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September 15, 2014

Mr. Matthew Rodriguez
 Secretary
 California Environmental Protection Agency
 1001 I Street
 P.O. Box 2815
 Sacramento, CA 95812-2815

Ms. Mary D. Nichols
 Chairman
 California Air Resources Board
 1001 I Street
 P.O. Box 2815
 Sacramento, CA 95812-2815

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Dear Secretary Rodriguez and Chairman Nichols:

SUBJECT: California Environmental Protection Agency Approaches to Identifying Disadvantaged Communities; California Air Resources Board Interim Guidance to Agencies Administering Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund Monies

The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments regarding the Approaches to Identifying Disadvantaged Communities proposed by the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) and the Interim Guidance to Agencies Administering Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund Monies proposed by the California Air Resources Board (CARB).

As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the San Diego region, SANDAG serves as the forum for regional decision-making. SANDAG is committed to promoting social equity and environmental justice in the regional planning process.

SANDAG makes significant efforts to proactively engage community members who have traditionally been underserved and underrepresented in the planning process. To ensure meaningful public involvement and help bridge the gap between decision-makers and traditionally underrepresented communities, SANDAG has contracted with twelve community-based organizations (CBOs) from around the San Diego region to form a community-based outreach network. These organizations specialize in providing services to and engaging these populations, and advocate for the needs of these communities.

Working with CBO partners to define criteria that accurately capture San Diego's most impacted and disadvantaged communities, SANDAG has identified cities and communities with high concentrations of low income residents, minority populations, and seniors, as communities of concern in the region.

The methods and guidance under consideration by CalEPA and CARB may impact the ability of SANDAG, the region's transit operators, and community partners to utilize and invest Cap and Trade funds in support of these communities. As such, SANDAG appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the review of the proposed statewide disadvantaged communities identification methods and Interim Guidance and would like to comment on a few aspects in particular.

CalEnviroScreen: Population

San Diego's population is more than 8 percent of the State's total population. However, under CalEPA's proposed methodologies, it appears the San Diego region would be eligible to receive less than 2 percent of available funding under these guidelines. According to its methodology, CalEnviroScreen identifies Census tracts that include communities disproportionately burdened by multiple sources of pollution, absent of weighting by resident location or workplace location. Census tracts "generally have a population size between 1,200 and 8,000 people, with an optimum size of 4,000 people."¹ The largest census tract has more than 30,000 residents. Therefore, under the proposed methodology, it appears two tracts with similar pollution sources and socioeconomic profiles are treated equally even if the total number of residents or employees in the tracts differs substantially.

SANDAG encourages CalEPA to consider possible weighting methods that may be used to help compensate for the inequity of populations served under its proposed Census tract model and would welcome the opportunity to contribute to this exercise.

CalEnviroScreen: Pollution Burden Indicators

As a border region, San Diego is subject to several pollution sources originating from land Ports of Entry with Mexico and industrial sources outside the United States. However, because the CalEnviroScreen tool does not include data sources outside of the United States, San Diego communities with significant pollution burdens near the California – Baja California border remain unaccounted for under the proposed methodology.

Particulate Matter 2.5 (PM)

The largest on-road transportation source of PM in San Diego County is the Otay Mesa Commercial Port of Entry (POE). The Otay Mesa POE is the second busiest commercial truck border crossing along the United States-Mexico border and the busiest in California. Each day, thousands of trucks idle for hours waiting for U.S. Customs and Border Protection inspection. This has a direct impact on pollution levels in the Otay Mesa community.

The PM conditions are so egregious that the San Diego Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD) closed the regional monitoring station at Otay Mesa last year. According to the SDAPCD Annual

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. Geographic Terms and Concepts – Census Tract.
As viewed 9/9/2014. < https://www.census.gov/geo/reference/gtc/gtc_ct.html >

Network Plan, greatly increased truck traffic at the Otay Mesa border crossing has forced the re-designation of the Otay Mesa station instruments from Neighborhood Scale to MicroScale and Impact levels in order to measure concentrations representative of the air mass in the south San Diego region. The District also was granted permission to decommission the Otay Mesa border station and relocate 3.3 kilometers northeast.

