

# 9



## *Environmental Justice Element*

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*Public Review Draft – May 2024*



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# INTRODUCTION

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## What is Environmental Justice?

The State of California 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” (California Government Code Section 65040.12). “Fair treatment” means no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental, and commercial operations, and policies.

While it is the hope that all people have convenient access to safe housing, clean environments, adequate community services, and healthy foods, the reality does not always align. Today, and throughout California history, low-income residents, communities of color, tribal nations, and immigrant communities often bear a disproportionately large burden of exposure to environmental hazards, such as pollution burdens, urban heat islands, resulting in increased negative health outcomes for these groups. Conditions in these communities can be traced to a variety of factors such as underinvestment, inequitable land use and zoning policies, lack of access to necessary amenities, and lack of meaningful public engagement with community residents. These factors resulted in systemic disadvantages for these communities. Environmental justice seeks to remedy disproportionate health and environmental burdens through democratic values of fairness and equity. This Environmental Justice

Element addresses public health risks and environmental justice concerns citywide as well as for those residents living in Visalia’s Neighborhoods of Focus.

## Relationship to Other General Plan Elements

The Planning for Healthy Communities Act of 2016 (Senate Bill 1000) was enacted to address environmental justice at a local and regional level. The legislation requires cities and counties to incorporate policies and programs to promote environmental justice in their general plans. The purpose of Visalia’s Environmental Justice Element is to develop a robust set of goals, policies, and programs which prioritize improving the health and quality of life of the city’s vulnerable residents. As provided by State Government Code 65302(h), the Environmental Justice Element has the same weight as the other mandatory elements of a General Plan and shall be internally consistent with the other elements.

The goals, policies, and programs in this Environmental Justice Element align with and expand upon those found in other elements of the existing General Plan which promote healthy, diverse, and equitable communities in Visalia. Various policies within the Environmental Justice Element closely relate to subjects addressed in the following Elements:



**Land Use Element.** Establishes the framework for shaping the types and location of new development along with strategies to maintain and enhance existing development and character within the City. The City's most recent Land Use Element was adopted in 2014.

**Circulation Element.** Supports the Land Use Element by identifying the major roads and transportation systems necessary to support the development of the land uses and densities laid out in the element. In addition, the Circulation Element encompasses objectives and policies that focus on establishing secure, accessible, and efficient multi-modal transportation systems to facilitate the movement of individuals and goods throughout the City. The City's most recent Circulation Element was adopted in 2014.

**Housing Element.** Ensures that there is sufficient residential capacity available to meet the minimum needs established by the State for various income levels. The City's most recent Housing Element was adopted in 2023.

**Safety and Noise Element.** Identifies hazards to people and infrastructure and includes safety considerations in the planning and decision-making process by establishing policies related to future development that will minimize the risk of personal injury, loss of life, property damage, and environmental damage associated with natural and human-caused hazards. The noise section identifies noise sources within the city and includes mitigation measures to reduce their impacts and regulate noise sources. The City's most recent Safety and Noise Element was adopted in 2024.

**Parks, Schools, Community Facilities, and Utilities Element.** Establishes the fundamental building blocks for new neighborhoods, including the development and maintenance of parks, schools, and important services such as fire, police, water supply, wastewater and solid waste collection, and other utilities. This Element supports the policies and programs found in the Land Use and Circulation Elements. The City's most recent Parks, Schools, Community Facilities, and Utilities Element was adopted in 2014.

**Open Space and Conservation Element.** Ensures the conservation of natural resources in Visalia. This element addresses open space resources; land resources including farmland and minerals; water resources including groundwater and waterways; biological resources; and cultural and historic resources. This Element supports the policies and programs addressed in the Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases Element. The City's most recent Open Space and Conservation Element was adopted in 2014.

**Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases Element.** Identifies six air pollutants which contribute to poor air quality in Visalia and the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin and establishes policies and programs to reduce the creation of these pollutants. In addition, an inventory of greenhouse gas emissions and its impacts are identified, along with subsequent policies and programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This element supports the policies and programs found in the Land Use and Circulation Elements. The City's most recent Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases Element was adopted in 2014.

Many environmental justice-oriented policies are already present in other General Plan elements. **Table 9-1**, below, provides a list of these policies. The goals, policies, and programs in the Environmental

Justice Element aim to fill the gaps in other General Plan elements and ensure the General Plan fully addresses the environmental justice needs of the community

**Table 9-1 Policies in Other Elements Supporting Environmental Justice Efforts**

Policy Number	Policy Text	Page Number
<b>Land Use Element</b>		
LU-P-19	Ensure that growth occurs in a compact and concentric fashion by implementing the General Plan's phased growth strategy.	2-28
LU-P-29	Use regional and community parks and open space to enhance gateways to the City and as a buffer between adjacent communities.	2-32
LU-P-38	Develop a City-wide street tree and landscape master plan that enhances the City's overall identity and lends distinct character to specific streets and districts.	2-38
LU-P-45	Promote development of vacant, underdeveloped, and/or redevelopable land within the City limits where urban services are available and adopt a bonus/incentive program to promote and facilitate infill development in order to reduce the need for annexation and conversion of prime agricultural land and achieve the objectives of compact development established in this General Plan.	2-39
LU-P-46	Adopt and implement an incentive program for residential infill development of existing vacant lots and underutilized sites within the City limits as a strategy to help to meet the future growth needs of the community.	2-39
LU-P-48	Establish criteria and standards for pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle circulation networks within new subdivisions and nonresidential development.	2-45
LU-P-50	Provide development standards to ensure that a mix of detached and attached single family and multi-family housing types can be compatible in a single development.	2-45
LU-P-58	Establish an Affordable Housing Overlay Zoning District (AHO) to promote the development of affordable housing on infill land within the existing City limits in areas designated by the General Plan for multi-family residential development. Participation by affordable housing developers in the AHO program would be voluntary, with the incentives offered intended to make development of affordable housing feasible.	2-47
LU-P-72	Ensure that noise, traffic, and other potential conflicts that may arise in a mix of commercial and residential uses are mitigated through good site planning, building design, and/or appropriate operational measures.	2-53


**Table 9-1 Policies in Other Elements Supporting Environmental Justice Efforts**

<i>Policy Number</i>	<i>Policy Text</i>	<i>Page Number</i>
<b>LU-P-74</b>	Create new streets and public open spaces in East Downtown designed to be the focus for social and economic activities. Establish urban design guidelines to ensure that new projects help to shape and activate parks and streets; provide continuity and visual references; connect to contiguous development; and anticipate a future when central Visalia is the most sought after in-town residential and business address in the San Joaquin Valley.	2-54
<b>LU-P-103</b>	Require buffering land uses adjacent to existing or planned residential areas adjacent to industrial designations. Such uses may include parks, drainage ponds, open space, or other such uses.	2-60
<b>Circulation Element</b>		
<b>T-P-1</b>	Provide transportation facilities based on a “Complete Streets” concept that facilitate the balanced use of all travel modes (pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit users), meeting the transportation needs of all ages and abilities and providing mobility for a variety of trip purposes.	4-11
<b>T-P-2</b>	Optimize roadway operations with priority given to signal timing coordination in order to increase traffic-carrying capacity and decrease air pollution and congestion. Roundabouts shall be considered when feasible and beneficial as an alternative to traffic signals.	4-11
<b>T-P-23</b>	Require that all new developments provide right-of-way, which may be dedicated or purchased, and improvements (including necessary grading, installation of curbs, gutters, sidewalks, parkway/landscape strips, bike and parking lanes) other city street design standards. Design standards will be updated following General Plan adoption.	4-29
<b>T-P-30</b>	Give high priority to public transportation systems that are responsive to the needs of commuters, the elderly, persons with disabilities, the youth, and low-income citizens. Continue to work with transit providers to expand services to these populations and to underserved areas of the City.	4-35
<b>T-P-33</b>	Work with transit operators to establish transit stops adjacent to community and regional parks, senior housing facilities, areas with a high concentration of medical facilities, major employment centers, and major retail and commercial centers.	4-35
<b>T-P-41</b>	Integrate the bicycle transportation system into new development and infill redevelopment. Development shall provide short term bicycle parking and long-term bicycle storage facilities, such as bicycle racks, stocks, and rental bicycle lockers. Development also shall provide safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian access to high activity land uses such as schools, parks, shopping, employment, and entertainment centers.	4-40

**Table 9-1 Policies in Other Elements Supporting Environmental Justice Efforts**

<i>Policy Number</i>	<i>Policy Text</i>	<i>Page Number</i>
<b>T-P-50</b>	Provide pedestrian facilities that are accessible to persons with disabilities and ensure that roadway improvement projects address accessibility and use universal design concepts.	4-41
<b>T-P-51</b>	Locate sidewalks, pedestrian paths, and appropriate crosswalks to facilitate access to all schools and other areas with significant pedestrian traffic. Whenever feasible, pedestrian paths shall be developed to allow for unobstructed pedestrian flow from within a neighborhood.	4-41
<b>Housing Element</b>		
<b>HE Policy 1.4</b>	The City shall encourage a mix of residential development types in the city, including single family homes on a variety of lot sizes, as well as townhomes, row houses, live-work units, planned unit developments, accessory dwelling units, and multi-family housing.	136
<b>HE Policy 2.2</b>	The City shall encourage the development of vertical and horizontal mixed-use development projects as a means to increase housing supply while promoting diversity and neighborhood vitality.	138
<b>HE Policy 2.4</b>	The City shall provide a wide range of housing types (e.g., mixed use, flats, podium townhouses, row houses, small-lot single-family residential, and live-work lofts) in the Downtown and East Downtown areas, as well as encourage both affordable and market-rate housing opportunities.	138
<b>HE Policy 3.1</b>	The City shall encourage the development of housing that is affordable by design, such as small lot single family units, second units, and manufactured homes.	140
<b>HE Policy 3.6</b>	The City shall utilize available funds to subsidize the development of affordable housing for low-, very low-, and extremely low-income households.	140
<b>HE Policy 3.10</b>	The City shall strive to work with developers to ensure that low- and moderate-income housing is located within walking distance of or has access to public transit and services.	140
<b>HE Policy 4.3</b>	The City shall lead efforts to institute a holistic approach to neighborhood revitalization, including proactive code compliance, renter and landlord education programs, infrastructure reinvestment, and community engagement.	146
<b>HE Policy 5.1</b>	The City shall encourage the development of housing for elderly, persons with disabilities, large families, families with female heads of household, families and persons in need of emergency shelter, and farmworkers, where compatible with surrounding land uses and where site conditions and service capabilities permit. Sites considered especially appropriate for these uses are those accessible to day care and transit, case management, commercial, and medical services.	147


**Table 9-1 Policies in Other Elements Supporting Environmental Justice Efforts**

<i>Policy Number</i>	<i>Policy Text</i>	<i>Page Number</i>
<b>HE Policy 5.2</b>	The City shall encourage the development of housing types that meet the needs of baby boomers and seniors, such as housing on smaller lots with modest building footprints and encourage development of affordable senior housing.	147
<b>Safety and Noise Element</b>		
<b>S-P-15</b>	Require remediation and cleanup of sites contaminated with hazardous substances.	8-11
<b>Parks, Schools, Community Facilities, and Utilities Element</b>		
<b>PSCu-P-1</b>	Prepare a Parks and Recreation Master Plan to implement Park policies in this General Plan. The Plan should include: An assessment of existing and future recreational needs, including the needs of specific user groups and the needs of older areas of the community as well as those in new neighborhoods; [...]	5-9
<b>PSCu-P-2</b>	Strive to achieve and maintain a citywide standard of at least five acres of neighborhood and community parks per 1,000 residents.	5-10
<b>PSCu-P-5</b>	Create new community parks in the Northwest, Southwest, and Southeast quadrants, consistent with the Parks and Open Space diagram and the following planning guidelines:	5-11
<b>PSCu-P-6</b>	Create a high-quality, accessible neighborhood park system based on the needs of the surrounding community, the Parks and Open Space diagram and the following planning guidelines:	
<b>PSCu-P-16</b>	Provide at least one community center in each of the City's four neighborhood quadrants. Use existing and new community center facilities to provide multicultural programs and teen recreation activities and provide space for meetings and classes. Community centers should be designed with community input, including guidance from a cross-section of user groups.	5-14
<b>PSCu-P-24</b>	Promote innovative park design that responds to neighborhood needs and user groups.	5-16
<b>PSCu-P-37</b>	Work with Visalia Unified School District and the Tulare County Office of Education to locate additional continuation schools and other special programs.	5-25
<b>PSCu-P-39</b>	Promote the location and development of vocational and trade schools and alternative and continuing education programs such as Visalia Charter Independent Study.	5-25
<b>PSCu-P-42</b>	Work with Tulare County Library to ensure that the central library remains an attractive and vibrant Downtown destination.	5-25
<b>Open Space and Conservation Element</b>		

**Table 9-1 Policies in Other Elements Supporting Environmental Justice Efforts**

<i>Policy Number</i>	<i>Policy Text</i>	<i>Page Number</i>
<b>OSC-P-2</b>	Develop open space corridors along selected community waterways, power transmission line right-of-ways and abandoned railroad right-of-ways to serve as links between park and recreation facilities.	6-3
<b>OSC-P-5</b>	Support community gardens as a valuable open space resource.	6-3
<b>OSC-P-11</b>	Create incentives for new development along waterways to include pocket parks, patios or plazas that front onto the creek corridor as an amenity to residential occupants or visitors to commercial developments.	6-7
<b>Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases Element</b>		
<b>AQ-P-2</b>	Require use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce particulate emission as a condition of approval for all subdivisions, development plans and grading permits, in conformance with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Fugitive Dust Rule.	7-8
<b>AQ-P-6</b>	Amend the Street Tree Ordinance to promote use of plants and trees that are efficient pollutant absorbers.	7-9
<b>AQ-P-9</b>	Continue to mitigate short-term construction impacts and long-term stationary source impacts on air quality on a case-by case basis and continue to assess air quality impacts through environmental review. Require developers to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce air pollutant emissions associated with the construction and operation of development projects.	7-9
<b>AQ-P-11</b>	Continue to work in conjunction with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District and others to put in place additional Transportation Control Measures that will reduce vehicle travel and improve air quality and to implement Air Quality Plans.	7-10
<b>AQ-P-12</b>	Support the implementation of Voluntary Emissions Reduction Agreements (VERA) with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (the District) for individual development projects that may exceed District significance thresholds.	71-5
<b>AQ-P-17</b>	Prepare and adopt a Climate Action Plan that incorporates a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Reduction Plan. The GHG Emissions Reduction Plan will quantify current and anticipated future emissions and focus on feasible actions the City can take to minimize the adverse impacts of General Plan implementation on climate change and air quality.	7-15

Source: *City of Visalia General Plan*



## Scope

This Element contains goals, policies, and programs designed to enhance the participation and empowerment of historically marginalized populations, referred to in this Element as the “Neighborhoods of Focus.” This Environmental Justice Element addresses public health risks and environmental justice concerns citywide and for those residents living in Visalia’s Neighborhoods of Focus. The goals, policies, and programs of this Element focus on the following areas:

- Reducing pollution exposure and improving air and water quality.
- Promoting healthy food access.
- Promoting physical activity and healthy lifestyles.
- Promoting “civil engagement” in the public decision-making process.
- Promoting public and recreational facilities.
- Promoting safe and sanitary homes.
- Prioritizing improvements and programs that address the needs of Neighborhoods of Focus.

## Content of the Environmental Justice Element

To aid in the understanding of environmental justice and how the City will address environmental justice concepts, this Element is organized as follows:

- **Introduction**

This section provides a brief overview of environmental justice concepts and the statutory obligation for communities. A discussion on the content and scope of this Environmental Justice Element is also provided.

- **Background and Context**

This section discusses environmental justice principles and the methodology for identifying Neighborhoods of Focus within the Visalia city limits. This section also identifies and shows the location of the Neighborhoods of Focus in Visalia.

- **Public Participation**

A key principle of environmental justice is engaging the communities most impacted by pollution burden and other environmental justice factors. This section summarizes the community outreach and publicity strategy employed for this effort. A full summary of comments received at each topic station during the community workshop can be found in Appendix D.

- **Neighborhoods of Focus: Context and Demographics**

This section identifies the Neighborhoods of Focus in Visalia and provides an evaluation of baseline demographic data for each community. Data analyzed in this section includes race and ethnicity, household income and poverty status, educational attainment, spoken language and English proficiency, and age.

- **Environmental Justice Concerns**

This section provides an evaluation of baseline (2023) environmental issues within the Neighborhoods of Focus including pollution burden, healthy food access, physical activity, public facilities, safe and sanitary housing, language isolation, and civic engagement.

- **Objectives and Policies**

The goals and policies described in this section establish how the City will incorporate

environmental justice into decision making and support positive outcomes for affected residents. For the purpose of this Environmental Justice Element, “goals” refer to the resulting purpose of an effort and “policies” refer to a guiding action that carries out a particular goal.

- **Implementation**

This section establishes the implementation programs the City will undertake to address

environmental justice concerns citywide and in the Neighborhoods of Focus. For the purpose of this Environmental Justice Element, “implementation programs” refer to specific actions, programs, or techniques which carry out a particular policy.

- **References and Appendices**

This section Includes a comprehensive list of associated appendices and reference materials.



# BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

## Statutory Requirements

With the enactment of Senate Bill (SB) 1000, California Government Code Section 65302(h) requires local jurisdictions to incorporate environmental justice in their general plans. The law requires local governments to develop policies to reduce the disproportionate exposure to pollution in neighborhoods that also experience increased social and economic challenges. These requirements are organized into two subsections: Section 65302 (h)(1) through Section 65302 (h)(2), which are summarized in the call out box to the right.

## Identifying Environmental Justice Communities

California law refers to communities with high levels of environmental and socioeconomic vulnerability as “disadvantaged communities.” Identifying communities faced with social, economic, and environmental challenges as “disadvantaged” does not accurately capture the many strengths these communities also possess, such as a strong sense of community and local community-based organizations and residents working to improve their neighborhood. In recognition of the many assets and importance of this area to the well-being of the City of Visalia, determined that any area which qualifies as a “disadvantaged community” is more accurately identified as a “Neighborhood of Focus.”

### *California Government Code Section 65302(h)*

*65302 (h)(1) adds to the required elements of the general plan an environmental justice element, or related goals, policies, and objectives integrated in other elements, which identifies “disadvantaged communities.”*

- 65302 (h)(1)(A) identifies objectives and policies to promote the following in disadvantaged communities:
  - Public facilities;
  - Food access;
  - Safe and sanitary homes;
  - Physical activity;
  - Exposure to pollution, including improving air quality; and
  - Any unique or compounded health risks.
- 65302 (h)(1)(B) identifies objectives and policies to promote civic engagement in the public decision-making process in disadvantaged communities.
- 65302 (h)(1)(C) identifies objectives and policies that prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities.

*65302 (h)(2) requires the adoption or revision of environmental justice element, or related goals, policies, and objectives, upon the revision of two or more elements concurrently on or after January 1, 2018.*

## Methodology and Analysis

The City used two geospatial screening tools that analyze socioeconomic, environmental, and health factors to identify if a Neighborhood of Focus exists within the city limits.

### CalEnviroScreen 4.0

CalEnviroScreen 4.0 is a screening tool developed by the California OEHHA and is the primary screening tool used by the CalEPA to identify disadvantaged communities in California. CalEnviroScreen uses 21 indicators to assess pollution burdens and population vulnerabilities for each census tract in California and assigns a score for each indicator. The higher the score, the more that census tract is impacted by that indicator. Individual indicator scores are then summarized into two primary metrics: pollution burden and population characteristics, which are together calculated to determine an overall CalEnviroScreen score. Census tracts in the top 25 percent of overall CalEnviroScreen scores (percentile scores between 75 and 100) are identified as disadvantaged communities by the CalEPA. Figure 9-1 shows overall CalEnviroScreen scores for Visalia.

### EJScreen

EJScreen is a screening tool developed by the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) that combines environmental and socioeconomic factors to calculate environmental justice index scores for each census block group in the United States. EJScreen provides an environmental justice index score for 12 environmental indicators that then receive a percentile score compared to both countrywide and statewide

scores. For the purposes of this Environmental Justice Element, Visalia block groups were compared to statewide percentile scores and a 75th percentile filter was used as the threshold for identifying environmental justice communities.

#### CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Cumulative Scores

The **Pollution Burden score** identifies census tracts that are disproportionately affected by pollution exposure and other adverse environmental conditions that pose negative health effects and environmental degradation.

The **Population Characteristics score** identifies census tracts with higher concentrations of people with physiological traits, health status, or community characteristics that can result in increased vulnerability to pollution.

The **overall CalEnviroScreen score** is a cumulative score that combines the Pollution Burden and Population Characteristics scores and represents the cumulative impact of environmental and socioeconomic effects on a community.

