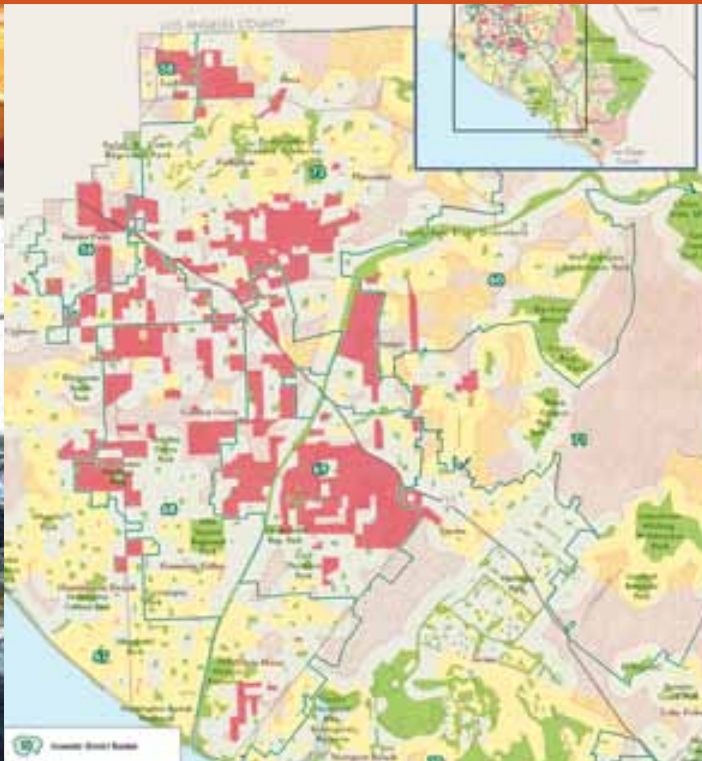




# HEALTHY PARKS, SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES: Mapping Green Access and Equity for Southern California

Los Angeles County | Orange County | Ventura County | San Bernardino County | San Diego County | Riverside County | Kern County | Santa Barbara County | Imperial County





## ***ABOUT THIS REPORT***

The City Project is proud to present this report, *Healthy Parks, Schools, and Communities: Mapping Green Access and Equity for Southern California*, which maps and analyzes park access and equity in nine counties in Southern California — Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, San Bernardino, Riverside, San Diego, Kern, Santa Barbara and Imperial — using narrative analyses, geographic information system (GIS) mapping tools, and demographic and economic data.

Unlike other studies, which plot *either* green space *or* population, the maps in this report plot green space *in relation* to population and other metrics to measure accessibility, such as distance to the park. This report also provides multidisciplinary analyses of the vital benefits of parks and other green space to people and the environment. It describes the consequences of disparities in green access and the benefits that could be reaped in “park poor” and “income poor” communities if resources were fairly allocated. It concludes with recommendations for equitable investments in green space in California and the nation.

The goal of this work is to combine research and analyses with effective outreach to provide concerned citizens, community groups, elected and other government officials, planners, funders, and other stakeholders with the best available information upon which to prioritize actions and decisions that positively impact green access for all.

*For more information on green access and equity in Southern California, or to download a copy of this report, as well as individual county reports in English and Spanish, please visit [www.cityprojectca.org/greenjustice](http://www.cityprojectca.org/greenjustice).*

## ***ABOUT THE CITY PROJECT***

**The mission of The City Project is to achieve equal justice, democracy and livability for all.**

The City Project carries out its mission by influencing the investment of public resources to achieve results that are equitable, enhance human health and the environment, and promote economic vitality for all communities. Focusing on parks and recreation, playgrounds, schools, health, and transit, we help bring people together to define the kind of community where they want to live and raise children. The City Project works with diverse coalitions in strategic campaigns to shape public policy and law, and to serve the needs of the community as defined by the community.

The City Project is a nonprofit organization that has worked and published extensively over the past decade on equal access to parks and green space, transportation, and related issues at the intersection of social justice, sustainable regional planning and smart growth.

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## ***FOREWORD BY THE CITY PROJECT***

The City Project presents this report on Healthy Parks, Schools and Communities: Green Access and Equal Justice for Southern California. The City Project has worked for over ten years to broaden access to parks and open space in underserved communities; to provide quality education including physical education and healthy food at school; to address related human health concerns from an equity perspective; and to advocate for green jobs and economic justice. This report provides people with information to take action to create healthy communities for all.

Where we live, the color of our skin and the amount of money we have has an enormous impact on our health. Access to parks, physical education in school, healthy food, and economic vitality can help improve everyone's health and eliminate unfair disparities.

This report, and others in the series on individual counties in Southern California, is made possible in part by the generous support of our major donors. Dr. Anthony Iton of The California Endowment wrote in the Riverside report, "Whether you are a parent, concerned citizen, educator, elected official or activist, we hope this report will be useful in your efforts to make your community a healthy environment." According to Martin H. Blank of The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation, "We have seen our investment in The City Project yield impressive returns, such as new urban parks and the Los Angeles Unified School District's adoption of a plan to enforce physical education requirements at all schools in response to community campaigns." According to Diana Bonta of Kaiser Permanente, "Over the long term, the work of The City Project and their community partners can spur new parks and recreation areas like walking paths and gardens in underserved neighborhoods, as well as joint-use agreements between schools and parks, and the recognition of green space access in local planning and policy documents." David Fukuzawa of the Kresge Foundation wrote in the Ventura report, "We hope this report invites many others to engage in a discussion not just about parks but about the underlying issues of justice and fairness." According to Angela Glover Blackwell, Founder and CEO of PolicyLink, "The City Project [is] using mapping and analyses to indicate where large numbers of people of color and low-income people live, and then noting the absence of parks in those areas contrasted with disproportionately white and wealthy areas. The City Project uses these data as a core advocacy tool to support the equitable distribution of parks and recreation facilities around the state." Emily Young, Senior Director, and Marisa Aurora Quiroz, Manager, Environment Program, San Diego Foundation, write: "The San Diego region has directly benefitted from The City Project's ongoing activism and steadfast dedication to advocating for children's right to play. Identifying where our green space resides and looking at who has access to these spaces is now a critical component of our work."

We thank each of them and the other generous donors listed at the end of this report.

Sincerely,

**Virginia Keeny**

Board Chair

The City Project

*This Southern California report, and individual county reports in English and Spanish, are available on the web at [www.cityprojectca.org/mapjustice](http://www.cityprojectca.org/mapjustice).*



View of City of Riverside from Sycamore Canyon Park | Creative Commons - Lori McCollum

## ***FOREWORD BY THE CALIFORNIA ENDOWMENT FROM THE RIVERSIDE REPORT***

The California Endowment is a foundation committed to improving the health of all Californians, especially those in underserved communities. The most important thing we have learned is that where we live has an enormous impact on our health. Being able to breathe clean air, to send our kids to school without fear of violence, to have a convenient place to buy fresh foods, to live near a park where we can walk and play - these are the things that keep us healthy.

The California Endowment has worked with The City Project for many years to broaden access to parks and open space in underserved communities, and to fight childhood obesity by guaranteeing that students get enough physical education at school.

Childhood obesity is an epidemic, and The California Endowment believes all California families deserve to live in healthy environments with access to opportunities for physical activity. Improving green access, as called for in this report by The City Project, is a critical strategy in building healthy communities. We must make it easier for kids and adults to be more active by eliminating the disparities in access to green space and physical activity.

The California Endowment funded a study in late 2010 that shows nearly all segments of the voting population view childhood obesity as a very serious problem in the state, with African-Americans, Latinos and low-income voters particularly concerned. Of those surveyed, 89% support requiring physical education classes for four years in high school. A similar percentage (88%) favors requiring school gyms, tracks, playgrounds and fields to be open to children when school is not in session. And 87% back the idea of cities making street improvements so that it is easier to bike, ride and walk. These are all recommendations that you will find in this report by The City Project.

This report includes images from “Picturing Health,” a photo documentary project of Venice Arts sponsored by the Endowment that explores health issues as seen through the eyes of teens in diverse Southern and Central California communities, including the Coachella Valley in Riverside County.

Whether you are a parent, concerned citizen, educator, elected official or activist, we hope this report will be useful in your efforts to make your community a healthy environment.

Sincerely,

**Anthony Iton, M.D., J.D., M.P.H.**

Senior Vice President, Healthy Communities  
The California Endowment

The work of The City Project is made possible in part by generous support from The California Endowment.

*The California Endowment, a private, statewide health foundation, was established in 1996 to expand access to affordable, quality health care for underserved individuals and communities and to promote fundamental improvements in the health status of all Californians. For more information, please visit [www.calendow.org](http://www.calendow.org).*





View of downtown Los Angeles from Elysian Park | The City Project

## ***FOREWORD BY THE ROSALINDE AND ARTHUR GILBERT FOUNDATION FROM THE LOS ANGELES REPORT***

The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation is deeply committed to improving the health of children in Los Angeles County. We hope that escalating rates of childhood obesity and diabetes can be reversed by providing more opportunities for children to play and exercise every day.

The Foundation is a proud supporter of The City Project's efforts to change policy, improve access to green space, and promote healthy, livable communities for all.

Using multidisciplinary research and analyses, like the work reflected in this report, The City Project works to improve and create safe parks, mobilizes community residents to support policies that address equal access to parks and open space, and supports city and school district policies that promote physical activity and healthy choices.

We have seen our investment in The City Project yield impressive returns, such as new urban parks and the Los Angeles Unified School District's adoption of a plan to enforce physical education requirements at all schools, in response to community campaigns led by The City Project with their community allies.

By helping children and their families be physically active, The City Project is setting a precedent for the rest of their lives and a foundation for healthy futures.

Sincerely,

**Martin H. Blank, Jr.**

Trustee

The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation

This report was sponsored in part by a generous grant from The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation.

*The mission of The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation is to invest in programs that promote education, tolerance, social services, healthcare and the arts. The Foundation builds on the ideals and pursuits of its founders, Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert. For more information, please visit [www.thegilbertfoundation.org](http://www.thegilbertfoundation.org).*



## ***FOREWORD BY KAISER PERMANENTE FROM THE ORANGE COUNTY REPORT***

For nearly 65 years, our mission at Kaiser Permanente has been to improve the health of our health plan members and the communities we serve. Parks and green space play a vital role in the health and well-being of a community and its residents. That's why we are proud to support the "green space" work that The City Project is doing with funding from our Healthy Eating Active Living program.

We've come together because we know that healthy communities and a healthy environment are critical to individual health and wellness. Over the long term, the work of The City Project and their community partners can spur new parks and recreation areas like walking paths and gardens in underserved neighborhoods, as well as joint-use agreements between schools and parks, and the recognition of green space access in local planning and policy documents.

We congratulate The City Project on this important effort, and applaud the American Public Health Association's recent awarding of its prestigious Presidential Citation to City Project Founding Director Robert García.

Expanding the availability of open spaces and the access to them is one way we can contribute to a lasting solution to improve public health. It's all part of our commitment to bring total health—including preventive care through healthier lifestyles—to our members and the communities we serve.

Sincerely,

**Diana M. Bontá**

Vice President, Public Affairs  
Kaiser Permanente

The work of The City Project is made possible in part by generous support from Kaiser Permanente.

*Kaiser Permanente is recognized as one of America's leading health care providers and not-for-profit health plans. Founded in 1945, Kaiser's mission is to provide high-quality, affordable health care services and to improve the health of their members and the communities they serve. Kaiser Permanente's Community Health Initiatives take a prevention-driven approach to health, focusing on policies and environmental changes that promote healthy eating and active living.*





Santa Susana Park, Simi Valley | Creative Commons – Robin Kanouse

## ***FOREWORD BY THE KRESGE FOUNDATION FROM THE VENTURA COUNTY REPORT***

For many of us, living healthy means eating the right foods and getting enough exercise. Just watching our diets and keeping up our physical activity can be a struggle.

As The City Project's policy reports on Californians' access to recreational areas and parks make clear, low-income people of color frequently reside in communities where the physical and built environments discourage and limit opportunities for active lifestyles.

The City Project's dedication to addressing such disparities and increasing access to natural places for urban communities reflects The Kresge Foundation's commitment to promoting healthy environments for vulnerable populations.

Although the report focuses on residents of Ventura County, its central policy recommendations could apply in communities throughout the country. For example, this report focuses on keeping McGrath State Beach in Ventura and California State Parks open for all. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has placed state parks across the country on its list of the most endangered historic places. This report can help keep parks open for all.

That's why Kresge is pleased to support The City Project's work to engage, educate and empower communities to alleviate disparities in access to park, school and health resources.

We hope this report invites many others to engage in a discussion not just about parks but about the underlying issues of justice and fairness.

Sincerely,

**David D. Fukuzawa**

Health Program Director

The Kresge Foundation

The work of The City Project is made possible in part by a generous grant from The Kresge Foundation.

*Headquartered just outside of Detroit, Michigan, The Kresge Foundation is a private, national foundation that seeks to influence the quality of life for future generations through its support of nonprofit organizations in six fields of interest: arts and culture, community development, education, the environment, health, and human services. For more information, please visit [www.kresge.org](http://www.kresge.org).*





Southridge Panorama, Fontana | Creative Commons - Russell Brennan

## ***FOREWORD BY POLICYLINK FROM THE SAN BERNARDINO REPORT***

PolicyLink has long recognized that place and race matter. As neighborhoods remain segregated along racial lines, neighborhood environmental factors – from economic opportunities to the physical environment to supportive services to social connections among neighbors – profoundly influence the health of residents.

Place matters. By the same token, race matters – a lot. PolicyLink looks intentionally and explicitly at race and ethnicity and what they mean in the context of building healthy communities. Race is an overarching consideration that affects where and how we all live. Race continues to fracture our society – compounding disadvantage and perpetuating it across generations. An effective agenda to improve the health of all Californians must consider both race and place, authentically and forthrightly.

The City Project is striving to expand green access and equity for all. It is identifying affected communities and using mapping and analyses to indicate where large numbers of people of color and low-income people live, and then noting the absence of parks in those areas contrasted with disproportionately white and wealthy areas. The City Project uses these data as a core advocacy tool to support the equitable distribution of parks and recreation facilities around the state.

PolicyLink is proud to have partnered with The City Project on green access and equity in San Bernardino County and beyond.

### **Angela Glover Blackwell**

Founder and CEO

PolicyLink

*The City Project has worked with the Latino Health Collaborative, the San Bernardino County of Public Health's Healthy Communities Program, and PolicyLink in a joint effort to build the knowledge and capacity of community leaders to undertake leadership and advocacy to address the urgent issues addressed in this report. The passion and commitment of the community leaders we worked with is a tremendous asset that should be harnessed by policy makers, public and philanthropic sector leaders that care about these concerns. For more information about PolicyLink, please visit [www.policylink.org](http://www.policylink.org).*





## **LETTER FROM THE SAN DIEGO FOUNDATION**

On behalf of The San Diego Foundation, we would like to thank The City Project for exceptional work and visionary leadership in our partnership to create and release the Parks for Everyone: Green Access for San Diego County Report.

The San Diego Foundation's Environment Program has long been committed to supporting the creation of an interconnected system of parks and natural areas throughout San Diego by partnering with local land trusts and conservation organizations. Over the past decade, these grounds have collectively preserved over 28,000 acres of land, offering many benefits to people and wildlife alike.

We are so grateful for the deep commitment, expertise, and tenacity consistently demonstrated by Robert Garcia, Seth Strongin, and The City Project team. Their enthusiasm is contagious and the partnership has made green access advocates out of us all. The San Diego region has directly benefited from The City Project's ongoing activism and steadfast dedication to advocating for children's right to play. Identifying where our green space resides and looking at who has access to these spaces is now a critical component of our work. The Parks for Everyone Report illuminates the disparities in access to parks and open space and other recreational places and spaces for kids to play, learn, and thrive. The report is now a cornerstone of our current grantmaking strategy.

Robert and Seth's ongoing participation with our Green Access Committee has been vital to the success of the project. They have gone over and beyond expectations by coming down to San Diego on several occasions to actively participate in local opportunities to increase green access awareness and connect with various key stakeholders. Most recently, Robert presented at the San Diego Natural History Museum's Kids and Nature Series, and in April of 2010, Seth Strongin and Erica Flores presented to the entire team of 80 City of San Diego Open Space Division personnel.

The City Project has become an invaluable partner for The San Diego Foundation's Environment Program and we are so appreciative and grateful for our ongoing work together. We look forward to more opportunities to do complimentary work.

With great respect and gratitude,

**Emily Young**

Senior Director, Environment  
Analysis and Strategy

**Marisa Aurora Quiroz**

Manager, Environment Program

The San Diego work was sponsored in part by The San Diego Foundation.

*The mission of The San Diego Foundation is to improve the quality of life in all of our communities by providing leadership for effective philanthropy that builds enduring assets and by promoting community solutions through research, convenings and actions that advance the common good.*









## I. INTRODUCTION

Southern California is renowned for its diverse geography. From iconic beaches to towering mountains and vast deserts, the region boasts a variety of opportunities for recreation and enjoying the natural environment. At the same time, Southern California is one of the most racially and ethnically diverse regions in the United States. It would be easy to assume that under these conditions all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or socio-economic status, are able to benefit from accessing the region's green space. Unfortunately, this is not the reality.

The presence of green space alone is not enough. Despite a wealth of green space in the region as a whole, many neighborhoods and communities in Southern California are actually park poor. There are unfair park, school, and health disparities based on race, ethnicity, income, poverty, youth, and access to cars. Children of color disproportionately live in communities of concentrated poverty without enough places to play in parks and schools, and without access to cars or an adequate transit system to reach parks and school fields in other neighborhoods. The human health implications of the lack of physical activity are profound, including obesity, diabetes and heart disease. If present trends continue, this will be the first generation in the history of this country in which children will have a lower life expectancy than their parents.<sup>2</sup>

### Why do parks matter?

Parks and other green space provide important benefits to people and the environment. The values at stake include the simple joys of playing in the park or school field; physical, psychological and social health; improved academic performance; positive alternatives to gangs, crime, drugs, and violence; and economic vitality for all. Parks also offer conservation benefits: reducing air, water and ground pollution, land conservation, and habitat protection for animals and plants. Additionally, parks play an important role in mitigating climate change and promoting climate justice. Parks promote spiritual values in protecting Mother Earth and her people, and preserving Native American values and Sacred Sites. Parks provide places celebrate cultural, historic, and public art resources. Fundamental values of equal justice and democracy underlie each of these other values.

In order to enjoy these benefits, however, it is essential that people enjoy equal access to parks and green space. Many factors – including the distance from green space to where people live, natural geographic features, transportation or the lack of it, real and perceived park safety, and sustainable community planning – affect green access and equity.

This Policy Report, *Healthy Parks, Schools, and Communities: Mapping Green Access and Equity for Southern California*, presents multidisciplinary analyses to achieve healthy, livable communities for all. This Report maps and analyzes park access and equity in nine counties in Southern California – Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, San Bernardino, Riverside, San Diego, Kern, Santa Barbara, and Imperial<sup>3</sup> – using narrative analyses, geographic information system (GIS) mapping tools, and demographic and economic data from the 2000 U.S. Census.<sup>4</sup>

The City Project supports a collective vision for a comprehensive and coherent web of parks, schools, rivers, beaches, mountains, forests and “*Transit to Trails*” that promotes human health, a cleaner environment, and economic vitality for all, while reflecting the growing cultural diversity of Southern California and the nation.<sup>5</sup> This Report analyzes the reality and the hope of green access and equity, guided by this vision.





# Park Acreage, Median Household Income and People of Color



Figure 1. Map of Park Poverty, Income Poverty and People of Color Throughout California



## WHY DO PARKS MATTER?

**Parks and school fields promote the simple joys of playing; bringing people together; improved physical, psychological, and social health; youth development and improved academics; positive alternatives to gangs, crime, and drugs; economic justice including local green jobs; conservation values of climate justice, clean air, water, and land, and habitat protection; art, culture and historic preservation; spiritual values in protecting the earth and its people; and sustainable regional planning. Equal justice and democracy underlie these values.**

### A. Development Patterns in Southern California

Prior to the recent economic downturn, Southern California had experienced tremendous population growth accompanied by a boom in development for several decades. Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego and Riverside Counties were the four largest growing counties in the nation through 1997. San Bernardino, Kern, Ventura, and Santa Barbara Counties also ranked among the fastest growing counties in the country.<sup>6</sup> The population explosion led to the development of a new urban form, referred to variously as edge cities or post-suburban outer cities.

Many of these new communities seemed to follow a remarkably similar development pattern in which agricultural fields were sold to residential and commercial developers. Soon after, freeways were built and developers rapidly constructed massive housing developments. In order to attract new residents, shopping centers were built, along with schools, places of worship, and other basic amenities. Office and industrial development brought jobs to these communities, with many industrial sites eventually being converted into more office parks. As the community grew, chain restaurants and hotels began emerging and the transformation of open space to edge city took hold.<sup>7</sup>

As more and more higher income people came to populate the newly constructed suburban residential neighborhoods, workers in search of jobs in these new communities and their families flocked to the region's older neighborhoods.

The existing park infrastructure in these lower income areas was often not sufficient to support the needs of all the new residents. Making matters worse, few new parks have been built in these communities. Even in the newly developed areas, the sprawling nature of development throughout Southern California coupled with a lack of public transportation options has left many people with no way to access parks. The result is a lasting legacy of inequities in access to green space.

### B. Green Access and Equity

Throughout each of the counties in this Report, a distinct and tragic pattern emerges: Children of color living in poverty with no access to a car have the worst access to parks and places for physical activity, and have the highest levels of childhood obesity. Access to parks and recreation is not random with respect to race and ethnicity.

Inequality in green access is true beyond Southern California, as well. The map on the preceding page shows communities throughout California that are park poor and income poor, as well as communities that are disproportionately populated by people of color. The hatched red hot spots are the most underserved communities in the state. Improving green access in these park poor, income poor communities of color will provide the multiple benefits of green space for all, including underserved communities. Additionally, improving green access for all will help achieve compliance with equal justice laws and principles mandating equal access to public resources, as discussed throughout this Report.

The U.S. Forest Service reports that over 90% of visitors to all national forests are non-Hispanic white, while less than 5% are Latino, less than 2% are Asian, and only 1% are African American.<sup>8</sup> This pattern holds true in Southern California, as well. Despite the fact that the majority of Los Angeles residents are people of color, few go to the Angeles National Forest. For example, nearly 45% of the county's population is Latino, but only 11% of visitors to the Angeles Forest are Latinos. Nearly 10% of the residents are black, yet only 1% of the visitors to the forest and 0% of visitors to the forest's wilderness areas are black. Asians account for an estimated 25% of the total population of the San Gabriel Valley, yet only 4.5% of visitors to the Angeles are Asian.<sup>9</sup>

On a nationwide basis, 87% of non-Hispanic white respondents reported "there are safe places for children to play" in their neighborhood, while only 68% of Latinos, 71% of African Americans, and 81% of Asians agreed, according to the Census Bureau survey "A Child's Day."<sup>10</sup> Almost half (48%) of Latino children and 39% of black children in central cities were kept inside as much as possible because their neighborhoods were perceived as dangerous, compared to 25% of non-Hispanic white children and 24% of Asian children.<sup>11</sup>

In 2008, the California legislature enacted legislative criteria (AB 31) to invest park funds in communities that are "park poor" and "income poor." Communities that are park poor have three acres or less of parks per thousand residents. Income poor communities have a median household income of \$47,331 or less. While these criteria apply specifically to \$400 million in park bond funds under a statewide resource bond passed in 2006 (Proposition 84), the implications go far beyond those specific funds. These legislative criteria are a best practice example to establish standards to measure progress and equity and to hold public officials accountable for infrastructure investments in underserved communities. The maps and analysis presented in this Report examine park poor and income poor communities in Southern California.



President Barack Obama has announced the America's Great Outdoor Initiative as a 21st century strategy for conservation and physical activity.<sup>12</sup> The White House is sending a clear signal that green access is critical to the well being of all Americans. Southern California leaders have recommended that the initiative ensure compliance with equal justice laws and principles.<sup>13</sup> Advocates have presented recommendations for equal access as part of the National Park Service's strategic plan for the 21st Century.<sup>14</sup>

Proposition 21 on the November 2010 California ballot would have imposed an annual \$18 per vehicle fee dedicated to state parks, generating about \$500 million per year forever. Though the initiative was not approved, this is not an indication that the people of California do not support parks. Instead, the result reflects voter rejection of "ballot box budgeting" — and the profound need for economic stimulus programs to create jobs and infrastructure for all. Park and recreation programs must create local green jobs, and improve the quality of life for all. The voters sent a clear message that if you want parks, work for jobs — and justice.<sup>15</sup>

Though there are very real budget constraints on the federal, state, and local level, dedicating public resources for creating and improving access to green space, particularly in low-income communities and communities of color, offers an exceptional opportunity to promote quality of life, public health, economic vitality, environmental quality and equal justice for all. Parks and other natural public places have inherent value and are not a luxury. Instead, they are a democratic commons that alter the rhythms of everyday life and bring diverse people together as equals, in a space where they can encounter each other in an open and inviting atmosphere. Further, parks allow people to come together to make their community the kind of place where they want to live and raise children.<sup>16</sup>

Maximizing access to public lands while ensuring the fair treatment of people of all colors, cultures, and incomes will transform Southern California into a more livable, democratic, and just region for all. This can serve as a replicable advocacy model for community development in regions throughout the nation.

The environmental justice movement is evolving to address other issues beyond stopping toxics and harmful activities in communities of color and low-income communities. The expanded scope of environmental justice includes an urban park movement that advocates for the creation public goods, including parks and schools. The urban park movement is drawing national and international attention, buoyed by several notable urban park victories. A Latino-led environmental movement focused on the revitalization of the Los Angeles River, for example, is framing progressive and working class issues with traditional environmental concerns in a seamless narrative, as is a growing urban environmental movement.

This Report aims to advance the urban park movement by analyzing green access in Southern California, highlighting successes in creating and maintaining urban parks, and identifying opportunities to improve green access. Each of the maps for each county referenced through the report is available in the back of that county's chapter or on the web at [www.cityprojectca.org](http://www.cityprojectca.org). The Report itself consists of 12 chapters. Chapter I provides a broad overview of the issue of inequalities in access to parks. Chapter II presents a vision for a comprehensive and coherent web of natural public spaces, including parks, school fields, rivers, beaches, mountains, and forests, that will enhance human health and economic vitality for all, with lessons for regions across the country. Chapter III describes lessons learned from raising funds for parks through resource bonds in California. Chapter IV presents the experience of great urban park victories in the region, as well as struggles to keep public lands public for all in beaches, mountains, and forests. Chapter V discusses why parks matter and the values at stake in natural public places. Chapter VI presents original demographic research and analyses of park, school, and health disparities, and related equal access issues for each of the nine counties. Chapter VII examines inequalities in access to other recreational resources, including beaches, mountains, and forests in each of the counties.

Chapter VIII explores the history and pattern of discriminatory land use, housing patterns, and access to parks, beaches, and forests. Chapter IX presents policy and legal justifications for equal access to public lands. Chapter X describes the methodology used in this Report to measure green access and equity. Chapter XI provides principles and recommendations for equitable infrastructure investments in natural public places. Finally, Chapter XII presents the conclusion.



## II. A COLLECTIVE VISION

People are greening the Southern California region, driven by a collective vision for a comprehensive and coherent web of parks, schools, rivers, beaches, mountains, forests, and “Transit to Trails” that promotes human health, a cleaner environment, and economic vitality for all, while reflecting the growing cultural diversity of Southern California and the nation.

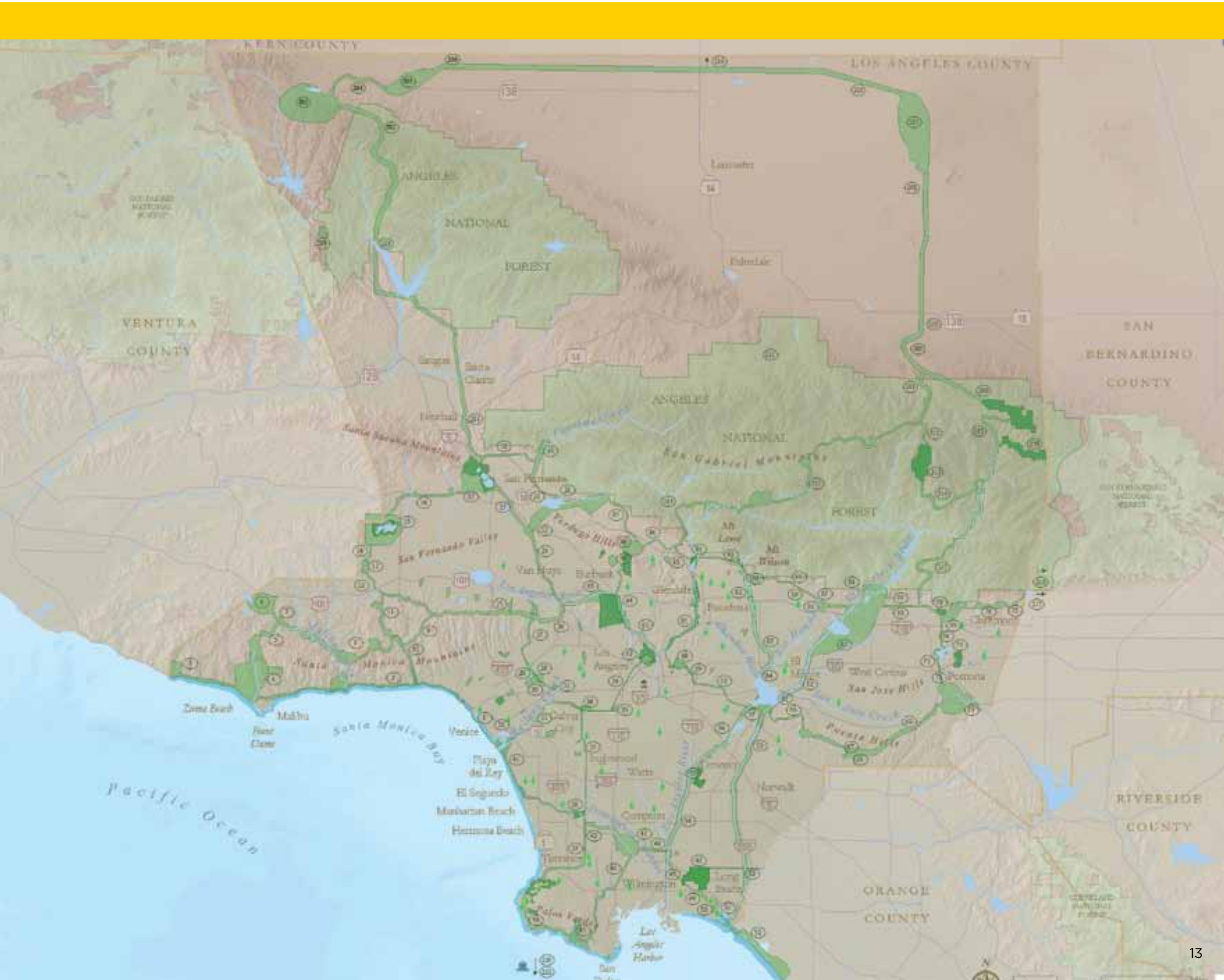
The Olmsted Report of 1930 provides the inspiration for much of this vision. The firm started by the sons of Frederick Law Olmsted — the person who designed Central Park, created the field of landscape architecture, and was passionately committed to equal justice through the abolition of slavery — with Bartholomew & Associates proposed a vision for a green, prosperous, and culturally rich Los Angeles that has yet to be realized. The lessons from the Olmsted Report can be applied not only in Los Angeles, but throughout Southern California and beyond. According to the Olmsted Report, in words which remain true today:

Continued prosperity will depend on providing needed parks, because, with the growth of a great metropolis here, the absence of parks will make living conditions less and less attractive, less and less wholesome. . . . In so far, therefore, as the people fail to show the understanding, courage, and organizing ability necessary at this crisis, the growth of the Region will tend to strangle itself.<sup>17</sup>

The Olmsted Report proposed the shared use of parks and schools to make optimal use of land and public resources. The Report recommended the greening of the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers,<sup>18</sup> doubling public beaches, and integrating forests and mountains within the park system.<sup>19</sup> It advocated multi-benefit projects for park and flood control purposes,<sup>20</sup> and envisioned a transportation system for people to reach parks, school fields, rivers, beaches, mountains, and forests.<sup>21</sup> The Report recognized that low-income people often live in less desirable areas, have fewer leisure opportunities, and should receive first consideration in parks and recreation.<sup>22</sup> The Report emphasized that a balanced park and recreation system serves diverse needs, including active and passive recreation. The Report recommended the creation of a regional park authority with power to raise dedicated funds to acquire and develop parks and other natural public places.<sup>23</sup> Each of these recommendations remains valid today - but unfulfilled.

Implementing the Olmsted vision would have made Los Angeles one of the most beautiful and livable places in the world. Powerful private interests and civic leaders demonstrated a tragic lack of vision and judgment when they killed the Olmsted Report. Politics, bureaucracy, and greed overwhelmed the Olmstedian vision in a triumph of private power over public space and social democracy.<sup>24</sup>

A diverse alliance of civil rights, environmental justice, environmental quality, public health, community, civic, business and political leaders is coming together to restore and conserve the beauty of Southern California using the principles of the Olmsted vision as a guiding philosophy.





### III. RESOURCE BONDS: DIVERSIFYING SUPPORT FOR AND ACCESS TO PARKS AND RECREATION

Park and resource bonds passed by California voters over the past ten years provide two important lessons. One lesson is that communities of color can propel properly framed environmental initiatives to success even when the non-Hispanic white vote is opposed. An equally important lesson is that advocates and activists must ensure that the benefits and burdens of park bonds and other public work investments are distributed fairly.

In 2002, California voters passed Proposition 40 to provide \$2.6 billion for parks, clean water and clean air. Prop 40 – the largest resource bond in United States history at the time of its passage – received the support of 77% of black voters, 74% of Latino voters, 60% of Asian voters, and 56% of non-Hispanic white voters. 75% of voters with an annual family income below \$20,000, and 61% with a high school diploma or less, supported Prop 40 – the highest among any income or education levels.<sup>25</sup> Prop 40 demolished the myth that a healthy environment is a luxury that communities of color and low-income communities cannot afford, or are not willing to pay for.

In November 2006, California's Proposition 84, a \$5.4 billion park and water bond, was successful because of massive support from the Latino community. 80% of Latino voters voted in favor of the Prop 84 while only 48% of non-Latino voters supported the measure. The strong showing of support from the Latino community, with 616,000 more "yes" votes than "no" votes, was enough to push the overall balance in favor of Prop 84.<sup>26</sup>

To ensure that \$400 million in park funds under Prop 84 reach underserved communities, the California legislature enacted AB 31. This law establishes standards for defining communities that are "park poor" and "income poor" so that these communities are prioritized in the distribution of Prop 84 funds.<sup>27</sup> Park poverty and income poverty are standards against which progress and equity can be measured. Further, they provide a tool to hold public officials accountable for the investment of funds in parks and green infrastructure projects in underserved communities.

State officials have been playing political football with the California state park system for years, especially during the greatest economic crisis since the Great Depression. In 2009, the governor and the legislature proposed closing up to one out of every three state parks to "save money," even though state parks generate over \$4 billion in revenue per year.<sup>28</sup> As the *New York Times* recognized in an Editorial on endangered state parks, including California's, "It is critical to keep the parks open for the health of their lands and for the well-being of the citizens who use them – all of us."<sup>29</sup> The National Trust for Historic Preservation has listed state parks, including California's, on the list of the eleven most endangered historic places in the United States.<sup>30</sup> The *Sacramento Bee* has published an investigative article about reduced access, budget cuts, the closure of areas within state parks, reduced hours, reduced staffing, reduced services, and \$1.3 billion in deferred maintenance.<sup>31</sup>

Advocates are working to save California's state parks for all through various means. A diverse alliance of park advocates have filed an administrative complaint with the United States Department of Interior, Environmental Protection Agency, and Department of Justice to ensure that state parks remain open. In the wake of the defeat of Proposition 21, it is necessary to ensure that any cuts to the state park system are distributed fairly.<sup>32</sup>

While funding for the acquisition and preservation of large tracts of open space in sparsely populated areas has materialized over the past decade, resources for urban parks and school fields has largely dried up in the wake of Prop 13, which cut off property taxes for local services including schools and parks.<sup>33</sup> Private donations, such as a \$175 million conservation grant announced by the Packard Foundation in 1998, have provided funding for 116 land trusts to acquire remote plots of green space.<sup>34</sup> Urban parks, unfortunately, have not received comparable benefits.

Despite their support for environmental public goods, communities of color and low-income communities are disproportionately denied environmental benefits, including access to parks and recreation. A 2002 study found that the way bond funding for local parks was distributed exacerbated rather than alleviated unfair disparities in access to parks and recreation in Los Angeles.<sup>35</sup> An analysis of state bond measures to provide funding for urban parks in California, including Propositions 12 and 40, found that despite the success of these programs in targeting economically disadvantaged and park poor communities, large disparities in park access still exist in Southern California and throughout the state.<sup>36</sup>

A California survey echoes the disparities reported in the national survey by the U.S. Census Bureau, "A Child's Day," discussed above. Most California residents believe there are environmental inequities between more and less affluent communities, according to a survey by the influential Public Policy Institute of California. 64% of Californians say that poorer communities have less than their fair share of well-maintained parks and recreational facilities. Latinos are far more likely than non-Hispanic whites (72% to 60%) to say that poorer communities do not receive their fair share of parks and recreational facilities. A majority of residents (58%) agree that neighborhoods with disproportionately high percentages of low-income households, and residents who are people of color, have more than their fair share of toxic waste and polluting facilities, compared to wealthier neighborhoods.<sup>37</sup>

A November 2010 poll conducted by the University of Southern California and the *Los Angeles Times* found that Latino and Asian voters throughout California are significantly more concerned about core environmental issues, including global warming and pollution, than non-Hispanic whites. The study is particularly significant because it allowed voters to answer questions in their native language, and thus was able to reach a more diverse pool of respondents than an English-only poll.<sup>38</sup>



Yorba Regional Park | OC Parks (ocparks.com)





## IV. GREAT URBAN PARK VICTORIES – AND CHALLENGES

Advocates and activists have created great urban parks, and are fighting to keep public lands accessible for all. These victories offer valuable lessons for Southern California, the state, and the nation.

### A. Great Urban Parks

In the City of Los Angeles, the diverse Chinatown Yard Alliance helped stop a proposal by city officials and wealthy developers to build warehouses in favor of the 32-acre Los Angeles State Historic Park at the Cornfield, the last vast open space in downtown Los Angeles. The *Los Angeles Times* called the community victory “a heroic monument” and “a symbol of hope.”<sup>39</sup> “*Nothing like this has ever happened in Chinatown before,*” the late Chinatown activist Chi Mui said. “*We’ve never had such a victory. And now, every time people walk with their children down to that park, they’ll see that great things can happen when folks come together and speak up. We can renew our community one dream at a time.*”<sup>40</sup> The victory at the Cornfield required an administrative complaint on civil rights and environmental grounds before the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to cut off the federal subsidies for the warehouses, as well as a lawsuit under state environmental laws. Ultimately, however, the Cornfield will not be a park because of any court order, but because of a creative deal between Alliance members and the developers. The Chinatown Yard Alliance succeeded by brokering a deal in which the developer agreed to abandon the warehouse proposal after the Alliance persuaded the State to purchase the site in order to build a park.

Unfortunately, as of this writing, the site of the Los Angeles State Historic Park at the Cornfield is not yet a completed park. Budget constraints and other issues have delayed development of the park. In an encouraging turn of events, the California Department of Parks and Recreation released a revised park development plan in December 2010 that calls for construction to begin in 2013.<sup>41</sup>

Drawing on the lessons of the Cornfield, advocates and activists helped stop a commercial development in favor of the 40-acre Río de Los Angeles State Park at Taylor Yard along the Los Angeles River in Northeast Los Angeles after a trial on state environmental grounds. Even after all parties agreed that the site should be home to a new state park, however, officials with the California Department of Parks and Recreation initially opposed active recreation at Taylor Yard. State officials relented in favor of a balanced park that includes active and passive recreation in light of community needs. “*I am all for preserving rocks and trees and those things, but to me, it seems more important to help the children first,*” according to Raul Macias, a businessman and founder of the Anahuak Youth Sports Association.<sup>42</sup> The balanced park, which opened on Earth Day in 2007, provides active recreation with soccer fields, courts, a running track, and bike paths, as well as passive recreation, natural open space, and picnic areas. The same youth who play soccer there also plant trees there.

San Onofre State Beach, on the border of San Diego County and Orange County, is not only one of the most visited California state parks it is also where the Native American sacred site Panhe is located. Panhe is the site of a 9,000-year old village that is still a sacred, ceremonial, cultural, and burial site for the Native American Acjachemen people. Panhe has historical significance as the site of the first baptism in California and the first close contact between Spanish explorers, Catholic missionaries, and Native Americans in Southern California. The Acjachemen people built Mission San Juan Capistrano.<sup>43</sup>

A public-private toll road agency in Orange County has sought to build a toll road through the park and Panhe. In one of the greatest victories for Sacred Sites and the environment in California, a diverse alliance including United Coalition to Protect Panhe, The City Project, surfers, and mainstream conservationists stopped the toll road and saved Panhe and San Onofre. After the largest hearing in its history, the California Coastal Commission voted 8-2 against the toll road in February 2008. Commissioner Mary Shallenberger said the impact on Native Americans was reason enough to stop the toll road. The U.S. Department of Commerce upheld the Coastal Commission in December 2008 after a ten-hour public hearing. Recently, the United States Navy and Marine Corps vetoed an alternative route for the toll road that would go through Camp Pendleton, citing the impact the road would have on the preparation of Marines heading into combat.<sup>44</sup>

A community alliance helped save the proposed Baldwin Hills Park, a two-square-mile park in the historic heart of African American Los Angeles that would be the largest urban park designed in the U.S. in over a century. Advocates and activists stopped a power plant there in 2001, stopped a garbage dump in 2003, and saved the Baldwin Hills Conservancy and its budget in 2005 after a governor’s commission threatened to eliminate both. “*People sometimes think they can do things like this, believing that this community won’t have people to speak up for them, but they’re wrong,*” Robert García told the *Los Angeles Times*. “*This is a human rights issue and fundamentally an issue of equal justice.*”<sup>45</sup> As of this writing, there is litigation to protect human health and the environment and to improve oil field regulations and an environmental impact report covering oil fields adjoining the parklands.<sup>46</sup>





Río de Los Angeles State Park | The City Project

In East Los Angeles, the community celebrated the groundbreaking of the next great urban park at Ascot Hills in November 2005. The planned 140-acre park will provide passive recreation and green space in one of the most park poor areas in the city. The City of Los Angeles and the Mountains Recreation Conservation Authority planned the park in a creative partnership using state funds in response to effective community organizing by The City Project and others.<sup>47</sup> In June 2010, in response to community demands led by The City Project and a coalition of allies and advocates, a second groundbreaking event for Ascot Hills Park was held. The city claims to have officially opened the park in June 2011 but as of the writing of this report it is far from complete. Until this park gets built, the largest green space in East L.A. is Evergreen Cemetery. The message sent to children and residents is that if they want open space, they have to die first.



Ascot Hills Park | The City Project

The Heritage Parkscape will link the Los Angeles River, the Los Angeles State Historic Park at the Cornfield, El Río de Los Angeles State Park at Taylor Yard, El Pueblo Historic District, along with 100 other rich cultural, historical, recreational, educational, and environmental resources in the heart of Los Angeles. *“They should not be treated as isolated, separate parks but as one continuous parkway system,”* Robert García told the Daily Breeze. *“This is a wonderful opportunity. Los Angeles is hungry for its history.”*<sup>48</sup> The Heritage Parkscape is inspired in part by the Olmsted plan, by the Cornfield Advisory Committee Report calling for linked parks and resources, and by plans for a continuous greenway along the Los Angeles River.<sup>49</sup> The Heritage Parkscape reflects a frank recognition that although there are few large parcels left in urban areas, great urban parks can still be built by linking smaller, non-contiguous parcels together. This follows the example set by the Gateway National Recreation Area which links the parks of New York Harbor, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area which links natural public places in the Bay Area in Northern California, and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area in Southern California.<sup>50</sup> UCLA Prof. Judy Baca and SPARC (the Social and Public Art Resources Center) are working with The City Project to produce pilot projects of the Heritage Parkscape along the Los Angeles River, and to restore and extend the Great Wall of Los Angeles.

The struggle for great urban parks in Southern California has also inspired the community to come together for a series of meetings and has led to the formation of new community groups. The Latino Environmental Summit in November 2005 and the National Latino Congreso in 2006 are examples of meetings organized by community members interested in urban parks. The Congreso, the largest gathering of Latino leaders in over a generation, included a full day session on Latinos and the environment. The struggle for the Los Angeles State Historic Park at the Cornfield led to the formation of the Alianza de los Pueblos del Río. The Alianza is working to ensure that the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan promotes democratic participation and equitable results in greening the river with healthy parks, schools, and communities. The Alianza formed when its leaders decided that the development of the river was a symbolic and literal convergence of a myriad of issues confronting the region’s Latino population and other communities of color and low-income communities. The agenda of the Alianza grew into a comprehensive new platform of urban and Latino environmentalism, or the “browning of the green movement.”<sup>51</sup> Part legal strategy, part organizing principle, this “urban greening con salsa movement” has put people, particularly immigrants and low-income families, at the center of an issue that has traditionally focused on flora and fauna.<sup>52</sup>



## B. Keeping Public Lands Public for All

It is necessary to create public parks, and to keep public lands public for all. Developers and wealthy property owners sought to block access to public trails in the Canyon Back area of the Santa Monica Mountains, one of the most precious natural resources in Southern California. *“This is part of an overall trend by which wealthy enclaves think they can simply take over public parks, public beaches, public trails,”* Robert García told the *Los Angeles Times*. *“We’re not going to allow it.”*<sup>53</sup> Litigation settled in 2006 keeps the trails open for all.<sup>54</sup>

A wealthy gated enclave sought to cut off public access to trails that have been public for thousands of years in historic Millard Canyon, which begins in the Angeles National Forest and ends at the Arroyo Seco in Altadena. Property owners posted *“No Trespassing”* signs and harassed hikers and equestrians on the public trails. The county approved development of the gated enclave on the condition that the trails remain public. A *Pasadena Star News* editorial urged the property owners to *“live up to the original agreement”* and keep public access to the trails open. The article stated, *“The situation is akin to those who live on the beach, public property, who want to fence it off from that very public owner. That’s just not right.”*<sup>55</sup> The County of Los Angeles and community activists filed successful litigation against the property owners to keep the trails open, and preserve the rich historical and cultural legacy and beauty of Millard Canyon for all, whether or not one can afford to live in an exclusive gated enclave.<sup>56</sup>

Beachfront property owners up and down the coast of California are trying to cut off public access to public beaches and privatize public places. In places from Newport Beach, Malibu, Santa Barbara, and Hollister Ranch in Southern California to tiny Trinidad in Northern California, private landowners do not have the right to deny public access to public beaches.<sup>57</sup>

Malibu residents have been particularly aggressive in restricting access to beaches alongside multi-million dollar mansions. In 2005, private property owners on Broad Beach in Malibu took the astounding action of bulldozing away the public beach. The beach bulldozing reduced public access, caused significant environmental and habitat destruction, and destroyed the beauty of the beach.<sup>58</sup> The California Attorney General successfully sued the Broad Beach homeowners group Trancas Property Owners Association for violation of the Coastal Act, interference with public access to the beach, and theft (conversion) of beach minerals.<sup>59</sup>

Media mogul David Geffen along with the City of Malibu filed suit to cut off public access to the public beach alongside his beachfront mansion. His suit was dismissed six times before he finally gave up and opened a nine-foot path from the highway to the beach in 2005.<sup>60</sup>

The Coastal Commission acted in response to The City Project’s *“Free the Beach!”* campaign by removing phony *“Private Beach/No Trespassing”* and *“No Camping”* signs in Malibu. For years, private property owners illegally attempted to deter public beachgoers by posting signs that falsely declared *“Private Beach/No Trespassing”* on public lands. Many property owners dispatched private security guards on all-terrain vehicles, which are not permitted on public beaches, or called in the county sheriff in an effort to intimidate the public from using these beaches. The California Coastal Commission ordered an end to the phony signs and illegal vehicles in 2005.<sup>61</sup>

The California Coastal Commission also suggested that the City of Malibu remove *“No Camping”* signs posted at the Malibu city limits because the signs were *“inconsistent with the City’s ordinances, LCP (local coastal plan), and the Coastal Act.”* In 2008, the City of Malibu changed the signs to prohibit camping except in designated areas.<sup>62</sup>

Not content to only cut off public access to the beach, the City of Malibu and Malibu residents recently filed pending litigation to cut off public access to public parks, overnight campsites, and trails in the coastal zone along the Santa Monica Mountains.<sup>63</sup> After a hearing on improving public access to Malibu’s Lechuza Beach, at which a non-profit representative spoke eloquently about teaching children of color life skills through outdoor activities, a local property owner complained to a state official that she opposes inner city youth coming to Lechuza Beach.<sup>64</sup>

The population of Malibu is disproportionately non-Hispanic white and wealthy compared to the general public of Los Angeles County, whom they have tried so hard to keep out of their city. Malibu is 89% non-Hispanic white, with a median income of \$102,031. Nearly 25% of Malibu households have an annual income over \$200,000. In contrast, only 31% of residents of Los Angeles County are non-Hispanic white, the median household income is just \$42,189, and only 4% of households have an annual income of \$200,000 or more.<sup>65</sup>







Transit to Trails Franklin Canyon | Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy

### C. Transit to Trails

Southern California should develop and implement a strategic plan for a “Transit to Trails” program to take people to parks, beaches, forests, lakes, and other public natural spaces. A Transit to Trails program would serve all the people of the region, but would be particularly useful to the working poor with limited or no access to cars. A disproportionate number of these residents are people of color and low-income.<sup>66</sup>

A Transit to Trails program provides green access for people who otherwise would not have any. The premise of such a program is to take under privileged children and their families and friends on fun and educational park, beach, mountain and river trips. Program participants are transported to green spaces via buses. The trips are led by experienced guides and offer participants the chance to not only experience and connect with nature, but also to learn about physical activity, healthy eating, and cultural and historical resources.

Implementing Transit to Trails requires relatively low levels of oversight and administrative support. Coordinating trips requires little more than willing participants, guides, equipment and supplies, and transportation. Community groups can work with guides to design a series of programs that caters to the local community. Local retailers can provide donations or discounts for Transit to Trails as a public service program. Transportation can be coordinated with park agencies, municipal transit operators, or school districts with school buses available for trips on weekends or over the summer.

A successful pilot Transit to Trails program has been implemented in Los Angeles County through a partnership between Anahuak Youth Sports Association, Mountains and Recreation Conservation Authority, and The City Project. Inner city youth have gone on nature trips to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, a vast green space resource that most program participants had never visited before.<sup>67</sup>

Today, there is virtually no good way to reach the four Southern California forests using public transportation.<sup>68</sup> Transit to beaches is limited, time-consuming, and expensive.<sup>69</sup> Low cost transit service should link parks like the Los Angeles State Historic Park and Rio de Los Angeles State Park. The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) has called for a multi-agency effort to provide transit to trails in its Regional Transportation Plan Environmental Justice Report.<sup>70</sup> The Olmsted Report envisioned a transportation system for people to reach natural public places.<sup>71</sup>

Transit to Trails Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area | The City Project





## V. THE VALUES AT STAKE: WHY PARKS AND RECREATION MATTER

Green space and recreational opportunities are important because they provide many benefits to people who can access them. These benefits include the simple joys of playing in the park; social cohesion, or bringing people together; improved physical, psychological, and social health; youth development and improved academic performance; positive alternatives for at risk youth; violence prevention; economic vitality for all; climate justice and conservation values of clean air, water, and land, and habitat protection; art, cultural and historic preservation; promoting spiritual and indigenous values in protecting Mother Earth and her people; and sustainable regional planning. Fundamental principles of equal justice and democracy cut across these other values.<sup>72</sup>

### A. Physical, Psychological, and Social Health

Social science research demonstrates how important physical activity is for the full development of the person. For example, recent studies on the impact of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 on progress in the work place and human health found that equal access to sports makes a long-term difference in a person's life. *"It's not just that the people who are going to do well in life play sports, but that sports help people do better in life,"* according to the author of the report. *"While I only show this for girls, it's reasonable to believe it's true for boys as well."*<sup>73</sup>

A large body of research shows that sports are associated with all sorts of benefits, like lower teenage pregnancy rates, better grades and higher self-esteem. But until now, no one has determined whether those improvements are a direct result of athletic participation... Now, separate studies from two economists offer some answers, providing the strongest evidence yet that team sports can result in lifelong improvements to educational, work and health prospects.<sup>74</sup>

Using a complex analysis, a study from the University of Pennsylvania showed that increasing girls' sports participation had a direct effect on women's education and employment. The changes set in motion by Title IX explained about 20 percent of the increase in women's education, and about 40 percent of the rise in employment for 25-to-34-year-old women. The study untangles the effects of sports participation from other confounding factors — school size, climate, social and personal differences among athletes — and comes closer to determining a cause and effect relationship between high school sports participation and achievement later in life.<sup>75</sup> A separate study from the University of Illinois at Chicago found that the increase in girls' athletic participation following the enactment of Title IX was associated with a 7 percent lower risk of obesity 20 to 25 years later, when women were in their late 30s and early 40s.<sup>76</sup>

#### 1. Simple Joys

Fun is not frivolous. Children have the right to the simple joys of playing in safe parks and school fields. The United Nations recognizes the child's right to play as a fundamental human right.<sup>77</sup> The United States was founded in part for the pursuit of happiness.<sup>78</sup>

#### 2. Physical Activity, Obesity, and Health

Parks and open space provide health benefits to all people, from young children to senior citizens, and everyone in between. These benefits broadly include increased physical activity, enhanced social development, improved psychological wellbeing, community cohesion, and fewer doctor visits. Good health extends beyond reducing obesity and diabetes to include the contributions of the built environment to the full development of the person and community.<sup>80</sup> Parks and physical activity are an integral part of a comprehensive approach to healthcare and the built environment. As the nation struggles to come to grips with spiraling costs of medical care, improving the built environment through parks and green space should be embraced as a form of preventive care. Indeed, many experts consider providing safe parks and other recreation spaces as a primary form of preventive medicine.<sup>81</sup>



Transit to Trails | CORBA The City Project

This is the first generation in the history of the country in which children could have a lower life expectancy than their parents if childhood obesity is not reversed.<sup>82</sup> Regular physical activity, along with a healthful diet, plays a vital role in preventing obesity and the many chronic health conditions associated with it, such as Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, and some cancers.<sup>83</sup> Obesity is also associated with greatly increased costs for medical care and lost productivity. The combined cost to California of overweight, obesity, and physical inactivity is estimated to be \$41.2 billion annually.<sup>84</sup> The cost of obesity alone in the United States is \$117 billion annually, including health care costs and lost productivity.<sup>85</sup>

It is no coincidence that childhood obesity rates are increasing at the same time as physical activity levels among children are decreasing. The precipitous decline in children's physical activity levels, and escalating rates of childhood obesity and diabetes, are alarming national epidemics.<sup>86</sup> More than one out of every four adolescents in California (29%) — nearly one million teenagers — get less than the recommended levels of physical activity.<sup>87</sup> Inactivity and obesity are even more significant among people of color and low-income communities.

First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move initiative has made physical activity a national priority.<sup>88</sup> The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the President's Council on Fitness and Sports announced a goal of increasing the proportion of adolescents who engage in moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes five days a week by 2010.<sup>89</sup> Organizations such as the California Endowment,<sup>90</sup> Robert Wood Johnson Foundation<sup>91</sup> and the Trust for America's Health<sup>92</sup> recognize that access to safe and healthy places to live, work, learn, and play is an important part of getting people physically active and, ultimately, combating obesity.

Children and adults who live in communities with parks, athletic fields, nature centers and other recreational facilities are more physically active.<sup>93</sup> Research shows that park proximity is associated with higher levels of park use and physical activity among a variety of populations, particularly youth. Additionally, having more parks and more park acreage within a community is associated with higher physical activity levels.<sup>94</sup> This is particularly true for low-income communities. One study found that people in low-income areas in Los Angeles who live within one mile of a park visited that park four time more frequently and exercised 38% more than people who lived more than one mile away.<sup>95</sup> Unfortunately, low-income areas often lack places for physical activity, including



parks and school fields. This is one reason that children and teens in low-income areas and children of color have a lower percentage of physically active youth and are especially vulnerable to obesity.<sup>96</sup>

The American Academy of Pediatrics has issued a policy statement on the importance of designing to communities to promote physical activity in children.<sup>97</sup> Neighborhoods with features such as parks, sidewalks, neighborhood schools, sidewalks, and street layouts that encourage walking allow children to be more physically active. Walking to school is a good way to increase physical activity in children's physical activity and foster a stronger sense of community. In low-income communities, however, the built environment often imposes barriers that discourage walking. Negative elements such as high crime rates, undesirable aesthetics, inadequate amenities, and poor maintenance may overwhelm positive design features like sidewalks, high population density, street connectivity and a mix of land uses.<sup>98</sup>

Evidence-based research illustrates the profound health implications of the lack of parks and recreation. Unfair disparities, based on race, color or national origin, exist in California in regard to rates of overweight, as illustrated in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Percentage of Overweight Children in California by Race and Ethnicity<sup>99</sup>**

Race or Ethnicity	Overweight
Pacific Islander	35.9%
Latino	35.4%
Native American	31.7%
African American	28.7%
White, non-Hispanic	20.6%
Asian	17.9%

The safety, or even perceived safety, of parks is also an important issue. Access to safe parks or other places for physical activity, along with other characteristics of the neighborhoods where adolescents live, have an important effect on whether teens meet recommendations for physical activity, and whether they get any activity at all.<sup>100</sup> Perceived park aesthetics, condition and safety may also be associated with park visitation and physical activity levels within parks.<sup>101</sup> In California, the percent of teens engaging in regular physical activity is higher when teens have access to a safe park than when they have no access. In addition, the percentage of teens that get no physical activity at all is higher among those with no access to a safe park.<sup>102</sup>

### 3. Personal Development, Academic Achievement, and Violence Prevention

Physical activity has been demonstrated to make a positive impact on academic performance.<sup>103</sup> Regular physical activity breaks during the school day improve students' cognitive performance and promote on-task classroom behavior in elementary school.<sup>104</sup> After engaging in physical activity, children perform better on tasks requiring concentration. Beyond physical activity alone, children who meet physically fitness standards have been shown to perform better in school than children that are not physically fit.<sup>105</sup> Conversely, a recent study found that young adults that were overweight during high school and the years immediately following high school were less likely to pursue education beyond a high school diploma and were more likely to receive welfare than their peers.<sup>106</sup>

Physical education quality and quantity are particularly deficient for less affluent students and those in racial and ethnic groups at high risk for overweight and obesity.<sup>107</sup> In an era when shrinking school budgets and increased pressure to meet academic standards measured by standardized tests is leading to a decline in physical education classes and school-sponsored athletic programs, research indicates that students who have sacrificed physical education for more time in the classroom do not perform better academically.<sup>108</sup>

Parks and recreation programs can play an important role in reducing crime and violence. The City of Los Angeles' Summer Night Lights program keeps select parks open from 7pm until midnight, offering recreational activities, mentoring and counseling programs, meals, and other services, throughout the summer as an anti-gang initiative.<sup>109</sup> There has been a 40.4% overall reduction in gang-related crime, including a 57% reduction in gang-related homicide, in the neighborhoods where the program operates since the program began in 2008.<sup>110</sup>

Active recreation and team sports in parks can promote positive choices and help reduce youth violence, crime, drug abuse, and teen pregnancy. Sports and recreation can provide life-long lessons in teamwork, build character and improve academics.<sup>111</sup> Research shows that children involved in sports and extracurricular activities tend to score higher on standardized tests and are less likely to engage in antisocial behavior.<sup>112</sup> Additionally, interscholastic sports lead to decreased drop out rates for both boys and girls.<sup>113</sup>



#### 4. Stress, Depression, and Mental Functioning

In modern urban environments, parks and open spaces provide needed reprieve from the everyday stressors that lead to mental fatigue. This improves the health of adults and children by reducing stress and depression and improving focus, attention span, productivity, and recovery from illness.<sup>114</sup> Spending time in parks can reduce irritability and impulsivity and promote intellectual and physical development in children and teenagers by providing a safe and engaging environment to interact and develop social skills, language and reasoning abilities, as well as muscle strength and coordination. Researchers have found associations between contact with natural environment and improvements in the functioning of children with Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).<sup>115</sup> Contact with natural environments, such as trees, has also been found to be associated with increases in the psychological resources of individuals living in public housing to make changes that will improve their lives and a decreased likelihood of finding problems insurmountable.<sup>116</sup>

Parks provide a place for social support and an opportunity for self-determination, both important factors in reducing stress, lowering anxiety, and improving a person's overall mood. This is true for children and adults.<sup>117</sup> Social support is derived from the friendship or companionship that comes from the shared experience of participating in activities in a park with other people. The psychological benefits of self-determination come when a person voluntarily chooses to visit a park. By being in a recreational setting, that person is exercising the freedom to decide for him or herself how they want to spend their time.<sup>118</sup> People who do not have easy access to parks do not have the same opportunities for social support and self-determination as people who have parks close by.