As a result, the CARB Air Monitoring Network, which is used as the data source for CalEnviroScreen PM indicators, has no way of measuring or demonstrating the significant pollution burdens impacting this community due to the border.

Diesel Particulate Matter

Diesel PM sources near the California border with Mexico also appear to be excluded from CalEnviroScreen data sources. Diesel PM exposure criteria use CARB Emissions Factors 2013 for county-wide estimates of diesel PM emissions for a July weekday and county-wide estimates of diesel PM from non-road sources. Using these two sources, CARB develops a distribution of Diesel PM across the entire state. In areas near county borders (e.g., San Clemente), the Diesel PM profiles include information from both counties (e.g., Orange and San Diego). However, in areas along the international border, it is unclear how Diesel PM from the 750,000 trucks entering the United States at Otay Mesa last year is accounted for in the model. This suggests Diesel PM results utilized by CalEnviroScreen are erroneously low for Otay Mesa, Tecate, and Calexico.

Toxic Releases from Facilities

Only facilities in the United States are required to report toxic chemical usage to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. As such, the CalEnviroScreen data source for Toxic Releases from Facilities has no way to account for industrial and manufacturing sources in Tijuana, Tecate, and Mexicali in its analysis. The California-Baja California border zone is home to more than a hundred Mexican factories operating in the free trade zone, manufacturing medical devices, electronics, and automobiles for sale and distribution in the United States. Since the Toxic Release indicator includes a proximity analysis in its calculation, this measure also would result in erroneously low exposure levels for communities near the California – Baja California border.

CalEnviroScreen: Other Criteria

The San Diego region faces unique challenges that are not accounted for in CalEnviroScreen's current form. As a result, communities that would be considered as disadvantaged according to regional criteria are likely to be considered ineligible for funding designated under the proposed identification methods. In particular, the proposed methods fail to capture many communities in San Diego that have high concentrations of low income and/or minority populations. Communities of concern identified by SANDAG represent more than 1.5 million people. By contrast, the CalEnviroScreen tool, using the 30 percent threshold, appears to capture only 206,164 individuals.

The attached maps demonstrate the stark difference between communities of concern that have been identified by SANDAG and those that would qualify under CalEnviroScreen's proposed methodology, at both the 20 percent and 30 percent cut-off threshold. As shown, even at the highest proposed threshold, many of San Diego's locally identified communities of concern would be excluded. These communities include, but are not limited to, San Ysidro, City Heights, Linda Vista, Imperial Beach, parts of Oceanside, Escondido, La Mesa, El Cajon, and significant portions of the rural communities in San Diego's East County.

According to equity analysis conducted by SANDAG, these communities are among the most impacted and disadvantaged in the region.

In an effort to help improve CalEnviroScreen to more accurately capture disadvantaged communities throughout the State, SANDAG encourages CalEPA to consider the following modifications:

- Include “rent burden” as a new criteria. This factor was cited by SB 535 as a factor to determine disadvantaged communities, and would help account for cost of living differences across the state.
- Set the cut-off point for determining disadvantaged communities at the 30% threshold.

Initial analysis indicates the acceptance of these modifications would help to better reflect the current challenges faced by communities throughout San Diego, and the State as a whole.

Interim Guidance: Process

SANDAG supports the guidance proposed by CARB stating that “if CalEPA updates the list of census tracts defined as disadvantaged communities, the new list of communities will apply to projects funded with subsequent fiscal year monies.” This measure accounts for potential changes in CalEPA’s methods in the future while providing for a level of certainty conducive to responsible and efficient planning.