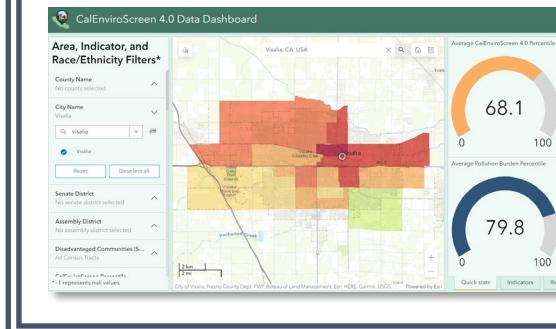




Figure 9-1 CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Cumulative Scores, City of Visalia

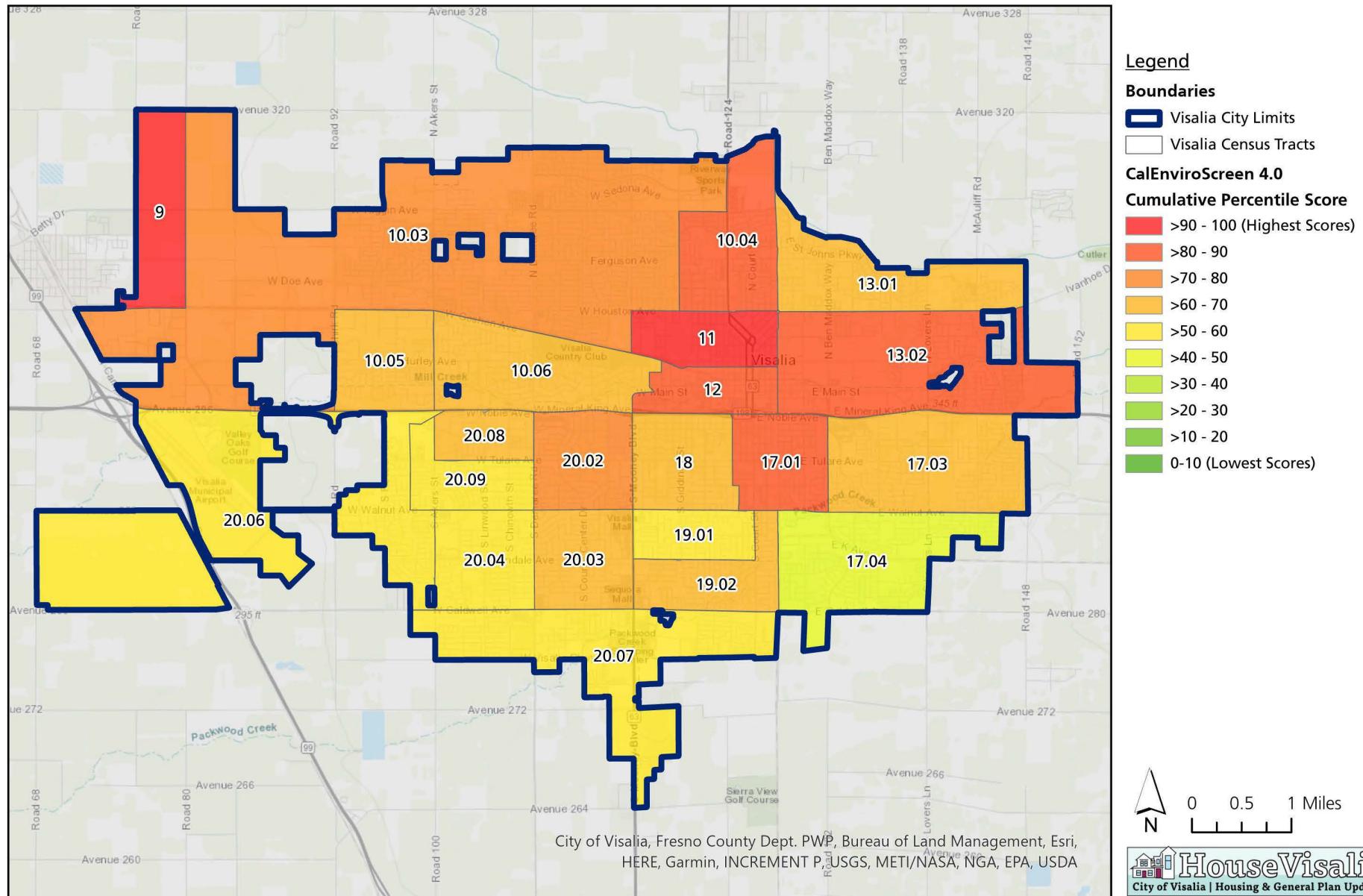


Figure 9-2 CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Pollution Burden Scores, City of Visalia

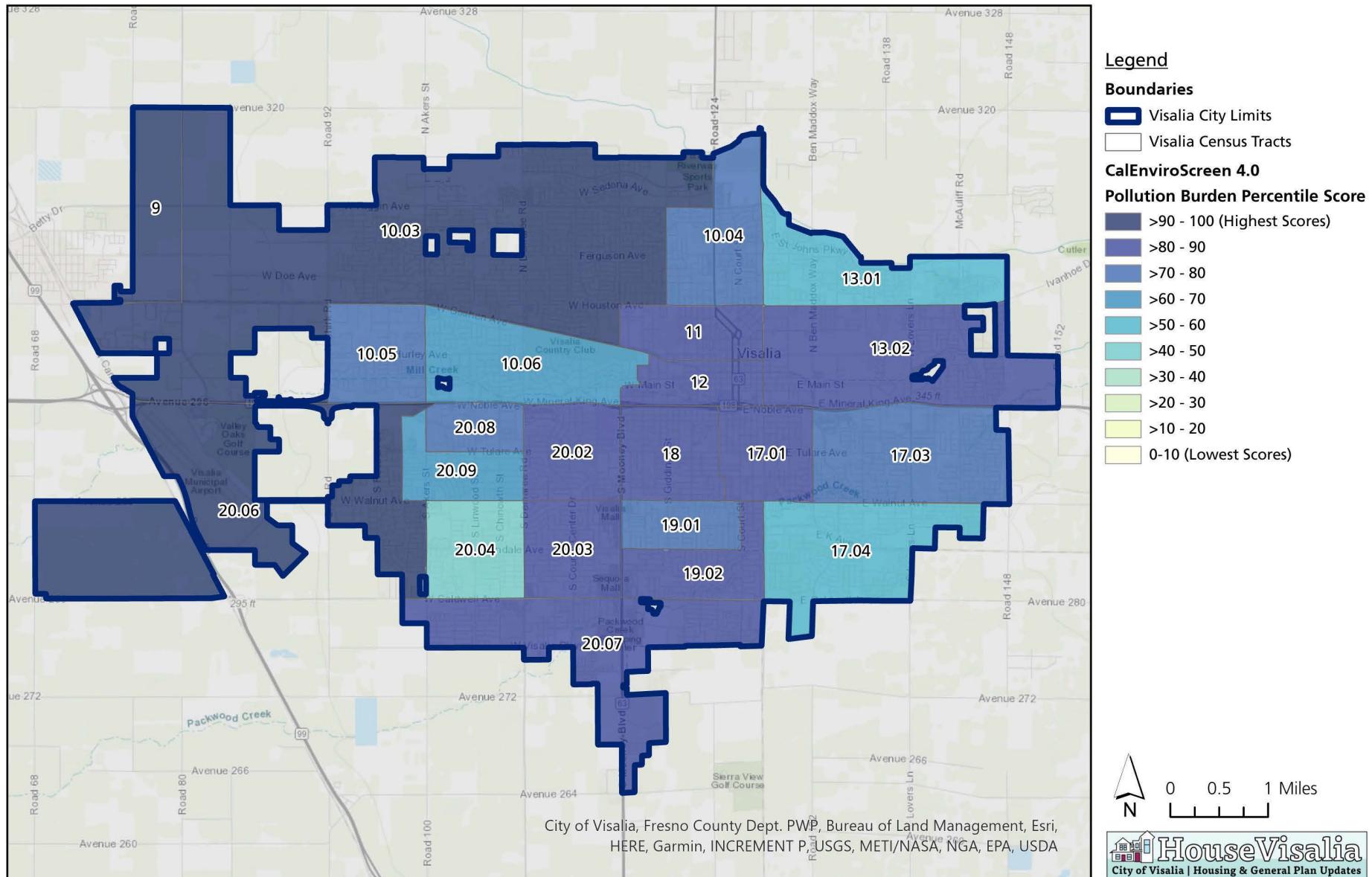
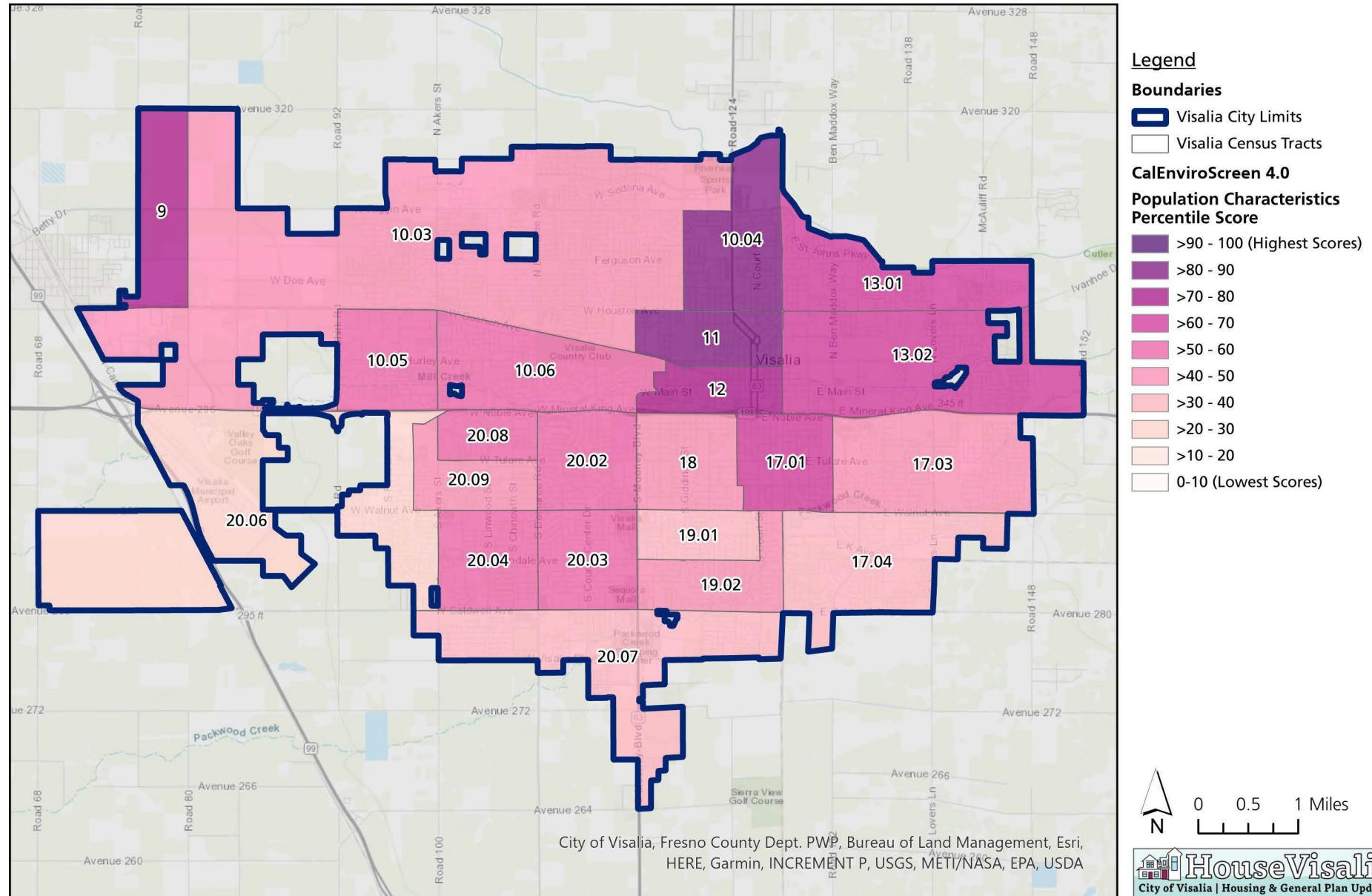




Figure 9-3 CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Population Characteristics Scores, City of Visalia



## SB 535 Communities

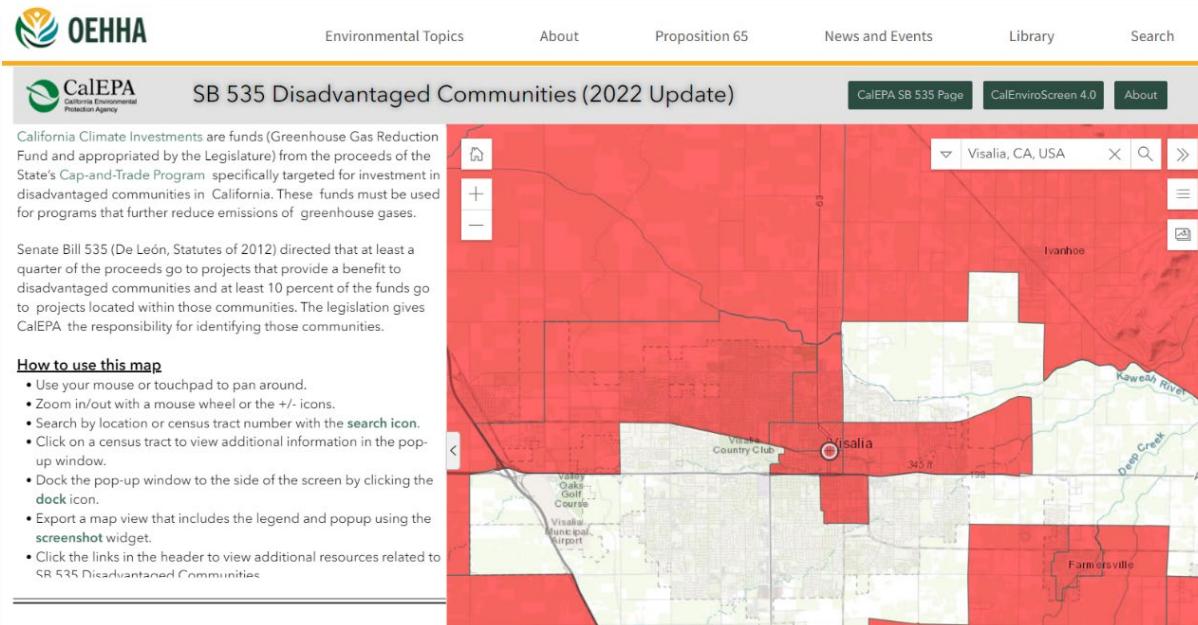
In 2012, Senate Bill (SB) 535 tasked CalEPA with identifying disadvantaged communities. Disadvantaged communities in California are targeted for investments from State funding to improve public health, quality of life, and economic opportunity. In 2022, CalEPA updated its designation of disadvantaged communities to include any census tract that meets one or more of the following four criteria:

1. Census tracts receiving the highest 25 percent of overall scores in CalEnviroScreen 4.0
2. Census tracts lacking overall scores in CalEnviroScreen 4.0 due to data gaps but

receiving the highest five percent of CalEnviroScreen 4.0 cumulative pollution burden scores.

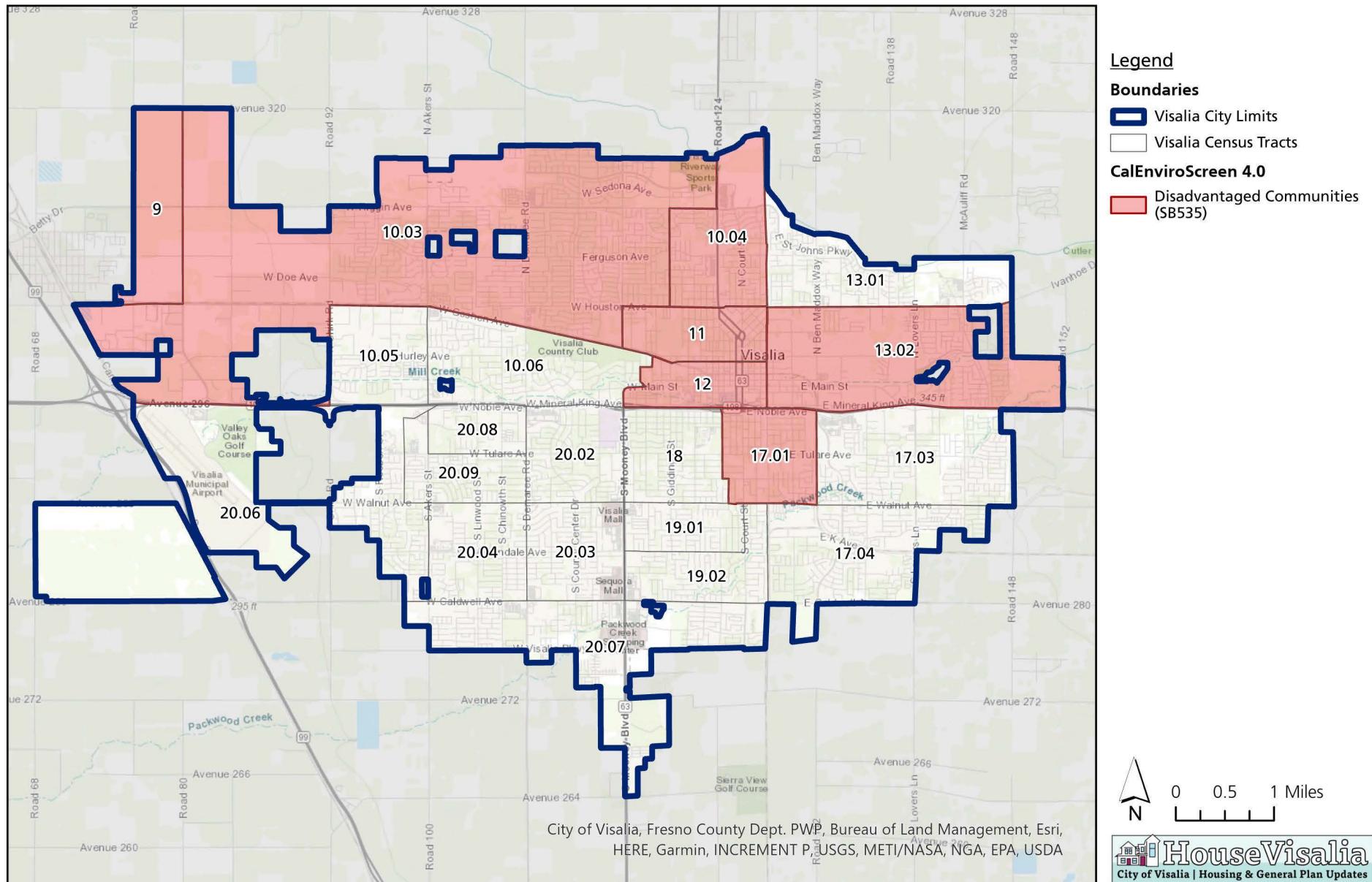
3. Census tracts identified in the 2017 Disadvantaged Community designation as “disadvantaged,” regardless of their scores in CalEnviroScreen 4.0
4. Lands under the control of federally recognized Tribes

Figure 9-4 shows census tracts in Visalia identified as disadvantaged communities under the 2022 SB 535 designation criteria by the CalEPA.





## Figure 9-4 SB 535 Disadvantaged Communities, City of Visalia



## Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus

The term “Neighborhoods of Focus” refers to the census tracts within the city where residents experience disproportionate pollution burdens, health impacts, and socioeconomic barriers. The City has identified four neighborhoods as part of Visalia’s Neighborhoods of Focus. Below is a list of Visalia’s four Neighborhoods of Focus and the census tract(s) included in each:

Table 9-2 Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus	
Neighborhood Name	Census Tracts
North-West Visalia	Tract 10.03 (6107001003)
Oval Park	Tract 10.04 (6107001004) Tract 11 (6107001100) Tract 12 (6107001200)
East Visalia	Tract 13.02 (6107001302)
Seven Oaks	Tract 17.01 (6107001701)

*Source: City of Visalia; Mintier Harnish*

Figure 9-5 shows Visalia’s Neighborhoods of Focus. These neighborhoods were determined primarily based on SB 535 census tract boundaries, CalEnviroScreen 4.0 scores, and defining features (i.e., major roads).

### 2020 Census Tract Redistricting

The census tracts listed above are those used in the 2010 U.S. Census, however, in 2020, four of these six census tracts were split up to form new, additional census tracts as a result of redistricting. Table 9-3 shows the redistricting changes made to the census tracts within the Neighborhoods of Focus.

As of October 2023, CalEnviroScreen 4.0 uses 2010 census tracts to showcase data on pollution exposure,

environmental effects, sensitive populations, and socioeconomic factors. Given the importance of CalEnviroScreen 4.0 in determining which areas of Californian cities experience greater social inequities and environmental burdens, this Element uses the 2010 census tract boundaries to identify Visalia’s Neighborhoods of Focus.

**Table 9-3 Visalia Redistricting Changes in Visalia’s Neighborhoods of Focus**

2010 Census Tract	2020 Redistricting Changes
Tract 10.03 (61070001003)	Split into Tracts 10.07, 10.08, 10.11, and 10.12
Tract 10.04 (6107001004)	Split into Tracts 10.09 and 10.10
Tract 11 (6107001100)	Split into Tracts 11.01 and 11.02
Tract 12 (6107001200)	No change
Tract 13.02 (6107001302)	Split into Tracts 13.05 and 13.06
Tract 17.01 (6107001701)	No change

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2023)*

Additionally, American Community Survey (ACS) data is not available for redistricted census tracts prior to 2020. As a result, for certain topics in the demographics analysis, 2019 ACS data is used. To ensure 2019 data was still consistent with current conditions in these census tracts, a weighted average of 2021 ACS data from each set of redistricted 2020 census tracts was compared against 2019 ACS data.



## Location and Context

### North-West Visalia

The North-West Visalia Neighborhood of Focus includes one census tract in the northwestern area of the city. The residential areas in this Neighborhood of Focus are primarily located north of W Goshen Avenue to the northern Visalia City Limit. The portion of this neighborhood west of N Shirk Road is primarily industrial and manufacturing. North-West Visalia extends east to North Mooney Boulevard, North Giddings Street, and Dinuba Boulevard. It should be noted that the census tract that covers North-West Visalia extends slightly beyond Visalia City Limits to the north, most of which is agricultural land.

Note: Census tract boundaries used to identify the North-West Visalia Neighborhood of Focus (Census Tract 10.03) received heavy redistricting changes from the 2020 Census as a result of substantial new residential developments in the area. As shown in Table 9-3, Census Tract 10.03 was split into four tracts during the 2020 redistricting. A majority of residences in new Census Tracts 10.07 and 10.08, and significant portions of Census Tracts 10.11 and 10.12, have been constructed within the last 20 years. As a result of these changes, the portions of this neighborhood that have undergone extensive growth may not experience the same disproportionate burdens, impacts, and barriers described in this element as other longer-established portions of this neighborhood.

### Oval Park

The Oval Park Neighborhood of Focus includes three census tracts in the north-central area of the city. The

Oval Park neighborhood is centered around SR 63 extending from SR 198 to the northern City Limits. The eastern boundary of the neighborhood is North Santa Fe Street and extends west to North Mooney Boulevard, North Giddings Street, and Dinuba Boulevard. The southern portion of the Oval Park neighborhood includes commercial areas of Downtown Visalia around Main Street.

