

# Environmental Justice Elements Planning Initiative



East Palo Alto Workshop | May 23, 2024



# Meeting Overview

## » Informational Presentation

- Background Information
- Overview of the Environmental Justice Elements Planning Initiative

## » Questions & Answers

## » Gallery Walk

## » Reconvene and Close





# What is Environmental Justice?

- » **Everyone has the right to the same environmental protections and involvement in the decision-making process.**
- » **Requires governments to correct laws, policies, and regulations that have:**
  - Created systemic racism and oppression.
  - Placed low-income communities and communities of color in more polluted environments.
- » **Requires robust and equitable engagement with affected communities.**



# California Law

**California law requires that counties and cities address environmental justice by:**

- Identifying communities that suffer from environmental injustices (i.e., “disadvantaged communities”)
- Assessing conditions and challenges in these communities
- Adding policies in the General Plan, a key City plan, to address these injustices



# Identifying

## “Disadvantaged Communities”

- » Disadvantaged communities are defined in State law as low-income communities experiencing high levels of pollution and/or other health hazards



\* State law uses the term “disadvantaged community.” What term would you prefer we use in the Environmental Justice Element?



# Environmental Justice Issues



Pollution exposure and air quality



Access to healthy and affordable food and groceries



Access to safe, sanitary, and stable homes



Access to recreational opportunities and physical activity



Access to effective public services and facilities



Exposure to climate hazards, extreme weather, and other health risks



Ability to engage in government procedures



Other issues specific to a community



# What is a General Plan?

## » “Blueprint” for Growth & Development

- Establishes community vision and supporting goals, policies, and actions
- Provides direction for future development and City decision-making
- Includes eight mandatory sections or “elements”





# What is an “Element”

State law requires that General Plans contain eight mandatory sections or “elements.”  
The State provides flexibility in how the elements are organized.



Land Use



Circulation



Housing



Conservation



Open Space



Noise



Safety



**Environmental  
Justice**



# What is the Environmental Justice Elements Planning Initiative?

## » Collaborative effort:

- Burlingame
- East Palo Alto
- San Mateo County

## » Prepare/update environmental justice elements in each jurisdiction



# Environmental Justice Elements Planning Initiative Process

## » Four steps:

1. Research Environmental Justice Issues and Communities
2. Engage Communities
3. Develop Draft Environmental Justice Elements
4. Adopt the Environmental Justice Elements