SANDAG also supports the proposed guidance regarding outreach efforts to potential project applicants in disadvantaged communities or their representatives and encourages CARB to ensure San Diego is included within these efforts. SANDAG has reached out to CBOs in the region to increase awareness regarding CalEnviroScreen and the Interim Guidance; however, respectfully requests CARB consider holding workshops in San Diego, in addition to Los Angeles, to help encourage more widespread participation in the process.

Interim Guidance: Corridor Approach

SANDAG appreciates the efforts made by CARB to develop criteria that account for the fact that many projects provide direct, meaningful, and assured benefits to disadvantaged communities without being physically located in those places. While the proposal to include a half-mile radius to determine projects with benefits to disadvantaged communities is a step in the right direction, SANDAG encourages CARB to consider a corridor-approach.

Transportation improvements often benefit wider populations than those residing within a defined zone around the investment. Similarly, limiting the definition of affordable housing benefits to projects within a half mile of a disadvantaged community may have several unintended consequences, including serving as a disincentive to increase affordable housing near job centers or encouraging development in pollution-laden areas.

A further broadening of the criteria would help ensure that the communities that are most in need of additional transportation investment and affordable housing have the greatest opportunity to benefit from Cap and Trade investments.

Concluding Thoughts

CalEPA and CARB have taken tremendous effort to develop a tool and guidelines that meet legislative objectives. The guiding legislation for these efforts is clear in its intent to focus investments on those communities that are most impacted and disadvantaged. Rather than attempting to dilute this targeted approach, SANDAG believes the suggestions included within this letter deepen the ability of these tools to achieve statutory intent by enabling a more accurate portrayal of populations in need.

That being said, CalEPA and CARB have outlined an extremely ambitious timeline for adoption of the Approaches to Identifying Disadvantaged Communities and the Interim Guidance to Agencies Administering Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund Monies. Given the magnitude of these proposals and millions of dollars in public funding that are at stake, SANDAG encourages CalEPA and CARB to take the necessary amount of time to consider, and incorporate as appropriate, all submitted comments.

