



Environmental Justice (EJ)

Vision

Create a community where negative environmental impacts are reduced to protect the health, safety, and well-being of community members, where commercial and industrial uses employ clean, sustainable energy technologies, and where resources and information regarding environmental-related issues are readily available.

Background

Environmental justice is defined by the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) and the L.A. County General Plan, as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

An environmentally just Florence-Firestone is a place where:

- Environmental risks and hazards associated with land use incompatibility are alleviated, and services to mitigate negative environmental impacts are equally accessible throughout the community;
- Existing and future negative environmental impacts are reduced to the fullest extent and clean energy use is incentivized to protect the community's health, safety, and well-being;
- Access to environmental investments, benefits, and resources, such as parks and open space, are equally distributed throughout the community; and
- Information, participation in decision-making, and access to resources regarding environmental concerns is made available in multiple languages and a variety of platforms.

CalEPA released CalEnviroScreen version 1.0 in 2013 to implement state law SB 535, which requires investment of state cap-and-trade funds in disadvantaged communities. CalEnviroScreen is a comparative environmental health mapping and screening tool applied to communities throughout California. The cap-and-trade funds are aimed at improving public health, quality of life, and economic opportunity in California's most burdened communities, while at the same time reducing pollution that causes climate change. CalEPA has used CalEnviroScreen to designate disadvantaged communities, defining these

areas as census tracts scoring in the top 25% for burden by multiple sources of pollution and vulnerability to its effects.

The data indicates that Florence-Firestone is disproportionately impacted by the negative effects of pollution. In the 2017 version of CalEnviroScreen 3.0, Florence-Firestone scored an average of over 75 on indicators for environmental factors related to particulate matter in the air, toxic releases by businesses, cleanup sites, and solid waste sites near populated census tracts, and overall community-level pollution burden. Florence-Firestone also scored over 75 in the following socioeconomic and health characteristics:



Residential and industrial use adjacency.

- Number of asthma emergency department visits per 10,000 people,
- Rate of emergency department visits for heart attacks per 10,000 visits,
- Percentage of the population over age 25 with less than a high school education,
- Percentage of households in which no one age 14 or older speaks English “very well” or speaks only English, and
- Percentage of the population with incomes less than two times the federal poverty level.

The County Board of Supervisors has adopted policies and initiated efforts to address environmental justice and ease the disproportionate environmental burden on disadvantaged communities. Given these indicators, Florence-Firestone has been identified as an area where additional land use tools and implementation plans will be applied to address environmental justice issues.

Opportunities and Challenges

Resolving Land Use Incompatibility

Florence-Firestone contains a number of industrially zoned properties which are directly adjacent to residential zones, particularly near the Alameda Corridor, along Slauson Avenue, and along the Metro Blue Line and railroad rights-of-way. Incongruent land uses may contribute to environmental risks due to the impacts of more intensive industrial operations or multiple facilities operating in proximity to residential areas. Further requirements for site development and operations should be developed to resolve the incompatibilities. Additionally, as requirements for industrial areas have been revised over the



Bethune Park.



Community members listening to a presentation at the Florence-Firestone Community Service Center.

years, existing uses have not consistently applied the revised standards resulting in continued incompatibility. Therefore, existing industrial uses should be required to meet current development standards over specified time periods, ensuring that community members are buffered from potential negative impacts of industrial operations.

Incentivizing Green Industry

Offering incentives through outreach and business assistance programs can attract new businesses, facilitate upgrades for existing uses to meet development standards, and encourage satisfying clean energy certification requirements (i.e. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design; LEED). These measures would reduce negative environmental impacts and support incorporation of clean technologies. Partnerships with local utilities and other organizations can help provide information and resources to private and public developments to incorporate clean technologies and operate with minimal environmental impacts, setting a higher standard for all uses in the community.

Increasing Open Space and Parks

Adding more parks and green spaces equally distributed throughout the community reduces cumulative pollution burdens and encourages active use of public spaces. Underutilized spaces, such as alleys and utility corridors, can be converted into parks, community gardens, or other green spaces. As current research demonstrates, indoor air quality is often many times worse than outdoor air quality. Offering additional outdoor spaces for recreation and socializing in pollution burdened communities contributes to improved community health.