#### 5. Recovery from Illness and Stress

Parks and green space have direct healing effects. A classic study demonstrated that views of trees enhance the recovery of surgical patients and shortens the duration of hospitalizations.<sup>119</sup> Another study found that for people who had recently experienced a stressful event in their life, the simple act of driving by parks and green spaces improved their rate of recovery.<sup>120</sup> Other research has demonstrated that living in environments with more green space reduces the number of overall health complaints.<sup>121</sup>

#### 6. Social Cohesion - Bringing People Together

Parks and recreation programs that serve the diverse needs of diverse users bring people together in the public commons for the public good. Numerous studies document how people attach different values to green space and use green space differently, both in urban and non-urban contexts.<sup>122</sup>

Parks and green spaces can entice community members to spend time outside of their private residence and to socially interact with other community members. Parks become a source of community pride and inspiration. Social interaction and neighborhood spaces have been identified as key facets of healthy communities supporting social networks, social support, and social integration.<sup>123</sup> Sociability may contribute to a sense of belonging and community. In a study conducted at a large public housing development in Chicago, Illinois, vegetated areas were used by significantly more people and those individuals were more likely to be engaged in social activities than similar areas without vegetation.<sup>124</sup>

Photo by Tim Wagner for Partnership for the Public's Health ([twagnerimages.com](http://twagnerimages.com))







## B. Climate Justice, Environmental Benefits, and Conservation

Green spaces also play an important role in combating climate change and global warming, as well as in improving the quality of the local environment. Global warming is fundamentally an issue of human rights and environmental justice that connects the local to the global. With rising temperatures, human lives are affected by compromised health, financial burdens, and social and cultural disruptions. People of color, low-income individuals, and indigenous communities are often disproportionately affected by these disruptions because of where they live and because they may lack the financial resources to overcome these challenges. Ironically, those who are likely to be the most affected are often the least responsible for the greenhouse gas emissions that cause the problem—both globally and within the United States. Moreover, strategies to mitigate or adapt to climate change may put an undue burden on these communities unless appropriate steps are taken to explicitly address equity and economic hardship in these strategies.<sup>125</sup>

One way green spaces, particularly those in urban settings, help prevent climate change and benefit the local environment is by reducing urban heat island effects. Asphalt, concrete, and other man-made building materials trap heat, making these areas less comfortable for people.<sup>126</sup> In turn, people are more likely to stay inside, less likely to walk or bicycle between destinations, and more likely to run air conditioners and keep lights on. The result is that people are less physically active and consume more greenhouse gas producing fossil fuel energy. Green spaces, on the other hand, work to actively avoid urban heat effects while also promoting physical activity and reducing the need to consume fossil fuel energy.<sup>127</sup>

Another way parks help stop global warming is by actively taking greenhouse gases and other local air pollutants out of the air. Trees, grass, and other plants require carbon dioxide to grow and literally remove these gases from the air for their own use, therefore preventing those gases from contributing to climate change.<sup>128</sup> These plants also filter other local air pollutants, such as particulate matter, nitrogen and sulfur oxides.<sup>129</sup>

Green space can also play a key role in facilitating active transportation and walkable communities. People that live in neighborhoods with parks can walk to these facilities instead of having to drive. Further, networks of trails allow people to move from one point to another without having to get in a car.<sup>130</sup> This has the double benefit of reducing harmful fossil fuel emissions while also getting people physically active.

A fourth way parks help stop climate change is by occupying the space that would otherwise be used to construct and operate buildings, which generate global warming-causing greenhouse gases. Open space allows a community to avoid having more buildings and the carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases those buildings emit.

Green space provides other important environmental services, as well. One service provided by green space is the absorption and natural filtration of storm water.<sup>131</sup> This can help reduce flooding while also improving water quality. Developing flood control basins as parks and athletic fields can yield the dual benefits of preventing floods and providing space for residents to recreate. Careful attention must be paid, however, to ensure the safety of all users of park space that has been developed on flood control basins.

Another important ecosystem benefit of green space is habitat for plants and animals. As the amount of available and viable habitat for many species continues to decrease as a result of development and other factors, preserving green space takes on added importance. Additionally, well planned green space systems that are linked together may serve as corridors that further increase the amount of available habitat and can make certain species more resilient to climate change by providing a means for that species to migrate in the event that its former habitat is no longer suitable.<sup>132</sup>

Green spaces also promote conservation values including the protection of habitat and clean air, water, and land. Parks and open spaces allow people to interact with nature and to take value from being in a natural setting. These interactions take on additional importance as more and more people are living in urban settings. For many individuals, particularly in low-income, urban areas, parks represent their only opportunity to escape the built environment, play on grass, and experience a diversity of wildlife. The bottom line is that parks can make Southern California more livable, and people in livable communities are more likely to live efficiently and thus reduce their impact on the environment.<sup>133</sup>





Judith F. Baca, "Great Wall of Los Angeles: Illusion of Prosperity" from the 1930's section. (Summer 1980)

### C. Spiritual Values in Protecting the Earth and its People

Social justice and stewardship of the earth motivate spiritual leaders to support parks, green space and equal justice. The United Church of Christ has published environmental justice studies on toxics in 1987 and 2007.<sup>134</sup> Cardinal Roger Mahony, and the Justice and Peace Commission of the Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles, have actively supported equal access to parks and natural space.<sup>135</sup> Protecting the earth and its people bears a special meaning in the values of indigenous people around the world.<sup>136</sup> Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Rigoberta Menchú has praised work to promote equal access to parks and recreation as a way of giving children hope and saying no to violence.<sup>137</sup> In 2004, the Nobel Committee awarded the Peace Prize to Kenyan woman Wangari Muta Maathai for planting trees and speaking out for women.<sup>138</sup> The award is an explicit recognition that there is more at stake in caring for creation than mainstream environmental values.

Parks provide important places to celebrate diverse culture, heritage and art. Cultural, historical and artistic monuments should reflect the diversity of a place and its people. The California Department of Parks and Recreation recognized the need to serve the needs of diverse users in its seminal study *Five Views: An Ethnic Historic Site Survey for California (1988)*.<sup>139</sup> People of color and women have been vital to the creation of Los Angeles throughout the history of the City and the area. Yet with over 1,000 official cultural and historical landmarks in the City of Los Angeles, only about 100 relate to people of color, women, and Native Americans.<sup>140</sup> The Great Wall of Los Angeles by UCLA Prof. Judy Baca and SPARC (Social and Public Art Resource Center), one of the nation's greatest monuments to inter-racial harmony, is a best practice example of public art in a public park.<sup>141</sup> Prof. Baca and SPARC are working with The City Project to restore and extend the Great Wall and create interpretive pilot projects on the Heritage Parkscape along the Los Angeles River to celebrate diversity, democracy and freedom, using \$2.1 million in state and other grants.<sup>142</sup>

The struggle to stop a proposed toll road through the sacred Acjachemen site of Panhe and San Onofre State Beach illustrates the profound values of religious freedom, democracy, and equal justice for Native Americans that can be celebrated in parks.<sup>143</sup> Native American sites must be preserved.







## D. Economics, Green Jobs, and Wealth Creation

When cities create urban parks, property values rise, local businesses benefit, and jobs are created, contributing to the local, state and national economies. Open space has also been shown to have a beneficial effect on home values. One recent study of the San Diego region found that being located near open space adds between five and ten percent to the total value of a home, in both high income and low-income communities.<sup>144</sup> Many high-income communities in San Diego County are located in close proximity to parks and open spaces and the homes in these communities have increased values as a result. For example, the study found that in La Jolla, which had a median home price of \$1.1 million at the time of the study and has a relatively large amount of open space, being located near green space added as much as \$110,000 to the average home value.<sup>145</sup> Many low-income communities do not enjoy such economic benefits because there is an insufficient amount of safe and/or accessible green space nearby. Paradise Hills, in the southeastern part of the City of San Diego, has very little accessible green space, yet the study found that if there were nearby green space the value of the surrounding homes would increase by at least \$21,150.<sup>146</sup> Though this study focused on San Diego, the lessons are applicable to all of Southern California and beyond. Creating new parks and improving green access offers economic benefits for everyone.

Other places across the United States have seen economic benefits as well. Examples include:

- Chattanooga, Tennessee replaced warehouses with an eight-mile greenway and property values increased by 127% while the number of businesses and full time jobs in the city more than doubled.
- San Antonio, Texas revitalized the San Antonio River and the river park became the most popular attraction in the city's \$3.5 billion tourist industry.
- After expansion and restoration of the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, in Atlanta, Georgia, the predominantly African-American neighborhood of Sweet Auburn was revitalized, with dozens of new homes, 500,000 annual visitors boosting local business, and a decrease in crime.<sup>147</sup>

Green space provides economic stimulus beyond real estate values. Parks and recreation help strengthen and stimulate the economy through sports and recreation-related sales of clothing, equipment, fees and services and the revenues generated from the tourism and hospitality industries. A forthcoming study by researchers at Sacramento State University found that visitors to state parks in California spend \$4.32 billion in park-related expenditures per year statewide. The study also found that each visitor spends an average of \$57.63 per visit, including \$24.63 within the park and \$33 outside the park.<sup>148</sup> In New York State, researchers found that the economic benefits exceed the direct costs of the state park system by a benefit-to-cost ratio of more than five to one. In other words, the park system generates more than \$5 in benefits for every \$1 in costs. The annual economic impact of the park system is close to \$2 billion in output and sales for private businesses, in addition to 20,000 jobs.<sup>149</sup>

Advocates and activists need to ensure that these economic benefits are distributed equitably through such avenues as jobs for local workers and affordable housing to avoid gentrification. Moreover, it is important that residents who already live in the community but do not live in affordable housing are not forced to move because of increases in property tax for homeowners or increased rent for renters.

Green infrastructure projects, such as developing, expanding, and enhancing parks, can be a source of green collar jobs for local workers in Southern California. Local small businesses, particularly those which are woman-owned, veteran-owned, or owned by disadvantaged community members, should be given priority in contract selection to help ensure benefits are fairly distributed. Contract awards should also require businesses to hire people from the community where the project is located. This is particularly important for green space projects in low-income areas or communities with disproportionately large populations of color. Training investments, bridge programs, and apprenticeship programs should focus on creating career ladders that allow workers to access higher-skilled jobs and transition to more modern technologies.<sup>150</sup>

Access to existing green spaces can often be improved by providing transportation options beyond cars, such as public transit accessibility or walkways and bicycle paths. Unfortunately, public transportation resources are generally spent in a way that encourages people to drive more. Currently, more than 80% of gas taxes go to highways and bridges, while less than 20% goes to transit.<sup>151</sup> Developing infrastructure that people can use to get to parks without a car creates jobs, reduces transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions, improves local air quality, and improves access to green spaces. Transit can provide choices for people who have none, fight global warming, and reduce oil dependency.



Improving transit options is an ongoing topic of debate in Southern California. As the region moves forward with planning its transportation future, it is important that access to green space is factored into decisions regarding the expansion of public transit services. New bus lines, light rail stations, and transit routes should be designed to reach the region's existing green space resources. Innovative programs such as Transit to Trails are specifically designed to use transit services to provide access to green space for inner city youth.<sup>152</sup>

Important lessons can be drawn from the New Deal on the importance of including parks and recreation in economic stimulus activities.<sup>153</sup> New Deal projects included 8,000 parks and 40,000 schools. The Civilian Conservation Corps expanded open space<sup>154</sup> and created jobs that kept young people out of regular markets. The New Deal was successful in creating work for artists, musicians, actors, and writers. Painters taught high school classes and painted murals on public buildings depicting ordinary life. 15,000 musicians gave 225,000 performances in symphony orchestras, jazz groups, and free concerts in parks. Classics and contemporary works staged for 30 million viewers included productions with mixed and black casts. Writers wrote popular guides to each state, major cities, and interstate routes.<sup>155</sup>

California recently launched a pilot green collar jobs program for at risk youth. California Green Corps, modeled after the Civilian Conservation Corp created under the New Deal, was started with federal stimulus funding and financial resources from public-private partnerships.<sup>156</sup> Similar programs should be created on the federal, state, and local levels.

The New Deal was not a square deal for all, however. Prof. Ira Katznelson's book *When Affirmative Action Was White* documents how New Deal policies excluded blacks, and increased income and wealth disparities. A continuing legacy is that the average black family holds just 10% of the assets of the average white family.<sup>157</sup> The Federal Housing Authority sanctioned racially restrictive housing covenants, for example.<sup>158</sup> Robert Moses transformed New York with New Deal and other federal funds, but often excluded African Americans from housing, parks and beaches. Blacks could not get many New Deal jobs.<sup>159</sup> Civil rights laws must guarantee equal access to the economic stimulus package today.

### E. Equal Justice and Democracy

Fundamental principles of equal justice and democracy underlie each of the other values above. The maps and demographic analyses in this Policy Report document unfair disparities in access to natural public places. As a matter of simple justice, parks, school fields, and other natural public places are a public resource, and the benefits and burdens should be distributed equally.<sup>160</sup> Those who lack adequate access to these resources are disproportionately at risk for health problems and face more challenges to enjoying the quality of life improvements associated with parks and open spaces.

Coachella Valley | Untitled, courtesy of Celeste Lopez (age 13) and Venice Arts







South Los Angeles | Determination, Courtesy of Khaliq Farthing (age 18) and Venice Arts

## VI. PARK, SCHOOL, AND HEALTH ACCESS

In contrast to the positive vision for a regional web of natural public places discussed in Part II above, this Part presents the challenge of equal access to park, school, and health resources throughout Southern California.

### A. Los Angeles County

#### 1. Overview

Geographically, Los Angeles County lies at the center of the Southern California region, with Orange County and San Bernardino Counties to the east, Kern County to the north, Ventura County to the west, and the Pacific Ocean to the south. The county covers more than 4,000 square miles, an area larger than the states of Delaware and Rhode Island combined.<sup>161</sup> With more than 9.5 million residents as of the 2000 U.S. Census<sup>162</sup> and an estimated population of 10.4 million in 2010,<sup>163</sup> Los Angeles County has the largest population of any county in the United States.<sup>164</sup>

Los Angeles County was created in 1850 as one of California's original counties under statehood. Today, there are 88 incorporated cities in the county. The county seat, the City of Los Angeles, is the largest city in the county, and the largest city in California.<sup>165</sup> Although the majority of the county's population lives within the incorporated cities, more than 65% of the land area of Los Angeles County is unincorporated.<sup>166</sup>

*Geography.* Los Angeles County has a diverse geography that includes mountains, valleys, forests, rivers, deserts, and beaches. The county's 75 miles of mainland coastline is one of the most recognizable features of the landscape. At the same time, snow can be seen on top of some of the county's mountains, such as the peak of Mt. Baldy at 10,064 feet, for a good portion of the year.<sup>167</sup>

The federal government manages portions of several of the county's mountain ranges. The National Park Service coordinates the oversight of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, a collection of several parks and open spaces in northwest Los Angeles County. Cumulatively, the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area comprises 153,254 acres, with individual parks owned and managed by the federal, state, county, and municipal governments.

Advocates are organizing to create a national recreation area in the San Gabriel Mountains. The U.S. Forest Service manages much of the San Gabriel Mountain Range as part of Angeles National Forest. This vast green space lies just north of metropolitan Los Angeles and covers more than 650,000 acres, mostly within Los Angeles County. However, despite being so close to the diverse populations of Los Angeles County, few people of color visit Angeles National Forest.<sup>168</sup>

*Demographics.* As the most populous county in the United States, Los Angeles County is home to more than one-fourth of the entire population of California.<sup>169</sup> Its official population of 9,519,338 is extremely racially and ethnically diverse. Nearly 70% of the county's residents are people of color. With 44.6% of the total population, Latinos make up the largest ethnic group in the county. Table 2 below shows the demographic distribution of Los Angeles County.

Though they make a small percentage of the total population, Los Angeles County is home to the largest population of indigenous people of any county in the United States.<sup>170</sup> This population is not always fully accounted for in official tallies because indigenous people from Mexico and Central and South America may not be counted as Native American. Further, many people with indigenous heritage in Los Angeles are of mixed race or ethnicity and may be categorized by the census as something other than Native American.<sup>171</sup> Many Native Americans are members of tribes or nations that are not yet recognized by the federal government.

**Table 2. Los Angeles County Demographic Distribution<sup>172</sup>**

Race or Ethnicity	Population	Percent of Total Population (%)
White, Non-Hispanic	2,959,614	31.1
Hispanic/Latino	4,242,213	44.6
Asian and Pacific Islander	1,147,834	12.0
Black/African American	901,472	9.5
Native American	25,609	0.3



The population is not distributed evenly based on race, ethnicity, color or national origin. Racial or ethnic groups are often concentrated in communities throughout the county. For example, the percentage of African Americans living in the cities and neighborhoods of South and Central Los Angeles is far higher than the county average,<sup>173</sup> while the proportion of African Americans in the San Fernando Valley is lower.<sup>174</sup> The disparities can be extreme between neighborhoods within the same city. Neighborhoods in the eastern portion of the City of Los Angeles, such as Boyle Heights and El Sereno, are more than 80% Latino<sup>175</sup> while fewer than 10% of some neighborhoods in western Los Angeles are Latino, including Pacific Palisades and Brentwood.<sup>176</sup>

## 2. Access to Parks and School Fields

*Children of Color.* Children of color living in poverty with no access to a car suffer from the worst access to parks and to schools with five acres or more of playing fields in Los Angeles County. They also suffer from the highest levels of child obesity. Conversely, communities that are disproportionately high income and non-Hispanic white, with fewer children than the county average, enjoy the best access to parks, school fields and transportation. In a cruel irony, the people who need the most have the least, while those who need less have the most.

Making matters worse, public transit systems that children and their families can take to parks and school fields are inadequate in Los Angeles. For families that lack access to a car and live in communities that are underserved by the park system, access to parks and school fields is extremely difficult.

Maps LA-1, LA-2, and LA-3<sup>177</sup> illustrate green access and equity for Los Angeles County. The communities with the worst access to parks lie in Central and South Los Angeles, which have the lowest income levels and the highest concentrations of people of color. The annual income needed for a family of four to provide for its basic needs in Los Angeles County was slightly more than \$63,000 in 2005, more than 300% of the federal poverty level.<sup>178</sup> Fully 93% of households with children in Central Los Angeles and 85% in South Los Angeles fall below this income level. Income disparities are most notable for Latino families, with 89% earning less than 300% of the federal poverty level, compared to only 34% of non-Hispanic white families.<sup>179</sup>

*Acres of Parks per Thousand Residents.* One indicator of green access is the total amount of green space available within a certain area. It is more informative, however, to measure green space in an area in relation to population. A sparsely populated area with few acres of green space may have a large amount per resident, while a densely populated urban area may have more total acres but not enough to accommodate all residents.

A common metric of green space acreage in relation to population is “acres of parks per thousand residents.” Areas with three or fewer acres of parks per thousand residents are considered park poor.

There are unfair disparities in acres of green space per thousand residents in Los Angeles County when measured, for example, by Assembly District.<sup>180</sup> For example, Assembly District 46 in Central Los Angeles has only 0.52 net acres of urban parks per thousand residents, compared to 282.79 net acres per thousand residents in Assembly District 37 in the northwest part of the county. District 37 has as an astonishing 555 times more net acres of urban parks per thousand residents than District 46.

The disparities are even more dramatic if total acres of parks, including forests and other large natural public places, are included. District 59 in the northeast part of the county has 1,587 total acres of parks per thousand residents, while District 52 in South Los Angeles only has 0.68 total acres per thousand residents. Districts 37 and 59 in the north county are disproportionately non-Hispanic white and wealthy, compared to inner city Districts 46 and 52. (See Map LA-1 and Chart LA AD-2.)

More than 30% of the land area of Los Angeles County, 807,731 acres in total, is designated as green space. This equates to a countywide average of 84.93 total acres of parks per thousand residents. A large number of those acres, however, are in a small number of large parks, such as the Angeles National Forest, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, Griffith Park, Elysian Park, and Baldwin Hills Parks.<sup>181</sup> Together, Angeles National Forest and Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area account for 84% of all park space in the county. Excluding those large public spaces, the county has 8.89 net acres of parks per thousand residents.<sup>182</sup>

The population wide averages mask the vast park, school, and health disparities based on race, ethnicity, income, poverty, and access to cars discussed above. Many neighborhoods in the urban core of Los Angeles are densely populated but offer very small amounts of park space, providing much less than the county average of park acres per thousand residents. These park poor neighborhoods have disproportionately higher percentages of people of color and low-income households. For example, in the City of Los Angeles Latino neighborhoods have an average of 1.6 acres of green space per thousand residents, disproportionately African American neighborhoods average only 0.8 acres per thousand residents, and neighborhoods disproportionately populated by Asian/Pacific Islanders provide 1.2 acres per thousand residents, in comparison to non-Hispanic white neighborhoods that offer an average of 17.4 acres per thousand residents.<sup>183</sup>

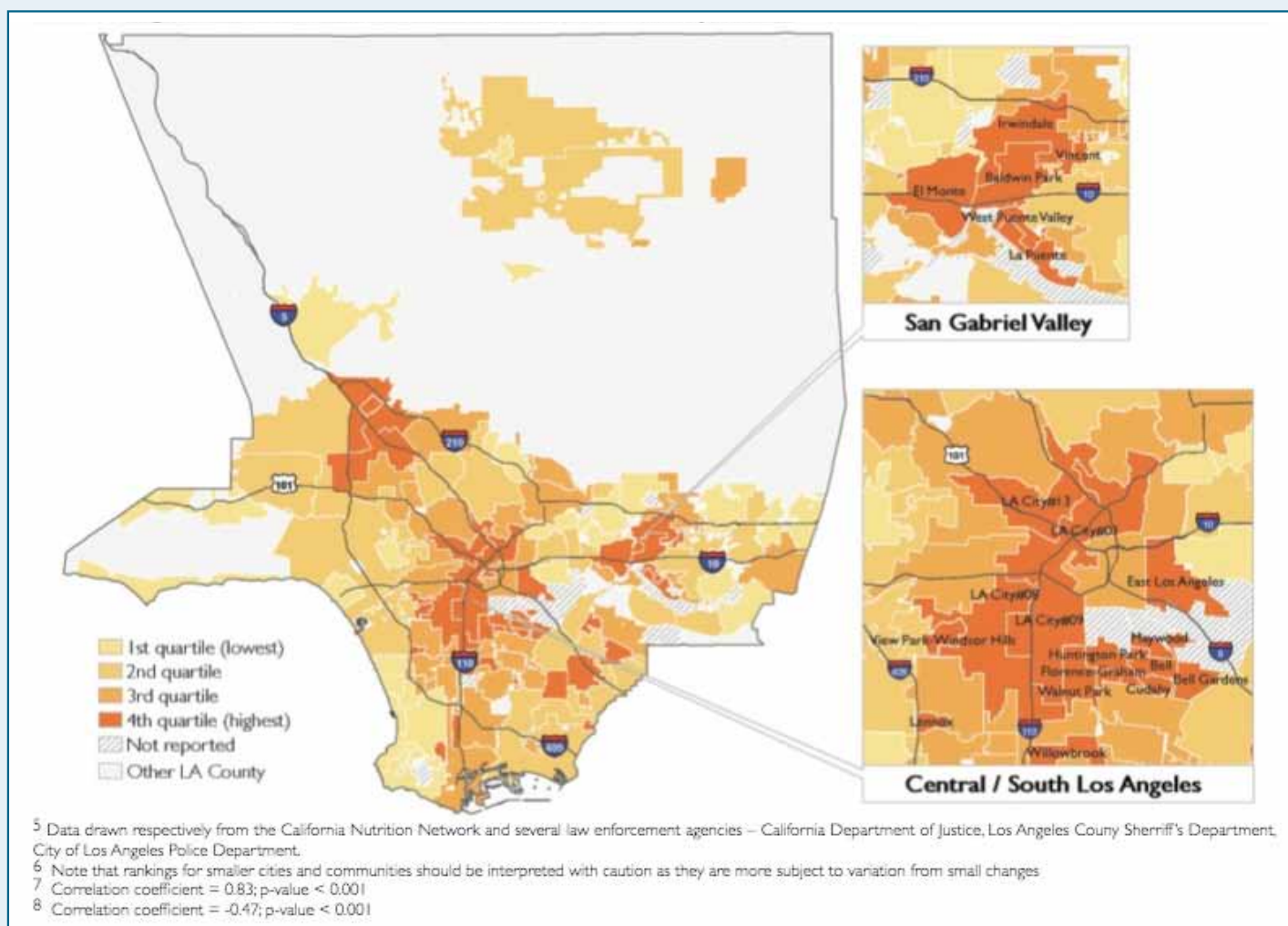
*Shared Use of Parks and Schools.* The shared use of parks and schools can alleviate the lack of places to play and recreate, while making optimal use of scarce land and public resources. Unfortunately, as of 2006 only 103 Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) schools had five acres or more of playing fields, and those tended to be located in areas that are disproportionately non-Hispanic white and wealthy and have greater access to parks (see Map LA-1).<sup>184</sup> LAUSD provides 71% more play acres for non-Hispanic white students than for Latino students in elementary schools.<sup>185</sup> There were only 30 joint use agreements between LAUSD and the City of Los Angeles Recreation and Parks Department as of April 2006.<sup>186</sup> The Olmsted Report and an audit of recreation and parks by the Los Angeles City Controller both call for the shared use of parks and schools, but these recommendations have not been widely implemented.



### 3. Childhood Obesity

*Child Obesity.* One common indicator of weight status is Body Mass Index (BMI). Children with a BMI score in the 95th percentile or higher on the pediatric growth chart are considered overweight.<sup>187</sup> This is particularly significant because 70% of overweight adolescents go on to become overweight adults, with increased risk for a variety of health problems that diminish quality of life and could ultimately lead to premature death.<sup>188</sup> Overweight and obesity, in combination with general lack of physical activity, are estimated to cost California \$41.2 billion annually.<sup>189</sup>

**Figure 2. Prevalence of Childhood Obesity in Los Angeles County<sup>190</sup>**



The levels of child obesity are intolerably high even for children in the best neighborhoods – over 31% of children in Los Angeles County are overweight<sup>191</sup> – but children of color suffer first and worst. In Los Angeles, children of color disproportionately live in the areas with the highest levels of child obesity and the worst access to parks and schools fields (see Map LA-3). Of the 80 Assembly Districts within California, the five districts with the highest rates of overweight children are all within Los Angeles County, with most of those districts clustered in Central and South Los Angeles.<sup>192</sup> On the state level, Latino and black children are disproportionately overweight compared to non-Hispanic white and Asian children (see Table 1).

A study by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health mapped the prevalence of childhood obesity for 128 cities and communities in the county, with rates varying widely from a low of 4% in Manhattan Beach to a high of 37% in Maywood (Figure 2). The percentage of overweight and obese children tended to be higher in communities that provide fewer acres of parks, recreational areas, or wilderness areas. The study also found a correlation between weight status and economic hardship. Cities or communities with a high economic burden (higher poverty, unemployment, median income, lower educational attainment, more dependents, crowded housing) also had higher percentages of overweight and obese children.<sup>193</sup> While this study did not consider disparities based on race, color or national origin, the City Project and GreenInfo Network have reanalyzed the county data to include race, color and national origin, as shown in Map LA-3.

### 4. Physical Education, Physical Fitness, Student Health, and Equal Justice

In California, public schools are required by law to provide physical education.<sup>194</sup> Physical education classes provide an opportunity for children to meet recommendations for daily physical activity. This is particularly true for students of color and low-income students, many of whom live in neighborhoods that lack safe places to play.

Over half the school districts audited by the California Department of Education do not enforce physical education laws. Between the 2004 and 2009 academic years, half the school districts audited (94 out of 188) did not enforce physical education laws.<sup>195</sup> LAUSD, which was audited consecutively from 2004-2005 through 2007-2008, was found to be noncompliant each year.

LAUSD is the largest school district in California and the second largest school district in the United States, serving over 600,000 K-12 students. 92% of LAUSD students are children of color and 74% are low-income (qualify for free or reduced meals).<sup>196</sup> Like many school districts throughout Southern California, LAUSD is also faced with a growing obesity epidemic. The rates of obesity among LAUSD students increased from 20.2% to 26.1% between 1999 and 2006, according to the Los Angeles County Department of Health. Moreover, the percentage of obese students continued to be persistently higher than at other school districts in the county.<sup>197</sup>



LAUSD recently adopted an implementation plan to enforce physical education and civil rights laws that provides a best practice example for other school districts across the state. Working together with LAUSD administrators, diverse allies waged a successful campaign to enforce physical education and civil rights requirements. The campaign included five elements. First, the teachers' union, United Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA), organized a public campaign to support physical education. Second, The City Project filed administrative complaints under education and civil rights laws to require the school district to enforce physical education requirements. Third, the school board unanimously adopted a resolution to enforce physical education and civil rights laws. Fourth, the district staff adopted the implementation plan. Fifth, the campaign relied on social science research published by the California Endowment and others highlighting the relationship between physical education, obesity, and health disparities based on race, ethnicity, and income.<sup>198</sup> The plan is designed to ensure that schools provide properly credentialed physical education teachers, meet the physical education minute requirements, maintain reasonable class size averages, and provide quality facilities for physical education.<sup>199</sup>

A similar strategy could be employed by school districts through California to ensure that all students are provided with physical education and equal justice under law. A recent ruling by the California Court of Appeal upheld that public elementary schools are mandated to comply with a state laws that requires at least 200 minutes every ten days, an average of 20 minutes per day in elementary school, not including lunch or recess.<sup>200</sup> Good schools, a good education and the full development of the child include physical education in the curriculum.<sup>201</sup>

*Physical Fitness.* The health implications of inadequate physical education coupled with the lack of places to play in parks and schools are profound. In California, 66% of fifth, seventh, and ninth graders did not achieve minimum physical fitness standards during the 2008-2009 school year.<sup>202</sup> In LAUSD, 75% of students were not physically fit.<sup>203</sup> During the 2003-2004 school year, nearly 1,600 children at South Gate High School took the state Fitnessgram test and not a single one passed. South Gate High School was just one of 40 schools in the district that did not have a single physically fit student during this school year. Less than 15% of students were physically fit in more than 300 LAUSD schools. Only eight schools had student populations that are more than 50% physically fit (see Table 3).<sup>204</sup>

**Table 3. Percentage of Physically Fit Children in LAUSD Schools in 2003-2004<sup>205</sup>**

Percentage of Physically Fit Children	Number of Schools in LAUSD
0%	40
1-5%	58
6-10%	96
11-15%	123
16-20%	83
21-25%	75
26-30%	42
31-35%	38
36-40%	22
41-45%	16
46-50%	4
>50%	8

## 5. Inequities in Urban Parks, Programs, and Funding

Unfair disparities in parks, recreation programs, and funding are documented by demographic maps of park access in the County of Los Angeles (Maps LA-1 and LA-2, Chart LA-1C), an audit of the city Recreation and Parks Department, and an academic study showing that the allocation of park bond funds exacerbates park inequities.<sup>206</sup> Similar reports should be published analyzing other park agencies and resource bonds to get a more complete picture of which communities benefit from the investment of public funds and which do not. Such studies can serve as tools for reform.

The Los Angeles City Controller published a three-part audit of the Recreation and Parks Department documenting systemic management failures and disparities.<sup>207</sup> For example, more high quality recreation programs are available in wealthy communities than in low-income communities, and funding policies exacerbate rather than alleviate inequities. One of the Controller's major recommendations is that the City *"needs to strategically address issues of inequity regarding levels of service provided at parks citywide."*<sup>208</sup> Fortunately, the audit also offers a blueprint for reform. The audit makes six key recommendations, including the need for:

- (1) a strategic plan to improve parks and recreation programs in every neighborhood, and eliminate unfair disparities;
- (2) standards to measure equity and progress and hold public officials accountable;
- (3) a community needs assessment every five years;
- (4) a fair system of park financing and fees;
- (5) shared use of parks and schools; and
- (6) improved park safety, real and perceived.<sup>209</sup>



The Controller's audit documents park inequities that city officials have known about for decades. The City of Los Angeles virtually abandoned parks, school construction, and public recreation in the wake of Proposition 13 in 1978, the taxpayers' revolt, which cut funding for local services, including parks and schools. In 1987 the *Los Angeles Times* reported that "*in scores of city parks across Los Angeles – mostly cramped sites in poor neighborhoods – fear is high. So pervasive are gangs, drug dealers and drunks, so limited are the programs and facilities, that the sites are known to parents and even some recreation directors as 'dead parks.'*" Robin Kramer, then a city council deputy and a former chief of staff to Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, acknowledged in that article that "there is tremendous under serving" of people in poor neighborhoods by the parks department.<sup>210</sup> In 1999, then-Mayor Richard Riordan told the *Wall Street Journal* that poorer communities have been short-changed by funding formulas for parks and recreation. "*The way money is spread throughout the city has not been based on need as much as it has been about equally distributing funds*" among the 15 council districts, according to the mayor.<sup>211</sup> Park officials concurred. "*It's a pattern we all understand,*" according to the then-director of planning and development for Recreation and Parks. "*The urban areas of Los Angeles have less park facilities than the new areas or outer lying areas, where ordinances require that parks be developed when housing developments go in.*"<sup>212</sup> "*I think the mayor's sincere in his desire to address these inequities,*" Robert García told the *Wall Street Journal*, but "*I don't think the city is doing enough.*"<sup>213</sup>

## 6. River Revitalization

William Deverell eloquently describes the role of the Los Angeles River in the history of Los Angeles:

"Were it not for the Los Angeles River, the city that shares its name would not be where it is today. Were it not for the Los Angeles River, Los Angeles would not be at all. The Los Angeles River has always been at the heart of whichever human community is in the basin: Gabrielino village, Spanish outpost, Mexican pueblo, American city. The river has been asked to play many roles. It has supplied the residents of the city and basin with water to drink and spread amidst their grapes, oranges, and other crops. It has been an instrument by which people could locate themselves on the landscape. It has been a critical dividing line, not only between east and west, north and south, but between races, classes, neighborhoods. . . . The river has also been a place where ideas and beliefs about the past, present, and future of Los Angeles have been raised and contested."<sup>214</sup>

The Los Angeles River stretches 52 miles and crosses 13 cities, flowing through diverse communities from Canoga Park in the San Fernando Valley through downtown Los Angeles to the ocean in Long Beach. The City of Los Angeles has launched the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan process to guide river revitalization for the next 20 years, focusing on the 32 miles of the river that flow through the city from Canoga Park to Vernon. The *New York Times* cites the plan for the revitalization of the Los Angeles River as a best practice example for "*more sustainable, livable and socially just cities.*"<sup>215</sup>

The Los Angeles River Project Office published the report *Los Angeles River Access and Use: Balancing Equitable Actions with Responsible Stewardship (the River Report)* in June 2009 in response to a City Council resolution. The Report notes that "The City's River revitalization efforts must balance human interests in accessing and using the River with improvements that will ensure an environment supportive of healthy, sustainable biodiversity. . . . The River offers one of the nation's and the world's most significant opportunities to introduce meaningful environmental value back into the post-industrial urban landscape."<sup>216</sup>

As emphasized in the *River Report*, citing the work of The City Project:

Numerous local organizations have stressed the importance of making sure that the River's revitalization addresses environmental justice issues (See, e.g., the City Project's work at: [www.cityprojectca.org](http://www.cityprojectca.org)). Of key concern in Los Angeles is the growing disparity of access to and use of open space resources, including parks, ball fields, and natural areas by those living in low-income communities of color. Whole generations are growing up in Los Angeles without any meaningful relationship to the natural environment. . . . The River offers an opportunity to redress environmental justice problems by not only providing numerous new green spaces, but also by ensuring free access to them.<sup>217</sup>

The *River Report* emphasizes the need for river revitalization to address:

- Compliance with equal justice laws and principles as one of the six major goals for river revitalization. These laws are discussed below.
- Environmental Justice.
- Human health and childhood obesity, including health impact assessments.
- Economic justice and green local jobs.
- Transit to Trails to take inner city residents on river, mountain and beach trips.
- Shared use of parks and schools.
- Public art along the river.<sup>219</sup>

This commitment to equal justice laws and principles should guide revitalization along the full length of the river. Communities along the lower 20 miles of the Los Angeles River have disproportionately higher percentages of residents of color and low-income people than the communities within the city limits.<sup>220</sup> The county, City of Los Angeles, and other municipalities and agencies need to work together on a regional solution to ensure equitable distribution of the benefits and burdens of revitalizing communities along the entire length of the river. The Environmental Protection Agency recently classified the Los Angeles River as traditional navigable waters.<sup>221</sup> This designation makes clear that the public trust doctrine applies to ensure equitable revitalization, as well as clean water protections.



The Olmsted Report called for the greening of the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers, and multiuse projects for parks, schools, and flood control. The County of Los Angeles adopted a Master Plan for the Los Angeles River in 1996.<sup>222</sup> The County also published a Master Plan for the San Gabriel River in 2006.<sup>223</sup> Additionally, the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan for Greater Los Angeles County (IRWMP) covers both the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers. Planning for revitalization of the full length of the Los Angeles River, the San Gabriel River, and other waterways must be coordinated to achieve social justice, as well as compliance with clean water and civil rights laws.<sup>224</sup> In the past, communities of color have relied on access to justice through the courts against the City of Los Angeles to achieve compliance with clean water laws.<sup>225</sup>

Clean water compliance and flood control should be combined with healthy parks, schools, and communities through multipurpose projects. Green spaces in parks and schools can work to clean water through natural filtration and mitigate polluted storm water runoff from reaching the rivers and the ocean. Flood control basins can provide green space for parks and playing fields, like the Sepulveda flood control basin recreation areas along the Los Angeles River currently do. Funding for clean water and flood control projects can also be used for parks and school fields.

Latino support for community revitalization along the river is strong, and continues to grow, according to polling by the William C. Velazquez Institute and anecdotal evidence gathered by the Alianza de los Pueblos del Río. When surveyed about what they would like to see on the river and its banks, Latinos showed significant support for parks and recreation: 48% said parks, 32% schools, 27% open green space, 21% California style trees and plants, and 20% said soccer and baseball fields. Latinos showed little support for “gentrification-oriented development,” with 25% supporting affordable housing but only 2% supporting market rate housing, 3% supporting tourism-related development, and 3% in favor of condominiums and penthouses.<sup>226</sup>

Latinos viewed revitalization priorities significantly differently than non-Hispanic whites. Latinos favor parks, schools, affordable housing, soccer and baseball fields, and businesses that create jobs by 10 percentage points more than non-Hispanic whites, on average. In contrast, non-Hispanic whites favored open green space, California style trees and plants, and community gardens by 12 percentage points more than Latinos, on average. It is important to note, however, that Latinos and non-Hispanic whites were united in their opposition to gentrification.<sup>227</sup>

In an important victory for the river, the diverse people living along it and the environmental justice community, the EPA declared the Los Angeles River as “traditional navigable waters” in July 2010.<sup>228</sup> This designation triggers the protections afforded under the Clean Water Act to the river and its 834-square-mile urban watershed. The EPA specifically cited recreational opportunities, public access, and the presence of ongoing restoration and educational projects as factors that contributed to this designation.<sup>229</sup>

Revitalizing the San Gabriel River poses a related set of challenges. The three-mile radius along the San Gabriel River is more complex demographically than the three-mile radius along the Los Angeles River.<sup>230</sup> The San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy has jurisdiction over both rivers and can coordinate equitable revitalization for both.

Southern Kern County | Closed for Playing, courtesy of Berenice Sanchez (age 17) and Venice Arts





## 7. The San Gabriel National Recreation Area

A diverse and growing alliance working through the San Gabriel Mountains Forever campaign supports the creation of a diverse and robust San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area.<sup>231</sup> The Campaign has called on the Department of Interior and National Park Service to implement many of the recommendations included in this report, including:

- (1) Local green jobs through Civilian Conservation Corps-type programs.
- (2) Transit to Trails programs for inner city families.
- (3) Park and historical sites that preserve the stories and resources of diverse people.
- (4) Programs to improve human health, including programs for physical activity and healthy eating to reduce obesity, and programs to contribute to the full development of the person and community through youth development, gang and crime prevention, and economic vitality for all.
- (5) Proactive compliance with equal justice laws.
- (6) Standards to measure progress and equity and hold public officials accountable in each of these areas.

Whittier Narrows Regional Park, South El Monte | The City Project

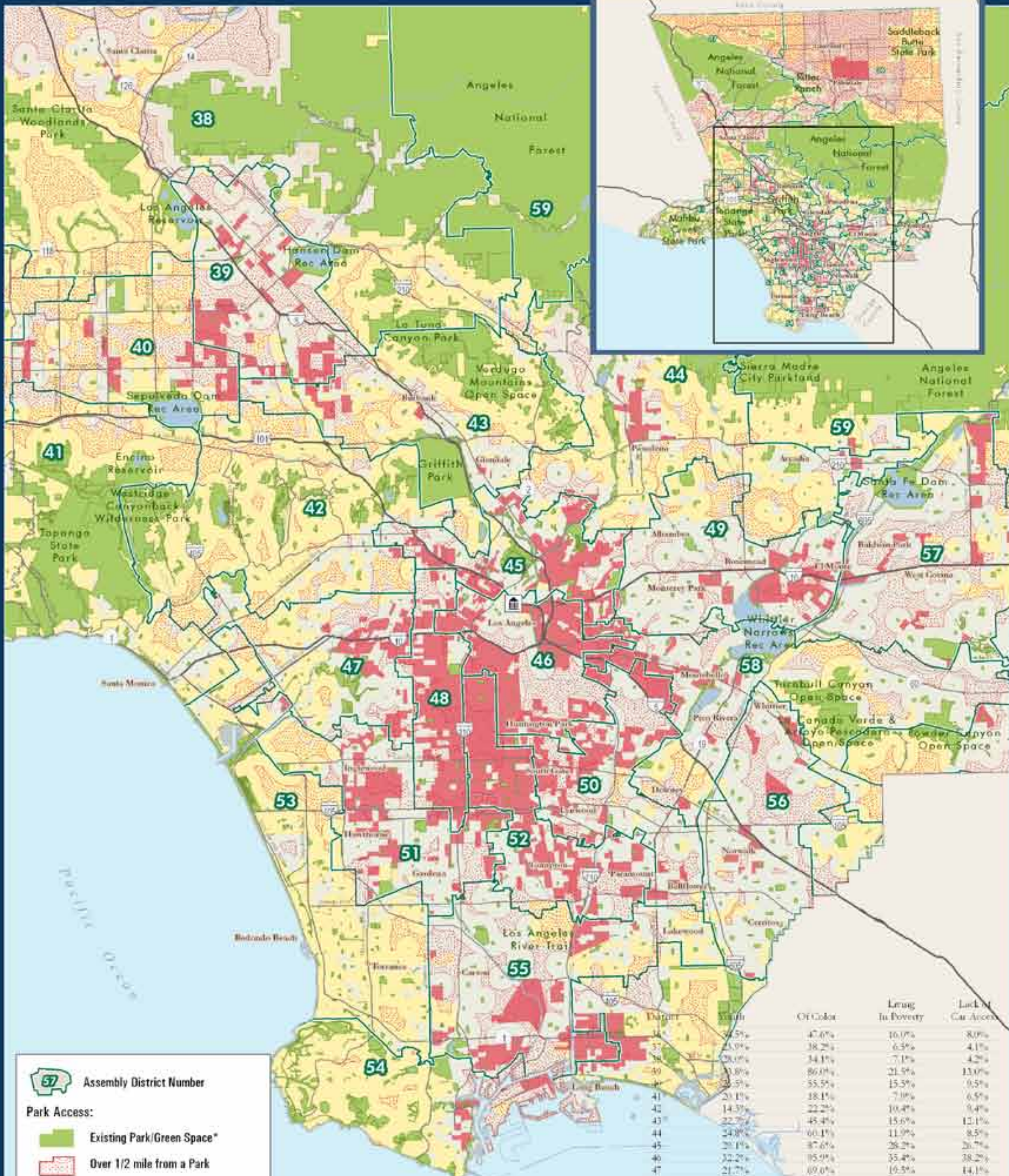






# Park Access for Children of Color Living in Poverty with No Access to a Car

Los Angeles County



**57** Assembly District Number

**Park Access:**

- Existing Park/Green Space\*
- Over 1/2 mile from a Park

**Block group status, in relation to Los Angeles County Averages, for:**

- Youth
- Race/Ethnicity
- Poverty
- Lack of Car Access

- Exceeds Los Angeles County Average
- Below Los Angeles County Average
- Within Los Angeles County Average

Park Access for Children of Color Living in Poverty with No Access to a Car is a project of The City Project - [www.cityprojectca.org](http://www.cityprojectca.org). Map created by GreenInfo Network, July 2010 [www.greeninfo.org](http://www.greeninfo.org). Data Sources: Demographics - Census 2000, Existing Park/Green Space - California Protected Areas Database v1.2 March 2009, [www.calandis.org](http://www.calandis.org); Native American Reservation areas identified, where possible. The data should not be considered complete.

Assembly District	% Youth	% of Color	% Living in Poverty	% Lack of Car Access
38	24.5%	47.6%	16.1%	8.0%
39	23.9%	38.2%	6.5%	4.1%
40	28.0%	34.1%	7.1%	4.2%
41	19.8%	86.0%	21.5%	13.0%
42	28.5%	55.5%	15.5%	9.5%
43	21.1%	38.1%	7.1%	6.5%
44	14.3%	22.2%	10.4%	9.4%
45	22.7%	45.4%	15.6%	12.1%
46	24.8%	60.1%	11.9%	8.5%
47	29.1%	87.6%	26.2%	26.7%
48	32.2%	85.9%	35.4%	38.2%
49	21.7%	69.0%	16.5%	14.1%
50	30.5%	95.2%	33.9%	28.9%
51	27.1%	85.5%	18.0%	11.4%
52	35.5%	88.4%	29.0%	13.1%
53	30.7%	85.7%	20.0%	13.1%
54	38.8%	96.0%	32.8%	20.4%
55	19.7%	35.9%	8.4%	6.5%
56	24.3%	47.6%	13.4%	11.2%
57	31.0%	77.8%	10.9%	13.5%
58	30.8%	78.5%	11.7%	7.5%
59	31.0%	80.0%	13.7%	7.4%
60	29.2%	80.9%	14.0%	9.8%
61	24.7%	32.2%	6.3%	5.6%
62	26.5%	64.8%	6.8%	4.2%
63	34.8%	82.0%	21.9%	16.6%

\*All parks/green space are shown, including forest service, bureau of land management and lands with no restricted public access.

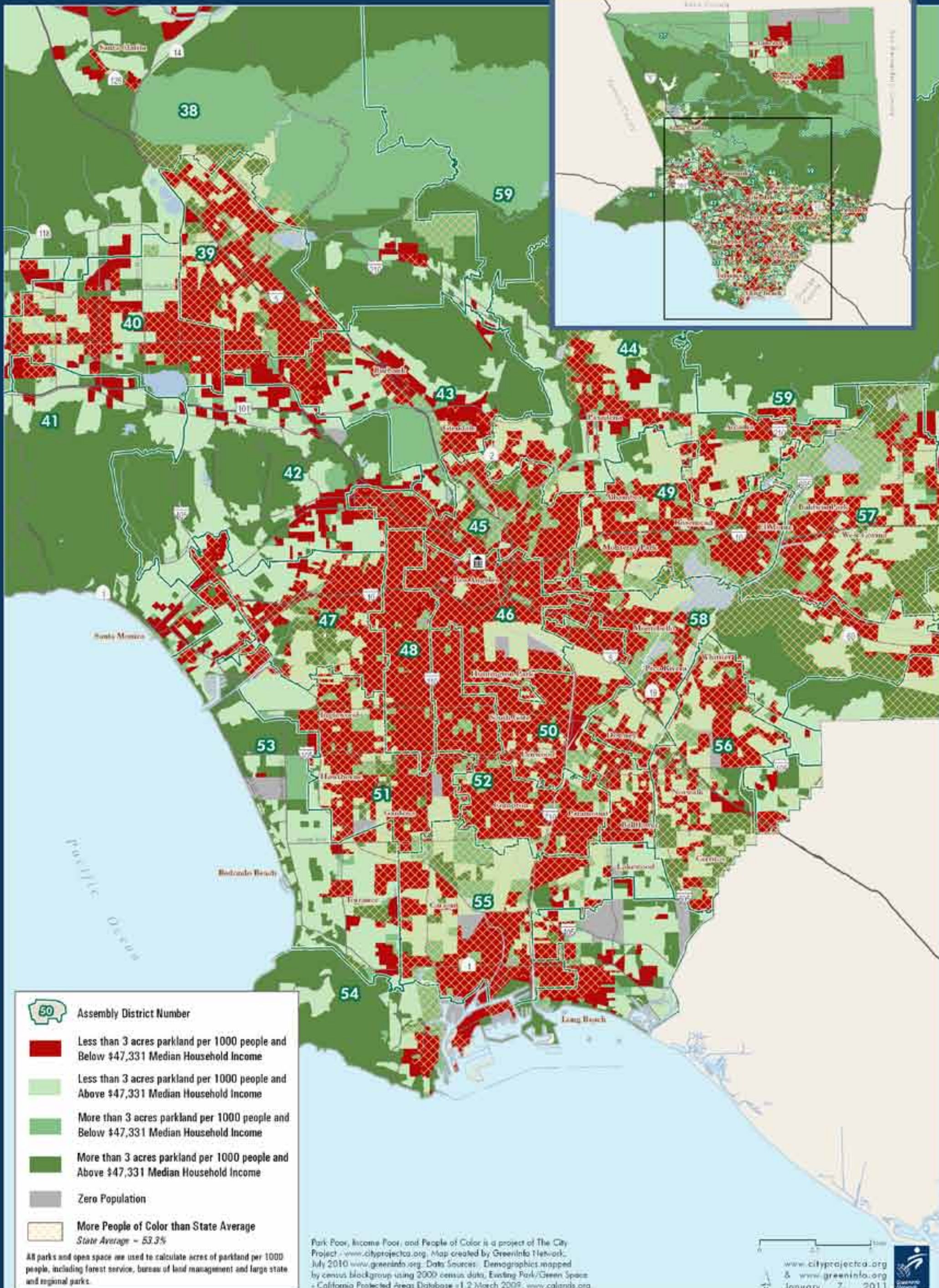
\*Percent youth, of color, living in poverty, and lack of car access represent total populations for each assembly district split at the county line. Districts 36, 37, 38, 41, 56, 59, 60 and 61 extend beyond the Los Angeles County line.





# Park Poor, Income Poor, and People of Color

Los Angeles County

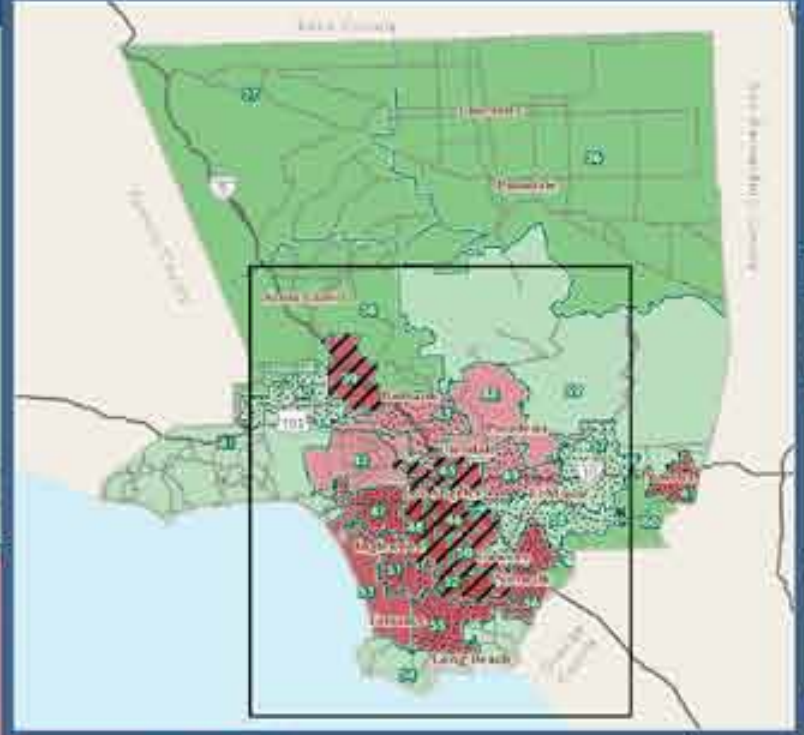
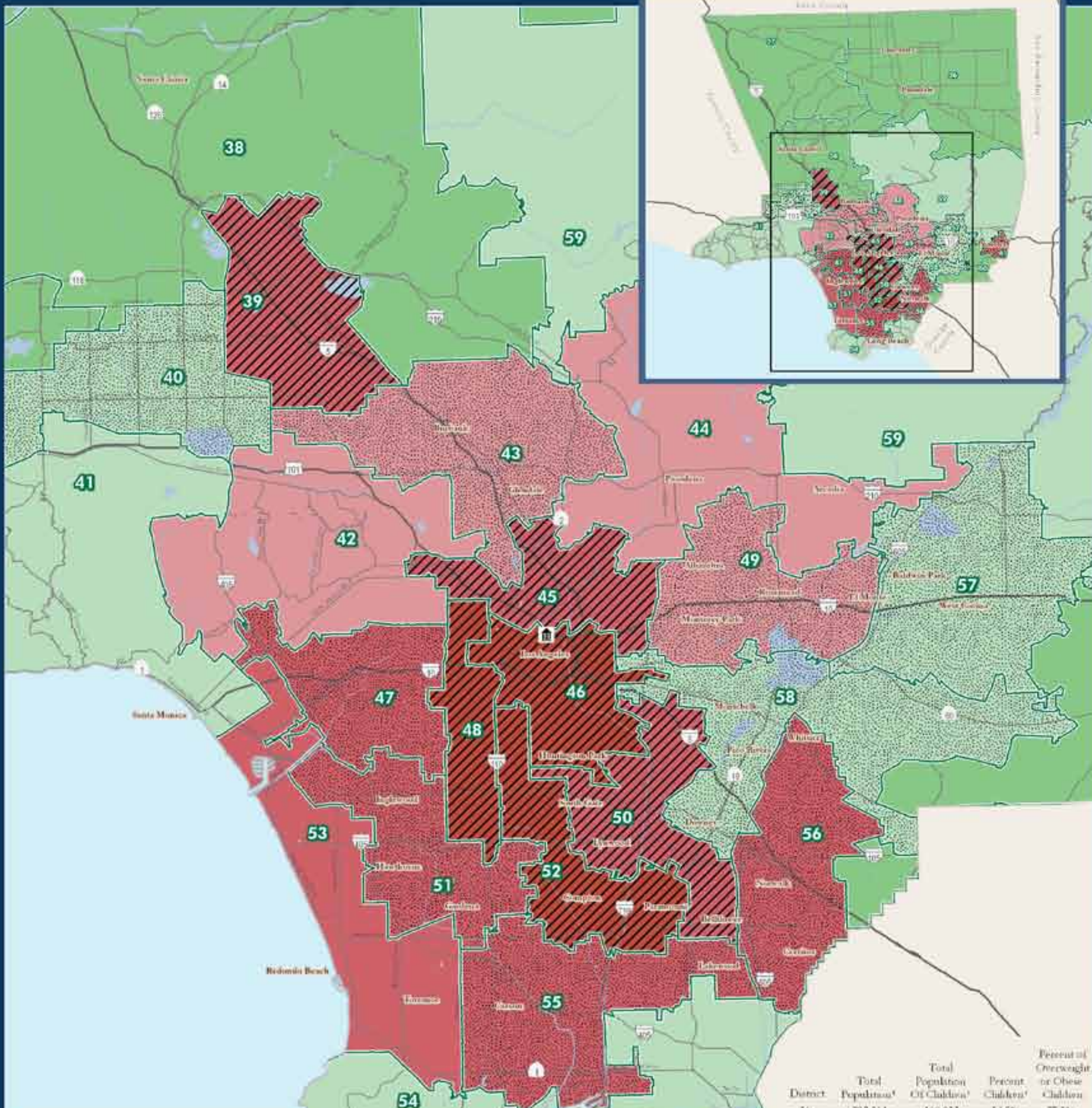






# Park Access and Child Obesity by State Assembly District

Los Angeles County



**76 Assembly District Number**

**Acres of Parks Per 1,000 Residents**

- Under 1
- 1 - 3
- 3 - 5
- 5 - 20
- Over 20

**Percent of Overweight or Obese Children**

- 23% - 30%
- 30% - 35%
- 35% - 40%

www.cityprojectco.org  
 & www.greeninfo.org  
 January 7, 2011

District	Total Population <sup>1</sup>	Total Population Of Children <sup>1</sup>	Percent Children <sup>1</sup>	Percent of Overweight or Obese Children
36	292,361	100,933	34.5%	27.3%
37	72,332	17,305	23.9%	23.2%
38	354,729	99,519	28.1%	25.8%
39	419,366	141,539	33.8%	37.8%
40	419,371	110,972	26.5%	31.9%
41	298,640	60,144	20.1%	34.0%
42	424,652	60,670	14.3%	27.0%
43	422,651	95,561	22.6%	30.8%
44	428,446	106,977	24.8%	27.9%
45	426,127	121,879	28.6%	36.3%
46	418,992	137,012	32.7%	39.1%
47	427,367	92,600	21.7%	32.6%
48	403,899	128,493	31.8%	36.8%
49	420,198	113,759	27.1%	31.1%
50	427,216	151,043	35.3%	35.2%
51	419,596	128,857	30.7%	33.5%
52	423,529	164,556	38.9%	37.4%
53	422,545	85,221	20.2%	24.0%
54	423,716	103,114	24.3%	26.9%
55	425,117	134,664	31.6%	31.4%
56	343,326	105,676	30.8%	31.5%
57	421,486	132,664	31.5%	34.3%
58	422,028	123,400	29.3%	31.9%
59	210,864	52,371	24.8%	24.6%
60	184,981	48,973	26.5%	23.1%
61	149,218	51,784	34.7%	33.4%

Park Access and Child Obesity is a project of The City Project - www.cityprojectco.org.  
 Map created by GreenInfo Network, July 2010 - www.greeninfo.org. Existing Park/Green Space - California Protected Areas Database v1.2 March 2009, www.calmaps.org.  
 Percent of Obese Children: California Center for Public Health Advocacy: The Growing Epidemic: Childhood Obesity Rates on the Rise in California Assembly Districts; Change in Percentage of Overweight Children by California Assembly District (2001-2009) (2009) available at [http://www.publichealthadvocacy.org/policy\\_briefs/obesityreport.pdf](http://www.publichealthadvocacy.org/policy_briefs/obesityreport.pdf).