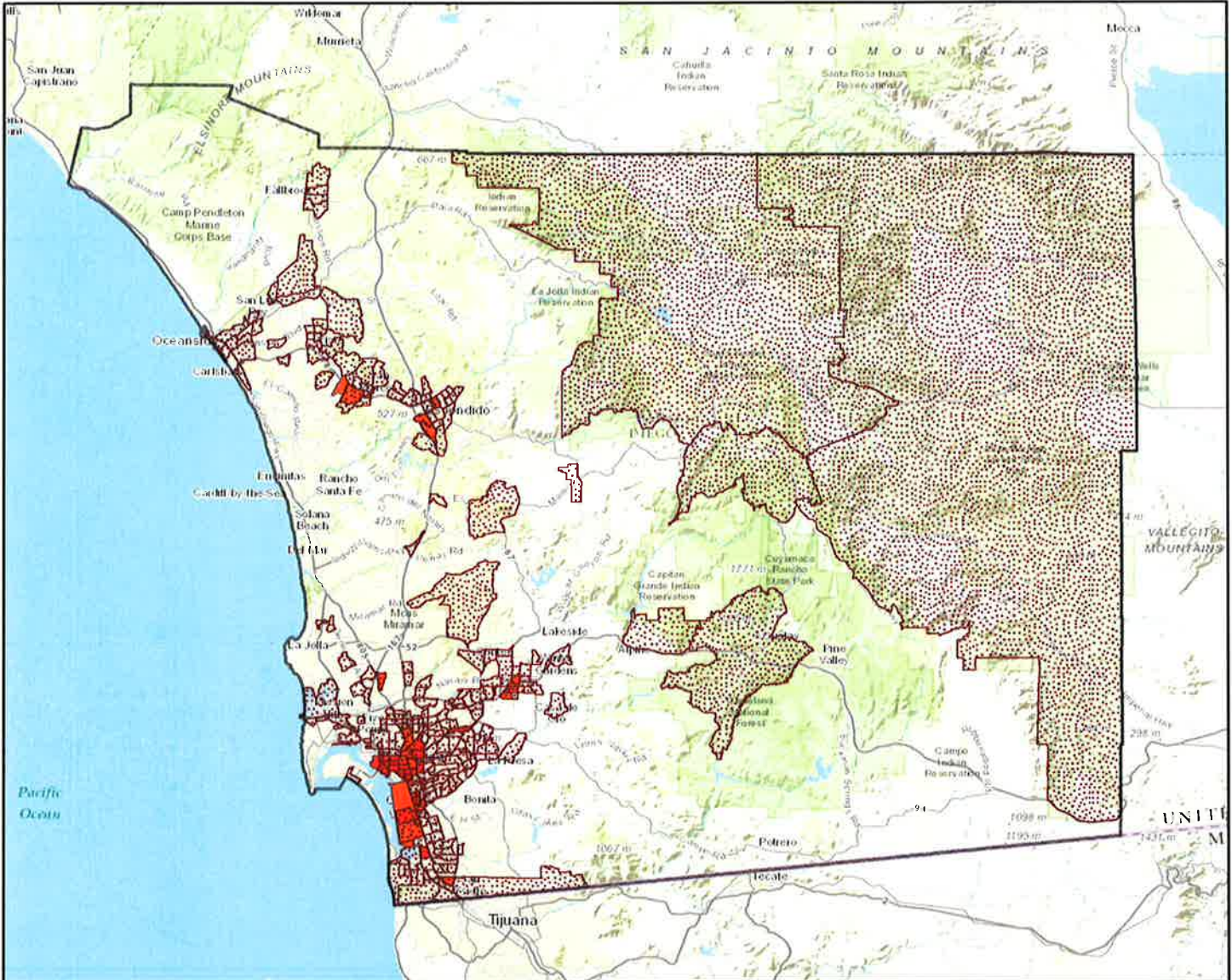
In particular, SANDAG respectfully requests that CARB delay Board action, currently scheduled for September 18, 2014, to provide CARB Members adequate time for consideration of public comments. Additional time also would allow for CARB and CalEPA to hold a workshop in San Diego in order to better understand the unique challenges our region experiences as a border community and how these characteristics may be more accurately represented in statewide tools and guidance.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. SANDAG looks forward to continuing to work with you throughout this process. Please feel free to contact Robyn Wapner, Senior Legislative Analyst, at (619) 699-1994 or robyn.wapner@sandag.org, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,


GARY L. GALLEGOS
Executive Director

CalEnviroScreen 2.0 30% Threshold Census Tracts with SANDAG Low Income Communities of Concern



September 12, 2014

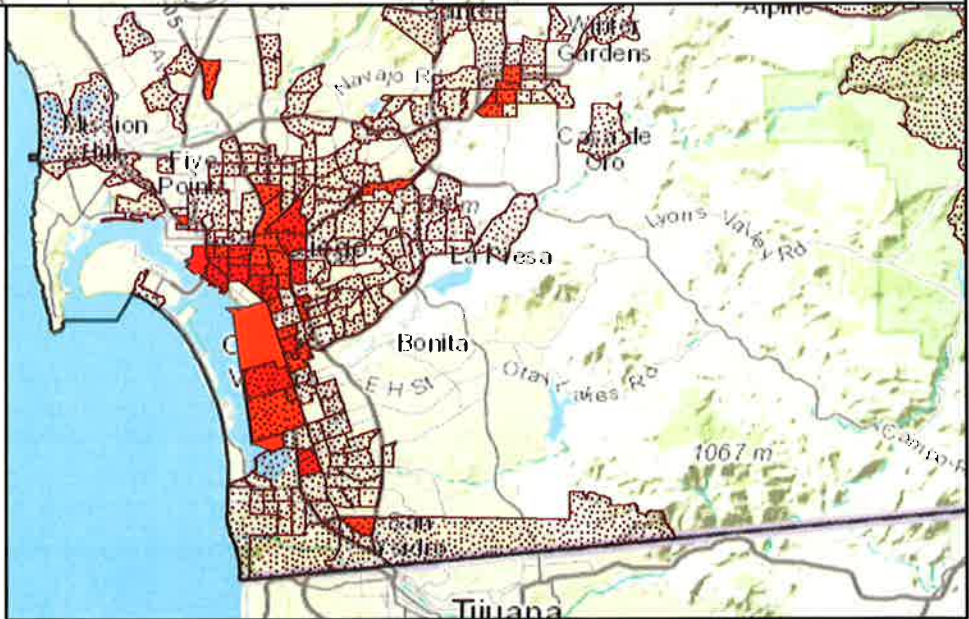
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Low Income Community of Concern