Access to Information and Public Participation

Access to information and awareness regarding environmental justice issues is critical for residents to stay engaged and contribute to well-informed land use decisions. Through dissemination of information and engagement processes, community members and local organizations can be more effectively involved in land use decisions and issues related to environmental justice. Internal department procedures can be enhanced to facilitate community engagement and engage active community groups early in land use decision-making processes.

Goals and Policies

RESOLVING LAND USE INCOMPATIBILITY

GOAL EJ-1

Residents are protected from harmful environmental effects.

Policy EJ-1.1

Compatible Land Uses. Require that existing development, especially near sensitive uses, meets current development and performance standards, comply with existing regulatory requirements, and be operationally compatible with surrounding uses.

Policy EJ-1.2

Development and Performance Standards. Require that nonconforming uses with potential to create harmful environmental effects be brought into compliance with current development and performance standards. Discourage nonconforming uses from continuing if they cannot be operationally compatible with surrounding uses.

Policy EJ-1.3

Illegal Uses. Require illegally established uses and egregious violations to be brought into compliance or be referred by enforcement officials for expedited legal action.

Policy EJ-1.4

Sensitive Land Uses. Require that proposals for new sensitive land uses, such as residences, schools, senior centers, daycare centers, medical facilities, or parks incorporate adequate setbacks or other measures to minimize negative environmental and health impacts.

INCENTIVIZING GREEN INDUSTRY

GOAL EJ-2

New and existing development and land uses have minimal negative environmental impact.

Policy EJ-2.1

Indoor Air Quality. Require that new development, especially those located near sources of air pollution, such as major highways and heavy industry, be designed to ensure safe indoor air quality.



Industrial facilities in the process of being upgraded.



Example of an affordable housing project with solar panels located in Santa Monica. Courtesy, GFDL (www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html), via Wikimedia Commons



Roosevelt Park. Courtesy, Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation



Example of shared pedestrian and bike path. By Victor Grigas - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=42589135

Policy EJ-2.2

Energy Efficient Development. Incentivize development that uses energy efficient products, renewable energy systems, and produces clean energy.

Policy EJ-2.3

Contaminated Sites. Promote the reuse and remediation of contaminated sites to residential standards, giving priority to sites proximate to residential areas.

Policy EJ-2.4

Green Building Techniques. Encourage existing public and private development to incorporate green building techniques, such as construction waste management practices, optimization of energy efficiency measures, and avoidance of toxic chemicals.

General Plan Policies

Energy Efficient Development

Policy LU 11.1: Encourage new development to employ sustainable energy practices, such as utilizing passive solar techniques and/or active solar technologies.

Policy LU 11.2: Support the design of developments that provide substantial tree canopy cover, and utilize light-colored paving materials and energy-efficient roofing materials to reduce the urban heat island effect.

INCREASING OPEN SPACE AND PARKS

GOAL EJ-3

Residents have equal access and are in close proximity to urban parks and green space.

Policy EJ-3.1

Neighborhood Parks. Provide more neighborhood parks and pocket parks dispersed equally throughout the community, proximate to residential areas and easily accessible, where people can enjoy the outdoors and exercise.

Policy EJ-3.2

Convert Underutilized Spaces. Promote the conversion of underutilized spaces, such as alleys, utility corridors and vacant land, into parks, community gardens, and other green space, where feasible and appropriate.

Policy EJ-3.3

Enhance Connectivity to Public Space. Enhance the connectivity, safety, and aesthetics of pedestrian and bicycle access routes to parks and open space by providing improved lighting, landscaping, sidewalks, and multi-use pathways.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

GOAL EJ-4

The community is engaged and has access to information and resources related to environmental justice issues.

Policy EJ-4.1

Environmental Justice Decision Making. Ensure environmental justice, cumulative environmental impacts, and public health outcomes are analyzed in discretionary land use proposals and taken into account during the decision-making process.

Policy EJ-4.2

Public Awareness About Land Use. Increase public participation and ensure the public and other stakeholders are informed and have access to information on environmental justice issues and environmental and health risks impacting their community.

Policy EJ-4.3

Toxic Materials Awareness. Provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information and educational materials to residents about the effect of projects with toxic materials or emissions.

Policy EJ-4.4

Access to Public Information. Encourage community member participation in local matters, such as land use decision-making, by providing multilingual notices and translation services as needed.