

City of Covina

# Equity Outcomes

## Covina Active Streets and Multimodal Connectivity Plan

City of Covina



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## INTRODUCTION

The Covina Active Streets & Multimodal Connectivity Plan (Plan) seeks to further regional and local sustainability through improving the active transportation network. An existing conditions analysis was conducted by Fehr&Peers and MIG for the study area where current conditions and data related to transportation – crosswalks, intersections, collisions, facilities, amenities, access, and ridership – were analyzed along with conditions related to the public realm to provide context. The existing conditions analysis also included an Equity Study which used data and community input to identify areas with barriers and challenges that create vulnerabilities for the community. Input from the community’s habits, concerns, and experiences were gathered using a digital survey tool and community engagement.

The Equity Study utilized data from CalEnviroScreen 4.0, Healthy Places Index 3.0, and UC Berkley’s Urban Displacement Project to examine inequities within the study area.

- CalEnviroScreen 4.0 (CES): Scores are composed of twenty-one indicators representing the product of pollution burdens and population characteristics, to produce an overall CES score for each census tract. A percentile ranking for a census tract above seventy-five means that the census tract is in the top 25% of all CalEnviroScreen scores statewide.
- Healthy Places Index 3.0 (HPI): Scores are composed of twenty-three community characteristics to quantify various factors that shape health. These scores can be used to identify health inequities by comparing the well-being and health of communities.
- UC Berkley’s Urban Displacement Project: Analyzes a set of criteria that would make it difficult for a household to afford changes in housing costs in the event of increased development. These communities vulnerable to displacement are referred to as sensitive communities.

The team analyzed the data from these three sources to assess what challenges each census tract experienced and whether specific areas experienced more inequities than others. This assessment also highlights individual burdens or characteristics that impact areas which do not experience as many challenges.

Data from CalEnviroScreen 4.0 designates census tract 4062.00 as a disadvantaged community. After reviewing all three data tools, census tracts 4061.02 and 4037.22 also experience multiple inequities. These three census tracts will be referred to as Equity Areas.

## PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

Community input was a necessary part of the Equity Study process to hear directly from community members. A digital survey tool was used to learn about the community’s ideas to realize active streets in Covina and to gather information to inform the Equity Study. The survey was launched [Month/Year] and closed [Month/Year]. Due to a low number of responses, the survey reopened in [Month/Year]. The responses gathered from the digital survey tool are from a self-selecting, and non-random sample. These results are reflective of the experiences of those who filled out the survey, and were used to identify geographies, challenges, and concerns.

Equity is the fair distribution and allocation of resources, that considers the barriers and challenges in accessing these benefits. *The Built Environment and Health* by the Prevention Institute states,

“Environmental factors contribute to disproportionately high incidences of negative health outcomes in low-income communities which are often also beset with structural and institutional inequities.” Inequitable distribution of resources and physical infrastructure in Covina are factors that contribute to negative health outcomes in this community.

The Equity Outcomes report builds on the data examined in the Equity Study to determine areas and neighborhoods where inequities could be addressed through improvements proposed in the Covina Active Streets & Multimodal Connectivity Plan.

## DEFINITIONS











The following terminology will be used to ensure consistency and provide clarity in reviewing the data described in this document.

- Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) – as per Cal EnviroScreen 4.0, communities disproportionately burdened by multiple sources of pollution and with population characteristics that make them more sensitive to pollution.
- Indicators – as per Cal EnviroScreen 4.0, measures of environmental conditions or health and vulnerability factors.
- Characteristics – as per Cal EnviroScreen 4.0 and Healthy Places Index, qualities that identify features of communities or populations.
- Sensitive Communities – as per UC Berkeley’s Displacement Project, communities vulnerable to displacement.
- Equity Areas – for the purposes of this assessment, areas with barriers and challenges that create vulnerabilities for populations.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Of the 45 combined indicators and characteristics – 21 indicators and characteristics used by CES, 23 used by HPI, and 1 used by UC Berkeley – 26 are defined in Figure 1. All indicators and characteristics are important when assessing the degree to which a community experiences negative impacts. This Plan informs the strategies to improve the local active transportation network, therefore this assessment will focus on the indicators and characteristics that demonstrate the opportunity for healthy outcomes through the proposed projects.