<sup>1</sup>Total population, total population of children, and percent children represent total population for each assembly district up to the county line. Districts 56, 57, 58, 41, 56, 59, 60, and 61 extend beyond the Los Angeles County boundary and therefore may have lower total than other sources of assembly district demographics.



LOS ANGELES COUNTY			CALIFORNIA	
	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT
Total Population	9,519,338	-	33,871,648	-
Children (under 18)	2,659,802	28%	9,221,463	27%
Seniors (65 and over)	926,970	10%	3,586,794	11%
<b>Race / Ethnicity<sup>+</sup></b>				
Non- Hispanic White	2,946,145	31%	15,771,163	47%
Hispanic	4,243,487	45%	10,969,132	32%
African American	916,907	10%	2,219,190	7%
Native American	68,471	1%	312,215	1%
Asian Pacific Islander	1,161,484	12%	3,796,833	11%
Other Race	2,262,925	24%	5,725,844	17%
2 or more races	486,792	5%	1,694,607	5%
<b>Income / Poverty</b>				
Median Household Income	\$42,189	-	\$42,896	-
In Poverty	1,674,599	18%	4,706,130	14%
Percent of people in poverty under 18 years of age	640,145	38%	1,757,100	37%
Percent of people in poverty over 65 years of age	93,555	6%	280,411	6%
<b>Rent / Own</b>				
Own	1,499,694	48%	6,546,237	57%
Rent	1,634,080	52%	4,956,633	43%
<b>Transportation</b>				
No Car Access	393,309	13%	1,091,214	9%
<b>Health</b>				
% of Overweight and Obese Children*	-	29%	-	27%
Passed 5 of 6 Physical Fitness Exams**	99,059	27%	366,228	27%
Passed 6 of 6 Physical Fitness Exams**	108,291	29%	443,504	32%
Students Enrolled in Free and Reduced Lunch Program**	975,788	60%	3,152,330	51%
<b>Parks and Open Space***</b>				
Acres of Green Space	875,240	-	48,490,056	-
Acres of Bureau of Land Management land	11,712	-	15,117,778	-
Acres of Forest Service land	655,770	-	20,695,282	-
Total Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents	92	-	1,432	-
Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents (w/o BLM)	91	-	985	-
Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents (w/o FS)	23	-	821	-
Net Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents (w/o BLM & FS)	22	-	374	-

<sup>+</sup> Race/ethnicity figures will not add up to 100%. Census 2000 allowed respondents to mark multiple races in addition to being

<sup>\*</sup>County obesity figures are derived from assembly district data. A weighted average was run based on population.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Data calculated for grades 5, 7, and 9 from Data Quest, California Department of Education 2007-08

[http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/gls\\_calworks.asp](http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/gls_calworks.asp)

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> All parks and open space data has been calculated from GreenInfo Network's California Protected Areas Database (CPAD) version 1.2, March 2009 [www.calands.org](http://www.calands.org)





Park Acreage for Los Angeles County by Assembly District					
A	B	C	D	E	F
District	Total Population	Total Acres of Parks	Total Acres of Parks per 1,000 Residents	Net Acres of Parks, Without National Forests, other U.S. Forest Service Land, and U.S. Bureau Of Land Management Land	Net Acres of Parks per 1,000 Residents
36	292,361	77,052	263.55	6,009	20.55
37	72,332	237,181	3,279.07	22,987	317.80
38	354,720	60,026	169.22	22,197	62.58
39	419,366	1,665	3.97	2,004	4.78
40	419,371	3,051	7.28	2,474	5.90
41	298,640	50,840	170.24	53,003	177.48
42	424,052	6,690	15.78	7,621	17.97
43	422,651	10,976	25.97	4,780	11.31
44	428,446	20,576	48.02	5,886	13.74
45	426,127	1,578	3.70	925	2.17
46	418,902	218	0.52	229	0.55
47	427,367	1,292	3.02	885	2.07
48	420,899	245	0.58	242	0.57
49	420,106	1,572	3.74	2,303	5.48
50	427,216	408	0.96	408	0.96
51	419,506	859	2.05	848	2.02
52	423,529	288	0.68	288	0.68
53	422,243	2,094	4.96	3,318	7.86
54	423,716	47,918	113.09	46,967	110.85
55	425,117	954	2.24	865	2.03
56	343,326	764	2.23	786	2.29
57	421,486	4,203	9.97	4,707	11.17
58	422,028	6,395	15.15	6,401	15.17
59	210,864	334,605	1,586.83	9,548	45.28
60	184,981	2,520	13.62	1,368	7.40
61	149,218	397	2.66	241	1.62
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,518,572</b>	<b>874,367</b>	<b>91.86</b>	<b>207,290</b>	<b>21.78</b>

This Chart shows acres of parks per thousand residents for the County of Los Angeles as a whole, and in each State Assembly District, first with Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land included, and then without the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land. The Chart breaks down this information as follows.

Column B shows the total population in the County and in each Assembly District.

Column C shows the total acres of parks in the County and in each District Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land included.

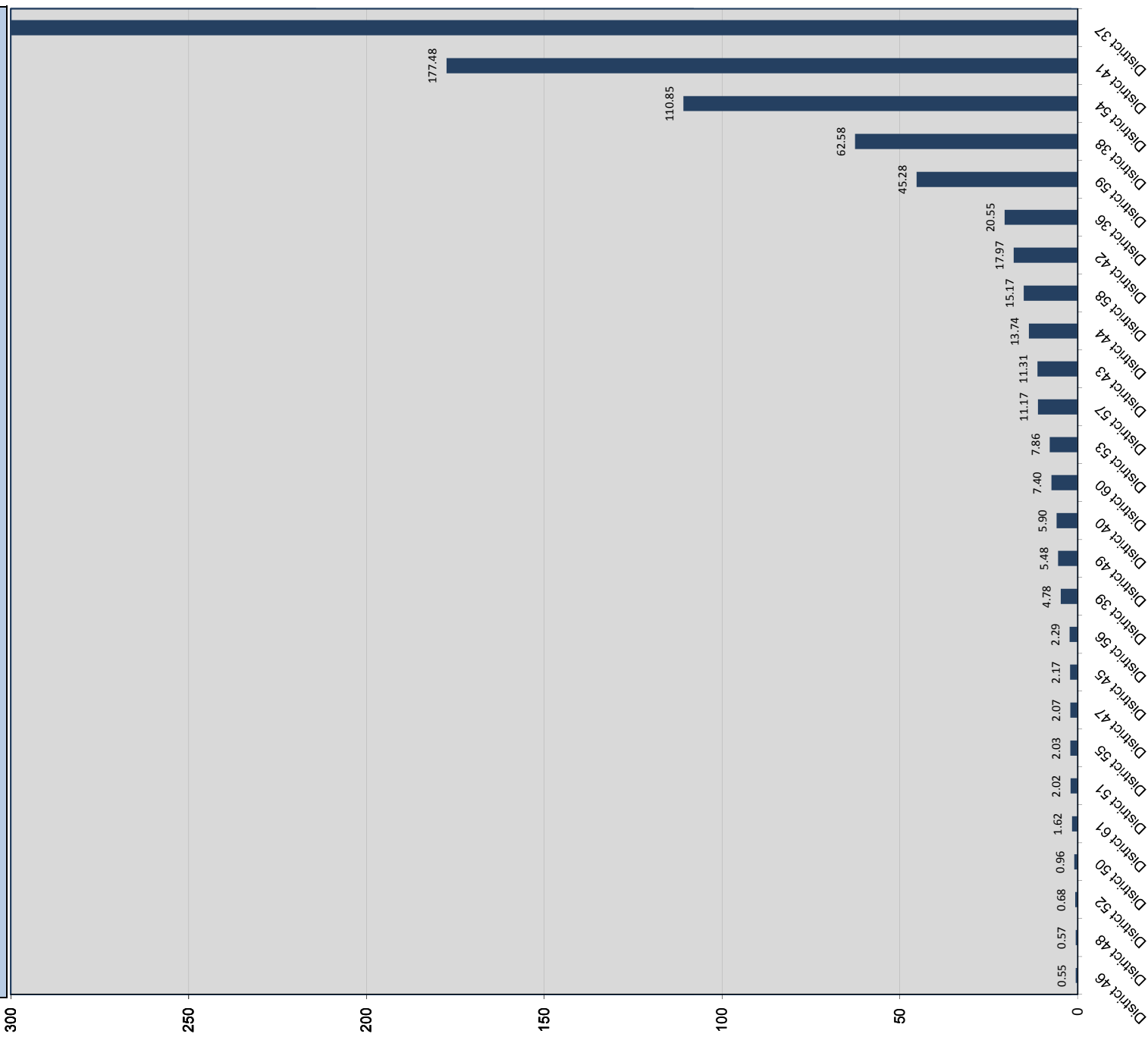
Column D shows the total acres of parks per thousand residents in the County and in each District, including Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land.

In Columns E and F, the acres of Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service space that actually lie within each District are subtracted. For example, the Angeles National Forest covers close to 700,000 acres, but only the 669,033 acres that actually lie within the County and each District are excluded.

The acreage for the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service that is subtracted in Column E is as follows:  
Angeles National Forest 669,033 acres

**Based on these calculations, 25% of all land in Los Angeles County is in the Angeles National Forest. Fully 78% of all park space in the County is in the Angeles Forest.**

Net Park Acreage for Los Angeles County by Assembly District







## B. Orange County

### 1. Overview

Orange County is bordered by Los Angeles County to the north, San Diego County to the south, Riverside County to the east, and San Bernardino County to the northeast. The western border of Orange County includes 42 miles of coastline along the Pacific Ocean.<sup>232</sup> With an estimated population of 3,010,759 as of 2008, Orange is the second most populous county in California, after Los Angeles.<sup>233</sup> Its total land area of 798.3 square miles makes it the smallest in physical size of the counties in Southern California.<sup>234</sup>

There are 34 incorporated cities in Orange County. The first city to incorporate was Anaheim in 1876. The county itself was not founded and officially recognized as a county until 1889.<sup>235</sup>

Each of the 34 cities maintains neighborhood and community parks, while the county maintains nearly 60,000 acres of regional and wilderness parks.<sup>236</sup> Orange County is also home to two federally protected lands, Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge and Cleveland National Forest, and six state protected areas. In addition, individual cities, the county, and the state all manage parts of the Orange County coastline.

*Demographics.* Orange County's population is 2,846,289 according to the 2000 census. The estimated population as of 2008 was 3,010,759. This represents a growth rate of approximately 6% over the past eight years.<sup>237</sup> Of the 2000 population, 51.3% consider themselves Non-Hispanic white; 30.8% identify as Hispanic/Latino; 13.8% identify as Asian and Pacific Islander descent; only 1.5% identify as black/African American; and 0.3% are Native American (see Table 4 and Chart OC AD-1).<sup>238</sup>

People of color tend to be separated into a few areas of high concentration with much smaller representations throughout the rest of the county. For example, the City of Santa Ana is disproportionately Latino, with 76.1% of its population, 257,097 individuals, identifying as Latino.<sup>239</sup> Over 52% of the total Latino population in Orange County resides in just four of the 34 cities: Santa Ana, La Habra, Stanton, and Anaheim. Nearly one-third of all Asian and Pacific Islanders in Orange County reside within the three cities of Westminster, Garden Grove, and Irvine. At the same time large parts of Orange County are disproportionately non-Hispanic white. Half of the incorporated cities in Orange County, 17 of 34, have a population that is at least two-thirds non-Hispanic white. The proportion of non-Hispanic white residents in these cities far exceeds the county average of 51.3%.

**Table 4. Orange County Demographic Distribution<sup>240</sup>**

Race or Ethnicity	Population	Percent of Total Population (%)
White, Non-Hispanic	1,458,978	51.3
Hispanic/Latino	875,579	30.8
Asian and Pacific Islander	391,896	13.8
Black/African American	42,639	1.5
Native American	8,414	0.3

There are disparities in green access between North and South Orange County. State Route 55, also known as the Costa Mesa Freeway, unofficially divides the county into two distinct regions, North Orange County and South Orange County. The Santa Ana River is also sometimes used as the dividing line. North Orange County is characterized by older, more densely populated cities that were established as suburbs of Los Angeles. In contrast, the communities of South Orange County tend to be more affluent and disproportionately non-Hispanic white. Each of the 13 cities in South Orange County has a higher proportion of non-Hispanic white residents than the county average, and 11 of the 13 have a median income above the countywide median household income. Another characteristic of South Orange County is far lower population and development densities than the northern county. This results in more open space being available within the cities, as well as within county-operated land, throughout South Orange County.



## 2. Access to Parks

The Orange County maps of green access and equity show inequities in park access for people of color and low-income people (see Map OC-1). The areas of Orange County disproportionately populated by people of color and low-income people have less green space than areas that are disproportionately non-Hispanic white.

*City Park Space.* There is a wide disparity in acres of parks per thousand residents by city. For example, disproportionately non-Hispanic white and wealthy Villa Park provides 13.3 acres of open space per thousand residents, while disproportionately Latino Stanton provides only 0.68 acres per thousand residents.<sup>241</sup>

Disparities in park space tend to follow demographic trends. Six of the 11 cities with disproportionately Latino populations were park poor, with less than two acres of parks per thousand residents. In the three cities with the highest percentage of Latino residents, two provide less than one acre per thousand residents. The story is similar for Asian and Pacific Islanders, with two of the three cities with the highest Asian populations providing less than one acre per thousand residents. Overall, of the four cities with the lowest ratio of acres of parks per thousand residents, three have higher than average Latino populations (Santa Ana, Garden Grove, and Stanton) and three have higher than average Asian and Pacific Islander populations (Westminster, Garden Grove, Stanton). Of the nine cities in Orange County that provide less than two acres per thousand residents, five have higher than average Black populations.

On the other hand, all 15 of the cities that provide at least three acres per thousand residents are disproportionately non-Hispanic white, and 21 of 23 disproportionately non-Hispanic white cities provide two or more acres per thousand residents. All 13 cities in South Orange County have disproportionately non-Hispanic white populations and provide at least two acres per thousand residents.

*County Park Space.* There are nearly 60,000 acres of park and open space operated by the Orange County Parks Department, including approximately 32,000 acres in more than 20 urban and wilderness parks, seven miles of beaches and coastal facilities, and 27,000 acres of open space.<sup>242</sup> In 2010, the county significantly increased its green space holdings when it received a donation of 20,000 acres of open space previously privately held by the Irvine Company.<sup>243</sup>

With 60,000 acres of county parks and 2,846,289 residents, there are approximately 21.1 acres of county parks per thousand Orange County residents.<sup>244</sup> Not all residents have equal access to these lands. There are considerably more acres of county parks in South Orange County, which is disproportionately non-Hispanic white and affluent, than in North Orange County.

In its 2007 Orange County Parks Strategic Plan, the county park department identified correcting inequality in access to parks between residents of North Orange County and South Orange County as one of its major goals.<sup>245</sup> Moreover, access to most county parks is limited to people with cars or other personal vehicles. According to a visitor survey, only 1% of visitors to county-operated parks used public transportation as their method of travel.<sup>246</sup> The parks department identified a need to partner with the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) as a way to close the accessibility gap,<sup>247</sup> but there is no evidence that any concrete steps have been taken.

The communities with the worst access to parks lie in North Orange County, which have the lowest income levels and the highest concentrations of people of color (see Map OC-2). Income disparities are most notable for Latino families. Of the four cities with the highest proportion of Latino residents, at least 13% of the residents in each city are living below the poverty line. On the other hand, the ten most disproportionately non-Hispanic white cities in Orange County had significantly fewer individuals living below the poverty line than the county average.<sup>248</sup>

## 3. Childhood Obesity and Physical Fitness Levels

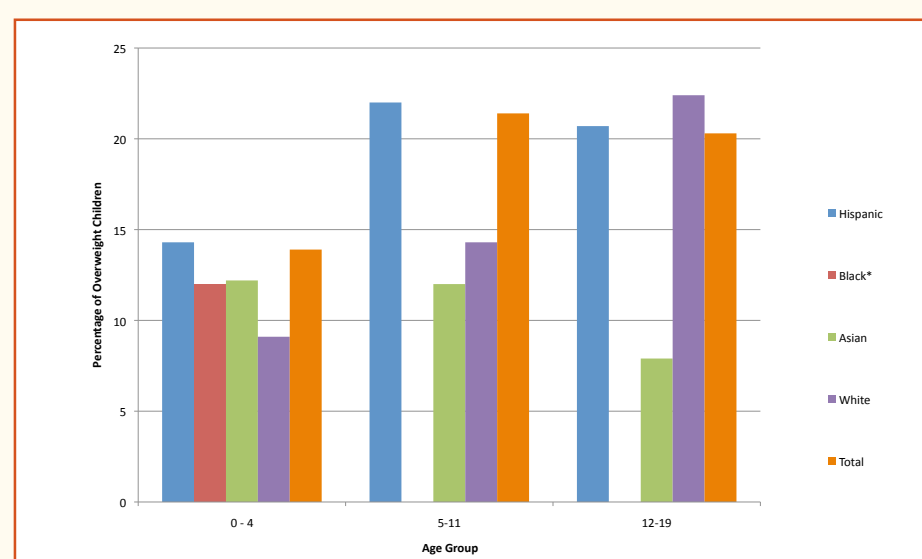
*Child Obesity.* The rates of overweight and obesity among children in Orange County range from 13.9% to 21.4%.<sup>249</sup> While children in Orange County are slightly less overweight and obese than the statewide average,<sup>250</sup> there are significant disparities between ethnic groups.

Children of color are particularly vulnerable because they often live in communities that do not have enough green space for physical activity and lack access to healthy food (see Map OC-3). Figure 3 shows the rates of overweight among Orange County children by race or ethnicity and age.

Overweight and obesity are problems among adults in Orange County, as well. The Orange County Health Needs Assessment reports that 53% of all adults in Orange County are overweight or obese.<sup>251</sup> Like children, adults of color are disproportionately overweight. An astonishing 72% of all Latino adults in Orange County are overweight or obese.<sup>252</sup>

*Physical Fitness.* Although students in Orange County are slightly more physically fit than the statewide average,<sup>253</sup> the number of children who are not physically fit is still too high. Children of color, particularly Latino children, are generally less physically fit than their non-Hispanic white classmates.

**Figure 3. Percentage of Overweight Children in Orange County<sup>254</sup>**



\*Note: Data are not available for Black/African American children in the 5-11 and 12-19 age groups in Orange County.



A significantly lower percentage of Latino fifth, seventh, and ninth grade students in Orange County achieved physical fitness standards than the countywide totals for fifth, seventh, and ninth grade students.<sup>255</sup> Black seventh and ninth grade students were also less physically fit than the county average. Conversely, more white non-Hispanic fifth, seventh, and ninth grade students in Orange County were deemed physically fit than the county averages. Asian and Pacific Islander students had a higher percentage of fifth, seventh, and ninth grade students achieving physical fitness standards than the countywide totals. Table 5 shows the percentage of Orange County students that achieved physical fitness standards broken down by race or ethnicity.

**Table 5. Percentage of Physically Fit Children in Orange County by Race/Ethnicity<sup>256</sup>**

Race or Ethnicity	5th Grade (%)	7th Grade (%)	9th Grade (%)
White, non-Hispanic	43.5	50.4	49.6
Latino	23.2	33.1	33.7
Black	34.5	41.6	42.1
Asian and Pacific Islander	38.8	53.1	54.3
Orange County	32.9	42.6	43.4

#### 4. Orange County Great Park

One encouraging sign for increased access to parks in Orange County is the creation of the Orange County Great Park in the City of Irvine. Great Park is being developed on the site of the former U.S. Marine Corps El Toro Air Station and is hailed as the “first great metropolitan park of the 21st century.”<sup>257</sup> Designed to rival New York’s Central Park, Great Park is planned to be more than 1,300 acres in area and located in the approximate geographic center of Orange County. The park plans call for 165 acres of sports and athletic fields, a two-mile long Great Canyon natural preserve, botanical gardens, and a three-mile wildlife corridor, as well as a cultural center and veterans memorial.<sup>258</sup>

Most importantly, Great Park is designed to be accessible to everyone in Orange County and southern California. The City of Irvine itself is an ethnically diverse city. While it does have a non-Hispanic White population that is higher than the county average, Irvine’s Asian and Pacific Islander population is more than double the county average. In regard to access, Great Park is being built adjacent to the Irvine Transportation Center, which is a multimodal transit hub servicing Amtrak and Metrolink trains, OCTA buses, shuttles, and carpools.<sup>259</sup> Another accessibility problem that plagues many large parks is that even if a person can get to the park without a car, they often cannot travel through the park without a car. Great Park is addressing this concern by providing emissions-free shuttle service throughout the park, bicycles for use inside the park that will be available for little or no cost, and extensive hiking and walking trails.<sup>260</sup>

Unfortunately, despite its potential to vastly increase the amount of park and recreational space available to Orange County residents, the construction timeline for Great Park is uncertain at this time. The \$1 billion dollar park project was approved by Orange County voters in 2002 and originally scheduled to be open to the public in 2008.<sup>261</sup> Financial difficulties, political infighting, and unmet promises between the park’s development partners have stalled the project, however, and a revised timetable for completion has not yet been released. The only part of the park that is currently accessible to the public is a 27.5-acre Preview Park. Disappointingly, instead of providing playgrounds, athletic fields and other recreational facilities the Preview Park offers only a hot air balloon ride, the Great Park Balloon, and a visitor center.<sup>262</sup> This project will represent a major step forward in terms of increasing access to parks and open space for Orange County residents and completing construction in a timely fashion should be made a top priority.

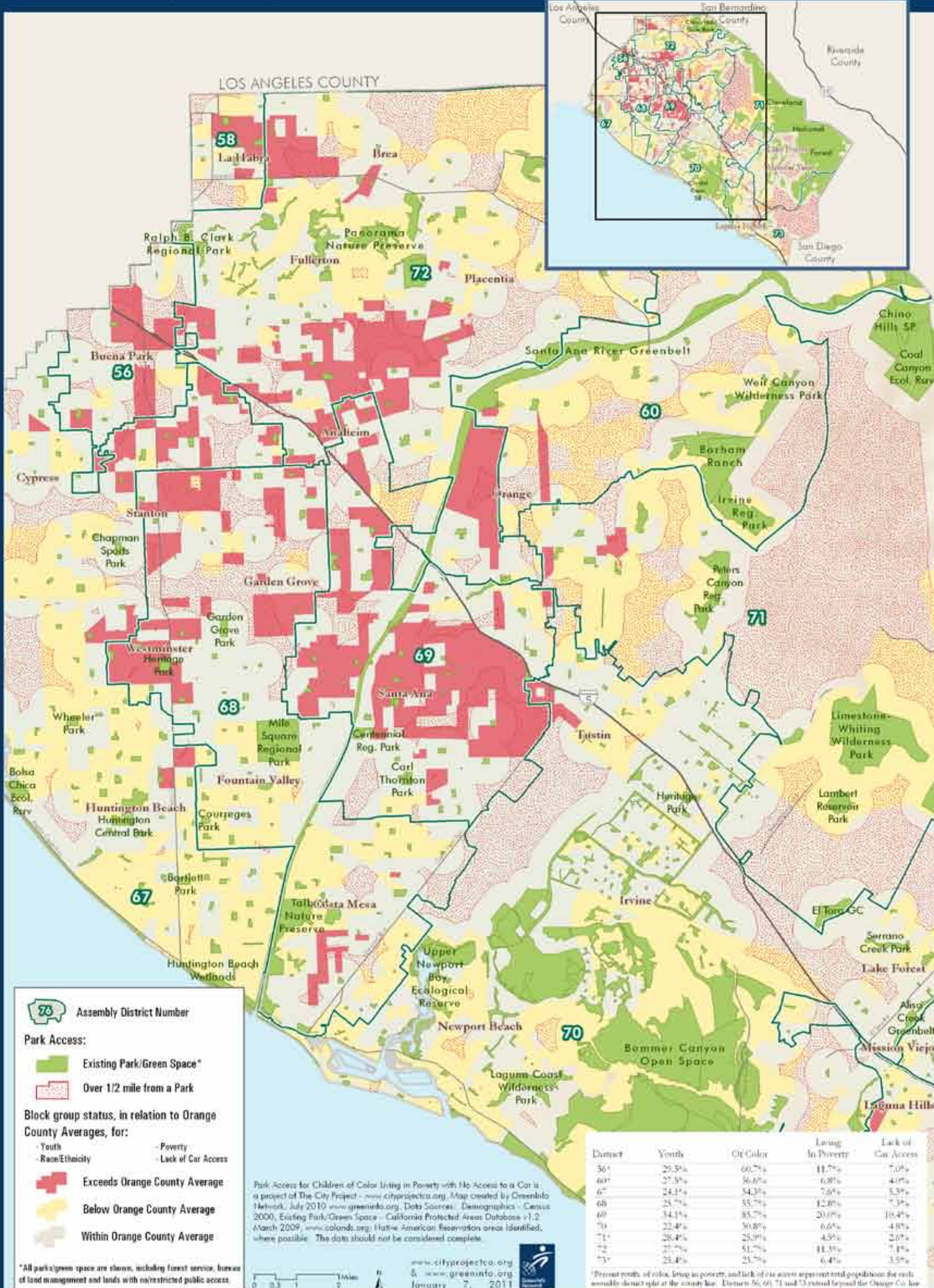






# Park Access for Children of Color Living in Poverty with No Access to a Car

## Orange County

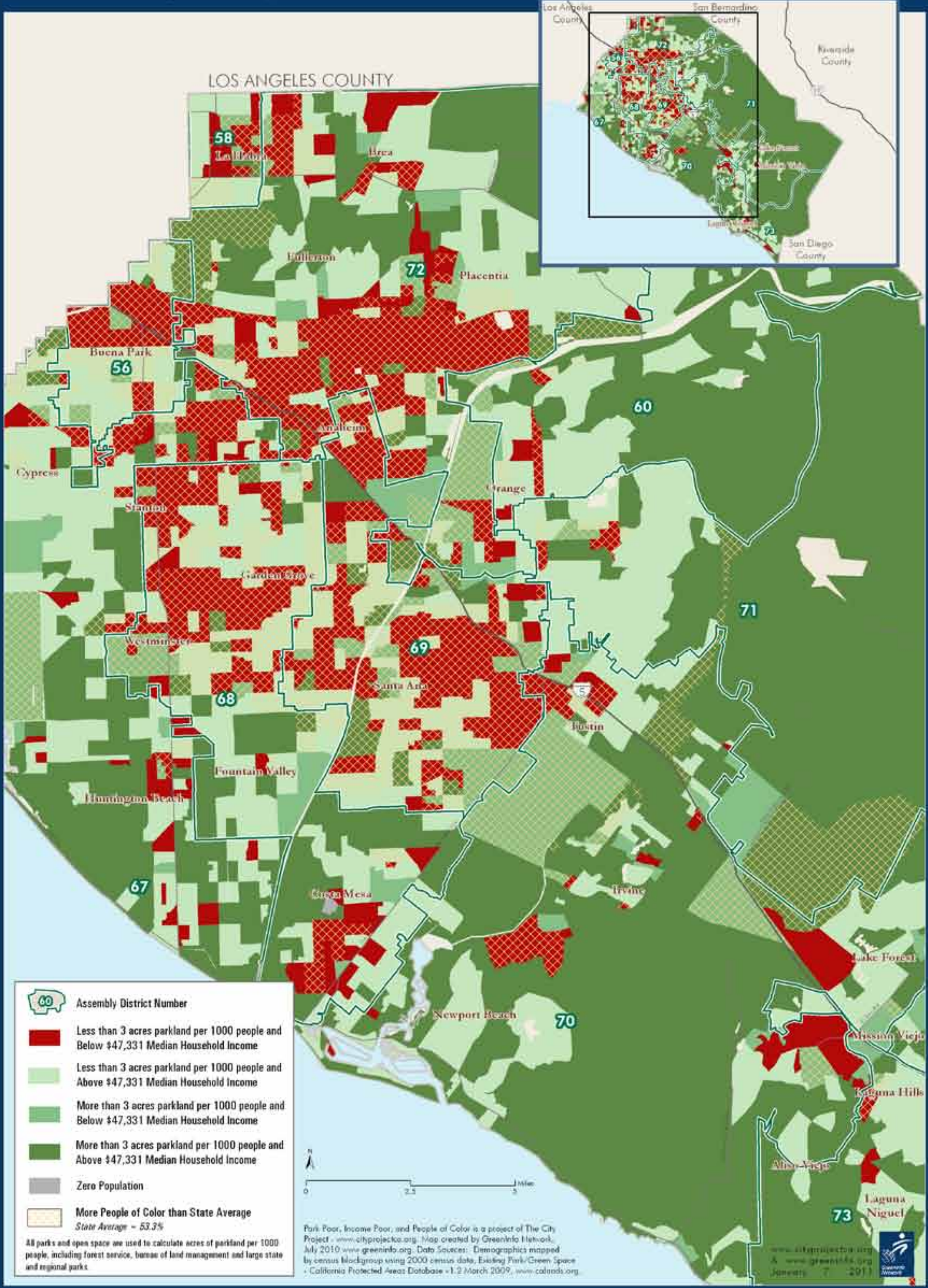






# Park Poor, Income Poor, and People of Color

## Orange County



Park Poor, Income Poor, and People of Color is a project of The City Project - [www.cityprojectca.org](http://www.cityprojectca.org). Map created by GreenInfo Network, July 2010 [www.greeninfo.org](http://www.greeninfo.org). Data Sources: Demographics mapped by census blockgroup using 2000 census data, Existing Park/Green Space - California Protected Areas Database - 1.2 March 2009, [www.caltrails.org](http://www.caltrails.org).

[www.cityprojectca.org](http://www.cityprojectca.org)  
[www.greeninfo.org](http://www.greeninfo.org)  
 January 7, 2011









ORANGE COUNTY			CALIFORNIA	
	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT
Total Population	2,846,289	-	33,871,648	-
Children (under 18)	767,129	27%	9,221,463	27%
Seniors (65 and over)	278,805	10%	3,586,794	11%
<b>Race / Ethnicity<sup>+</sup></b>				
Non- Hispanic White	1,455,470	51%	15,771,163	47%
Hispanic	876,451	31%	10,969,132	32%
African American	44,256	2%	2,219,190	7%
Native American	17,664	1%	312,215	1%
Asian Pacific Islander	394,874	14%	3,796,833	11%
Other Race	425,361	15%	5,725,844	17%
2 or more races	121,239	4%	1,694,607	5%
<b>Income / Poverty</b>				
Median Household Income	\$58,820	-	\$42,896	-
In Poverty	289,475	10%	4,706,130	14%
Percent of people in poverty under 18 years of age	102,002	35%	1,757,100	37%
Percent of people in poverty over 65 years of age	16,749	6%	280,411	6%
<b>Rent / Own</b>				
Own	574,193	61%	6,546,237	57%
Rent	361,094	39%	4,956,633	43%
<b>Transportation</b>				
No Car Access	54,409	6%	1,091,214	9%
<b>Health</b>				
% of Overweight and Obese Children*	-	24%	-	27%
Passed 5 of 6 Physical Fitness Exams**	30,692	27%	366,228	27%
Passed 6 of 6 Physical Fitness Exams**	44,319	40%	443,504	32%
Students Enrolled in Free and Reduced Lunch Program**	197,671	40%	3,152,330	51%
<b>Parks and Open Space***</b>				
Acres of Green Space	124,574	-	48,490,056	-
Acres of Bureau of Land Management land	0	-	15,117,778	-
Acres of Forest Service land	54,834	-	20,695,282	-
Total Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents	44	-	1,432	-
Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents (w/o BLM)	44	-	985	-
Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents (w/o FS)	25	-	821	-
Net Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents (w/o BLM & FS)	25	-	374	-

<sup>+</sup> Race/ethnicity figures will not add up to 100%. Census 2000 allowed respondents to mark multiple races in addition to being

<sup>\*</sup>County obesity figures are derived from assembly district data. A weighted average was run based on population.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Data calculated for grades 5, 7, and 9 from Data Quest, California Department of Education 2007-08

[http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/gls\\_calworks.asp](http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/gls_calworks.asp)

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> All parks and open space data has been calculated from GreenInfo Network's California Protected Areas Database (CPAD) version 1.2, March 2009 [www.calands.org](http://www.calands.org)





Park Acreage for Orange County by Assembly District					
A	B	C	D	E	F
District	Total Population	Total Acres of Parks	Total Acres of Parks per 1,000 Residents	Net Acres of Parks, Without National Forests, other U.S. Forest Service Land, and U.S. Bureau Of Land Management Land	Net Acres of Parks per 1,000 Residents
56	82,966	120	1.45	120	1.45
60	170,691	5,069	29.70	5,069	29.70
67	415,628	3,029	7.29	3,029	7.29
68	419,716	2,119	5.05	2,119	5.05
69	429,195	792	1.85	792	1.85
70	419,386	20,821	49.65	20,821	49.65
71	261,642	71,534	273.40	20,267	77.46
72	426,004	7,052	16.55	7,052	16.55
73	221,061	11,981	54.20	8,477	38.35
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,846,289</b>	<b>122,517</b>	<b>43.04</b>	<b>67,746</b>	<b>23.80</b>

This Chart shows acres of parks per thousand residents for the County of Orange as a whole, and in each State Assembly District, first with the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land included, and then without Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land. The Chart breaks down this information as follows.

Column B shows the total population in the County and in each Assembly District.

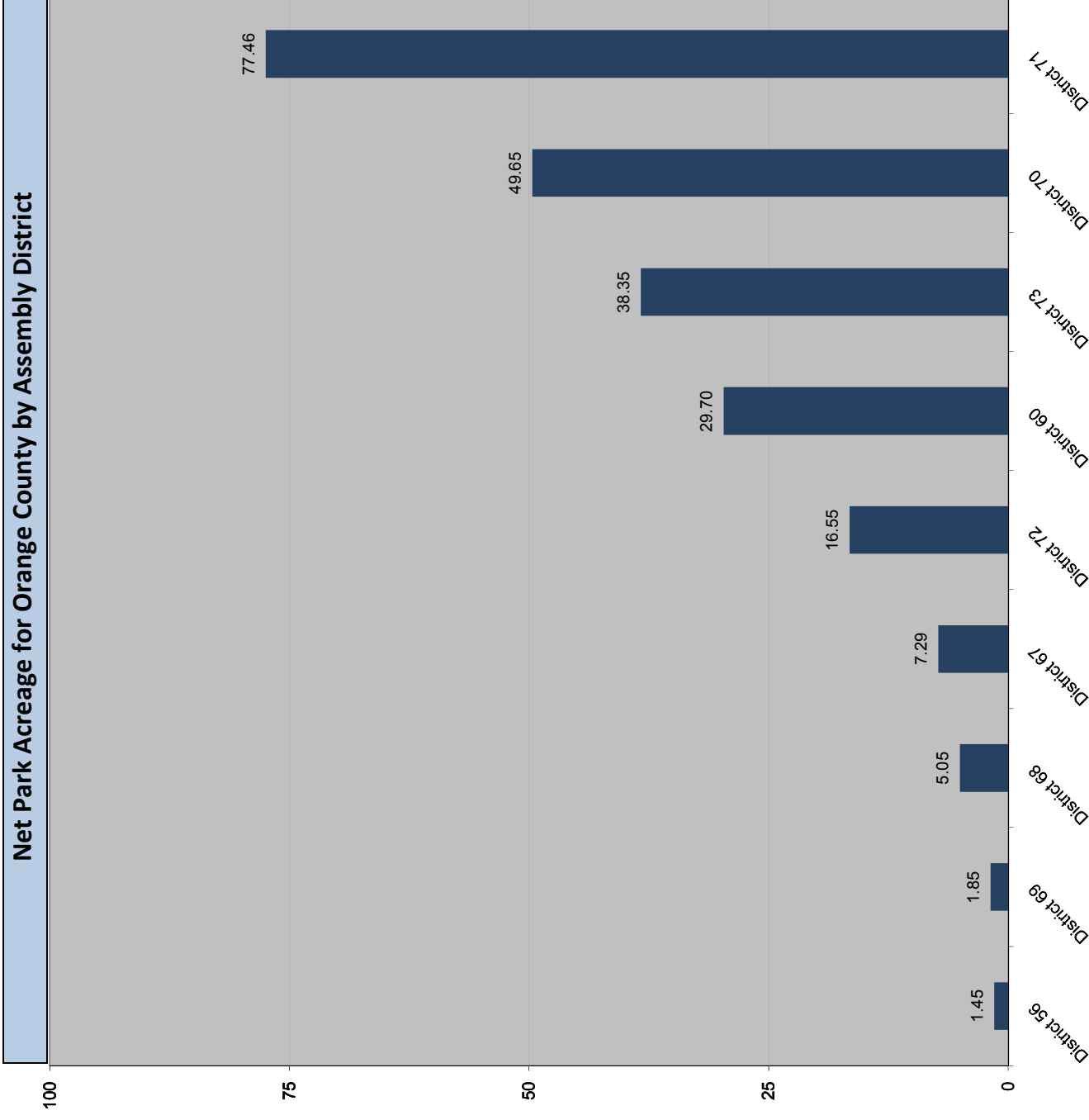
Column C shows the total acres of parks in the County and in each District, including Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land.

Column D shows the total acres of parks per thousand residents in the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land.

In Columns E and F, the acres Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land that actually lie within each District are subtracted. For example, the Cleveland National Forest covers close to 460,000 acres, but only the 54,771 acres that actually lie within the County and each District are excluded.

The acreage for the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land that is subtracted in Column E is as follows:  
Cleveland National Forest 54,711 acres

**Based on these calculations, 9% of all land in Orange County is in the Cleveland National Forest. Fully 44% of all park space in the County is in the Cleveland National Forest.**







## C. Ventura County

### 1. Overview

Ventura County is bordered by Los Angeles County to the east, Santa Barbara County to the west, and Kern County to the north. The southern border of Ventura County includes 43 miles of coastline along the Pacific Ocean.<sup>263</sup> Ventura County's estimated population of 797,740 as of 2008<sup>264</sup> is spread out over an area covering 1,873 square miles of land.<sup>265</sup>

There are 10 incorporated cities within Ventura County: Camarillo, Fillmore, Moorpark, Ojai, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Ventura (San Buenaventura), Santa Paula, Simi Valley, and Thousand Oaks. The first city to incorporate was San Buenaventura, now known as Ventura, in 1866. The City of Ventura incorporated seven years prior to the County of Ventura being officially recognized as a county in 1873.<sup>266</sup> Many of Ventura County's existing communities were established in the 1800s.

*Geography.* The diverse geography of Ventura County includes mountains, valleys, forests, coastal plains, and beaches. The mountain ranges, such as the Santa Monica Mountains, San Emigdio Mountains, and Topa Topa Mountains, are part of California's Transverse Range and all run east to west. There are hundreds of park and recreational areas throughout the county, as well as large tracts of open space. Cities, special park and recreation districts, the county, the State of California, and the federal government are all responsible for managing green space in Orange County.

555,618 acres in northern Ventura County are covered by Los Padres National Forest, equivalent to 46% of the total land area in the county.<sup>267</sup> There are also four nationally designated Wilderness Areas, totaling more than 283,000 acres, within this portion of the forest. In addition to Los Padres National Forest, other federally managed lands in Ventura County are Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge, a portion of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, and a small area of the Angeles National Forest.

Ventura County is also the gateway to Channel Islands National Park and National Marine Sanctuary. This park includes five uninhabited islands off the coast of Oxnard that constitute over 250,000 acres of land and marine area that are protected as a wilderness preserve.<sup>268</sup>

The U.S. Navy operates Naval Base Ventura County, with sites at Point Mugu and Port Hueneme. These bases are located along the coast and occupy a significant amount of shoreline. As a result, substantial portions of the Ventura County coastline are not accessible to the public.

The State of California operates five state beaches in Ventura County, as well as Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area, Point Mugu State Park, and a portion of the Santa Monica Mountains Recreation Area. The County of Ventura maintains 19 regional parks and five local parks. Other open space is overseen by one of the cities or one of the three special park and recreation districts. These special districts are each comprised of an incorporated city, as well as the unincorporated county land immediately surrounding that city.

*Demographics.* Ventura County's population is 753,197, according to the 2000 census. The estimated population as of 2008 was 797,740. This represents a growth rate of approximately 5.9% over the past eight years.<sup>269</sup> Of the 2000 population, 56.8% consider themselves white, Non-Hispanic; 33.4% are of Latino descent; 5.4% are Asian and Pacific Islanders; 1.8% identify as black/African American; and 0.4% are Native American (see Table 6 and Chart VT AD-1).<sup>270</sup>

The population of the county is not evenly distributed. Racial and ethnic groups tend to be separated into a few areas of high concentration with much smaller representations throughout the rest of the county. For example, the Cities of Santa Paula, Fillmore, and Oxnard are disproportionately Latino, each with over two-thirds of its residents identifying themselves as Latino.<sup>271</sup> Over 60% of the total Latino population in Ventura



Anahuak Youth Soccer Association, Raul Macias Futbol Court, L.A. River Center  
The City Project



County resides in these three cities. Similarly, 59% of the Asian and Pacific Islanders in Ventura County reside in the three cities of Oxnard, Camarillo, and Simi Valley. Large parts of Ventura County are disproportionately non-Hispanic white. Four cities in Ventura County have a population that is more than 70% non-Hispanic white, far in excess of the countywide average of 56.8%.

**Table 6. Ventura County Demographic Distribution<sup>272</sup>**

Race or Ethnicity	Population	Percent of Total Population (%)
White, Non-Hispanic	427,449	56.8
Hispanic/Latino	251,734	33.4
Asian and Pacific Islander	40,831	5.4
Black/African American	13,490	1.8
Native American	3,177	0.4

## 2. Access to Parks

The Ventura County map of green access and equity shows a significant imbalance in access to green space. (See Maps VT-1 and VT-2.)

*East and West Ventura County.* The Conejo Grade, a geographic feature that constitutes the end of the Santa Monica Mountains, unofficially divides Ventura County into East and West regions. East County, which is mostly within the Conejo Valley, consists of the cities of Thousand Oaks, Moorpark, and Simi Valley, as well as a few communities in unincorporated areas of the county. Large tracts of open land that were set aside for recreational and conservation uses when these communities were first being planned characterize East County. West County is comprised of all the land west of the Conejo Grade and is home to productive agricultural land, particularly in Oxnard, Santa Paula, and Fillmore. Strawberries and citrus fruits dominate Ventura County's agricultural sector, though there are many types of crops grown throughout the county.<sup>273</sup>

Though there is a large amount of land dedicated to parks and open space in Ventura County, many residents lack adequate green access. Residents of communities within the agricultural regions of the county, in particular, have limited outdoor recreation options available within a reasonable distance of their homes. These communities also have disproportionately high concentrations of people of color and the lowest income levels within the county. More than 18% of the children in Oxnard<sup>274</sup> and Santa Paula,<sup>275</sup> both disproportionately Latino cities, live below the poverty line compared to a county average of 8.7%.<sup>276</sup> (See Map VT-2.)

*Acres of Parks per Thousand Residents.* There is a wide disparity in acres of park per thousand residents by city. Disproportionately non-Hispanic white Simi Valley has an astounding 50.3 acres of open space per thousand residents, while disproportionately Latino Santa Paula provides only 1.25 acres per thousand residents, a 4,000% difference.

Not surprisingly, disparities in available park space tend to follow demographic trends. Of the three cities in which at least two thirds of the population is Latino, none of them provide more than three acres per thousand residents and only one provides more than two acres per thousand residents. In fact, the four cities in Ventura County that are disproportionately Latino have the four lowest totals of acres of park per thousand residents. Among these four cities, the higher the proportion of Latino residents, the lower the amount of park land per thousand residents.

Conversely, the six cities with disproportionately non-Hispanic white populations all provide more than three acres per person. The two cities with the highest ratio of acres per thousand residents, Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks, are more than 70% non-Hispanic white.





### 3. Childhood Obesity and Physical Fitness Levels

*Child Obesity.* The rates of child obesity and overweight are intolerably high even for children in the best neighborhoods in Ventura County. In total, more than 26% of children in Ventura are overweight.<sup>277</sup> Children of color, who also have the worst access to parks and school fields, suffer first and worst (see Map VT-3). Cities with the highest proportion of Latino children, such as Santa Paula and Oxnard, have the highest rates of overweight in Ventura County, while cities with the highest proportion of non-Hispanic white children, such as Thousand Oaks, Camarillo, and Simi Valley, have the lowest rates in the county.<sup>278</sup>

Overweight and obesity are problems among adults in Ventura County, as well. The Ventura County Public Health Status Report 2008 indicates that 51% of all adults in Ventura County and 58.4% of the total residents in the county are either overweight or obese.<sup>279</sup> Moreover, 37% of deaths in Ventura County are directly related to diseases that have strong correlations with being overweight or obese, such as diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.<sup>280</sup>

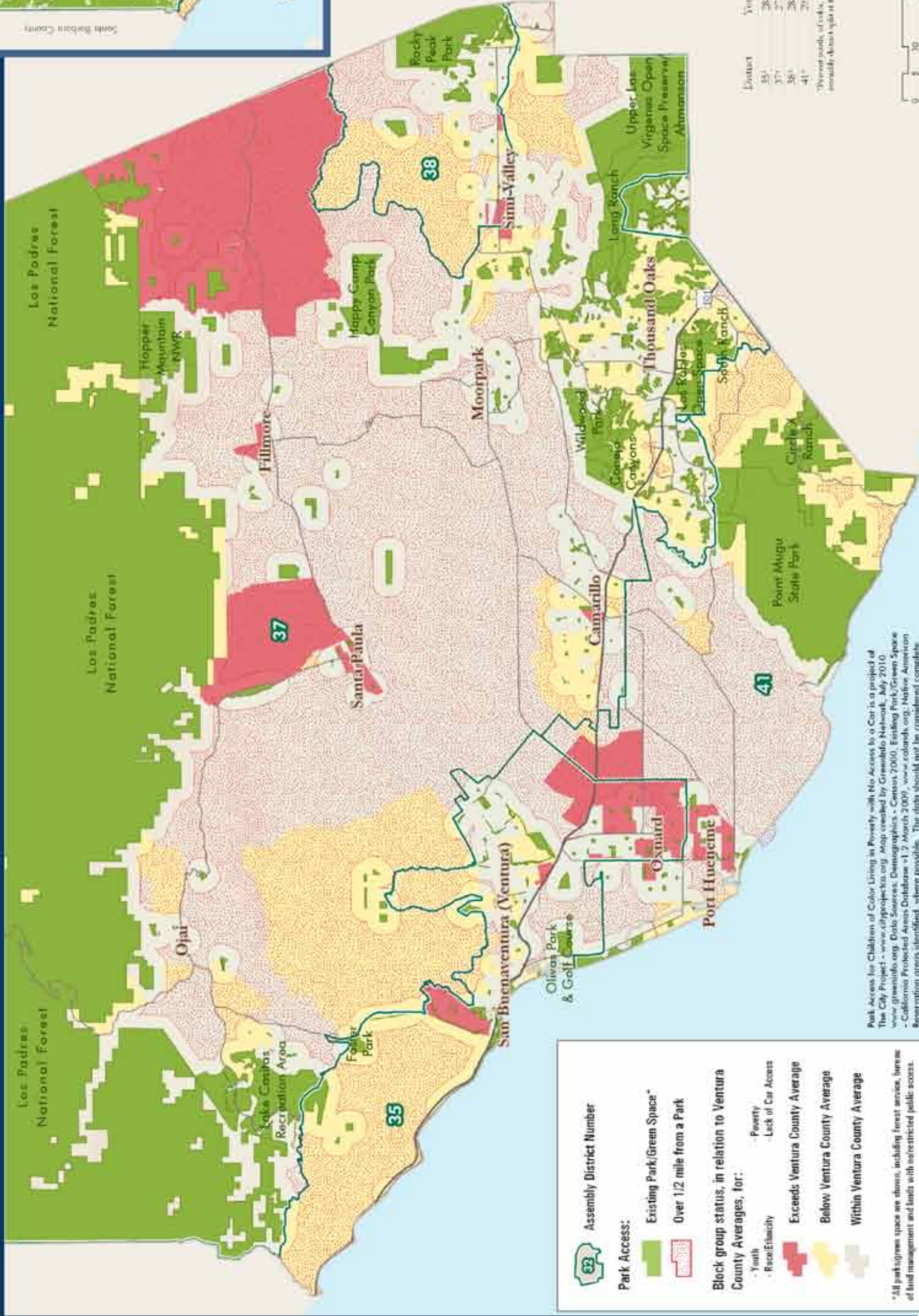
*Physical Fitness.* Although students in Ventura County on average are slightly more physically fit than the statewide average, the number of physically unfit children is still high. Children of color, particularly Latino children, tend to be less physically fit than their white, non-Hispanic classmates. The school districts with the highest proportion of Latino children in Ventura consistently had a significantly smaller percentage of physically fit fifth and ninth grade students than the county average. The school districts with the highest proportion of white, non-Hispanic students consistently had a higher percentage of physically fit fifth and ninth grade students than the county average. Table 7 shows a breakdown of the state, county, and city average statistics for children meeting physical fitness standards.

**Table 7. Percentage of Physically Fit Ventura County Students<sup>281</sup>**

Category	Jurisdiction	5th Grade	7th Grade	9th Grade
State Averages	California	28.5	32.9	35.6
County Averages	Ventura County	32	35	45.1
Disproportionately Latino	Fillmore	23.9	36.9	19
	Santa Paula	19.8	37.5	36.2
	Oxnard	14.6	26	37.1
Disproportionately White, Non-Hispanic	Ojai	45.8	52.5	61.9
	Thousand Oaks	39.3	23.2	51.3
	Simi Valley	35.1	39.7	45.5







**Assembly District Number**

**Park Access:**

- Existing Park/Green Space\*
- Over 1/2 mile from a Park

**Block group status, in relation to Ventura County Averages, for:**

- Youth
- Race/Ethnicity
- Poverty
- Lack of Car Access

- Exceeds Ventura County Average
- Below Ventura County Average
- Within Ventura County Average

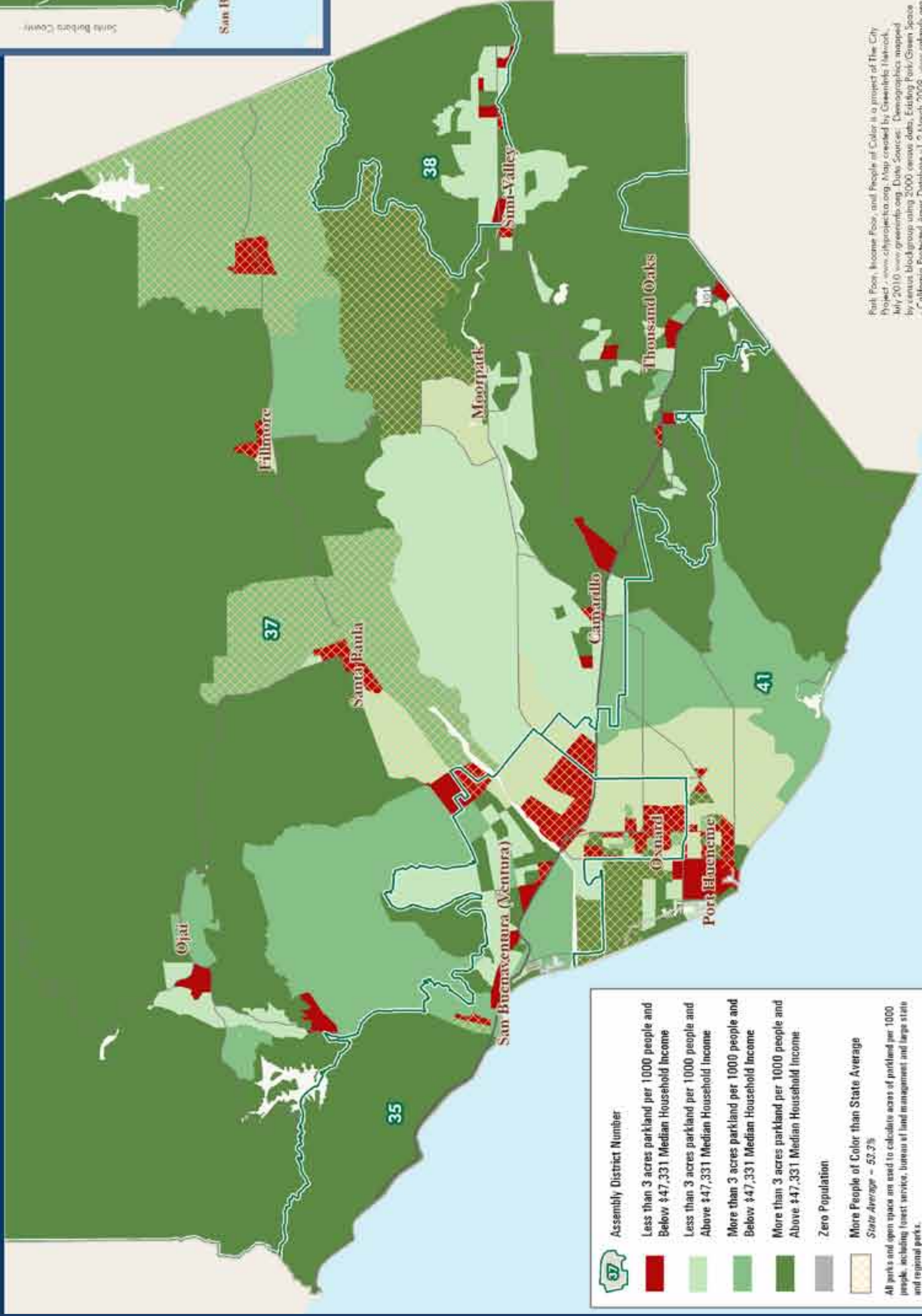
\*All park/green space are shown, including forest services, items of land management and lands with restricted public access.

District	Youth	OR color	Living In Poverty	Lack of Car Access
35	38.8%	55.4%	15.0%	7.9%
37	27.8%	29.2%	6.9%	4.0%
38	38.3%	24.8%	6.0%	3.3%
41	29.8%	50.1%	11.2%	4.6%

\*Percent youth of color, living in poverty, and lack of car access represent total population for each assembly district with the county bar. Districts 35, 37, 38, and 41 total beyond the Ventura Co. bar.

Park Access for Children of Color Living in Poverty with No Access to a Car is a project of The City Project - [www.cityprojectca.org](http://www.cityprojectca.org). Map created by GreenInfo Network, July 2010. [www.greeninfo.org](http://www.greeninfo.org). Data Sources: Demographics - Census 2000, Existing Park/Green Space - California Protected Areas Database v.1.7 March 2009, [www.calandis.org](http://www.calandis.org), Native American Reservation areas identified, where possible. The data should not be considered complete.





	Assembly District Number
	Less than 3 acres parkland per 1000 people and Below \$47,331 Median Household Income
	Less than 3 acres parkland per 1000 people and Above \$47,331 Median Household Income
	More than 3 acres parkland per 1000 people and Below \$47,331 Median Household Income
	More than 3 acres parkland per 1000 people and Above \$47,331 Median Household Income
	Zero Population
	More People of Color than State Average State Average = 53.3%

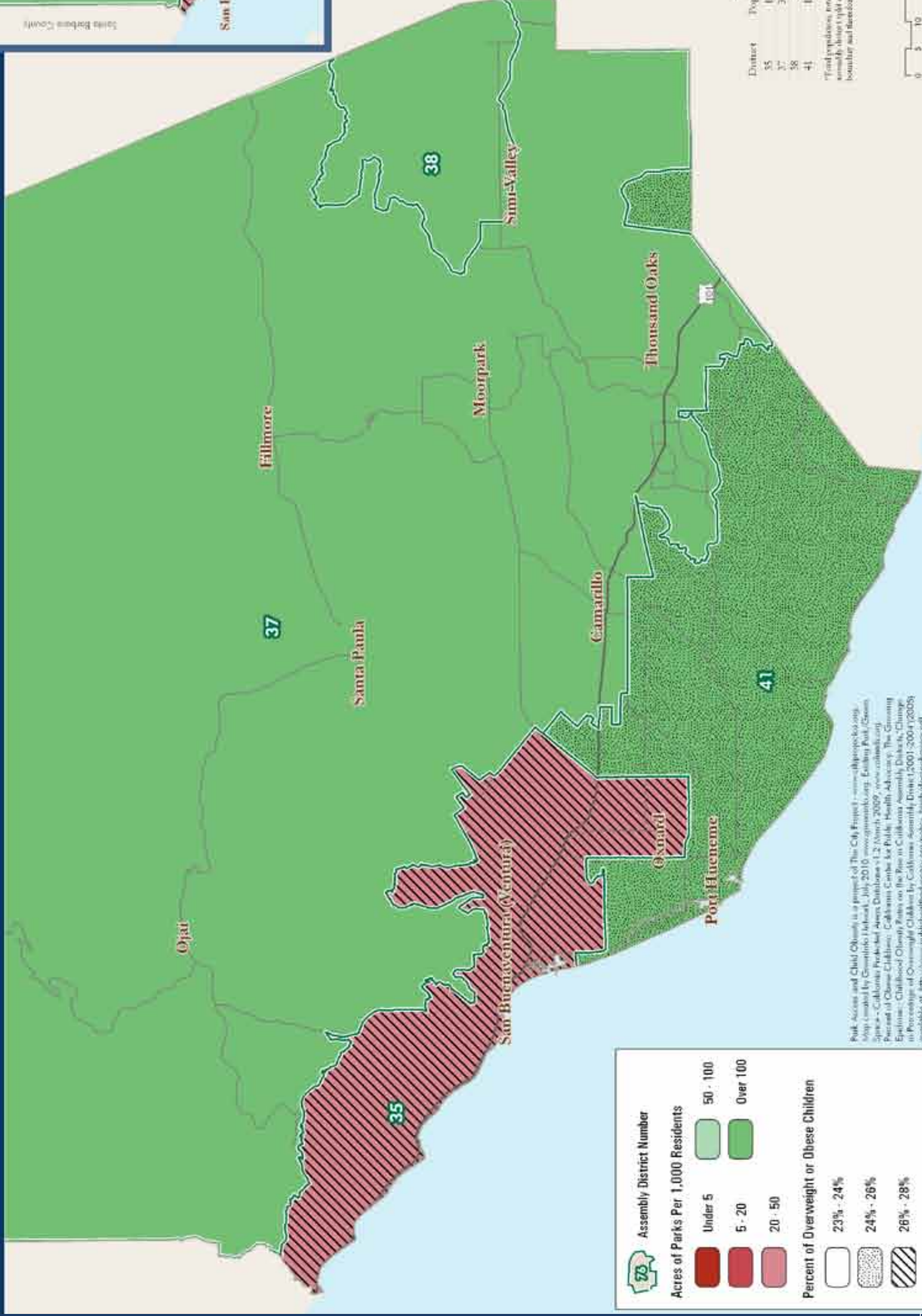
All parks and open space are used to calculate acres of parkland per 1000 people, including forest service, bureau of land management and large state and regional parks.





# Park Access and Child Obesity by State Assembly District

Ventura County



**75** Assembly District Number

**Acres of Parks Per 1,000 Residents**

- Under 5
- 5 - 20
- 20 - 50
- 50 - 100
- Over 100

**Percent of Overweight or Obese Children**

- 23% - 24%
- 24% - 26%
- 26% - 28%

District	Total Population <sup>a</sup>	Total Population Of Children <sup>b</sup>	Percent Children <sup>c</sup>	Percent of Overweight or Obese Children
35	199,652	57,246	28.8%	26.0%
37	350,017	97,127	27.7%	23.2%
38	72,244	20,443	28.3%	25.8%
41	131,209	39,391	30.0%	24.0%

<sup>a</sup>Total population used population of children, and percent children represent total population for each assembly district (right of the county line). Districts 35, 37, 38 and 41 extend beyond the Ventura County boundary and therefore may have lower totals than other counties of assembly district designations.

