

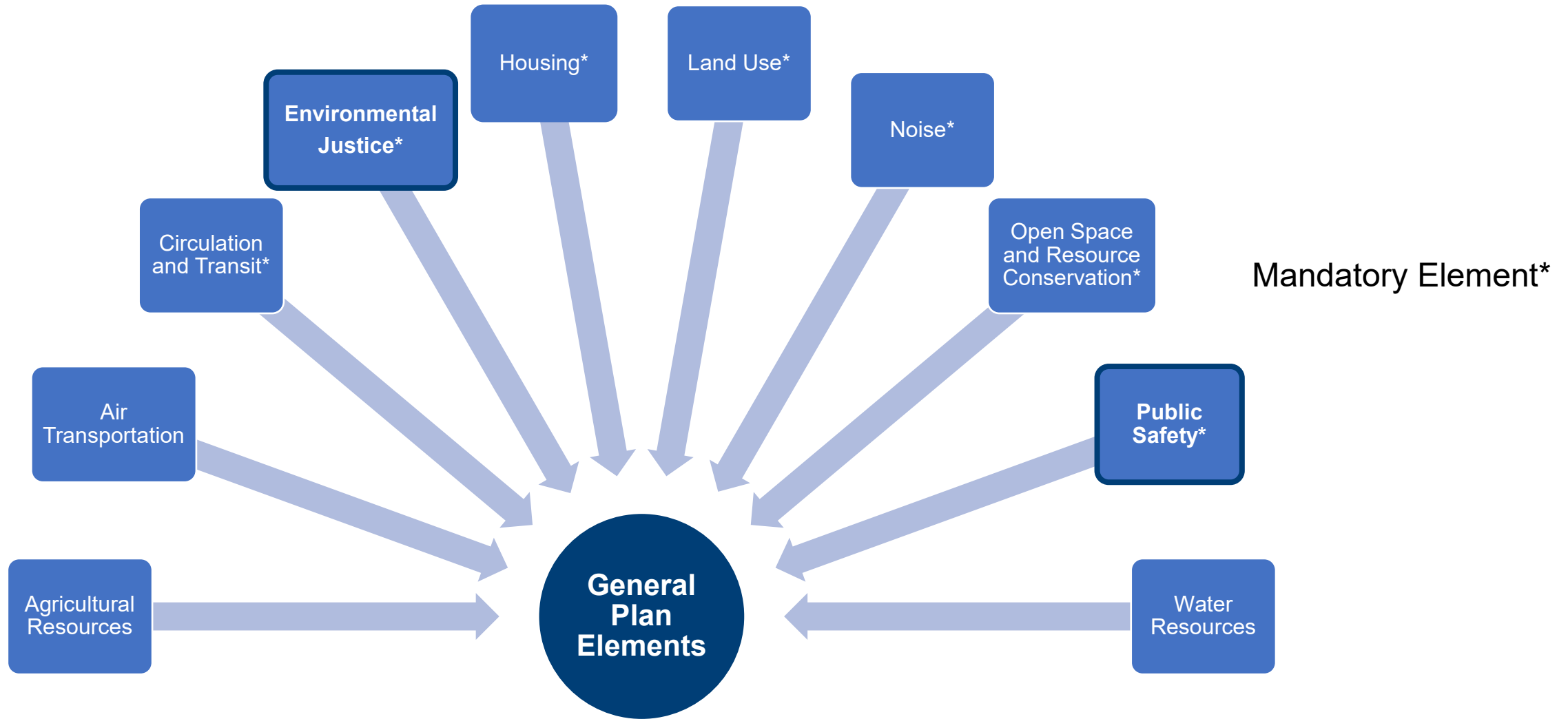
General Plan 2020 Safety Element Update and New Environmental Justice Element



Permit Sonoma File GPA25-0001
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Board of Supervisors
August 12, 2025

General Plan 2020





Safety Element Update

Purpose: Reduce the potential short- and long-term risks to people, property, and systems resulting from environmental hazards

- Wildfire
- Flooding
- Seismic & geologic hazards
- Hazardous materials
- Sea level rise
- Extreme temperatures
- Drought

General Requirements:

- Identify hazards and risks
- Establish goals, policies, and implementation measures to reduce risks





Environmental Justice (EJ) Element

Purpose: Advance health in low-income communities that are disproportionately impacted by environmental burdens, such as pollution.