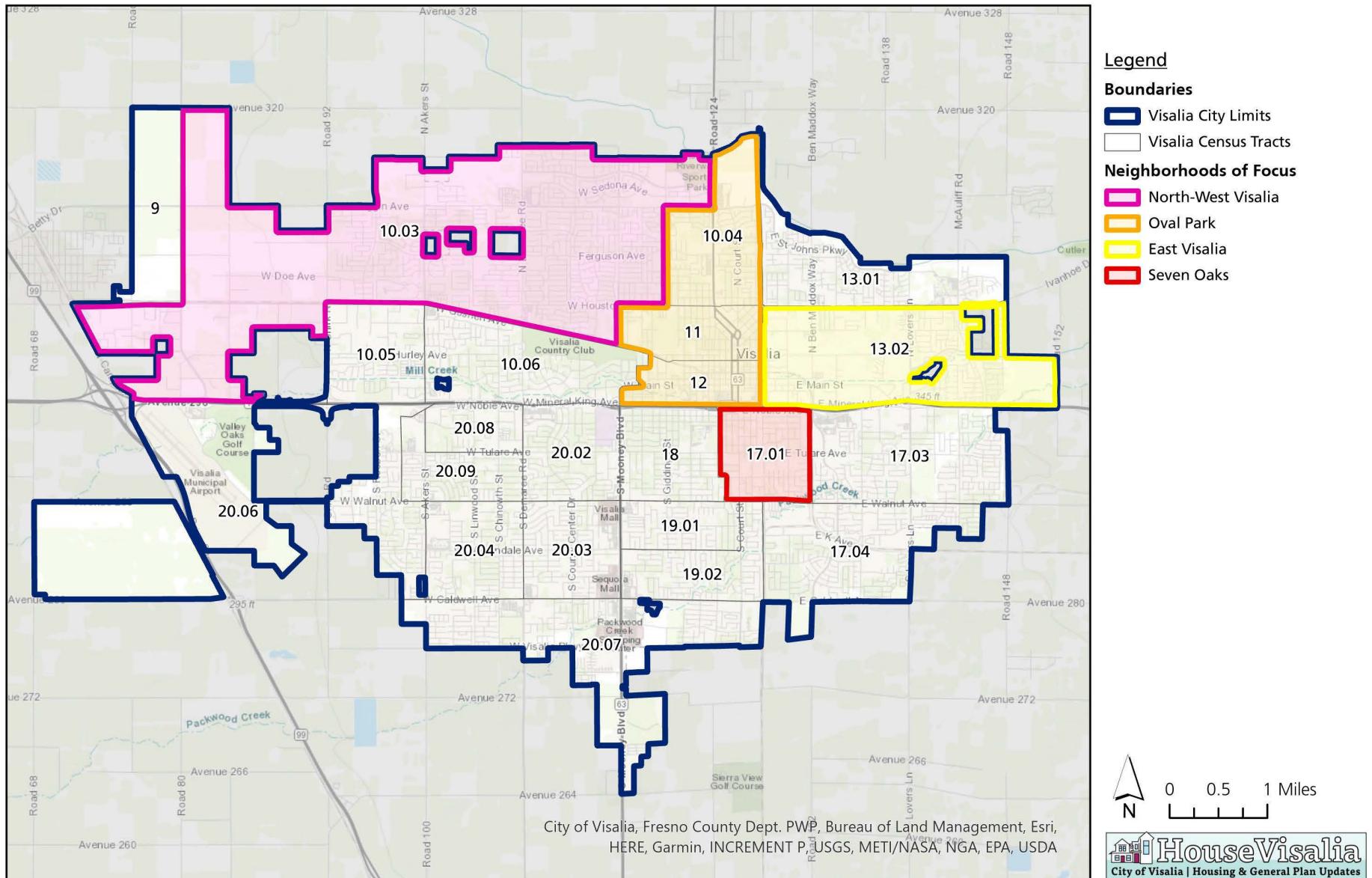
### Seven Oaks

The Seven Oaks Neighborhood of Focus includes one census tract in the east-central area of the city. This neighborhood is bordered by SR 198 to the north, South Watson Street to the west, East Walnut Avenue to the south, and the San Joaquin Valley Railroad tracks to the east. The Seven Oaks neighborhood is primarily residential with some commercial and medical uses along South Santa Fe Street and South Court Street.

### East Visalia

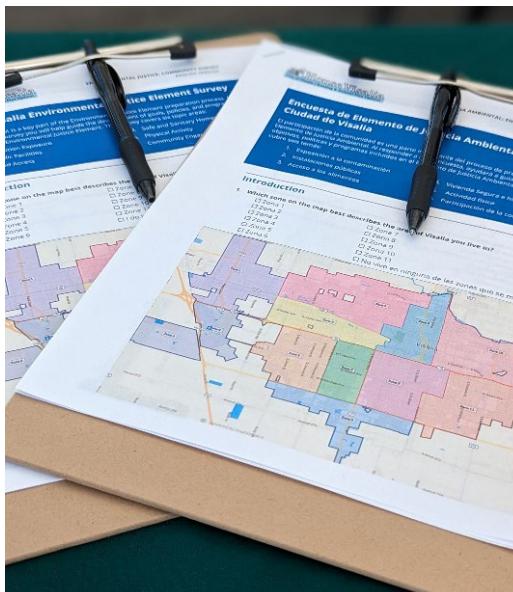
The East Visalia Neighborhood of Focus includes one census tract in the eastern area of the city. The neighborhood is bordered by SR 198 to the south, North Santa Fe Street to the west, Houston Avenue to the north, and Visalia city limits to the east. The neighborhood is also bisected by SR 216. The northern and eastern portions of the East Visalia neighborhood are primarily residential, whereas western and southern portions include a mixture of commercial around Main Street and light industrial around East Goshen Avenue. It should be noted that both census tracts in East Visalia extend beyond the Visalia City Limits to the east, most of which is agricultural land.

Figure 9-5 Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus





*Farmer's market booth from August 5, 2023, event.*



*Physical surveys of the online community survey were available at all outreach events.*

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A key principle of environmental justice is engaging the residents most impacted by pollution burden and other environmental justice factors. In August 2023, the City facilitated a series of community engagement events to gather community input on environmental justice issues. This section provides an overview of the publicity strategy for this effort, as well as a summary of the community engagement events, and feedback received. The publicity and outreach strategy included:

- Three community outreach events
- An online and physical community survey
- E-blasts, social media posts, community flyers, and coordination with local schools and CBOs

The feedback received throughout the public participation process was used to develop the goals, policies, and programs contained in this Environmental Justice Element.

### Publicity and Outreach Strategy

Several methods were used to publicize the Environmental Justice Element and associated community engagement opportunities. Below is a summary of the City's publicity strategy. See Appendix E for copies of publicity materials used throughout the process.

#### Project Website

The project website ([HouseVisalia.com](http://HouseVisalia.com)) was updated one to two weeks before each event with the information, time, and location of the event. The environmental justice community survey was also posted on the project website from July 27, 2023, through November 30, 2023.

#### E-Blasts

Email blasts (e-blasts) were sent out to the project mailing list one week before each event with a follow up email sent one day prior or morning of the event. E-blasts also went out at least once a month promoting the environmental justice survey. A total of 11 e-blasts were sent over the course of five months that included event information (time, location, goal of the event), a link to the project website, and a link to the environmental justice survey.

#### Community Advertising

The Project Team created a vinyl banner that was displayed at numerous community events to encourage community input on the Environmental Justice Element. The banner included the project logo, directions to provide feedback, and a QR code to the environmental justice survey. The banner was also displayed at the Cowhide football game, a highly anticipated annual high school rivalry game, on October 27, 2023.

## School District Email

The Project Team coordinated with the Visalia Unified School District to share the environmental justice survey to all parents and school district staff via email. The email included a link to the survey and a brief written announcement about the project and purpose of the survey.

## Community Based Organization (CBO) Outreach

The Project Team contacted seven CBOs that work with environmental justice communities in Visalia and/or the surrounding region. CBOs are valuable partners in the engagement process since they actively work in environmental justice communities and have established relationships and trust with community members. City staff contacted CBOs to provide information about the overall project and how community members can get involved. Many of the CBOs that were contacted for this effort were recommended by community members during the first two community outreach events.

## Social Media

The Project Team posted notifications of the environmental justice survey and outreach events on the City's social media pages that included event information, the survey link, and a link to the project website. Between July and November 2023, the Project Team made nine social media posts across Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and X (formerly known as Twitter).

## Community Outreach Events

Throughout August 2023 and November 2023, the City facilitated three in-person community outreach events. All three events featured similar content and activities to ensure any community members who attended only one event would receive the same information as attendees at any other event. See Appendix A for all of the materials used at the community outreach events.

### Farmer's Market Booth

*August 5, 2023*

The Project Team facilitated a “pop-up” booth at the Visalia Farmers’ Market on Saturday, August 5, 2023. The purpose of the booth was to provide community members with an understanding of environmental justice topics and identify crucial issues within the community and suggest preliminary ideas for potential improvements. In attendance was one City staff member and two members of the consultant team. The booth consisted of an informational poster with an overview of environmental justice and an interactive activity. All booth materials and activities were available in both English and Spanish.

The booth activity encouraged participants to identify issues in Visalia related to the six environmental justice topic areas and potential solutions to those issues. The activity was framed around the idea if the participant was “Mayor for the Day” what issue would they try to solve or opportunity they would implement. Participants were provided with an index card to write down their issue and corresponding solution. Completed index cards were displayed for other participants and marketgoers to read. The Project Team



*Booth at the El Grito En Visalia event on September 16, 2023.*



*Booth at the 2023 Farmworker Women's Conference event on November 16, 2023.*



was available to answer questions, facilitate dialog and provide activity assistance.

In addition to the activity, participants had the opportunity to take the environmental justice community survey. The Project Team had hard copy surveys available, in both English and Spanish, and cards with the survey QR code. A full summary of feedback received during the community workshop can be found in Appendix D.

In total, 20 people visited the pop-up booth over the course of three hours. The Project Team received eight activity cards and eight completed environmental justice surveys.

### El Grito En Visalia Event Booth *September 16, 2023*

The Project Team facilitated a second pop-up booth at the El Grito En Visalia event on Saturday, September 16, 2023. The El Grito En Visalia event is a Mexican Independence Day celebration with a variety of activities, performances, and food. The purpose of the booth was to provide community members with an understanding of environmental justice topics and identify key issues in the community and propose initial ideas for improvements. In attendance were two City staff members, one of which was a Spanish-speaker, and three members of the consultant team.

The booth featured an informational poster on environmental justice, available in both English and Spanish. The poster provided an overview of environmental justice topics and emphasized the significance of community outreach in identifying issues within environmental justice communities. The

booth featured an interactive exercise like the Farmers' Market booth (Outreach Event #1). Participants received colored index cards and were asked to identify neighborhood issues related to an environmental justice topic. Following this, participants were encouraged to propose potential solutions. Completed index cards were displayed on the booth table for other participants to read and to generate more interest toward the booth. City staff and the consultant team were available to answer questions and help as needed.

About 20 people attended the pop-up booth over the course of two hours. The Project Team received 10 activity cards and seven completed environmental justice surveys. A full summary of feedback received during the community workshop can be found in Appendix D.

### 2023 Farmworker Women's Conference *November 16, 2023*

The Project Team facilitated a booth at the 2023 Farmworker Women's Health, Safety, Employment, Education and Environment Conference on Thursday, November 16, 2023, at the Visalia Conference Center. The Farmworker Women's Conference is an annual conference that provides farmworker women resources and information to maintain and improve the health, safety, and quality of life for both them and their families. The conference is attended primarily by Latina, Spanish-speaking women who work in the Central Valley agricultural industry.

The booth was in the conference exhibit hall and consisted of an environmental justice informational

poster, informational flyers, and a vinyl banner with the QR code to the online environmental justice survey. The booth materials were provided primarily in Spanish with English translation available if needed. Additionally, since the conference was not specific to Visalia, the booth had a small sign that asked “Vives en Visalia?” (Do you live in Visalia?) to draw the attention of Visalia residents. Three City staff were in attendance, two of whom were Spanish-speaking.

The central focus of the booth was to encourage participation in the environmental justice community survey, which participants could fill out either in person or online. Additionally, cards featuring a QR code to access the survey were provided for those interested in completing the survey later. A shorter version of the environmental justice survey, containing nine questions, was created, and made available in hard copy form. This condensed survey could be completed quickly (in less than five minutes), catering to attendees with limited time between conference sessions and booth visits. See the “Community Survey” section for more information on the differences between the long survey and short survey.

The conference drew approximately 1,300 attendees, and during the four-hour booth duration, the Project Team collected a total of 81 completed surveys (32 in Spanish and 49 in English). An additional 31 online surveys were submitted on the same day.

## Community Survey

The environmental justice community survey was available online from July 27, 2023, through November 30, 2023, in both English and Spanish. The survey was

created using the platform Maptionnaire, which allowed for interactive mapping questions within a traditional online survey. The survey was divided into six sections covering the six environmental justice topic areas (pollution exposure, public facilities, food access, safe and sanitary housing, physical activity, and civic engagement) with the goal of understanding lived experiences of community members related to each topic area. Each section had two to five questions that were either multiple choice or interactive mapping questions with a total of 18 questions.

A total of 885 survey responses with meaningful data were gathered throughout the outreach process, including physical survey responses received at outreach events. The English survey received 833 responses, and the Spanish survey received 52 responses. Although the survey was optimized for online participation, printed versions of the survey were available at in-person community outreach events. Printed surveys included the same questions in the online survey and were later entered into Maptionnaire by the Project Team following each outreach event.

An abbreviated version of the printed survey was created for the Farmworker Women’s Conference to allow conference attendees with limited time to visit the booth to complete the survey in less than five minutes. The Project Team selected nine questions from the full-length survey to include in the abbreviated survey, with at least one question per topic area. When entering abbreviated survey responses in Maptionnaire, the Project Team left questions not included in the abbreviated survey blank. See Appendix B for a copy of



the full-length and abbreviated printed survey, and Appendix C for a full summary of all survey responses.

The survey asked participants to identify where they lived in Visalia by selecting one of 11 zones provided on a map (see Figure 9-6). The areas were created by grouping census tracts using key features (such as major roads and railroad tracks) and CalEnviroScreen 4.0 census tract scores. This information allowed the Project Team to better understand where in Visalia respondents live while also maintaining anonymity of individual respondents. The zone(s) included in the Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus are as follows:

- **North Visalia**<sup>1</sup>: Zone 1 and Zone 2
- **Oval Park**: Zone 8
- **Seven Oaks**: Zone 9
- **East Visalia**: Zone 10

## How Survey Responses are Used in the Environmental Justice Element

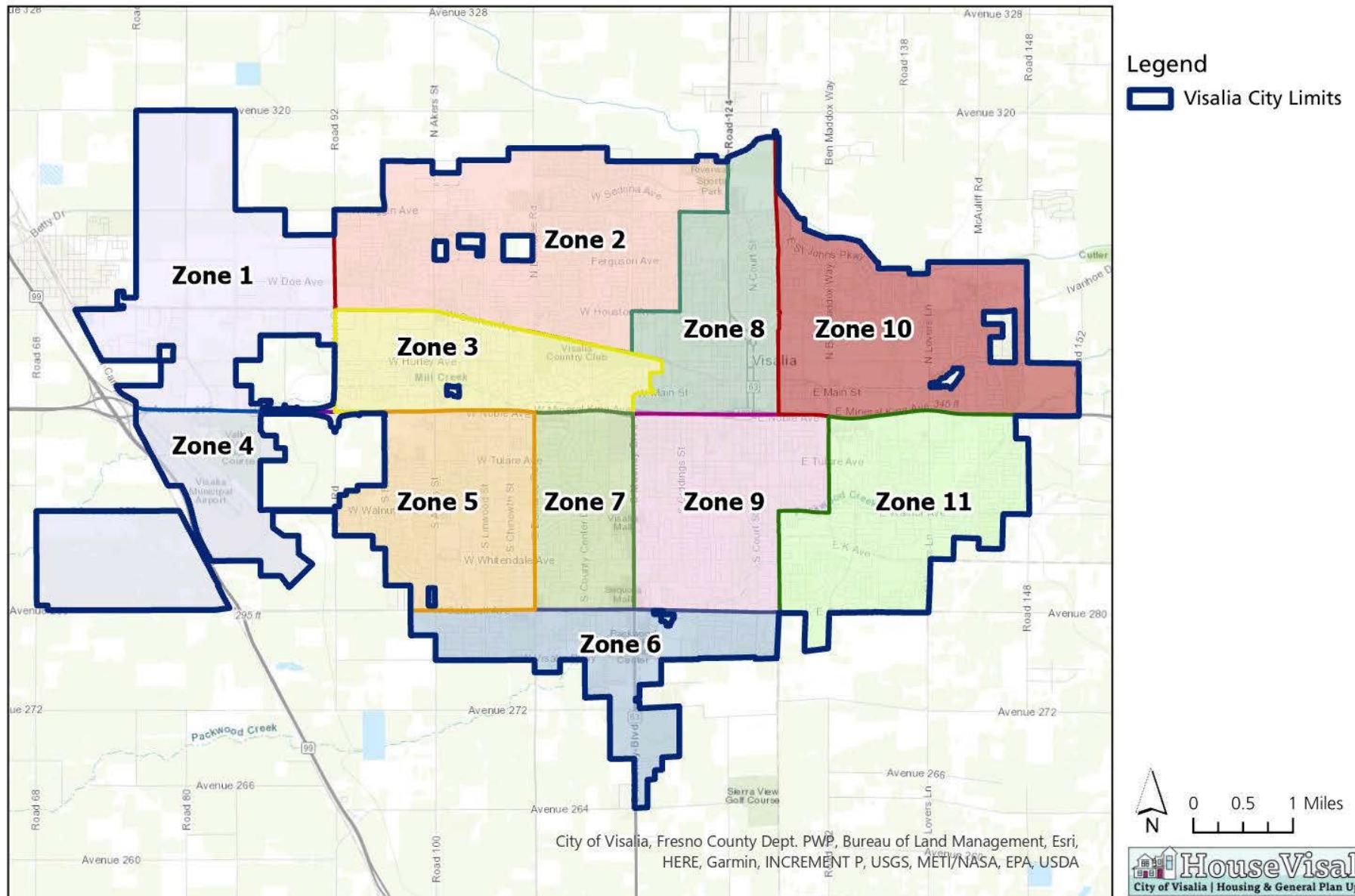
Survey responses are used in this Element to supplement the analysis of environmental justice concerns in Visalia. It should also be noted that about 56 percent of all survey respondents (498 respondents) provided a response for the zone/location-specific question of the survey. To maintain the integrity of survey data, survey responses that did not answer the zone/location-specific question are not included in discussions of survey results referencing neighborhood

areas but are included in survey result discussions that reference all survey respondents.

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<sup>1</sup> North Visalia includes two Zones because Zone 1 includes primarily non-residential uses and minimal responses were received from residents in this Zone.

Figure 9-6 Residential Zones from Visalia Environmental Justice Community Survey





## COMMUNITY PROFILE

Residents in the Neighborhoods of Focus represent diverse cultures, incomes, and ages. Additionally, many residents in the Neighborhoods of Focus provide critical support to the agricultural and service industries

in the surrounding San Joaquin Valley region. This section summarizes the population and socioeconomic factors for each Neighborhood of Focus.

### Race and Ethnicity

Analyzing the racial and ethnic makeup of communities helps to identify potential disparities related to pollution burdens, health impacts, and quality of community services. Race and ethnicity factors are often tied to a community's overall health equity and the social determinants of health, along with income, educational attainment, employment status, and access to healthcare. Through understanding and addressing environmental justice inequities, further inequities can be prevented. Table 9-4 shows a summary of racial and ethnic demographics in the Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus compared to citywide and countywide totals.

#### North-West Visalia

The North-West Visalia Neighborhood of Focus is the largest of the four Neighborhoods of Focus with a total population of 25,636, which is about 19 percent of the citywide population. The largest racial/ethnic group in North-West Visalia is Hispanic/Latino (51 percent), which is slightly less than the City of Visalia (52 percent) and Tulare County (65 percent). The second largest racial/ethnic group is white alone (39 percent), which is similar to the City of Visalia (38 percent) but about 10 percent higher than Tulare County (29 percent). The

percentage of residents that identify as Asian alone in North-West Visalia (eight percent) is higher than the citywide percentage (five percent) and the countywide percentage (three percent).

#### Oval Park

The Oval Park Neighborhood of Focus has a total population of 15,986, about 12 percent of the citywide population. The largest racial/ethnic group in Oval Park is Hispanic/Latino (74 percent), which is significantly higher than the City of Visalia (52 percent) and Tulare County (65 percent). The second largest racial/ethnic group is white alone (12 percent), which is significantly less than any other Neighborhood of Focus as well as the city (38 percent) and county (29 percent). About 10 percent of residents in Oval Park identify as Asian alone, which is higher than any other Neighborhood of Focus as well as the city (five percent) and county (three percent).

#### East Visalia

The East Visalia Neighborhood of Focus has a total population of 9,219, which is about seven percent of the citywide population. The largest racial/ethnic group

in East Visalia is Hispanic/Latino (63 percent), which is higher than the City of Visalia (52 percent) and slightly lower than Tulare County (65 percent). The second largest racial/ethnic group is white alone (28 percent), which is less than both the city (38 percent) but similar to the county (29 percent).

## Seven Oaks

The Seven Oaks Neighborhood of Focus is the smallest of the four Neighborhoods of Focus with a total

population of 6,626, about five percent of the citywide population. The largest racial/ethnic group in Seven Oaks is Hispanic/Latino (63 percent), which is slightly higher than the City of Visalia (52 percent) but similar to Tulare County (65 percent). The second largest racial/ethnic group is white alone (32 percent), which is slightly less than the city (38 percent) but slightly higher than the county (29 percent).

**Table 9-4      Race and Ethnicity in the Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus**

<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>	<i>North-West Visalia</i>	<i>Oval Park</i>	<i>East Visalia</i>	<i>Seven Oaks</i>	<i>City of Visalia</i>	<i>Tulare County</i>
<b>White alone</b>	38.7%	12.1%	27.8%	31.9%	38.4%	28.5%
<b>Black or African American alone</b>	0.1%	1.3%	2.2%	1.2%	1.8%	1.3%
<b>American Indian and Alaska Native alone</b>	0.0%	0.5%	0.4%	0.2%	0.4%	0.6%
<b>Asian alone</b>	8.0%	9.9%	5.5%	2.6%	5.1%	3.2%
<b>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone</b>	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
<b>Some other race alone</b>	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%
<b>Two or more races</b>	2.2%	1.0%	0.9%	1.7%	1.8%	1.5%
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	50.9%	74.3%	63.3%	62.5%	52.2%	64.6%
<b>Total Population</b>	25,636	15,986	9,219	6,626	132,104	461,898

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2019 (5-year Estimates), Table B03002



## Household Income and Poverty Status

As shown in , in 2019, the median income within the Community of Focus ranged from \$26,591 in Oval Park to \$83,097 in North-West Visalia. Compared to the median income of both Visalia residents (\$62,263) and Tulare residents (\$49,687), the median incomes within the Community of Focus vary significantly. North-West Visalia has the highest median income (\$83,097) which is significantly higher than both the City of Visalia and Tulare County. Oval Park has the lowest median income ranging from \$26,591 in Census Tract

12 to \$43,364 in Census Tract 10.04. East Visalia has a median income ranging from \$57,241 in Census Tract 13.01 and \$60,185 in Census Tract 13.02, which lies between that of Visalia and Tulare County. Seven Oaks reports a median income of \$48,945, which is lower than both Visalia and Tulare County. Mean income follows a similar trend, although Oval Park (\$55,387) is the only community that is below both Visalia (\$82,412) and Tulare County (\$69,493). North-West Visalia has the lowest poverty rate (13 percent), followed by East Visalia (25 percent) and Seven Oaks (30 Percent). Oval Park has the highest poverty rate of 38 percent, which is higher than both Visalia (18 percent) and Tulare County (25 percent).

Table 9-5      Income and Poverty in the Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus

	North-West Visalia	Oval Park	East Visalia	Seven Oaks	City of Visalia	Tulare County
<b>Median Income</b>	83,097	26,591 - 43,364	60,185	48,945	62,263	49,687
<b>Average Income (Mean)</b>	108,155	55,387	70,392	78,570	82,412	69,493
<b>Population in Poverty</b>	12.9%	38.2%	24.6%	30.2%	18.1%	25.1%
<b>Total Population</b>	25,636	15,986	9,219	6,626	132,104	461,898

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2019 (5-year Estimates), Table S1501

## Unemployment

The unemployment rate of residents directly influences the mental, physical, and financial health of those unemployed, their families, and the community at large. Gaps in employment can significantly reduce the amount of disposal income available to individuals and their families, which can impact the ability to pay for essential items such as housing, food, and other living

expenses. This decreased spending caused by a temporary or long-term reduction in disposable income can have a direct impact on the total amount of money spent locally, which in turn can negatively impact the local economy of the region. Additionally, the many stressors associated with being unemployed can cause a number of physical health problems, including high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart disease, as well as mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression.