Park Access and Child Obesity is a project of The City Project - <http://thecityproject.org>. Map created by GreenInfo Network, July 2010. [www.greeninfo.org](http://www.greeninfo.org) - Estimating Park/Green Space - California Protected Areas Database v1.2 (March 2009). [www.calhhs.org](http://www.calhhs.org) Percent of Obese Children: California Center for Public Health Advocacy, The Growing Epidemic: Childhood Obesity Rates on the Rise in California Assembly Districts, Change in Percentage of Overweight Children by California Assembly District (2001-2004) (2005) available at [http://www.jpub.utahhealthcare.org/jpubs\\_bksh/docs/epidemioc.pdf](http://www.jpub.utahhealthcare.org/jpubs_bksh/docs/epidemioc.pdf)





VENTURA COUNTY			CALIFORNIA	
	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT
Total Population	753,197	-	33,871,648	-
Children (under 18)	213,599	28%	9,221,463	27%
Seniors (65 and over)	75,582	10%	3,586,794	11%
<b>Race / Ethnicity<sup>+</sup></b>				
Non- Hispanic White	426,179	57%	15,771,163	47%
Hispanic	251,965	33%	10,969,132	32%
African American	14,048	2%	2,219,190	7%
Native American	6,283	1%	312,215	1%
Asian Pacific Islander	40,851	5%	3,796,833	11%
Other Race	136,037	18%	5,725,844	17%
2 or more races	30,410	4%	1,694,607	5%
<b>Income / Poverty</b>				
Median Household Income	\$59,666	-	\$42,896	-
In Poverty	68,540	9%	4,706,130	14%
Percent of people in poverty under 18 years of age	25,407	37%	1,757,100	37%
Percent of people in poverty over 65 years of age	4,644	7%	280,411	6%
<b>Rent / Own</b>				
Own	164,373	68%	6,546,237	57%
Rent	78,861	32%	4,956,633	43%
<b>Transportation</b>				
No Car Access	12,215	5%	1,091,214	9%
<b>Health</b>				
% of Overweight and Obese Children*	-	24%	-	27%
Passed 5 of 6 Physical Fitness Exams**	8,464	26%	366,228	27%
Passed 6 of 6 Physical Fitness Exams**	11,968	37%	443,504	32%
Students Enrolled in Free and Reduced Lunch Program**	55,918	40%	3,152,330	51%
<b>Parks and Open Space***</b>				
Acres of Green Space	632,943	-	48,490,056	-
Acres of Bureau of Land Management land	2,672	-	15,117,778	-
Acres of Forest Service land	557,312	-	20,695,282	-
Total Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents	840	-	1,432	-
Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents (w/o BLM)	837	-	985	-
Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents (w/o FS)	100	-	821	-
Net Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents (w/o BLM & FS)	97	-	374	-

<sup>+</sup> Race/ethnicity figures will not add up to 100%. Census 2000 allowed respondents to mark multiple races in addition to being

<sup>\*</sup>County obesity figures are derived from assembly district data. A weighted average was run based on population.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Data calculated for grades 5, 7, and 9 from Data Quest, California Department of Education 2007-08

[http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/gls\\_calworks.asp](http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/gls_calworks.asp)

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> All parks and open space data has been calculated from GreenInfo Network's California Protected Areas Database (CPAD) version 1.2, March 2009 [www.calands.org](http://www.calands.org)





Park Acreage for Ventura County by Assembly District					
A	B	C	D	E	F
District	Total Population	Total Acres of Parks	Total Acres of Parks per 1,000 Residents	Net Acres of Parks, Without National Forests, other U.S. Forest Service Land, and U.S. Bureau Of Land Management Land	Net Acres of Parks per 1,000 Residents
35	195,153	3,326	17.04	2,456	12.58
37	348,634	599,848	1,720.57	41,309	118.49
38	72,500	4,769	65.78	4,769	65.78
41	136,940	23,629	172.55	23,629	172.55
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>753,227</b>	<b>631,572</b>	<b>838.49</b>	<b>72,163</b>	<b>95.81</b>

This Chart shows acres of parks per thousand residents for the County of Ventura as a whole, and in each State Assembly District, first with Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land included, and then without the Bureau of Land Management and National Forest land. The Chart breaks down this information as follows.

**Column B** shows the total population in the County and in each Assembly District.

**Column C** shows the total acres of parks in the County and in each District, including Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land.

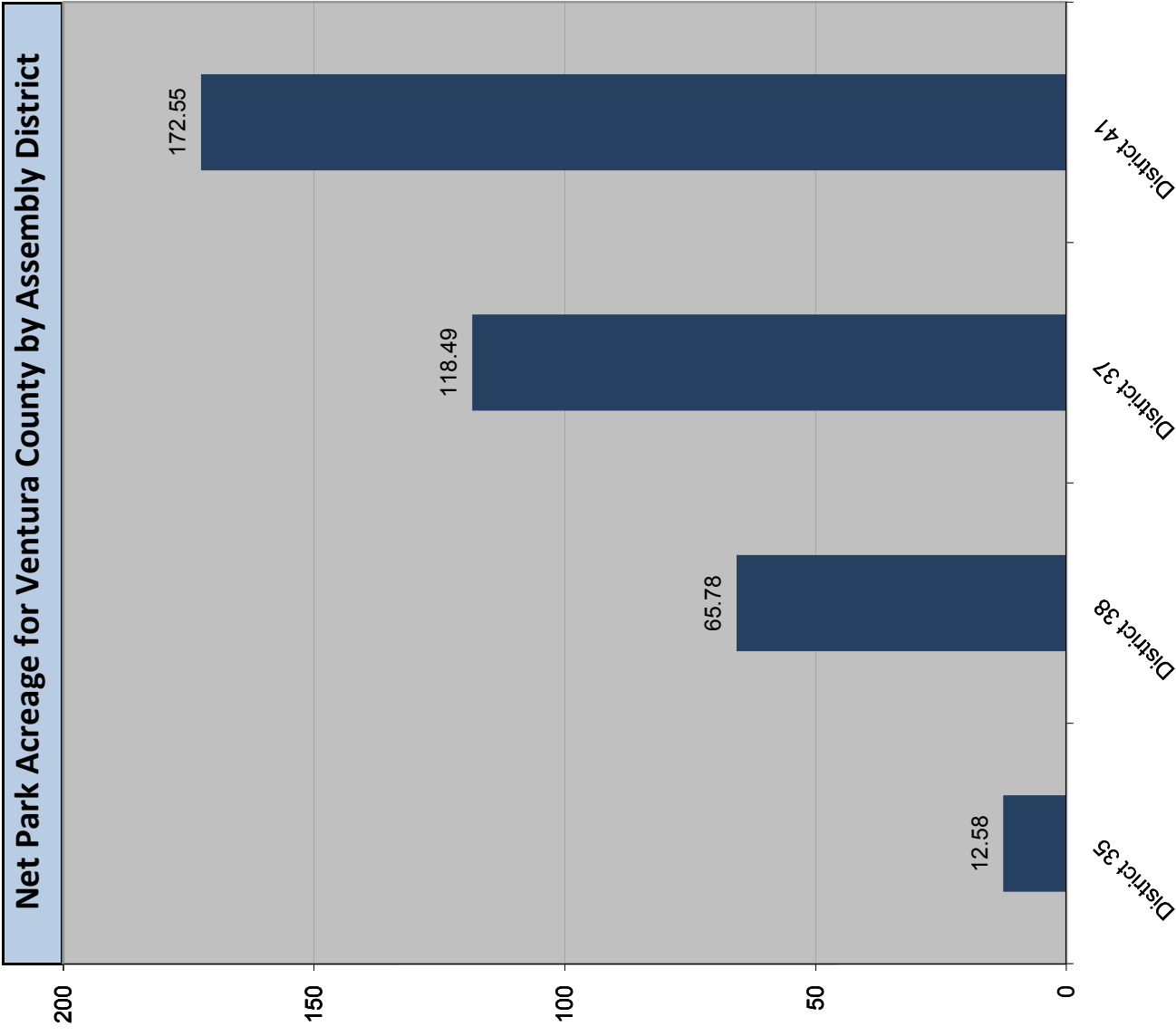
**Column D** shows the total acres of parks per thousand residents in the County and in each District, including Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land.

In **Columns E and F**, the acres of Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land that actually lie within each District are subtracted. For example, the Los Padres National Forest covers close to 2,000,000 acres, but only the 556,738 acres that actually lie within the County and each District are excluded.

The acreage for the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land that is subtracted in **Column E** is as follows:

Los Padres National Forest 556,738 acres  
 Bureau of Land Management 2,670 acres

**Based on these calculations, 46% of all land in Ventura County is in the Los Padres National Forest. Fully 88% of all park space in the County is in the Los Padres National Forest.**



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## D. San Bernardino County

### 1. Overview

San Bernardino County is bordered by Inyo County to the north, the State of Nevada to the east, Riverside and Orange Counties to the south, and Los Angeles and Kern Counties to the west. The southwestern portion of San Bernardino and the northwestern portion of neighboring Riverside County comprise an area known as the “Inland Empire.” At 20,160 square miles – about 90% of which is desert – San Bernardino County is the largest county by area in the entire United States,<sup>282</sup> sprawling over an area larger than Rhode Island, New Jersey, Delaware, and Connecticut combined.<sup>283</sup>

Mormons traveling west from Salt Lake City founded the City of San Bernardino. The County incorporated in 1853,<sup>284</sup> followed closely by the City of San Bernardino in 1854. In 1857, just after they had established the small but vital urban center, Brigham Young called the Mormons back to Utah. The shell of a city they left behind quickly filled with miners who had heard rumors of gold in California, and who came and went as their fortunes dictated.<sup>285</sup>

The city’s population boomed and diversified in the 1880s when three railroads – the Santa Fe, the Union Pacific, and the Southern Pacific – came together in the city, making it a west-coast transportation hub. The city was made the county seat and doubled in population between 1900 and 1910, from 6,150 to 12,779.<sup>286</sup>

The suburbanization of San Bernardino County left the City of San Bernardino reeling. In 1976 the city was ranked as one of the top ten All-American Cities in the nation. By the mid 1990s, some 40% of its 185,000 residents were on welfare. San Bernardino had become a classic example of an abandoned inner city, and a magnet for welfare recipients from Los Angeles, from which so many residents were fleeing. Nearly 70% of the schoolchildren qualified for free or reduced meals, compared to 31% statewide. These were the conditions that many residents of the county had tried to escape in leaving other places.<sup>287</sup>

*Demographics.* Today, there are 24 incorporated cities within San Bernardino County.<sup>288</sup> Its 2008 population was estimated to be 2,015,355.<sup>289</sup> The official population of San Bernardino County as of 2000 was 1,709,443, with an estimated increase to 2,015,355 by 2008. San Bernardino County’s 17.9% growth rate is more than double the statewide average of 8.5%. Table 8 and Chart SB AD-1 show the demographic distribution of San Bernardino County as of the 2000 U.S. Census.<sup>290</sup>

San Bernardino County’s population has been growing at the highest rate in the state, and its racial and ethnic composition is changing rapidly. With a population increase of 113% between 1990 and 2000, the City of Adelanto was one of the fastest-growing cities in Southern California.<sup>291</sup> The entire Inland Empire region has grown tremendously in a short period of time, doubling in size between 1982 and 1997.<sup>292</sup>

**Table 8. San Bernardino County Demographic Distribution<sup>293</sup>**

Race or Ethnicity	Population	Percent of Total Population (%)
White, Non-Hispanic	752,222	44.0
Hispanic/Latino	669,387	39.2
Asian and Pacific Islander	150,201	8.8
Black/African American	9,804	0.6
Native American	82,541	4.9



People of color are projected to be the majority of the 2008 San Bernardino population, with Latinos nearly forming a majority on their own. A 2008 report by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) predicts that Latinos will become the new majority across the Inland Empire (defined as San Bernardino and Riverside Counties), representing fully 51% of the region’s population. Non-Hispanic whites are expected to decline from 42% in 2005 to 32% in 2015. The Asian population will rise from 5% to 7%, and African Americans will remain 7% of the population during that decade (see Table 9).<sup>294</sup> Overall, the PPIC predicts that the Inland Empire’s population will explode from 3.9 million in 2005 to 4.9 million in 2015.<sup>295</sup>

**Table 9. Racial and Ethnic Change in the Inland Empire: 2005-2015<sup>296</sup>**

Race or Ethnicity	Percentage of total population in 2005	Percentage of total population in 2015 (projected)
White, Non-Hispanic	42%	32%
Hispanic/Latino	43%	51%
Black/African American	7%	7%
Asian	5%	7%

## 2. Access to Parks

*City Parks.* Many cities in San Bernardino County are park poor. With 26 parks (including four school fields) and 31 playground areas, the City of San Bernardino has a total of 506 acres of parks and recreational facilities<sup>297</sup> – about 2.7 acres per thousand residents based on its 2000 population. Rialto provides only 1.2 acres per thousand residents, while Ontario provides only 1.1 acres per thousand residents.

Much of the eastern portion of the county is covered by desert. In general, San Bernardino County experiences extreme heat during the summer months. This must be factored into plans for improving access to spaces to be physically active. It is important that along with more outdoor playing fields, indoor recreational facilities and public pools are also built. Developing sites that conform to the needs of the community is an essential component of improving access to places where people can be physically active.

*County Parks and Open Space.* Parks and open space in San Bernardino County are managed and operated by the county, individual cities, the federal government, or the state government. County parks are operated by two distinct authorities: the San Bernardino County Parks Department, which operates nine regional parks comprising 9,200 acres and 17.8 miles of trail in incorporated areas,<sup>298</sup> and a Special Districts authority that operates parks on unincorporated land. Total Special District parks acreage is not calculated. San Bernardino’s vast size creates an obstacle to park access in its more sparsely populated areas – both in terms of the number of parks that would be required in order to ensure that all residents have a park close to home, and in terms of access to parks via public transit.

Including the nine regional parks, there are 247 city- and special district-operated parks in San Bernardino County<sup>299</sup> yet almost uniformly, residents of the huge county’s southwestern corner live over a half a mile away from the nearest park or open space (see Maps SB-1 and SB-2). San Bernardino, Rialto, and Fontana – all cities with disproportionately high populations of color – are located in this area.

## 3. Childhood Obesity and Physical Fitness Levels

*Child Obesity.* The rates of child obesity and overweight are intolerably high in San Bernardino County, ranging from 27.3 % to 31.4% depending on age. More than 31% of all seventh graders in San Bernardino are overweight. The rates of overweight and obesity among children in San Bernardino exceed the state average, which are alarmingly high to begin with. Over a quarter of all students across California are overweight in every grade measured. This indicates a clear need for better health and fitness in San Bernardino County and the entire state of California (see Table 10).

Broken down by race and ethnicity, the numbers tell an even more disturbing story. Latino and African American students on average are far more likely to be overweight than their white and Asian peers, though both are slightly less overweight on average than their age-mates in the state as a whole (see Table 11).<sup>300</sup> Children of color are especially vulnerable because they live in communities that do not have enough open space to support physical activities and lack access to nutritious food, leading to risks of overweight that follow them into adulthood (see Map SB-3).

According to the National Trails Training Partnership, which is working with San Bernardino County to build trails and greenways in major cities, San Bernardino “is part of the most sprawling metropolitan area (Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario) in the nation, indicating a lack of town centers, poor street connectivity, and insufficient population density to support transit. The same metropolitan area is the 4th most obese in the nation.”<sup>301</sup>

**Table 10. Percentage of Overweight Children in San Bernardino County<sup>302</sup>**

Grade Level	San Bernardino County	California
5th Graders	29.3	29.3
7th Graders	31.4	29.1
9th Graders	27.3	25.4



*Physical Fitness and Health.* The County of San Bernardino has California’s highest death rate from heart disease and the state’s ninth-highest diabetes death rate. People of color suffer disproportionately: 8% of African American adults and 11% of Latino adults are diagnosed with diabetes, compared to 7% of whites. African American adults are 23% more likely to die from diabetes than are white adults, and they are more likely to be overweight, get less exercise, and eat fewer fruits and vegetables. Doctors cited a number of potential factors at play in this disparity, with the physical environment of disproportionately minority neighborhoods – which in San Bernardino County often lack sidewalks – among them.<sup>303</sup>

**Table 11. Percent of Overweight Children by Race/Ethnicity in San Bernardino Assembly Districts<sup>304</sup>**

CA State Assembly District	Counties in District (Whole or Part)	Latino	White	African American	Asian	Native American
34th	Inyo, Kern and San Bernardino	31.3	23.1	24.1	20.9	28.7
61st	Los Angeles and San Bernardino	32.5	26.8	30.5	19.2	22.1
63rd	San Bernardino	29.2	19.4	24.0	16.1	26.3
65th	Riverside and San Bernardino	31.5	22.3	27.7	21.2	30.5
California		33.7	20.2	28.6	17.5	25.1

San Bernardino County public health officials determined that 72% of Latino and black adults in the county are overweight or obese, compared to 62% of non-Hispanic white residents; 40% of Latino adults and 36% of black adults get no moderate or vigorous exercise, compared to 24% of non-Hispanic whites; 38% of black adults eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day, compared to 44% of non-Hispanic white adults and 52% of Latinos. Among children, 15% of Latino and 20% of black fifth graders meet all six California fitness standards, compared with 26% of non-Hispanic white students.<sup>305</sup>

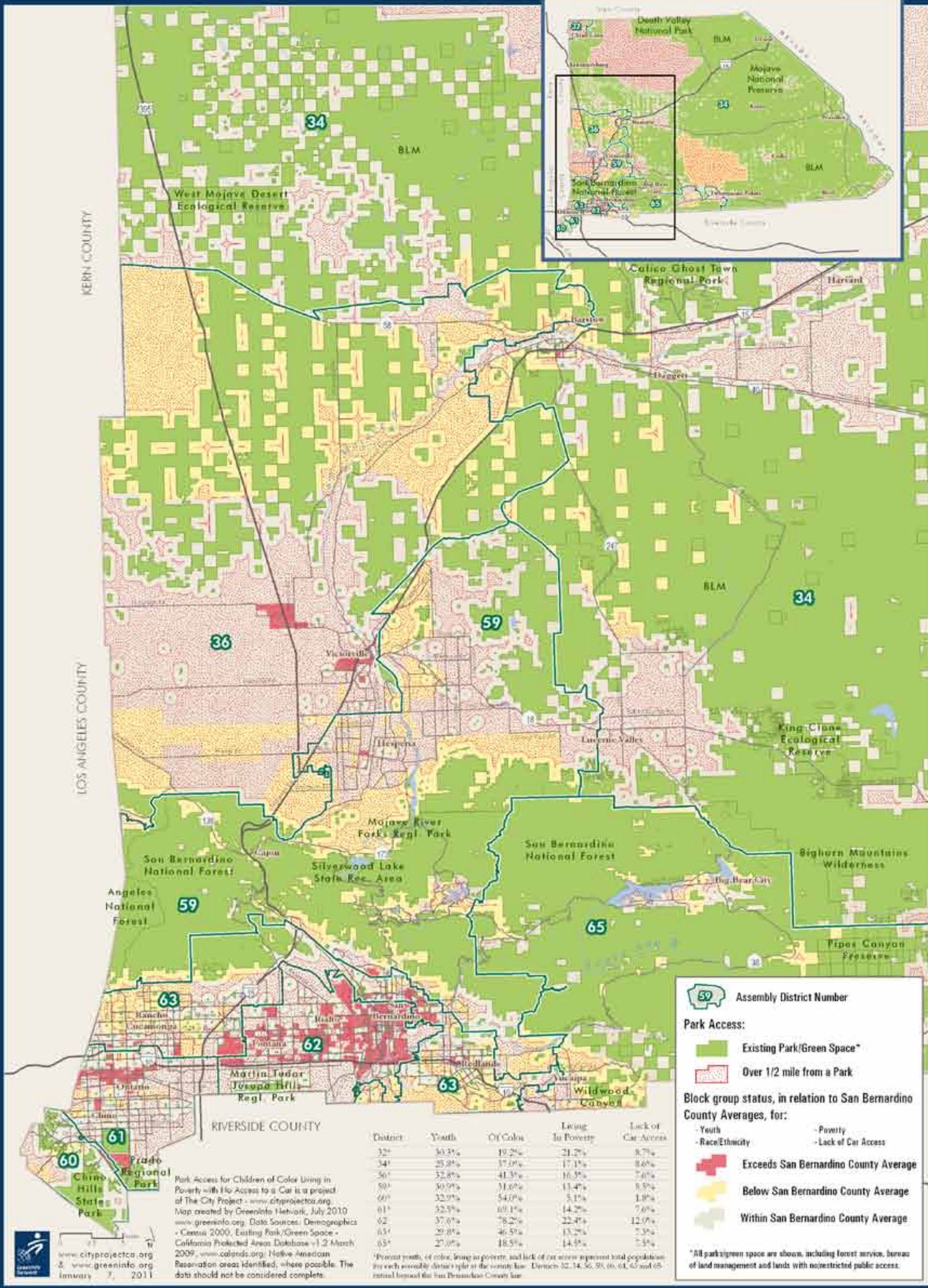
San Bernardino County has undertaken initiatives to improve the health of its residents. The San Bernardino County Department of Health is partnering with cities including Rancho Cucamonga and Redlands to create new trails and greenways.<sup>306</sup> The County’s Healthy Communities initiative focuses on increasing physical activity and improving nutrition. One of the initiative’s core programs is a partnership between the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health and the San Bernardino County Regional Parks Department to encourage participation in outdoor physical activity. This countywide program has also developed formal relationships with some of the cities in the county, allowing each of those cities to tailor programs to meet the specific needs of its residents.<sup>307</sup>





# Park Access for Children of Color Living in Poverty with No Access to a Car

## San Bernardino County



**59** Assembly District Number

**Park Access:**

- Existing Park/Green Space\*
- Over 1/2 mile from a Park

**Block group status, in relation to San Bernardino County Averages, for:**

- Youth
- Race/Ethnicity
- Poverty
- Lack of Car Access

**Exceeds San Bernardino County Average** (Red)

**Below San Bernardino County Average** (Yellow)

**Within San Bernardino County Average** (Green)

\*All parks/green space are shown, including forest service, bureau of land management and lands with no restricted public access.

District	Youth	Of Color	Living In Poverty	Lack of Car Access
32*	39.3%	19.2%	21.2%	8.7%
34†	25.8%	37.0%	17.1%	8.6%
36†	32.8%	41.3%	16.3%	7.0%
59†	30.9%	31.6%	11.4%	5.9%
60†	32.9%	54.0%	5.1%	1.8%
61†	32.5%	69.1%	14.2%	7.0%
62	37.8%	78.2%	22.4%	12.0%
63†	29.8%	46.5%	13.2%	5.3%
65*	27.0%	18.5%	14.5%	7.5%

\*Percent youth, of color, living in poverty, and lack of car access represent total population for each assembly district (plus its county base). Districts 32, 34, 36, 59, 60, 61, 62 and 65 extend beyond the San Bernardino County line.

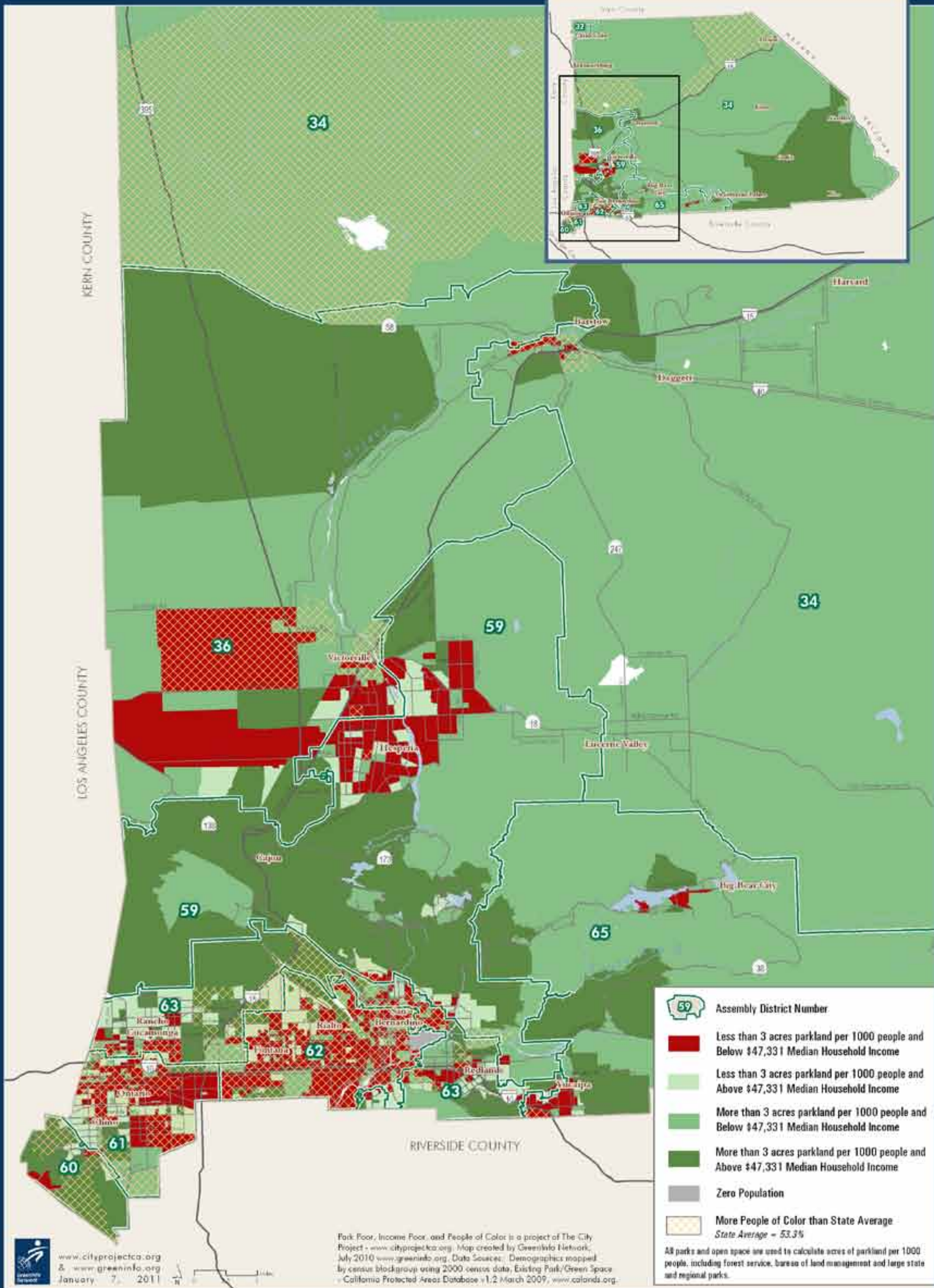
Park Access for Children of Color Living in Poverty with No Access to a Car is a project of The City Project - [www.cityprojectca.org](http://www.cityprojectca.org)  
 Map created by GreenInfo Network, July 2010  
[www.greeninfo.org](http://www.greeninfo.org). Data Sources: Demographics - Census 2000, Existing Park/Green Space - California Protected Areas Database v1.2 March 2009, [www.calands.org](http://www.calands.org). Native American Reservation areas identified, where possible. The data should not be considered complete.





# Park Poor, Income Poor, and People of Color

San Bernardino County



**59** Assembly District Number

- Less than 3 acres parkland per 1000 people and Below \$47,331 Median Household Income
- Less than 3 acres parkland per 1000 people and Above \$47,331 Median Household Income
- More than 3 acres parkland per 1000 people and Below \$47,331 Median Household Income
- More than 3 acres parkland per 1000 people and Above \$47,331 Median Household Income
- Zero Population
- More People of Color than State Average  
State Average = 53.3%

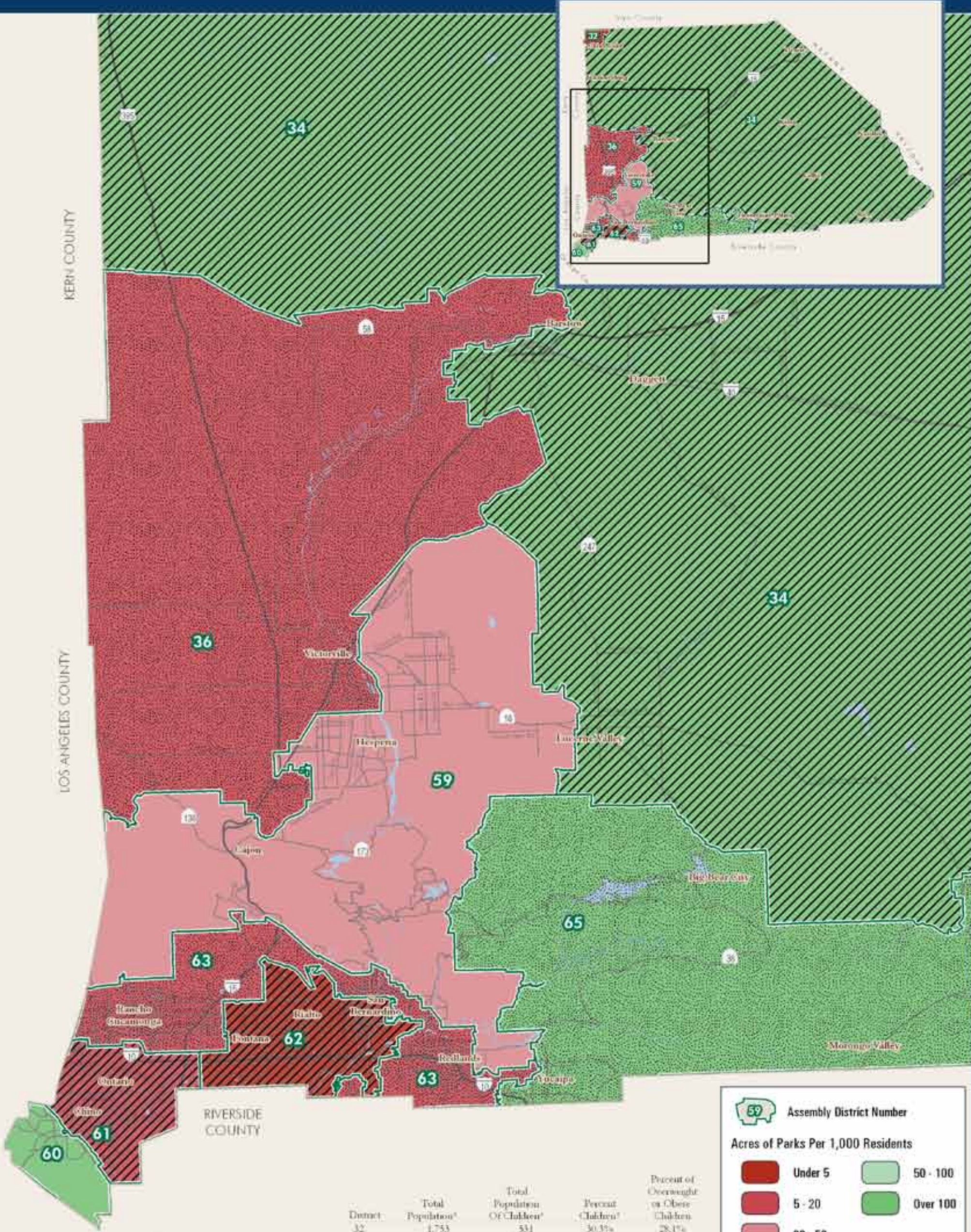
All parks and open space are used to calculate acres of parkland per 1000 people, including forest service, bureau of land management and large state and regional parks.

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 & www.greeninfo.org  
 January 7, 2011

Park Poor, Income Poor, and People of Color is a project of The City Project - www.cityprojectca.org. Map created by GreenInfo Network, July 2010 www.greeninfo.org. Data Sources: Demographics mapped by census blockgroup using 2000 census data, Existing Park/Green Space - California Protected Areas Database v1.2 March 2009, www.calands.org.



## San Bernardino County



Park Access and Child Obesity is a project of The City Project - [www.cityprojectca.org](http://www.cityprojectca.org)  
 Map created by GreenInfo Network, July 2010 - [www.greeninfo.org](http://www.greeninfo.org). Existing Park/Green Space - California Protected Areas Database v1.2 March 2009 - [www.calandb.org](http://www.calandb.org).  
 Percent of Obese Children - California Center for Public Health Advocacy, The Growing Epidemic: Childhood Obesity Rates on the Rise in California Assembly Districts, Change in Percentage of Overweight Children by California Assembly District (2001-2004/2005) available at [http://www.publichealthadvocacy.org/policy\\_files/docapolewors.pdf](http://www.publichealthadvocacy.org/policy_files/docapolewors.pdf)

District	Total Population*	Total Population Of Children*	Percent Children†	Percent of Overweight or Obese Children
32	1,753	531	30.3%	28.1%
34	74,661	19,371	25.9%	30.2%
36	130,217	42,745	32.8%	27.3%
59	212,661	65,711	30.9%	24.6%
60	66,525	21,855	32.8%	23.1%
61	273,869	89,522	32.5%	33.4%
62	423,479	158,804	37.5%	34.9%
63	415,223	124,050	29.9%	26.4%
65	109,215	29,504	27.0%	27.1%

\*Total population, total population of children, and percent children represent total population for each assembly district split at the county line. Districts 32, 34, 36, 59, 60, 61, 63, and 65 extend beyond the San Bernardino County boundary and therefore may have lower totals than other sources of assembly district demographics.

**59** Assembly District Number

**Acres of Parks Per 1,000 Residents**

- Under 5
- 5 - 20
- 20 - 50
- 50 - 100
- Over 100

**Percent of Overweight or Obese Children**

- 23% - 25%
- 25% - 30%
- 30% - 35%





SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY			CALIFORNIA	
	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT
Total Population	1,709,434	-	33,871,648	-
Children (under 18)	551,110	32%	9,221,463	27%
Seniors (65 and over)	145,447	9%	3,586,794	11%
<b>Race / Ethnicity<sup>+</sup></b>				
Non- Hispanic White	749,224	44%	15,771,163	47%
Hispanic	669,902	39%	10,969,132	32%
African American	151,879	9%	2,219,190	7%
Native American	19,054	1%	312,215	1%
Asian Pacific Islander	84,122	5%	3,796,833	11%
Other Race	356,920	21%	5,725,844	17%
2 or more races	93,662	5%	1,694,607	5%
<b>Income / Poverty</b>				
Median Household Income	\$42,066	-	\$42,896	-
In Poverty	263,412	16%	4,706,130	14%
Percent of people in poverty under 18 years of age	113,695	43%	1,757,100	37%
Percent of people in poverty over 65 years of age	352	0%	280,411	6%
<b>Rent / Own</b>				
Own	341,014	65%	6,546,237	57%
Rent	187,580	35%	4,956,633	43%
<b>Transportation</b>				
No Car Access	42,120	8%	1,091,214	9%
<b>Health</b>				
% of Overweight and Obese Children*	-	27%	-	27%
Passed 5 of 6 Physical Fitness Exams**	25,402	27%	366,228	27%
Passed 6 of 6 Physical Fitness Exams**	25,908	28%	443,504	32%
Students Enrolled in Free and Reduced Lunch Program**	235,997	56%	3,152,330	51%
<b>Parks and Open Space***</b>				
Acres of Green Space	8,608,039	-	48,490,056	-
Acres of Bureau of Land Management land	5,990,558	-	15,117,778	-
Acres of Forest Service land	467,334	-	20,695,282	-
Total Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents	5,036	-	1,432	-
Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents (w/o BLM)	1,531	-	985	-
Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents (w/o FS)	4,762	-	821	-
Net Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents (w/o BLM & FS)	1,258	-	374	-

<sup>+</sup> Race/ethnicity figures will not add up to 100%. Census 2000 allowed respondents to mark multiple races in addition to being

<sup>\*</sup>County obesity figures are derived from assembly district data. A weighted average was run based on population.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Data calculated for grades 5, 7, and 9 from Data Quest, California Department of Education 2007-08

[http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/gls\\_calworks.asp](http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/gls_calworks.asp)

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> All parks and open space data has been calculated from GreenInfo Network's California Protected Areas Database (CPAD) version 1.2, March 2009 [www.calands.org](http://www.calands.org)





### Park Acreage for San Bernardino County by Assembly District

A District	B Total Population	C Total Acres of Parks	D Total Acres of Parks per 1,000 Residents	E Net Acres of Parks, Without National Forests, other U.S. Forest Service Land, and U.S. Bureau Of Land Management Land	F Net Acres of Parks per 1,000 Residents
32	1,960	0	0.00	0	0.00
34	72,547	7,683,944	105,916.77	2,015,147	27,777.12
36	132,986	213,142	1,602.74	1,484	11.16
59	212,358	241,776	1,138.53	6,786	31.96
60	66,782	10,546	157.92	10,546	157.92
61	273,701	5,226	19.09	5,226	19.09
62	421,080	1,589	3.77	1,589	3.77
63	416,835	18,119	43.47	3,827	9.18
65	111,185	427,623	3,846.05	106,219	955.34
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,709,434</b>	<b>8,601,965</b>	<b>5,032.05</b>	<b>2,150,824</b>	<b>1,258.21</b>

This Chart shows acres of parks per thousand residents for the County of San Bernardino as a whole, and in each State Assembly District, first with Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land included, and then without Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land. The Chart breaks down this information as follows.

**Column B** shows the total population in the County and in each Assembly District.

**Column C** shows the total acres of parks in the County and in each District, including Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land.

**Column D** shows the total acres of parks per thousand residents in the County and in each District, including Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service land.

In **Columns E and F**, the acres of Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land that actually lie within each District are subtracted. For example, the Angeles National Forest covers close to 700,000 acres, but only the 17,190 acres that actually lie within the County and each District are excluded.

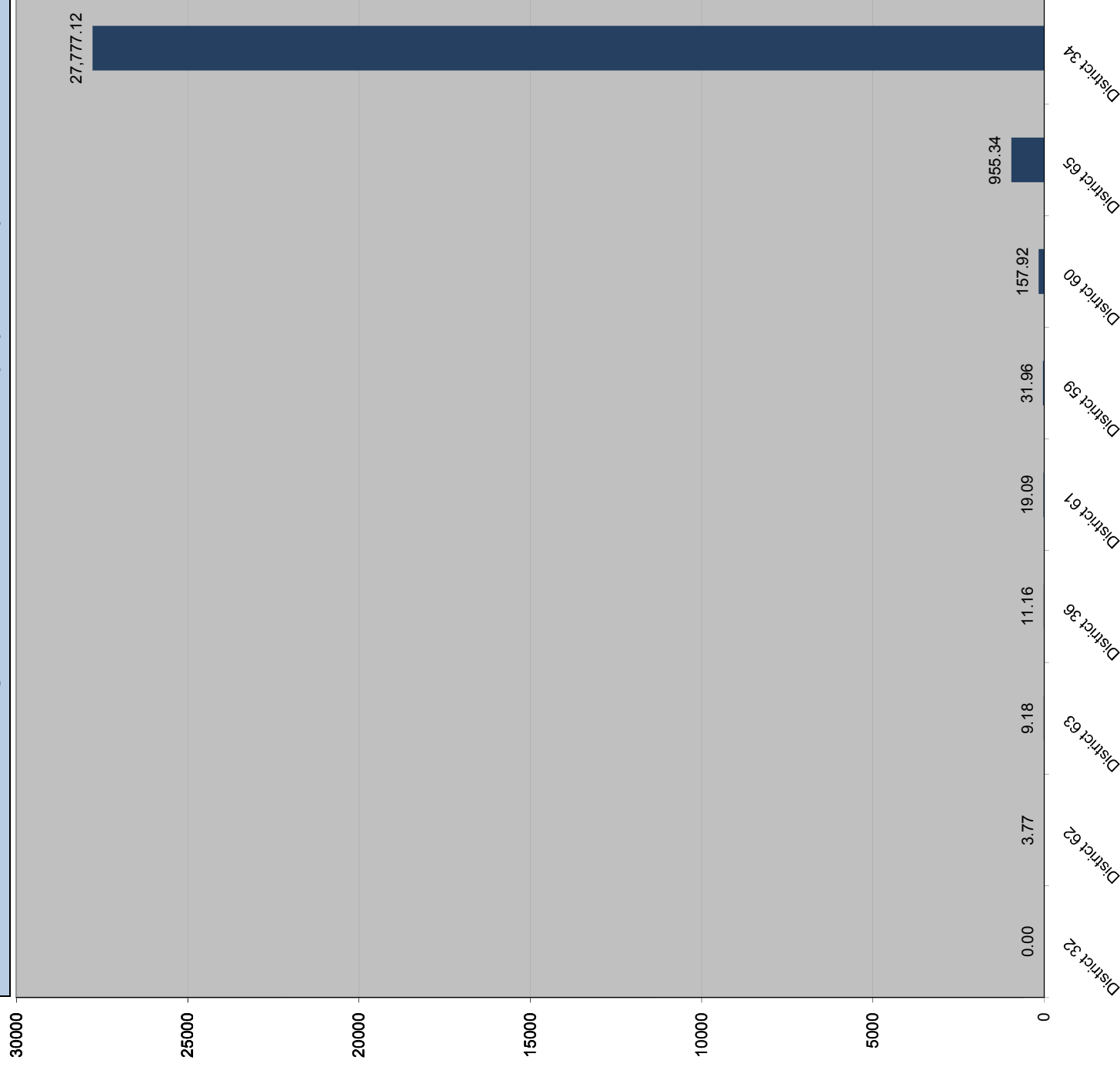
The acreage for the Bureau of Land Management of Forest Service land that is subtracted in

**Column E** is as follows:

Angeles National Forest 17,190 acres  
 San Bernardino National Forest 450,035 acres  
 Bureau of Land Management 5,967,627 acres

**Based on these calculations, 3.5% of all land in San Bernardino County is in National Forests and 46% is owned by the Bureau of Land Management. Fully 5% of all park space in the County is forest land. Fully 69% of all park space in the County is held by the Bureau of Land Management. A total of 74.5% of park space being either Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management land.**

### Net Park Acreage for San Bernardino County by Assembly District







Jurupa Aquatic Center, City of Riverside | Photo courtesy of Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District.

## E. Riverside County

### 1. Overview

Founded in 1870 by Easterners looking to establish a colony devoted to furthering education and culture, the City of Riverside was originally part of San Bernardino County. The city’s first major expansion came as a result of the introduction of the citrus industry, which began in 1873 when a woman planted two Brazilian navel orange trees sent to her by Washington’s Department of Agriculture and found that they grew famously in the warm climate. Less than 10 years after the first trees were planted, more than half of California’s 500,000 citrus trees were found in the area that is now Riverside County.<sup>308</sup>

Like San Bernardino to the north, the Riverside area prospered with the arrival of transcontinental railroads, which could take its produce across the country.<sup>309</sup> Formed from portions of San Bernardino County to the north and San Diego to the south and west, Riverside County incorporated in 1893. By 1895, it was California’s richest city on a per capita basis.<sup>310</sup>

At 7,200 square miles, it is the fourth-largest county in California,<sup>311</sup> bordered by San Bernardino County to the north, San Diego and Imperial Counties to the South, Orange County to the west and the State of Nevada to the East. Today, there are 26 incorporated cities in Riverside County.<sup>312</sup>

*Demographics.* Riverside County has a population of 1,545,374 according to the 2000 U.S. Census. 51.0% are white, Non-Hispanic, 36.2% are Hispanic/Latino, 6.0% are black/African American, 0.7% are Native American, 3.8% are Asian or Pacific Islanders, and 2.4 % are Other (see Table 12 and Chart RV AD-1).<sup>313</sup>

Riverside County, and the Inland Empire as a whole, is among the fastest growing areas in California. The estimated population in 2008 was 2,100,516, representing a 35.9% increase since 2000. This rate of growth far exceeds the statewide average of 8.5% over the same time span. Individual cities within Riverside County also rank among the fastest growing cities in the state. With a population increase of 111% between 1990 and 2000, the population growth rate of the City of La Quinta was among the highest in California.<sup>314</sup>

**Table 12. Riverside County Demographic Distribution<sup>315</sup>**

Race or Ethnicity	Population	Percent of Total Population (%)
White, Non-Hispanic	788,831	51.0
Hispanic/Latino	559,575	36.2
Black/African American	92,403	6.0
Native American	10,135	0.7
Asian and Pacific Islander	58,483	3.8
Other	35,960	2.4

Much of Riverside’s growth rate has been fueled by a rapid increase in the Latino population. Due in large part to an abundance of construction and service jobs resulting from the construction boom of the early 2000s, as well as the lure of more modestly priced housing, many Latino families moved to the area over a short period of time. Between 2000 and 2008, the Inland Empire (including parts of Riverside and San Bernardino) added more than 635,000 new Latino residents, giving it the largest increase in Latino population of any metropolitan area in the entire United States.<sup>316</sup> In Riverside alone, the percentage of the population that are Latino shot up nearly 20% between 1990 and 2007.<sup>317</sup>

Riverside County also saw significant growth in its Asian population, with 86,000 more Asian residents in the Inland Empire in 2008 than in 2000. While the overall percentage of Asians in Riverside is still relatively small, the region’s Asian population growth ranks in the top ten of all metropolitan areas in the country.<sup>318</sup>



## 2. Access to Parks

Each incorporated city, the county, the state, and the federal government all manage green space within Riverside County. The County of Riverside operates 13 regional parks, seven nature and historic centers, and one recreation area,<sup>319</sup> comprising 71,656 total acres.<sup>320</sup> With 1,545,374 residents, there are approximately 46.4 acres of county-operated park space for every thousand Riverside County residents. Not all Riverside County residents have equal access to these lands. People of color have the worst access to parks within the county. The most park poor parts of Riverside County, including the Coachella Valley, Moreno Valley and the City of Riverside, also have disproportionately high concentrations of Latinos, African Americans, and Asians compared to the county average.

Riverside County's 2008 General Plan refers explicitly to the need to enhance park access.<sup>321</sup> Unfortunately, one writer has called Riverside County "one of the birthplaces of the current recession."<sup>322</sup> If the economy of the Inland Empire region, the state and the nation do not improve, Riverside's unfunded vision could go unrealized.

An important consideration regarding access to recreation and sites for physical activity in Riverside County is the extreme daytime heat during much of the year. In places such as the Coachella Valley, in particular, it may not be advisable for residents to engage in vigorous physical activity outside for prolonged periods of time. Therefore, it is necessary that pools and indoor, air conditioned recreational facilities be part of the plan for increasing access to physical activity.

*Acres of Park per Thousand Residents.* The Riverside County communities with the worst access to parks lie in the northwest, west and central portions of the county (see maps RV-1 and RV-2). For example, the cities of Coachella, Rancho Mirage, and Cathedral City in central Riverside County each offer fewer than two acres of green space for every thousand residents.

None of the three cities with the largest populations in the county, the cities of Riverside, Corona, and Moreno Valley, all of which are in the northwestern portion of the county, provides three acres or more per thousand residents. Together with the adjacent area in San Bernardino County, this region is the heart of the Inland Empire, an area where population has steadily grown as a result of migrants from Los Angeles and Orange Counties who could no longer afford to rent or own acceptable housing near their work.<sup>323</sup> Much of the area has poor access to parks and inadequate transit options, but people of color and low-income people who do not have access to a car suffer the worst.

## 3. Childhood Obesity and Physical Fitness Levels

*Child Obesity.* With 25.9% to 29.7% of Riverside County's children being overweight, there is a clear need for increased physical activity and healthier eating in the county (see Table 13).

**Table 13. Percentage of Overweight Children in Riverside County<sup>324</sup>**

Grade Level	San Bernardino County	California
5th Graders	28.3	29.3
7th Graders	29.7	29.1
9th Graders	25.9	25.4

An analysis of the rates of overweight in children by race and ethnicity shows significant disparities. As is the case throughout California, the rates of overweight are highest among Latino and African American children (see Table 14).<sup>325</sup> Children of color are especially vulnerable because they often live in communities that do not have enough open space for physical activities and they lack access to healthy food, leading to health risks that follow them into adulthood (see Map RV-3).

**Table 14. Percent of Overweight Children by Race/Ethnicity in Riverside Assembly Districts<sup>326</sup>**

CA State Assembly District	Counties in District (Whole or Part)	Latino	White	African American	Asian	Native American
64th	Riverside	30.7	20.5	27.4	20.3	28.7
65th	Riverside and San Bernardino	31.5	22.3	27.7	21.2	22.1
66th	Riverside and San Diego	30.2	18.7	26.1	21.6	26.3
80th	Imperial and Riverside	34.4	21.8	25.1	19.6	30.5
California		33.7	20.2	28.6	17.5	25.1



Riverside County is trying to implement policies that encourage healthy lifestyles. The county has pledged to incorporate a “health element” into development plans after 2010, making sure that new neighborhoods have parks, bike paths, trails, and other open spaces.<sup>327</sup> This is a step in the right direction but more needs to be done, particularly so residents living in already developed parts of the county have adequate access to green spaces.

**Table 15. Percentage of Physically Fit Children in Riverside County by Race/Ethnicity<sup>328</sup>**

Race or Ethnicity	5th Grade (%)	7th Grade (%)	9th Grade (%)
White, non-Hispanic	38.6	42.5	42.5
Hispanic/Latino	26.3	28.2	29.3
Black/African American	29.8	35.5	35.1
Asian and Pacific Islander	39.0	42.7	50.4
Riverside County	30.6	33.8	35.0

*Physical Fitness.* In Riverside County, 67% of fifth, seventh, and ninth graders did not achieve minimum physical fitness standards in the 2007-2008 school year.<sup>329</sup> Although students in Riverside County on average are slightly more physically fit than the statewide average,<sup>330</sup> the number of children who are not physically fit is still too high. There is a wide disparity in fitness rates between racial and ethnic groups. Latinos have the lowest rates of physical fitness of any race or ethnicity in each grade measured. The percentage of physically fit African Americans is similar to the countywide average, but fitness levels for non-Hispanic whites and Asians far exceed the countywide average. Table 15 shows the percentage of physically fit Riverside County students broken down by race and ethnicity.

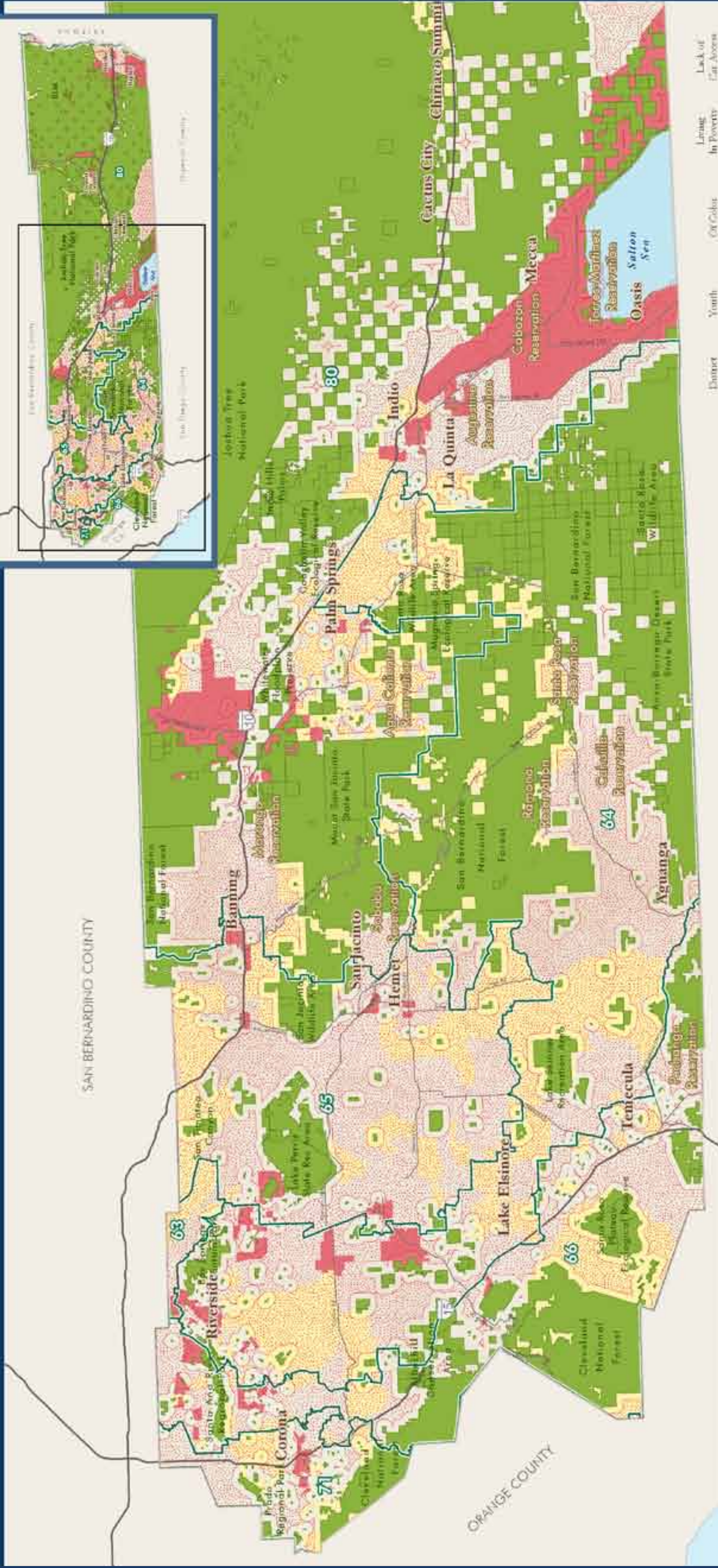
Coachella Valley | Untitled, courtesy of Ariel Martinez (age 16) and Venice Arts





# Park Access for Children of Color Living in Poverty with No Access to a Car

Riverside County



**Assembly District Number**

**Park Access:**

- Existing Park/Green Space\*
- Over 1/2 mile from a Park

\*All park/green space as above, including forest areas, urban of land management and lands with unrestricted public access.

**Block group status, in relation to Riverside County Averages, for:**

- Youth
- Race/Ethnicity
- Poverty
- Lack of Car Access

- Exceeds Riverside County Average
- Below Riverside County Average
- Within Riverside County Average

SAN DIEGO COUNTY

District	Youth	Of Color	Living in Poverty	Lack of Car Access
63*	52.7%	53.6%	16.8%	5.0%
64	28.2%	42.8%	15.9%	7.1%
65*	20.7%	45.0%	15.8%	8.3%
66*	33.9%	43.6%	11.4%	5.2%
71*	31.6%	48.1%	8.4%	5.6%
80*	28.0%	88.4%	10.7%	8.5%

\*Percent youth, of color, living in poverty, and lack of car access represent total populations for each assembly district (not just the county) - Districts 65, 66, 71 do not represent the Riverside Co. pop.

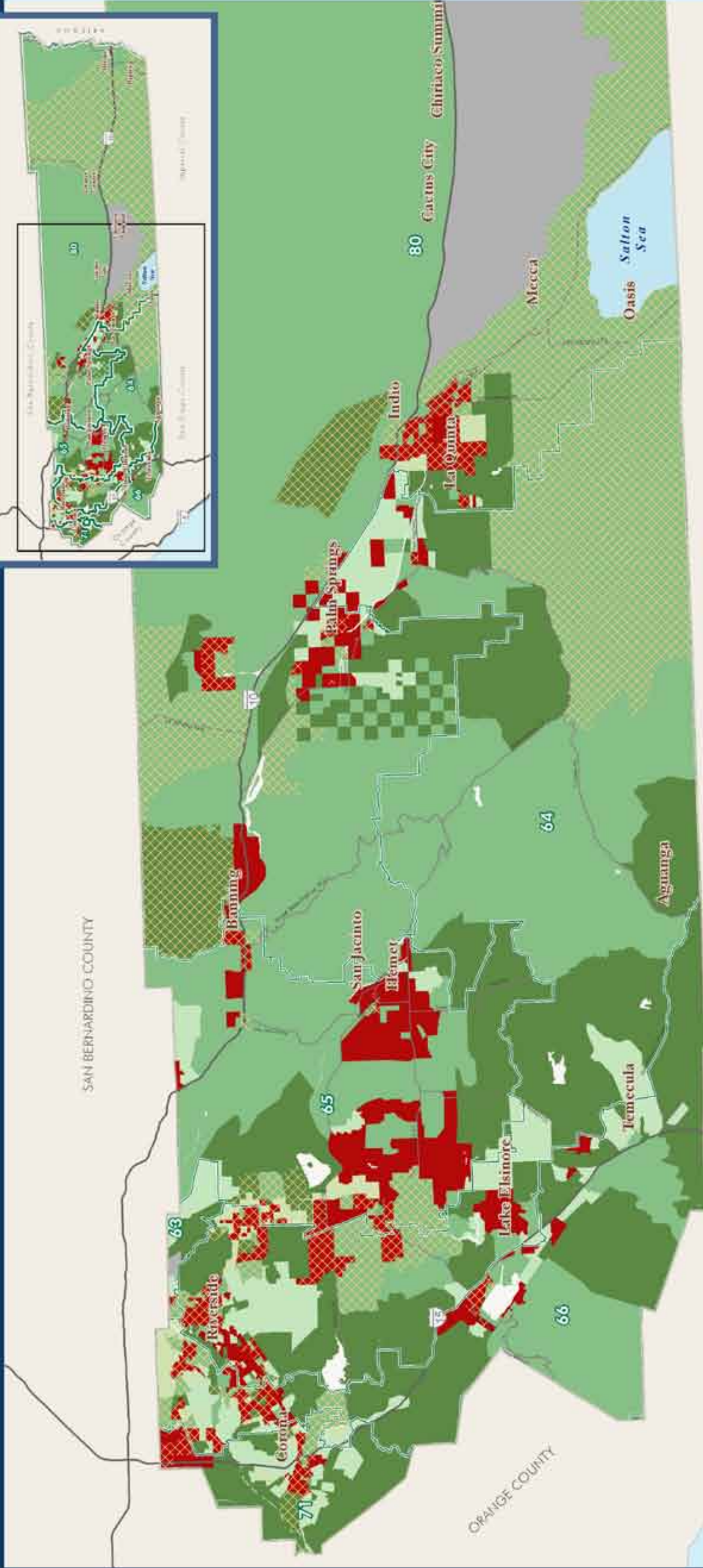
Park Access for Children of Color Living in Poverty with No Access to a Car is a project of The City Project - [www.cityprojectco.org](http://www.cityprojectco.org). Map created by Greenbilo Network, July 2010. [www.greenbilo.org](http://www.greenbilo.org). Data Sources: Demographics - Census 2000, Ending Park/Green Space - California Protected Areas Database v1.2 March 2009, [www.cadatabase.org](http://www.cadatabase.org); Native American: Reservation areas identified, where possible. The data should not be considered complete.





# Park Poor, Income Poor, and People of Color

Riverside County



**65**

	More than 3 acres parkland per 1000 people and Above \$47,331 Median Household Income
	Less than 3 acres parkland per 1000 people and Below \$47,331 Median Household Income
	Less than 3 acres parkland per 1000 people and Above \$47,331 Median Household Income
	More than 3 acres parkland per 1000 people and Below \$47,331 Median Household Income

	More than 3 acres parkland per 1000 people and Above \$47,331 Median Household Income
	Zero Population
	More People of Color than State Average State Average = 52.3%

All parks and open space are used to calculate acres of parkland per 1000 people, including forest services, acres of land management and large state and regional parks.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Park Poor, Income Poor, and People of Color is a project of The City Project - [www.cityprojectco.org](http://www.cityprojectco.org). Map created by GreenInfo Network, July 2010 [www.greeninfo.org](http://www.greeninfo.org). Data Sources: Demographics mapped by census blockgroup using 2000 census data. Existing Park/Green Space - California Protected Areas Database v1.2 March 2009. [www.calandis.org](http://www.calandis.org)



[www.cityprojectco.org](http://www.cityprojectco.org)  
[www.greeninfo.org](http://www.greeninfo.org)  
 January 7, 2011







RIVERSIDE COUNTY			CALIFORNIA	
	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT
Total Population	1,545,387	-	33,871,648	-
Children (under 18)	467,079	30%	9,221,463	27%
Seniors (65 and over)	194,833	13%	3,586,794	11%
<b>Race / Ethnicity<sup>+</sup></b>				
Non- Hispanic White	787,318	51%	15,771,163	47%
Hispanic	559,328	36%	10,969,132	32%
African American	95,638	6%	2,219,190	7%
Native American	18,277	1%	312,215	1%
Asian Pacific Islander	58,367	4%	3,796,833	11%
Other Race	289,080	19%	5,725,844	17%
2 or more races	72,517	5%	1,694,607	5%
<b>Income / Poverty</b>				
Median Household Income	\$42,887	-	\$42,896	-
In Poverty	214,084	14%	4,706,130	14%
Percent of people in poverty under 18 years of age	87,083	41%	1,757,100	37%
Percent of people in poverty over 65 years of age	14,437	7%	280,411	6%
<b>Rent / Own</b>				
Own	348,479	69%	6,546,237	57%
Rent	157,739	31%	4,956,633	43%
<b>Transportation</b>				
No Car Access	35,832	7%	1,091,214	9%
<b>Health</b>				
% of Overweight and Obese Children*	-	25%	-	27%
Passed 5 of 6 Physical Fitness Exams**	24,920	27%	366,228	27%
Passed 6 of 6 Physical Fitness Exams**	30,142	33%	443,504	32%
Students Enrolled in Free and Reduced Lunch Program**	217,457	52%	3,152,330	51%
<b>Parks and Open Space***</b>				
Acres of Green Space	2,828,680	-	48,490,056	-
Acres of Bureau of Land Management land	1,598,100	-	15,117,778	-
Acres of Forest Service land	292,705	-	20,695,282	-
Total Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents	1,830	-	1,432	-
Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents (w/o BLM)	796	-	985	-
Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents (w/o FS)	1,641	-	821	-
Net Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents (w/o BLM & FS)	607	-	374	-

\* Race/ethnicity figures will not add up to 100%. Census 2000 allowed respondents to mark multiple races in addition to being

\*County obesity figures are derived from assembly district data. A weighted average was run based on population.