*Figure 1: Legend for Table 1: Data Indicators and Characteristics*

	Toxic releases from facilities		Low percentage of 3–4-year-olds in school
	PM2.5 concentrations in the air		Low percentage of 15–17-year-olds in school
	Traffic impacts – pollution and emissions		Low percentage of population over the age of 25 with a bachelor’s degree or higher
	Diesel particulate matter emissions		Low completion rate of 2020 census
	Drinking water contaminants		Low percentage of households with access to an automobile

















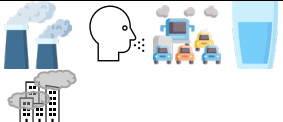

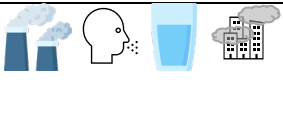
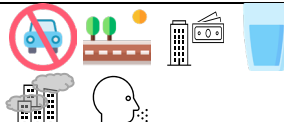

	Ozone concentrations in the air		Low percentage of people living within a half-mile of a park, beach, or open space
	Potential risk for lead exposure in children living in low-income communities with older housing		Low percentage of land with tree canopy in relation to population
	High rate of emergency department visits for asthma		Low percentage of people who own their home
	Limited English-speaking households		Households with poor quality plumbing and basic kitchen facilities
	High unemployment for populations eligible for work force		Low-income homeowners who pay more than 50% of their income on housing
	Low-income households burdened by housing costs		Low-income renters who pay more than 50% of their income on housing
	People earning less than 200% of the federal poverty level		Households with more than 1 occupant per room
	Low average income		Households that would have difficulties affording changes in housing costs

Table 1 provides a visual summary of the indicators and characteristics used by CalEnviroScreen 4.0, Healthy Places Index 3.0, and UC Berkley's Urban Displacement Project. Each icon shown represents an indicator or characteristic that is negatively impacting the listed census tract leading to poor environmental conditions and health outcomes in Covina. Census tracts 4062.00, 4061.02, and 4037.22, demonstrate the greatest benefit for healthy outcomes that can be addressed through the proposed projects (also see Map 1 and Map 2 in the Appendix). These census tracts are shown in red in Table 1 and are being considered Equity Areas because of the opportunities for positive or healthy outcomes from the following negative impacts:

- Diesel particulate matter emissions
- High rate of emergency department visits for asthma
- Low average income
- Low percentage of 3–4-year-olds in school
- Low percentage of population over the age of 25 with a bachelor's degree or higher

Table 1: Data Indicators and Characteristics

Tracts	CalEnviroScreen 4.0	Healthy Places Index 3.0	UC Berkeley Urban Displacement Project
4036.00			
4037.21			

4037.22			
4038.01			
4058.00			
4059.00			
4060.00			
4061.01			
4061.02			
4062.00			

## EQUITY OUTCOMES

In addition to looking at transportation amenities and resources for the Covina Active Streets & Multimodal Connectivity Plan, the fair distribution of community resources and services, parks and open space, and streetscape or public realm improvements are also being considered in the neighborhoods that experience disproportionate impacts, as per the data from the existing conditions analysis. Exploring these categories identifies barriers and challenges the community experiences. Addressing these barriers and challenges by improving access can lead to better health outcomes and improved

quality of life for Covina, and more specifically people who live in the census tracts that are most burdened.

According to *Parks and Public Health in Los Angeles County: A Cities and Communities Report*, “Cities and communities with less park space per capita on average had higher rates of premature mortality from cardiovascular disease and diabetes, higher prevalence of childhood obesity, and greater economic hardship compared with cities and communities with more park space per capita.” Those who have access to infrastructure and amenities that promote active lifestyles experience better outcomes than those who do not have access. Further, parks serve as central locations for “enrollment in health and social services, youth development programs, employment events/job fairs, and nutrition assistance programs”, places where community members gather to address health and social issues in their communities and can increase access to fresh produce. Parks provide more than just greenspace; they facilitate access to vital community resources and can help connect residents who otherwise would need to travel longer distances to access these resources.

