

GOAL EJ-5. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Equitable and safe access to diverse recreational and active transportation opportunities for all residents, supporting healthy lifestyles.

Physical activity plays a key role in the physical and mental health of Glendale residents. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, active individuals tend to live longer and have a lower risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, depression, and certain cancers. The built environment can encourage physical activity by providing spaces for walking, biking, and exercise, such as parks, trails, green spaces, and active transportation networks. Expanding green spaces and recreational opportunities in underserved areas is essential for fostering environmental equity, improving physical health, and supporting mental well-being across Glendale. The topics of parks, recreation, open space, and active transportation are extensively addressed in other General Plan Elements, including Land Use, Mobility, Open Space and Conservation, and Recreation. The policies and actions listed in this section supplement existing policies and actions within other Elements.

Key Takeaways From Existing Conditions Report

According to the nonprofit Trust for Public Land, which tracks park access across urban areas in the United States, 77% of Glendale residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park. Their ParkServe® mapping platform identifies priority areas for new park investments, which are mainly located along the northern boundary of Glendale's Environmental Justice Communities and slightly beyond. Additional priority areas are scattered within these communities, as well as in the northern part of Glendale within its sphere of influence.

Glendale features several miles of established hiking and riding trails in its mountainous central area, providing valuable recreational opportunities. An existing bike lane runs along Glenoaks Boulevard within the Environmental Justice Communities. Additionally, the City has plans for numerous proposed bikeways, including bike routes and bike lanes throughout the Environmental Justice Communities, as well as other hiking and riding trails to enhance access and connectivity. Furthermore, the City has several plans and programs to continue improving and expanding the bicycle and pedestrian network, as detailed in the Report.

Glendale boasts scenic natural spaces like Deukmejian Wilderness Park, Verdugo Mountains, and San Rafael Mountains, however, access to parks and open spaces is not evenly distributed, particularly in densely populated, urbanized neighborhoods. To help expand accessibility to nearby regional parks, the City is planning the Garden River Bridge Project which will connect the Glendale Narrows Riverwalk to Griffith Park.

Key Takeaways From Community Input

When asked about their satisfaction levels with various aspects of local parks and recreation centers, most residents expressed satisfaction with easy access to parks and recreation centers, as well as with the availability of suitable spaces for physical activity. A majority also felt safe at these facilities and were satisfied with the amenities offered. However, there was more variation in responses regarding opportunities for affordable activities and the availability of activities for people of different ages and abilities, with most respondents being neutral. A small portion expressed strong dissatisfaction with these areas.

EJ-5 Policies

EJ-5.1 Equitable Distribution. Encourage the equitable distribution of and safe access to park and recreation amenities and natural resources such as public parks, recreation centers, and community fitness programs, consistent with the goals, policies, and actions of the City's other General Plan Elements.

- EJ-5.2 **Park Priority Areas.** Give additional consideration to park priority areas identified in the Existing Conditions Report (Appendix A) when updating the Open Space and Conservation Element and the Recreation Element.
- EJ-5.3 **Community Greening Program.** Identify and map opportunities to expand and/or install new mini-parks, parks, and green spaces around the City.
- EJ-5.4 **Affordable and Inclusive Activities.** Expand access to affordable, inclusive recreational activities at local parks and recreation centers, offering a wide variety of facilities and programs for all age groups, abilities, and income levels. This includes active and passive spaces, such as parks, sports fields, multi-use indoor facilities, urban bikeways, and hiking trails, to meet diverse community needs.
- EJ-5.5 **Active Transportation.** Promote bicycling, walking, and other forms of active transportation by supporting connected networks, making physical improvements to bicycle lanes, bikeways, and related infrastructure, and enhancing pedestrian-oriented, accessible sidewalks to encourage physical activity and increase walking and bicycling for commuting, errands, school, and recreational trips.
- EJ-5.6 **Alternative Transportation Modes.** Expand access to parks and other key destinations (such as schools, retail centers, and jobs) via alternative modes of transportation.
- EJ-5.7 **Public Health Education.** Educate the public on the merits and health benefits of physical activity and active lifestyles and educate residents on safe walking and bicycling.
- EJ-5.8 **Interjurisdictional Coordination.** Continue to coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions and regional partners to provide connected bicycle and pedestrian facilities and regional trails.

EJ-5 Actions

- EJ-5a **Parks & Open Spaces.** Explore opportunity areas and joint use agreement options to create new or expand parks and open spaces in areas that generally lack parks or open spaces, especially in Environmental Justice Communities.
- EJ-5b **Repurpose Public Spaces.** Explore the option of repurposing underutilized public spaces into community fitness zones with exercise equipment, walking trails, and designated sports areas, focusing on neighborhoods with limited access to recreational facilities.
- EJ-5c **Urban Greening.** Explore opportunity areas to create new green spaces and/or incorporate art in areas that generally lack cooling and/or green infrastructure, such as along freeways, parking structures, concrete channels, and vertical walls.
- EJ-5d **Subsidized Passes.** Partner with local non-profits and businesses to offer discounted or free passes for low-income families and individuals with disabilities to access recreation programs, sports leagues, and fitness classes at parks and community centers.
- EJ-5e **Inclusive Programs.** Collaborate with community organizations to offer inclusive programming that caters to all abilities and age groups.
- EJ-5f **Connected and Sustainable Trails.** Expand and enhance a sustainable trail system with features like trailheads, rest stops, and scenic views, while integrating trail improvements into recreation programs and open space preservation efforts. Collaborate with regional partners to connect trails, promote maintenance, and improve transportation access to trailheads and recreational areas.

- EJ-5g **Integrated Bikeway Linkages.** Strengthen bikeway linkages by combining bikeway alignments with scenic roadways and hikeways, and working with adjacent jurisdictions to connect city bikeways to local and regional systems, as outlined in the City's Bicycle Transportation Plan.
- EJ-5h **Active Mobility Infrastructure.** Enhance streetscapes along commercial, mixed-use, and transit-oriented corridors, prioritizing pedestrian-friendly design on bicycle and transit-priority streets. Establish a network of multimodal thoroughfares and collector streets that emphasize walking access and apply Complete Streets principles to ensure transportation projects serve all users and abilities.
- EJ-5i **Bicycle Parking.** Highly encourage retail and commercial property owners and businesses to install bicycle amenities such as bike racks, lockers, or repair stations.
- EJ-5j **Transit Access.** Coordinate with local transit agencies to expand service options, including Bus Rapid Transit, improve transit access and connectivity, and enhance amenities such as bus shelters and real-time information.
- EJ-5k **Public Education.** Collaborate with community organizations such as Glendale Healthier Community Coalition and Walk Bike Glendale to promote walking and biking through safety education and outreach campaigns such as the Be Street Smart Campaign and Safe Routes to School Program.
- EJ-5l **Local Partnerships.** Work with private schools, utility right of ways, and Caltrans to identify and transition areas within their right of ways that could be transitioned into parks, open spaces, and/or beautification projects.
- EJ-5m **Local Sponsorships.** Engage with businesses to gain sponsorship for the parks and/or open spaces to expand access to enhanced transportation and more park space.