\*\*Data calculated for grades 5, 7, and 9 from Data Quest, California Department of Education 2007-08

[http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/gls\\_calworks.asp](http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/gls_calworks.asp)

\*\*\* All parks and open space data has been calculated from GreenInfo Network's California Protected Areas Database (CPAD) version 1.2, March 2009 [www.calands.org](http://www.calands.org)





Park Acreage for Riverside County by Assembly District					
A	B	C	D	E	F
District	Total Population	Total Acres of Parks	Total Acres of Parks per 1,000 Residents	Net Acres of Parks, Without National Forests, other U.S. Forest Service Land, and U.S. Bureau Of Land Management Land	Net Acres of Parks per 1,000 Residents
63	9,834	79	8.03	79	8.03
64	424,685	343,722	809.36	105,377	248.13
65	301,882	41,730	138.23	33,458	110.83
66	347,761	94,320	271.22	23,507	67.60
71	172,612	13,796	79.92	3,004	17.40
80	288,613	2,333,167	8,084.07	771,816	2,674.22
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,545,387</b>	<b>2,826,814</b>	<b>1,829.19</b>	<b>937,241</b>	<b>606.48</b>

This Chart shows acres of parks per thousand residents for the County of Riverside as a whole, and in each State Assembly District, first with Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land included, and then without Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land. The Chart breaks down this information as follows.

Column B shows the total population in the County and in each Assembly District.

Column C shows the total acres of parks in the County and in each District, including Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land.

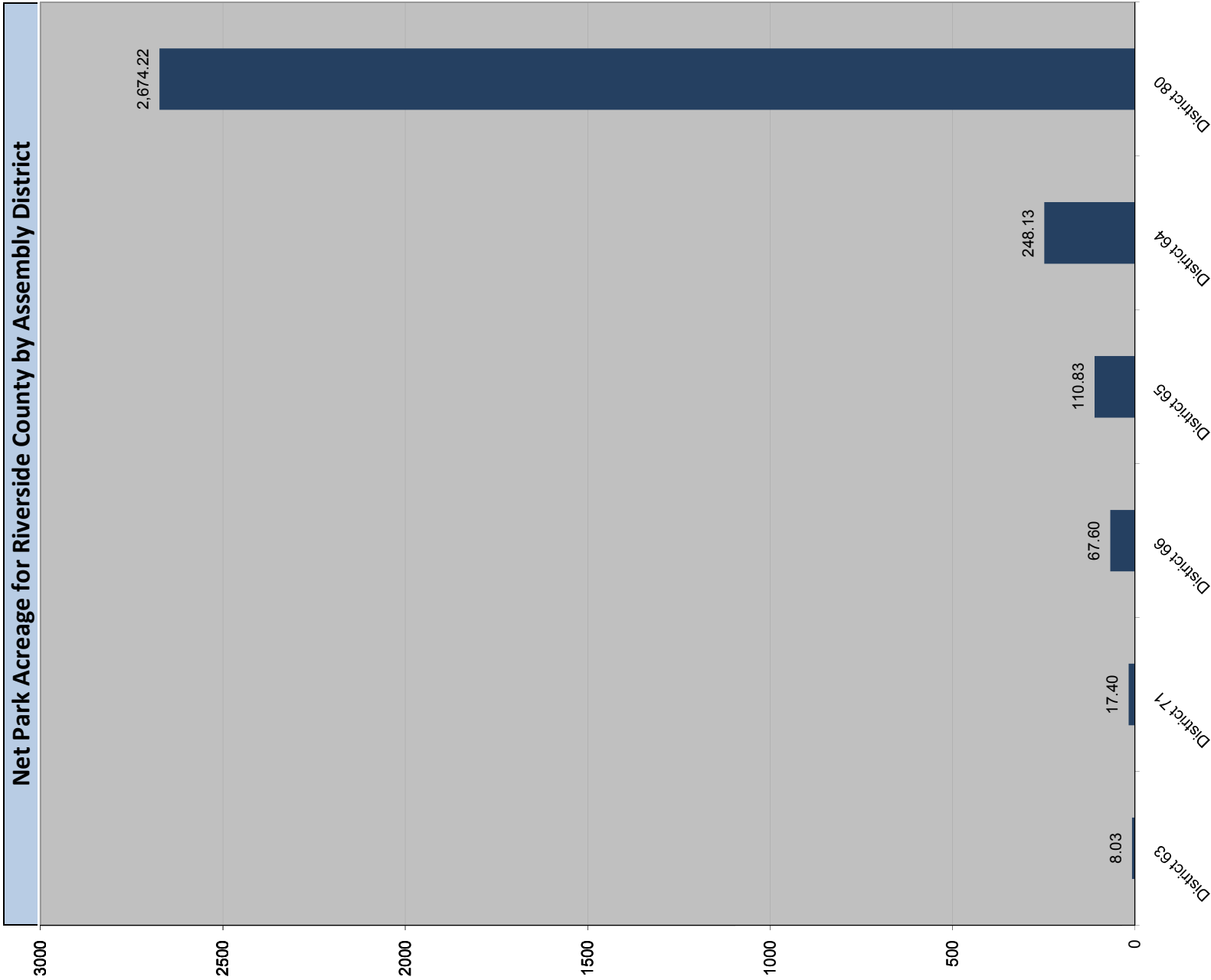
Column D shows the total acres of parks per thousand residents in the County and in each District, including Bureau of Land Management and National Forest land.

In Columns E and F, the acres of Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service that actually lie within each District are subtracted. For example, the Cleveland National Forest covers close to 460,000 acres, but only the 77,358 acres that actually lie within the County and each District are excluded.

The acreage for the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land that is subtracted in Column E is as follows:

- Cleveland National Forest 77,358 acres
- San Bernardino National Forest 215,183 acres
- Bureau of Land Management 1,597,618 acres

**Based on these calculations, 6% of all land in Riverside County is in National Forests and 34% is owned by the Bureau of Land Management. Fully 6% of all park space in the County is in the Angeles Forest. Fully 34% of all park space in the County is held by the Bureau of Land Management. A total of 40% of park space being either Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management land.**







Chula Vista | Photo by Tim Wagner for Partnership for the Public's Health (twagnerimages.com)

## F. San Diego County

### 1. Overview

San Diego County is the southwestern most county in the continental United States and shares a border with Mexico. The combined population of the metropolitan area consisting of the City of San Diego and the Mexican city of Tijuana is estimated to be over 5,000,000.<sup>331</sup> The official population of San Diego County was 2,813,835 as of 2000, making it the third most populous county in California behind Los Angeles and Orange.<sup>332</sup> The county is spread out over 4,261 square miles of land, an area roughly equivalent to the size of Connecticut.<sup>333</sup> San Diego has 70 miles of coastline along the Pacific Ocean.<sup>334</sup>

There are 18 incorporated cities within San Diego County, mostly found in the western third of the county. The rest of the county contains large tracts of federal, state, and county protected lands, as well as unincorporated area. The City of San Diego is the economic hub of the county and the county seat. With a population of 1,223,400, the City of San Diego is the second largest city in California.<sup>335</sup>

*Geography.* San Diego County contains a diverse range of geography, including desert, mountains, valleys, forests, coastal plains, lakes, rivers, and beaches. There are hundreds of parks, recreational areas, and open spaces throughout the county that are managed locally by cities or the county, on the state level, or federally. Approximately 45% of the total land in San Diego County, 1,225,488 acres, is dedicated to parks and recreation.<sup>336</sup> Most of this park and recreation land is publicly owned, though 57,000 acres is privately owned land dedicated to recreational uses.<sup>337</sup>

The state and federal governments own and manage the vast majority of this publicly owned park and recreation land. The State of California Department of Parks and Recreation has the largest holdings of parks and open space in the county with 589,384 acres. Much of this land is in the Anza Borrego Desert State Park or Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, which cover most of the central and eastern portion of the county.<sup>338</sup> In addition to these large state parks, there are nine state beaches, several ecological or nature preserves, and other open space parks.

The U.S. Forest Service has the largest share of federally owned land in the county with 287,500 acres, almost all of which is in the Cleveland National Forest.<sup>339</sup> There are also several National Wildlife Refuges in the county that comprise the San Diego National Wildlife Refuge Complex. Other federally managed facilities include Cabrillo National Monument, which is managed by the National Park Service.

In addition to federally protected park and recreation land, there are 16 United States military facilities in San Diego County. The Navy owns the majority of these facilities, but the Coast Guard and Marine Corp also own property in the county.<sup>340</sup> Though some of these facilities, such as Camp Pendleton, contain large areas of preserved open space, these areas are generally not accessible to the public.

Local authorities, including the county government and the incorporated cities, also own and manage park and recreation land. The County of San Diego maintains more than 44,000 acres of parks and open space and over 300 miles of trails. This land is divided among local and regional parks, recreation centers and sports complexes, campgrounds, lakes and fishing areas, ecological preserves, and open space preserves.<sup>341</sup> Each of the 18 incorporated cities also maintains parkland. Cumulatively, 44,000 acres of parks and open space are owned by the county's incorporated cities,<sup>342</sup> with nearly 40,000 of those acres being owned by the City of San Diego alone.<sup>343</sup>

*Demographics.* San Diego County is home to a diverse population, ranging from native San Diegans to transplants from all over the United States to immigrants from around the world. With an official population of 2,813,835 as of the 2000 U.S. Census,<sup>344</sup> and an estimated current population of more than 3,000,000, San Diego has the third largest population of any county in California.<sup>345</sup> Most of the county's residents are packed into the western third of the county, while the central and eastern portions of the county are sparsely populated.



The San Diego region has experienced significant population growth over the past few years, with Latinos accounting for the overwhelming amount of this growth. There has also been a substantial increase in the number of Asians living in the county. On the other hand, there are fewer non-Hispanic white residents in San Diego County now than there were in 1990.<sup>346</sup> If current trends continue, a majority of San Diegans will belong to a racial or ethnic group typically defined as “minority” within the next few years. Table 16 shows the demographic distribution of the San Diego region.

**Table 16. San Diego County Demographic Distribution<sup>347</sup>**

<b>Race or Ethnicity</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Percent of Total Population (%)</b>
White, Non-Hispanic	1,548,833	55.0
Hispanic/Latino	750,965	26.7
Asian and Pacific Islander	257,461	9.1
Black/African American	154,487	5.5
Native American	15,253	0.5
Other	86,834	3.1

The San Diego region is also home to 17 federally-recognized sovereign tribal nations of Native Americans, the most of any county in the United States.<sup>348</sup> Tribal reservations account for approximately 4% of the land within the county’s geographical borders and are mostly located in the eastern portion of San Diego County. The region’s Native American population is primarily from four distinct groups, including the Kumeyaay/Diegueño, the Luiseño, the Cupeño, and the Cahuilla.<sup>349</sup> There are also Native Americans who are not yet federally recognized, including the Acjachemen or Juaneño people who built the San Juan Capistrano mission and who trace their heritage back to the 9,000 year-old village and sacred site of Panhe in San Onofre State Beach.

The population of the county is not evenly distributed. People of color tend to be separated into a few areas of high concentration with much smaller representations throughout the rest of the county (see Maps SD-1 and SD-2). The cities of Chula Vista, Imperial Beach, and National City are each disproportionately Latino and are all located south of Interstate 8, in close proximity to the border with Mexico. Meanwhile many of the cities north of the City of San Diego, including Del Mar, Encinitas, Poway, and Solana Beach, have disproportionately fewer Latinos.

The City of San Diego accounts for such a large proportion of the total population of the county that its overall ethnic breakdown is similar to the county as a whole. But there is considerable ethnic clustering in certain neighborhoods. Many of the neighborhoods with the highest concentrations of people of color are located south of Interstate 8.<sup>350</sup> For example, the neighborhoods in the central, southeastern, and far southern parts of the city, such as City Heights and Barrio Logan, have a much higher percentage of Latino residents than the city average, while neighborhoods in the western portion of the city, such as La Jolla and Pacific Beach, have a lower percentage of Latino residents than the city average.

The highest concentrations of black residents are in the southeastern neighborhoods of the City of San Diego and the City of Lemon Grove, which is directly to the southeast of the City of San Diego. Meanwhile, black residents make up less than 1% of the population of several northern coastal cities, including Carlsbad, Del Mar, Encinitas, and Solana Beach.

Asian communities also tend to be clustered, with the highest concentrations of Asians in the City of San Diego’s northern neighborhoods, such as Mira Mesa and Sorrento Valley, and far fewer in the city’s southern neighborhoods.

Several cities in the county are disproportionately non-Hispanic white. Del Mar is over 90% non-Hispanic white and has the lowest percentages of every other racial and ethnic group of any city in San Diego County. Compared to the countywide population of 55% non-Hispanic white, 77% or more of the population is non-Hispanic white in seven cities in San Diego County.<sup>351</sup>

There is an uneven distribution of households by income level in the region. According to income brackets defined by the San Diego Association of Governments and the U.S. Census, nearly 40% of all households in the San Diego region are classified as Extremely Low-income, Very Low-income, or Low-income.<sup>352</sup> These income brackets are determined by the amount of household income and the number of people in the household so there is not a singular dollar amount that defines any of these categories.

Most of the cities south of Interstate 8, including Chula Vista, El Cajon, Imperial Beach, Lemon Grove, and National City, have a median household income below the countywide median household income of \$52,192.<sup>353</sup> Many of the cities to the north of the City of San Diego, such as Carlsbad, Del Mar, Encinitas, Poway, Santee, and Solana Beach, have median household incomes that exceed the countywide average.

Map SD-2 shows considerable overlap in patterns of income, race and ethnicity. For example, many of the cities with the highest percentages of people of color are also cities that have low median household incomes. National City, which has the highest percentages of Latinos and Asians and the lowest percentage of non-Hispanic white residents of any city in San Diego County, also has the lowest median household income (\$33,439) of any city in the county.<sup>354</sup> The City of Del Mar, which has the highest percentage of non-Hispanic whites and the lowest percentage of Latino residents, has the highest median income (\$87,982) of any city in the county.<sup>355</sup>

Of the seven cities in San Diego County that have a median household income that exceeds the countywide median household income, each of these cities is disproportionately non-Hispanic white. Conversely, each one of the eight cities in San Diego County that are disproportionately Latino has a median household income that is below the countywide level. Likewise, the three cities with higher percentages of black residents than the county average and the three cities with higher percentages of Asian residents than the county average each have a lower median household income than the countywide figure.



## 2. Access to Parks

The map of green access and equity in San Diego County shows that the areas with the most people of color, highest rates of poverty, and worst access to cars also have the worst access to parks (see Map SD-1).

There are 1,225,488 acres of land dedicated to parks and open space in San Diego County.<sup>356</sup> The overwhelming majority of this land, 1,168,141 acres, is publicly owned and managed.<sup>357</sup> This equates to an astonishing 415 acres of public parks and open space land for every 1,000 residents in the county. Though this ratio is extremely high, these statistics alone do not tell the whole story.

The majority of the San Diego region's residents live within the western portion of the county. There are fewer large open space parks in this part of the San Diego region, though there are exceptions such as Mission Trails Regional Park. In general, there are far fewer acres of green space and far more people in the western portion than elsewhere in the county (see Map SD-1). A closer examination reveals that there is a high level of variability in regard to available green space within this densely populated part of the San Diego region.

Maps SD-1 and SD-2 show that the most park poor areas of the region are also the areas with the highest concentrations of low-income households and people of color. In fact, there are few areas in the region with high concentrations of low-income households and people of color that are not park poor. Many of these park poor areas that are also income poor and have disproportionately high percentages of residents of color are in the southwestern portion of the region, south of Interstate 8, though there are also pockets in places such as Escondido, Vista, and Oceanside in the northern part of the county.

*Acres of Parks per Thousand Residents.* Each of San Diego's incorporated cities owns and operates some amount of park and recreation land, in addition to any county-, state-, or federally-operated green space within that city's borders. Though the amount of city-owned green space in each municipality varies, most cities do not offer very much. Among the 18 cities, 13 provide less than three acres of green space per thousand residents. Three of the remaining five cities are on the cusp of being park poor, each offering approximately three acres per thousand residents. Only the cities of San Diego and Encinitas offer significantly more than three acres per thousand residents.<sup>358</sup>

*Urban Parks.* The one exception to the lack of park space in the densely populated portion of the county is the City of San Diego. With 39,737 acres of developed and undeveloped parkland and open space, the city offers approximately 32.5 acres of parks per 1,000 residents.<sup>359</sup> In addition, the city maintains over 100 joint use agreements with the San Diego Unified School District to allow recreational use of school facilities by the public outside of school hours.<sup>360</sup>

Large urban parks are a particularly noteworthy aspect of the City of San Diego's park system. Covering 1,172 acres, Balboa Park is the largest urban cultural park in the country.<sup>361</sup> In addition to active and passive recreation, Balboa Park is home to botanical gardens, 15 museums, the Old Globe Theatre, and the San Diego Zoo.<sup>362</sup> This park was created in 1868 and has served as the foundation around which the city developed.<sup>363</sup> Balboa Park is a very popular destination for San Diego residents and tourists alike.

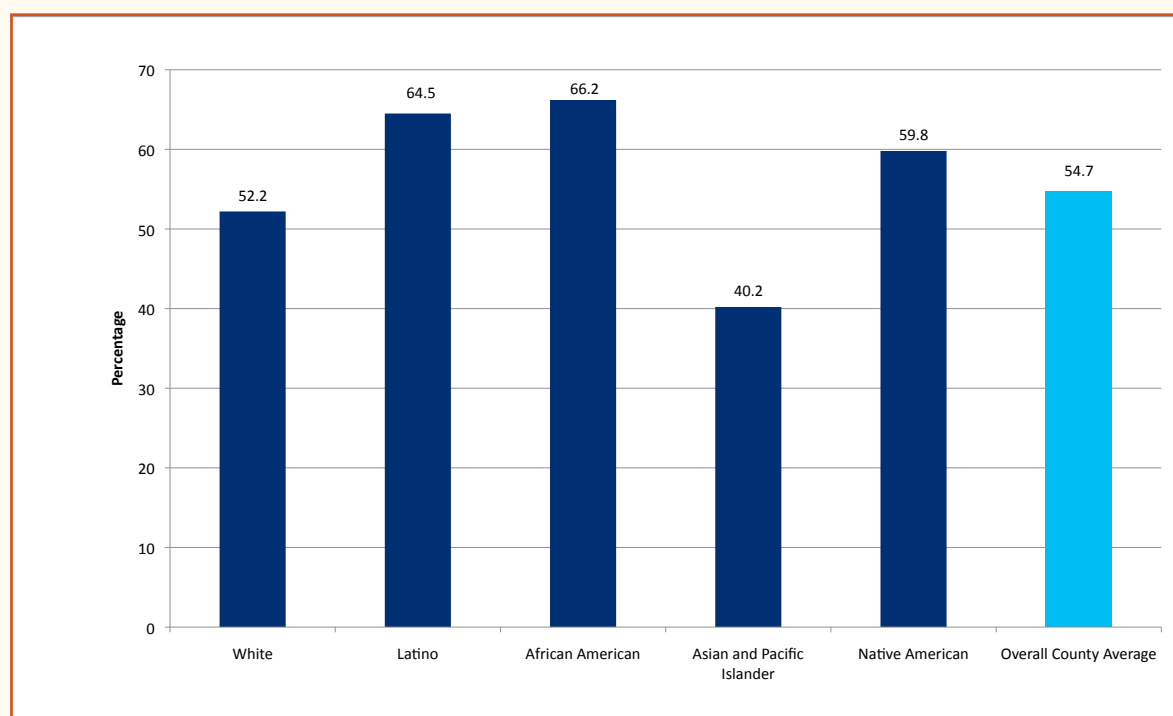
Mission Trails Regional Park and Mission Bay are other examples of large urban parks within the City of San Diego. Mission Trails Regional Park is a 5,800-acre open space preserve located just a few miles away from downtown San Diego.<sup>364</sup> Mission Bay is the largest man-made public aquatic recreation center in the world. Its 4,600 acres are nearly evenly divided between land and water.<sup>365</sup> In addition to these three parks, the City of San Diego also owns and operates several large open space parks that offer unique recreational opportunities for the city's residents and visitors.<sup>366</sup>

## 3. Childhood Obesity and Physical Fitness Levels

*Child Obesity.* 31% of children in San Diego are overweight or obese.<sup>367</sup> Simply stated, overweight and obesity are part of a health crisis in San Diego. Map SD-3 shows that the rates of child obesity are high throughout the San Diego region. This map also shows that the highest concentrations of overweight and obese children are in the southwestern portion of the county, which is also one of the most park poor areas of the San Diego region. Moreover, this part of San Diego County also has the highest concentrations of low-income households and people of color. Though the rates of child obesity are still too high in the northern coastal cities, this relatively park rich area has lower child obesity rates than the park poor areas south of Interstate 8.

Weight management is also a problem among adults in San Diego, with 54.7% of adults (age 18 and older) in the county being overweight or obese.<sup>368</sup> Not surprisingly, the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency points out in its Healthy People 2010 San Diego report that significant disparities exist in the prevalence of obesity between non-Hispanic whites and people of color.<sup>369</sup>

**Figure 4. Percentage of Overweight and Obese Adults in San Diego County<sup>370</sup>**





People of color are particularly vulnerable because they often live in communities that do not have enough green space for physical activity and/or access to healthy food. Rates of overweight and obesity in San Diego County are particularly high for Latinos and African Americans, at 64.5% and 66.2%, respectively. Asian and Pacific Islanders had the lowest rates of overweight and obesity. Figure 4 shows the percentage of overweight and obese adults in each racial or ethnic group in San Diego.

*Physical Fitness.* In San Diego, 67% of fifth, seventh, and ninth graders did not achieve minimum physical fitness standards in the 2007-2008 school year, compared to 68% of students statewide during the same school year.<sup>371</sup> Although the percentage of physically fit students in San Diego County is comparable to the state average,<sup>372</sup> the number of children who are not physically fit is still too high. There is a wide disparity in fitness rates based on race and ethnicity.

**Table 17. Percentage of Physically Fit Children in San Diego County by Race/Ethnicity<sup>373</sup>**

Race or Ethnicity	5th Grade (%)	7th Grade (%)	9th Grade (%)
White, non-Hispanic	40.5	42.6	45.2
Hispanic/Latino	20.8	27.4	26.4
Black/African American	26.4	27.7	27.3
Asian and Pacific Islander	40.7	48.7	45.4
San Diego County	29.8	34.7	34.9

On average, Latino and black children are far less physically fit than their non-Hispanic white and Asian classmates for all grade levels assessed. For example, 40.5% of white and 40.7% of Asian fifth grade students in San Diego County achieved physical fitness standards, while only 20.8% of Latino and 26.4% of black fifth graders were physically fit.<sup>374</sup> Table 17 shows the percentage of San Diego County students that achieved physical fitness standards broken down by ethnicity.

South Kern County | Working Swing Set, courtesy of Karina Forero (age 16) and Venice Arts





#### 4. River Revitalization

The San Diego River flows for 52 miles from its headwaters in the Cuyamaca Mountains in eastern San Diego County all the way to the Pacific Ocean. The river has been home to human inhabitants for over 8,000 years and provides significant recreational, cultural, ecological, and educational value.<sup>375</sup> Unfortunately, after years of serving as an illegal trash dump and having polluted urban runoff drain directly into its waters, the health of the San Diego River and its watershed has declined severely.<sup>376</sup>

In response, concerned citizens, the cities of San Diego and Santee, the County of San Diego, and the state came together to develop a plan to restore the river. As a result, several intergovernmental and citizen groups dedicated to the restoration, revitalization, and enhancement of the San Diego River and its future recreational opportunities have been formed. Working individually and in collaboration, these organizations have developed a vision for a San Diego River Park that goes beyond ecology and hydrology to incorporate the human element into the revitalization of the river. The proposed San Diego River Park will be an interconnected system of parks, trails, open spaces, public places, and community facilities along the length of the river.<sup>377</sup>

This project is currently in the planning phase. A San Diego River Park Draft Master Plan has been created and is currently in the process of being reviewed and revised.<sup>378</sup> Once the Master Plan is finalized and adopted, specific plans for individual parks and open spaces that will collectively make up the San Diego River Park must be approved. Making this vision a reality will also require the acquisition of some land from private owners. A timeline for completion of this project has not been set but community support for the San Diego River Park is high.<sup>379</sup>

The creation of the San Diego River Park system will improve green access for all San Diegans, particularly for those who live along the river. There is a wide range of culture, ethnic and racial groups living in proximity to the San Diego River. With plans calling for a large and interconnected park system, there is a tremendous opportunity for an inclusive park that satisfies the needs of diverse users. In order for this to happen, local communities must be included in all of the planning activities and the parties responsible for creating the park should proactively seek input from local community members.

Creating the San Diego River Park can represent a landmark river revitalization project that can serve as a best practice example for other rivers and communities throughout California and the United States. A project of this magnitude requires significant political will and substantial funding. It is therefore critical that government and community groups work together to make this dream a reality.

Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Preserve | Creative Commons - Mayr







# Park Access for Children of Color Living in Poverty with No Access to a Car

San Diego County



**76** Assembly District Number

**Park Access:**

- Existing Park/Green Space\*
- Over 1/2 mile from a Park

**Block group status, in relation to San Diego County Averages, for:**

- Youth
- Race/Ethnicity
- Poverty
- Lack of Car Access

- Exceeds San Diego County Average
- Below San Diego County Average
- Within San Diego County Average

District	Youth	Cit/Colo	Living In Poverty	Lack of Car Access
66	32.6%	43.8%	11.4%	1.3%
71	26.0%	35.6%	8.7%	1.0%
74	26.3%	35.0%	10.1%	2.1%
76	25.3%	35.6%	6.9%	1.3%
76	18.7%	38.3%	14.7%	5.2%
77	25.9%	25.4%	9.8%	2.6%
78	27.8%	60.7%	15.3%	2.5%
79	29.7%	70.3%	20.7%	4.6%

\*All parks/green space are shown, including forest service, bureau of land management and lands with no restricted public access.

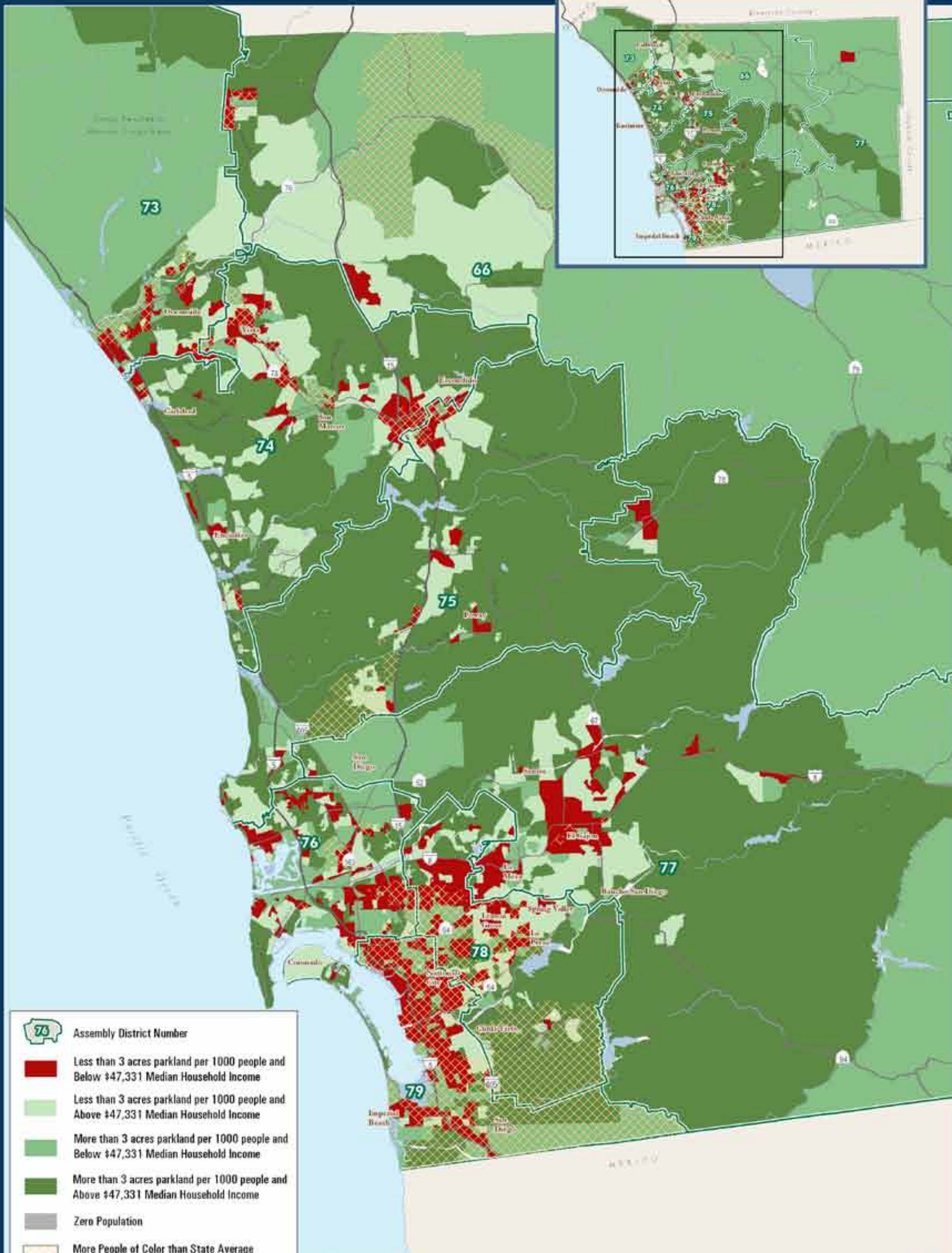
Park Access for Children of Color Living in Poverty with No Access to a Car is a project of The City Project - [www.cityprojectca.org](http://www.cityprojectca.org). Map created by GreenInfo Network, July 2010. [www.greeninfo.org](http://www.greeninfo.org). Data Sources: Demographics - Census 2000, Existing Park/Green Space - California Protected Areas Database v1.2 March 2009, [www.colostds.org](http://www.colostds.org). Native American Reservation areas identified, where possible. The data should not be considered complete.





# Park Poor, Income Poor, and People of Color

San Diego County



**73** Assembly District Number

- Less than 3 acres parkland per 1000 people and Below \$47,331 Median Household Income
- Less than 3 acres parkland per 1000 people and Above \$47,331 Median Household Income
- More than 3 acres parkland per 1000 people and Below \$47,331 Median Household Income
- More than 3 acres parkland per 1000 people and Above \$47,331 Median Household Income
- Zero Population
- More People of Color than State Average  
State Average = 52.3%

All parks and open space are used to calculate acres of parkland per 1000 people, including forest service, bureaus of land management and large state and regional parks.

Park Poor, Income Poor, and People of Color is a project of The City Project - [www.cityprojectca.org](http://www.cityprojectca.org). Map created by GreenInfo Network, July 2010 [www.greeninfo.org](http://www.greeninfo.org). Data Sources: Demographics mapped by census blockgroup using 2000 census data. Existing Park/Green Space - California Protected Areas Database v1.2 March 2009 - [www.caflands.org](http://www.caflands.org).

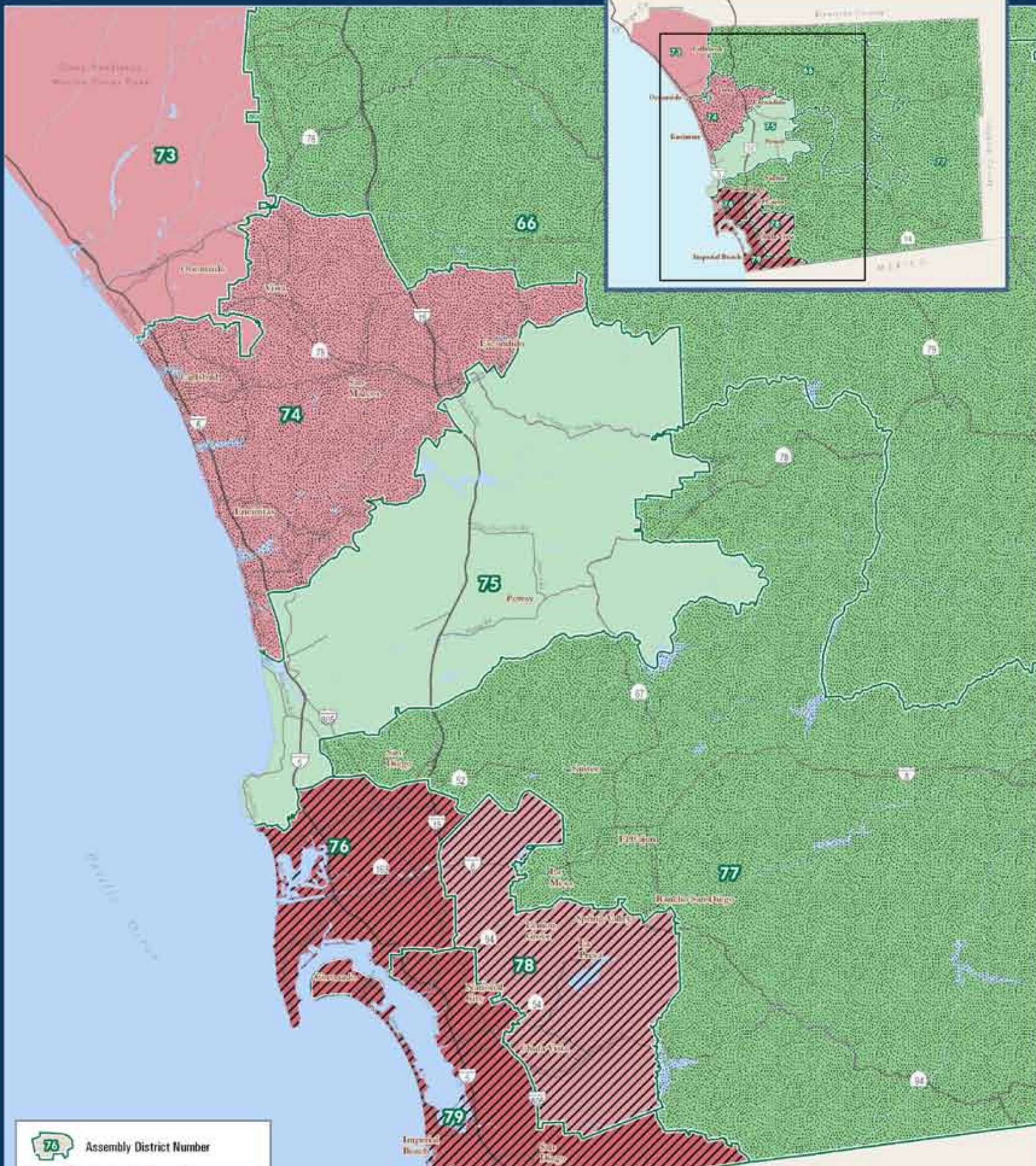
[www.cityprojectca.org](http://www.cityprojectca.org)  
 & [www.greeninfo.org](http://www.greeninfo.org)  
 January 7, 2011





# Park Access and Child Obesity by State Assembly District

San Diego County



**76 Assembly District Number**

**Acres of Parks Per 1,000 Residents**

- Under 5
- 5 - 20
- 20 - 50
- 50 - 100
- Over 100

**Percent of Overweight or Obese Children**

- 18% - 23%
- 23% - 27%
- 27% - 34%

District	Total Population*	Total Population Of Children*	Percent Children*	Percent of Overweight or Obese Children
66	77,020	30,425	36.3%	26.1%
73	194,956	52,113	26.7%	20.4%
74	422,855	111,180	26.3%	23.0%
75	424,145	107,274	25.3%	18.2%
76	420,041	78,513	18.7%	27.9%
77	419,391	108,802	26.0%	24.3%
78	426,460	118,747	27.8%	28.0%
79	419,530	124,855	29.8%	33.4%

Park Access and Child Obesity is a project of The City Project - [www.thecityproject.org](http://www.thecityproject.org). Map created by GreenInfo Network, July 2010 [www.greeninfo.org](http://www.greeninfo.org). Existing Park/Green Space - California Protected Areas Database v1.2 March 2009. [www.calandis.org](http://www.calandis.org). Percent of Obese Children - California Center for Public Health Advocacy: The Growing Epidemic: Childhood Obesity Rates in the State of California Assembly Districts: Change in Percentage of Overweight Children by California Assembly District 2001-2004 (2005) available at <http://www.publichealthadvocacy.org/policy/brush/docs/policy05.pdf>

\*Total population, total population of children, and percent children represent total population for each assembly district split at the county line. Districts 66 and 73 extend beyond the San Diego County boundary and therefore may have lower totals than other sources of assembly district demographics.



SAN DIEGO COUNTY			CALIFORNIA	
	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT
Total Population	2,813,833	-	33,871,648	-
Children (under 18)	720,751	26%	9,221,463	27%
Seniors (65 and over)	313,702	11%	3,586,794	11%
<b>Race / Ethnicity<sup>+</sup></b>				
Non- Hispanic White	1,544,484	55%	15,771,163	47%
Hispanic	750,991	27%	10,969,132	32%
African American	158,371	6%	2,219,190	7%
Native American	23,513	1%	312,215	1%
Asian Pacific Islander	262,135	9%	3,796,833	11%
Other Race	362,705	13%	5,725,844	17%
2 or more races	139,772	5%	1,694,607	5%
<b>Income / Poverty</b>				
Median Household Income	\$47,067	-	\$42,896	-
In Poverty	338,399	12%	4,706,130	14%
Percent of people in poverty under 18 years of age	119,704	35%	1,757,100	37%
Percent of people in poverty over 65 years of age	20,561	6%	280,411	6%
<b>Rent / Own</b>				
Own	551,489	55%	6,546,237	57%
Rent	443,188	45%	4,956,633	43%
<b>Transportation</b>				
No Car Access	79,978	8%	1,091,214	9%
<b>Health</b>				
% of Overweight and Obese Children*	-	26%	-	27%
Passed 5 of 6 Physical Fitness Exams**	29,095	26%	366,228	27%
Passed 6 of 6 Physical Fitness Exams**	37,246	33%	443,504	32%
Students Enrolled in Free and Reduced Lunch Program**	222,362	46%	3,152,330	51%
<b>Parks and Open Space***</b>				
Acres of Green Space	1,280,405	-	48,490,056	-
Acres of Bureau of Land Management land	183,695	-	15,117,778	-
Acres of Forest Service land	289,619	-	20,695,282	-
Total Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents	455	-	1,432	-
Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents (w/o BLM)	390	-	985	-
Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents (w/o FS)	352	-	821	-
Net Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents (w/o BLM & FS)	287	-	374	-

<sup>+</sup> Race/ethnicity figures will not add up to 100%. Census 2000 allowed respondents to mark multiple races in addition to being

<sup>\*</sup>County obesity figures are derived from assembly district data. A weighted average was run based on population.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Data calculated for grades 5, 7, and 9 from Data Quest, California Department of Education 2007-08

[http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/gls\\_calworks.asp](http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/gls_calworks.asp)

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> All parks and open space data has been calculated from GreenInfo Network's California Protected Areas Database (CPAD) version 1.2, March 2009 [www.calands.org](http://www.calands.org)





Park Acreage for San Diego County by Assembly District					
A	B	C	D	E	F
District	Total Population	Total Acres of Parks	Total Acres of Parks per 1,000 Residents	Net Acres of Parks, Without National Forests, other U.S. Forest Service Land, and U.S. Bureau Of Land Management Land	Net Acres of Parks per 1,000 Residents
66	77,020	285,106	3,701.72	109,268	1,418.70
73	194,956	17,172	88.08	3,555	18.23
74	422,855	14,786	34.97	13,116	31.02
75	424,145	46,957	110.71	41,562	97.99
76	420,041	6,052	14.41	6,052	14.41
77	419,391	898,247	2,141.79	591,187	1,409.63
78	426,460	16,720	39.21	16,478	38.64
79	419,530	9,379	22.36	7,427	17.70
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,804,397</b>	<b>1,294,419</b>	<b>461.57</b>	<b>788,645</b>	<b>281.22</b>

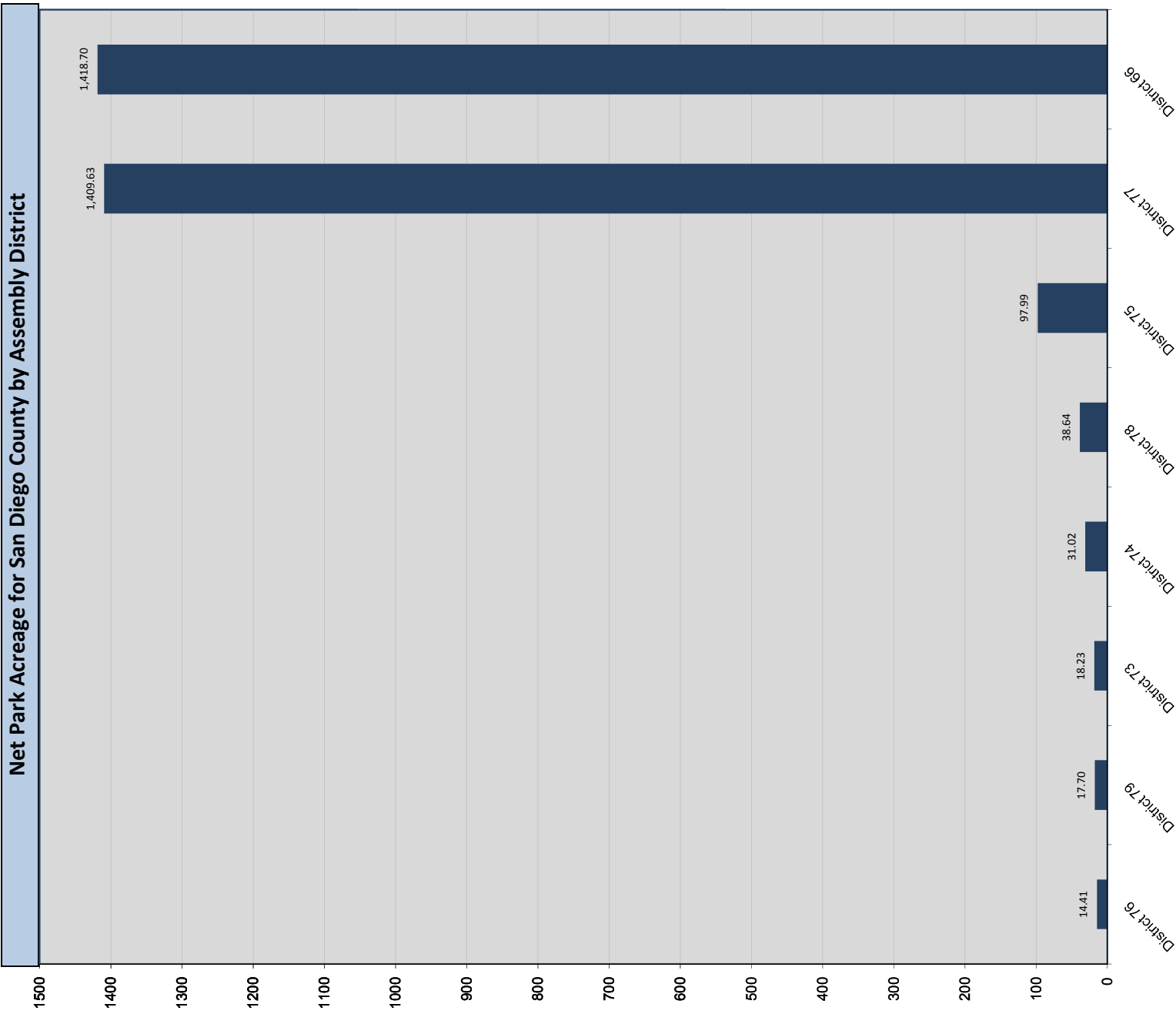
This Chart shows acres of parks per thousand residents for the County of San Diego as a whole, and in each State Assembly District, first with Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land included, and then without Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land. The Chart breaks down this information as follows.

Column B shows the total population in the County and in each Assembly District.  
 Column C shows the total acres of parks in the County and in each District, including Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land.  
 Column D shows the total acres of parks per thousand residents in the County and in each District, including all Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land.

In Columns E and F, the acres of Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land that actually lie within each District are subtracted. For example, the Cleveland National Forest covers close to 460,000 acres, but only the 289,439 acres that actually lie within the County and each District are excluded.

The acreage for the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land that is subtracted in Column E is as follows:  
 Cleveland National Forest 289,439 acres  
 Other USFS Land 317 acres  
 BLM Land 183,689 acres  
 No/restricted public access 32,477 acres

**Based on these calculations, 11% of all land in San Diego County is in the Cleveland National Forest. Fully 22% of all park space in the County is in the Cleveland Forest.**







Lake Isabella Kern River | Creative Commons - Brenda Om

## G. Kern County

### 1. Overview

Kern County lies to the north of Los Angeles County and Ventura County and to the west of San Bernardino County. Covering 8,161 square miles, this land-locked county is the third largest county by area in the United States and is roughly the size of Connecticut, Delaware, and Rhode Island combined.<sup>380</sup> Despite its large physical size, the official population of Kern County was only 661,645 as of 2000.<sup>381</sup> Kern County's economy is dominated by agriculture and oil production. Lying at the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley, Kern is the third largest agriculture-producing county in the United States.<sup>382</sup> The agricultural sector in Kern County is worth more than \$4 billion, with the main crops being milk, grapes, citrus, almonds, and carrots.<sup>383</sup> Farm labor accounts for many jobs in the area and has attracted many Latinos including Mexican-Americans and Mexicans to the region. The county generally experiences significant, temporary population surges when migrant laborers are brought in for seasonal harvests.<sup>384</sup>

The other major industry in Kern County is oil production. Kern produces more oil than any other county in California, providing 66% of the total land-based oil production in the state. Over 31,000 active wells are found within the county. On the national level, Kern accounts for approximately 10% of overall U.S. oil production and is home to three of the five largest oil fields in the entire country.<sup>385</sup> In 1910, Kern County was home to what the *New York Times* has described as one of the worst environmental catastrophes in the history of the nation, when a well blew and spewed 9 million barrels, or 378 million gallons, over 18 months.<sup>386</sup>

There are 11 incorporated cities within Kern County. A significant portion of the county remains unincorporated, though there are many communities in the unincorporated areas that have been in existence for over 100 years. The City of Bakersfield is the county seat and the major population and commercial center of Kern. Home to nearly 40% of the county's total population, Bakersfield is by far the largest city in the county.<sup>387</sup> Of the ten other incorporated cities, only one has more than 25,000 residents and four have fewer than 10,000 residents.<sup>388</sup>

*Geography.* Kern County is a land-locked county that includes diverse geography, such as mountains, valleys, desert, forests, lakes, and rivers. The eastern part of the county is home to the southern tip of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. On the western side of the county is the Tremblor Mountain Range, which is one of the California Coastal Ranges. Between these two mountain ranges lies the southern part of the San Joaquin Valley, part of the Central Valley. The Central Valley is the major agricultural production region for the state of California and covers a large area extending well beyond the borders of Kern County. The southern boundary of the San Joaquin Valley is the Tehachapi Mountains in the south of the county. In stark contrast to the fertile Central Valley, the Mojave Desert covers the southeastern portion of Kern County.

There are various types of parks and open spaces across the county. The incorporated cities, the county, the State of California, and the federal government each manage some of Kern's parks and green space. Kern is home to parts of Los Padres National Forest, Sequoia National Forest, Giant Sequoia National Monument, Bitter Creek National Wildlife Reserve, and Carrizo Plain National Monument, as well as Fort Tejon, Red Rock Canyon, and Colonel Allensworth State Parks and Tule Elk State Natural Reserve.

In addition to park and recreation land, the United States government operates two military facilities in Kern County. Edwards Air Force Base in eastern Kern and China Lake Naval Air Station in the northeastern part of the county both contain large areas of preserved open space but these areas are not accessible to the public.

Local authorities, including the county government, the incorporated city governments, and special park and recreation districts also own and manage park and recreation land. The City of Bakersfield and Kern County own almost all of this land. Many of the small, incorporated cities in the county maintain fewer than five parks.

*Tejon Ranch.* Kern County is also home to Tejon Ranch, the largest privately owned parcel of land in the state of California. The 270,000-acre property has a remarkable array of biodiversity, providing critical habitat to a number of federally- and state-protected species of animals and plants, including the California condor.<sup>389</sup> The property owner, Tejon Ranch Company, has declared its intentions to extensively develop residential and commercial real estate throughout Tejon Ranch.<sup>390</sup>

Development plans for Tejon Ranch have been a source of considerable controversy for several years. In 2008 a broad coalition of environmental groups reached an agreement with the Tejon Ranch Company that will allow for the company to proceed with three major development projects while preserving 178,000 acres. Additionally, the agreement makes 62,000 acres available for public purchase, with 49,000 of these acres designated for a potential state park and an additional 10,000 acres allocated for the realignment of the Pacific Crest Hiking Trail.<sup>391</sup>



*Demographics.* Kern County's official population in 2000 was 661,645. The estimated population as of 2006 was 800,458.<sup>392</sup> This represents a 21% growth rate over the past eight years. Of the population from 2000, 49.5% consider themselves Non-Hispanic white; 38.4% identify as Latino; 3.4% are of Asian or Pacific Islander descent; 6.0% are black/African American; and 1.5% are Native American (see Table 18).<sup>393</sup>

**Table 18. Kern County Demographic Distribution<sup>394</sup>**

Race or Ethnicity	Population	Percent of Total Population (%)
White, Non-Hispanic	327,190	49.5
Hispanic/Latino	254,036	38.4
Asian	22,268	3.4
Black/African American	39,798	6.0
Native American	9,999	1.5

The population of the county is not evenly distributed and integrated (see Maps KC-1 and KC-2). The City of Bakersfield accounts for such a large proportion of the total population of the county that its racial and ethnic breakdown is similar to the county as a whole. In the rest of the county, ethnic groups tend to be separated into a few areas of high concentration with much smaller representations throughout the rest of the county. The Latino population is mostly clustered in the agricultural areas in the north-central part of the county, including the cities of Arvin, Delano, McFarland, Shafter, and Wasco. At least 67% of the population in each of these cities is Latino. More than 85% of the population in Arvin and McFarland is Latino. The proportion of Latino residents in these cities can fluctuate even higher on a seasonal basis when migrant laborers work in the agricultural fields during harvests.

In contrast, approximately 80% or more of the population in the cities of Maricopa and Taft in the oil-producing western part of Kern County are non-Hispanic whites. In the eastern part of Kern, the cities of California City and Ridgecrest also have significantly higher proportions of non-Hispanic white residents than the county average. The Latino population in all four of those cities is less than half the county average.

Although Latinos account for most of the population of color in Kern, there are also pockets of other racial or ethnic groups within the county, including a large population of Filipinos in Delano and of Native Americans in Arvin.

## 2. Access to Parks

The maps and analyses of Kern County for green access and equity reflect patterns similar to those in other counties in Southern California (see Maps KC-1, KC-2, and KC-3). Though there are significant amounts of park and open space land within the county, not all Kern County residents have equal access to those resources. Most of the parks are large regional parks, state parks, or federally protected lands, as opposed to neighborhood and pocket parks. Although these larger types of parks can cater to the needs of the population across a wide area, in Kern County most residents can only access these large parks by car. Public transportation in Kern County is focused around the Bakersfield metropolitan area and does not serve all areas of the county well. For Kern residents who do not live in the Bakersfield metropolitan area and do not have ready access to a car, reaching the county's parks can be extremely difficult.

*Acres of Parks per Thousand Residents.* The agricultural areas in the north-central portion of the county, which are disproportionately Latino, lack sufficient park space (see Map KC 2). There are only a handful of parks in each of the incorporated cities in this part of the county, and there are not many county parks, either. In contrast, the disproportionately non-Hispanic white cities in Kern County have the highest ratios of parks per thousand residents. Bakersfield, Tehachapi, California City, and Ridgecrest all offer far more than three acres per thousand residents, with Tehachapi and California City each providing more than 10 acres per 1,000 residents.

The Bakersfield Department of Recreation and Parks and the North of the River Special Recreation and Park District provide more than 2,000 acres of parks to residents of the City of Bakersfield, not including county parks in the city. With a population of 247,057 in the city, this equates to about 8.3 acres of city parks per thousand residents.

*Kern River Parkway.* A significant amount of Bakersfield's park space is in the Kern River Parkway. This 1,400-acre park consists of interconnected recreational areas, bicycle paths, hiking trails, and preserved natural areas along the Kern River.<sup>395</sup> This park system is jointly managed by the City of Bakersfield, Kern County, and the state, and offers a diversity of recreational opportunities, including sports and active recreation, horseback riding, picnicking and other forms of passive recreation, cultural events such as concerts and theater, as well as boating, fishing, and swimming.<sup>396</sup>



Old Japanese American National Museum Little Tokyo | Nic Garcia

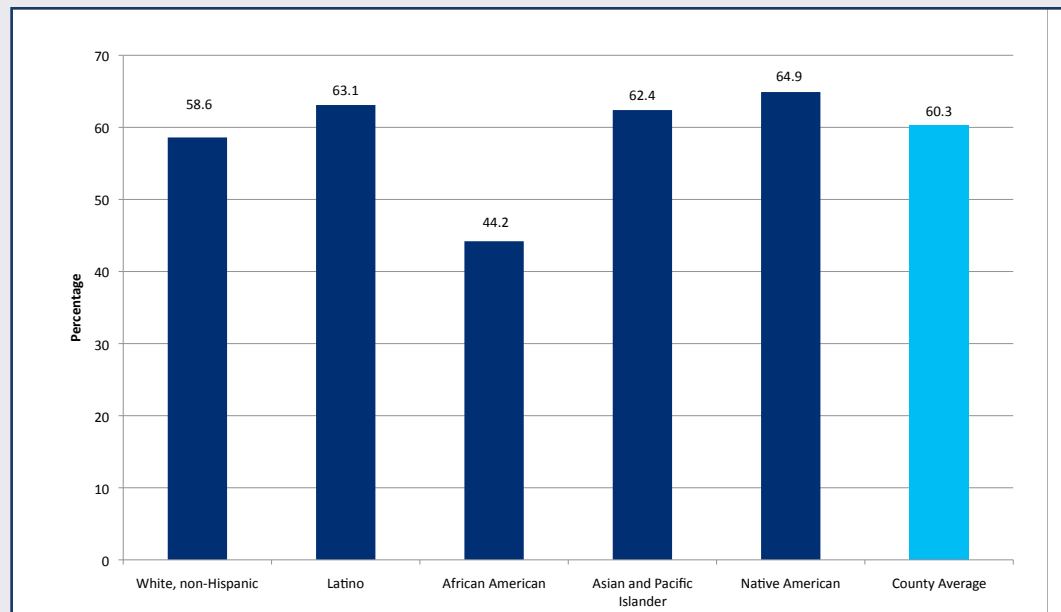


### 3. Childhood Obesity, Health, and Physical Fitness Levels

*Child Obesity.* The rates of child obesity and overweight are intolerably high for children in Kern County, with 30% of all children under the age of 18 falling into one of these categories.<sup>397</sup> The rates of overweight and obesity among teenagers (ages 12-17) in Kern County are a little bit better, approximately 19%,<sup>398</sup> but are nonetheless troubling. Not surprisingly, there are significant disparities in childhood overweight and obesity rates throughout the county. In the cities with the worst access to parks, such as Wasco, Delano, Shafter, and Arvin, a higher percentage of children are overweight or obese than the county average (see Map KC-3).<sup>399</sup> These cities are also all disproportionately Latino. On the other hand, Tehachapi is disproportionately non-Hispanic white, has the highest ratio of acres of parks per 1,000 residents in the county, and has the lowest percentage of overweight or obese children. The disparities are striking, with 42% of children in Wasco considered overweight or obese compared to only 14% of children in Tehachapi.<sup>400</sup>

Overweight and obesity are problems among adults in Kern, as well. 60.3% of adults (age 18 and older) in Kern County are either overweight or obese.<sup>401</sup> There are also significant disparities between ethnic groups. Latinos (63%) and Native Americans (65%) have the highest rates of overweight and obesity in the county.<sup>402</sup> Figure 5 shows cumulative rates of overweight and obesity among adults in Kern County by ethnic group.

**Figure 5. Percentage of Overweight and Obese Adults in Kern County<sup>403</sup>**



*Health.* Kern County has the dubious distinction of being home to the worst air quality in the United States. The United States EPA declared that the City of Arvin, which is 88% Latino, had more days in which smog-forming air pollution exceeded the acceptable limit than any other city in the entire United States in 2007.<sup>404</sup> In a harsh irony, this agriculture-based city generates very little of the pollution from which it suffers. Instead, the city is a victim to the actions of its neighbors and its location at the bottom of the Central Valley, hemmed in by 3 mountain ranges. Air pollution from as far away as the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles, as well as pollution from trucks and cars passing by on nearby Interstate 5, gets trapped by the mountains and collects over Arvin. On average, there are more than 70 days per year in which pollution levels exceed federal limits.<sup>405</sup> The residents of Arvin are the ones who suffer. Children are particularly vulnerable. 17.5% of children across Kern County have asthma, in excess of the state average of 14.8% and the national average of 12.2%.<sup>406</sup> For all residents of Arvin and the surrounding communities, poor air quality forces people to stay inside more often in order to protect their health and safety, making it more difficult to be physically active.

*Physical Fitness.* The health implications of the lack of places to play in parks and schools are profound. In Kern County, 72.4% of fifth, seventh, and ninth graders failed to achieve physical fitness standards during the 2007-2008 school year.<sup>407</sup> There is a wide disparity in fitness rates between racial and ethnic groups. On average, Latino and African American children are far less physically fit than their white and Asian classmates for all grade levels assessed. For example, 35.3% of white and 44.2% of Asian seventh grade students in Kern achieved physical fitness standards while only 26.3% of Latino and 26.0% of African American seventh graders were physically fit.<sup>408</sup> Table 19 shows the percentage of Kern County students that achieved physical fitness standards broken down by race and ethnicity.