The existing conditions analysis for Covina reveals tree canopy, ozone, and particulate matter 2.5 as issues across the entire City. Further, Catalyst California links the impacts from climate change on air quality and temperatures to worsening conditions for low-income Black and Brown communities, emphasizing the importance of green open space that can be strategically used to promote climate resiliency (“LA County Park Equity Groups Fight to Turn Park-Poor Communities ‘Red to Green’”).

Numerous studies support the idea that increasing activity by providing necessary infrastructure and amenities and encouraging safer environments help mitigate some of the citywide inequities. Respondents’ attitude in the survey reflects behavior that is willing to be more active if needs are met and supported.

Interventions and improvements in the three Equity Areas can greatly improve health – mental and physical –, environmental conditions and even economic conditions by increasing access and connectivity through the recommendations.

## **SURVEY FEEDBACK**

When asked “What type of walker describes you best?” over half of the survey responses indicated “I walk for some trips; I would walk more but have concerns (e.g., comfort, convenience, safety, distance to destination)”. Respondents are willing to adopt more active lifestyles but the current conditions they experience do not support their needs. Further, opportunities to facilitate accessibility for people with disabilities and people who use mobility aids could improve their experience as they move through the public realm leading to equitable outcomes for everyone.

Feedback received from the survey supports and reflects the findings from the existing conditions analysis. Survey respondents suggested the following improvements which would help address their concerns:

*Comfort – improvements address feeling of uneasiness and maintains peace of mind related to physical conditions resulting in positive experiences.*

- Increase shade by planting shade and street trees
- Reduce vehicle speeds
- Improve condition of sidewalks, address missing sidewalks, and maintain unobstructed clear paths
- Incorporate consistent access to trash receptacles
- Improve access to bicycle amenities
- Provide transit shelters with shade, sufficient lighting, and seating that accommodates people of all sizes

*Convenience – improvements prioritize pedestrians and active transportation by providing simple alternatives that are preferred.*

- Increase connectivity networks for pedestrians
- Prioritize pedestrian experience in public realm

*Safety – improvements that help protect pedestrians and offer peace of mind. Some challenges related to safety go beyond physical barriers and need to be addressed at the social policy level.*

- Increase visibility through street lighting
- Improve pedestrian crossings and crosswalks
- Reduce vehicle speeds
- Provide secure bicycle amenities
- Implement designated protected bike lanes and paths

*Distance to destinations – improvements that increase active transportation connectivity networks to areas of interest.*

- Examples based on community input include:
  - Downtown
  - Library
  - Post Office
  - Fire Station
  - Police Station
  - Parks
  - Grocery Stores
  - Bank

The results from entire survey can be found in the summary of community engagement in the Covina Active Streets & Multimodal Connectivity Plan.

## **INTERVENTIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS**

The recommendations proposed for the Covina Active Streets & Multimodal Connectivity Plan address concerns and barriers highlighted during the Equity Study. These recommendations increase access to greenspace, improve connectivity, make the pedestrian experience in the public realm more enjoyable, encourage the use of active transportation, facilitate climate resiliency, and make the City safer – for everyone.

The Covina Active Streets & Multimodal Connectivity Plan can address barriers and improve quality of life for Equity Areas. The Plan includes design interventions and proposes addressing barriers by implementing projects that include:

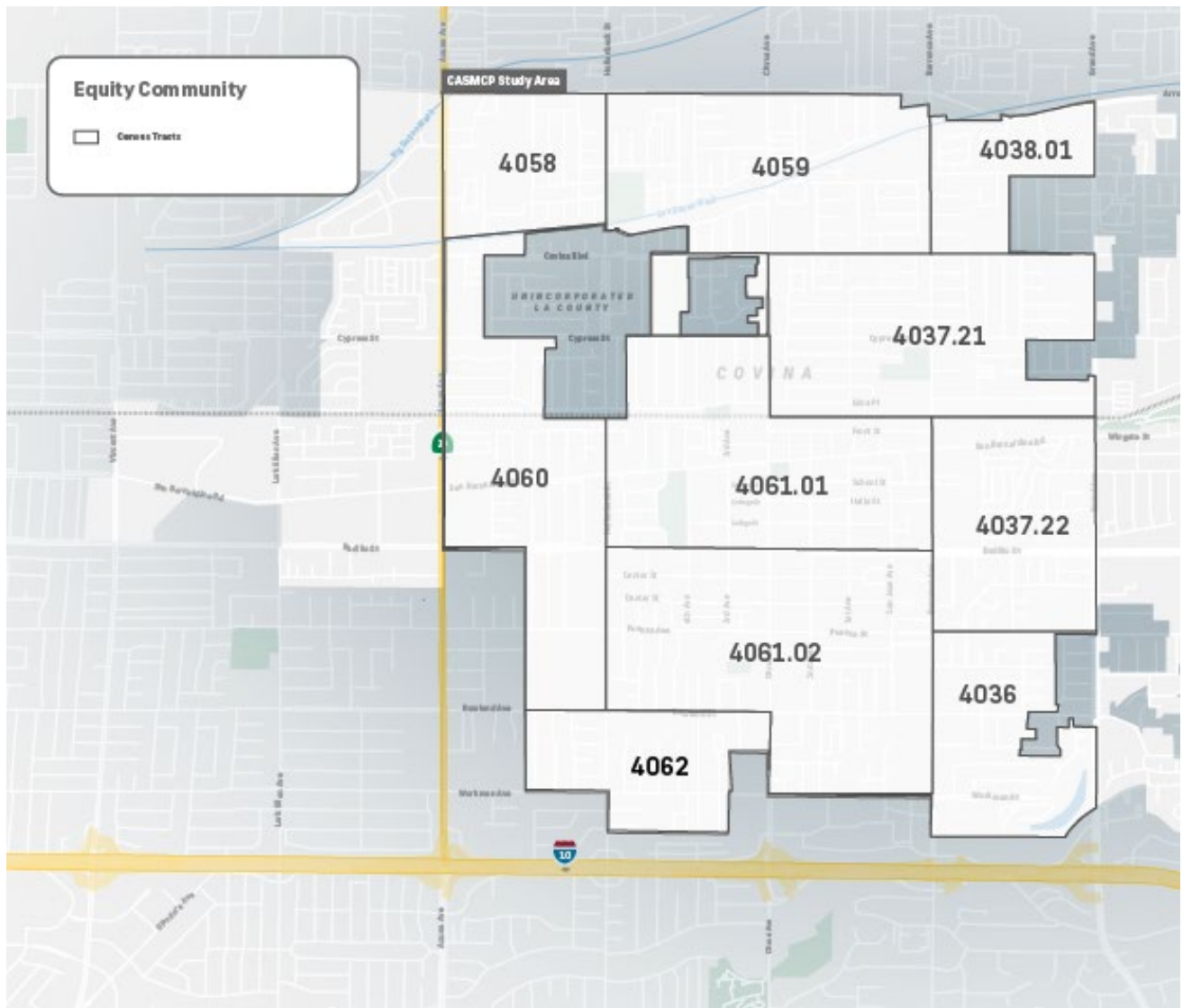
- Sidewalk Zone Amenities
  - Lighting
  - Street furniture
  - Bicycle racks
  - Transit shelter
  - paving
- Physical Expansions
  - Sidewalk
  - Treelet
  - Curb extension
- Green Infrastructure
  - Street trees
  - Bioswales
  - Permeable paving
- Curb space Management
  - EV charging
  - On-street parking
  - Service loading
  - Pick-up / Drop-off
  - Micro mobility parking

## CONCLUSION

Addressing the inequities identified in the Equity Areas can bridge gaps that would result in greater outcomes not just for the entire City but especially for those in these communities who live these experiences. In order to improve the active transportation network and further regional and local sustainability, community resources and services, parks and open space, and streetscape or public realm improvements must be fairly distributed and barriers to access these benefits need to be addressed. The implementation of strategies and interventions included in the Covina Active Streets & Multimodal Connectivity Plan will bring Covina one step closer to achieving more equitable outcomes.

## Appendix

Map 1: Study Area Census Tracts



Map 2: Equity Indicators (CES 4.0 and HPI) by Census Tract