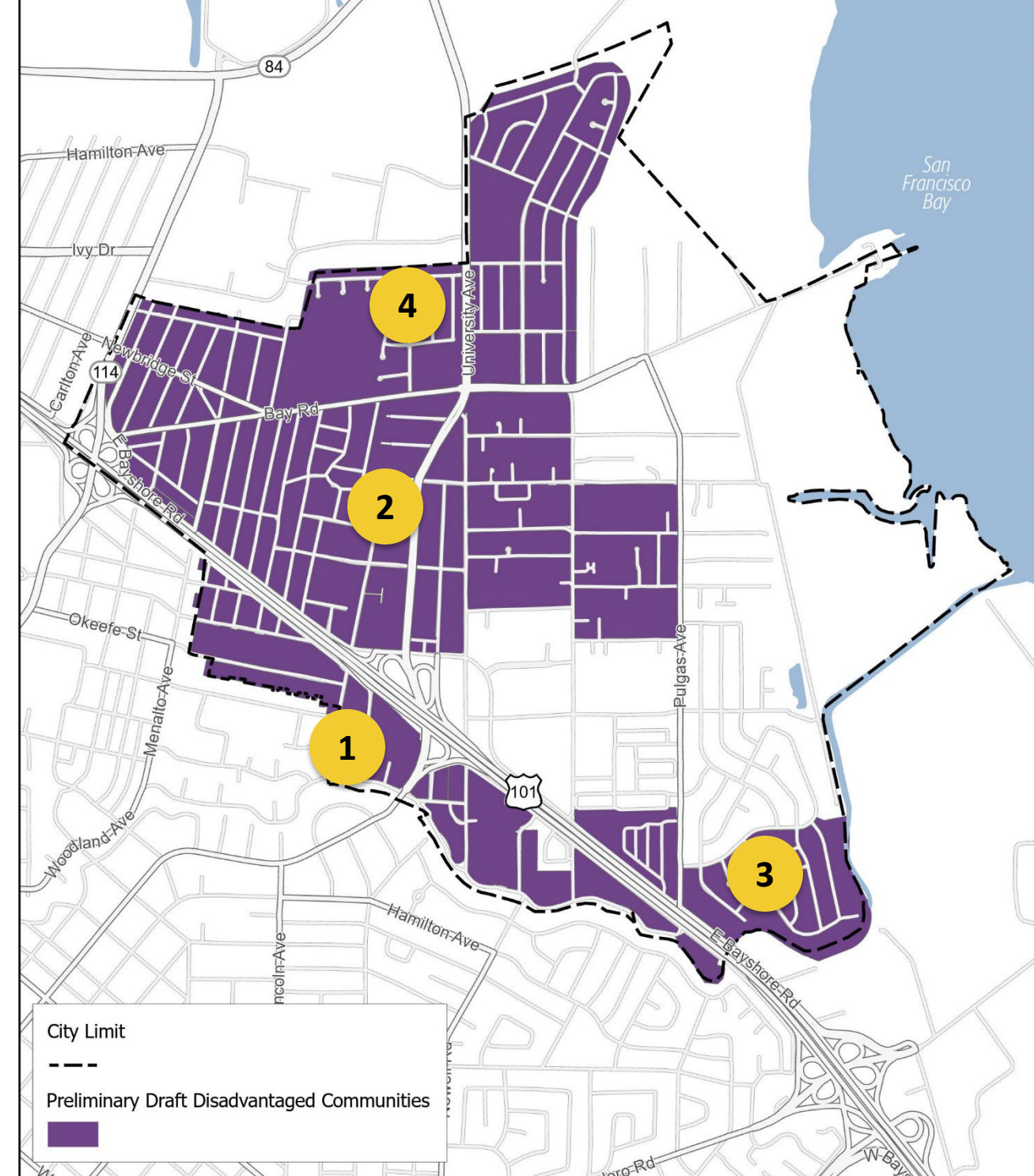
# ✓ Step 1: Research EJ Issues and Communities

- » Research environmental justice issues
- » Identify preliminary disadvantaged communities based on available data



# East Palo Alto Preliminary Draft Disadvantaged Communities Map

1. West and south of US 101: High risk of displacement and flooding issues
2. Central area north of US 101 (includes Weeks neighborhood): Multifamily and soft-story buildings along Bay Rd and Clark Ave
3. Gardens Neighborhood in south: Rent-burdened households and flooding issues
4. North of Bay Rd: Rent-burdened households and soil and groundwater contamination