CalEnviroScreen 2.0

Census Tract (by Statewide Percentile)

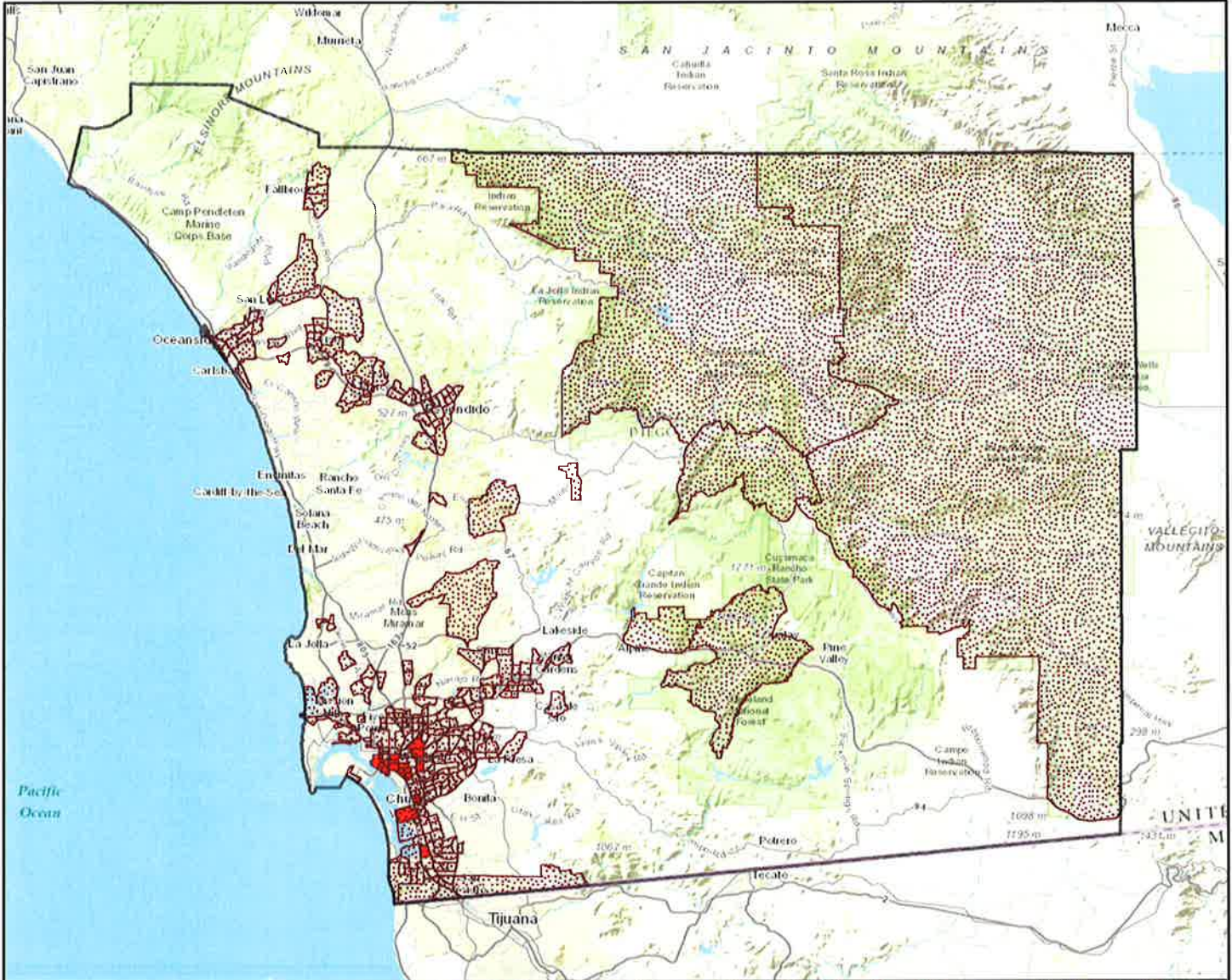
- Lowest Scores (Bottom 10%)
- 11 - 20%
- 21 - 30%
- 31 - 40%
- 41 - 50%
- 51 - 60%
- 61 - 70%
- 71 - 80%
- Highest Scores (81 - 90%)
- Highest Scores (91 - 100%)