General Requirements:

- Identify disadvantaged communities
- Establish goals, policies, and implementation measures to:
 - Reduce the unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities
 - Enable civic engagement in the public decision-making process
 - Prioritize improvements and programs for disadvantaged communities



Planning Process





Community Engagement

- **Equity Working Committee (EWC)**
 - Purpose: Center the experiences of under-resourced and underrepresented communities to develop equitable policy
 - Role: Advise staff, review draft concepts, serve as community ambassadors to help publicize engagement events, and participate in the planning effort
- **Focus Groups** with community organizations and County staff
- **Pop Up Events and Community Meetings**
- **Online Survey** focused on climate adaptation

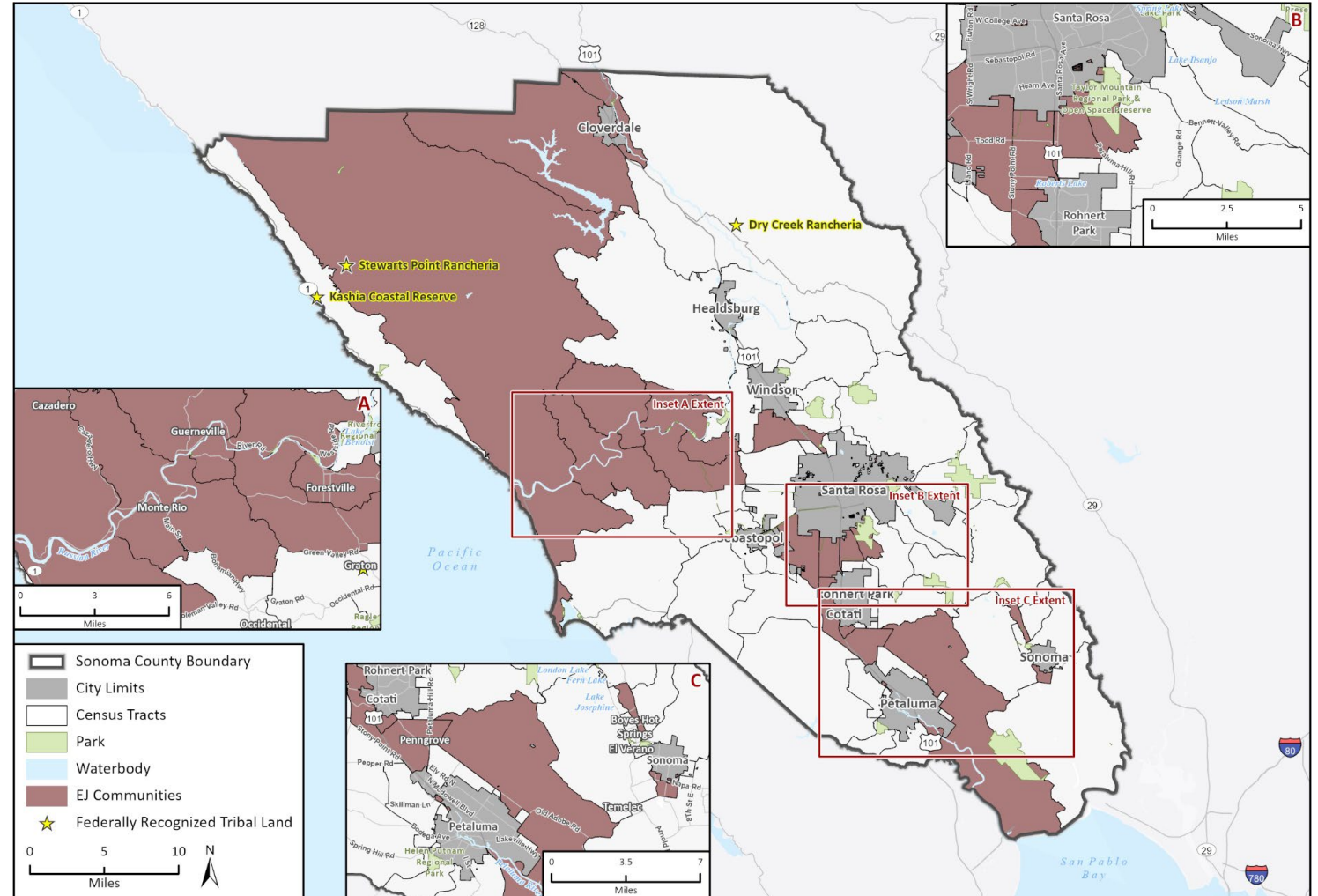


Environmental Justice (EJ) Communities



EJ Communities include:

1. Census tracts with elevated pollution burden overall, or low-income census tracts with either:
 - Elevated levels of individual pollutants; or
 - Elevated housing burden.
2. Federally recognized tribal lands.



Base map provided by Esri and its licensors © 2024.
Additional data provided by Sonoma County, 2022; CalEnviroScreen 4.0, 2022; Priority Population Investments 4.0, 2022; Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2023.