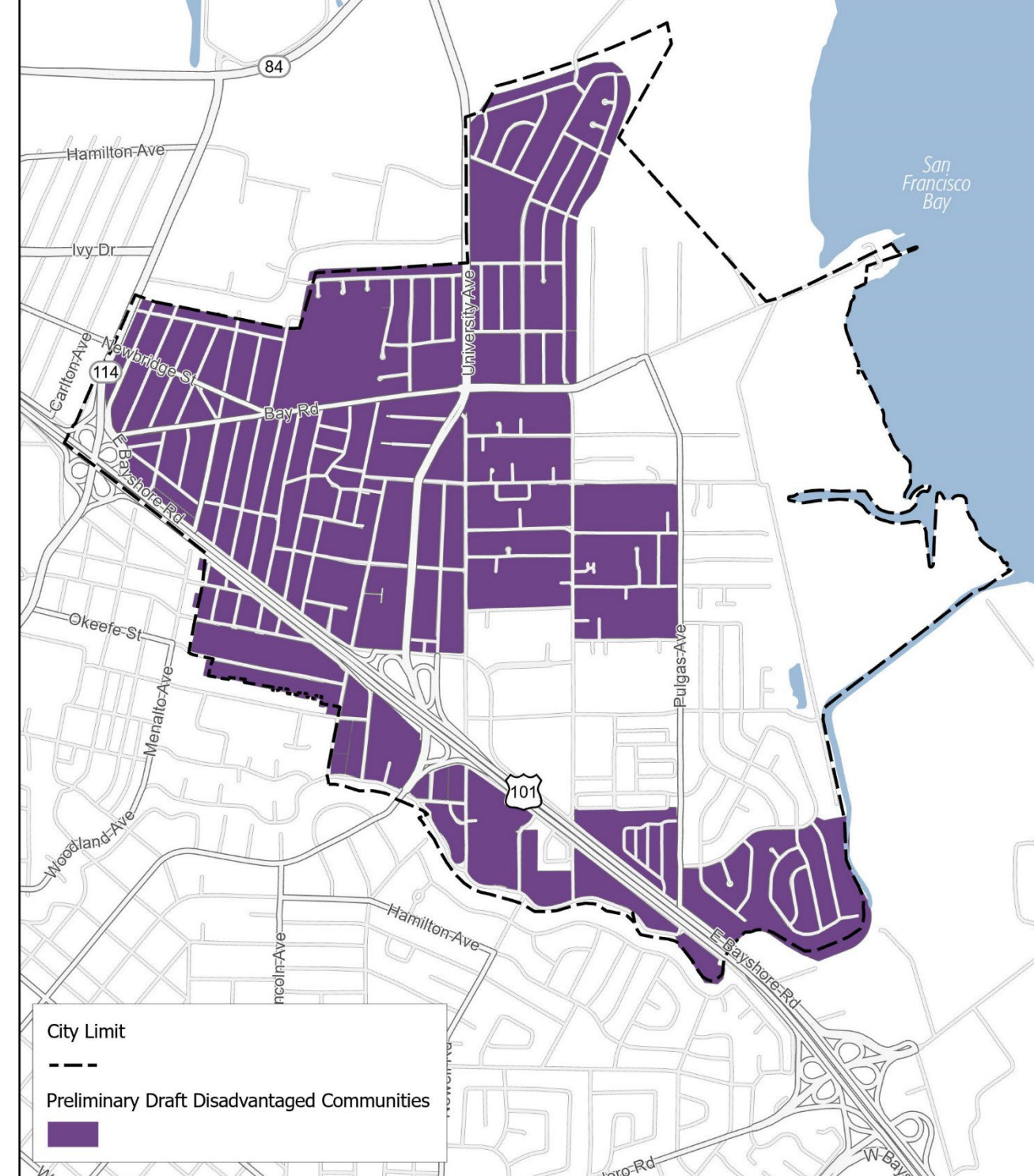




# East Palo Alto Preliminary Draft Disadvantaged Communities Map

We would like your feedback on:

- Where are you experiencing EJ issues and what are those issues?
- What would you change about this map?
- Do you agree with the name “Disadvantaged Communities”?



# Step 2: Engage Communities

- » Local knowledge and expertise
- » Vet and ground truth the preliminary mapping
- » Learn more about the issues faced in these communities





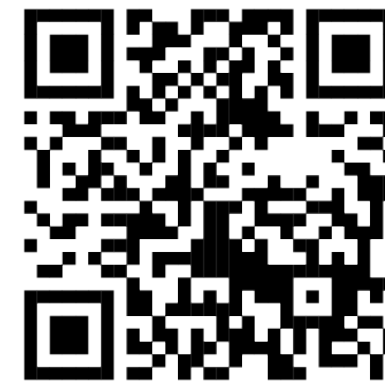
# Community Engagement Opportunities

- » **Community engagement is critical**
- » **Ways to participate:**
  - In-person workshops
  - In-person door to door surveys
  - Interactive map-based online survey
- » **Visit the project website to stay up to date with the latest opportunities!**

[envirojusticeplanning.com](https://envirojusticeplanning.com)



Map-based online survey  
<https://arcg.is/0DO9eL0>



Envirojusticeplanning.com

# What's Next?

- » **Step 3: Prepare the Draft Environmental Justice Elements (this summer through spring 2025)**
- » **Step 4: Adopt the Environmental Justice Elements (summer 2025)**





