

GOAL EJ-4. SAFE & SANITARY HOMES

Healthy and safe living conditions for people of all backgrounds and incomes.

Housing conditions in Environmental Justice Communities can negatively impact residents' health due to factors like poor indoor air quality, toxic materials, extreme temperatures, inadequate ventilation, and structural instability. Older housing, common in Environmental Justice Communities, increases the risk of exposure to lead, asbestos, and other hazardous materials. Additional issues such as overcrowding further contribute to unsafe living conditions. Affordable housing also plays a critical role in maintaining safe homes, as financial strain often leaves families unable to afford repairs or other essentials like healthcare and nutritious food. The policies and actions in this section of the Environmental Justice Element are primarily focused on the issues of resident safety and health in housing. Topics such as affordable housing, financial assistance, housing development, accessory dwelling units, housing design standards, and equal housing are further discussed and addressed in the Housing Element of this General Plan.

Key Takeaways From Existing Conditions Report

HOUSING STOCK CONDITIONS

A large proportion of housing stock that is over 30 years old typically indicates that most of the City's housing stock could require major rehabilitation. This does not include properties within historic districts that have been well-preserved. According to the City of Glendale 2021-2029 Housing Element, only about a third of the housing in Glendale is less than 50 years old; 36.6% of units were built in 1970 or later. The majority (63.4%) of housing units were built prior to 1970, with 30.6% built prior to 1950.

OVERCROWDING

The U.S. Census defines overcrowded households as more than one occupant per room (excluding bathrooms, kitchens, hallways, and porches). The City of Glendale 2021-2029 Housing Element reported that about 3.1% of owner-occupied homes and 6.6% of renter-occupied homes are overcrowded, and a total of 5.5% of all households in Glendale are overcrowded.

COST BURDEN

A household paying more than 30% of its total income toward housing costs is cost burdened. The City of Glendale 2021-2029 Housing Element shows that more renters are cost burdened than owners, with 57% of renters in Glendale being cost burdened compared to 37% of homeowners. These cost burdened renters are located throughout Glendale, with increased concentrations in census tracts located in western Glendale. Overall, these census tracts have a higher percentage of households in renter-occupied housing units and include more multi-family housing. Like cost-burdened renters, cost-burdened homeowners are located throughout Glendale.

Key Takeaways From Community Input

Residents expressed significant concern about the affordability and access to air conditioning and heating, as well as issues related to unsafe or unhealthy housing conditions, overcrowding, and other housing challenges. Some residents feel that rising housing costs and the lack of rent control are making the City unaffordable, especially for low-income families. They expressed concerns about overcrowding and a lack of parking in older buildings, perhaps due to multigenerational households. High-density developments are perceived as adding to traffic, pollution, and infrastructure strain, while rising utility costs challenge residents' ability to maintain comfortable homes. Many are calling for tenant protections, improved amenities, and thoughtful planning to address these issues. Most residents have access to air conditioning and heating in their homes. Some rely on private or public facilities to cool off during hot days or warm up in colder weather, while a small portion of respondents do not have a designated place for temperature relief.

EJ-4 Policies

- EJ-4.1 **Efforts to Minimize Overcrowding.** Support the development of affordable, safe, and appropriately sized housing options to help reduce overcrowding.
- EJ-4.2 **Affordable Utility Pricing and Access.** Advocate for affordable utility pricing and support equitable access to affordable air conditioning and heating and expand weatherization services for low-income households, especially those in Environmental Justice Communities.
- EJ-4.3 **Lead-Based Paint.** Raise awareness about the risks associated with lead-based paint and other housing hazards, including by distributing information about remediation of lead and best practices to reduce and eliminate other housing hazards.
- EJ-4.4 **Indoor Air Quality.** Encourage measures to reduce indoor air quality impacts (e.g., air filtration systems, kitchen range hood exhaust fans, low-VOC paint and carpet) for new developments.
- EJ-4.5 **Property Maintenance.** Support the upkeep and maintenance of rental properties throughout Glendale, especially in Environmental Justice Communities, and promote increased awareness of the importance of property maintenance to long-term housing quality.
- EJ-4.6 **Code Enforcement.** Continue to utilize the City's code enforcement program to ensure properties comply with the health and safety standards and to bring substandard units into compliance with City codes, with special emphasis on Environmental Justice Communities and those neighborhoods within lower income census tracts.
- EJ-4.7 **Target Areas.** Consider "target areas" in need of attention as a strategy to foster safe, sanitary and secure housing by improving such neighborhoods through focused neighborhood and community planning programs and prioritized investment strategies, as feasible.
- EJ-4.8 **Cooling Infrastructure.** Explore cooling infrastructure options, such as shade trees, cool pavement, and porous surfaces in "target areas" and Environmental Justice Communities.

EJ-4 Actions

- EJ-4a **Affordable Housing Barriers.** Assess barriers to affordable housing preservation and construction in areas of Glendale where overcrowding is an issue.
- EJ-4b **Energy Efficiency.** Continue to implement GWP's reduced utility charge program for low-income households. Consider collaboration with other utility providers to create a rebate program for low-income households to install energy-efficient air conditioning or heating systems and offer free or low-cost home weatherization services.
- EJ-4c **GWP Program Assistance.** Where feasible, expand GWP programs to increase leakage detection systems and repairs; drought tolerant landscaping; low-flow fixtures, fitting, and appliances; greywater capture and reuse; leakage repairs; and financing and technical resources to subsidize costs to landlords and low-income households.
- EJ-4d **Water Rates.** Where feasible, implement a program to conduct an energy/water nexus study to inform the City's future public water rate structure and to directly assist low-income households with high utility burdens during water rate structure changes to avoid inequitable outcomes.
- EJ-4e **Lead Based Paint Testing.** Property owners of Section 8 housing in the City shall continue to consult with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health about any occurrences they have encountered with lead-based paint positive test results in children.

PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT

- EJ-4f **Lead Hazard Information.** As required by the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Section 8 Program, continue to distribute information about remediation of lead to all new HCV program participants.
- EJ-4g **Property Owner Outreach.** Continue to distribute educational mailers to all landlords in the City informing owners of their legal requirements to maintain and upkeep their rental properties.
- EJ-4h **Tenant Rights Information.** Continue to distribute information through the Rental Rights Program about protecting tenant rights, so tenants are not penalized for reporting or living in a dwelling unit that does not meet health and safety standards.
- EJ-4i **Increase Cooling Solutions.** Prioritize cooling infrastructure at public facilities and surrounding “target areas.” Expand the functionality and availability of cooling centers and distribute low-cost cooling resources to reduce the impacts of extreme heat and poor air quality on climate vulnerable populations.