As shown in Table 9-6, the Neighborhoods of Focus have varying levels of unemployment compared to the city and the county. Oval Park has the highest unemployment rate (seven percent), which is significantly higher than the City of Visalia (three

percent) and similar to Tulare County (six percent). East Visalia has the second highest unemployment rate (two percent), followed by Seven Oaks (one percent) and North-West Visalia (one percent).

**Table 9-6      Unemployment in the Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus**

	<i>North-West Visalia</i>	<i>Oval Park</i>	<i>East Visalia</i>	<i>Seven Oaks</i>	<i>City of Visalia</i>	<i>Tulare County</i>
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	1.3%	6.6%	2.2%	1.4%	3.0%	5.6%
<b>Total Population</b>	25,636	15,986	9,219	6,626	132,104	461,898

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (DP03), 2019

## **Educational Attainment**

The level of educational attainment achieved by residents influences their social determinants of health, which in turn tends to impact their level of accessibility and involvement in public decision-making processes. According to the California Healthy Places Index, all people should be able to seek opportunities for higher education, access quality jobs and higher wages, gain knowledge to make healthy choices, and build important social and cognitive skills.

As shown in Table 9-7, the Neighborhoods of Focus have varying levels of educational attainment across the four neighborhoods when compared to the City of Visalia and Tulare County. Oval Park has the lowest level of educational attainment in both education categories, where 23 percent report having a high

school diploma or higher and less than two percent report having a bachelor's degree or higher. High school attainment is significantly lower than the City of Visalia (79 percent) and Tulare County (67 percent). East Visalia has the second lowest rate of educational attainment, where 37 percent of residents have a high school diploma or higher and eight percent have a bachelor's degree or higher. Seven Oaks has an educational attainment rate generally consistent with the City of Visalia and Tulare County, where 72 percent of the population has a high school diploma or higher and 8 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher. North-West Visalia has the highest rate educational attainment where 83 percent of residents have a high school diploma or higher and 29 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher, which is greater than both the City of Visalia and Tulare County in each category.


**Table 9-7      Educational Attainment in the Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus**

	<i>North-West Visalia</i>	<i>Oval Park</i>	<i>East Visalia</i>	<i>Seven Oaks</i>	<i>City of Visalia</i>	<i>Tulare County</i>
<b>High School or Higher</b>	82.5%	23.2%	36.6%	72.2%	78.7%	66.9%
<b>Bachelor's or Higher</b>	28.9%	1.8%	7.8%	7.9%	19.6%	11.9%
<b>Total Population</b>	25,636	15,986	9,219	6,626	132,104	461,898

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S1501), 2019

## Language Spoken and English Proficiency

It is common for residents of impacted communities to speak languages other than English. Historically, this has created additional barriers to navigate the traditional public decision-making processes without additional resources and support. Both English and Spanish are the primary languages spoken in the Community of Focus. This is consistent with the statistics of Visalia and Tulare County, though there is some variation in the exact proportion Spanish and English speakers in the Community of Focus compared to the city and county.

As shown in Table 9-8, English is the primary language spoken in all neighborhoods and in both the City of Visalia and Tulare County, with the exception of Oval Park. Spanish is the primary language spoken in Oval Park and is spoken by 49 percent of the population, followed by English with 32 percent. The percent of Spanish speakers in Oval Park is similar to Tulare

County (44 percent) and significantly higher than the City of Visalia (28 percent). English is spoken at a similar rate in East Visalia (51 percent) and Seven Oaks (51 percent) but is more common in North-West Visalia (60 percent). Spanish is more widely spoken in Seven Oaks (37 percent) when compared to East Visalia (34 percent) and North-West Visalia (26 percent). Notably, North-West Visalia has the lowest percent of Spanish speakers with 26 percent, which is similar to the City of Visalia (28 percent). Asian and Pacific Island languages make up the third most common language category across all neighborhoods, the City of Visalia, and Tulare County. Oval Park has the largest population of Asian and Pacific Island language speakers with 9 percent, which is significantly higher than all geographic areas included in this study. The City of Visalia has the second largest population (three percent) while Tulare County has the smallest (two percent). Other languages, which includes Arabic and Creole, are the least commonly spoken languages and account for less than one percent of languages spoken in each of the regions.

**Table 9-8 Language Spoken at Home - Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus**

	<i>North-West Visalia</i>	<i>Oval Park</i>	<i>East Visalia</i>	<i>Seven Oaks</i>	<i>City of Visalia</i>	<i>Tulare County</i>
<b>English Only</b>	60.2%	32.1%	50.9%	50.5%	59.0%	44.8%
<b>Spanish</b>	28.3%	54.5%	33.5%	41.0%	30.1%	47.4%
<b>Other Indo-European Languages</b>	2.9%	0.0%	3.0%	0.2%	1.4%	1.4%
<b>Asian and Pacific Island Languages</b>	3.0%	9.6%	4.4%	3.1%	3.3%	2.1%
<b>Other Languages</b>	0.2%	0.1%	0.5%	0.1%	0.4%	0.4%
<b>Total Population</b>	25,636	15,986	9,219	6,626	132,104	461,898

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S1601), 2019

## Age

Age distribution analysis related to environmental justice examines the extent to which the most vulnerable populations, namely the young and elderly, are impacted. These age groups are more susceptible to health impacts from environmental hazards such as air pollution and extreme heat. Children may also be more likely to spend time outdoors or in playgrounds, which can expose this age group to environmental hazards such as lead in soil or pesticide residue on grass. Considering age distribution in environmental justice efforts ensures the needs and concerns of different age groups are considered, resulting in more equitable and sustainable communities for all residents.

As shown in Table 9-9, the percentage of residents between the ages of 15 and 64 is generally similar between the Community of Focus, the City of Visalia,

and Tulare County. Seven Oaks has the highest proportion of the population aged 15 to 64 (67 percent) followed by North-West Visalia (65 percent) and Oval Park (65 percent). Children under 15 years old make up a relatively similar percentage of each population, with East Visalia having the highest percentage of residents under the age of 15 (33 percent). Seven Oaks has the smallest percentage of residents under 15 years old with 23 percent, which is lower than both the City of Visalia (25 percent) and Tulare County (26 percent). The community of focus has a lower percent of residents aged 65 or older compared to the City of Visalia (12 percent) and Tulare County (11 percent). North-West Visalia has the smallest population aged 65 or older (7 percent) and Seven Oaks has the highest (10 percent). Oval Park and East Visalia have a comparable percentage of residents aged 65 or older, with East Visalia slightly higher.


**Table 9-9      Age Distribution - Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus**

Age Group		North-West Visalia	Oval Park	East Visalia	Seven Oaks	City of Visalia	Tulare County
Children (<15)	Count	7,419	4,204	3,026	1,539	33,058	119,670
	Percent	28.9%	26.3%	32.8%	23.2%	25.0%	25.9%
General Population (15-64)	Count	16,554	10,322	5,296	4,426	83,822	290,697
	Percent	64.6%	64.6%	57.4%	66.8%	63.5%	62.9%
Older Population (65+)	Count	1,663	1,460	897	661	15,224	51,531
	Percent	6.5%	9.1%	9.7%	10.0%	11.5%	11.2%
Total Population		25,636	15,986	9,219	6,626	132,104	461,898

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (DP05), 2019

# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE CONCERNs IN VISALIA

## Community Health

The risk and severity of chronic health problems such as asthma, obesity, heart disease, and diabetes can be a direct or indirect result of someone's environment. Residents of environmental justice communities tend to have higher rates of these chronic health problems due to increased pollution exposure (at work and/or at home), lack of physical activity, lack of access to healthy foods, unhealthy living conditions, or a combination of these factors. Lack of investment and incompatible land uses in residential areas can either cause or worsen these chronic health conditions, resulting in someone's overall health being partially determined by their zip code. This section describes the presence of chronic health problems in Visalia.

### Asthma

Asthma is a chronic lung condition that causes an individual's airways to narrow and swell, making it difficult to breathe and triggering symptoms such as coughing, wheezing, and chest tightness. Although it is unclear what causes asthma, exposure to high levels of air pollutants such as traffic, particulate matter, smog, and diesel exhaust can trigger asthma attacks. People who live, work, or spend time outside near major roads, highways, and railways are at higher risk of more

frequent and severe asthmatic attacks that can lead to emergency room (ER) visits.

Table 9-10 shows the number of children and adults diagnosed with asthma in the Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus compared to the City of Visalia and Tulare County. The asthma rates for children in Oval Park (eight percent) and East Visalia (seven percent) are slightly higher than the citywide and countywide asthma rates for children. The asthma rates for adults in Oval Park, Seven Oaks, and East Visalia are similar to the city and county, however, the adult asthma rates in North-West Visalia (19 percent) are slightly higher than the city, county, and other Neighborhoods of Focus. Overall the asthma rates in the Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus are similar to the city and county for both children and adults, with some neighborhoods' rates being slightly higher (within two to three percent).

CalEnviroScreen 4.0 measures the Asthma Indicator by estimating the average number of asthma related ER visits per 10,000 people, measuring the most severe asthma attacks. As shown in Figure 9-7, in Visalia, census tracts in Oval Park and North-West Visalia have asthma percentile scores between 44 and 52, meaning the rate of asthma related ER visits are higher than 44 to 52 percent of census tracts in California. Seven Oaks and one of the census tracts in East Visalia have slightly lower percentile scores, between 38 and 40.



**Table 9-10      Rate of Asthma in the Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus**

	<i>North-West Visalia</i>	<i>Oval Park</i>	<i>East Visalia</i>	<i>Seven Oaks</i>	<i>City of Visalia</i>	<i>Tulare County</i>	<i>California</i>
<b>Children (0-17) ever diagnosed with asthma</b>	5.6%	8.1%	6.7%	6.0%	5.9%	6.2%	12.3%
<b>Adults (18+) ever diagnosed with asthma</b>	19.4%	12.1%	15.7%	14.3%	16.3%	14.1%	16.1%

*Source: California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), 2020*

## Obesity

Obesity is a health condition that is present when a person's body mass index (BMI) is equal to 30 or more. Individuals who are obese have a higher risk of serious health problems that can require regular medical care to manage, including heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and liver disease. Two major factors that contribute to increased obesity rates include physical activity and access to healthy food options. In environmental justice communities, inequitable development patterns and policies often lead to a higher prevalence of unhealthy food options, such as fast food and liquor stores. Additionally, these communities also tend to receive less investment in neighborhood infrastructure that promotes physical activity, such as sidewalks, trees, and bike lanes. Additionally, low-income households may lack the money, education, or tools to purchase and prepare healthy foods and often

cope with food insecurity by consuming nutrient-poor but calorie-rich foods that can increase risk of obesity and/or malnutrition.

As shown in Table 9-11, the adult obesity rates in the Neighborhoods of Focus tend to be slightly higher than the citywide and countywide rates. Oval Park (43 percent), East Visalia (44 percent), and Seven Oaks (45 percent) are all two to four percent higher than the citywide obesity rate. North-West Visalia has a slightly lower adult obesity rate (39 percent) than the city and county. Additionally, the obesity rate across the Neighborhoods of Focus, city, and county are 12 to 18 percent higher than the statewide obesity rate (27 percent). This data suggests that residents in Visalia, particularly the Neighborhoods of Focus, may face greater challenges with access to healthy food options and opportunities for physical activity.

**Table 9-11      Rate of Obesity in the Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus**

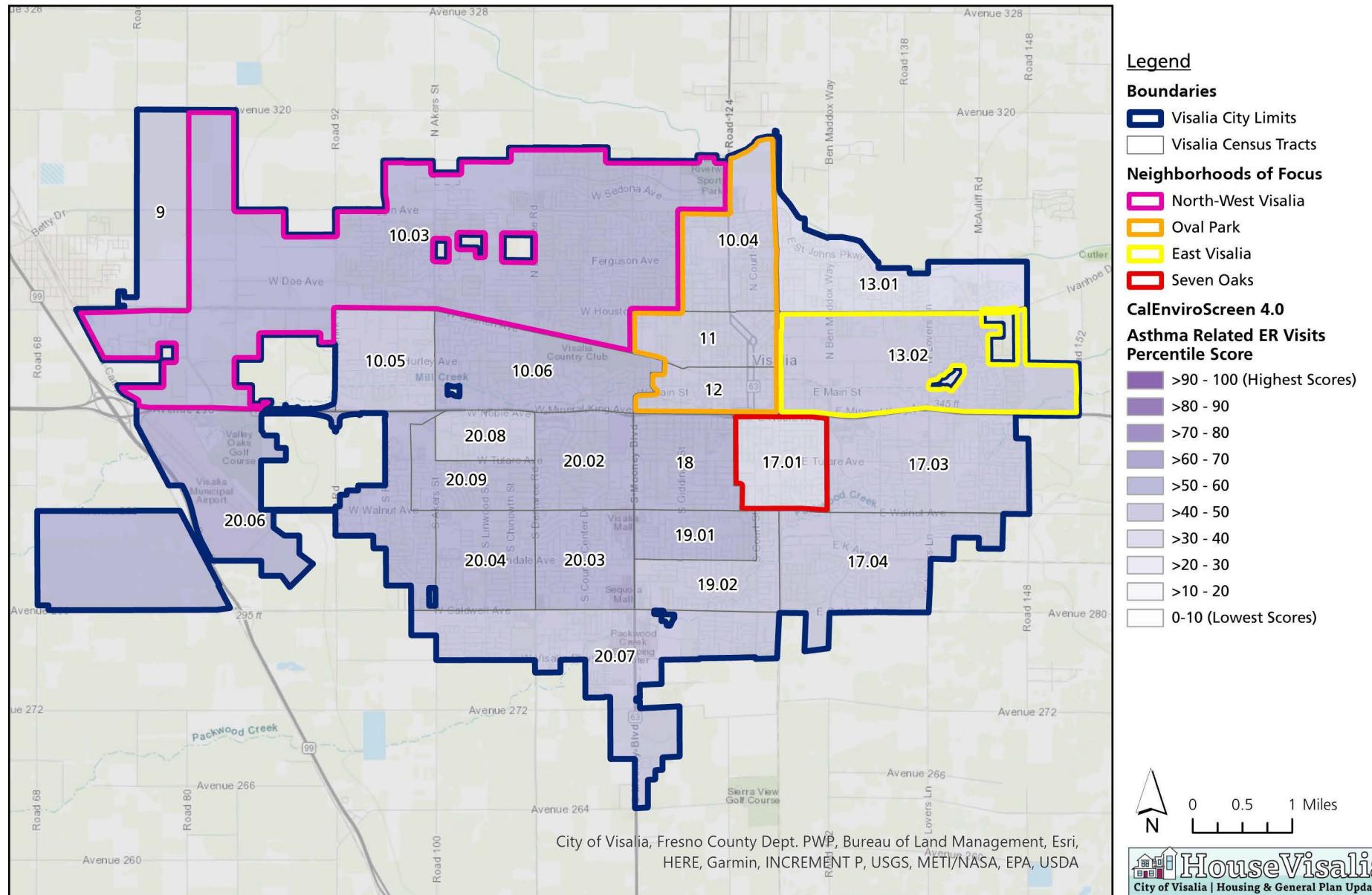
	<i>North-West Visalia</i>	<i>Oval Park</i>	<i>East Visalia</i>	<i>Seven Oaks</i>	<i>City of Visalia</i>	<i>Tulare County</i>	<i>California</i>
<b>Adults (18+) with a BMI of 30+</b>	39.4%	42.6%	44.0%	44.5%	40.5%	41.9%	26.8%

Source: California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), 2018

Note: 2018 data is the most recent year that CHIS has for all Neighborhoods of Focus Census Tracts



Figure 9-7 CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Asthma Related ER Visits, Visalia



## Diabetes

Diabetes is a chronic health condition that occurs when the body does not produce enough insulin or when the body cannot use the insulin it has effectively. Over time, the symptoms of diabetes can cause serious health problems, including heart disease, vision loss, and kidney disease. There are two types of diabetes. Type 1 diabetes is thought to be caused by genetic disposition, not environmental or lifestyle choices, whereas type 2 diabetes can be prevented through regular physical activity and healthy food choices. Regardless of type, management of diabetes requires healthy lifestyle choices including healthy food choices, regular physical activity, controlling blood pressure, and controlling cholesterol, all of which can be more challenging for environmental justice communities that tend to

experience lower incomes and less access to regular and high-quality medical care.

The rate of diabetes in North-West Visalia and Oval Park is slightly higher than the city and county average, as shown in Table 9-12, whereas the diabetes rate in Seven Oaks and East Visalia are similar or slightly lower compared to the city and county. Additionally, the diabetes rates across the Neighborhoods of Focus, City of Visalia, and Tulare County are three to seven percent higher than statewide diabetes rates (11 percent). Although neighborhoods that reflect higher rates of diabetes may not be due to environmental conditions, it demonstrates the importance of providing an environment that promotes healthy lifestyle choices in these neighborhoods such as adequate sidewalks, parks, and recreational opportunities, as well as access to healthcare and healthy food.

**Table 9-12      Rate of Diabetes in the Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus**

	<i>North-West Visalia</i>	<i>Oval Park</i>	<i>East Visalia</i>	<i>Seven Oaks</i>	<i>City of Visalia</i>	<i>Tulare County</i>	<i>California</i>
<b>Adults (18+) ever diagnosed with diabetes</b>	17.3%	17.7%	16.0%	14.0%	15.3%	15.5%	11.1%

Source: California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), 2020

## Heart Disease

Heart disease includes a variety heart conditions and is the leading cause of death in the United States. The most common type of heart disease in the U.S. is coronary artery disease, which can cause heart attacks. Risk factors for heart disease include high blood pressure and blood cholesterol, diabetes, and obesity. Heart disease can be prevented through regular physical

activity and a healthy diet, both of which are less easily attainable in environmental justice communities due to a lack of neighborhood infrastructure that promotes physical activity (i.e. parks, sidewalks, proximity to high traffic roads) and lack of healthy food choices due to income, access to full-service grocery stores, or time or knowledge to prepare healthy foods at home.



As shown in Table 9-13, the rate of adults diagnosed with heart disease in the Neighborhoods of Focus are similar (within one to two percent) to the citywide, countywide and statewide heart disease rates.

CalEnviroScreen 4.0 measures the Cardiovascular Disease Indicator by estimating the number of people per 10,000 who visited the ER for a heart attack. As

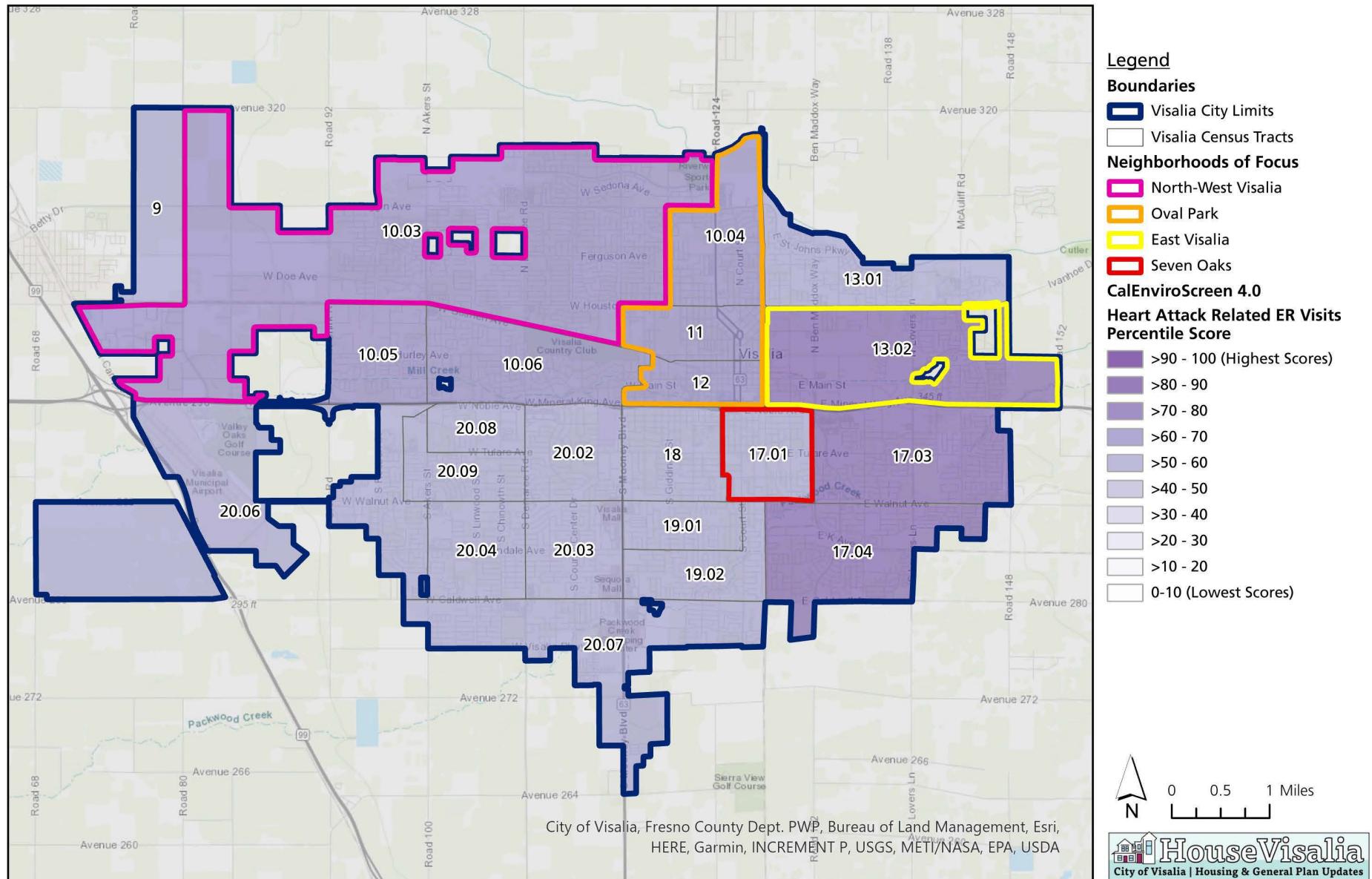
shown in Figure 9-8, other than Seven Oaks, all Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus have Cardiovascular Disease Indicator percentile scores between 60 and 70, with East Visalia being the highest, meaning the rate of heart attack related ER visits are higher than 60 to 70 percent of census tracts in California.