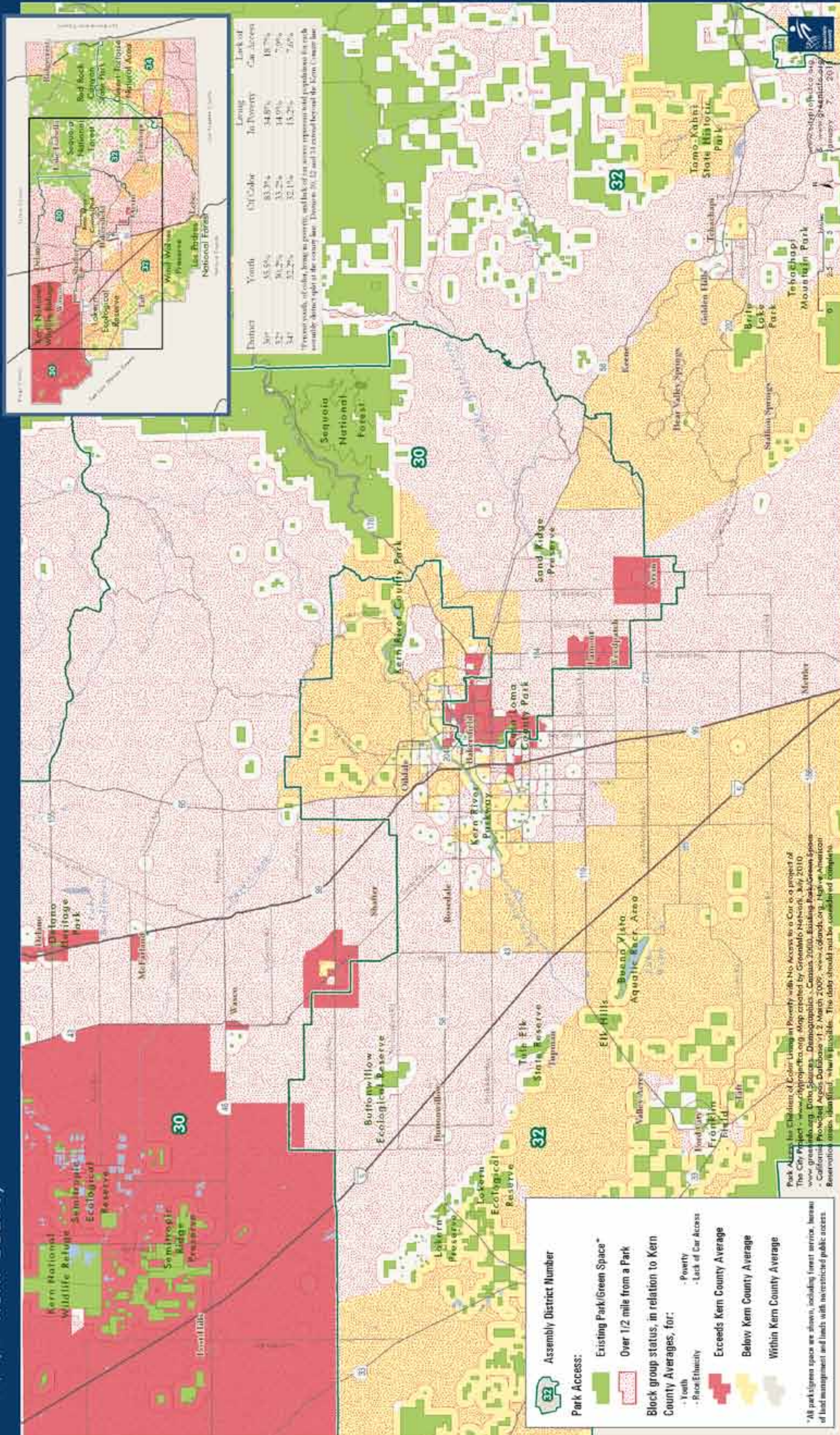
**Table 19. Percentage of Physically Fit Children in Kern County by Race/Ethnicity<sup>409</sup>**

Race or Ethnicity	5th Grade (%)	7th Grade (%)	9th Grade (%)
White, non-Hispanic	34.1	35.3	29.9
Hispanic/Latino	21.4	26.3	25.5
Black/African American	27.8	26.0	27.4
Asian and Pacific Islander	36.3	44.2	40.7
Kern County	25.7	29.6	27.4



# Park Access for Children of Color Living in Poverty with No Access to a Car

The City Project  
Kern County



District	Youth	Ch/Color	Living In Poverty	Lack of Car Access
30*	35.5%	83.3%	34.8%	48.7%
32*	31.2%	33.2%	14.9%	7.0%
34*	32.2%	32.1%	15.2%	7.6%

\*Percent youth of color, living in poverty, and lack of car access represent total populations for each assembly district split in the county line. Districts 30, 32 and 33 extend beyond the Kern County line.

**Assembly District Number**

**Park Access:**

- Existing Park/Green Space\*
- Over 1/2 mile from a Park

**Block group status, in relation to Kern County Averages, for:**

- Youth
- Race/Ethnicity
- Poverty
- Lack of Car Access

- Exceeds Kern County Average
- Below Kern County Average
- Within Kern County Average

\*All park/green space are shown, including forest services, Bureau of Land Management and lands with restricted public access.

Park Access for Children of Color Living in Poverty with No Access to a Car is a project of The City Project - www.cityprojectca.org. Map created by GreenInfo Network, July 2010. www.greeninfo.org. Data Sources: Demographics - Census 2010, Existing Park/Green Space - California Protected Areas Database v1.2 March 2009, www.cadlands.org, Native American Reservations - www.blm.gov. The data should not be considered complete.











KERN COUNTY			CALIFORNIA	
	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT
Total Population	661,645	-	33,871,648	-
Children (under 18)	210,770	32%	9,221,463	27%
Seniors (65 and over)	62,175	9%	3,586,794	11%
<b>Race / Ethnicity<sup>+</sup></b>				
Non- Hispanic White	326,523	49%	15,771,163	47%
Hispanic	254,059	38%	10,969,132	32%
African American	38,804	6%	2,219,190	7%
Native American	9,014	1%	312,215	1%
Asian Pacific Islander	22,340	3%	3,796,833	11%
Other Race	155,595	24%	5,725,844	17%
2 or more races	29,500	4%	1,694,607	5%
<b>Income / Poverty</b>				
Median Household Income	\$35,446	-	\$42,896	-
In Poverty	130,949	21%	4,706,130	14%
Percent of people in poverty under 18 years of age	58,213	44%	1,757,100	37%
Percent of people in poverty over 65 years of age	6,310	5%	280,411	6%
<b>Rent / Own</b>				
Own	129,661	62%	6,546,237	57%
Rent	78,991	38%	4,956,633	43%
<b>Transportation</b>				
No Car Access	21,732	10%	1,091,214	9%
<b>Health</b>				
% of Overweight and Obese Children*	-	29%	-	27%
Passed 5 of 6 Physical Fitness Exams**	9,769	25%	366,228	27%
Passed 6 of 6 Physical Fitness Exams**	10,623	28%	443,504	32%
Students Enrolled in Free and Reduced Lunch Program**	105,226	62%	3,152,330	51%
<b>Parks and Open Space***</b>				
Acres of Green Space	1,269,367	-	48,490,056	-
Acres of Bureau of Land Management land	719,812	-	15,117,778	-
Acres of Forest Service land	377,253	-	20,695,282	-
Total Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents	1,919	-	1,432	-
Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents (w/o BLM)	831	-	985	-
Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents (w/o FS)	1,348	-	821	-
Net Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents (w/o BLM & FS)	260	-	374	-

<sup>+</sup> Race/ethnicity figures will not add up to 100%. Census 2000 allowed respondents to mark multiple races in addition to being

<sup>\*</sup>County obesity figures are derived from assembly district data. A weighted average was run based on population.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Data calculated for grades 5, 7, and 9 from Data Quest, California Department of Education 2007-08

[http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/gls\\_calworks.asp](http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/gls_calworks.asp)

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> All parks and open space data has been calculated from GreenInfo Network's California Protected Areas Database (CPAD) version 1.2, March 2009 [www.calands.org](http://www.calands.org)





Park Acreage for Kern County by Assembly District					
A	B	C	D	E	F
District	Total Population	Total Acres of Parks	Total Acres of Parks per 1,000 Residents	Net Acres of Parks, Without Sequoia National Forest, Los Padres National Forest, other U.S. Forest Service Land, and U.S. Bureau Of Land Management Land	Net Acres of Parks per 1,000 Residents
30	50,984	103,718	2,034.33	25,243	495.12
32	421,737	1,047,715	2,484.29	144,187	341.89
34	17,942	133,003	7,413.05	19,094	1,064.25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>490,662</b>	<b>1,284,436</b>	<b>2,617.76</b>	<b>188,524</b>	<b>384.22</b>

This Chart shows acres of parks per thousand residents for the County of Kern as a whole, and in each State Assembly District, first with Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land included, and then without the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land. The Chart breaks down this information as follows.

Column B shows the total population in the County and in each Assembly District.

Column C shows the total acres of parks in the County and in each District, including Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land.

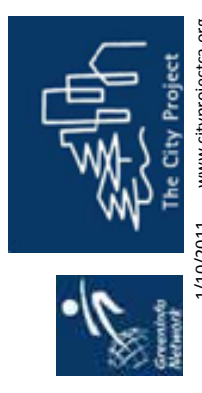
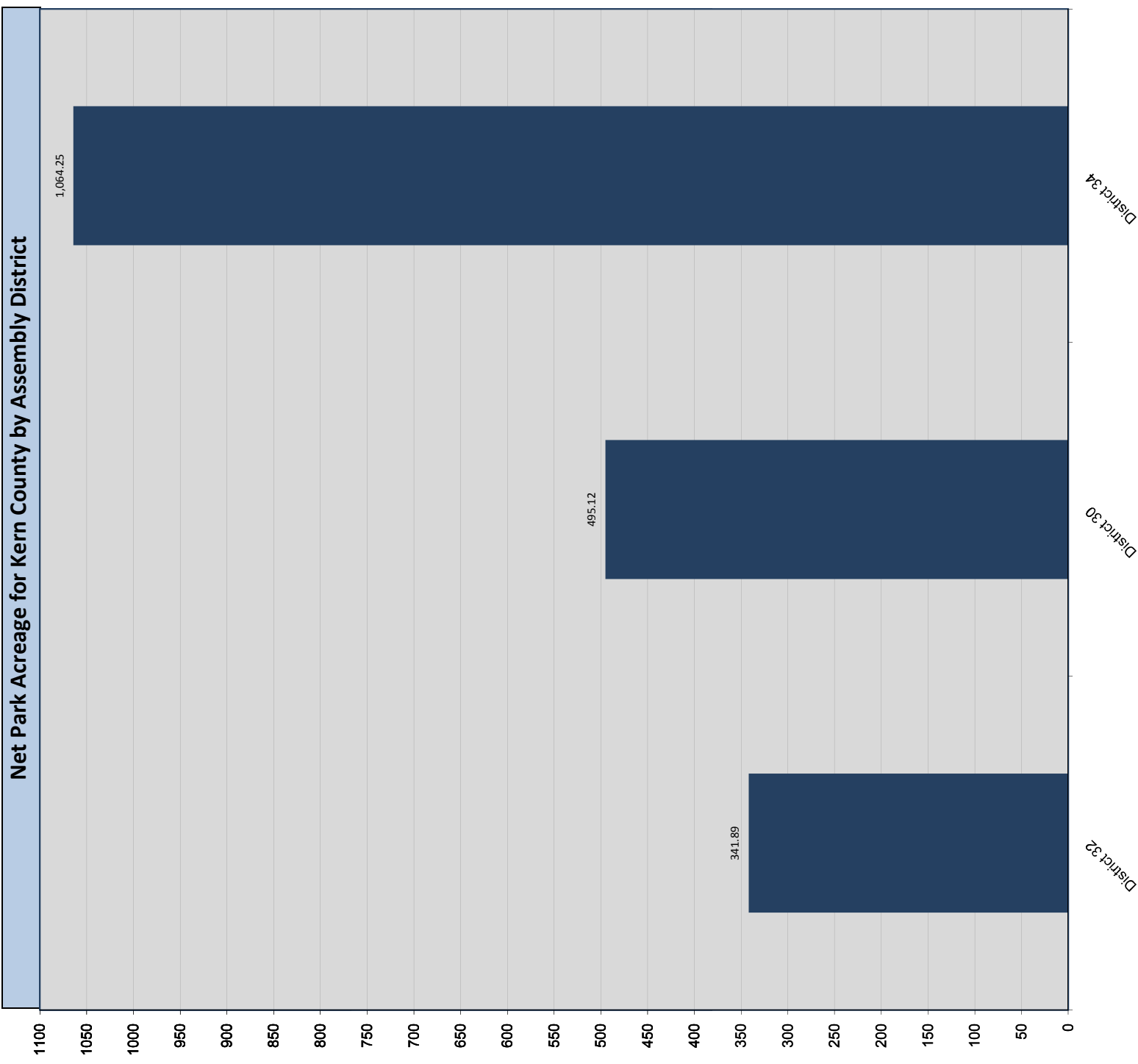
Column D shows the total acres of parks per thousand residents in the County and in each District, including Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land.

In Columns E and F, the acres of Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land that actually lie within each District are subtracted. For example, the Sequoia National Forest covers close to 1,080,990 acres, but only the 304,715 acres that actually lie within the County and each District are excluded.

The acreage for the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land and that is subtracted in Column E is as follows:

- Sequoia National Forest 304,715 acres
- Los Padres National Forest 71,275 acres
- Other USFS Land 110 acres
- BLM Land 719,812 acres

**Based on these calculations, 7% of all land in Kern County is in the Sequoia National Forest and the Los Padres National Forest. Fully 29% of all park space in the County is in the National Forests.**







## H. Santa Barbara County

### 1. Overview

Santa Barbara County lies to the northwest of Los Angeles County and is bordered by Ventura County to the east, San Luis Obispo County to the north, and Kern County to the northeast. Part of the coastline in Santa Barbara County runs east to west, with the Pacific Ocean lying to the south like it does in Ventura County. Approximately half of the 110 miles of beaches in Santa Barbara are face the south.<sup>410</sup> The official population of Santa Barbara County as of 2000 was 399,347,<sup>411</sup> making it the second least populated county in Southern California. The county is spread out over 2,737 square miles of land and also includes 1,052 square miles of water.<sup>412</sup>

There are eight incorporated cities within Santa Barbara County. The City of Goleta became Santa Barbara's newest city when it incorporated in 2002. The City of Santa Barbara is the county seat and the most populous city in the county as of 2000.<sup>413</sup> Recent population estimates now list the City of Santa Maria as the most populated city in the county.<sup>414</sup>

*Geography.* The diverse range of geography in Santa Barbara County includes mountains, valleys, forests, coastal plains, lakes, rivers, and beaches. The mountain ranges, in particular, play a notable role in distinguishing the distinct geographical regions of the county. All of the mountains in Santa Barbara County, including those in the Santa Ynez, San Rafael, and Sierra Madre ranges, run east to west. The majority of the land in Santa Barbara's mountain ranges lies in Los Padres National Forest, one of several federally protected green spaces within the county.

Nearly one third of the total land acreage of Santa Barbara County is covered by Los Padres National Forest, which runs through much of the northeastern and central parts of Santa Barbara County.<sup>415</sup> There are also two federally protected Wilderness Areas, San Rafael Wilderness and Dick Smith Wilderness, in the portion of Los Padres National Forest that is within Santa Barbara County. Santa Barbara is also home to the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes National Wildlife Refuge and Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve, both managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other federally protected land parcels managed by the Bureau of Land Management.<sup>416</sup>

Santa Barbara County also includes four of the five islands that make up the Channel Islands National Park and National Marine Sanctuary. This 294,354-acre land and underwater national park is made up of five uninhabited islands adjacent to the Santa Barbara Channel and the underwater ecosystems surrounding them.<sup>417</sup>

The State of California operates five state beaches in the county, including Carpinteria, El Capitan, Refugio, Point Sal, and Gaviota.<sup>418</sup> There is also beach access within Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area. This 5.5-mile stretch of beach in the northern part of the county is designated for use only by off-highway motor vehicles. As a result, public access to the beach is effectively blocked for anyone who does not drive off-road vehicles.

The County of Santa Barbara maintains 27 parks and open spaces, including six beaches, covering over 7,200 acres. The county also manages more than 30 miles of trails throughout its designated green spaces.<sup>419</sup> The eight incorporated cities collectively operate more than 2,000 acres of parks and other green spaces. The City of Santa Barbara operates nearly 1,600 acres of green space, far more than any other city in the county.

*North County and South County.* The county is unofficially divided into distinct regions: North County and South County, sometimes also referred to as the South Coast. The dividing line between the two regions is the Santa Ynez Mountain range. Wealthy homeowners, beaches, and academic institutions such as the University of California Santa Barbara characterize South County. The economy of coastal South County is dominated by tourism, whereas agriculture, ranching, and oil development are the dominant industries in the more sparsely populated North County. The Santa Ynez Valley, one of California's most productive wine regions, is located in North County, as is Vandenberg Air Force base. On several occasions, including as recently as 2006, North County has attempted to break away to form its own county.<sup>420</sup> To date, those efforts have not been successful.



*Demographics.* The official population of Santa Barbara County was 399,347 in 2000. The estimated population as of 2007 was 424,425, a growth rate of approximately 6.3% over a seven-year span.<sup>421</sup> Of the population from 2000, 54.1% consider themselves non-Hispanic white; 34.2% identify as Latino; 4.3% are of Asian or Pacific Islander descent; 2.3% are black/African American; and 1.2% are Native American (see Table 20).<sup>422</sup> Latinos are the fastest growing population in the county, with a growth rate of more than 37% from 2000-2005. If the current trends continue, a majority of the county's residents will belong to a racial or ethnic group typically defined as "minority" within the next few years.<sup>423</sup>

**Table 20. Santa Barbara County Demographic Distribution<sup>424</sup>**

Race or Ethnicity	Population	Percent of Total Population (%)
White, Non-Hispanic	216,047	54.1
Hispanic/Latino	136,577	34.2
Asian and Pacific Islander	171,172	4.3
Black/African American	9,185	2.3
Native American	4,792	1.2

Santa Barbara County's population is not evenly distributed, however. Some cities and unincorporated areas have large populations of certain racial and ethnic groups, while that same group may not be well represented in other cities. For example, the City of Guadalupe in the Santa Maria Valley in North County is over 84% Latino but only 19.9% of the population of the City of Solvang, in the Santa Ynez Valley in North County, is Latino. Santa Maria, the most populous city in the county according to 2008 estimates, is 60% Latino. More than 3,000 African Americans live in the City of Lompoc, nearly one-third of the county's total African American population, while the cities of Buellton, Carpinteria, Guadalupe, and Solvang each have fewer than 100 African American residents. Other cities, such as Goleta, Solvang, and Buellton, are disproportionately non-Hispanic white.

## 2. Access to Parks

There are hundreds of parks and recreational areas throughout the county, as well as large tracts of open space but not all residents of Santa Barbara have equal access to green space. Maps STB-1, STB-2, and STB-3 show that the areas in the county with the most people of color, highest rates of poverty, and worst access to cars also have the worst access to parks.

Many of Santa Barbara County's largest tracts of open land, including Los Padres National Forest, large open space parks managed by the City of Santa Barbara, and county parks, are located far from the major population centers. Making matters worse, it is difficult or impossible to access most of these parks via public transportation. Residents who lack access to a car are effectively cut off from these green spaces.

*Acres of Parks per Thousand Residents.* The amount of land dedicated to parks and recreation in each of the incorporated cities varies widely in Santa Barbara County (see Maps STB-1 and STB-2). The City of Goleta which is disproportionately non-Hispanic white provides over 17 acres of parks per thousand residents, while Guadalupe, which is 84.5% Latino, offers only 3.6 acres per thousand residents. While each of the incorporated cities in Santa Barbara does offer more than three acres of parks per thousand residents, Guadalupe and Santa Maria, the two most heavily Latino cities in the county, have the lowest amounts of parks per thousand residents.

The three incorporated cities in South County, Santa Barbara, Carpinteria, and Goleta, each have more than three acres of parks per thousand residents and each offer beach access, as well. Carpinteria, the only city on the South Coast that is disproportionately Latino, provides less than half the amount of parks per thousand residents than the other two cities.

There is a large amount of open space in North County but much of that is privately held land. Many of the public green spaces in North County are large county operated parks that are not close to many residents. In general, the cities in North County offer less publicly accessible green space per thousand residents than the cities in South County. Of the five cities in North County, four of those offer the four lowest amounts of park acres per thousand residents in the county. Public transportation is limited in much of North County, so many of the large county parks in this part of the county are not accessible to anyone who lacks access to a car.



Castelar School in Chinatown | The City Project



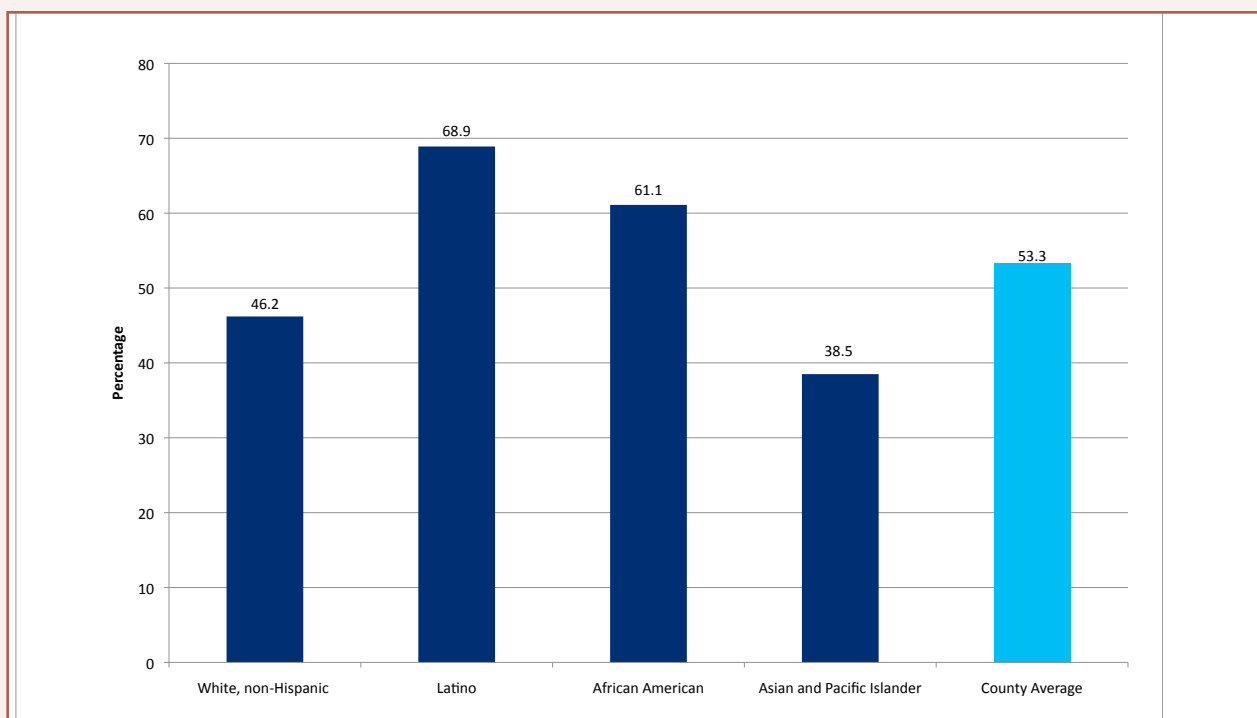
### 3. Childhood Obesity and Physical Fitness Levels

*Child Obesity.* Nearly 26% of all children in Santa Barbara County are either overweight or obese.<sup>425</sup> Not surprisingly, some parts of the county suffer more than others (see Map STB-3). For example, 35.4% of children in Lompoc, which is disproportionately black, are overweight or obese while 23.8% of children in disproportionately non-Hispanic white Goleta suffer from those conditions.<sup>426</sup> While these rates are too high in both of these cities, the disparity is clear. The numbers are even more troubling when looking only at teenagers. Approximately 38% of teenagers in Santa Barbara are either at risk or are already overweight or obese.<sup>427</sup>

*Adult Obesity.* In keeping with the trend throughout Southern California for obesity rates, Santa Barbara County's adults are more overweight and obese than its youth. Fully 53.3% of adults (age 18 and older) in Santa Barbara County are either overweight or obese.<sup>428</sup> While adults in the county are slightly less overweight and obese than the statewide average,<sup>429</sup> there are significant disparities based on race and ethnicity. Rates of overweight and obesity are particularly high for Latinos and African Americans, at 68.9% and 61.1%, respectively.<sup>430</sup> Asian and Pacific Islanders had the lowest rates of overweight and obesity of all racial or ethnic groups. Figure 6 shows cumulative rates of overweight and obesity among adults in Santa Barbara County by ethnic group.

The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department states in its *Community Health Status Report 2009* that the higher rates of overweight and obesity among Latino adults are, in part, due to lower income levels and less access to healthy food. The report also notes that there is a 3:1 ratio of fast food vendors to supermarkets and produce vendors in the county and that the ratio is higher in some low-income neighborhoods.<sup>431</sup> Further exacerbating the situation, there are often not enough places for children and adults in Santa Barbara to be physically active in disproportionately Latino communities in Santa Barbara (see Map STB-3). These factors point to a need for better access to healthy foods, including fruits and vegetables, as well as better access to green spaces and recreational facilities where residents can engage in physical activity.

**Figure 6. Percentage of Overweight and Obese Adults in Santa Barbara County<sup>432</sup>**



*Physical Fitness.* In Santa Barbara County, 61% of fifth, seventh, and ninth graders did not achieve minimum physical fitness standards in the 2007-2008 school year.<sup>433</sup> Although students in Santa Barbara on average are slightly more physically fit compared to their peers across the state,<sup>434</sup> the number of children who are not physically fit is too high. There is a wide disparity in fitness rates between racial and ethnic groups.

On average, Latino and black children are far less physically fit than their non-Hispanic white and Asian classmates for all grade levels assessed. Latino students, in particular, are suffering from a lack of physical fitness. For each grade assessed, Latinos are significantly below the county average and are near or at the lowest levels of physical fitness of any racial or ethnic group. Table 21 shows the percentage of Santa Barbara County students that achieved physical fitness standards by race and ethnicity.

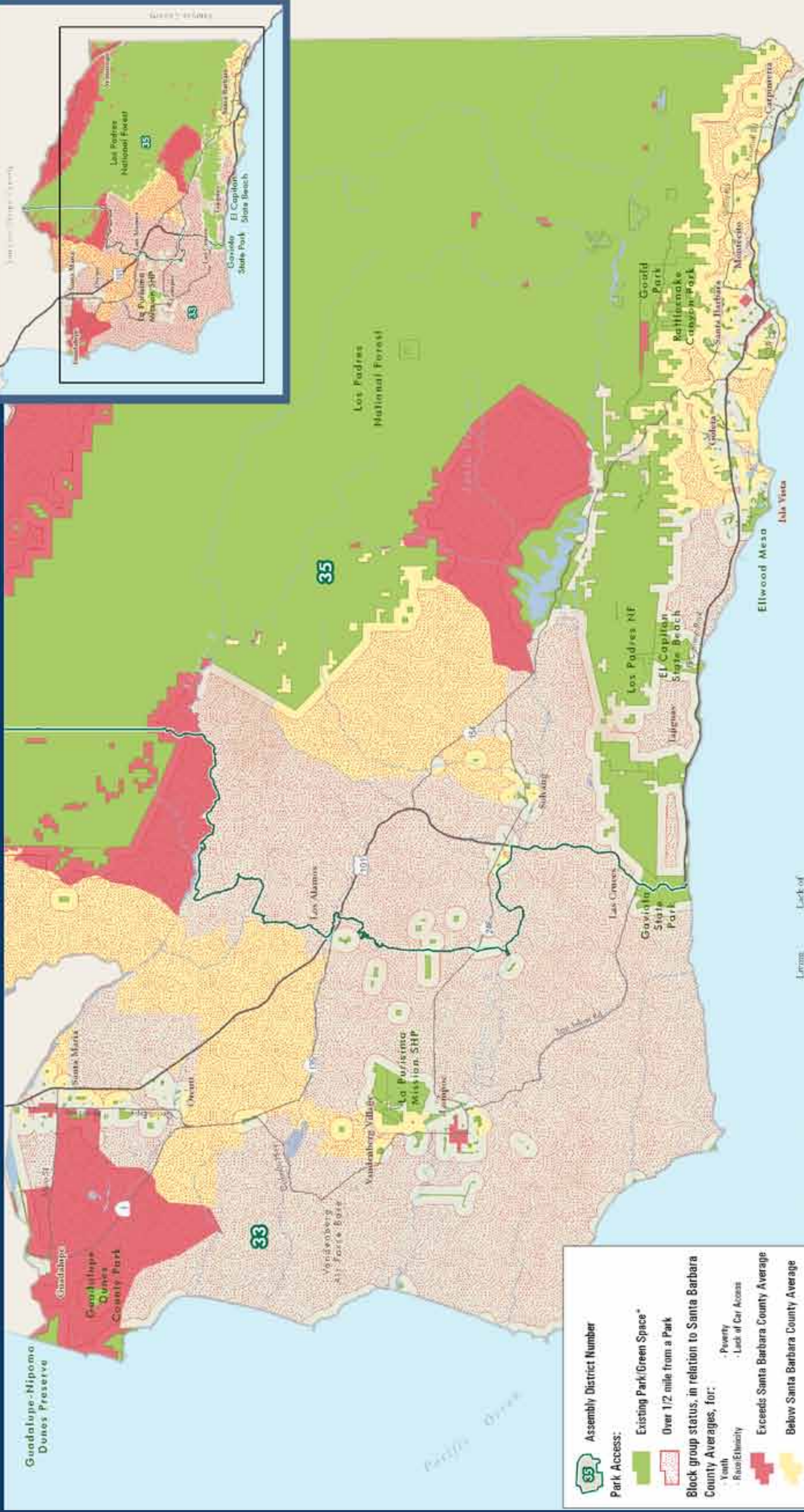
**Table 21. Physically Fit Children in Santa Barbara County by Race/Ethnicity<sup>435</sup>**

Race or Ethnicity	5th Grade (%)	7th Grade (%)	9th Grade (%)
White, non-Hispanic	45.2	52.2	55.3
Latino	25.6	35.6	38.4
African American	25.4	39.2	55.2
Asian and Pacific Islander	45.8	54.4	62.8
Santa Barbara County	32.5	38.9	45.6



# Park Access for Children of Color Living in Poverty with No Access to a Car

The City Project  
Santa Barbara County



**33** Assembly District Number

**Park Access:**

- Existing Park/Green Space\*
- Over 1/2 mile from a Park

**Block group status, in relation to Santa Barbara County Averages, for:**

- Youth
- Race/Ethnicity
- Poverty
- Lack of Car Access

- Exceeds Santa Barbara County Average
- Below Santa Barbara County Average
- Within Santa Barbara County Average

\*All parks/green space are shown, including forest service, Bureau of Land Management and fields with unrestricted public access.

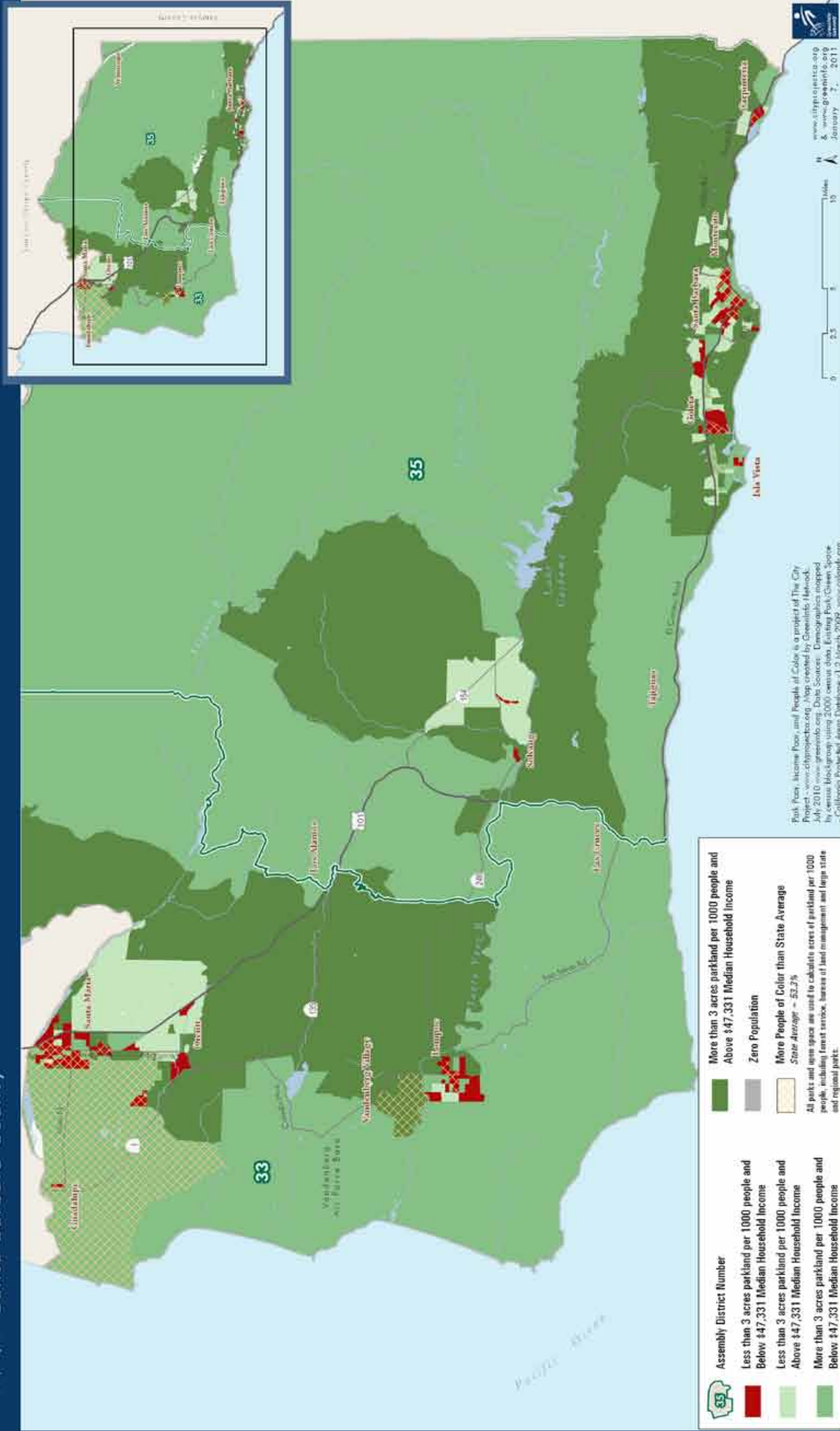
District	Youth	Of Color	Living in Poverty	Lack of Car Access
33*	30.4%	50.5%	14.0%	6.4%
35*	30.6%	52.0%	13.0%	7.1%

\*Percent youth, of color, living in poverty, and lack of car access represent total populations for each assembly district relative to county total. Districts 33 and 35 extend beyond the State Parkway Corridor.

Park Access for Children of Color Living in Poverty with No Access to a Car is a project of The City Project - [www.thecityproject.org](http://www.thecityproject.org). Map created by GreenInfo Network, July 2010  
 www.greeninfo.org. Data Sources: Demographics - Census 2000, Existing Park/Green Space - California Protected Areas Database v1.2, March 2009. [www.calands.org](http://www.calands.org); Native American Reservation areas identified, where possible. The data should not be considered complete.













SANTA BARBARA COUNTY			CALIFORNIA	
	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT
Total Population	399,347	-	33,871,648	-
Children (under 18)	98,773	25%	9,221,463	27%
Seniors (65 and over)	50,550	13%	3,586,794	11%
<b>Race / Ethnicity<sup>+</sup></b>				
Non- Hispanic White	226,841	57%	15,771,163	47%
Hispanic	136,737	34%	10,969,132	32%
African American	9,057	2%	2,219,190	7%
Native American	4,318	1%	312,215	1%
Asian Pacific Islander	16,535	4%	3,796,833	11%
Other Race	61,445	15%	5,725,844	17%
2 or more races	17,745	4%	1,694,607	5%
<b>Income / Poverty</b>				
Median Household Income	\$46,677	-	\$42,896	-
In Poverty	55,086	14%	4,706,130	14%
Percent of people in poverty under 18 years of age	16,319	30%	1,757,100	37%
Percent of people in poverty over 65 years of age	3,059	6%	280,411	6%
<b>Rent / Own</b>				
Own	76,579	56%	6,546,237	57%
Rent	60,043	44%	4,956,633	43%
<b>Transportation</b>				
No Car Access	9,366	7%	1,091,214	9%
<b>Health</b>				
% of Overweight and Obese Children*	-	26%	-	27%
Passed 5 of 6 Physical Fitness Exams**	3,731	26%	366,228	27%
Passed 6 of 6 Physical Fitness Exams**	5,573	39%	443,504	32%
Students Enrolled in Free and Reduced Lunch Program**	34,304	53%	3,152,330	51%
<b>Parks and Open Space***</b>				
Acres of Green Space	797,192	-	48,490,056	-
Acres of Bureau of Land Management land	7,896	-	15,117,778	-
Acres of Forest Service land	628,404	-	20,695,282	-
Total Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents	1,996	-	1,432	-
Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents (w/o BLM)	1,976	-	985	-
Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents (w/o FS)	423	-	821	-
Net Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents (w/o BLM & FS)	403	-	374	-

\* Race/ethnicity figures will not add up to 100%. Census 2000 allowed respondents to mark multiple races in addition to being

\*County obesity figures are derived from assembly district data. A weighted average was run based on population.

\*\*Data calculated for grades 5, 7, and 9 from Data Quest, California Department of Education 2007-08

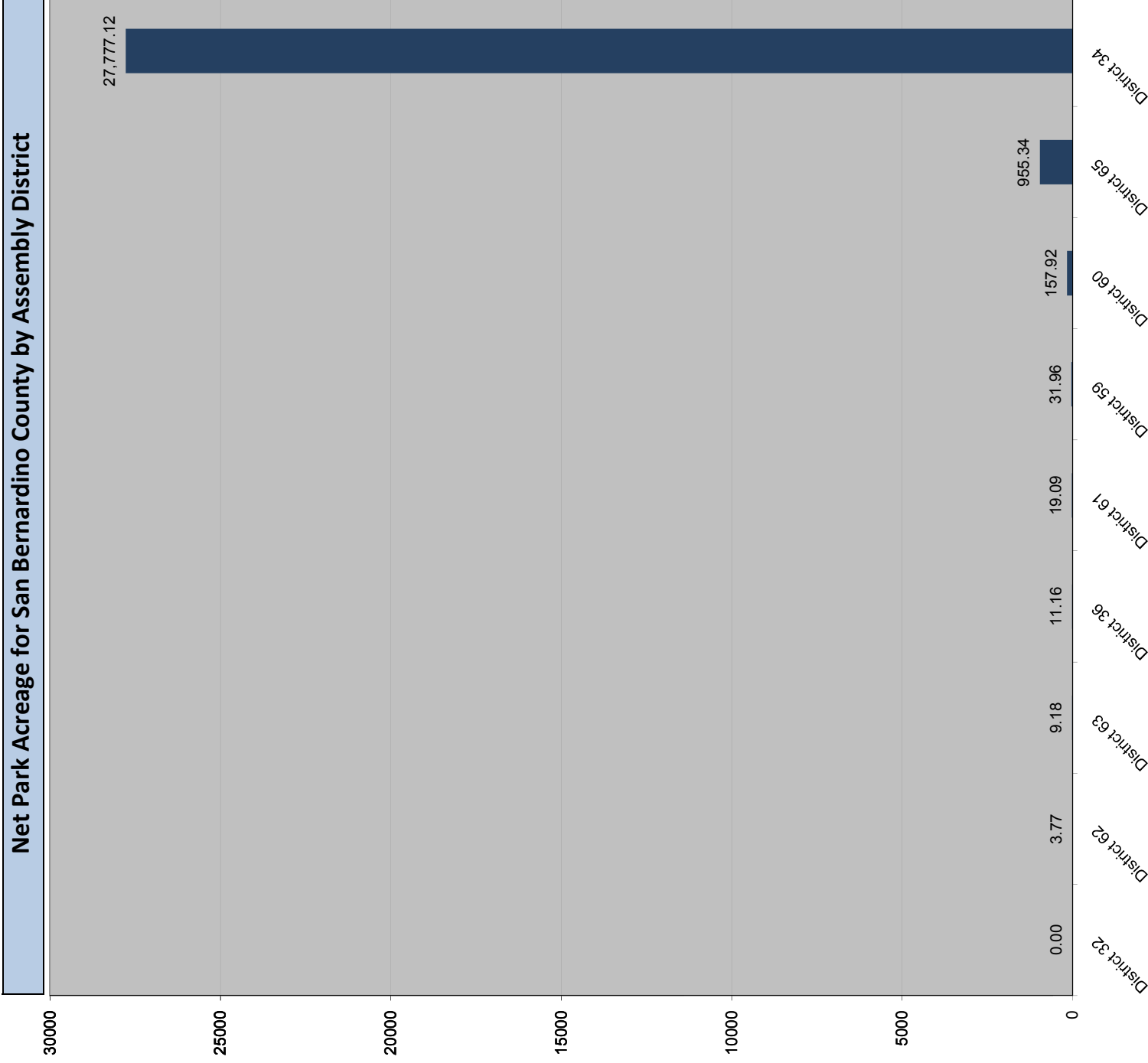
[http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/gls\\_calworks.asp](http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/gls_calworks.asp)

\*\*\* All parks and open space data has been calculated from GreenInfo Network's California Protected Areas Database (CPAD) version 1.2, March 2009 [www.calands.org](http://www.calands.org)





Park Acreage for San Bernardino County by Assembly District					
A	B	C	D	E	F
District	Total Population	Total Acres of Parks	Total Acres of Parks per 1,000 Residents	Net Acres of Parks, Without National Forests, other U.S. Forest Service Land, and U.S. Bureau Of Land Management Land	Net Acres of Parks per 1,000 Residents
32	1,960	0	0.00	0	0.00
34	72,547	7,683,944	105,916.77	2,015,147	27,777.12
36	132,986	213,142	1,602.74	1,484	11.16
59	212,358	241,776	1,138.53	6,786	31.96
60	66,782	10,546	157.92	10,546	157.92
61	273,701	5,226	19.09	5,226	19.09
62	421,080	1,589	3.77	1,589	3.77
63	416,835	18,119	43.47	3,827	9.18
65	111,185	427,623	3,846.05	106,219	955.34
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,709,434</b>	<b>8,601,965</b>	<b>5,032.05</b>	<b>2,150,824</b>	<b>1,258.21</b>



This Chart shows acres of parks per thousand residents for the County of San Bernardino as a whole, and in each State Assembly District, first with Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land included, and then without Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land. The Chart breaks down this information as follows.

**Column B** shows the total population in the County and in each Assembly District.

**Column C** shows the total acres of parks in the County and in each District, including Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land.

**Column D** shows the total acres of parks per thousand residents in the County and in each District, including Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service land.

In **Columns E and F**, the acres of Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land that actually lie within each District are subtracted. For example, the Angeles National Forest covers close to 700,000 acres, but only the 17,190 acres that actually lie within the County and each District are excluded.

The acreage for the Bureau of Land Management of Forest Service land that is subtracted in

**Column E** is as follows:

- Angeles National Forest 17,190 acres
- San Bernardino National Forest 450,035 acres
- Bureau of Land Management 5,967,627 acres

**Based on these calculations, 3.5% of all land in San Bernardino County is in National Forests and 46% is owned by the Bureau of Land Management. Fully 5% of all park space in the County is forest land. Fully 69% of all park space in the County is held by the Bureau of Land Management. A total of 74.5% of park space being either Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management land.**







## I. Imperial County

### 1. Overview

Imperial County is the southeastern-most county in California, sharing its southern border with Mexico and its eastern border with Arizona. San Diego County lies to the west of Imperial and Riverside County is to the north. Imperial County lies in the Imperial Valley, from which it takes its name. The Imperial Valley straddles the U.S.-Mexico border, with about half of the land in the U.S. and half in Mexico. Due to its proximity to Mexico, Imperial County has the highest percentage of Latinos of any county in California.<sup>436</sup> Fully 72% of all residents of Imperial County are Hispanic/Latino. Imperial County also has the dubious distinction of having the highest unemployment rate, 27.0% as of April 2010, of any county in California.<sup>437</sup>

Despite averaging less than three inches of rainfall every year, Imperial is one of the most productive agricultural regions in the state. This agriculture is almost entirely supported by irrigation from the Colorado River, which comes to the county via the All-American Canal.<sup>438</sup>

With an official population of 142,361 as of 2000, Imperial is the least populated of all the southern California counties.<sup>439</sup> The total area of the county is 4,482 square miles, much of which is below sea level.<sup>440</sup> There are currently seven incorporated cities within Imperial County. The City of El Centro is the county seat, the economic hub, and the largest city in the county. The largest city in the Imperial Valley is Mexicali, which is on the Mexican side of the border, directly adjacent to the City of Calexico on the U.S. side.

*Geography.* Much of Imperial County is in the Colorado Desert, which is part of the larger Sonoran Desert. Temperatures regularly exceed 100°F and rainfall is extremely limited. One of Imperial's most noteworthy geographic features is the Algodones Sand Dunes, the largest dune ecosystem in the United States. The dunes stretch in an eight-mile wide band for 40 miles in the eastern portion of the county.<sup>441</sup> The federal Bureau of Land Management manages part of this area, while other areas, such as the nearly 26,000-acre North Algodones Dunes Wilderness, are operated by the State of California. Though the dunes are a popular destination for recreation such as hiking and camping, a significant portion of the area is managed for off-road vehicle recreation. As a result, access to this space is restricted for residents that do not have the desire or financial means to drive off-road vehicles as a form of recreation.

Imperial County is also home to a portion of Anza Borrego Desert State Park. Lying mostly in San Diego County, Anza Borrego is the largest state park in California.<sup>442</sup> Although Imperial County residents are fortunate to have this vast natural space in their county, it is virtually impossible to access this park without a car.

Another notable geographic feature in Imperial County is the Salton Sea. Lying at 226 feet below sea level, the Salton Sea is a saltwater lake that was naturally created in 1905 as a result of heavy rains that caused the Colorado River to change course and empty into a previously dry basin. It now serves as the recipient of the drainage from agricultural production, which has caused the lake to become highly polluted and increasingly salty. Compounding the situation, since the lake has no outflow, the water level of the lake continues to rise as it receives more agricultural waste water. As the lake expands, the area that is becoming contaminated does as well.<sup>443</sup>

The Salton Sea was once a popular destination for tourists and local recreation but that is no longer the case as the water is unsuitable for recreation. Most fish species in the lake have died off as a result of pollution. At the south end of the Salton Sea is the Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge, which protects critical habitat for a large number of bird species that migrate through the area. Despite these protections, the polluted water and contaminated soil around the lake is suspected of being responsible for the increased number of birth defects and infant mortality among many of these bird populations.<sup>444</sup>

In addition to the Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also operate the Cibola National Wildlife Refuge and the Imperial National Wildlife Refuge within Imperial County. The Imperial National Wildlife Refuge, which runs along a 30-mile stretch of the lower Colorado River, is one of the few naturally green spaces within the county.

Many of the other green spaces, including most of the city-operated parks, in Imperial exist as a result of irrigation from the Colorado River. In addition to providing irrigation water to support the county's agriculture and municipal parks, the Colorado River itself provides many recreational opportunities. Largely due to the lack of other usable lakes or rivers in the county, the Colorado River is a popular site for fishing, boating, water skiing, and jet skiing.



*Demographics.* Imperial County's population is 142,361 according to the 2000 census. The estimated population as of 2007 was 172,672, a growth rate of 21.3% in just seven years.<sup>445</sup> In fact, the county's population grew 3.4% from 2006 to 2007 alone, the highest growth rate of any county in California for that period of time. Much of this exceptional growth in population has been driven by the affordable home prices in the county, as well as by immigration.<sup>446</sup>

Of the population from 2000, 20.2% identify as non-Hispanic white; 72.2% are Latino; 1.8% considers themselves Asian or Pacific Islanders; 3.6% identify as black/African American; and 1.2% are Native American (see Table 22).

**Table 22. Imperial County Demographic Distribution<sup>447</sup>**

Race or Ethnicity	Population	Percent of Total Population (%)
White, Non-Hispanic	28,768	20.2
Hispanic/Latino	102,817	72.2
Asian and Pacific Islander	2,521	1.8
Black/African American	5,148	3.6
Native American	1,736	1.2

With nearly three-quarters of all the county's residents being of Latino descent, Imperial has by far the highest percentage of Latinos of any county in the state.<sup>448</sup> No other county in southern California has any single racial or ethnic group that accounts for such a high proportion of the county's total population. Growth estimates predict the Latino population to continue to increase over the next few years.

Though much smaller than the Latino population, Imperial's black population is also growing significantly, with estimates of a 15% increase between 2000 and 2005.<sup>449</sup> Even with significant population growth, however, the black population in Imperial is still less than 5% of the total population. There is also a small but established Asian population in the county, mostly consisting of people of Chinese or Indian descent.

Imperial's population is not evenly distributed, however. Although more than 50% of the population is Latino in every incorporated city and the unincorporated areas of the county, the proportions range from a high of Calexico being 95% Latino to a low of 54% of the population in unincorporated Imperial County. Other cities have notable clusters of racial or ethnic groups. Calipatria, for example, has more black residents than any other racial or ethnic group besides Latinos. With 21% of its population being black, Calipatria has a far higher proportion of blacks than the county average of 3.6%. Unlike any other county in southern California, non-Hispanic whites do not form a majority in any one of the incorporated cities or in the unincorporated areas of Imperial County. The concentration of non-Hispanic whites is highest in the county's unincorporated areas and in the City of Imperial, at 33% and 32%, respectively, while there are less than 1,000 white residents in other places like Calexico and Westmorland.

## 2. Access to Parks

Though there are parks and recreational opportunities throughout Imperial, many residents do not have good access to these resources. Maps IM-1, IM-2, and IM-3 show that many of the county's green spaces are located far from population centers. A lack of adequate public transportation compounds the situation, as those who do not have access to a car often have few options for accessing green space.

Further complicating the situation is the fact that large tracts of land set aside for recreation in the county are designated for off-road vehicle recreation. Sites such as the federal Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area, Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area, Plaster City State Vehicle Recreation Area, and Heber Dunes Off-Road Vehicle Recreation Area provide space for off-road vehicle enthusiasts. Unfortunately, this is a form of recreation that does not involve physical activity.

Another important consideration regarding recreation in Imperial County is the extreme heat throughout the year, especially in summer. With temperatures regularly exceeding 100°F, it is not always safe for residents to be engaged in prolonged outdoor physical activity. Imperial residents require public swimming pools and air-conditioned indoor recreation areas during summer to ensure access to usable recreation space.

*Acres of Parks per Thousand Residents.* The amount of land dedicated to parks and recreation in each of the incorporated cities varies in Imperial County. Since the majority of residents in every city in Imperial are Latinos, examining the amount of available green space in each city based on its population of people of color is less appropriate than for other counties in southern California. In general, the cities with the smallest overall populations provide the least amount of park space. The three cities with fewer than 7,500 residents, Calipatria, Holtville, and Westmorland, all offer fewer than three acres of park land per thousand residents. The four cities with more than 7,500 residents, El Centro, Imperial, Calexico, and Brawley, all provide three or more acres of parks per thousand residents (see Map IM-2).



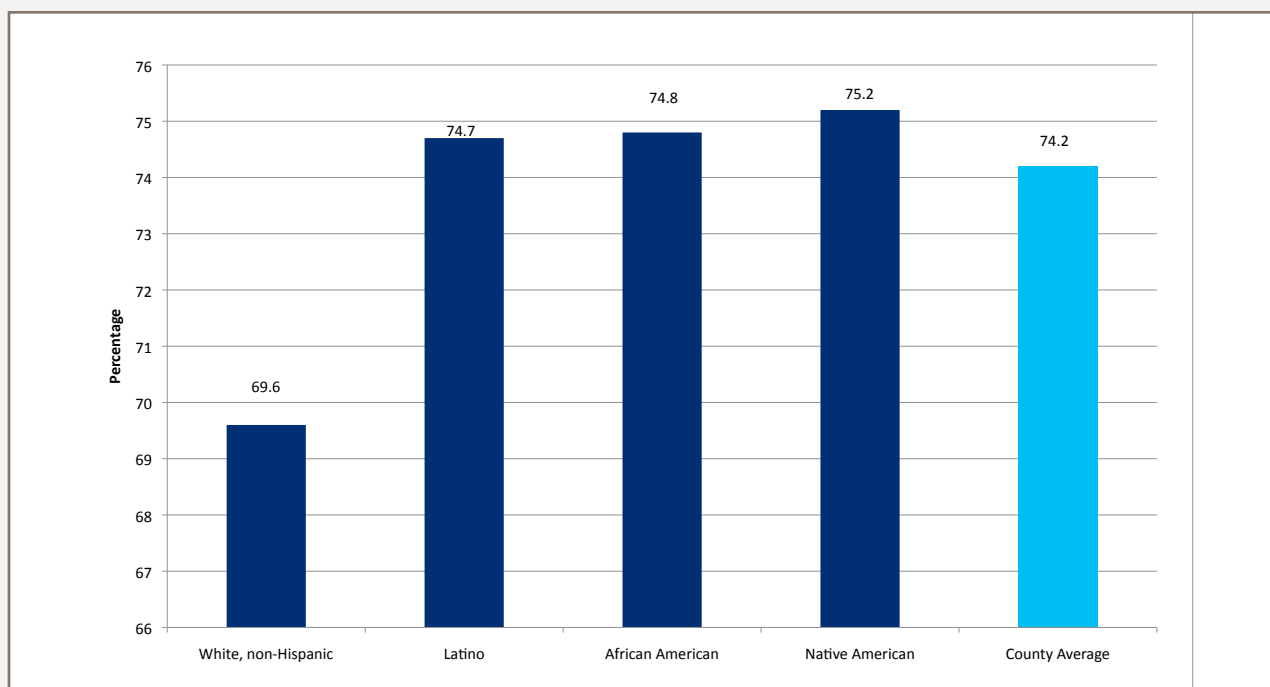
### 3. Childhood Obesity and Physical Fitness Levels

*Child Obesity.* 36.5% of all children in Imperial County are either overweight or obese.<sup>450</sup> This alarmingly high number far outpaces the state average of 28.1%. With high numbers of people of color and low-income residents, it is not surprising that the rates of overweight and obesity are consistently high throughout the entire county (see Map IM-3). Although the rates of children living in poverty in Imperial have declined over the past decade, more than 18% of all children in the county still live in poverty.<sup>451</sup> The Imperial County Public Health Department recognizes poverty and its associated effects, such as lack of access to healthy and nutritious foods and insufficient opportunities or places to be physically active, as a major factor contributing to the county's obesity problem.<sup>452</sup> The situation is hardly more encouraging with teenagers in Imperial County, nearly 30% of whom are either at risk or already overweight or obese.<sup>453</sup>

In an effort to reduce the prevalence of overweight and obesity, the county formed the Physical Activity and Healthy Eating Coalition with representatives from community groups, schools, and public health agencies. One project the coalition has implemented, the Healthy Lifestyles Program, promotes healthy eating and physical activity in both English and Spanish.<sup>454</sup>

*Adult Obesity.* As shocking as the rates of overweight and obesity among Imperial's youth are, the rates among Imperial's adults are even more disturbing. More than 74% of adults in Imperial County are either overweight or obese. Unlike other counties in southern California in which there are significant disparities between the obesity and overweight rates of different racial and ethnic groups, the rates are similar for all racial and ethnic groups in Imperial County. Figure 7 shows that rates of overweight and obesity are at or above 70% for all races and ethnic groups in Imperial that had a sufficiently large population to be measured. There were too few Asian and Pacific Islanders in the county to obtain statistically reliable rates for this population, so they are excluded from this graph.<sup>455</sup>

**Figure 7. Percentage of Overweight and Obese Adults in Imperial County<sup>456</sup>**



*Physical Fitness.* Only 20.2 % of all fifth, seventh, and ninth grade students in Imperial County achieved minimum physical fitness standards in the 2007-2008 school year.<sup>457</sup> The percentage of physically fit students of each race or ethnicity for nearly every grade level in Imperial is below the average for students of the same race in the same grade on a statewide basis.

Similarly to other counties in southern California, there is a disparity in fitness rates between racial or ethnic groups. In most cases, the percentage of Latino and African American students that are physically fit is lower than the percentage of physically fit non-Hispanic white and Asian students. With such a large percentage of the county's population being Latino, it is not surprising that the physical fitness rates for the entire county are so close to the county average. More troubling, however, is the fact that Latinos had the lowest levels of physical fitness of any race or ethnicity for each grade level assessed. Table 23 shows the percentage of Imperial County students that achieved physical fitness standards by racial and ethnic categories.

**Table 23. Percentage of Physically Fit Children in Imperial County by Race/Ethnicity<sup>458</sup>**

Race or Ethnicity	5th Grade (%)	7th Grade (%)	9th Grade (%)
White, non-Hispanic	22.6	34.8	31.4
Latino	13.4	18.2	25.5
African American	20.0	23.9	30.0
Asian and Pacific Islander	37.8	16.7	50.0
Imperial County	14.6	19.5	25.9

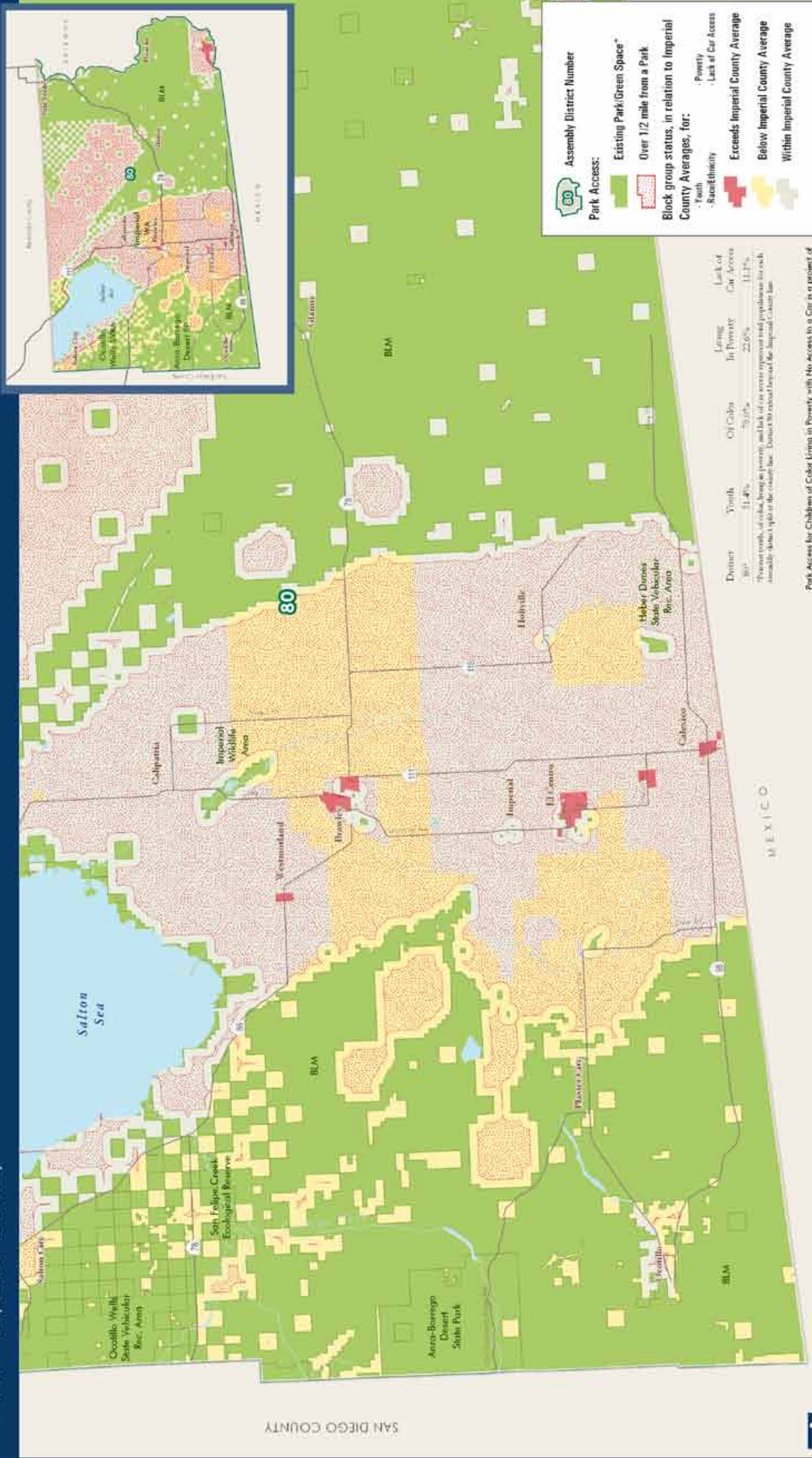


# Park Access for Children of Color Living in Poverty with No Access to a Car

IP - 1



Imperial County



**Assembly District Number**

**Park Access:**

- Existing Park/Green Space\*
- Over 1/2 mile from a Park

**Block group status, in relation to Imperial County Averages, for:**

- Youth
- Rac/ethnicity
- Poverty
- Lack of Car Access

**Exceeds Imperial County Average**

**Below Imperial County Average**

**Within Imperial County Average**

District	Youth	Ch/Colr	Living In Poverty	Lack of Car Access
AD 60	11.4%	79.0%	22.6%	11.1%

\*Percent youth, of color, living in poverty, and lack of car access represent total population for each assembly district split as the column bar. Districts do not equal Imperial County totals.

