit greater attention and focus than in past years.

Civic Engagement

A key principle is involving the communities most impacted by pollution so that they can have a say in the decisions that impact their health and well-being. SB 1000 requires local jurisdictions to promote “civil engagement in the public decision-making process.” Input from the community is important because residents can bring knowledge, information, and ideas for consideration to City staff. Community members that are affected by environmental issues on the ground can share their firsthand knowledge of the problems and can provide leadership on the solutions, which can lead to more effective planning decisions to remedy those burdens. The City’s Community Development Department has initiated the City’s General Plan Update. The intent of this process is to lay out how the City may meet its growth demand and future needs sustainably with adequate services, water supply and infrastructure while responding to state mandates regarding housing, climate change and environmental justice among other topics. The process for public input and its relationship to the general plan are illustrated in the following graphic and will have several opportunities for community members and stakeholders to influence identification of DACs, health and environmental justice priorities, and related policies and goals.

Figure 45. Conclusion: Additional DAC Considerations