Note: SANDAG Low Income Communities of Concern are areas where more than 51 percent of households fall below 200 percent of the federal poverty rate.


Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

CalEnviroScreen 2.0 20% Threshold Census Tracts with SANDAG Low Income Communities of Concern













September 12, 2014

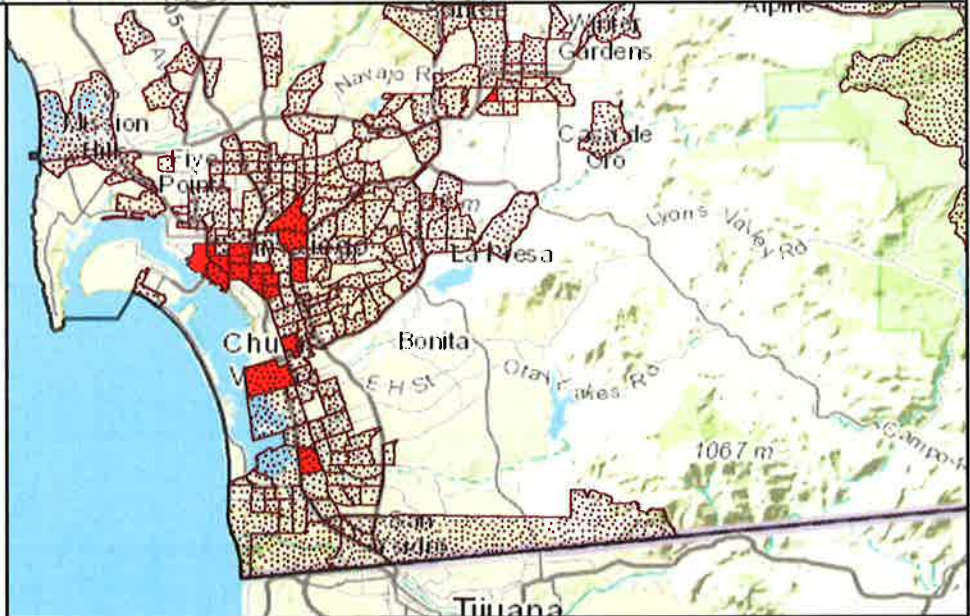
Legend

 Low Income Community of Concern

CalEnviroScreen 2.0

Census Tract (by Statewide Percentile)

-  Lowest Scores (Bottom 10%)
-  11 - 20%
-  21 - 30%
-  31 - 40%
-  41 - 50%
-  51 - 60%
-  61 - 70%
-  71 - 80%
-  Highest Scores (81 - 90%)
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Community Based Organizations (CBOs) – SANDAG Outreach Partners