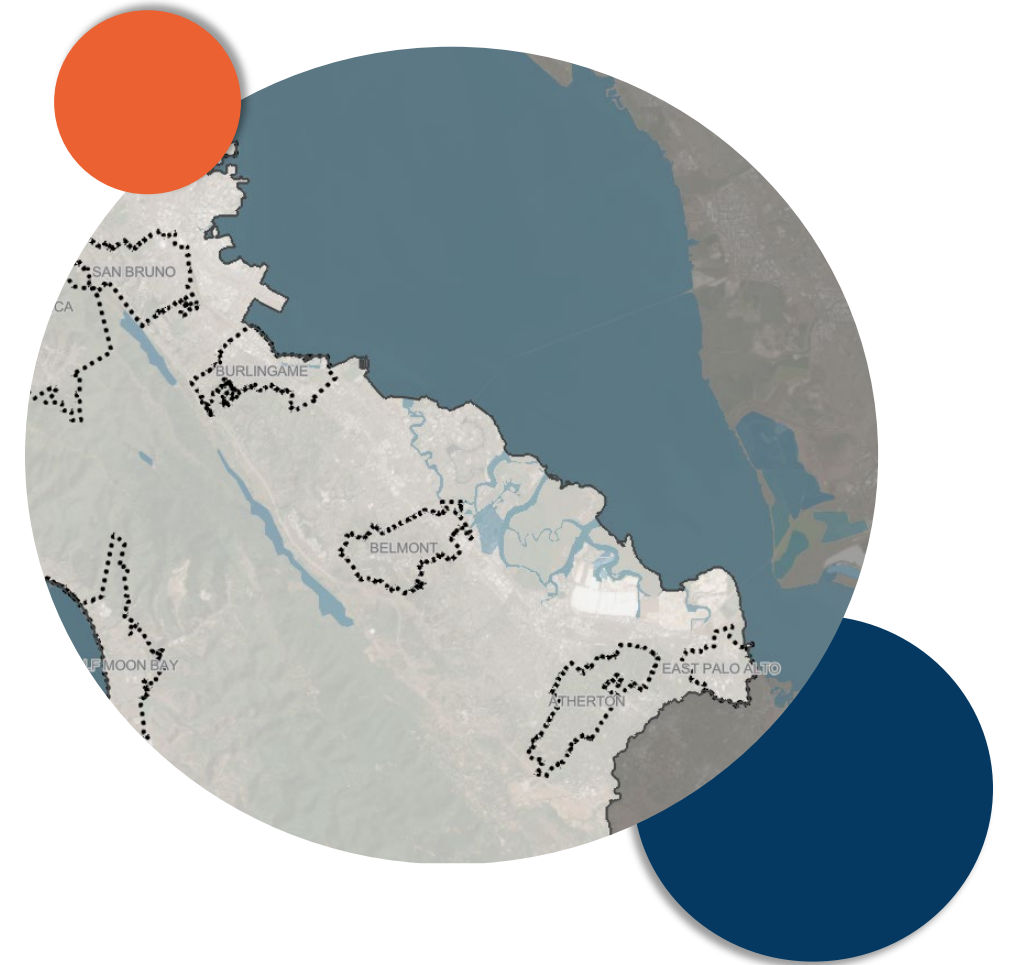
# Safety Element Updates: About the PREP Project

