

GOAL EJ-1. POLLUTION EXPOSURE & AIR QUALITY

Minimized pollution exposure through resource-efficient practices, renewable energy, and sustainable infrastructure.

Achieving environmental justice involves reducing pollution exposure in communities heavily burdened by it. Pollution exposure occurs when people encounter air, water, and soil contaminants, often due to incompatible land uses. Sensitive populations, such as children, the elderly, and those with weakened immune systems, are most vulnerable. Environmental Justice communities often face multiple pollution sources, increasing their risks. While air quality is just one type of pollution, improving it is crucial for health and the environment.

Key Takeaways From Existing Conditions Report

CalEnviroScreen was used to assess pollution exposure and vulnerability in Glendale, using indicators that measure Pollution Burden and Population Characteristics. The overall CalEnviroScreen score is based on a weighted combination of the Pollution Burden score and the Population Characteristics score. The scores are representative of how vulnerable census tracts are to environmental “burdens”. A census tract with a high score is one that experiences higher pollution burden and vulnerability than census tracts with low scores. A summarized explanation of the CalEnviroScreen scoring methodology is provided in Appendix A, and a full explanation can be found in the CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Report.¹

Pollution Burden represents the potential exposures to pollutants and the adverse environmental conditions caused by pollution and is measured using 13 different indicators. More than half (23) of all census tracts in Glendale have high Pollution Burden scores, with nearly all these tracts located within Environmental Justice Communities. Glendale has a high burden score for Drinking Water (81), and medium burden scores for all other indicators except Pesticides (0). Key issues include high pollution burdens from ozone, particulate matter, diesel particulate matter, and traffic, with Environmental Justice Communities experiencing the highest exposure, particularly in neighborhoods near major freeways and industrial areas.

Population Characteristics represent physiological traits, health status, or community characteristics that can result in increased vulnerability to pollution and are measured using eight indicators. Ten census tracts in Glendale have high overall Population Characteristics Burden indicator scores, and all of these are within Environmental Justice Communities. The City’s overall Population Characteristics indicator scores are shown below. Glendale has high burden scores for Linguistic Isolation (83) and Housing Burden (77), and medium burden scores for all other indicators. Several health burdens disproportionately affect Environmental Justice Communities, particularly in southern and western areas of the City, such as asthma, low birth weight, and cardiovascular disease. Socioeconomic issues such as linguistic isolation and housing cost burden are also prevalent, with many residents facing difficulties accessing affordable housing, particularly in low-income brackets.

Contributing factors to high burden scores are Glendale’s unique geography, proximity to major freeways, and historic and current industrial land uses. These disparities highlight the need for targeted policies and resources to address these inequities and improve the quality of life for vulnerable populations. The individual indicators and potential explanations for their scores in Glendale are described in more detail in Appendix A.

¹ <https://oehha.ca.gov/media/downloads/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen40reportf2021.pdf>, pages 17-24.

Key Takeaways From Community Input

Residents identified several environmental concerns affecting health and quality of life, with the most common being air pollution from vehicles, followed by illegal dumping, industrial air pollution, and water pollution. Residents also expressed concerns about noise and air pollution from gas powered yard maintenance equipment. There is a strong desire for improved City coordination on trash cleanup, particularly along the 134 freeway and Verdugo Road. Residents also expressed a desire for better water filtration technology.