**Table 9-13      Rate of Heart Disease in the Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus**

	<i>North-West Visalia</i>	<i>Oval Park</i>	<i>East Visalia</i>	<i>Seven Oaks</i>	<i>City of Visalia</i>	<i>Tulare County</i>	<i>California</i>
<b>Adults (18+) ever diagnosed with heart disease</b>	6.6%	6.2%	6.9%	7.3%	7.5%	7.1%	6.9%

*Source: California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), 2020*

Figure 9-8 CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Heart Attack ER Visits, Visalia





## Pollution Exposure

Pollution exposure occurs when people come into direct contact with pollutants in the air, water, food, or soil. Pollution can be the result of polluting land uses (e.g., industrial facilities, agriculture), heavy or high traffic transportation facilities (e.g., railroads, freeways), or household conditions (e.g., lead paint, indoor air quality). Environmental justice communities, especially low-income communities, are more likely to live or work near one or more polluting sources due to underinvestment and land use decisions that concentrated polluting land uses near low-income communities. Living or working near polluting land uses can result in a higher risk of serious health issues such as respiratory infections, cancer, or heart disease due to consistent and regular exposure to one or more pollutants.

This section discusses the major pollution burdens in Visalia based on data from CalEnviroScreen 4.0 and EJScreen.

### Diesel Particulate Matter

Diesel Particulate Matter (DPM) is a type of air pollution that derives from diesel engine emissions. Major sources of DPM include on- and off- road mobile sources such as trucks, buses, cars, ships, trains, and heavy machinery (e.g., tractors). For this reason, DPM is concentrated near ports, rail yards, and freeways where there are high traffic volumes.

DPM is made up of extremely small particles of dirt and soot that come out of the exhaust pipes of vehicles. With consistent exposure, these particles are easily

inhaled and cause irritation to the eyes, trouble breathing, heart disease, and lung cancer. Children, elderly, and people with existing respiratory diseases such as asthma are more vulnerable to the negative health effects of DPM.

Visalia is located along SR 99, which is a major north-south highway for passenger vehicles and trucks and is a major source of DPM in neighboring communities. Although most of the areas within the city limits that are adjacent to SR 99 are non-residential, SR 99 intersects with SR 198, which is an east-west connection that diverts truck and passenger traffic directly through Visalia. The city is also bisected by two other California highways: SR 216 (east-west) and SR 63 (north-south).

Figure 9-10 shows concentrations of DPM emitted near the populated part of census tracts as reported in CalEnviroScreen 4.0. In Visalia, the census tracts located along SR 198 and SR 63 have the highest DPM percentile scores. Tract 10.04 in the northern portion of the Oval Park Neighborhood of Focus has the highest DPM percentile score in the city at 77, meaning that the tons of DPM emitted per year is higher than 77 percent of census tracts in California. The percentile scores in other Neighborhoods of Focus census tracts range from 38 in East Visalia to 69 in Seven Oaks.

In the community survey, air pollution from cars and trucks was one of the most reported types of pollution across all areas in Visalia, accounting for 40 percent of all respondents. As shown in Figure 9-9, 42 to 48 percent of respondents in North Visalia, Oval Park, Seven Oaks, and Non-EJ Areas reported experiencing air pollution from cars and trucks in their neighborhood. East Visalia has a significantly lower

response rate for air pollution from cars and trucks compared to other areas of the city, accounting for only 28 percent of responses. Seven Oaks has the highest response rate for air pollution from cars and trucks,

accounting for 48 percent of respondents in the neighborhood, most likely due to the neighborhood's close proximity to SR 198 and South Santa Fe Street, which is a major north-south corridor through the city.

**Figure 9-9      Community Survey Responses – Air pollution from cars and trucks**

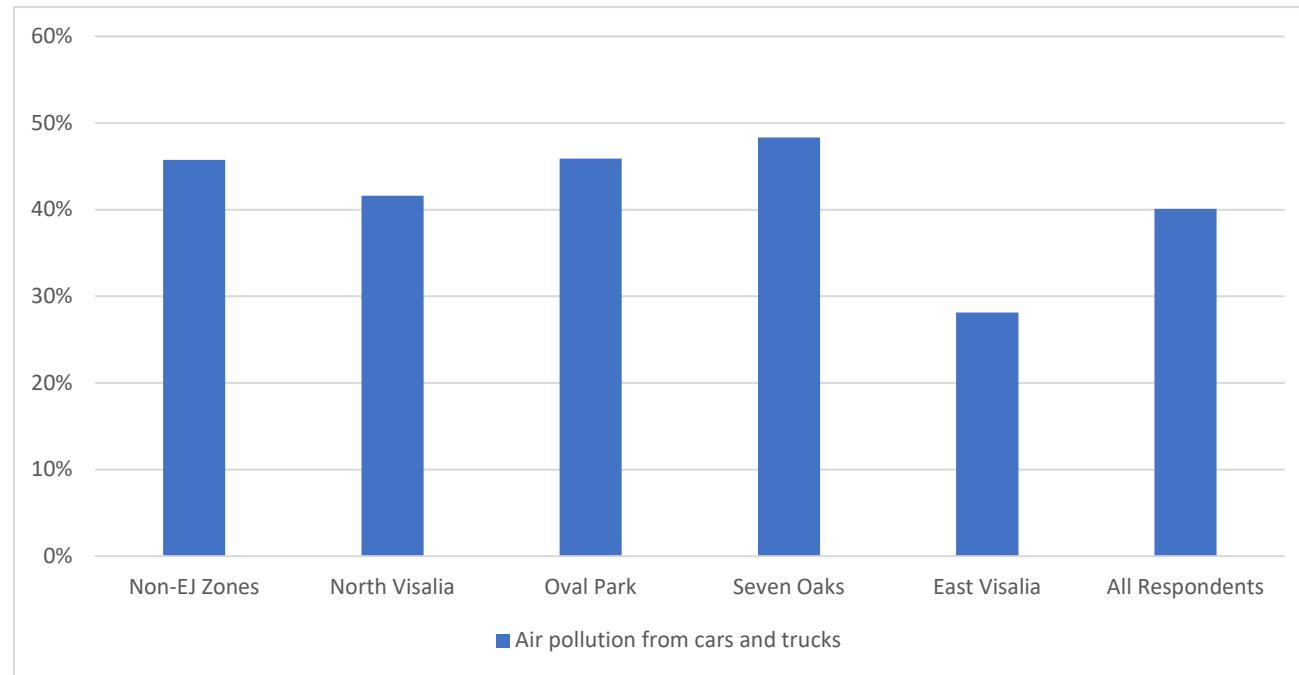
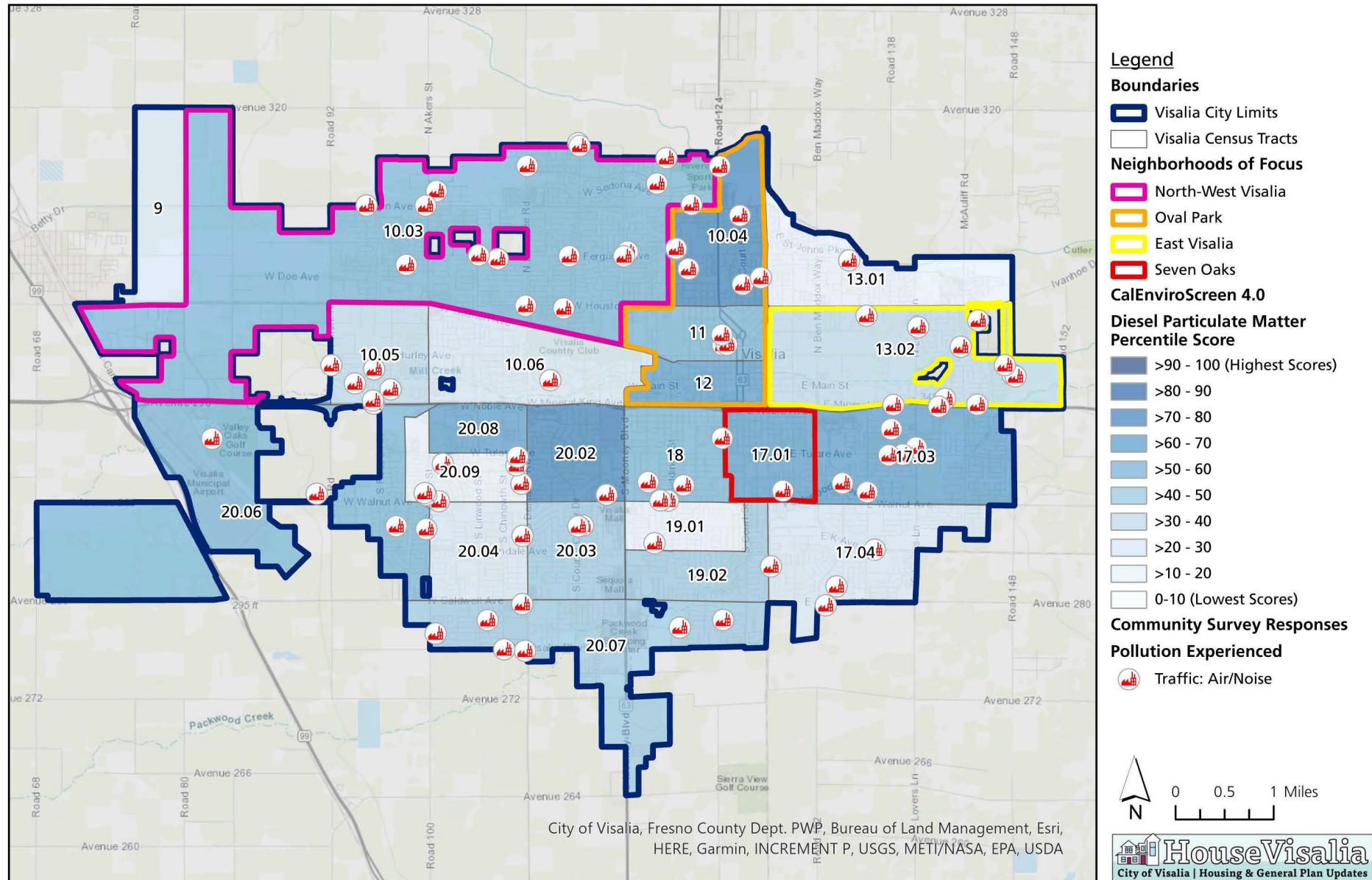




Figure 9-10 CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Diesel Particulate Matter – Visalia



*Note: The community survey responses shown on the map are points that survey respondents identified as issue areas. The number of points shown is not representative of all survey responses, as not all respondents answered the mapping question.*

## Ozone

Ozone is a gas formed when oxygen-containing compounds react with other air pollutants (e.g., carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide) in the presence of sunlight and can be either good or bad depending on where it is found. Ozone found in the earth's upper atmosphere provides protection from the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays at the earth's surface. In contrast, ozone found at the ground level is the primary component of smog and can cause adverse health impacts such as respiratory irritation, lung disease, asthma, and cancer. Common air pollutants that create ozone at the ground level include cars, trucks, power plants, chemical plants, and farms.

To monitor ozone levels across California, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) maintains a network of air monitoring stations, one of which is in Visalia on North Church Street. Ozone levels are typically their highest in the afternoons and summer months when the days are longer and hotter, therefore, the CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Ozone Indicator score is determined based on the daily maximum ozone concentration in summer months (May – October).

As shown in Figure 9-11, all census tracts in Visalia have an Ozone Indicator percentile score between 89 and 94, meaning the ozone concentrations in Visalia is 89 to 94 percent higher than all other census tracts in California. Ozone concentration in northern and eastern Visalia is slightly higher than other areas of the city. This demonstrates that ozone pollution exposure affects not only Visalia's Neighborhoods of Focus, but also the citywide population.

## Fine Particulate Matter (PM2.5)

PM2.5 is a form of air pollution that is made up of very small particles (less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter) and can include a variety of particles, including organic chemicals, dust, soot, and metals. Particulate matter can come from any activities involving combustion, such as transportation, agriculture, industry, and construction.

The small size of PM2.5 particles can cause serious health effects on the heart and lungs, as these fine particles can penetrate deeper into the lungs if inhaled. Exposure to PM2.5 can result in lung irritation, exacerbation of asthma and other respiratory diseases, lung disease, heart disease, and increased risk of strokes.

PM2.5 levels are monitored by CARB's air monitoring stations, which is used by CalEnviroScreen 4.0 to measure the PM2.5 Indicator percentile scores based on annual average concentrations of PM2.5. Similar to the Ozone Indicator percentile score, in Visalia the PM2.5 Indicator percentile scores for all census tracts are between 97 and 99 (see Figure 9-13), meaning the PM2.5 concentrations in Visalia are 97 to 99 percent higher than all other census tracts in California.

### Did you know?

The size of particle matter has a direct relation to its potential health impacts. PM2.5 particles are smaller than the thickness of a human hair. Particles of this size can more easily penetrate into the lungs and even into the bloodstream.



Figure 9-11 CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Ozone Concentration, Visalia

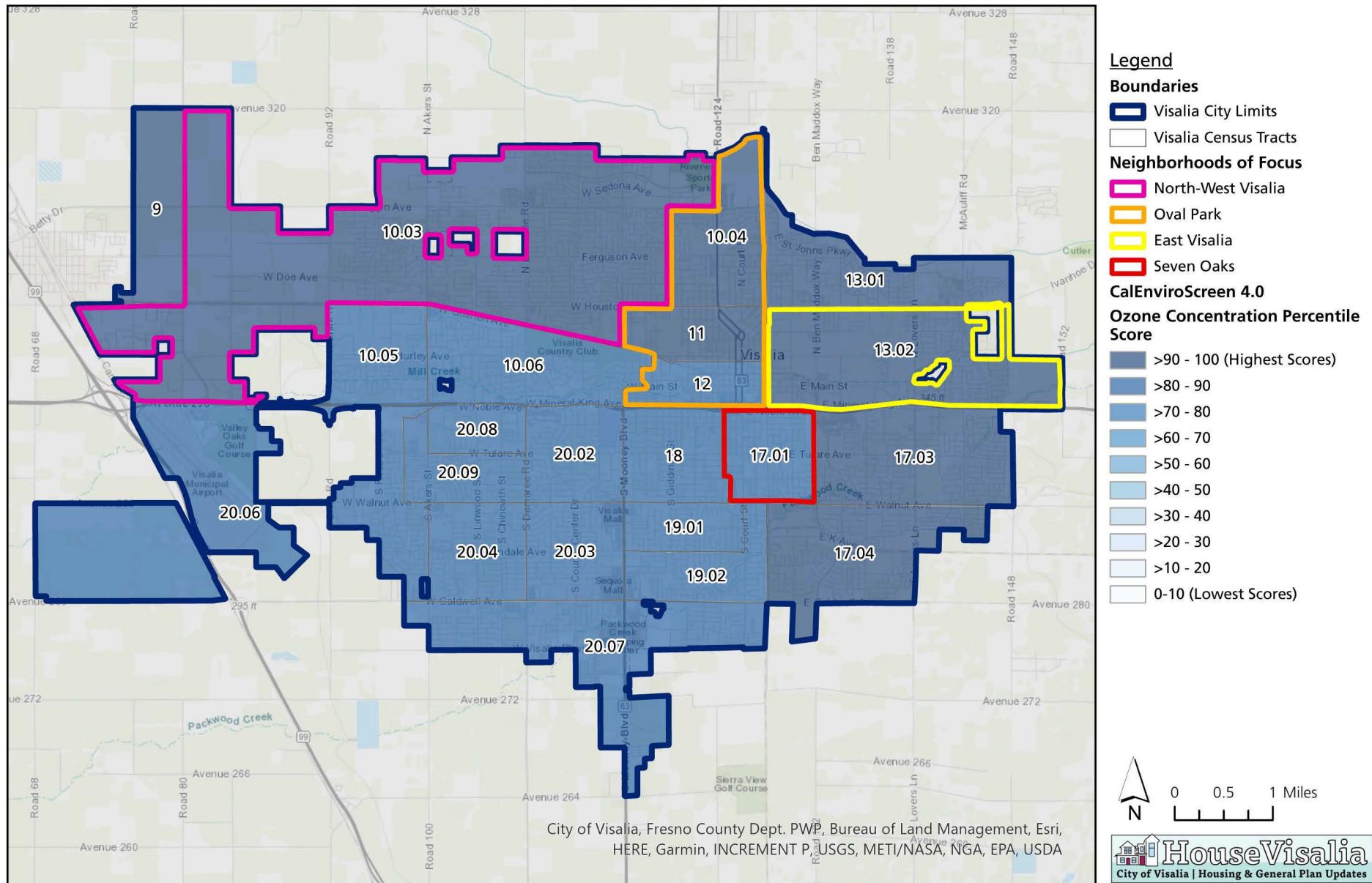
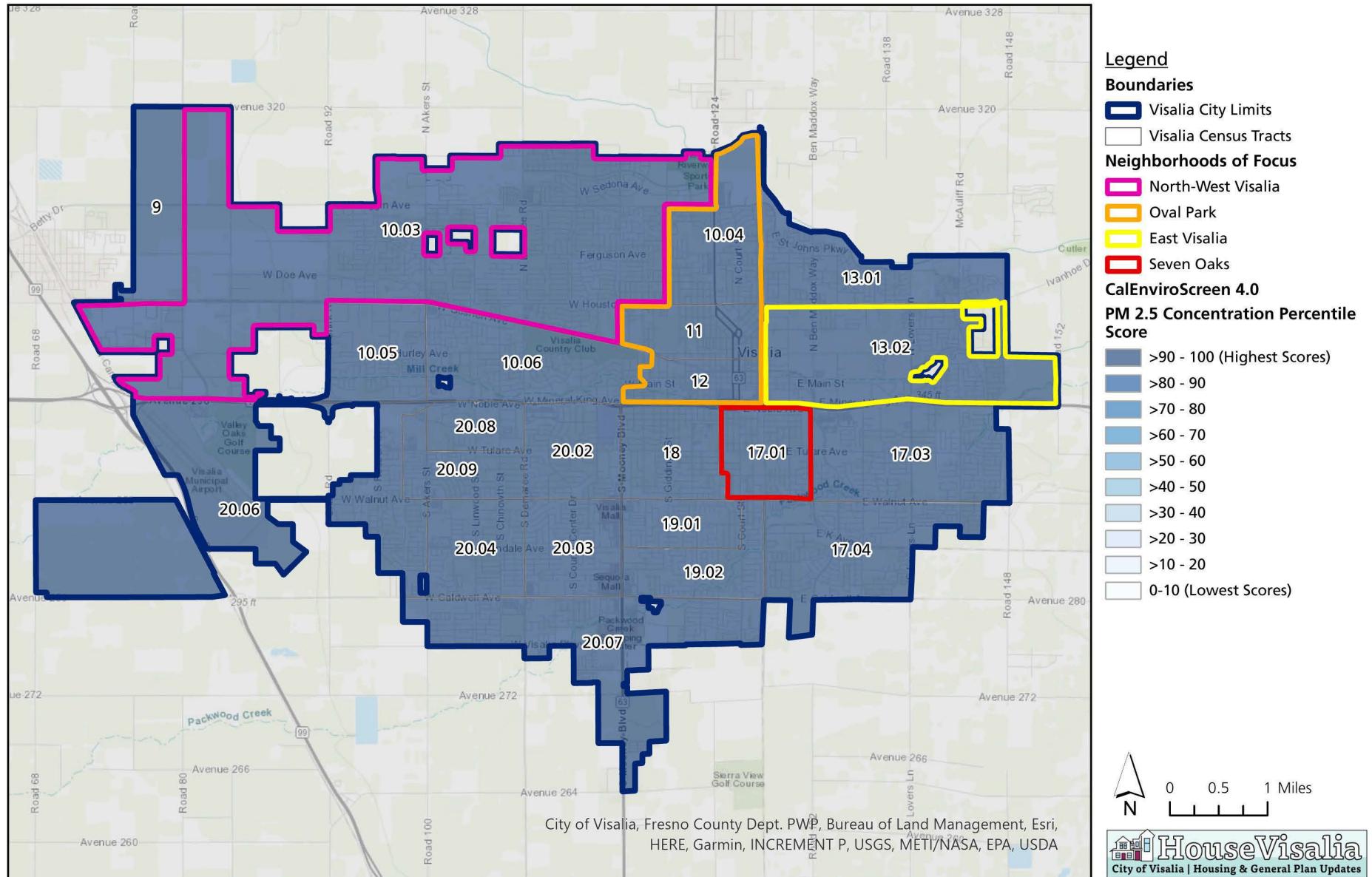


Figure 9-13 CalEnviroScreen 4.0 PM2.5 Concentration, Visalia





## Pesticide Use

Pesticides are chemicals used to control insects, plant diseases, and other pests that threaten crops. Pesticides applied in agricultural areas can become airborne and drift to neighboring communities and become a significant source of pollution exposure to residents. Chronic exposure to harmful pesticides can cause serious health issues such as respiratory illnesses, birth defects, cancer, and neurological impacts<sup>2</sup>. Additionally, environmental justice communities, especially in the California San Joaquin Valley, are more likely to work in the agricultural industry resulting in higher risk of exposure at work.

Although over 1,000 pesticides are registered for use in California, the CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Pesticide Use Indicator assesses only 132 of the most toxic and volatile active pesticide ingredients residents may be exposed to. The indicator adds the total pounds per square mile of these selected pesticide ingredients for the years 2017-2019 for each census tract. Some of the active pesticide ingredients assessed as part of the CalEnviroScreen 4.0 indicator found in and around Visalia include:

- **1,3-dichloropropene.** Typically used in soil that can cause short-term and long-term health impacts to humans if exposed, such as nose and throat irritation, chest pain, difficulty breathing, skin sensitivity, and chronic respiratory issues.
- **manocozeb.** A fungicide typically used a variety of crops (notably potatoes, apples, and grapes)

that can cause health impacts to humans such as thyroid issues, cancer, and birth defects.

Manocozeb was banned in the European Union in 2021 due to severe birth defects reported.

- **paraquat dichloride.** An herbicide typically used to control weeds and to reduce moisture for pre-harvest crops. Paraquat can have severe health impacts on humans such as respiratory failure, kidney failure, liver failure, and death.

As shown in Figure 9-15, Visalia is surrounded by farmland with some areas of the city having little to no buffer between residential and agricultural uses making these areas more susceptible to pesticide drift. As shown in Figure 9-16, census tracts on the outer edges of the city that are adjacent to agricultural areas have much higher CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Pesticide Use percentile scores than other areas of the city.

Two census tracts in Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus have pesticide percentile scores above 75. The census tract in East Visalia has a percentile score of 90, meaning the pounds of active pesticide ingredients used per square mile is higher than 90 percent of the census tracts in California. The census tract in North-West Visalia has a percentile score of 79. It should be noted that these two Neighborhoods of Focus extend beyond the city limits into agricultural areas that are not within the city.

In the community survey air pollution from pesticides or dust was the most commonly reported type of pollution experienced in all areas of the city, accounting

<sup>2</sup> National Institute of Health. Tudi, Muyesaier et al. "Exposure Routes and Health Risks Associated with Pesticide Application." *Toxics* vol. 10, 6 335. 19 Jun. 2022, doi:10.3390/toxics10060335

for 56 percent of all respondents. As shown in Figure 9-14 below, North Visalia had the highest response rate for pesticide and dust pollution, accounting for 66 percent of respondents, which is 24 percent higher than any other pollution type reported in North Visalia. North Visalia and Seven Oaks have a higher response

rate for pesticide and dust than Non-EJ Areas of the city, whereas Oval Park and East Visalia have a lower response rate. Although East Visalia has one of the highest CalEnviroScreen Pesticide percentile scores, as seen in Figure 9-16, it had a lower response rate in the community survey compared to other parts of the city.