Park Access for Children of Color Living in Poverty with No Access to a Car is a project of The City Project - [www.cityprojectca.org](http://www.cityprojectca.org). Map created by GreenInfo Network, July 2010. [www.greeninfo.org](http://www.greeninfo.org). Data Sources: Demographics - Census 2000, Existing Park/Green Space - California Protected Areas Database v1.2 March 2009, [www.calandis.org](http://www.calandis.org). Native American Reservation areas identified, where possible. The data should not be considered complete.



SAN DIEGO COUNTY

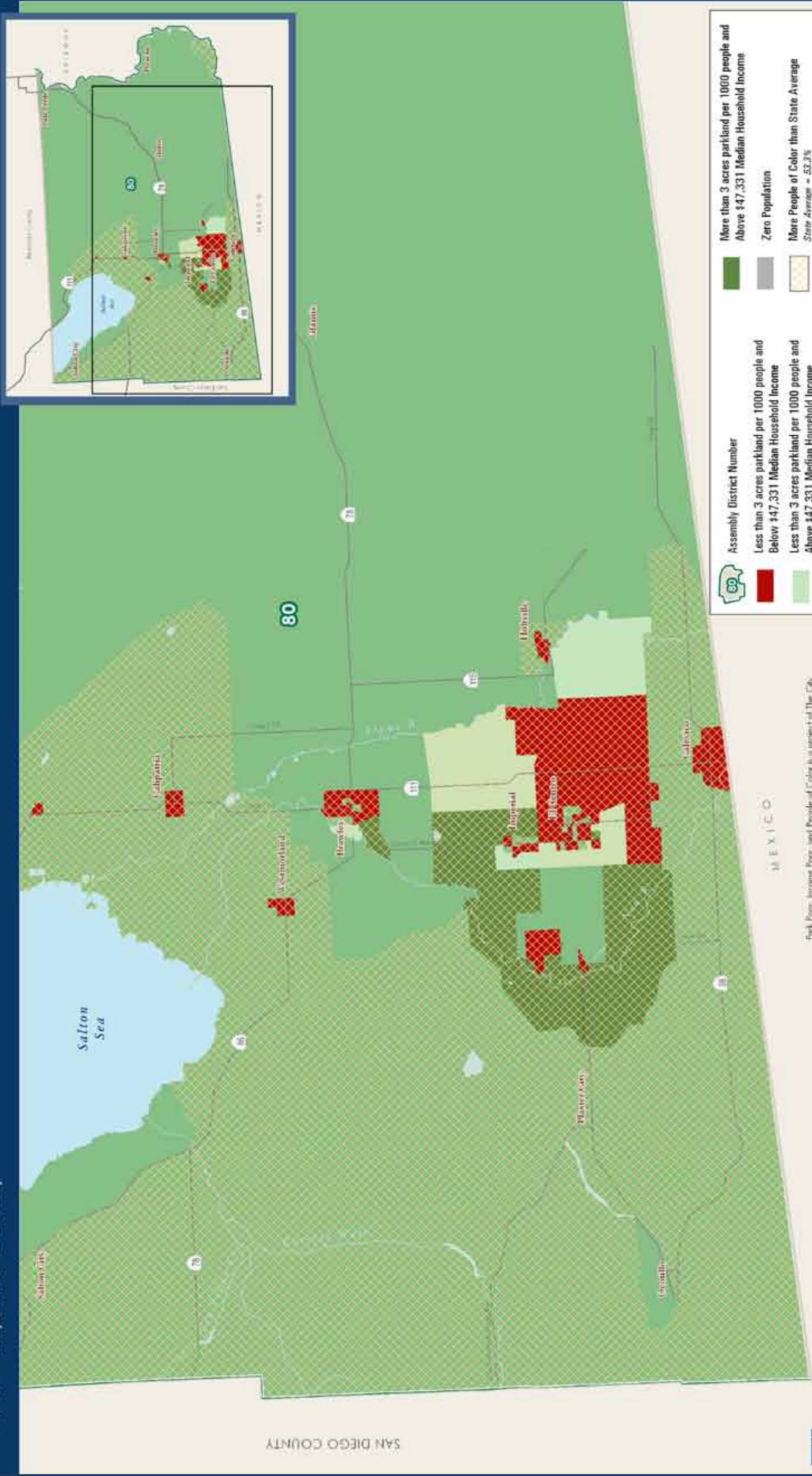


# Park Poor, Income Poor, and People of Color

IP-2



Imperial County



**Assembly District Number**

CA

**Less than 3 acres parkland per 1000 people and Below \$47,331 Median Household Income**

**Less than 3 acres parkland per 1000 people and Above \$47,331 Median Household Income**

**More than 3 acres parkland per 1000 people and Below \$47,331 Median Household Income**

**More than 3 acres parkland per 1000 people and Above \$47,331 Median Household Income**

**Zero Population**

**More People of Color than State Average**  
State Average = 53.3%

All parks and open spaces are used to calculate acres of parkland per 1000 people, including forest services, areas of land management and large state and regional parks.

M. E. X. I. C. O.

Park Poor, Income Poor, and People of Color is a project of The City Project - [www.cityprojectca.org](http://www.cityprojectca.org). Map created by GreenInfo Network, July 2010. [www.greeninfo.org](http://www.greeninfo.org). Data Sources: Demographics mapped by census blockgroup using 2000 census data; Existing Park/Green Space - California Protected Areas Database v1.2 March 2009. [www.calandci.org](http://www.calandci.org)



[www.cityprojectca.org](http://www.cityprojectca.org)  
& [www.greeninfo.org](http://www.greeninfo.org)  
January 7, 2011



SAN DIEGO COUNTY



# Park Access and Child Obesity by State Assembly District

Imperial County



SAN DIEGO COUNTY

MEXICO

**Assembly District Number**

- Under 10
- 10 - 50
- 50 - 100
- 100 - 150
- Over 150

**Acres of Parks Per 1,000 Residents**

- Under 10
- 10 - 50
- 50 - 100

**Percent of Overweight or Obese Children**

- 28% - 30%
- 30% - 32%
- 32% - 34%

District	Total Population <sup>1</sup>	Total Population of Children <sup>2</sup>	Percent of Children <sup>3</sup>	Percent of Overweight or Obese Children
80	142,157	44,670	31.4%	33.2%

<sup>1</sup>Total population, and population of children, and percent of children represent total population for each assembly district of the county for District 80 extends beyond the Imperial County boundary and therefore may have lower totals than other counties of assembly district boundaries.

Park Access and Child Obesity is a project of The City Project: [www.thecityproject.org](http://www.thecityproject.org). Map created by Greenleaf Networks, July 2010 [www.greenleaf.org](http://www.greenleaf.org). Esri, Park, GreenSpace - California Protected Areas Database v1.2 March 2009. [www.calandis.com](http://www.calandis.com). Percent of Obese Children: California Center for Public Health Advocacy: The Growing Epidemic: Childhood Obesity Rates on the Rise in California. [www.calandis.com](http://www.calandis.com). Change in Percentage of Overweight Children by California Assembly District (2001-2004) (2005) available at: [http://www.publichealthadvocacy.org/policy\\_files/obesitypolicy.pdf](http://www.publichealthadvocacy.org/policy_files/obesitypolicy.pdf).





IMPERIAL COUNTY			CALIFORNIA	
	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT
Total Population	142,361	-	33,871,648	-
Children (under 18)	44,719	31%	9,221,463	27%
Seniors (65 and over)	14,516	10%	3,586,794	11%
<b>Race / Ethnicity<sup>+</sup></b>				
Non- Hispanic White	28,489	20%	15,771,163	47%
Hispanic	103,086	72%	10,969,132	32%
African American	5,136	4%	2,219,190	7%
Native American	2,566	2%	312,215	1%
Asian Pacific Islander	2,879	2%	3,796,833	11%
Other Race	56,596	40%	5,725,844	17%
2 or more races	5,156	4%	1,694,607	5%
<b>Income / Poverty</b>				
Median Household Income	\$31,870	-	\$42,896	-
In Poverty	29,681	23%	4,706,130	14%
Percent of people in poverty under 18 years of age	12,769	43%	1,757,100	37%
Percent of people in poverty over 65 years of age	1,913	6%	280,411	6%
<b>Rent / Own</b>				
Own	22,971	58%	6,546,237	57%
Rent	16,413	42%	4,956,633	43%
<b>Transportation</b>				
No Car Access	4,367	11%	1,091,214	9%
<b>Health</b>				
% of Overweight and Obese Children*	-	31%	-	27%
Passed 5 of 6 Physical Fitness Exams**	2,054	24%	366,228	27%
Passed 6 of 6 Physical Fitness Exams**	1,716	20%	443,504	32%
Students Enrolled in Free and Reduced Lunch Program**	25,221	70%	3,152,330	51%
<b>Parks and Open Space***</b>				
Acres of Green Space	1,550,938	-	48,490,056	-
Acres of Bureau of Land Management land	1,256,948	-	15,117,778	-
Acres of Forest Service land	0	-	20,695,282	-
Total Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents	10,894	-	1,432	-
Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents (w/o BLM)	2,065	-	985	-
Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents (w/o FS)	10,894	-	821	-
Net Acres of Green Space Per 1,000 Residents (w/o BLM & FS)	2,065	-	374	-

<sup>+</sup> Race/ethnicity figures will not add up to 100%. Census 2000 allowed respondents to mark multiple races in addition to being

<sup>\*</sup>County obesity figures are derived from assembly district data. A weighted average was run based on population.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Data calculated for grades 5, 7, and 9 from Data Quest, California Department of Education 2007-08

[http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/gls\\_calworks.asp](http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/gls_calworks.asp)

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> All parks and open space data has been calculated from GreenInfo Network's California Protected Areas Database (CPAD) version 1.2, March 2009 [www.calands.org](http://www.calands.org)





Park Acreage for Imperial County by Assembly District					
A	B	C	D	E	F
District	Total Population	Total Acres of Parks	Total Acres of Parks per 1,000 Residents	Net Acres of Parks, Without National Forests, other U.S. Forest Service Land, and U.S. Bureau Of Land Management Land	Net Acres of Parks per 1,000 Residents
80	142,157	1,577,276	11,095.31	320,328	2,253.34
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>142,157</b>	<b>1,577,276</b>	<b>11,095.31</b>	<b>320,328</b>	<b>2,253.34</b>

This Chart shows acres of parks per thousand residents for the County of Imperial as a whole, and in each State Assembly District, first with Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land included, and then without Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land. The Chart breaks down this information as follows.

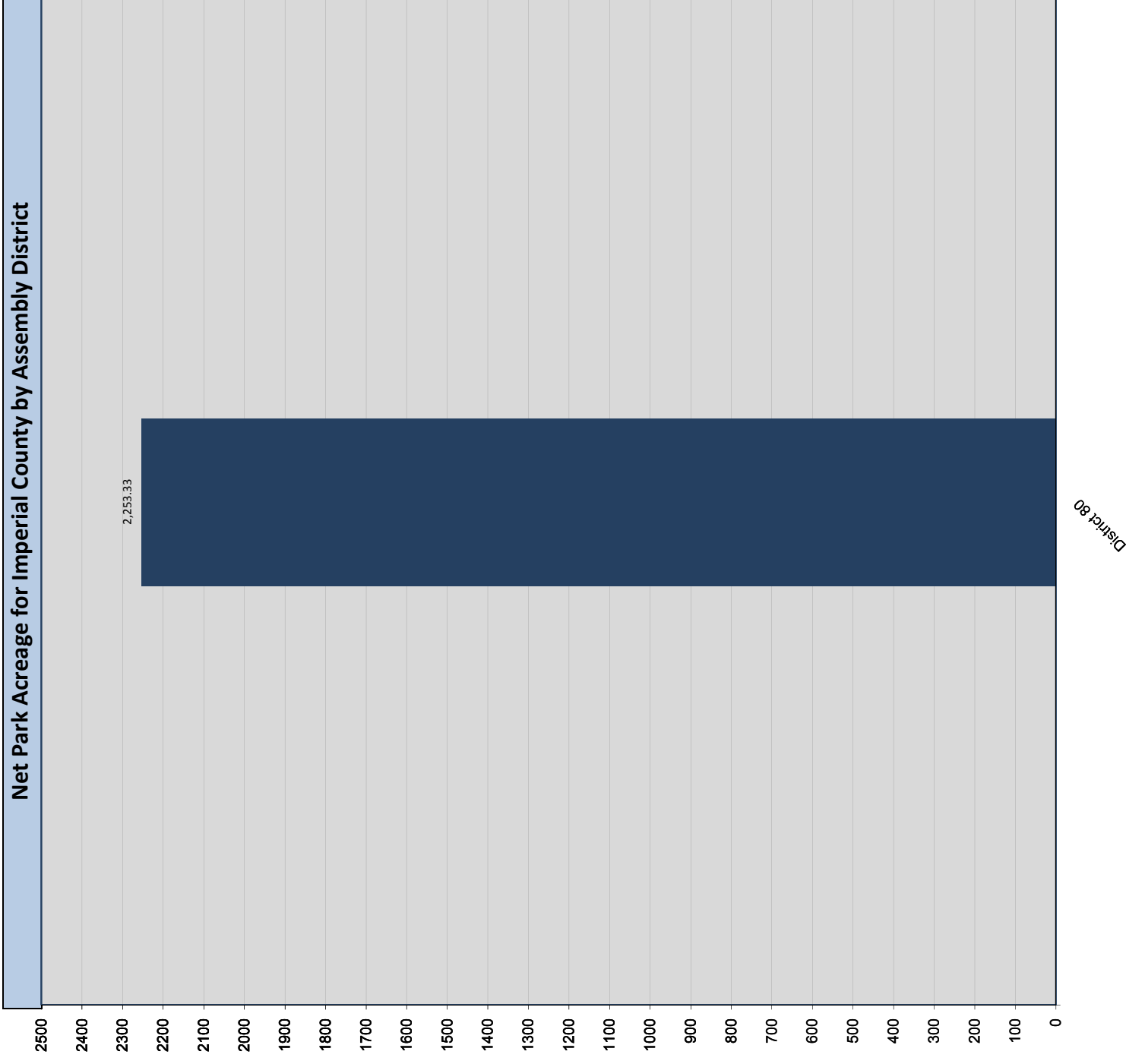
Column B shows the total population in the County and in each Assembly District. Column C shows the total acres of parks in the County and in each District, including Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land.

Column D shows the total acres of parks per thousand residents in the County and in each District, including Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land.

In Columns E and F, the acres of Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service land that actually lie within each District are subtracted. For example, the Bureau of Land Management land covers close to 1,300,000 acres, but only the 1,256,948 acres that actually lie within the County and each District are excluded.

The acreage of Bureau of Land Management land and Forest Service that is subtracted in Column E is as follows:  
Bureau of Land Management Land 1,256,948 acres

**Based on these calculations, 44% of all land in Imperial County is owned by the Bureau of Land Management. Fully 80% of all park space in the County is owned by BLM.**







## J. Native Americans in Southern California

### 1. Overview

According to official census data, there are nearly 170,000 Native Americans residents throughout the nine counties of Southern California.<sup>459</sup> In reality, this is almost certainly an underestimation because many people who have indigenous ancestors are of mixed racial or ethnic backgrounds and may not be categorized as Native American in official counts.<sup>460</sup>

There are more than 30 federally-recognized Native American tribes in Southern California.<sup>461</sup> Some members of these tribes live on reservations, while others live among the general population. Map NA-1 shows the location of Indian reservations in Southern California in relation to existing green space.

There are also many Native Americans in the region that belong to tribes or groups that have not yet been recognized by the federal government, including the Acjachemen or Juaneño people in Orange and San Diego Counties.

### 2. Access to Parks, Childhood Obesity, and Physical Fitness Levels

Due to the small percentages of Native Americans in relation to the general population in most counties in Southern California, accurate data on green access and related health consequences for Native Americans are not always available. The data that are available suggest that Native Americans do not enjoy equal access to parks and other places to play. In many counties, the overweight and obesity rates for Native Americans are among the highest for any racial or ethnic group. Across the region, 70% of Native American fifth, seventh, and ninth graders did not meet minimum physical fitness standards in the 2007-2008 school year.<sup>462</sup>

Native Americans in Southern California are also economically disadvantaged. The median household income for Native Americans across the nine county region is \$36,462, whereas the median household income for all people in the state as a whole is \$42,896.<sup>463</sup> Additionally, 21% of Southern California's Native Americans live in poverty, a level that is 50% higher than the statewide total of 14% of all people living in poverty (see Table NA-1T).<sup>464</sup>

### 3. Native American Cultural Heritage, Parks, and Schools

The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) is the state 'trustee agency' pursuant to Public Resources Code §21070 for the protection and preservation of California's Native American cultural resources. The NAHC is greatly concerned about the maintenance and security in parks, including at the 278 State Parks, many of which contain significant Native American cultural resources including priceless archaeological items and burial grounds. Without adequate maintenance and security, Native American cultural resources may be vandalized or destroyed, erasing an important historic link with indigenous California and the natural environment. Archaeological research indicates that Native Americans inhabited most of what is now California for more than 10,000 years prior to European contact. State Parks are sites of several Native American cultural resources and literally thousands of Native American burials, including Anza Borrego Desert State Park, the Ocotillo District, Crystal Cove in Orange County, Leo Carrillo State Park in Los Angeles County, and other parks.

The sites for State Parks were chosen for their pristine nature in order to provide educational and recreational opportunities for future generations of the California public. Many park sites are also part of Native American cultural landscapes and encompassed or were near historic Native American villages, and religious and ceremonial areas. The NAHC supports plans by the California Department of Parks and Recreation to establish "cultural preserves" on many State Parks in order to provide a higher level of protection for Native American cultural items and burial grounds. Thus, while the establishment of State Parks by the California Legislature is a tantamount to a trust relationship between the people of California and examples of California's environmental beauty and diversity, it is also a trust relationship between the State of California and the descendants of more than 200 Native American tribes that historically inhabited the state.<sup>465</sup>

Native American cultural resources are included in other parks and in schools as well. For example, El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historic Monument includes the area originally occupied by the Tongva or Gabrieleño village of Yaangna.<sup>466</sup> University High School in Los Angeles includes the site of Kuruvungna Springs, a village of the Tongva or Gabrieleño people.<sup>467</sup> Puvunga, a Sacred Site for the Tongva or Gabrieleño people as well as the Acjachemen or Juaneño, is located at the site of what is now California State University at Long Beach.<sup>468</sup> Putiidhem is located at the site of what is now Junipera Serra Catholic High School in San Juan Capistrano.<sup>469</sup> Puvunga and Putiidhem are part of the annual Ancestor Walk.<sup>470</sup>



# Park Access and Native American Reservations

Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, San Bernardino, Riverside, Imperial, Kern, San Diego, and Santa Barbara Counties

### NATIVE AMERICAN DEMOGRAPHICS

<b>POPULATION</b>	168,160	31%	6%
Total Native American Population	52,595	31%	
Children (under 18)	9,495	6%	
Seniors (65 and over)			
<b>EDUCATION</b>	15,094	16%	
Under 9th grade	18,670	19%	
9th - 12th grade, no degree	22,019	23%	
High school degree (includes equivalent)	23,596	24%	
Some college, no degree	6,757	7%	
Associates degree	7,260	7%	
Bachelor's degree	3,782	4%	
Grad or professional degree			
<b>INCOME / POVERTY</b>	\$36,462	21%	1%
Median Household Income	35,340	21%	
In Poverty	14,029	9%	
Percent of people in poverty under 18	1,394	1%	
Percent of people in poverty 65 and over			
<b>TENURE</b>	23,142	46%	54%
Own home	27,045	54%	
Rent home			
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	6,961	14%	
No car access			
<b>HEALTH</b>	1,137	26%	30%
Passed 5 of 6 physical fitness exams*	1,308	30%	
Passed 6 of 6 physical fitness exams*			

\*Data calculated for grades 5, 7, and 9 from Data Quest, California Department of Education, 2007-08 [http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/jobs\\_cabrorks.asp](http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/jobs_cabrorks.asp)

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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA <sup>1</sup> - NATIVE AMERICAN <sup>2</sup>			CALIFORNIA - All Races	
	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT
Total Native American Population	169,160	-	33,871,648	
Children (under 18)	52,595	31%	9,221,463	27%
Seniors (65 and over)	9,495	6%	3,586,794	11%
Education (for population 25 and over)				
Under 9th grade	15,094	16%	2,446,324	11%
9th - 12th grade, no degree	18,670	19%	2,496,419	12%
High School Degree (includes equivalent)	22,019	23%	4,288,452	20%
Some College, no degree	23,596	24%	4,879,336	23%
Associates Degree	6,757	7%	1,518,403	7%
Bachelor's Degree	7,260	7%	3,640,157	17%
Grad or Professional Degree	3,782	4%	2,029,809	10%
Income / Poverty				
Median Household Income	\$36,462	-	42,896	-
In Poverty	35,340	21%	4,706,130	14%
Percent of people in poverty under 18 years of age	14,029	9%	1,757,100	37%
Percent of people in poverty over 65 years of age	1,394	1%	280,411	6%
Rent / Own				
Own	23,142	46%	6,546,237	57%
Rent	27,045	54%	4,956,633	43%
Transportation				
No Car Access	6,961	14%	1,091,214	9%
Health				
Passed 5 of 6 Physical Fitness Exams <sup>3</sup>	1,137	26%	366,228	27%
Passed 6 of 6 Physical Fitness Exams <sup>3</sup>	1,308	30%	443,504	32%

<sup>1</sup> Includes: Imperial, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Ventura Counties

<sup>2</sup> Defined as respondents selecting "American Indian or Alaska Native" only

<sup>3</sup> Data calculated for grades 5, 7, and 9 from Data Quest, California Department of Education 2007-08  
[http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/gls\\_calworks.asp](http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/gls_calworks.asp)





## VII. DISPARITIES IN ACCESS TO BEACHES, MOUNTAINS, AND FORESTS

### A. Beaches<sup>471</sup>

An impressive nine in ten Californians say the quality of the beach and ocean is just as important to them personally as it is to the overall quality of life and economy in the state, according to a survey by the Public Policy Institute of California. Residents say the condition of the coast is very important (61%) or somewhat important (30%) on a personal level, very important (70%) or somewhat important (24%) to the state's quality of life, and very important (63%) or somewhat important (30%) to the economy.<sup>472</sup> Majorities agree across regions and political parties. "Californians treasure the ocean and the state's beaches," said survey director Mark Baldassare. "These attitudes run deep and wide across political parties, coastal and inland areas, and in the growing Latino population - to ignore them could be politically perilous."<sup>473</sup>

Beaches are among California's most valuable public assets. California has the largest ocean economy in the nation, a large portion revolving around the state's beaches. Ocean-related activities in California produced a gross state product (GSP) of \$42.9 billion and provided almost 700,000 jobs and more than \$11.4 billion in wages and salaries in 2000.<sup>474</sup>

While 80% of the 34 million people of California live within an hour of the coast,<sup>475</sup> low-income communities of color are disproportionately denied the benefit of beach access. Rio de Janeiro, like Los Angeles, is marked by some of the greatest disparities between wealth and poverty in the world. Yet Rio's famous beaches are open to all, rich and poor, black and white. The beach in Rio is the great equalizer. California's world famous beaches must also remain public for all, not the exclusive province of the rich and famous. Research suggests that different racial and ethnic groups in Southern California tend to visit different beaches, but conclusive data is not yet available.<sup>476</sup>

#### 1. Los Angeles County Beaches

Los Angeles County is world famous for its beaches. The sad reality, however, is that not everyone in Los Angeles has equal access to the beach. Not all beaches in Los Angeles have public access, accurate data on public beach visitation is not always available, and private property owners are trying to cut off public access to public beaches, as discussed above.<sup>477</sup>

**Table 24. Demographics of Coastal Communities in Los Angeles County<sup>478</sup>**

Community	Total Population	Non-Hispanic White (%)	Latino (%)	Asian (%)	Median Household Income
Malibu	18,528	85	6	3	\$102,052
Pacific Palisades	17,143	89	4	5	\$125,711
Santa Monica	54,341	74	12	6	\$50,435
Venice (Ocean Park)	24,639	61	24	3	\$48,101
Marina del Rey	14,837	80	6	7	\$74,444
Playa del Rey	16,830	70	11	8	\$67,651
El Segundo	15,970	78	10	7	\$61,385
Manhattan Beach	29,017	86	5	5	\$102,739
Hermosa Beach	18,442	85	7	4	\$81,883
Redondo Beach	27,107	77	10	8	\$61,142
Torrance	11,026	80	7	10	\$72,920
Palos Verdes Estates	13,340	76	3	17	\$123,996
Rancho Palos Verdes	21,525	64	4	25	\$104,552
Rolling Hills	1,871	77	5	14	\$200,001
L.A. Harbor	34,878	58	28	4	\$51,482
Long Beach	100,920	47	31	9	\$41,587
L.A. County	9,519,338	31	45	12	\$42,289
California	33,871,648	60	32	11	\$47,493

The Olmsted Report called for the doubling of public beach frontage in the Los Angeles region. According to the Report:

Public control of the ocean shore, especially where there are broad and satisfactory beaches, is one of the prime needs of the Region, chiefly for the use of throngs of people coming from inland. . . . The public holdings should be very materially increased.<sup>479</sup>

People who live along the beach in Los Angeles County are generally disproportionately non-Hispanic white and wealthy. The non-Hispanic white population ranges from 89% to 58% in beachfront communities. In all coastal communities, the black population was too small to be significant. Table 24 shows the demographic distribution in beachside communities in Los Angeles County.

Long Beach is the only exception to the rule. There, the non-Hispanic white population of 47% is less than the state and county average, and the median household income is lower. This may be because Long Beach, unlike other coastal communities in Los Angeles, extends far inland and a good portion of the coastline is dedicated to the Port of Long Beach. Moreover, as is true for many port towns, Long Beach has historically been a working class town.<sup>480</sup>



## 2. Orange County Beaches

Orange County is home to 42 miles of coastline along the Pacific Ocean.<sup>481</sup> There are six cities in Orange County with coastal access: Seal Beach, Huntington Beach, Newport Beach, Laguna Beach, Dana Point, and San Clemente. The population of each of these cities is at least 71% non-Hispanic white, more than 20% higher than the county average of 51.3%. Three of the six have a non-Hispanic white population that is at least 84% of the city’s total population. Moreover, there are no communities of color that reach the county average in any one of these cities. Table 25 highlights this disparity in populations of communities of color in cities with coastal access in Orange County.

**Table 25. Demographics of Coastal Communities in Orange County<sup>482</sup>**

City	Total Population	White, Non-Hispanic (%)	Latino (%)	Asian & Pacific Islander (%)	Black (%)
Newport Beach	75,662	89	4.7	4.1	0.5
Laguna Beach	23,727	88.2	6.6	2.1	0.8
Dana Point	35,110	78.8	15.5	2.6	0.7
San Clemente	49,936	78.4	15.9	2.7	0.6
Seal Beach	24,157	84.3	6.4	5.8	1.4
Huntington Beach	189,594	71.9	14.7	9.5	0.7
County Average	2,846,289	51.3	30.8	13.8	1.5

Though much of the beachfront in Orange County is publicly accessible, private landowners are increasingly trying to restrict public access. This is particularly true in South Orange County. In June 2003, Newport Beach city councilmember Richard Nichols publicly proclaimed his opposition to improvements to improving a public beach because “with grass we usually get Mexicans coming in there early in the morning and they claim it as theirs and it becomes their personal, private grounds all day.”<sup>483</sup> As *Los Angeles Times* columnist Steve Lopez noted, “If not for the likes of Nichols letting loose now and then, we’d have to constantly remind ourselves why we have civil rights attorneys.”<sup>484</sup> The City Council issued a warning against demonstrations of bias and prejudice in the future, but did not call for his resignation.<sup>485</sup>

Two thirds of the beaches in Orange County are in South County, which is disproportionately non-Hispanic white and affluent. While the beach may be open to the public, getting to the beach is more of a challenge for residents of color who live further away. With limited access via public transportation, the beaches can be particularly difficult to visit for low-income families who lack access to a car. None of the cities with large Latino populations, such as Santa Ana, Anaheim, and La Habra, border a city with coastal access. Being located inland makes beach access more difficult.

## 3. Ventura County Beaches

Ventura County is home to 43 miles<sup>486</sup> of coastline along the Pacific Ocean. Nicknamed the “Gold Coast,” Ventura County’s beaches are popular destinations for children, adults, and surfers. Unfortunately, not all Ventura County residents have easy access to these beaches. Only 7.5 of the 43 miles of coastline are accessible to the public.<sup>487</sup> The rest of the oceanfront land is used by the U.S. Navy or for commercial purposes..

The publicly accessible beaches in Ventura County are primarily found in the Cities of Ventura and Oxnard. Small portions of the oceanfront land in Port Hueneme are also publicly accessible. The City of Ventura is disproportionately non-Hispanic white, with 68% of its population non-Hispanic white and only 24% Latino. Though Oxnard is disproportionately Latino, the Latino community tends to be clustered in communities that are inland, such as the Del Norte and Northeast sections of the city, with less access to the ocean.<sup>488</sup> This situation is made worse by inadequate public transportation services in Oxnard and Ventura County as a whole.<sup>489</sup>





#### 4. San Diego County Beaches

San Diego County is home to 70 miles of coastline along the Pacific Ocean.<sup>490</sup> There are dozens of city and state beaches throughout the county offering a diverse range of recreational opportunities. Some beachgoers prefer to relax on the beach or take in the beauty of the ocean, while others engage in active recreation such as swimming, surfing, and boating. Unfortunately not all San Diego residents have equal access to the beach.

There are eight cities within San Diego County that have coastal access. Five of these cities, Carlsbad, Encinitas, Solana Beach, Del Mar, and Coronado, are so disproportionately white that the percentage of non-Hispanic white residents in each city is at least 20 percentage points higher than the county average. Moreover, while the City of San Diego's ethnic mix is similar to the county average, the neighborhoods along the coast, including La Jolla, Pacific Beach, Sunset Cliffs, and several others, are all disproportionately white.<sup>491</sup>

The two cities that are exceptions are Oceanside and Imperial Beach. With its proximity to Camp Pendleton, Oceanside is home to many military personnel and their families. As a result, its population is more geographically, racially and ethnically diverse than the population of many of the neighboring cities, and its average income is lower because of military pay.<sup>492</sup> Imperial Beach, like many of the cities in the southern part of the county, is disproportionately Latino. This is likely due to the fact that it is adjacent to the U.S.-Mexico border. Table 26 shows the ethnic composition of the San Diego County cities with coastal access.

**Table 26. San Diego County Cities with Coastal Access by Racial and Ethnic Group<sup>493</sup>**

City	Total Population	White, non-Hispanic (%)	Latino (%)	Asian and Pacific Islander (%)	Black (%)	Native American (%)
Carlsbad	78,247	80.5	11.7	4.4	0.9	0.3
Coronado	24,100	78.6	9.8	3.9	5.0	0.5
Del Mar	4,389	90.9	3.9	2.9	0.3	0.3
Encinitas	58,014	79.0	14.8	3.2	0.5	0.3
Imperial Beach	26,992	43.5	40.1	6.8	5.0	0.7
Oceanside	161,029	53.6	30.2	6.6	5.9	0.4
San Diego	1,223,400	49.4	25.4	13.9	7.6	0.3
Solana Beach	12,979	79.0	14.8	3.4	0.5	0.2
County Average	2,813,833	55.0	26.7	9.1	5.5	0.5

#### 5. Santa Barbara County Beaches

With 110 miles of coastline, Santa Barbara County has the most beachfront of any county in southern California.<sup>494</sup> Due to its location along a stretch of the California coast that extends westward, the ocean lies to the south instead of the west on more than half of Santa Barbara's beaches. With so many miles of beaches and a tourism-dependent economy in South County, it is not surprising that Santa Barbara's beaches are a very popular destination for the county's residents and visitors. South County cities Santa Barbara, Carpinteria, and Goleta all maintain city beaches. Additionally, there are seven county beaches and five state beaches within the county.

Over the past few years there have been multiple campaigns by private landowners to cut off public access to sections of Santa Barbara's beach.<sup>495</sup> In one case, wealthy newspaper publisher and self-proclaimed "environmentalist" Wendy McCaw filed a lawsuit to restrict access to a 500-foot length of shoreline below her 25-acre estate that sits on top of a bluff. After losing in the California courts, McCaw tried to take her case to the U.S. Supreme Court, but the Court refused to take the case, effectively preserving public access.<sup>496</sup>

The plight of the Gaviota Coast, a long stretch of beach along the southwestern corner of Santa Barbara County that is one of the last remaining areas of undeveloped coastline in southern California, is even more troubling. This 76-mile expanse of shoreline and open space presents residents and visitors a rare glimpse of an undisturbed natural coastal ecosystem, as well as a bounty of recreational opportunities. It has also long been the subject of controversy regarding development plans.

In an effort to permanently protect Gaviota, U.S. Congress ordered the National Park Service to undertake a study to determine the feasibility of designating the area as a National Seashore. Private landowners from Hollister Ranch, a wealthy community located within the coastal zone surrounding Gaviota, loudly voiced their objections. Even after multiple failed attempts to use the courts to stop the feasibility study, the landowners launched a lobbying campaign protesting the efforts to protect Gaviota. In the end, the National Park Service's study found that the area was suitable, but not feasible, for inclusion in the National Park System. One of the main reasons cited in the study that the area was not found feasible for protection was "*strong opposition from study area landowners [which] makes it unlikely that effective [National Park Service] management could occur.*"<sup>497</sup> Wealthy beachfront property owners bullied the federal government into abandoning protection of public access to the beach.



## B. Forests and Mountains

Diversifying access to and support for the forests of Southern California is an important part of achieving equal access to natural public places. The U.S. Forest Service reports that over 90% of visitors to all national forests are non-Hispanic white, while less than 5% are Latino, less than 2% are Asian, and only 1% are African American.<sup>498</sup> These tragically low visitation rates are consistent with the rates for the Angeles National Forest discussed below, and other public green space including national parks and state parks, based on statistical evidence, anecdotal evidence, and personal experience. One difficulty in providing access to the forests and mountains in Southern California is the lack of transit, as noted by the SCAG environmental justice study<sup>499</sup> and a study by USC students.<sup>500</sup> One remedy is Transit to Trails to provide fun, educational, and healthy trips to mountains, forests and beaches.

### 1. Los Angeles County Forests and Mountains

The Angeles National Forest provides by far the most natural public space in Los Angeles County. Fully 25% of all land and 78% of all park space in the county is in the Angeles National Forest. Recreation is the predominant use of the forests in Southern California.<sup>501</sup> As a result of its proximity to metropolitan Los Angeles, millions of people visit this forest every year. The Olmsted Report recommended integrating forests and mountains into the regional park system.<sup>502</sup>

Unfortunately, the visitors to the Angeles National Forest do not reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the region, as shown in Table 27 below. Despite the fact that the majority of Los Angeles residents are people of color, few people of color go to the Angeles National Forest. For example, nearly 45% of the county's population is Latino, but only 11% of visitors to Angeles National Forest are Latinos. Nearly 10% of the residents of Los Angeles County are black, yet only 1% of the visitors to the forest and 0% of visitors to the forest's wilderness areas are black.

The San Gabriel Valley, which lies adjacent to Angeles National Forest, has among the highest concentrations of residents of Asian descent in the United States. Asians account for an estimated 25% of the total population of the San Gabriel Valley, and 8 of the 10 cities in the United States with the highest concentration of Chinese Americans are in the San Gabriel Valley. Yet only 4.5% of visitors to the Angeles were Asian.

The reasons for the low visitation rates by people of color include a history and pattern of employment discrimination based on race, ethnicity and gender by the Forest Service in the region, cultural differences in recreation, lack of transit, the privatization of public space, and a history of discriminatory land use and housing policies.<sup>503</sup>

One strategy for improving access to forests and mountains in Los Angeles County is the creation of a San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area. The City Project is partnering with a diverse coalition of community-based organizations, Native Americans, and mainstream environmental groups for the San Gabriel Mountains Forever campaign.<sup>504</sup> The goal is to improve healthy recreational opportunities within the San Gabriel Mountains and along the length of the San Gabriel River.<sup>505</sup>

**Table 27. Angeles National Forest Visitors<sup>506</sup>**

Race or Ethnicity	Proportion of Visitors to Angeles National Forest (%)	Proportion of Visitors to Wilderness Areas in Angeles National Forest (%)
Non-Hispanic White	79.2	78.7
Latino	10.8	14.8
Asian/Pacific Islander	4.5	4.0
Black	1.1	0.0
Native American	1.1	0.6
Other	1.4	0.8

The proposed National Recreation Area will extend beyond the mountains themselves and into the surrounding communities to the south. The vision for this National Recreation Area includes opportunities for both active and passive recreation that meets the needs of the local community, as defined by the community.<sup>507</sup> Additionally, it is critical that a Transit to Trails program is implemented to ensure that those who live nearby but otherwise have no way to access this vital resource are able to enjoy the benefits that a San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area can provide for all.

### 2. Orange County Forests and Mountains

Orange County is home to the Trabuco Ranger District of the Cleveland National Forest, as well as the Santa Ana Mountain Range, Saddleback Ridge, and Loma Ridge. Cleveland National Forest is split into three distinct districts: Trabuco, Palomar, and Descanso. The 54,000-acre Trabuco District covers the eastern portion of Orange County and extends into Riverside County. The Trabuco District supports many forms of recreation, including camping, hiking, picnicking, horseback riding, hunting, and fishing.<sup>508</sup> It is also home to a completely undeveloped stretch of land called the San Mateo Wilderness Area. Although this large open space is within Orange County, many of the county's residents have no way of accessing the forest. There is no way to get to Cleveland National Forest via transit.<sup>509</sup>



### 3. Ventura County Forests and Mountains

The entire northern part of Ventura County is in Los Padres National Forest. Covering an area of 555,618 acres, or 868 square miles, this portion of the forest represents 46% of the total land area of the entire county.<sup>510</sup> Over half of this portion of Los Padres National Forest is designated as National Wilderness Areas. Although some parts of Los Padres National Forest are not accessible to the public due to recent wildfires,<sup>511</sup> or because that land is critical habitat for endangered species such as the California condor and red-legged frog,<sup>512</sup> much of this great natural resource is open to the public. Unfortunately, it is virtually impossible to access the park without a car. There is no good transit to Los Padres.<sup>513</sup> Even for those who have access to a car, there is only one major access road to the park and two minor roads that lead only to very specific areas of the forest. The lack of roads makes it difficult for anyone to access this portion of Los Padres National Forest.

Ventura County is also home to a portion of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. This land managed jointly by federal, state, regional and local authorities supports a wide variety of recreational and conservation uses and covers 150,000 acres in Ventura and Los Angeles Counties. Similarly to Los Padres National Forest, it is difficult to access this area via public transportation. Moreover, the portion of this park in Ventura is in East Ventura County, which is disproportionately non-Hispanic white and wealthy compared to other areas of the county.

### 4. San Bernardino County Forests and Mountains

San Bernardino is home to great swathes of federally managed park space, including San Bernardino National Forest, Angeles National Forest, the Mojave National Preserve, and Death Valley National Park.<sup>514</sup> These huge natural open spaces are wonderful resources for serious nature-seekers, but in large part difficult to access without vehicles, planning, and some expertise. A 2003 study of Mojave National Preserve revealed that only 7% of visitors were Latino, compared to 93% non-Hispanic white.<sup>515</sup> A disproportionate number of people of color and of low-income in the San Bernardino lack access to a car and, therefore, have an extremely difficult time accessing these vast recreational resources.<sup>516</sup> While there is public transit service to Lake Arrowhead and Big Bear in the San Bernardino National Forest, the service can be prohibitively time consuming and expensive.<sup>517</sup>

### 5. Riverside County Forests and Mountains

Similarly to San Bernardino, there are huge tracts of federal and state managed natural open space in Riverside County. San Bernardino National Forest and Cleveland National Forest, Joshua Tree National Park, Mount San Jacinto State Park, Lake Perris State Recreation Area, and parts of Anza Borrego Desert State Park are all found within Riverside.<sup>518</sup> Unfortunately, most of these resources are located far from the county's major population centers. Moreover, accessing most of these parks is almost impossible without a car. There is no transit to Cleveland National Forest. While it is possible to reach some areas of the San Bernardino National Forest by transit, there is no transit service to the portion within Riverside County.<sup>519</sup>

### 6. San Diego County Forests and Mountains

San Diego County is home to 287,500 acres of the Cleveland National Forest,<sup>520</sup> including the Descanso Ranger District and part of the Palomar Ranger District. This Forest supports many forms of recreation, including camping, hiking, picnicking, horseback riding, hunting, and fishing.<sup>521</sup> There are four wilderness areas in this Forest, including three wilderness areas covering a total of 37,000 acres within the portion of the Forest in San Diego County.<sup>522</sup> Although the Forest accounts for a large portion of the open space within the county, it is difficult for many residents to access the forest due to its remoteness. For residents without access to a car, it is virtually impossible.

### 7. Kern County Forests and Mountains

Lying at the southern end of the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, Kern County is home to portions of Sequoia National Forest, Giant Sequoia National Monument, and Los Padres National Forest. The entire 88,290-acre Kiavah Wilderness and a portion of the Dome Land Wilderness, two of the six designated wilderness areas in Sequoia National Forest, are within Kern County. Each of these federally managed areas provide a variety of recreational opportunities, such as camping, hiking, picnicking, horseback riding, hunting, boating, kayaking, fishing, and winter sports.<sup>523</sup> Although these forests represent large tracts of open space within Kern, accessing these resources can be very difficult for residents without access to a car.

### 8. Santa Barbara County Forests and Mountains

Los Padres National Forest covers more than 30% of the total land area of Santa Barbara County.<sup>524</sup> This area includes significant portions of the Santa Ynez and San Rafael Mountain ranges, as well as the San Rafael Wilderness Area and the Dick Smith Wilderness Area. Large areas within this portion of Los Padres National Forest have become inaccessible due to recent wildfires. The Zaca Fire, a human-caused fire that occurred in the summer of 2007, burned over 240,000 acres within the national forest.<sup>525</sup> Beyond the areas of Los Padres that are not accessible due to wildfire, it is difficult for anyone without access to a car to access Los Padres National Forest.

### 9. Imperial County Forests and Mountains

Imperial County's desert landscape does not offer much in the way of forested areas. In decades past, stands of cottonwood and willow trees lined the banks of the Colorado River, particularly along the part of the lower Colorado River that are now protected in the Imperial National Wildlife Refuge.<sup>526</sup> Over harvesting, in combination with clearing land for agriculture, led to the disappearance of most of these stands, though there has been some effort in the past few years to re-establish stands along the Colorado.<sup>527</sup>

Towering above the desert are several mountain ranges. The Chocolate Mountains run for 60 miles, originating in Riverside County and continuing through the north-central region of Imperial County. This mountain range is home to Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range, a military facility used by the U.S. Marines and the U.S. Navy. As a result, most of this mountain range is not accessible to the public. The Little Picacho Wilderness, a federal Bureau of Land Management area that provides critical habitat for a number of rare animals, lies directly to the south of the Chocolate Mountains. Other mountain ranges within Imperial County include the Black Hills Mountain Range, Cargo Muchacho Mountain Range, Little Mule Mountains Range, and the Superstition Hills Mountain Range.





Long Beach | Untitled, Courtesy of Adahli Montes (age 18) and Venice Arts

## VIII. THE HISTORY OF DISCRIMINATORY ACCESS TO PARKS AND RECREATION

The fact that low-income people of color disproportionately lack equal access to parks, school fields, beaches, trails, and forests is not an accident of unplanned growth, and not the result of an efficient free market distribution of land, housing, transit and jobs, but the result of a continuing history and pattern of discriminatory land use and economic policies and practices. The history of Southern California is relevant to understand how the region came to be the way it is, and how it could be better. Park and recreation resources must be allocated to overcome the legacy of unfair park, school, and health disparities.

Prof. Ira Katznelson's book *When Affirmative Action Was White* documents how racial inequities were aggravated by economic policies dating back to the Great Depression and the New Deal that had the impact of excluding blacks and increasing income, wealth, and class disparities. A continuing legacy of discriminatory economic policies is that the average black family in the United States holds just 10% of the assets of the average white family.<sup>528</sup> In the past, when beachfront prices were lower, for example, people of color were forbidden from buying, renting or even using beachfront property. Today, when beachfront property has skyrocketed in value, people of color often cannot afford to buy or rent beachfront property.

### A. Discriminatory Housing and Land Use Patterns

#### 1. Legal Developments

The California Supreme Court sanctioned racially restrictive housing covenants in 1919 and California courts continued to uphold them as late as 1947. The Federal Housing Authority not only sanctioned restrictive covenants but developed a recommended formula for their inclusion in subdivision contracts.<sup>529</sup> Restrictive city ordinances, housing covenants, and other racially discriminatory measures dramatically limited access by black people to housing, jobs, schools, playgrounds, parks, beaches, restaurants, transportation, and other public accommodations.<sup>530</sup>

The landmark U.S. Supreme Court decisions in *Shelley v. Kramer*<sup>531</sup> in 1948 and *Barrows v. Jackson*<sup>532</sup> in 1951 made racially restrictive housing covenants illegal and unenforceable. Even after those decisions, however, blacks and other people of color were excluded from white neighborhoods. The Los Angeles Urban League, for example, identified 26 different ploys that white homeowners used to exclude blacks, including payoffs by neighbors to discourage home sales to prospective black buyers, vandalism, cross burnings, bombings, and death threats. Until the late 1950s, the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Real Estate Boards contained a provision explicitly prohibiting real estate agents from introducing people of color into white neighborhoods. Banks and developers were unwilling to break the racial lines set by white homeowners and real estate agents. "In the postwar era many individual white homeowners, and virtually all the public and private institutions in the housing market, did everything possible to prevent African Americans from living outside areas that were already predominantly black."<sup>533</sup>

State laws in California continued to go back and forth in their prohibition of housing discrimination through 1967. Laws such as the Unruh Civil Rights Act<sup>534</sup> and the Rumford Fair Housing Act<sup>535</sup> represented progress in guaranteeing that no one could be discriminated against on the basis of their ethnicity, gender, or family status for housing and public accommodations. Other laws, such as Proposition 14, sought to permit housing discrimination in California. This law, which was approved by nearly 65% of California voters in 1964, allowed the seller of a property to deny the right to buy, lease, or rent that property to anyone they did not want to live there.<sup>536</sup> Sponsored by the California Real Estate Association, with support from conservative organizations such as the John Birch Society, Proposition 14 effectively nullified the Rumford Act.<sup>537</sup>

A landmark U.S. Supreme Court case originating in Southern California ultimately overturned Proposition 14 and banned housing discrimination. When Lincoln Mulkey and his wife, both African Americans, were denied the right to rent an apartment outside of the black neighborhood in Santa Ana in Orange County, they enlisted the help of the NAACP to sue the property owners. Although the Mulkeys lost their case in the local Orange County court, they eventually won in the California Supreme Court in 1966.<sup>538</sup> The case was appealed and *Reitman v. Mulkey*<sup>539</sup> went before the U.S. Supreme Court the following year, with the U.S. Supreme Court affirming the decision of the lower court and effectively invalidated Proposition 14 on the ground that it embodied in the state constitution the right to discriminate on racial grounds, in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment right of equal protection.



## 2. Los Angeles County

Los Angeles pioneered the use of racially restrictive housing covenants. As a result, blacks increasingly became concentrated in South Central Los Angeles, for example, Chinese in Chinatown, Mexican-Americans in East L.A., and Japanese in Little Tokyo.

The area surrounding the new Los Angeles State Historic Park at the Cornfield illustrates this history. El Pueblo de Los Angeles was founded in 1781 near the Native American Tongva village of Yangna, near the present site of the Park. The first settlers, the Pobladores, were Spaniards, Catholic missionaries, Native Americans, and blacks. Mexicans and Californios further established the city before statehood. Chinese began arriving in 1850 in search of gold but were restricted to working on the railroad and in domestic jobs. They were forced to live on the wrong side of the tracks in Old Chinatown, across “Calle de los Negros” (“Nigger Alley”) from the Plaza.

The Chinatown massacre of 1871 first brought Los Angeles to national and international attention. In the 1930s, the city forcibly evicted the residents and razed Old Chinatown to build Union Station. New Chinatown was created at the site of the old Mexican-American barrio of Sonoratown, just west of the Cornfield. Mexican-Americans, including U.S. citizens, were deported from the Cornfield during the Great Depression as a result of discrimination and competition for jobs.

Japanese arrived because of the labor shortage caused by the Chinese Exclusion Act and settled in Little Tokyo. They were forced into concentration camps at Manzanar and other places during World War II. Little Tokyo became known as Bronzatown when blacks arriving from the South to work in the war industry filled the Japanese vacancies.<sup>540</sup>

The city destroyed the bucolic Latino community in Chavez Ravine with promises of affordable housing, then sold the land to the Dodgers baseball team, who buried the site with 16,000 places for cars to park and no place for children to play.<sup>541</sup>

Despite the prominent role of blacks in early Los Angeles,<sup>542</sup> black residential and business patterns were restricted in response to discriminatory housing and land use patterns. “Whites only” deed restrictions, housing covenants, mortgage policies subsidized by the federal government, and other racially discriminatory measures dramatically limited access by people of color to housing, parks, schools, playgrounds, swimming pools, beaches, transportation, and other public accommodations.<sup>543</sup> Property owners continued tactics to restrict fair housing through the 1960s and beyond, as discussed above.

## 3. Orange County

The Native American Gabrielino, Juaneño, and Luiseño were the first inhabitants of the land that is now Orange County.<sup>544</sup> In 1769, Spanish explorer Gaspar de Portola led the expedition that brought the first group of European settlers to the area. Over the next 100 years a small number of families began to acquire large tracts of land, known as ranchos, throughout the region. A drought and a smallpox epidemic in 1862, the completion of the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1875 and Santa Fe Railroad in 1888, and the growth of Los Angeles in the late 1800s all contributed to the ranchos being sold off into smaller plots of land and the eventual establishment of the northern portion of Orange County as a population center.<sup>545</sup>

North Orange County became a suburb of Los Angeles. After Orange County broke away from Los Angeles to form its own county in 1889, several new cities began to incorporate as more and more residents moved to the area. Many immigrants, particularly from Mexico, came to the area in search of employment in either bustling Los Angeles or in the agricultural fields.<sup>546</sup> Much of the southern portion of the county remained in the hands of a few wealthy landowners and was dominated by agriculture and ranching. In North Orange County, wealthy, non-Hispanic white landowners began selling off their land as smaller plots, but refused to sell land to people of color.<sup>547</sup>

As cities started emerging, developers refused to sell individual properties to Mexicans, Native Americans, Asians, or African Americans. Like neighboring Los Angeles, racially restrictive housing covenants were in use in Orange County until the 1960s. Housing restrictions led to the creation of segregated communities, such as the barrio of El Modena.<sup>548</sup> Many property owners would allow people of color only to buy or rent property in segregated areas that were specifically set aside for this purpose.<sup>549</sup> Other cities such as Brea, Santa Ana, and Orange were considered “sundown towns.” These cities allowed blacks in during the day to complete domestic and manual labor but prohibited them from being there after sundown, effectively barring African Americans from living in those cities.<sup>550</sup> People of color were subject to discrimination in housing, legal segregation in schools, and segregation in churches and entertainment.<sup>551</sup>

In 1906, a resident of Santa Ana’s Chinatown, one of three Chinatowns in Orange County during that time, was alleged to have leprosy. Instead of providing treatment or waiting for a proper medical diagnosis, the City Council of Santa Ana ordered all the buildings in Chinatown to be burned down and the neighborhood was literally destroyed.<sup>552</sup> There are no longer any Chinatowns in Orange County.<sup>553</sup>

In South Orange County, the non-Hispanic white landowners allowed Mexican laborers to work in their agricultural fields but did not offer them a place to live. This forced the Mexicans to live in North Orange County, where they faced discrimination. The Mexican farm workers were also paid extremely low wages, leaving them with little economic power to improve their living conditions.<sup>554</sup> The low wages paid deterred other people of color in search of agricultural jobs, such as blacks from the South, from migrating to the area.<sup>555</sup>

After the end of World War II, a new wave of migration hit Orange County as military servicemen and their families began settling in the area when they returned from the war. One result of this migration was the availability of labor for the development of the aerospace industry in Orange County and southern California. This led to an increase in manufacturing jobs and a corresponding increase in some populations of color.<sup>556</sup> Unfortunately, these new residents arrived to find a culture of discrimination still alive in Orange County. It was not until the middle of the 20th century that legal discrimination in Orange County began to be challenged effectively.



## 4. Ventura County

The history of the land that is now Ventura County stretches back for centuries. Its first inhabitants were the Chumash tribe of Native Americans.<sup>557</sup> Though the first European explorers arrived in the 1500s, it was not until 1769 that Spaniards began settling on the land. Spanish religious leaders named the area Buena Ventura, meaning “good fortune.”<sup>558</sup> In the middle of the 1800s, large migrations of white Europeans, land ownership, and commercial agricultural production changed the landscape.

By the 1860s, development of municipal infrastructure such as a post office, schools, rights to the ownership of land, and the incorporation of cities had begun in earnest. Non-Hispanic white Europeans began buying parcels of land based on the land’s capability for agricultural production and, to a lesser extent, petroleum extraction. Within a short period of time, a small number of white landowners controlled large areas of land throughout Ventura County.<sup>559</sup> The need for laborers brought an influx of immigrants, particularly from Mexico. Keenly aware that they were severely outnumbered by the immigrant workers, these wealthy landowners set up a political and economic power system that ensured that the labor force would be subservient.

A series of discriminatory laws were passed preventing Mexicans and Native Americans from owning land, voting, or sending their children to the same schools the white children attended.<sup>560</sup> The same laws applied to the Chinese<sup>561</sup> and Japanese<sup>562</sup> immigrants, as well as the few African Americans who had migrated to the area. These ethnic groups were relegated to live only in either certain designated areas of cities or in villages of farm worker housing.<sup>563</sup> These housing conditions further segregated populations into ghettos and restricted access to parts of the county where non-Hispanic whites lived. Non-Hispanic white landowners also kept their workers’ wages low so the workers would remain dependent on the landowners.<sup>564</sup> This also meant that workers were forced to work long hours to earn enough money to support their families and thus had less time to enjoy recreational activities such as visiting a park.

In the 1940’s a new wave of migration came to Ventura County when two military bases were built along the coast to support the U.S. Navy during World War II. This wave of migration brought many U.S. citizens from other parts of the country, including a significant number of African Americans, to Ventura County in search of employment.<sup>565</sup>

Discriminatory policies and political and economic power imbalances remained intact in Ventura County through the 1950s and into the 1960s.<sup>566</sup> People of color faced discrimination in housing, schools, retail stores, movie theaters, transportation services, parks, pools, and beaches.<sup>567</sup>

Racially restrictive housing covenants were used in Ventura County up until the late 1960s. Non-white farmers, including Chinese, Japanese, and Mexicans, were not allowed to own the land they farmed.<sup>568</sup> Moreover, Latino, black, and Asian residents were only permitted to live in certain sections of town, sometimes referred to as “set asides.”<sup>569</sup> This led to the creation of ghettos, such as La Colonia in Oxnard<sup>570</sup> and the Santa Paula’s east side, often called “Mexican Town.”<sup>571</sup>

## 5. Inland Empire: San Bernardino and Riverside Counties

The Inland Empire is famous for its sprawl. In *Up Against the Sprawl: Public Policy and the Making of Southern California*, economists, urban planners, geographers, public policy consultants, and others argue that unplanned growth compounded with a chronic shortage of jobs, a commuter mentality among residents, and a localist mentality among policy makers are the roots of many of the Inland Empire’s woes. Further, these realities have led to the development of communities that are separated along racial and ethnic lines. Throughout the Inland Empire, a disproportionate number of low-income residents and people of color now live in areas with inadequate access to parks and open space.

In a chapter entitled “Urban Sprawl, Racial Separation, and Federal Housing Policy,” Carolyn B. Aldana and Gary A. Dymski argue that the interaction between federal loan policies and housing market forces have heightened the features for which the Inland Empire is notorious for, including racial and ethnic separation, income segmentation and urban sprawl.<sup>572</sup> Market forces do not distribute housing in a way that is optimal, they argue. Rather, outlying areas like some of the towns in Riverside and San Bernardino are “informally designed as areas in which whites were no longer expected to live.”<sup>573</sup> Planned cities far removed from the urban areas that cannot be legally segregated become safe haven for non-Hispanic whites – a claim well backed-up with references to the Riverside cities of Murrieta, which is 72% white, and Temecula, which is 69% white<sup>574</sup> - compared to a Riverside County average of about 50% at the time those numbers were gathered.