22-12991 EPS Sonoma Co EJ Tech Report.aprx
Fig X Sonoma County DACs



Background Assessments

- **Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment** (Senate Bill 379)
- **Residential Egress Assessment** (Senate Bill 99)
- **Evacuation Routes and Locations Assessment** (Assembly Bills 747 and 1409)
- **Environmental Justice Technical Report**





Policy Development

Equity Working Committee Meetings

- Two meetings refining strategies and policy concepts into *Policy Frameworks*

Board of Supervisors Workshop July 2024

- Reviewed *Policy Frameworks*

Municipal and Citizens Advisory Councils / Commissions

- Vetting *Policy Frameworks*

County Department/Agency Review

- Reviewed draft goals, policies, and programs





Safety Element

Issue Areas

1. Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery (New)
2. Equitable Community Safety (New)
3. Resilient Facilities and Infrastructure (New)
4. Wildland and Structural Fires
5. Flooding and Inundation
6. Geologic and Seismic Hazards
7. Hazardous Materials
8. Sea Level Rise (New)
9. Extreme Temperatures (New)
10. Drought (New)





Environmental Justice Element

Issue Areas

1. Healthy Environments
2. Healthy Public Facilities and Promoting Physical Activity
3. Community Health
4. Healthy Food Access
5. Safe and Sanitary Housing
6. Civic Engagement and Language Access





Implementation Plans

- Required to carry out the established goals and policies
- Consists of programmed actions the County will undertake on either a set timeframe or ongoing basis

Types of Implementation Measures

- Interdepartmental coordination or with external partners
- Planning and feasibility studies
- Analysis or assessment
- Community outreach and engagement
- Funding identification
- Code updates



Policy and Program Considerations



State law and
other
regulations



Input from the
public and
stakeholders



Alignment
with existing
and ongoing
County work



Alignment
with County
Strategic Plan
and policy
direction of
other plans



Public Review

1) Public Review of Draft Elements

- March 28 to April 30, 2025
- Input opportunities
 - Online Surveys
 - Virtual Workshops
 - Written Comments

2) Equity Working Committee Reflection Session

3) Public Comment





Planning Commission Review

Safety Element

- June 5, 2025 public hearing
- Recommendation:
 - Integrate climate changes into environmental review for comprehensive General Plan update

Environmental Justice Element

- July 10, 2025 public hearing
- Recommendations:
 - Modifications to policy language (incorporated into recommended draft)
 - Additional policies/programs





State Agency Review

Safety Element

CAL FIRE / Board of Forestry & Fire Protection

- Informal review to CAL FIRE before formal submission
- July 22, 2025: Approved by Board of Forestry & Fire Protection

California Geologic Survey, Department of Conservation

- No response received or required





General Plan Consistency

- Furthers the overall goals and objectives of other General Plan elements
- Consistent with goals and policies in the following elements:
 - Land Use
 - Open Space and Resource Conservation
 - Housing
 - Water Resources
 - Public Facilities
 - Circulation and Transit
 - Agricultural Resources





Environmental Determination

Safety Element

CEQA Guidelines Sec. 15162 / Public Resources Code Sec. 21166

- GP 2020 Environmental Impact Report (EIR) certified in 2008 with adoption of the plan
- No subsequent or supplemental EIR required if:
 - No substantial changes in the project with new effects
 - No substantial changes in the circumstance under which the project is being undertaken
 - No new information of substantial importance becomes available
- Safety Element Update is a program-level policy document
 - No new effects beyond those already studied in the EIR
 - Carries forward required GP2020 EIR mitigations and mitigating policies
 - Implementation does not make changes in land use, building density and intensity, or cause other changes to the physical environment
- Proposed Addendum to GP 2020 EIR





Environmental Determination

Environmental Justice Element

CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) (common sense exemption)

- CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment.
- EJ Element is a programmatic document that will not result in any direct or indirect physical change in the environment or approval of any development project
 - No changes in land use or building density and intensity.
 - Would not directly or indirectly cause population growth, or place additional demands on natural resources, public services, or infrastructure.
- It can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility the proposed general plan amendment will result in a direct or indirect physical change in the environment.





Recommendation

Conduct a public hearing and, after closing the public hearing;

- A. Adopt a resolution amending the Sonoma County General Plan to repeal the current Public Safety Element and adopt the Safety Element Update, and adopting an addendum to the General Plan 2020 Environmental Impact Report; and
- B. Adopt a resolution amending the Sonoma County General Plan to adopt the Environmental Justice Element and find the Environmental Justice Element exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3).



End of Staff Presentation