**Figure 9-14** Community Survey Responses – Pesticide Use

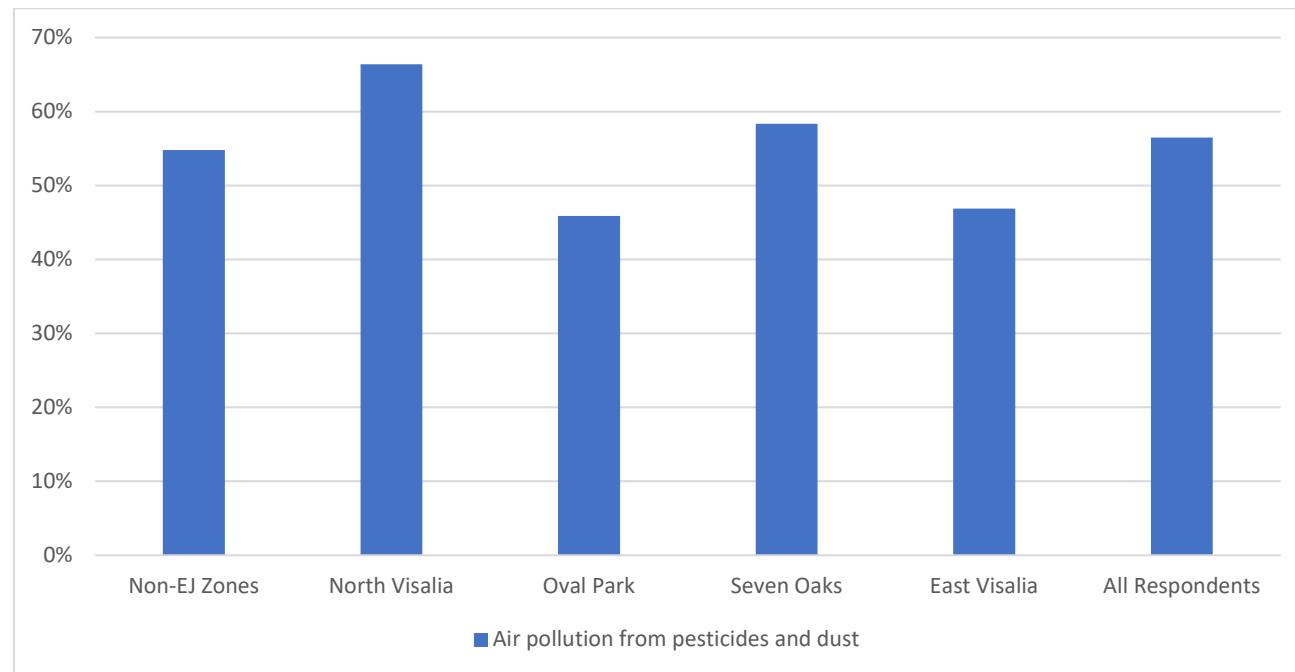




Figure 9-15 Farmland Surrounding Visalia

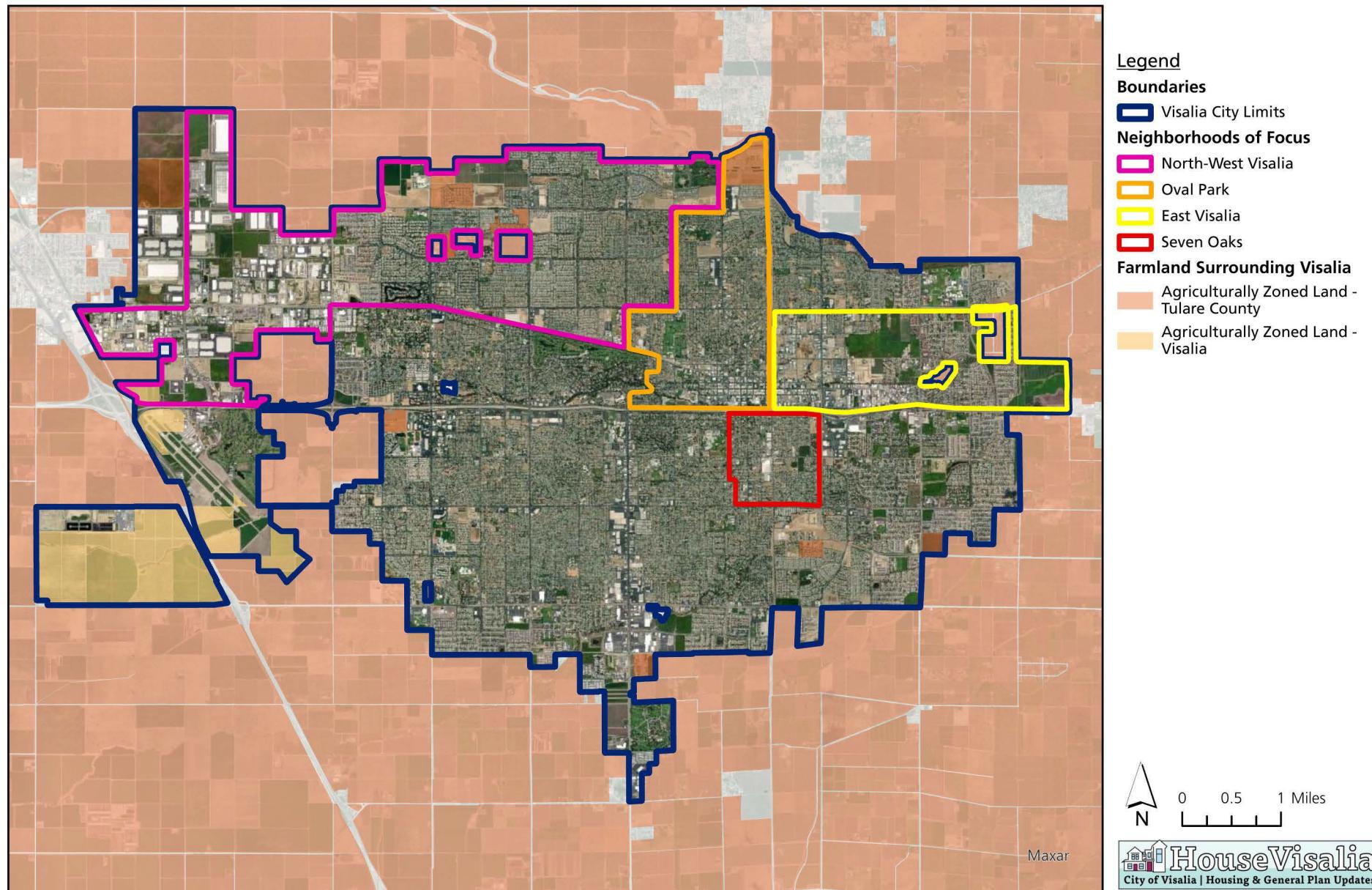
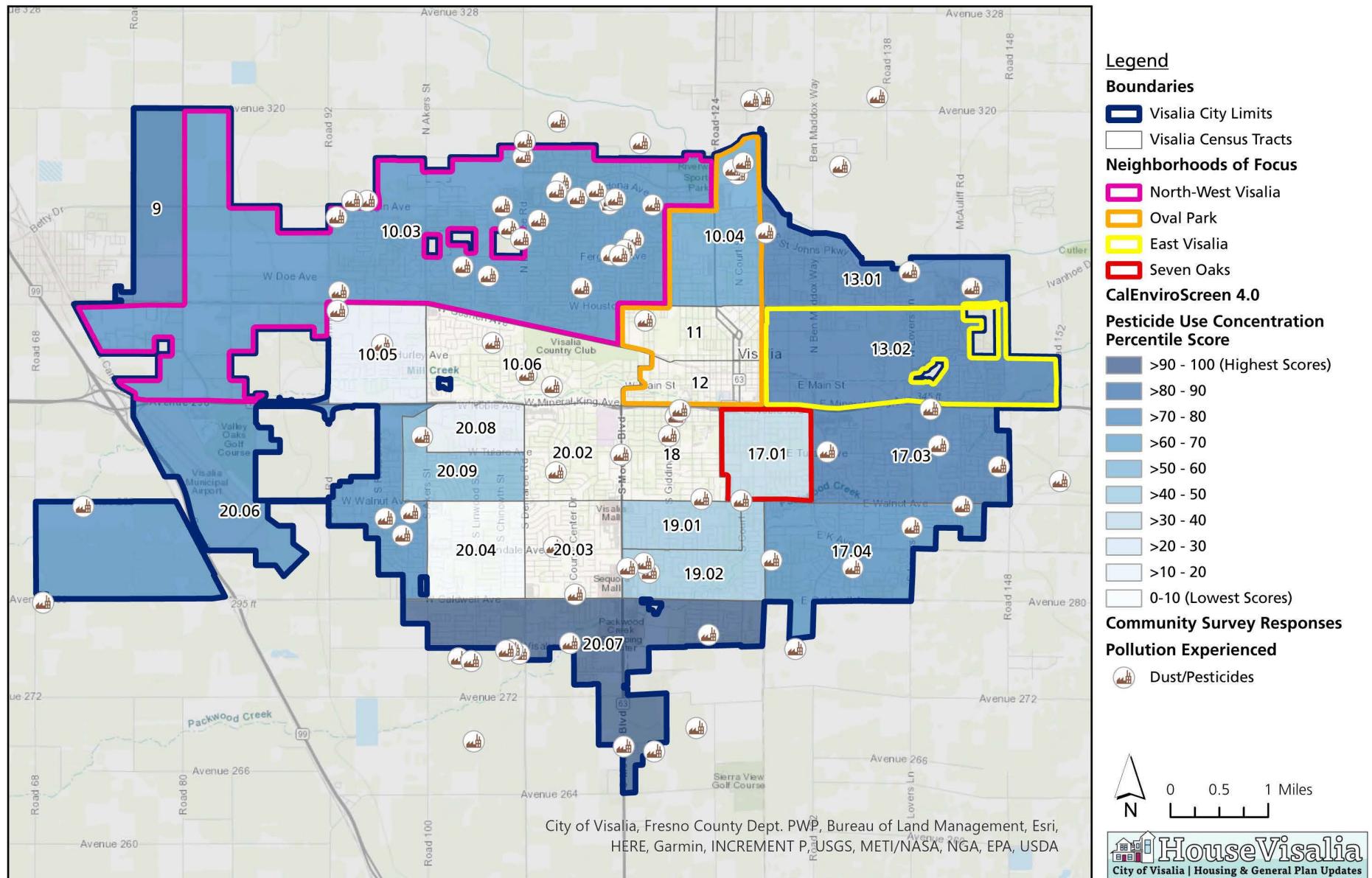


Figure 9-16 CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Pesticide Use, Visalia



*Note: The community survey responses shown on the map are points that survey respondents identified as issue areas. The number of points shown is not representative of all survey responses, as not all respondents answered the mapping question.*



## Drinking Water Contaminants

Public water systems in California have a high rate of compliance with drinking water standards set by the State. However, contaminants may still be introduced into the water system by a variety of sources including natural occurrence, accidental discharge, industrial release, and agricultural runoff. Exposure to contaminants in drinking water, even in small amounts, can have adverse health effects over time such as cancer and pulmonary issues.

CalEnviroScreen's Drinking Water Contaminants Indicator is a measure of a combination of contaminant data that takes into account the average concentrations of 16 contaminants and violations compared to other census tracts<sup>3</sup>.

North-West Visalia has a Drinking Water Contaminants Indicator percentile score of 78, making it the only Neighborhood of Focus with a Drinking Water Contaminants Indicator score that exceeds the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile threshold, as shown in Figure 9-17. Drinking Water Contaminant scores for other Neighborhoods of Focus ranged between 67 and 68. Table 9-14 shows the percentile scores for each contaminant and violation in the North-West Visalia census tract. The individual contaminants in North-West Visalia with the highest percentile score include 1,2,3 trichloropropane, nitrate, total coliform rule violations, and dibromochloropropane.

### Common Drinking Water Contaminants in Visalia

The following drinking water contaminants have the highest percentile scores in the Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus out of the 16 contaminants and violations CalEnviroScreen 4.0 measures for its Drinking Water Contaminants Indicator.

**1,2,3-Trichloropropane:** A carcinogen typically found in agricultural regions where it is used as a soil fumigant. Health Concern: cancer

**Nitrate:** A chemical used in fertilizer that typically contaminates drinking water via agricultural and urban runoff and discharges from municipal wastewater treatment plants. Health Concern: cancer

**Dibromochloropropane:** A pesticide chemical used for as a fumigant in agriculture. Health Concern: cancer

*Source: EWG, 2021*

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that the CalEnviroScreen Drinking Water Contaminants Indicator does not indicate whether drinking water is safe to drink. For up-to-date drinking water compliance information, please visit [calwater.com](http://calwater.com).

Table 9-14 North-West Visalia Drinking Water Contaminant and Violation Percentile Scores

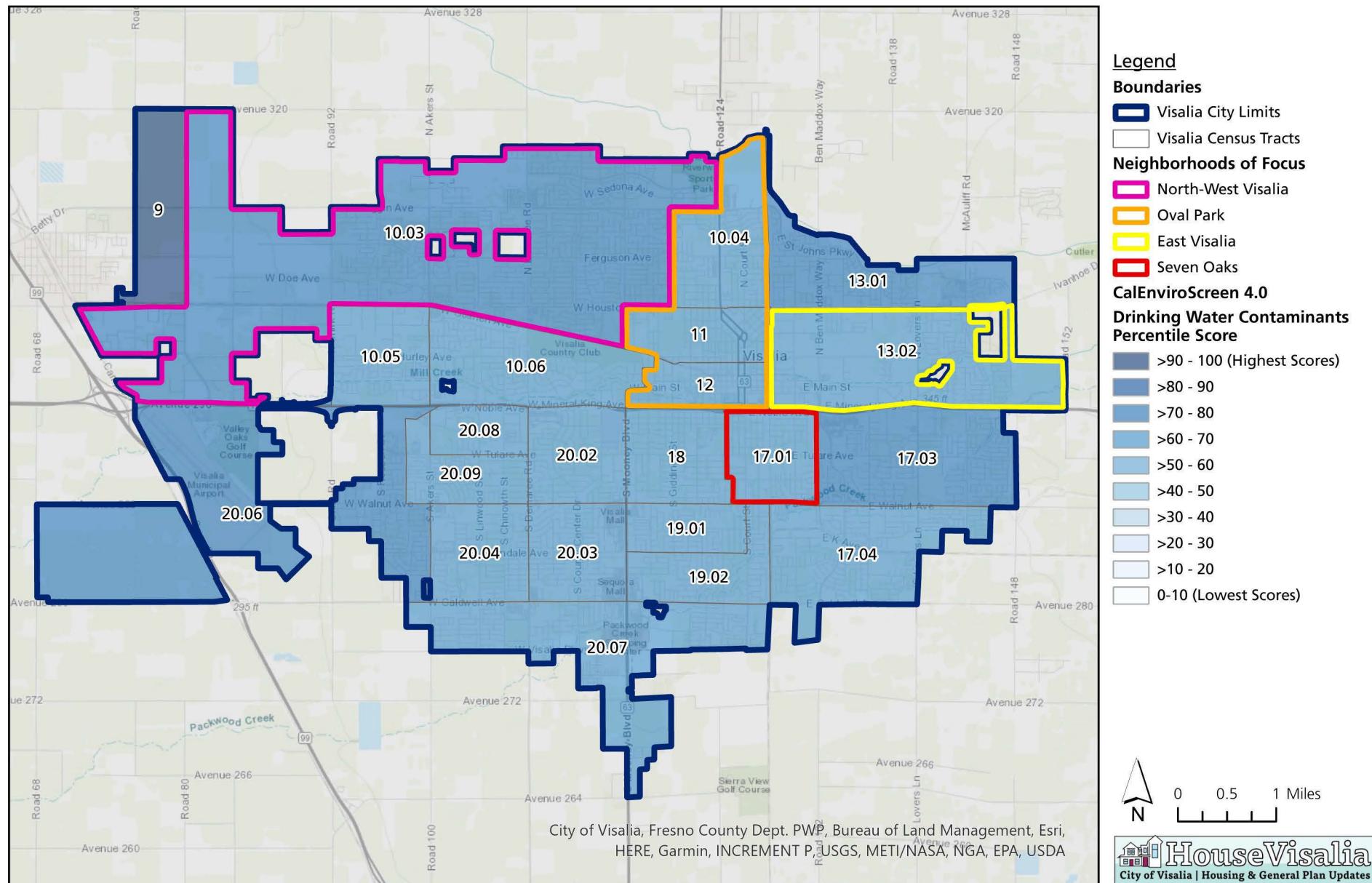
<i>Contaminant or Violation</i>	<i>Percentile</i>
1,2,3-Trichloropropane (TCP)	92.1
Arsenic	32.63
Chromium, Hexavalent	61.63
Dibromochloropropane (DBCP)	87.32
Gross Alpha	45.11
Lead and Copper Rule (lead only)	34.39
Nitrate as N	89.11
Perchlorate	85.78
Tetrachloroethylene (PCE)	77.84
Total Coliform Rule (TCR) Violations	89.85
Total Trihalomethanes (THM)	6.87

*Note: This table only contains percentiles for contaminants and violations with a percentile above 0.0.*

*Source: CalEnviroScreen 4.0, 2021*



Figure 9-17 CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Drinking Water Contaminants, Visalia



## Groundwater Threats

Groundwater, which is water stored beneath the Earth's surface in underground aquifers, can be contaminated by commercial, industrial, and agricultural sites that store and dispose of hazardous materials on land or in underground storage tanks. These underground storage tanks can leak and contaminate soil and groundwater, which is often used for drinking water. Common contaminants from these sites include gasoline, heavy metals, and pesticides. Other groundwater threats include produced water ponds, industrial sites, airports, dairies, dry cleaners, and publicly owned sewage treatment plants. Although these are potential groundwater threats, a leak could contaminate soil or groundwater that could expose residents to chemicals and contaminants that can have short-term or long-term health impacts such as irritation, headaches, dizziness, cancer, or reproductive harm. In addition to the threat to water quality, the

presence of these contaminants can limit future development or repurposing of these sites due to cleanup costs and liability concerns.

The CalEnviroScreen 4.0 groundwater threat indicator identifies cleanup sites that could potentially impact groundwater based on type of site and proximity to residentially populated areas based on information from the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). The SWRCB's GeoTracker Database identifies nine groundwater threat sites in Visalia, three of which are in the Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus (see Table 9-15). Figure 9-18 shows the groundwater threat sites and CalEnviroScreen 4.0 census tract Groundwater Threat Indicator scores.

North-West Visalia is the only Neighborhood of Focus that has a groundwater threat percentile score over 75, with three groundwater threat sites.

**Table 9-15      Groundwater Threat Sites in the Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus**

<i>Site Cleanup Status</i>	<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Potential Contaminant of Concern</i>
<b>Open - Remediation</b>	Cooper Power Systems Facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1,2-dichloroethylene – a flammable, colorless liquid used for solvents and chemical mixtures that can cause serious health impacts such as liver cancer.</li><li>• chlorinated solvents – industrial chemicals used primarily for metal cleaning and production plastics, lacquers, PVC, and perfumes. Chlorinated solvents can cause dizziness, nausea, and liver and lung damage.</li><li>• chromium - used to produce heavy metals and can cause respiratory issues, skin irritation, cancer, gastrointestinal issues, and reproductive harm.</li><li>• volatile organic compounds - gases that are emitted into the air that can cause serious health impacts such as cancer</li></ul>

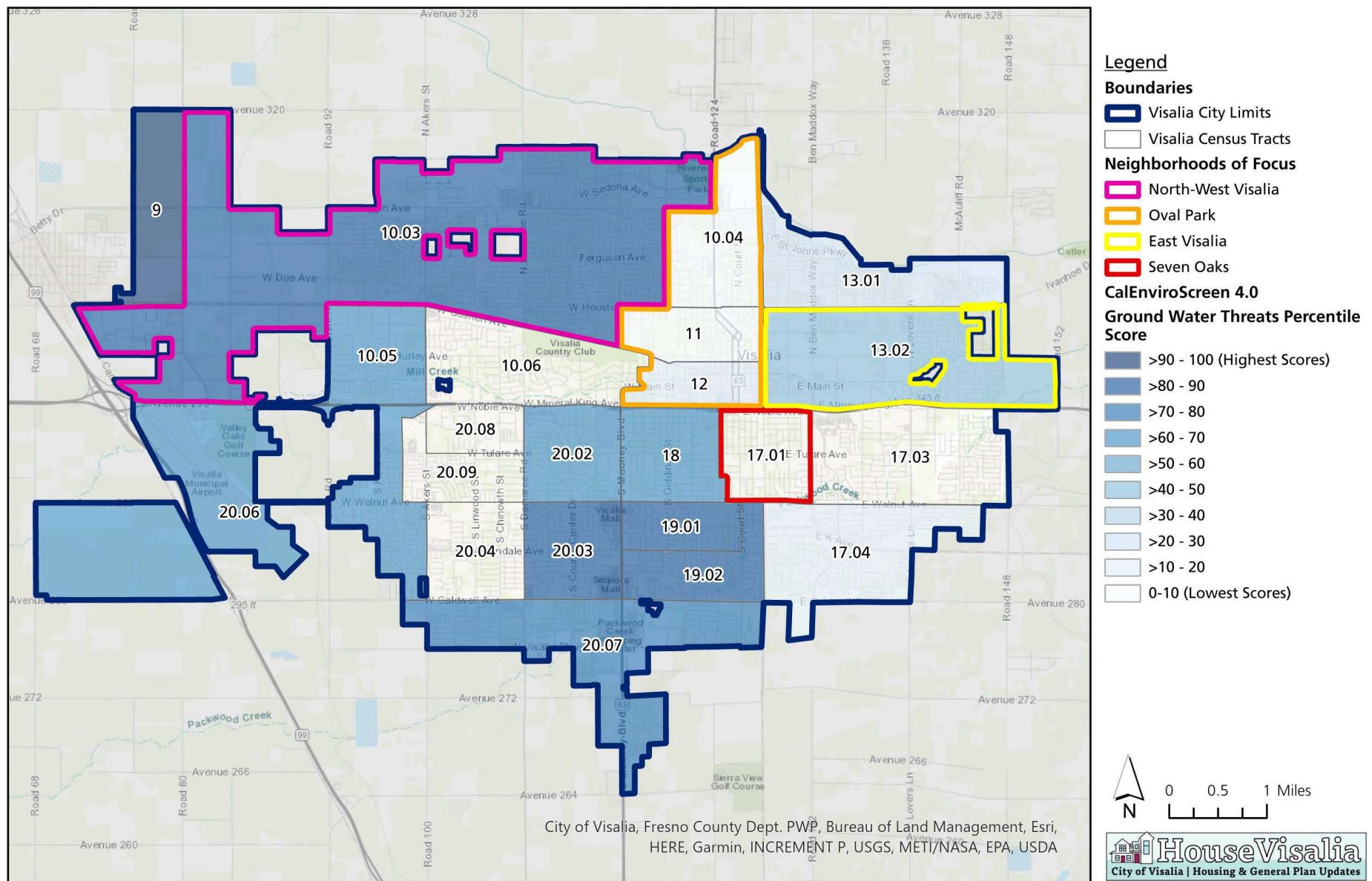


**Table 9-15      Groundwater Threat Sites in the Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus**

<i>Site Cleanup Status</i>	<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Potential Contaminant of Concern</i>
<b>Open - Remediation</b>	Goshen and Shirk Road; Snyder General/Stanley Bost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• volatile organic compounds (see above)</li> </ul>
<b>Completed – Case Closed (as of 11/1/2023)</b>	Kawneer Company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,1,1-trichloroethane - a colorless liquid that can cause irritation to the eyes and skin, dizziness, headaches, nausea, or liver damage.</li> <li>• dichloroethene - a flammable colorless liquid that can cause irritation to skin and eyes or drowsiness.</li> <li>• other inorganic/salt</li> </ul>

*Source: State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) GeoTracker Database, 2024.*

**Figure 9-18 Groundwater Threats in Visalia**





## Brownfield Development

Cleanup sites are often referred to as “brownfields.” The reuse and development of brownfield sites is limited by the costs and processes required to mitigate and remove the presence of pollution on the site. Brownfield sites can often take years or even decades to cleanup and redevelop, resulting in increased blight and vacant land in communities and reducing the potential benefits of that site to the surrounding community and residents.