Making matters worse, in the decades after World War II, public housing was built almost exclusively in low-income, high-minority areas, while VA/FHA home loans were based on “explicitly racist underwriting practices” that helped whites buy homes in the suburbs, far away from the inner-core areas where public housing was built.<sup>575</sup> Though the explicitly discriminatory underwriting policies ended in the early 1960s, the damage – or rather, the building – was done. Aldana and Dymski write,

The symbiotic interaction of market and discriminatory federal policies is evident: location decisions for federally subsidized housing, together with historical patterns of bias in FHA housing, reinforced a dynamic of poverty concentration and racial separation that itself fueled further suburban flight and expansion of the urban fringe.<sup>576</sup>

Juan DeLara, a doctoral student at U.C. Berkeley, says that the trajectory of the Inland Empire’s development can be understood as a series of cycles of housing booms and busts.<sup>577</sup>

Historically, two types of people have migrated east out of Los Angeles and Orange Counties seeking affordable housing: middle class parents seeking better lives and more space for their children, and low-income inner city people looking for a safer, less expensive place to live.<sup>578</sup>

The *Los Angeles Times* wrote a series of articles about one such boom in 1985, noting that it was already causing major problems in the area, including overcrowded municipal services of every kind from schools to sewers, and a severe job shortage.<sup>579</sup> In the meantime, the military contractors that the Inland Empire’s residents relied on for work were unreliable, and traffic congestion was increasing rapidly.<sup>580</sup>

Even when industry did come in, it did little to ease the job deficit. Logistical services, such as warehouses and distribution centers, which take up space, require investments in infrastructure, but provide relatively few jobs were the primary industries that appeared in the Inland Empire. A one-million-square-foot K-Mart warehouse in Ontario, for instance, employed only 300 people.<sup>581</sup>

The area was desperate for income to support its bulging population, but Proposition 13 in 1978 capped property taxes, forcing officials to look elsewhere for income. They looked to developers, charging high fees for the right to build homes in undeveloped



new places. Those fees were passed onto homebuyers, raising the cost of buying and pricing out all but the wealthiest. “Land use for housing and warehouses were privileged over any land for open space.”<sup>582</sup>

Expensive new developments had parks and open space planned into them from the start. But in the older spaces in the inner core, where communities of color and low-income residents were most prevalent and few parks had previously been developed, there was no development of new parks or preservation of open spaces. “[T]he dilemma is that in these older historical localities, there is no development of new park space.”<sup>583</sup>

Instead, parks were constructed in new developments that were home to wealthier residents that worked in Los Angeles or Orange Counties. If new money came in, it was not invested in older, more rundown areas.<sup>584</sup>

By the mid to late 1990s, when the military contractors that employed many Inland Empire residents had withdrawn and the county was climbing out of recession, the City of San Bernardino was facing a fiscal crisis. 40% of its residents were on welfare, its unemployment rate of 11% was the highest of any metropolitan area in the state, it had been ranked the worst city in the nation to live in by an environmental group, and Money magazine had rated it the most dangerous city in California. Building codes were not enforced, and the already-old city declined rapidly. With a high jobless rate and no new incoming business, there was little tax money to support basic services, build new parks, or provide recreation.<sup>585</sup>

Development patterns throughout the Inland Empire have created a great chasm between socioeconomic groups. Upscale new neighborhoods catering to higher income residents popped up throughout the region and were designed to provide parks and places to play. As people and investments left the older communities in the Inland Empire in favor of these newly built communities, the older neighborhoods became home to lower income residents working at service sector jobs that supported the region’s economy. These older communities did not have enough parks and recreational infrastructure to begin with and the new influx of workers and their families only served to exacerbate the problem.<sup>586</sup>

## 6. San Diego County

Native Americans have inhabited San Diego for at least 10,000 years. Major tribal groupings include the Kumeyaay-Diegueño, the Luiseño, the Cupeño, and the Cahuilla.<sup>587</sup> Over its history, a diverse array of people and cultures has lived in San Diego. Spanish explorers first arrived in 1542 and eventually settled the area by 1769.<sup>588</sup> After becoming one of the state’s original counties when California was ceded to the United States by Mexico in 1850,<sup>589</sup> immigration to San Diego increased in the late 1800’s with the arrival of Chinese and Japanese settlers.<sup>590</sup> Almost as soon as these new residents arrived, they faced discrimination. Laws were passed banning both groups from owning land and forcing them to live only in certain areas.<sup>591</sup> An Anti-Chinese Club formed to protest that Chinese workers were taking jobs building the railroads from white people.<sup>592</sup> Japanese residents faced segregation and discrimination until all people of Japanese ancestry in San Diego County south of the San Dieguito River, essentially the entire Japanese community, were sent to concentration camps by the federal government during World War II.<sup>593</sup>

When San Diego became part of the United States, some of the land remained in the hands of Mexican landowners. As more and more non-Hispanic white settlers came to the area, the Mexican landowners became increasingly marginalized.<sup>594</sup> Ironically, as the new white residents developed businesses and farms throughout San Diego, they became increasingly dependent on a Mexican work force. The white landowners sought to maintain their political, social, and economic power by forcing the Mexican and Mexican-American workers to live in colonias and barrios and by passing discriminatory policies such as “greaser laws,” which permitted the harassment of Mexicans.<sup>595</sup> During the Great Depression in the 1930s, many Mexicans and Mexican-Americans were forced out of San Diego and repatriated back to Mexico<sup>596</sup> based on unsubstantiated claims that they were taking jobs and using scarce welfare resources.<sup>597</sup>

Racially restrictive housing covenants were used against people of color throughout the first half of the 20th century. Real estate agents played a proactive role enforcing residential segregation.<sup>598</sup> In 1907, the San Diego Chamber of Commerce failed to approve the sale of a large plot of land to a real estate developer who wanted to build housing for African American workers because of fear over “negro colonization.”<sup>599</sup> Even as the black population grew around the war industry during the 1940s, some of the area’s major employers, such as Vultee Aircraft, had publicly known policies of not employing non-Caucasians.<sup>600</sup>

Discrimination in housing continued through the late 1960s in San Diego. The San Diego Realty Board, through its Committee on Home Protection, made a concerted public push for Proposition 14, which sought to nullify the Rumford Fair Housing Act.<sup>601</sup> Though segregated housing and discriminatory employment, school, and social policies are no longer legal in San Diego, inequalities in access to park access and recreation resources that exist in San Diego today are, in part, a legacy of those laws and practices.



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## 7. Kern County

Like its neighboring counties, Kern has a history of ethnic and racial segregation. Tribal conflicts between the different groups of Native Americans who inhabited the land that is now Kern County, including the Tubatulabal, Kawaiisu, Mohave, Piute, Haidu, and Yokut, led to the establishment of defined territories.<sup>602</sup> Spanish explorers began settling the area in the 1700s and claiming ownership of individual parcels of land, displacing many Native Americans and segregating them into unclaimed parts of the area. A new wave of immigrants of European descent came in the 1840s and 1850s to mine the land. These miners set up their own colonies to insulate themselves from the other ethnic groups who occupied the area.<sup>603</sup>

By the time Kern officially became a county in 1866, there was a realization that the land could be used for agriculture. In order to access prime agricultural land, the San Joaquin Valley first had to be drained. Prospective farmers hired Chinese laborers to hand dig the canals and ditches that not only moved the sitting water off the land but also allowed for irrigation of their fields later on. The Chinese laborers were paid low wages that prevented them from being able to purchase the land for which they had dug canals and, as soon as the construction projects were completed, most of the Chinese left the area.<sup>604</sup>

As agriculture took hold as a major industry in Kern County throughout the late 19th-century and into the 20th-century, farm owners began bringing in low-wage workers to tend the land. Many of these workers were Mexican-Americans and Mexicans. Communities of Latino farm workers began appearing in the agricultural areas in the north and central parts of the county. Farm workers were paid low wages and forced to work long hours, preventing them from being able to establish political and economic power. As conditions for farm workers remained poor, a farm labor movement began to form in Kern County and throughout California. By the 1940s, labor organizer Cesar Chavez had made Kern County the center of the farm labor movement by establishing his headquarters in the City of Delano.<sup>605</sup>

Oil was discovered in the late 19th century in the western part of the county. The booming oil industry led to an influx of new residents, almost all of whom were non-Hispanic white. Many of these new residents came in the 1930s after leaving their homes in the Midwest because of the Dust Bowl. Nicknamed Okies because many of them were originally from Oklahoma, these new residents grew resentful of the non-white farm workers who were willing to work for low wages.<sup>606</sup> The white immigrants instead worked in the oil fields and began to establish their own communities, such as Oildale, Taft, and Maricopa.

This distinct segregation of disproportionately white areas and disproportionately non-white areas of Kern still exists today. As late as the 1970s, there was allegedly a sign in Oildale that read “Nigger, don’t let the sun set on you in Oildale.”<sup>607</sup>

Racially motivated attacks have been perpetrated against African Americans and Latinos.<sup>608</sup> Parks, in particular, have been the sites of several racially motivated attacks in Kern County. In 2009, a group of young white supremacists calling themselves the Oildale Peckerwoods were found guilty of assaulting a group of Latino men and women who were gathered in Hart Park, along the Kern River. <sup>609</sup> Kern County law enforcement officials stated that there had been several similar incidents reported in the same park within the span of a few weeks.<sup>610</sup>

## 8. Santa Barbara County

The Native American Chumash people have continually inhabited Santa Barbara for more than 13,000 years. Using canoe-like boats called tomols to cross the Santa Barbara Channel, the Chumash traveled between the villages they had established on the mainland and their villages on the Channel Islands.<sup>611</sup> The Chumash had never encountered a European until 1542, when Portuguese explorer Juan Cabrillo and his expedition arrived.<sup>612</sup> The area was given the name Santa Barbara in 1602 after Sebastian Vizcaino and his fleet took shelter from a storm in the channel. The storm passed on the eve of the feast of Saint Barbara, prompting Vizcaino to name the area in her honor.<sup>613</sup>

Despite these early encounters with Europeans, the Chumash were the only residents in the area until 1769 when Gaspar de Portola, Father Junipero Serra, and members of their expedition established a settlement in what is now the City of Santa Barbara. By 1786 Mission Santa Barbara had been completed, built mostly by Chumash laborers. A few years later the Presidio of Santa Barbara was constructed.<sup>614</sup> These were the three parts of Spanish civilization in the so-called New World: the mission for religious society, the pueblo for secular society, and the presidio for military control.

Through the early and mid-19th century, as California was under the control of Spain and eventually Mexico, a community of Mexican farmers and ranchers lived on ranchos throughout the area. In 1850, Mexico ceded California to the United States and Santa Barbara became one of the original counties. Mexicans and other people of Spanish ancestry continued to be the majority population in the area for decades. These families enjoyed landownership, wealth, and political power.<sup>615</sup> However, a series of events in the mid-1860s and early 1870s forever changed the social landscape of Santa Barbara.

Many Mexican landowners had large tracts of land that they used for agriculture and cattle ranching operations. A cycle of extreme weather events covering several years, including a prolonged drought followed by severe flooding, drastically impacted the productivity of these lands.<sup>616</sup> Around the same time, stories of the healing effects of Santa Barbara’s natural hot springs, as well as its year-round mild climate, caused a boom in tourism to the area.<sup>617</sup> Many tourists, who were mostly non-Hispanic whites, ended up staying in the area. By the early 1870s, difficult financial times caused by the natural disasters forced many Mexican landowners to sell off parcels of their land at the same time that an influx of non-Hispanic white visitors were looking to put down roots in the area. The result was that by 1873 Mexicans had lost much of their collective wealth and were no longer the majority population in Santa Barbara. These factors combined to strip the Mexicans of their political power, as well, and the majority of the Mexican population was confined to a seven block area of the City of Santa Barbara called Pueblo Viejo, which was located in present-day downtown Santa Barbara.<sup>618</sup>

Forced to live in the barrio, the Mexican population became economically and politically impoverished within a very short period of time. It did not take long before this community was being discriminated against in cultural and recreational opportunities, as well. Cultural and recreational activities favored by Santa Barbara’s Mexican population, including the Mexican circus, horse racing, bull and bear fights, and festive celebrations of Mexican holidays, were either outlawed or replaced with activities favored by the non-Hispanic whites.<sup>619</sup>



As the 1870s proceeded, the non-Hispanic white population continued to grow and the town prospered economically while Mexicans were increasingly marginalized. To fill the demand for labor in the growing city, Chinese laborers were imported into Santa Barbara starting in the mid-1870s. Though viewed more favorably than the Mexicans at the time, the Chinese were also forced to live in a small ghetto that was located adjacent to Pueblo Viejo.<sup>620</sup> Conditions in the Chinatown area were not much better than the Mexican barrio and a combination of limited opportunities and a growing anti-Chinese sentiment among the white population caused most of the area's Chinese residents to leave either voluntarily or forcibly.<sup>621</sup>

Once again in need of workers to fill jobs, the economically empowered non-Hispanic whites began hiring Mexican laborers again. Lured by the promise of jobs in construction, road and railroad building, and farm picking, a new wave of Mexicans migrated to the area in the late 1880s and early 1890s. Over the years, continued encroachment had shrunk the size of Pueblo Viejo and the barrio was not able to accommodate the new arrivals. Though there were no written laws preventing Mexicans from living in the same neighborhoods as whites, economic realities and social pressure forced the immigrants to establish a new neighborhood called the Lower Eastside Barrio.<sup>622</sup>

Similarly to Pueblo Viejo, the Lower Eastside Barrio was overcrowded, suffered from inadequate public infrastructure and services, and offered residents few opportunities for recreation.<sup>623</sup> Much like the Mexican-Americans that had lived in Santa Barbara for several decades, the residents of the Lower Eastside Barrio faced discrimination. The new wave of Mexicans found themselves restricted only to low paying jobs and forced to live in the barrio. Further, many Mexicans were made to feel unwelcome at places like the public swimming pool and the movie theater. Many times, discrimination was based on skin color so that lighter-skinned Mexicans did not face the same discrimination as those with darker skin.<sup>624</sup> Sadly, this legacy has endured over time, with the east side of present day Santa Barbara still being disproportionately Latino and offering little public park space despite a relatively high population density.

Around the same time as the second wave of Mexican immigrants came to Santa Barbara, a group of Japanese immigrants came to the area also in search of jobs. The Japanese were also forced to live in a separate neighborhood and faced discrimination from the white majority.<sup>625</sup> Despite these disadvantages, a small community of Japanese continued to live in Santa Barbara for several decades.

The fate of Santa Barbara's Japanese community drastically changed on February 23, 1942, when the Ellwood Oil Field was shelled with artillery from a Japanese submarine. The military had established a heavy presence in the area during that time, with the Navy occupying the harbor, the Marines maintaining a base on the present-day site of the campus of University of California Santa Barbara, and the Army at Camp Cook, which later became Vandenberg Air Force Base.<sup>626</sup> Although the attack caused very little damage and resulted in no casualties, it marked the first foreign attack on the U.S. mainland of World War II and stoked much fear among the local population, as well as the nation. One week later, on March 2, 1942, the government issued Public Proclamation #1 and began the internment of Japanese and Japanese-Americans in the United States. In Santa Barbara, 700 people of Japanese ancestry were rounded up and sent to Manzanar.<sup>627</sup>

## 9. Imperial County

Various tribes of the Yuma have inhabited the land that is now Imperial County for over 12,000 years.<sup>628</sup> The Kumeyaay, Cocopah, and Quechan are among the Native American groups that have a presence in the area today. Aside from these indigenous groups, there were few settlers in the Imperial Valley until the 20th century.

The first known European in the area was Hernando de Alarcon, the explorer who discovered the Colorado River in 1540.<sup>629</sup> Though his expedition did not arrive until more than 200 years later, Juan Bautista de Anza was another early European visitor. The de Anza expedition came through the area in 1776 while exploring the Colorado River. In the wake of this expedition, a few outposts such as the Mission Purisima Concepcion were established and small communities developed around these outposts.<sup>630</sup>

In the 1870s, a small group of white land owners in the area grew convinced that they could transform the valley into a productive agricultural region by diverting water from the Colorado River. First they employed Native Americans to dig the irrigation ditches and later they imported Chinese laborers to complete the manual labor of creating the irrigation system. The Chinese laborers were also employed to build the railroad and for domestic services.<sup>631</sup> By the 1880s, resentment toward the Chinese had grown and landowners turned to Mexicans to continue digging the irrigation ditches.<sup>632</sup>

As farms started to spring up in the 1870s and 1880s as a result of the new irrigation system, the white landowners began importing laborers to work on their farms. The waves of farm laborer importations followed the same pattern as the irrigation system work importations. The first group of imported farm laborers included Chinese and Japanese workers, who were brought in to replace the Native Americans. Not long after that, Mexicans, blacks, and Filipinos were brought in.<sup>633</sup>

By the turn of the 20th century, the first major irrigation system for the Imperial Valley had been completed and the area started to flourish. With the area's population starting to grow and its farms succeeding financially, Imperial broke away from San Diego in 1907 to form its own county.<sup>634</sup> Taking its name from the valley in which it sits, Imperial County became the last of modern day California's 58 counties to be established.

The development of Imperial County was based on the development of the area's agricultural industry. Most of the early residents of the county worked as farm laborers. These jobs involved long hours and hard work in punishing heat. Recreation and leisure time were not possible for much of Imperial's population. The development of parks and green spaces within Imperial County was a low priority. Opportunities to enjoy parks today continue to be limited within Imperial, and many of the county's residents do not have the means to travel to the natural open space in the more remote parts of the county.



## 10. Native American Lands

California has a history of prohibiting California Indians from practicing their religion, speaking their languages, and practicing traditional ceremonies and customs, according to the California State Library Research Bureau. State laws separated California Indians from their lands, and separated at least a generation of children and adults from their families, languages, and cultures.<sup>635</sup>

California governors and others called for the extermination of California Indians. For example, Governor Burnett told the legislature in 1851:

That a war of extermination will continue to be waged between the races, until the Indian race becomes extinct, must be expected. While we cannot anticipate this result but with painful regret, the inevitable destiny of the Indian race is beyond the power or wisdom of man to avert.<sup>636</sup>

According to Kevin Starr, the Dean of California historians, there arose a form of Indian peonage, reinforced by the criminal justice system, that was slavery in everything save name only, particularly in Southern California. The indenturing of Indians to whites, sanctioned by the state government in 1850, fostered the rise of a slave trade. In the northern counties, genocidal warfare was waged against the Indians. *“Such slaughter, reinforced by the devastating effects of disease, reduced an estimated population of 150,000 in 1845 to less than 30,000 in 1870, with 60 percent of the deaths attributable to disease, the rest to murder.”*<sup>637</sup>

As the Indian Claims Commission recognized:

The evidence is plain, and in fact, not disputed, that after [the United States] acquired California, and as a result of the great influx of white people, the Indian communities were disrupted and destroyed, many of their members were killed, and those remaining were largely scattered throughout the state, and their tribal or band origin generally lost.<sup>638</sup>

The federal government has a history of separating California Indians from their lands. Between 1851 and 1852, eighteen treaties were negotiated with over 100 California Indian tribes. Under these treaties, California Indians were to retain 8.5 million acres (about one-seventh of the state of California) and receive educational, agricultural, technical, and other services in exchange for the 66.5 million acres they ceded. At the request of the California legislature, California’s United States senators opposed ratification of the treaties. The United States Senate formally rejected the treaties and classified them as secret and sealed them in a vault. The lands that had been reserved by the Indians in the treaties were treated as part of the public domain. The Indians were not informed of the Senate’s refusal to ratify the treaties. According to historian Robert Heizer, *“In the history of California Indians no other single event (that is non-event) had a more rapid destructive effect on their population and culture than . . . this about-face . . . by the Senate.”*<sup>639</sup>

A major tool the government used to break down the role of tribal government and disband tribal organization from the 1880s to the 1930s was the redistribution of tribal land to individuals under the General Allotment Act, also known as the Dawes Act. The act essentially privatized tribal land holdings in the hands of individuals. Tribal lands and tribal organization were lost as a result. Native Americans understood the implications of allotment and offered considerable resistance. The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 shifted direction in favor of empowering tribal government as a form of democracy to promote Indian self-determination.<sup>640</sup>

Today there are many California Indian tribes who do not have an established land base and/or who are not acknowledged by the United States or California governments. The lands that were set aside as reservations were largely desert, mountains, grazing lands, isolated, ill-adopted to agriculture, largely without water, wastelands.<sup>641</sup>





## B. School Segregation

Children in California went to intentionally segregated schools through at least the first half of the 20th century. In 1947, school segregation was outlawed throughout California thanks in large part to Orange County resident Gonzalo Mendez. After being told that his lighter-skinned nieces and nephew could attend the non-Hispanic white school but that his own darker skinned daughters would have to attend the Mexican school, Mr. Mendez and four other Mexican families brought a class-action lawsuit against four Orange County school districts.<sup>642</sup> In *Mendez v. Westminster*,<sup>643</sup> the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit held that the segregation of students based on Mexican descent violated the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution. This court ruling prompted Governor Earl Warren to sign a bill in 1947 that repealed provisions of the California Education Code that allowed for segregation.<sup>644</sup> *Mendez v. Westminster* served as important precedent to the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education*, which struck down “separate but equal” schooling and legal apartheid in the United States as unconstitutional in 1954.<sup>645</sup>

Almost fifteen years before the decision in *Mendez v. Westminster*, one of the country’s first school desegregation cases involved Mexican-American students in the City of Lemon Grove in San Diego County.<sup>646</sup> In January 1931, the Board of Trustees of Lemon Grove Grammar School barred students of Mexican descent from entering the school, directing them instead to a Mexicans only school. The parents of 5 students refused to send their children to a segregated school and started a school boycott by keeping them home. The parents formed a coalition that enlisted the help of the Mexican consulate and sued the school’s Board of Trustees on behalf of the segregated children.<sup>647</sup> Roberto Alvarez, an honor student, was chosen as the representative of the students.<sup>648</sup>

The Superior Court of California in San Diego heard *Roberto Alvarez v. the Board of Trustees of the Lemon Grove School District*. The court ruled that the Board of Trustees did not have the right to segregate the students of Mexican descent, most of whom were U.S. citizens by birth.<sup>649</sup> This case, which locally came to be known as the Lemon Grove Incident, marked the first successful school desegregation suit in the United States.<sup>650</sup>

Unfortunately, despite this ruling, schools in San Diego County remained heavily segregated for the next half-century.<sup>651</sup> By the late 1960s, due in part to a lack of residential integration, the schools in the City of San Diego were less integrated than the schools in Little Rock, Arkansas, and ranked lowest in the nation for minority faculty hires.<sup>652</sup> Fed up with inequalities in the local education system, parents of Chicano, African American, Asian, and white students filed a class action lawsuit against the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) in 1967. The protracted legal deliberations resulted in a 1977 ruling ordering the school district to draft a “voluntary” plan to alleviate racial segregation in 23 city schools.<sup>653</sup> The desegregation plan did lead to a better ethnic balance within the city’s schools, although it did not correct the social and housing discrimination that accompanied the school segregation.<sup>654</sup>

The Pasadena School District was the defendant in one of the first school desegregation suits outside the Deep South following the historic ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*.<sup>655</sup> In 1963, an African American family sued Pasadena for not allowing their son to transfer from a poor performing racially segregated school to another school within the same school district. In *Jackson v. Pasadena City School District*,<sup>656</sup> the California Supreme Court ruled that school boards were obligated to find solutions to school segregation, even if the segregation was caused by residential segregation.

Later in 1963, a group of students of color brought suit in *Crawford v. Board of Education of the City of Los Angeles*<sup>657</sup> against the City of Los Angeles to desegregate two high schools. In its remarks about the case, the California Supreme Court referred to the Los Angeles school district as “among the most segregated in the entire country.”<sup>658</sup> The case, which was eventually expanded to cover all of LAUSD, dragged on for years, touching off a firestorm around the issue of mandatory busing.<sup>659</sup> The case went through a lengthy appeals process, reaching the California Supreme Court and the U.S. Supreme Court, and resulting in an amendment to the California Constitution through Proposition 1.<sup>660</sup> In 1982 the California Supreme Court refused to intervene any further in the case. The United States Supreme Court, effectively determining that the school district was not required to bus students in order to desegregate schools.<sup>661</sup>

Despite the landmark legal rulings abolishing school segregation, the school system in Bakersfield remained segregated through the 1980s and is still largely segregated today. Following a lawsuit in 1984, the U.S. Department of Education found that the Bakersfield school district was guilty of intentional segregation.<sup>662</sup> The school district bused non-white students across town to segregated schools.<sup>663</sup> The case was referred to the U.S. Department of Justice under the Civil Rights Act of 1964.<sup>664</sup> Instead of mandating that the school district develop an integration plan, the Department of Justice filed a consent decree allowing the school district to implement a voluntary plan of creating magnet schools. The effect of this voluntary plan was minimal.<sup>666</sup> Although the busing practices were stopped, many of Bakersfield’s schools remain highly segregated.

As Jonathan Kozol explains in his book *Shame of the Nation*, segregation in schooling has been getting more severe, not better, over the past few decades. Schools that were segregated 30 years ago remain so today, while schools that had been integrated have been rapidly re-segregating.<sup>667</sup> Today California is one of the four most segregated states in the country for black students, with only one black student in seven attending a predominantly non-Hispanic white school.<sup>668</sup>



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## C. Parks and Pools

### 1. “International Day” in Los Angeles

Though not codified in law, parks and other public spaces in Los Angeles were “tacitly racialized.”<sup>669</sup> For example, blacks were not allowed in the pool in many municipal parks, such as Centinella Park in Inglewood.<sup>670</sup> At other pools, such as the Plunge in Brookside Park near the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, African Americans, Latinos, and Asians were permitted to swim only on Wednesdays between the hours of 2pm and 5pm. The event was called “International Day.” At the end of each International Day, the pool was drained, cleaned, and refilled. Segregation at this and other pools throughout Los Angeles continued through the 1940s.<sup>671</sup>

There were some places of refuge, however. Central Playgrounds on Central Avenue in Los Angeles allowed African Americans to swim and play sports. Lincoln Park in East Los Angeles was a popular destination for black youth from South Central and Latino youth from East Los Angeles, who could take the Pacific Electric railroad to reach one of the few parks where they were not feared, despised, and excluded.<sup>672</sup>

### 2. The Plunge in Orange County

The Plunge, a public pool in the City of Orange, allowed Mexicans to swim only one day a week on “Mexican Day.” Much like International Day in Los Angeles, Mexican Day was on Monday because that was the day the pool was drained before being cleaned and refilled the next day.<sup>673</sup> Similar policies existed at many public pools throughout Orange County through the 1940s.<sup>674</sup> Segregation in housing in Orange County led to segregation in parks, as well. Although people of color were not prohibited from using public parks by law, it was rare to find people of color at many parks located in mostly white areas.<sup>675</sup> Parks in more diverse communities, such as county-operated Irvine Regional Park, served as places where all ethnic groups could co-exist in harmony.<sup>676</sup>

### 3. Las Piedras Park in Ventura County

Parks and open space in Ventura County often reflected historical residential patterns of segregation, as well as discriminatory city planning. Few parks were built in the areas where people of color were allowed to live. In Santa Paula there were several public parks and recreational facilities within the city, but none of them were on the east side where the majority of the Mexican population lived.<sup>677</sup> It was not until 1969, with the construction of Las Piedras Park, that residents of Santa Paula’s east side had easy access to a park. Even then, the majority of money allocated for upkeep of the city’s parks was designated for parks on the west side. As a result, over the first few years of its existence Las Piedras Park was not properly maintained.<sup>678</sup>

### 4. Chicano Park and Barrio Logan in San Diego

Like many of its Southern California neighbors, residential and social segregation resulted in segregated parks in many of San Diego County’s parks. Though the main urban park in the area, Balboa Park, was used widely among people of all ethnic and racial backgrounds, there was little integration in many of the other parks.<sup>679</sup> Many of the areas where non-whites were allowed to live, such as Barrio Logan, were severely underserved by the city’s park system.

By the 1940s Barrio Logan had developed into one of the largest Mexican-American residential communities on the West Coast, boasting as many as 20,000 residents.<sup>680</sup> Following the end of World War II, the city began rezoning the area to allow industrial operations and junkyards into the neighborhood, and even next to schools, slowly causing many residents to leave the community.<sup>681</sup> In 1963, Interstate 5 was constructed through the middle of the neighborhood, displacing even more residents. The final straw came in 1969 when the construction of the Coronado Bay Bridge forced even more residents out of Barrio Logan.<sup>682</sup>

The remaining residents began organizing and demanded that the land underneath Coronado Bay Bridge be preserved as a park. Later that summer, the city agreed to build a park on the 1.8-acre site.<sup>683</sup> On April 22, 1970 – coincidentally the same day as the first Earth Day – the residents of Barrio Logan were dismayed to find the state beginning construction on a new headquarters and parking lot for the California Highway Patrol on the site of the planned park. Outraged community members formed the Chicano Park Steering Committee and began demonstrating on the site in protest, ultimately halting construction of the CHP facilities.<sup>684</sup> After months of negotiations, the city and state relented on June 30, 1970, and officially authorized the construction of a park on the site.<sup>685</sup>

The park came to be known as Chicano Park and represented a victory for the people of Barrio Logan in not only preserving their community but improving it through parks. In an effort to further demonstrate that the park belonged to the people of Barrio Logan,





a group of Chicano artists led by Salvador Torres painted giant murals celebrating Chicano history and culture in and above the park on the pylons supporting the bridge. These works of art now represent one of the largest sets of Chicano murals in the world.<sup>686</sup> Today, Chicano Park and its murals are considered a fine example of public artistic cultural expression. The park is designated as a San Diego Historical Site and remains an integral part of the social fabric of not only the residents of Barrio Logan but of the Chicano community throughout San Diego.<sup>687</sup>

## 5. The Bath House in Santa Barbara

The Bath House was a public pool located along the beach in the City of Santa Barbara. Similarly to public pools in Los Angeles and Orange, The Bath House was only open to whites. Although there was no actual written rule prohibiting any other people from using the pool, it was well known among the area's residents that people of color were not welcome. As was the case with other discriminatory practices in Santa Barbara, whether or not a person was allowed into the pool was based on skin color. Lighter-skinned Latinos were not prevented from swimming while darker-skinned Latinos and African Americans were excluded.<sup>688</sup>

## D. Beaches

### 1. Bruces' Beach

When Manhattan Beach was incorporated in 1912, the city set aside a two-block area on the ocean for African Americans. Charles and Willa Bruce, a black couple, bought the land and built the only beach resort in the Los Angeles area that allowed blacks. Bruces' Beach offered bathhouses, outdoor sports, dining, and dancing to African Americans who craved a share of Southern California's good life. As the area's black population increased, so did non-Hispanic white opposition to the black beach. Manhattan Beach, with the help of the Ku Klux Klan, drove out the black community and closed down Bruces' Beach in the 1930s. City officials forced black property owners to sell at prices below fair market value through condemnation proceedings. The nearby Peck's Pier – the only pier that allowed blacks – and the surrounding black neighborhood were destroyed. Black Angelenos were then relegated to the blacks-only section of Santa Monica beach at Pico Boulevard known as the Inkwell. In 2006, Manhattan Beach commemorated the struggle of the Bruce family and the African American community by renaming the park at the historical site as Bruces' Beach Park.<sup>689</sup>

### 2. Malibu

At the turn of the century, Malibu consisted of a 13,316-acre rancho along a 25-mile stretch of beaches, mountains and canyons, owned by Frederick H. Rindge and later by his widow May.<sup>690</sup> To pay her taxes after her husband's death, May Rindge began leasing and selling off land parcels to movie celebrities and others.<sup>691</sup> Parcels carried racially restrictive covenants that prevented people who were not white from using or occupying beach premises except as domestic servants. Even domestic workers who were not white were prohibited from using the public beach for bathing, fishing, or recreational purposes. A typical covenant underlying movie mogul David Geffen's reads:

Said land or any part thereof shall not be used or occupied or permitted to be used or occupied by any person not of the white or Caucasian race, except such persons not of the white or Caucasian race as are engaged on said property in the bona fide domestic employment of the owner of said land or those holding under said owner and said employee shall not be permitted upon the beach part of said lands for bathing, fishing or recreational purposes.<sup>692</sup>

The demographics of Malibu today reflect its discriminatory history, as discussed above.

### 3. Pacific Beach Club in Orange County

Unlike the beaches in neighboring Los Angeles,<sup>693</sup> there were no restrictions on which racial or ethnic groups were allowed to use the beaches in Orange County. There were even a few black lifeguards patrolling Newport Beach.<sup>694</sup> As is still the case today, however, most of the cities with coastal access in Orange County have historically had very small populations of residents of color.

In 1924, in response to the fact African Americans were not allowed on the beaches in Los Angeles, non-Hispanic white businessman Hal R. Clark purchased a 7.5-acre stretch of beach near Huntington Beach in Orange County to develop as a beach club for African Americans. The Pacific Beach Club was planned to not only include beachfront property but also a clubhouse, dance hall, bathhouse, rooftop garden, auditorium, shops, restaurant, and drug store.<sup>695</sup> The black beach club met with considerable resistance from local residents, the electric utility company, local chambers of commerce, and the railroad company, which initially refused to allow the entrance road to cross over its tracks. Few contractors were willing to work on the project.<sup>696</sup>

Despite these setbacks, prior to the completion of its buildings, Pacific Beach Club opened its beaches on Labor Day 1925 for the first "negro bathing beauty parade" in the country.<sup>697</sup> Construction of the buildings moved slowly, however, and financial difficulties delayed the official opening of the club. Tragically, on January 21, 1926, just three weeks before the scheduled grand opening ceremony, arsonists burned the entire facility to the ground. Attempts by the club's members and the owner to raise money to rebuild Pacific Beach Club were unsuccessful and the project was abandoned in January 1927 when the bank foreclosed the property.<sup>698</sup>

## E. Mountains

In the 1920s and beyond, racially restrictive covenants prevented people of color from occupying or using property at Lake Arrowhead, a mountain lake destination in San Bernardino County that is visited by people throughout Southern California.<sup>699</sup> The federal government traded away land on the lake for land in the woods. Today private mansions and businesses ring the lake and only the wealthy can live in what is known as "the Beverly Hills of the Mountains." There is no public access to Lake Arrowhead.<sup>700</sup> This is a prologue for the future of natural public places if the privatization of public space continues.





Judith F. Baca, "Great Wall of Los Angeles: Division of The Barrios and Chavez Ravine" from the 1950's section. (Summer 1983)

## IX. LEGAL JUSTIFICATIONS FOR EQUAL ACCESS TO PARKS AND RECREATION

Advocates in the urban park movement have creatively combined strategic campaigns including a variety of legal theories to create new great urban parks and to protect public access to public lands, including state and federal civil rights and environmental laws and First Amendment rights to freedom of association and expression in parks and beaches.<sup>701</sup> Southern California faces the opportunity to proactively comply with these laws and principles.

Federal and state laws prohibit both intentional discrimination and unjustified discriminatory impacts for which there are less discriminatory alternatives in the provision of public resources, including access to parks and other public lands.

Recipients of public funds, such as cities and counties, are prohibited from engaging in practices that have the intent or the effect of discriminating based on race or ethnicity. Title VI of the Civil Rights of 1964 and its implementing regulations prohibit both (1) intentional discrimination based on race, color or national origin, and (2) unjustified discriminatory impacts for which there are less discriminatory alternatives, by recipients of federal financial assistance.<sup>702</sup> An important purpose of the statutory equal justice framework is to ensure that recipients of public funds do not maintain policies or practices that result in discrimination based on race, color or national origin.<sup>703</sup>

Stated in positive terms, government officials, park planners and advocates should analyze green space access and equity in planning for and investing in parks and recreation. Recipients of federal financial assistance under civil rights laws and principles must prepare an equity analysis and plan that includes the following elements:

- (1) a clear description of what is planned;
- (2) an analysis of the impact on all populations, including minority and low-income populations;
- (3) an analysis of available alternatives;
- (4) the documented inclusion of minority and low-income populations in the study and decision-making process; and
- (5) an implementation plan to address any concerns identified in the equity analysis.

This equity plan is consistent with the equity analysis and plan that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has required the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) to conduct as a condition of receiving federal funds under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and its regulations.<sup>704</sup>

This equity plan is consistent with the requirements for federal funding imposed by then-Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Andrew Cuomo on the City of Los Angeles for the site that is now the Los Angeles State Historic Park at the Cornfield. Secretary Cuomo withheld federal funds for a proposed warehouse project at the site unless there was a full environmental impact statement including an environmental justice analysis that considered the park alternative and the impact on people of color. Secretary Cuomo acted in response to a campaign by community advocates including The City Project based on civil rights and environmental laws.<sup>705</sup> As a result of this action, the 32 acre abandoned rail yard – the last vast open space in downtown Los Angeles – could have been warehouses. Instead, it's a park. The *Los Angeles Times* called the community victory "a heroic monument" and "a symbol of hope."<sup>706</sup> As reported in the *Times*, advocates "organized a civil rights challenge that claimed the project was the result of discriminatory land-use policies that had long deprived minority neighborhoods of parks."<sup>707</sup>

The regulations that every federal agency has enacted pursuant to Title VI bar criteria or methods of administration by recipients of federal funds that have the effect of subjecting persons to discrimination because of their race, color, or national origin, or have the effect of defeating or substantially impairing accomplishment of the objectives of a program with respect to individuals of a particular race, color, or national origin.<sup>708</sup> These regulations embody the discriminatory impact standard. Intent to discriminate is not required under this standard.

To receive federal funds, a recipient must certify that its programs and activities comply with Title VI and its regulations.<sup>709</sup> In furtherance of this obligation, recipients of federal financial assistance such as the county must collect, maintain, and provide upon request timely, complete, and accurate compliance information.<sup>710</sup>



The Office of Management and Budget has circulated guidance specifying that recipients of federal funds, including the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), are to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as well as other equal opportunity laws and principles.<sup>711</sup> The United States Department of Justice under President Obama has re-emphasized the need for federal agencies to enforce, and recipients of federal funds to proactively comply with, equal justice laws and principles including Title VI.<sup>712</sup> The Ninth Circuit has recently condemned the United States Environmental Protection Agency for its pattern of failing to investigate Environmental Justice complaints.<sup>713</sup>

California law also prohibits both intentional discrimination and unjustified discriminatory impacts under Government Code section 11135 and its regulations, which are analogous to Title VI and its regulations.<sup>714</sup> The regulations pursuant to 11135 bar criteria or methods of administration that have the purpose or effect of subjecting a person to discrimination on the basis of ethnic group identification or color. Intent to discriminate is not required under the discriminatory impact standard.<sup>715</sup> In addition, California law defines environmental justice as *“the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.”*<sup>716</sup>

The inquiry under the disparate impact standard is: (1) whether a practice has a disproportionate impact based on race, color or national origin; (2) if so, the recipient of public funds such as the County bears the burden of proving that such action is justified by business necessity; and (3) even if the action would otherwise be justified, the action is prohibited if there are less discriminatory alternatives to accomplish the same objective.<sup>717</sup>

The following is evidence of intentional discrimination: (1) the impact of the action and whether it bears more heavily on one group than another; (2) a history of discrimination; (3) departures from substantive norms; (4) departures from procedural norms in reaching a decision; (5) whether the decision maker knows of the harm its decision will cause; and (6) a pattern or practice of discrimination.<sup>718</sup>

Regional authorities such as the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), and the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) have all taken action to address environmental justice.

The SCAG Regional Transportation Plan included an Environmental Justice report<sup>719</sup> calling for a multiagency effort to improve access to parks for all, as discussed above. SCAG has addressed environmental justice through public access and outreach, and equity analysis of disparities and associated mitigation. In 2004, SCAG published the “Compliance Procedure for Environmental Justice in the Transportation Planning Process” with emphasis on Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.<sup>720</sup>

SANDAG addresses environmental justice and social equity as a chapter in its Regional Comprehensive Plan.<sup>721</sup> This planning document not only calls for equal justice in regard to a healthy environment, economic prosperity, and housing, but also in terms of public facilities, urban form, and transportation. Further, SANDAG calls for the participation of all residents, regardless of race, ethnicity, or income status, in the community planning process.<sup>722</sup> These directives can help promote improved access to existing green space for all San Diego residents, as well as the preservation and maintenance of urban green spaces in the San Diego region.<sup>723</sup>

SCAQMD adopted guiding principles and initiatives to ensure environmental equity related to public participation and overriding goals of reducing air emissions and increasing public health. These initiatives led to the creation of the Environmental Justice Task Force.<sup>724</sup>

The California Environmental Protection Agency has developed an Environmental Justice Action Plan, which addresses development of guidance on precautionary approaches, guidance on cumulative impacts analysis and guidance on public participation.<sup>725</sup> The California Air Resource Board (CARB) adopted its *“Policies and Actions for Environmental Justice”* in 2001.<sup>726</sup> It directs CARB to integrate environmental justice into all programs, policies, and regulations.

The California State Lands Commission (CSLC) has developed and adopted an Environmental Justice Policy to ensure equity and fairness in its own processes and procedures. The CSLC adopted an amended Environmental Justice Policy in 2002 to ensure that *“Environmental Justice is an essential consideration in the Commission’s processes, decisions and programs and that all people who live in California have a meaningful way to participate in these activities.”* The policy commits the CSLC to consider Environmental Justice in its processes, decision-making, and regulatory affairs.<sup>727</sup>

The California Coastal Commission adopted a local coastal plan requiring Malibu to maximize public access to the beach while ensuring the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes in 2002.<sup>728</sup> This was the first time an agency implemented the statutory definition of environmental justice under California law. Then-Commissioner Pedro Nava told the *Los Angeles Times* he hoped to set a precedent for other communities, ensuring that visitors are not excluded because of their income or race.<sup>729</sup> The Commission adopted the provision in response to the advocacy of The City Project on behalf of a diverse alliance.<sup>730</sup>

Unfair park, school, and health disparities in Southern California are not just the result of bad management or dumb policies and practices. Compliance with the civil rights laws is necessary to eliminate *“business as usual”* that perpetuates the pattern and history of park, school, and health disparities. According to the authors of *Rethinking Urban Parks*, *“racist ideology and practices underlie the cultural processes and forms of exclusion we describe in urban parks and beaches. We intend this work to be antiracist at its core, and to contribute to a better understanding of how racism, as a system of racial advantage/disadvantage, configures everyday park use and management.”*<sup>731</sup>

Despite cutbacks in enforcement of civil rights protections in federal courts, it is important to keep in mind that both intentional discrimination and unjustified discriminatory impacts remain unlawful under federal and state law. As a matter of simple justice, it is unfair to use public tax dollars to subsidize discriminatory intent and discriminatory impacts.<sup>732</sup> Recipients of federal and state funds, including many of the cities and counties in Southern California and their park and recreation agencies, remain obligated to prohibit both.

Planning and administrative processes are available to achieve compliance with civil rights laws and overcome discriminatory impacts. Elected officials should be increasingly sensitive to, and held accountable for, the impact of their actions on communities of color and low-income communities, especially now that people of color are in the majority in forty-eight out of the 100 largest cities in the country.<sup>733</sup> Voluntary compliance is the preferred method of applying the civil rights laws.



## X. METHODOLOGY FOR MEASURING PARK ACCESS AND EQUITY

### A. Standards to Measure Access and Equity

Access to green space can be measured a number of ways, including acres of parks per thousand residents, and quarter- or half-mile access. In 2008, the California legislature enacted AB 31<sup>734</sup> to create legislative criteria for investing park funds in communities that are “park poor” and “income poor.” This law and applicable guidelines define “park poor” as areas with fewer than three acres of parkland for every thousand residents. “Income poor” is defined as areas where the median household income is at or below \$47,331. Though these criteria are not binding in other contexts, they serve as relevant standards to measure access and equity and hold public officials accountable.<sup>735</sup> Simply stating that agencies are committed to improving green access and equity is not enough to ensure that underserved communities actually enjoy fair access to green space.

Acres of parks per thousand residents is a more useful measure than acres of parks without regard to population. A sparsely populated area may have sufficient green space for each resident with a moderate number of acres, while a densely populated urban area may have more total acres, but not enough to accommodate residents.

### B. Patterns of Racial and Ethnic Disparities

This Report evaluates disparities in green access for based on race, ethnicity, income and poverty. These groups are analyzed by using county averages or totals. An area is said to be “disproportionately” populated by a particular group when that groups exceeds the county average.

Access to green space by demographics, as well as health disparities by demographics, are relevant to define equity standards, to determine whether the benefits and burdens of public resources are distributed fairly, and to assess discriminatory impacts and intent under civil rights laws and principles.

Other studies have used majority or supermajority representation, rather than disproportionate representation, to assess disparities and discrimination. One academic study, for example, evaluates park and funding disparities using areas in which a racial or ethnic group constitutes a majority (50% to 75% African American) or supermajority (75% or higher) of the population.<sup>736</sup> This method is not appropriate because both majority and supermajority measures create too high a statistical hurdle to evaluate equal access to public resources, including natural public places. Both measures are under-inclusive in guarding against discrimination and provide evidence in only the most extreme cases of disparate access and discrimination. This majority or supermajority method does not capture disparities or discrimination in which people of color are above the county average in a community but below 50% of the total population. Policy and legal analyses should use a comparison pool such as county averages to evaluate access to natural public places.<sup>737</sup>

### C. Distance to the Park

There is no “correct” distance to evaluate fair access to green space. Any distance in the abstract, such as half-mile or quarter-mile access, walking distance, driving distance, or other distances, can be arbitrary and misleading. The optimal distance depends on the needs of the community, the type of green space, and access to transportation, such as transit or cars.

The important concern is not distance alone but whether the park and recreation programs meet the needs of the community. If physical activity is a goal, for example, people can get physically active by walking half a mile or a mile to the park. With the shared use of parks and schools, people may not be close to a park but may have access to green space at a nearby school. If residents have access to an affordable and reliable transit system, the distance to the green space can be greater. In communities with houses that have large yards with pools and basketball hoops above the garage or ready access to cars, there is less need for a park within walking distance or a quarter mile.

Smaller parks and elementary school playgrounds within walking distance can serve the needs of younger children. Larger parks and playing fields at schools can provide places for physical activity and team sports for older children and adults, and can be within driving or busing distance rather than walking distance. At the same time, a quarter acre pocket park may not adequately serve the needs of the community even if it is within walking distance if the park does not have room to play and there are no other nearby parks. Even a large park may not adequately serve the community if the population and use density is so high that demand exceeds available park space.

Some park advocates call for a park within walking distance of each residence, typically considered to be a quarter mile or less. While this might be an admirable goal in the abstract, it is not realistic. In comparison, bus stops in Los Angeles are often more than a half mile from a residence. It is unrealistic to expect more parks than bus stops.

### D. Safety and Perceptions of Safety

Whether or not a park is safe, or perceived to be safe, affects green access. Fear of crime can be a major deterrent to the use of parks.<sup>738</sup> The physical appearance and condition of green space also influences usage. Studies show that parks in poor condition are more likely to be located in neighborhoods with poor health, suggesting that people are less likely to access poorly maintained green space. Parents who perceive their neighborhoods as unsafe are less likely to encourage their children to use local playgrounds. Safety can be improved through people using the park, providing programs and services that draw people to the park, lighting the park at night, better maintenance and upkeep, the visible presence of security officers, and targeted enforcement of drug dealing and gang activity. In densely populated urban areas that may lack space for creating new parks, making existing parks safer can help improve green access.



## E. Cultural Diversity in Parks and Recreation

People are entitled to parks and natural public places that serve the diverse needs of diverse users.<sup>739</sup> People from different racial and ethnic groups use parks differently, constructing meanings for natural space based on their own values, cultures, histories, and traditions. According to a UCLA study of cultural differences in the use of urban parks, parks are primarily social gathering places for Latinos. African Americans, more than any other racial group, tend to engage in sports in parks. Non-Hispanic whites tend to value a park solely for its passive qualities—its greenness, landscaping, and natural elements, and tend to engage in solitary, self-oriented uses. Asian-American (specifically, Chinese) families were rare in parks studied. This does not mean that Asians do not value parks; this may reflect the failure of the parks to meet the needs of the Asian-American community.<sup>740</sup> Most studies on leisure and urban recreation have focused on non-Hispanic whites.<sup>741</sup> Other studies have reached similar conclusions about how Latinos use forests and other natural public places differently.<sup>742</sup>

Research suggests two potential explanations for differences in ethnic and racial recreation patterns. The ethnicity hypothesis posits that participation patterns result from culturally based differences in value systems and leisure socialization. Even when variables such as income, gender, area of residence, and household size are statistically controlled, ethnic and racial differences in participation patterns persist. The marginality hypothesis suggests that under-participation of ethnic and racial groups results primarily from limited economic resources and historical and ongoing patterns of discrimination.<sup>743</sup> Because people of color often occupy a subordinate position and hold a low station in the status hierarchy, they are less desired as leisure companions, leading to the creation of leisure spaces that are identified as non-Hispanic white or otherwise.<sup>744</sup>

Park and recreation plans, programs, and funding need to serve the diverse interests of diverse users in a balanced park and recreation system that includes places for physical activity to improve health, active recreation, passive recreation, and wilderness places.

## XI. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GREEN SPACE AND EQUAL JUSTICE

Green spaces, including parks, school fields, rivers, beaches, forests, mountains, and trails, are a necessary part of the infrastructure for healthy, livable, and just communities. The following recommendations for equitable development would help ensure that everyone, especially children and youth of color and low-income communities, benefit equally from infrastructure investments.

1. Prioritize green space projects based on need in communities that are both park poor and income poor. The California legislative criteria for investing park funds in park poor and income poor communities under Prop 84 and AB31 is a best practice example for prioritizing investments in parks and green space.
2. Prioritize projects that address physical, psychological, and social health needs, including childhood obesity and diabetes levels. Applying public health criteria to infrastructure investments could improve health and the quality of life in communities.<sup>745</sup> Green space in parks and schools can provide opportunities for physical activity to reduce obesity, improve academics, bring people together and provide positive alternatives to gangs, crime and violence. Parks and school fields should be accessible and should provide programs to encourage the use of the parks.
3. Prioritize projects that involve the joint use of parks, schools and pools to make optimal use of scarce land, money, and public resources, and expand open space opportunities in densely developed communities. The joint use of parks, schools, and pools and other multi-benefit green spaces can clean the air and water, provide flood control, promote climate justice, and convert toxic sites and brownfields to green fields. The federal No Child Left Behind law should also require that quality physical education be taught in every public school, and that state physical education laws should be enforced.
4. Fund Conservation Corps and Youth Job Programs. Conservation Corps and youth job programs should be strengthened and expanded to create green jobs and to keep young people in school, physically active and healthy, and out of gangs. Youth programs also lead to permanent jobs and careers as stewards of the environment.
5. Prioritize cultural, historical, and public art projects that celebrate diversity, democracy and freedom parks and other public places. Native American sites must be celebrated and preserved.
6. Fund Transit to Trails. Transportation funding should support Transit to Trails as alternatives to single occupancy vehicles in order to provide access for all to parks, mountains, beaches and rivers.
7. Infrastructure projects should create green collar jobs for local workers, small and disadvantaged business enterprises, and youth.
8. Funding agencies should ensure compliance with civil rights laws guaranteeing equal access to public resources including parks and recreation programs. Compliance with civil rights laws should be combined with other laws including environmental and education laws, as discussed in the economic stimulus guidelines published by the Office of Management and Budget.
9. Projects should implement principles of equitable development: invest in people, invest in stronger communities, invest in the open, and invest in justice.<sup>746</sup>
10. Implement strategic plans to improve parks and recreation in every neighborhood. In conjunction with the specific recommendations above, public officials should develop a vision and strategic plan to alleviate inequities in access to parks and recreation. The California Department of Parks and Recreation should have an equity plan in place to distribute the benefits and burdens of state parks if Prop 21 passes, and certainly if it does not pass. The National Park Service, the National Forest Service, and the America's Great Outdoors Campaign should ensure equal access to the benefits of green space as core elements of their missions.



## XII. CONCLUSION

Green space plays a valuable role in the life of all Southern Californians. From the positive physical and psychological impacts parks have on people to environmental services to economic vitality, the fundamental values of equal justice and democracy underlie all of the values that parks provide.

Unfortunately, not everyone in Southern California has equal access to these green spaces. In the nine counties of Southern California, low-income communities and communities of color suffer first and worst in park access and related human health disparities.

The goal of this Policy Report is to engage, educate and empower stakeholders to achieve equal justice, democracy and livability for all by promoting equity in access to green space in Southern California. The City Project has relied on a five-part strategy to improve green access and equity in communities throughout California. First, coalition building brings people together to meet the needs of the community as defined by the community. Second, multidisciplinary research and analyses underlie work like this report, including GIS mapping, demographic analyses, and historical research. Third, strategic media campaigns, including traditional and new social media, help focus public attention. Fourth, policy and legal advocacy outside the courts can promote equitable infrastructure results through the planning process. Finally, access to justice through the courts can be a profoundly democratic means of ensuring equal access to public resources within a broader campaign if other alternatives fail.

These strategies helped produce the results in defining park poor and income poor under Prop 84, AB 31, and the applicable guidelines for investing park funds in underserved communities throughout California. These strategies helped save the sacred Native American site of Panhe and San Onofre State Beach, and stop the toll road that would devastate both. These strategies led to great urban park victories at the Los Angeles State Historic Park, Rio de Los Angeles State Park, Baldwin Hills Park, and Ascot Hills Park. These strategies resulted in the enforcement of physical education requirements in public schools in Los Angeles.

The road must be found from hope to change. Opportunities exist to create new green spaces and improve access to existing green spaces throughout Southern California. But the presence of green space is only part of the equation. It is imperative that everyone is equally able to access this green space. Achieving equitable green access throughout Southern California is not only possible but also necessary for realizing equal justice, democracy, and livability for all.

Billions of dollars of park, school, water, and other infrastructure bonds are available from federal, state and local sources. Various agencies are implementing park, school, and infrastructure plans that will shape the state and nation for generations to come. Applying the principles, recommendations, and laws above to achieve equitable infrastructure investments will help create healthy, livable, communities for all.

## Strategies for Success

**The City Project works with diverse allies to implement strategies to improve green access for all through: (1) community organizing and coalition building; (2) translating research into policy, law and systemic change; (3) strategic media campaigns, including new social media; and (4) policy and legal advocacy outside the courts. (5) When necessary, we also seek access to justice through the courts.**





### XIII. CITATIONS

<sup>1</sup> Robert García is Executive Director and Counsel of The City Project in Los Angeles, California. Seth Strongin is Assitant Director, Policy and Research Manager. Leah Nelson, Research Associate, contributed to the research and analyses of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Amanda Recinos, Associate Director of GreenInfo Network and a GIS specialist, prepared the maps and demographics analyses in this Report.

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<sup>3</sup> This Report will often use the shorthand terms “parks,” “parks and recreation,” and “green space” to refer to parks, school fields, rivers, beaches, forests, and other natural public places.

<sup>4</sup> Note: For accuracy and consistency, all demographic data used in this Report are from the 2000 U.S. Decennial Census unless otherwise noted.

<sup>5</sup> The City Project has worked and published extensively on equal access to parks, school fields, rivers, beaches, forests, transportation, and related issues at the intersection of equal justice, democracy, and livability. See generally Robert García and Erica Flores, *Anatomy of the Urban Park Movement: Equal Justice, Democracy and Livability in Los Angeles* [hereinafter *Urban Parks Movement*], in *The Quest for Environmental Justice: Human Rights and the Politics of Pollution* 145 (Robert Bullard, ed., 2005); Robert García et al., *We Shall Be Moved: Community Activism As a Tool for Reversing the Rollback* [hereinafter *We Shall Be Moved*], in *Awakening From The Dream: Pursuing Civil Rights In A Conservative Era* 329 (Denise C. Morgan et al., eds., 2005); Robert García and Thomas A. Rubin, *Crossroad Blues: The MTA Consent Decree and Just Transportation*, in *Running on Empty: Transport, Social Exclusion, and Environmental Justice* 221 (Karen Lucas, ed., 2004); Robert García and Erica Flores Baltodano, *Free the Beach! Public Access Equal Justice, and the California Coast*, 2 *Stanford Journal of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties* 142 (2005) [hereinafter *Free the Beach!*]; Robert García and Erica Flores Baltodano, *Healthy Children, Healthy Communities, and Legal Services*, published in a special issue on Environmental Justice for Children in the *Journal of Poverty Law and Policy* by the National Center on Poverty Law and the Clearinghouse Review (May-June 2005) [hereinafter *Healthy Children, Healthy Communities, and Legal Services*]; *Healthy Children, Healthy Communities: Schools, Parks, Recreation, and Sustainable Regional Planning*, 31 *Fordham Urb. L.J.* 101 (2004) (Symposium on Urban Equity); Robert García, Erica S. Flores, Julie Ehrlich, *Policy Report, The Cornfield and the Flow of History* (2004), available at [www.cityprojectca.org/publications/index.html](http://www.cityprojectca.org/publications/index.html); See generally Robert García, et al., *Dreams of Fields: Soccer, Community, and Equal Justice* 17 (2002); available at [www.cityprojectca.org/publications/index.html](http://www.cityprojectca.org/publications/index.html).

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Race or Ethnicity	Safe Place to Play	Kept Inside / Cities Under 18	Kept Inside / Suburbs Under 18
Non-Hispanic White	87%	25%	15%
Hispanic	68%	48%	33%
African American	71%	39%	25%

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- <sup>219</sup> See, e.g., River Report at 5, 20-21, 25-27, 36, 40, 43.
- <sup>220</sup> See also Maps 1002-1010. For example, within three miles of the river outside the City, 60% of the population is Hispanic, 10% is black, 43% of children live in poverty, and the median household income is \$34,751. Within three miles of the river within the City, 49% of the population is Hispanic, 5% is black, 35% of children live in poverty, and the median household income is \$41,681. Total acres of parks per thousand residents is higher within than outside the City (8.3 versus 5.6), while net acres are about the same (5.4 versus 5.6) within and outside the City.
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- <sup>224</sup> State and federal clean water laws, CEQA, and NEPA provide the framework for environmental restoration, revitalization and development along the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers. See, e.g., Federal Water Pollution Control Act, 33 U.S.C. §1313(a) et seq.; Porter-Cologne Act, Cal. Water Code §13000 et seq.; National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. § 4321; California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Cal. Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.). Civil rights laws are discussed below.
- <sup>225</sup> The City Project working with the community in South Central Los Angeles and Baldwin Hills is ensuring compliance with the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1311(a), and a court order to eliminate persistent and offensive sewer odors that have long plagued residents in African-American Los Angeles, and to improve the sewer system city wide. The Los Angeles sewer system is one of the largest in the nation, making this work significant both in southern California and nationally.
- After years of complaints, community residents sought access to justice through the courts in 2001 by joining a suit by the United States Department of Justice, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the California Regional Water Quality Control Board and a mainstream environmental organization to require the City of Los Angeles to fix the sewer system citywide. The suit resulted in a \$2 billion settlement agreement and court order in 2004. The Clean Water Act was used for the first time to address sewage odors, separate from spills. EPA officials called the historic agreement "one of the largest sewage cases in U.S. history." In 2009, the parties and the court agreed to modify the settlement agreement to enable community groups to continue to work with the Odor Advisory Board, an independent expert, The City Project, and the city to continue the clean up of the sewer odors. This work in and out of court is a best practice example of community groups, civil rights attorneys, government agencies at the federal, state and local level, and mainstream environmentalists working together to improve quality of life, environmental quality, and environmental justice for all. The community plaintiffs were the Baldwin Hills Estates Homeowners' Association, Inc., Baldwin Hills Village Garden Homes Association, United Homeowners Association, Village Green Owners Association, and Concerned Citizens of South Central Los Angeles. See generally The City Project, *Enforcing the Clean Water Act in Communities of Color*, [www.cityprojectca.org/ourwork/cleanwaterjustice.html](http://www.cityprojectca.org/ourwork/cleanwaterjustice.html).
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- <sup>739</sup> See generally Robert García, et al., Policy Report, Dreams of Fields: Soccer, Community, and Equal Justice 17 (The City Project Policy Report 2002), available at [www.cityprojectca.org/publications/index.html](http://www.cityprojectca.org/publications/index.html).
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- <sup>742</sup> See generally Alison H. Deming & Lauret E. Savoy, ed., *The Colors of Nature: Culture, Identity, and the Natural World* (2002); Rethinking Urban Parks, *supra*, at 40-43; Deborah J. Chavez, Mexican-American Outdoor Recreation: Home, Community & Natural Environment, proceedings paper, Hawaii International Conference on Social Sciences 5, 41-43 (2003); Deborah J. Chavez, Adaptive Management in Outdoor Recreation: Serving Hispanics in Southern California, 17 (3) West. J. Applied Forestry 132 (July 2002); Deborah S. Carr & Deborah J. Chavez, A Qualitative Approach to Understanding Recreation Experiences: Central American Recreation in the National Forests of Southern California in Culture, Conflict, and Communication in the Wildland-Urban Interface 181, 184-94 (A.W. Ewert, D.J. Chavez, A.W. Magill eds., 1993); Patrick T. Tierney, et al., USDA, Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station, Cultural Diversity of Los Angeles County Residents Using Undeveloped Natural Areas 5 (1998).
- <sup>743</sup> See generally Rethinking Urban Parks, *supra*, at 40-43; Mexican-American Outdoor Recreation, *supra*, at 2.
- <sup>744</sup> See Regina Austin, "Not Just for the Fun of It!: Governmental Restraints on Black Leisure, Social Inequality, and the Privatization of Public Space, 71 S. Cal. L. Rev. 667, 694, 711-12 (1998).
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- <sup>746</sup> See generally California Green Stimulus Coalition Principles, available at <http://californiagreenstimulus.org/our-principles>.



Bruce's Beach Free the Beach!



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*“It is very important that our children grow up healthy. The more they run, the happier they are. The more they play together with other children, the better people they will be in the future. Parks and school yards are a place for peace, a place where life-long values are built. Community activism to build parks and schools is a way of saying no to violence, no to war. Peace and hope are part of our children’s education and culture.”*

Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate,  
speaking about the work of The City Project and  
Anahuak Youth Soccer Association to bring parks,  
school fields, and green space to the children  
of Southern California.



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For more information on green access and equity in Southern California, and to download a copy of this report, and individual county reports in English and Spanish, please visit [www.cityprojectca.org/greenjustice](http://www.cityprojectca.org/greenjustice).

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