Able-Disabled Advocacy– Able-Disabled Advocacy (A-DA) is a non-profit organization founded in 1975 that provides employment and training services to individuals with all types of disabilities and other barriers to employment. Able-Disabled Advocacy's mission is *"to provide vocational skills training and educational advancement for youth and adults with disabilities and to assist them in finding employment and overcoming barriers to personal and financial self-sufficiency."* A-DA's main office is located in City Heights; at our Veterans Center in Central San Diego; at our Youth Center in Southeast San Diego; and in Chula Vista at the South County Career Center.

Area of influence: county-wide

Alliance for Regional Solutions – The Alliance For Regional Solutions (ARS) is a coalition of Northern San Diego County social service agencies, municipalities, the County of San Diego, United Way, educational entities, healthcare providers, other agencies and philanthropic bodies working together to create practical solutions to emerging community needs. The purpose of ARS is to address the needs of regional infrastructure to provide a coordinated community-wide response to community issues.

Areas of influence: Carlsbad, Oceanside, Vista, San Marcos, Escondido

BAME Renaissance Community Development Corporation - BAME Renaissance Community Development Corporation (BAME CDC) was founded in 1995 by members of the Bethel Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Church. BAME CDC strives to strengthen and revitalize one of San Diego's most economically distressed communities, the Greater Logan Heights area. BAME CDC assists children, families, and seniors with programs that meet their basic needs and improve their quality of life. The organization's mission is to promote and provide an opportunity for all sectors of the community to work collaboratively toward the goal of strengthening individuals, families, and neighborhoods through social and economic development. In accordance with this mission, BAME CDC offers an array of social services, programs, and community empowerment initiatives.

Areas of influence: Greater Logan Heights (Stockton, Memorial, Grant Hill, Sherman Heights, Logan Heights, Barrio Logan, and Southeastern San Diego)

Casa Familiar– Casa Familiar is a community-based, non-profit organization founded in 1968 under the name of *Trabajadores de la Raza*, San Diego Chapter, to serve Spanish-speaking monolingual clients in the community of San Ysidro. Over the years, Casa Familiar's services and target population have expanded to include all of South San Diego's population. While area demographics virtually ensure that the majority of our clients continue to be Latino, Casa Familiar welcomes clients from all walks of life, regardless of race, ethnic background, national origin, religious beliefs, or sexual orientation. Casa Familiar offers over fifty programs spanning the program areas of Human Services, Community Development, Recreation Services, Technology, Arts and Culture, and Education.

Areas of influence: San Ysidro

Chula Vista Community Collaborative—The Chula Vista Community Collaborative (CVCC) draws together all sectors of the local community to develop coordinated strategies and systems that protect the health and safety of residents, develop economic resources, promote local leadership, enhance the environment, and contribute to the celebration of and respect for cultural diversity. The CVCC currently has over 150 member organizations and 624 members. The CVCC acts as a platform from which to launch effective new initiatives to improve quality of life. The CVCC is the umbrella for a variety of programs and committees. The most notable infrastructure of the CVCC is the network of Family Resource Centers that have been created and sustained by collective effort.

Areas of influence: Chula Vista

City Heights Community Development Corporation and Mid-City Community Advocacy Network—Established in 1981, City Heights CDC works with residents to enhance the quality of life in City Heights through the creation of affordable housing and livable neighborhoods, fostering economic self-sufficiency and stimulating investment. Additional services: employment placement/training; neighborhood improvement; business assistance; Business Directory for City Heights/Mid-City. In the late 1980's, a group of concerned Mid-City community representatives came together to respond to the rapidly deteriorating conditions in the area. Now known as **Mid-City Community Advocacy Network (Mid-City CAN)**, this unique collaboration is comprised of schools, businesses, non-profit organizations, government agencies, youth, parents, ethnic and cultural groups, civic associations and faith-based institutions.