In Visalia, one major site for the development of a brownfield is the proposed Visalia Civic Center along North Burke Street and East School Avenue near the railroad. The property was previously owned by the Union Pacific Railroad and was assessed by the EPA to have soil contamination from lead. The vacancy of the site resulted in illegal dumping and the lost use of Mill Creek. Redeveloping this site as a Civic Center can not only eliminate potential exposure risk, but also provide a significant community benefit.



## Hazardous Waste and Toxic Releases

### Hazardous Waste

Certain facilities, such as chrome plating companies and mechanical manufacturers, use chemicals that generate hazardous waste that can be harmful to health and the environment. Hazardous waste can be liquids, solids, or gases and can range from automobile oil to highly toxic chemicals used at heavy industrial sites. Negative effects of living near a hazardous waste site include possible air, water, or soil contamination, decreased property values, and economic disinvestment.

According to CalEnviroScreen 4.0, there are 33 waste generators in Visalia, 21 of which are within the Neighborhoods of Focus. Most of the hazardous waste generators (about 71 percent) within the Neighborhoods of Focus are located in North-West Visalia in the industrial areas located in the western portion of the neighborhood as shown in Figure 9-19. Many of the hazardous waste generators within residential areas are drug stores with a pharmacy department that generate hazardous waste related to pharmaceuticals.

### Toxic Releases

Some industrial facilities can release toxic chemicals into the air that present potential health risks to surrounding communities. Environmental justice communities tend to be at higher risk of exposure to toxic chemicals because low-income neighborhoods tend to be located in closer proximity to industrial areas.

The U.S. EPA maintains a Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) to track the release of toxic chemicals from industrial facilities. According to the TRI, there are

eight facilities in Visalia that release toxic chemicals, seven of which are located within the North-West Neighborhood of Focus. As shown in Figure 9-19, most of these facilities are located in Visalia’s industrial area west of North Shirk Road and north of West Goshen Avenue.

Nitrate compounds are the most common chemicals released from the industrial facilities in Visalia, making up more than 75 percent of releases. Exposure to nitrate can cause a variety of negative health impacts including blood disorders, reproductive harm, birth defects, and cardiovascular problems. Other chemicals released from industrial facilities in Visalia include chromium, nickel, and peracetic acid.

### Cleanup Sites

Cleanup sites are properties that are contaminated with hazardous materials and require cleanup actions from the property owners before new development or operations can happen on that site. Cleanup sites not only present an increased risk of exposure to hazardous materials but can also increase the amount of underutilized land in a community due to high cleanup costs and risk of liability, limiting the benefit of that land to the surrounding community.

As shown in Figure 9-21, there are 38 cleanup sites in Visalia, 27 of which are in a Neighborhood of Focus. All but one census tract in the Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus have a Cleanup Sites Indicator percentile score between 89 and 93. A high concentration of cleanup sites are in the southern portion of Oval Park and East Visalia.

Figure 9-19 CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Hazardous Waste Sites, Visalia

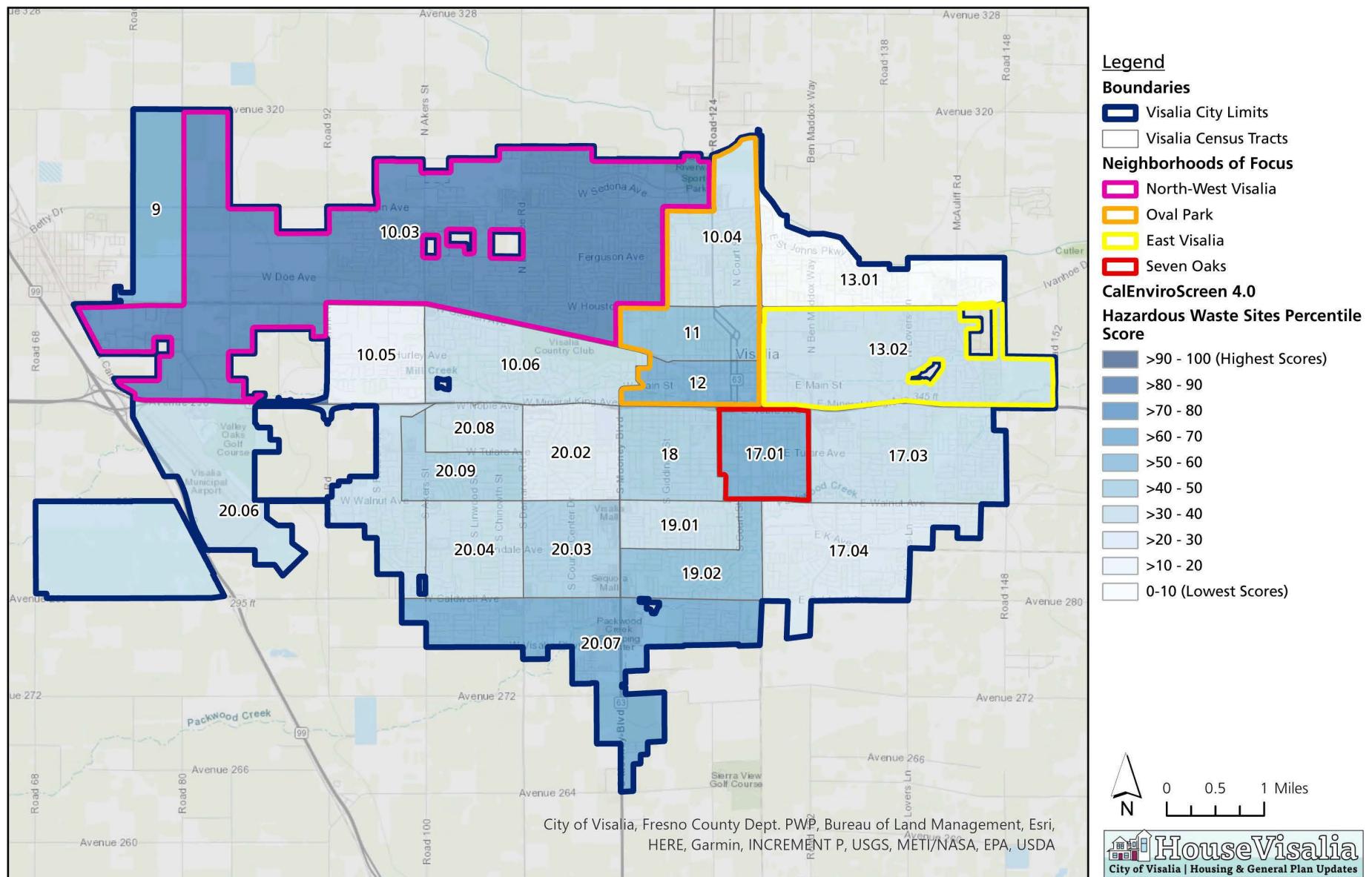




Figure 9-20 CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Toxic Release Sites, Visalia

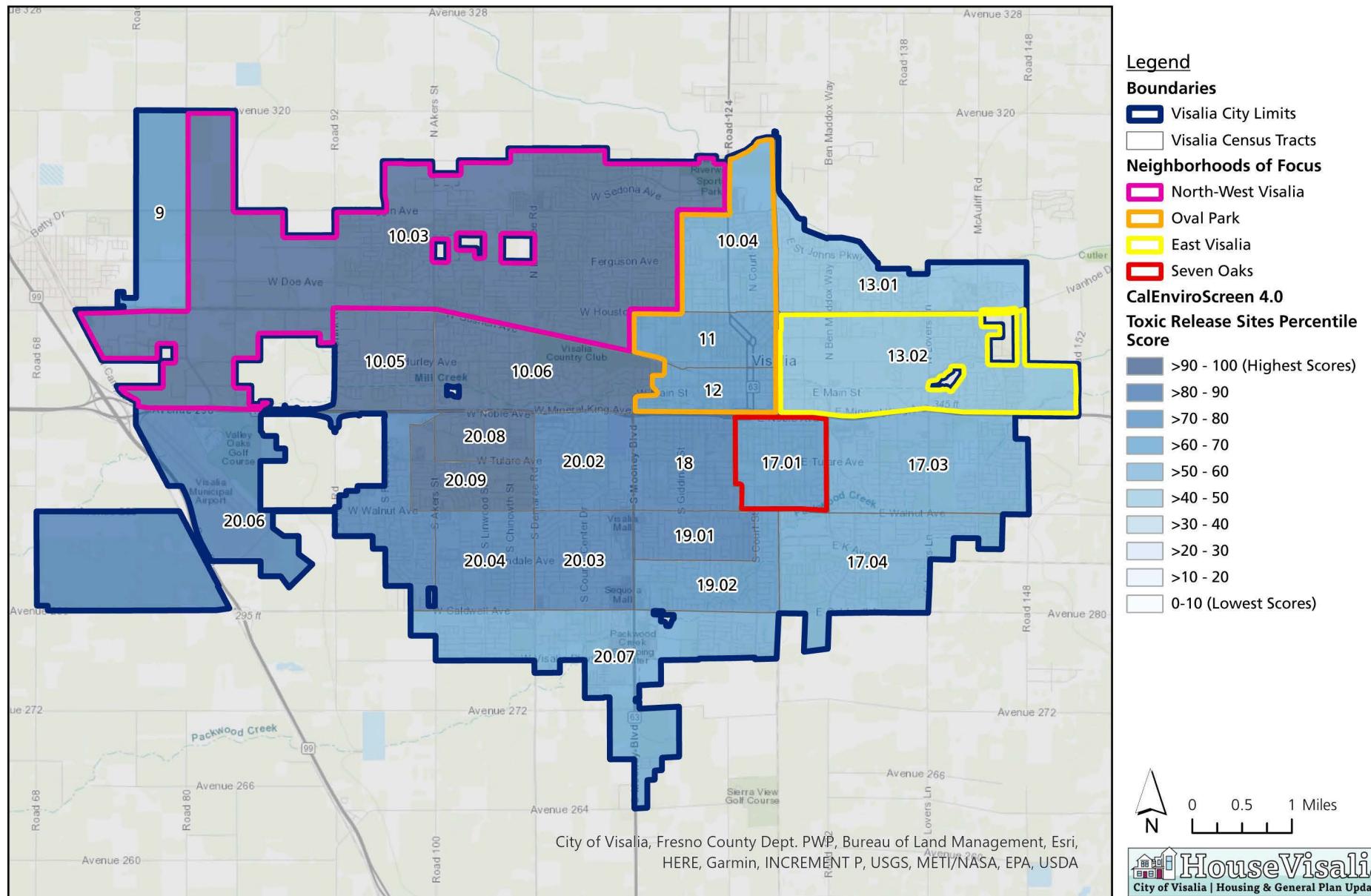
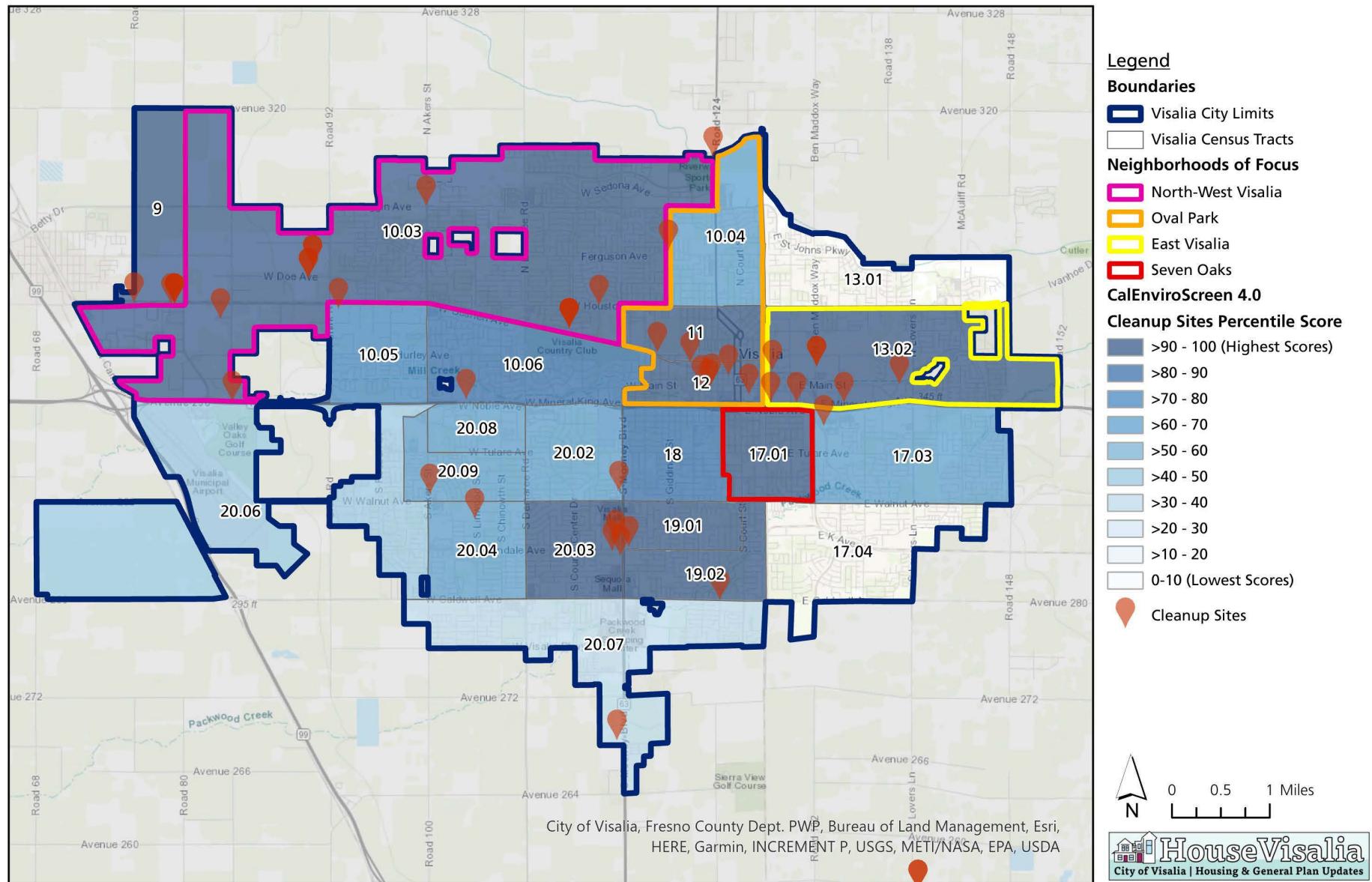


Figure 9-21 CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Cleanup Sites, Visalia





## Healthy Food Access

Adequate access to healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food is key to high quality of life in any community. Food access is determined not only by physical proximity to grocery stores and other food providers, but also the affordability and availability of healthy foods in residential neighborhoods. Environmental justice communities often have a more difficult time achieving food security than other areas since residents in these communities tend to have lower incomes, limited access to a vehicle, or lack the equipment or skills to prepare healthy foods at home.

### Food Environment

The food environment represents the quantity and type of food providers in a community, such as grocery stores, farmer's markets, food banks, and community gardens. The food environment also represents the presence of unhealthy food options in a community, such as liquor stores and fast food.

### Grocery Store Access

As of 2023, there are a total of 23 grocery stores within the Visalia city limits. Of those 23 grocery stores, 10 are located within the Neighborhoods of Focus (see Table 9-16), and five are located just outside of the Neighborhoods of Focus but within a half mile walking distance. Figure 9-22 shows the locations of grocery stores within Visalia as well as residential areas that are within a half mile walking distance of each store. As shown in Table 9-17 about 91 percent of residentially zoned parcels in Oval Park are within a half mile of a grocery store, which is significantly higher than other

areas of the city, primarily due to Oval Park's central location along major commercial corridors.

The percentage of residentially zoned parcels within a half mile of a grocery store in North-West Visalia (23 percent), East Visalia (26 percent), and Seven Oaks (20 percent) is significantly lower than non-EJ areas of the city (41 percent).

**Table 9-16    Grocery Stores in Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus**

Neighborhood	Grocery Store(s)
North-West Visalia	Walmart Neighborhood Market
Oval Park	MT&Y Oriental Food Market Carniceria y Taqueria Nueva Italia Bangkok Thai Grocery Store Vallarta Supermarkets Watson's Health Foods Food 4 Less Target Smart and Final
East Visalia	FoodMaxx
Seven Oaks	There are no grocery stores located in the Seven Oaks Neighborhood of Focus

*Source: City of Visalia, Mintier Harnish (2024)*

Figure 9-22 Food Environment, Visalia

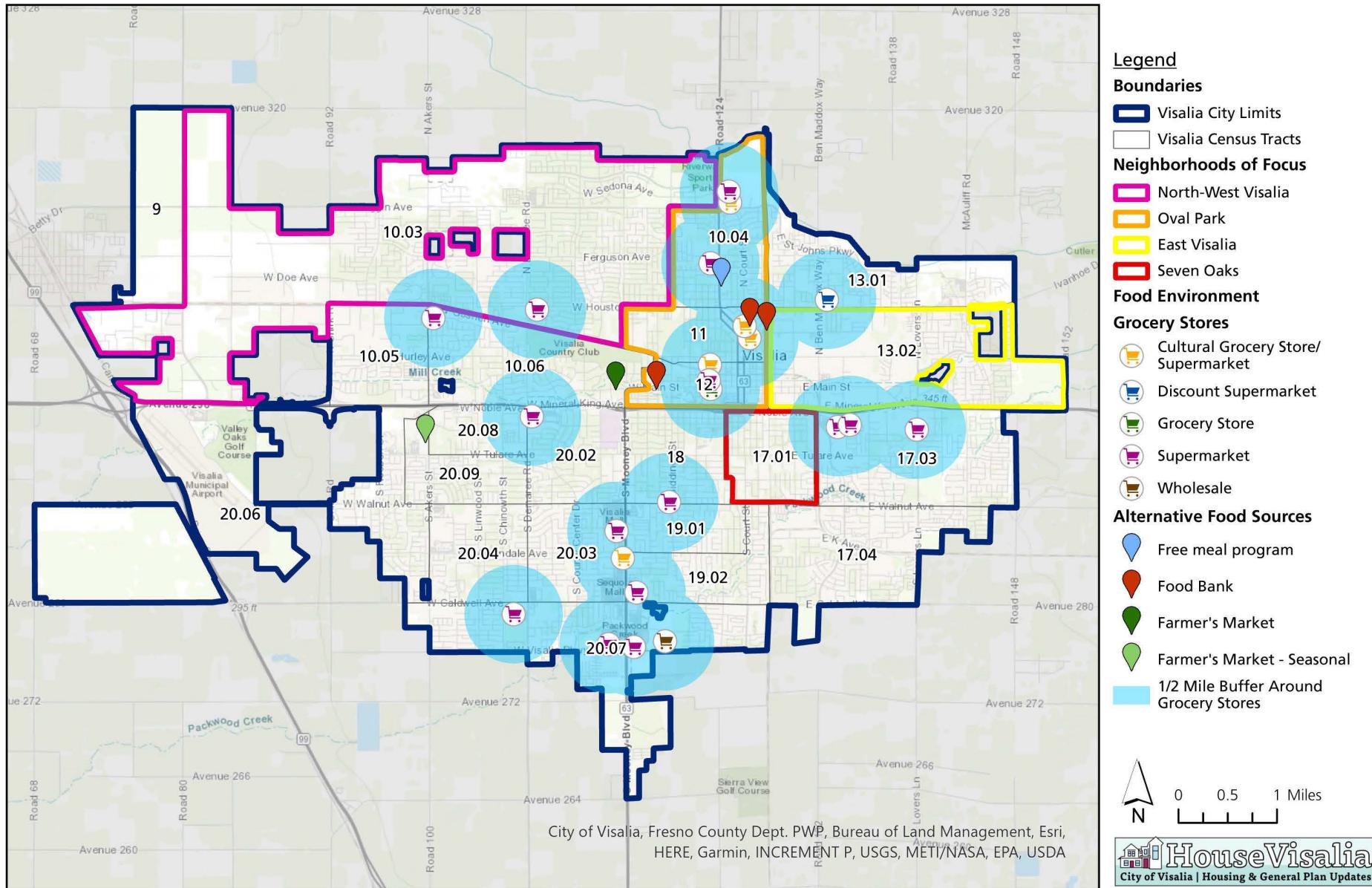




Table 9-17 Percentage of Residential Areas within ½ mile of a Grocery Store, Visalia

	<i>Number of Residentially zoned parcels</i>	<i>Number of residentially zoned parcels within ½ mile of a grocery store</i>	<i>Percentage of residentially zoned Parcels within ½ mile of a grocery store</i>
<b>North-West Visalia</b>	9,403	2,145	22.8%
<b>Oval Park</b>	4,382	3,979	90.8%
<b>East Visalia</b>	2,363	602	25.5%
<b>Seven Oaks</b>	1,477	297	20.1%
<b>Non-EJ Areas</b>	26,603	10,977	41.3%
<b>Citywide</b>	44,228	18,000	40.7%

Source: City of Visalia; Mintier Harnish (2024)

There are five cultural grocery stores in Visalia, four of which are located in the Oval Park Neighborhood of Focus. Cultural grocery stores carry products specific to certain cultures that are not necessarily carried by mainstream supermarkets. Culturally specific grocery stores are important not only to increasing food availability, but also in maintaining cultural traditions and affirming group identity and community.

