



Mobility Zones Equity Priority Communities

Action

**Author:** Kathleen Hanley

**Attachments:** Yes

**Referring Committee:** Transportation

**Issue:**

SACOG staff—in partnership with city and county staff, regional partners, and community members—have developed a map that designates Equity Priority Communities for the Mobility Zones project.

**Request:**

Approve

**Recommendation for Board:**

The Transportation Committee unanimously recommended that the Board adopt the Equity Priority Communities approved by the Mobility Zones Advisory Committees and Task Force.

**Recommendation for Committee:**

That the Transportation Committee recommend that the Board adopt the Equity Priority Communities approved by the Mobility Zones Advisory Committees and Task Force.

**Background:**

In January 2024, SACOG initiated the Mobility Zones project, a six-county three-year effort to improve clean, shared, and active transportation in equity-priority areas. Mobility Zones is funded by a \$5 million Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) federal grant that SACOG received in 2023.

The Mobility Zones project builds on the success of the Green Means Go program by taking a place-based case study approach to improve transportation for the Sacramento Region's diverse communities. Over the course of the three-year effort, SACOG will identify 10-15 neighborhood-sized 'zones', analyze zone's unique transportation challenges, prioritize projects for each zone, and advance at least one priority project in each county.

The Mobility Zones project also builds on the success of the Engage, Empower, Implement program by using a co-creation model where community members have direct decision-making power on the project. Mobility Zones convenes more than 70 city, county, and partner agency staff; and more 30 community leaders to guide the direction of the project. These partners form the project's seven Advisory Committees and Task Force which meet quarterly.

In April 2024, staff provided a project overview to the Transportation Committee and Board, including a discussion of the project's phases and its innovate community co-creation model. In September 2024, staff presented the project's four goals to the Transportation Committee and Board:

- Equity – Center the voices of people and places that have been historically marginalized or underserved by transportation decisions.
- Access – Expand affordable, reliable transportation options that allow people of all ages and abilities to get where they want to go safely.
- Quality of Life – Improve the ease, quality and comfort of travel options and limit environmental and public health burdens.
- Feasibility – Advance impactful projects that are supported by communities, cost-effective, and ready for near-term investment and implementation.

## **Discussion/Analysis:**

### *Context*

The first phase of the Mobility Zones project is focused on narrowing down to about 10 neighborhood-sized “zones” to focus on for the remainder of the project. The zones will be determined by overlapping demographic and built environment data to determine which parts of the six-county region have overlapping equity, transportation, and quality of life needs. The first step of this analysis uses demographic equity data to designate “Equity Priority Communities”, which is the focus of this staff report.

There are existing equity maps developed at the regional, state, and federal level, including federal Justice 40 Communities, state Disadvantaged Communities, state Low-Income Communities, and regional Environmental Justice Areas. However, these maps often underrepresent the needs of our region’s communities, particularly in rural and suburban areas (Attachment A). These maps also were developed with limited community input and residence-focused, ignoring the role job centers play in driving equity. A new equity map methodology was developed for the Mobility Zones project to address these shortcomings of existing maps.

### *Equity Priority Community Methodology*

This staff report summarizes the methodology, or process, used to develop the [Equity Priority Communities Map](#). Attachment B provides a more detailed technical explanation of the methodology. The first step in developing the map was to determine the “menu” of criteria that would be used to measure equity need. After feedback and refinement from the project’s advisory committees, the methodology includes nine equity criteria:

- Income
- Race and ethnicity
- Pollution burden
- Youth
- Older adults
- Disability status
- Limited English proficiency
- Amount of education
- Tribal areas

These criteria are applied at the Census Block Group level across all six counties but are weighted differently

for each county. By weighing, we address the “one-size-fits-all” problem with other equity maps. To determine how to weigh the criteria, staff used the project’s advisory committees and a public survey to understand which criteria are more important to different communities. Using this direct feedback we “dialed up” the categories that mattered more to each county and “dialed down” the categories that mattered less. This created the blue areas on the map which are areas where equity priority folks live.

Then, using observed travel data from Replica, staff analyzed where residents in the blue areas travel. Using this trip data, we identified areas where residents from the blue areas were going, including retail centers, office parks, community colleges and universities, and other job centers. The orange areas on the map are the places that receive the most trips from blue areas. Green areas indicate places where equity priority folks both live and travel.

### *Equity Priority Community Map*

The final [Equity Priority Communities Map](#) reflects diverse equity needs in urban, suburban, and rural areas; highlights the importance of commercial and job centers to equity; and includes direct input from residents and community-based organizations. The map succeeds at mapping equity broadly, while still taking a first step at narrowing down toward the about 10 neighborhood-sized zones.

The Equity Priority Communities Map was developed collaboratively with members of the Mobility Zones Advisory Committees and Task Force. Community members, city and county staff, and agency partners had input into each step of the process and have approved the final Equity Priority Communities Map. The map also reflects input from the two tribal governments that responded to SACOG’s offer to meet regarding Mobility Zones: United Auburn Indian Community and Enterprise Rancheria. Staff recommend that the board adopt the Equity Priority Communities approved by the Mobility Zones Advisory Committees and Task Force.

### **Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:**

Staff and consultant work on Mobility Zones is included in the adopted OWP and Budget.

### **List of Attachments:**

Attachment A: Regional Representation in Existing Equity Maps

Attachment B: Equity Priority Community Methodology

Attachment C: Slides