Areas of influence: City Heights

El Cajon Collaborative— Established in 1992, the El Cajon Collaborative is one of the oldest and strongest collaboratives in San Diego County. Currently, the Collaborative has an impressive list of 26 formal Partners (health clinics, social services agencies, educational institutions faith communities and government entities) whose target populations vary. Their goals include increasing pro-social activities for youth, community involvement through collaborative partnerships, and enhancing prevention activities for youth using the public health model of universal, secondary and targeted interventions.

Areas of influence: El Cajon

International Rescue Committee— International Rescue Committee (IRC) is an established San Diego community based organization that provides assistance to refugees and other low-income individuals from diverse backgrounds, who typically are unable to access mainstream services due to cultural and linguistic barriers. The IRC has been a trusted organization since 1975, when it was first established to assist Vietnamese refugees in San Diego. The IRC is located in City Heights, but also offers services at the Refugee Support Center, IRC's satellite office in El Cajon. Approximately 76% of the over 7,000 clients that IRC serves each year reside either in City Heights or El Cajon.

Areas of influence: City Heights, El Cajon

Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation - As a place-based operating foundation located at the center of southeastern San Diego and driven by a commitment to foster “resident ownership of neighborhood change”, JCNI has served as a catalyst for community revitalization through inclusive civic engagement since 1997. Our organization has committed the philanthropic resources of the Jacobs Family Foundation and public and private partners to work with teams of community stakeholders representing the diverse cultures, age groups, and economic interests of the ten Diamond Neighborhoods comprising Southeastern San Diego.

Areas of influence: Southeastern San Diego (Encanto, Paradise Hills, Bay Terraces, Valencia Park, Lincoln Park, Skyline, Chollas View, Mount Hope, Emerald Hills, Mountain View)

Linda Vista Collaborative—The Linda Vista Collaborative (LVC) offers a forum for public deliberation among the stakeholders of Linda Vista and promotes collaboration among them with the goal of improving the quality of life of all its residents. The Linda Vista Collaborative (LVC) and its lead agency, **Bayside Community Center (BCC)**, are well-established and trusted community assets with the ability to reach identified communities of concern in Linda Vista. Since its creation in 1995, the Linda Vista Collaborative has offered a forum for public deliberation among the key stakeholders of Linda Vista and promotes collaboration among them with the goal of improving the quality of life of all its residents. The Linda Vista Collaborative is integrated by community leaders, representatives of elected officials, members of non-profit organizations, staff of government agencies, school personnel and others who have a vested interest in advocating on behalf of Linda Vista.

Areas of influence: Linda Vista

Operation Samahan – Operation Samahan is a federally qualified health center (FQHC) founded by the Filipino community in 1973. Samahan is a Tagalog word which means “working together.” It operates six clinic sites strategically located within the county of San Diego; two of which are school-based health centers situated within the school campuses of National City and City Heights. Operation Samahan’s mission is to promote better health and living conditions for all members of the community particularly among the indigent, low-income, uninsured and underserved individuals and families, by providing high quality, affordable and culturally accessible primary and oral health care, integrative health, behavioral health, health promotion and education, and multi-faceted social services.

Areas of influence: National City, Lincoln Acres (unincorporated community within National City)

Vista Community Clinic – Vista Community Clinic is a nonprofit healthcare facility incorporated in 1972 with the mission to provide quality care and health education to the community focusing on those facing economic, social or cultural barriers. VCC serves the communities of Vista, Oceanside, and portions of the contiguous communities of Fallbrook, Carlsbad, Bonsall, San Marcos, and surrounding unincorporated areas. VCC’s Health Promotion Center was opened in 1990 to promote healthy lifestyles, reduce chronic disease, and increase the community’s well-being.

Areas of influence: Vista, Oceanside, Fallbrook, Carlsbad, Bonsall, San Marcos, and surrounding unincorporated areas