EJ-1 Policies

- EJ-1.1 **CalEnviroScreen Scores.** Support measures to reduce potential exposure to pollutants and to reduce high scores for CalEnviroScreen indicators such as Drinking Water, Linguistic Isolation, and Housing Burden.
- EJ-1.2 **Greenhouse Gas Emissions.** Support policies and programs that reduce the number of potential sources of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, especially those in Environmental Justice Communities. Encourage existing emitters of GHG emissions to use best available measures to minimize GHG emissions in Environmental Justice Communities and avoid new sources of significant GHG emissions in these communities, as feasible.
- EJ-1.3 **Multimodal Transportation.** Provide a network of complete streets and encourage active and multimodal public transportation options to help reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and subsequent air pollution impacts.
- EJ-1.4 **Green Industry.** Attract non-polluting industries and green technology companies in Glendale to promote a sustainable economy and reduce environmental impacts. Foster partnerships with businesses that prioritize sustainability and encourage workforce development programs to support green jobs.
- EJ-1.5 **Water Quality.** Advance equitable access to clean and safe water resources through comprehensive water quality improvement programs and water conservation initiatives. Prioritize reducing pollutants in waterways and storm drainage areas through stricter regulations, innovative green infrastructure, and public education campaigns tailored to Glendale's diverse communities.
- EJ-1.6 **Landscaping and Construction Equipment.** Explore feasible options for reducing noise and air pollution associated with gas powered landscaping and construction equipment.
- EJ-1.7 **Illegal Dumping.** Promote measures to prevent and address illegal dumping of solid waste (such as furniture), and of hazardous waste (such as pouring chemicals down storm drains), focusing on equitable regulations, enhanced enforcement, public education, and accessible waste disposal options to support a clean and healthy environment for all Glendale neighborhoods.
- EJ-1.8 **Sustainable Development.** Encourage sustainable and efficient development patterns that optimize existing infrastructure and minimize the need for expansion. Promote mixed-use, transit-oriented, and pedestrian-friendly land use patterns that prioritize walking, biking, and public transit, leading to shorter and fewer vehicle trips.
- EJ-1.9 **Energy Conservation and Efficiency.** Promote sustainable building practices and energy-efficient designs. Support the development of alternative fueling stations and infrastructure for electric vehicles, hydrogen, and other clean energy sources. Encourage energy-saving behaviors and prioritize equitable access to energy-efficient technologies and resources across Glendale's diverse neighborhoods.

- EJ-1.10 **Coordinated Agency Efforts.** Continue to coordinate with regional agencies such as the Los Angeles Regional Collaborative for Climate Action and Sustainability (LARC), Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), and the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) to reduce pollution.

EJ-1 Actions

- EJ-1a **Integrate Sustainable Innovations.** Continuously monitor advancements in sustainable development practices and technologies, integrating feasible and appropriate innovations into Glendale's policies and regulations.
- EJ-1b **Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions.** Implement actions to reduce greenhouse gas emission such as those identified within the City's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP).
- EJ-1c **VMT Measures.** Consider environmental justice goals and policies during the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review process for new development projects by identifying opportunities to align vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction measures with equitable transportation, air quality, and community health outcomes.
- EJ-1d **Encourage Higher-Density Development.** Identify opportunities to encourage higher-density residential development along transit corridors and near multi-modal transportation options in conjunction with Land Use and Mobility Element updates.
- EJ-1e **Sustainable Industry.** Consider investments in infrastructure, partnerships, and/or other methods to accommodate environmentally friendly industry and business operations.
- EJ-1f **Groundwater Pollution Prevention.** Implement programs to prevent groundwater pollution by managing hazardous materials, collaborating with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and complying with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), with a focus on industrial areas and landfills.
- EJ-1g **Protect Water Quality.** Protect groundwater recharge and surface water quality by looking for opportunities to expand percolation areas, promoting naturalized channels in development, and designing drainage systems that align with the natural environment.
- EJ-1h **Trade-In Incentives.** Consider a variety of incentives (such as discounts, subsidies, trade-in events) to encourage local contractors or residents to exchange gas-powered landscaping and construction equipment for electric alternatives.
- EJ-1i **Energy Efficiency Programs.** Provide all residents with information on available residential energy programs, continue implementing Glendale Water and Power (GWP) energy and water saving program, and promote the use of tools such as the My Connect app to monitor and optimize electrical usage.
- EJ-1j **Equitable Energy & Water Programs.** Maintain and expand programs including Smart Home Energy and Water Savings Surveys/Rebates, Smart Home Solar Solutions, Glendale Care, Guardian, and Helping Hand, promoting equitable access for low-income households.
- EJ-1k **Reduce Illegal Dumping.** Reduce the occurrence of illegal dumping through methods such as educating residents and businesses on the environmental and health impacts of illegal dumping, expanding access to free or low-cost bulky item pick-up and waste disposal services, and providing a user-friendly reporting system to enable residents to report illegal dumping anonymously.