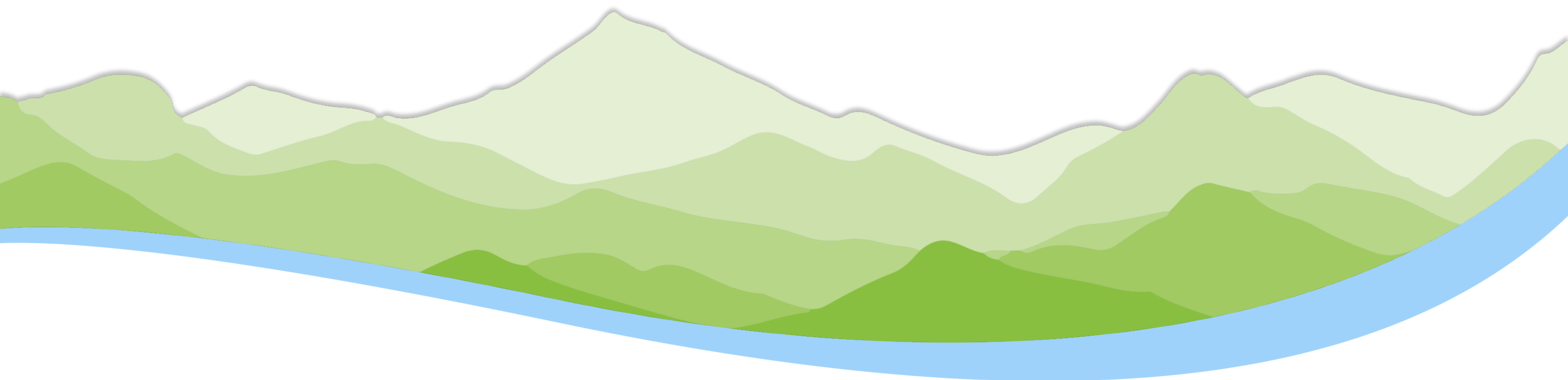
Peninsula Resilience Planning (PREP) is a project to plan for the harm posed by climate change and natural hazards for nine participating communities in San Mateo County, including East Palo Alto.

Includes:

- » Vulnerability Assessments
- » Safety Element Updates
- » Community Engagement

Learn more about PREP at [www.prepsmc.com](http://www.prepsmc.com).





# Questions?



**For Further Information:**  
**[envirojusticeplanning.com](http://envirojusticeplanning.com)**





# Gallery Walk Activity

## » Overview

- We want to hear from you!
- Pieces of the East Palo Alto Environmental Justice Element are on boards around the room and need your thoughts added.

## » Directions

- Use sticky dots to vote on priority issues and share your thoughts with notetakers and facilitators near each board.
- Ask questions, share your reasoning behind voting, and listen to fellow participants.

## » Activity Time

- 1 hour

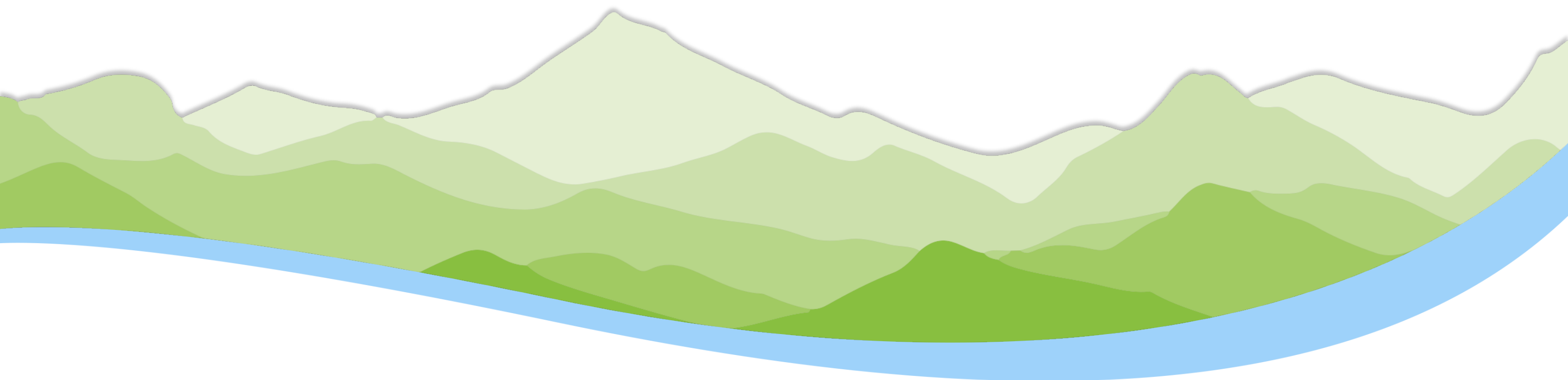


# Next Steps

- » **Continue community engagement**
  - Workshops in unincorporated San Mateo County
  - Community surveys
  - Interviews with community-based organizations
- » **Refined maps and issues**
- » **Policy development**
- » **Draft environmental justice element**
- » **Community review and input**







# Thank you!

**For Further Information:**  
[envirojusticeplanning.com](http://envirojusticeplanning.com)