#### **Farmer's Market and Alternative Food Sources**

In addition to grocery stores, farmer's markets, fruit stands, gardens, and food banks are alternative ways for residents to access healthy foods. Figure 9-23 shows the percentage of community survey respondents that reported getting healthy foods from local farmer's markets, community or private gardens, and/or local food banks or pantries.

#### **Farmer's Markets**

The Visalia Farmers' Market is held in two locations throughout the year. The Main Market is available year-round every Saturday on West Main Street at the courthouse parking lot. The Kaweah Health Market is available during summer months (May through August) on Wednesdays in southwest Visalia on Akers Street and Tulare Avenue. Customers can use CalFresh benefits at the Farmer's Market by using EBT cards and WIC Fruit and Vegetable Vouchers to purchase tokens that can be used like cash at vendor stalls. The Visalia Farmer's Market also participates in California's Market Match program where CalFresh and WIC customers can receive a dollar-to-dollar match up to \$10 to \$15 per day. Allowing these food assistance benefits at local farmer's markets helps make fresh fruits and vegetables more accessible and affordable for low-income families.

## Community and Personal Gardens

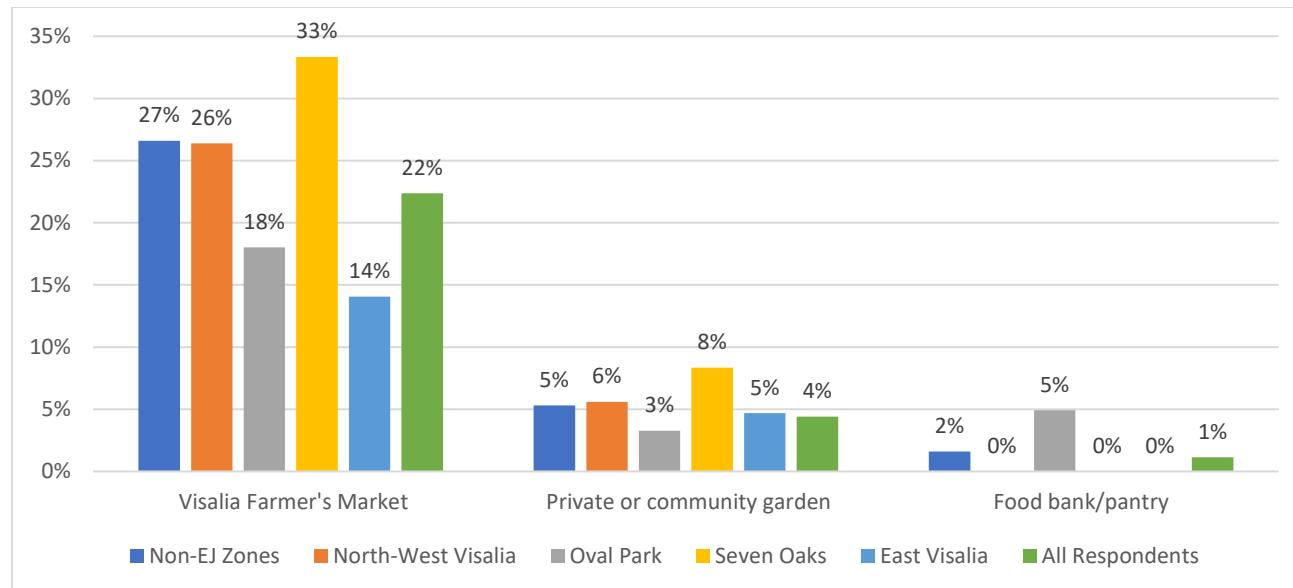
Community and personal gardens are another way for residents to access fresh fruits and vegetables, however, this requires space, upfront costs, and specialized knowledge that many residents, especially environmental justice communities, may not have access to due to income, space, or education.

## Food Banks

Food banks and similar programs help low-income households obtain fresh, canned, and frozen food and meals necessary to fill gaps in food assistance programs

such as CalFresh. Food banks or pantries are often operated by non-profit organizations and provide boxes of food and serve meals to low-income households on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. There are four food pantry/meal services in Visalia, all of which are located in the Oval Park Neighborhood of Focus near Main Street and Dinuba Boulevard. Individuals that use these services tend to be homeless individuals or low-income households, many of whom do not have access to a personal vehicle and rely on alternative transportation methods to access food pantry services.

**Figure 9-23 Community Survey Responses – Alternative Food Sources**





## Food Insecurity

While there are several grocery stores both within and immediately adjacent to the Neighborhoods of Focus, other factors such as household income can impact an individual's ability to purchase healthy foods on a regular basis. Table 9-18 shows the median income of census tracts in each of the Neighborhoods of Focus compared to the citywide and countywide income levels. Except for North-West Visalia, all Neighborhoods of Focus have a median income less than the citywide median income. Additionally, Oval Park and Seven Oaks both have a lower median income than the countywide median income. Similarly, except for North-West Visalia all Neighborhoods of Focus have a higher poverty rate than the city with Oval Park having the highest poverty rate.

**Table 9-18 Median Income and Poverty Rate**

	<i>Median Income</i>	<i>Poverty Rate</i>
<b>North-West Visalia</b>	\$83,097	9.3%
<b>Oval Park</b>	\$26,591 - \$43,364	26.1% - 44.2%
<b>East Visalia</b>	\$60,185	24.4%
<b>Seven Oaks</b>	\$48,945	21.3%
<b>City of Visalia</b>	\$62,263	16.2%
<b>Tulare County</b>	\$49,687	23.8%

*Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates (2021)*

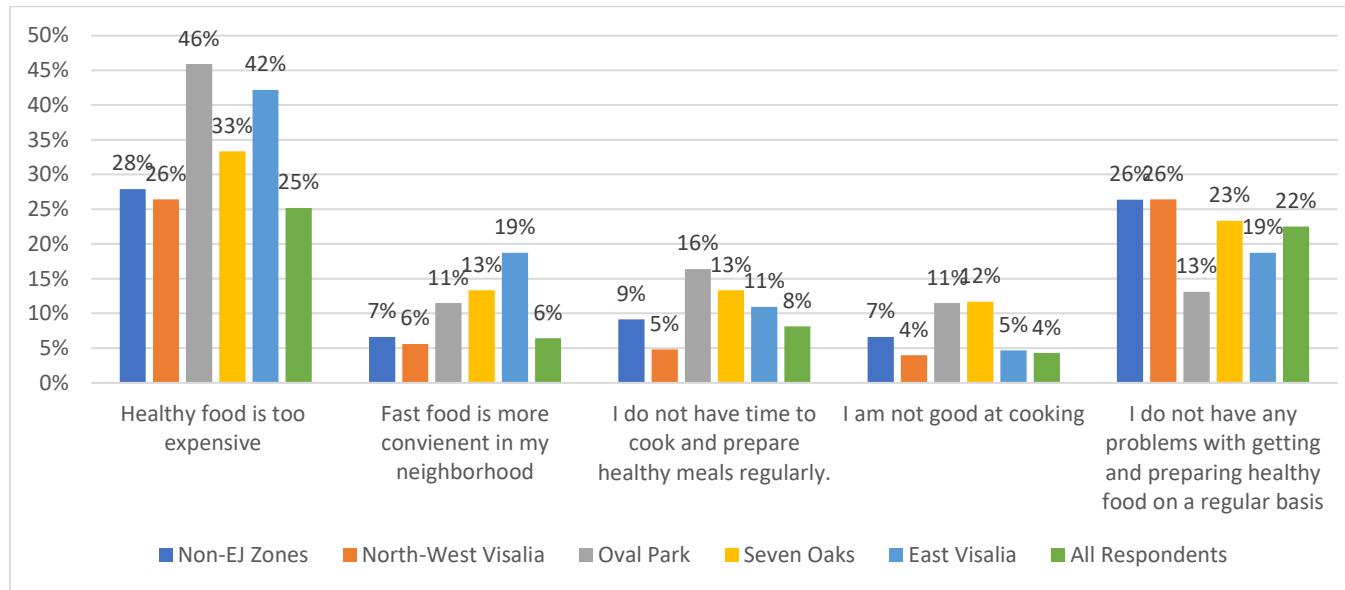
## Barriers to Healthy Food Access

In the community survey, respondents were asked what prevents them and their family from regularly getting healthy foods. Figure 9-24 shows the top five responses throughout the community (see Appendix C for a full summary of responses).

The most common response across all neighborhoods and citywide was that healthy foods are too expensive, accounting for about 25 percent of all survey respondents. The cost of healthy food had a significantly higher response rate in Oval Park (46 percent) and East Visalia (42 percent), compared to other neighborhoods in the city. Additionally, the convenience of fast-food restaurants tends to be a bigger barrier to healthy food access for Neighborhoods of Focus, compared to other areas of the city. The lack of time and knowledge of how to prepare healthy meals at home both tend to be a bigger barrier to healthy food access in Neighborhoods of Focus compared to other areas of the city.

As shown in the survey results, convenience can be a major determinant of daily food choices. Beyond cost, healthy food often requires more time, effort, and background knowledge to prepare making it more inconvenient for working families. At the same time, fast food and take out can often present itself as a more convenient and cheaper alternative.

**Figure 9-24 Community Survey Responses – Barriers to Healthy Food Access**



Although Figure 9-25 shows that most survey respondents reported that they do not currently use food assistance benefits and have not used food assistance benefits in the past five years, Oval Park, Seven Oaks, and East Visalia had a much higher number of residents who reported currently using food assistance benefits or have used food assistance benefits in the past five years compared to other areas of Visalia.

Although food assistance programs such as CalFresh are a resource available to low-income households, not all low-income households meet the income requirements to be eligible to receive benefits. In 2021, Feeding America estimated that Tulare County had a

food insecurity rate of about 14 percent, of which about 12 percent reported an income above the CalFresh income limits. Tulare County's food insecurity rate is slightly higher than the California average of about 11 percent, however the percent of food insecure households above the CalFresh income limits is significantly lower than the statewide average of 42 percent.

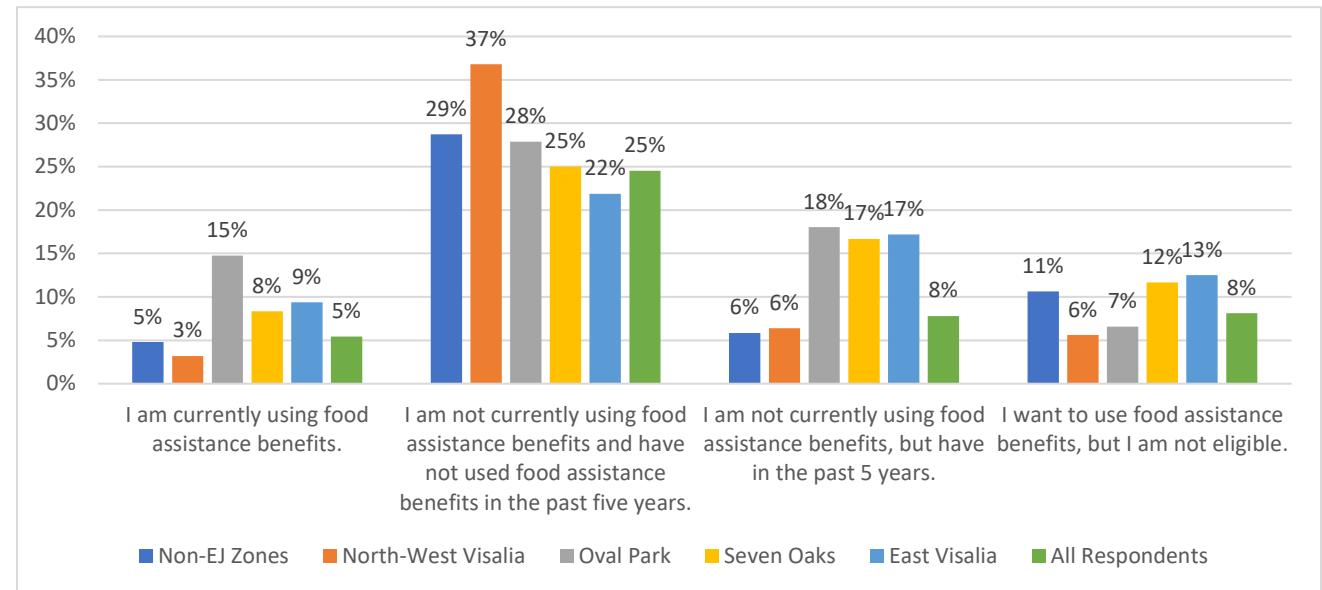
Additionally, CalFresh benefits may not always cover the cost of meals, especially in areas with a higher cost of living. Feeding America estimates the average meal cost in Tulare County is \$3.62, which is slightly lower than the average estimated meal cost of \$3.92 statewide.



CalFresh benefits in California cover approximately \$2.50 to \$3.00 per meal depending on the household size. Food pantries in Visalia commented that many

households use their meal services when their CalFresh benefits run out towards the end of the month.

**Figure 9-25 Community Survey Responses – Use of food assistance benefits**



## Physical Activity

Regular physical activity is important in maintaining good physical and mental health. The built environment, including, but not limited to, the availability and quality of parks, open spaces, pedestrian infrastructure, and bicycle infrastructure, can significantly impact the accessibility of recreational and active transportation opportunities. Environmental justice communities often have reduced access to these opportunities within their neighborhoods due to a variety of factors including the lack of physical infrastructure that promote physical activity (i.e., parks, sidewalks), safety concerns (i.e., crime, vehicle traffic, street-lighting), or incompatible land uses that make it uncomfortable to be outside due to noise, air quality, or heat (i.e., proximity to freeways, industrial uses, lack of shade and trees).

### Active Transportation

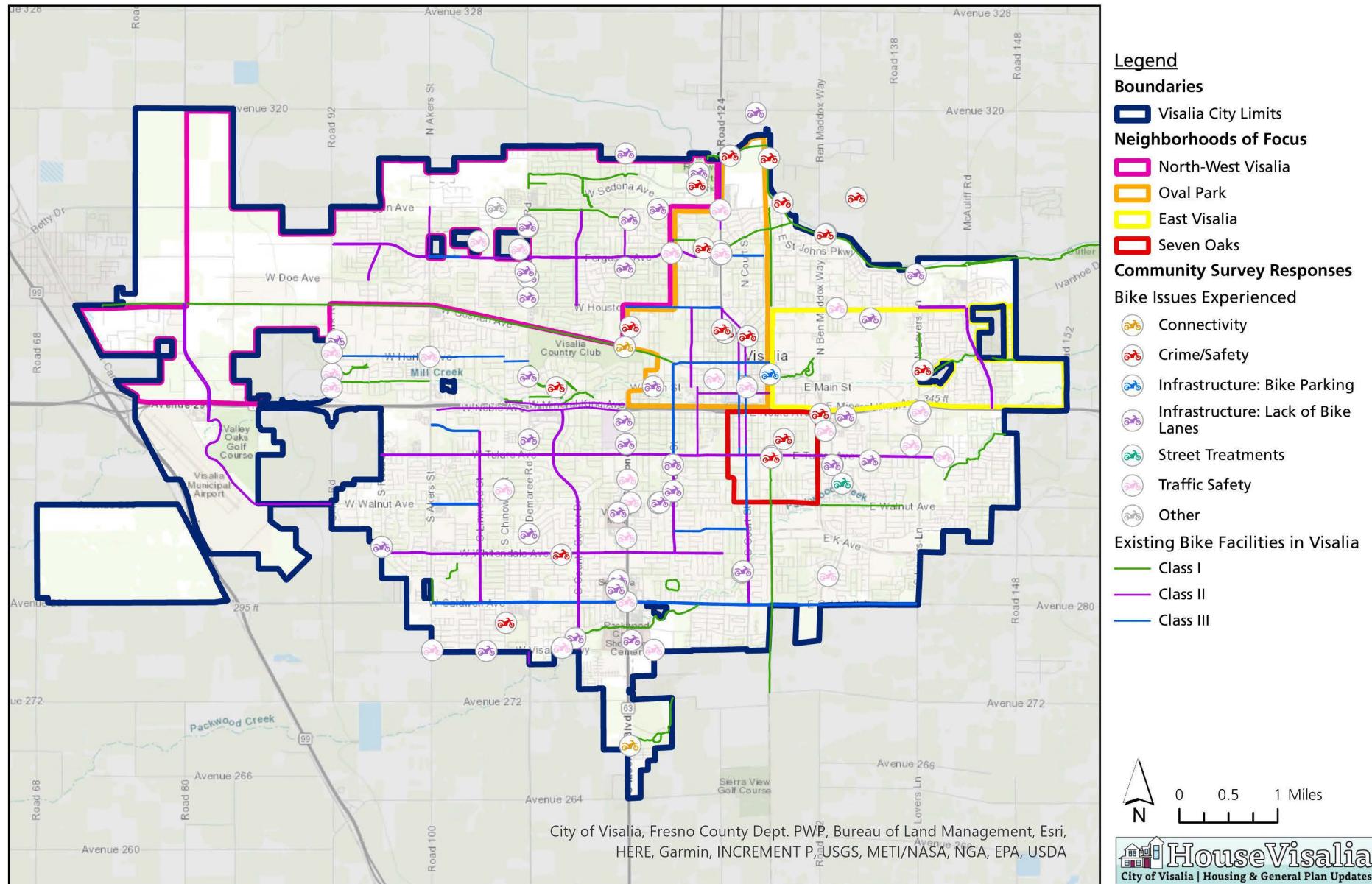
Biking and walking, whether for transportation or recreation, is a low-cost way for many people to get daily physical activity if the proper infrastructure is available. Providing and maintaining safe pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure can improve access to these modes of transportation for all residents.

In the community survey, respondents were asked what prevents them from walking in their neighborhood and to identify any specific areas where they experience these barriers on a map, which are shown in Figure 9-28. In Oval Park, over 49 percent of survey respondents indicated that a lack of street lighting is the largest barrier to walking in their neighborhood, which is over 11 percent more than responses from other areas of the

city. Over 37 percent of responses in Oval Park also reported crime as being a large barrier to walking, which is over seven percent more than other responses throughout the city. Crime, feeling unsafe crossing streets with vehicle traffic, and a lack of street lighting were the next most frequently reported barriers to walking across all Neighborhoods of Focus, although many Neighborhoods of Focus also reported a lack of sidewalks, a lack of nearby places to walk to, and walking being unpleasant as general barriers to walking. Visalia has an existing bike network throughout the city of Class I, Class II, and Class III bike facilities as shown in Figure 9-26. In the community survey, respondents were asked what prevents them from biking in their neighborhood and to identify any specific areas where they experience these barriers on a map, which are shown in Figure 9-27. In all areas of Visalia, safety concerns from vehicle traffic were the most reported barrier to biking in respondents' neighborhoods, as shown in Figure 9-27. Individual comments from respondents noted that this safety concern primarily stemmed from speeding vehicles, poor bike lane conditions, and a lack of dedicated, protected bike lanes throughout the city to protect bicyclists from vehicles. Respondents from Oval Park reported higher rates of a lack of bike lanes as a barrier to biking compared to other areas of Visalia (30 percent), although all other Neighborhoods of Focus apart from East Visalia also cited a lack of bike lanes as a general barrier to biking. Other common barriers to biking across Visalia's Neighborhoods of Focus include crime and lacking a functioning bike.

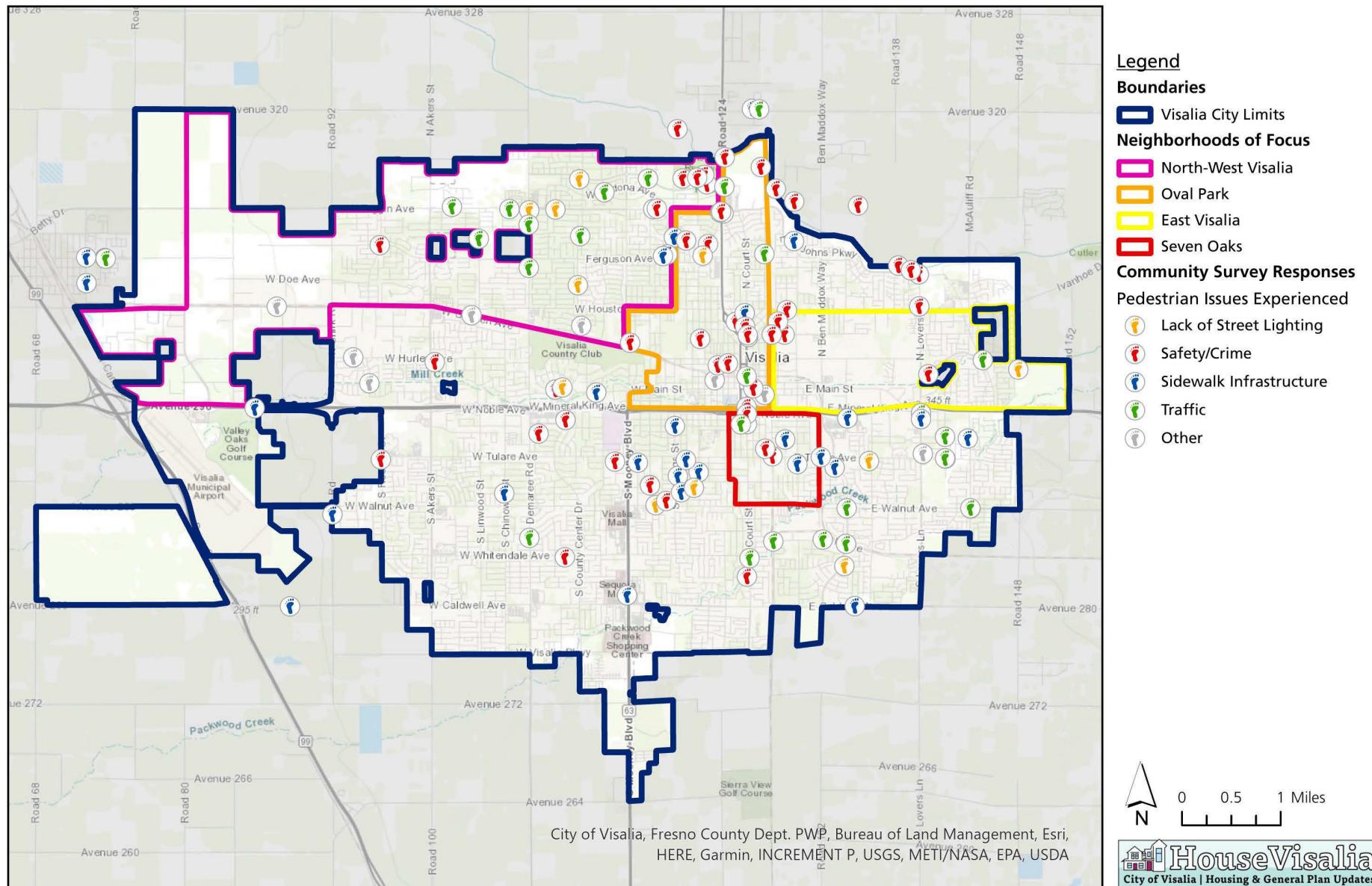


Figure 9-26 Bicycle Facilities in Visalia



Note: The community survey responses shown on the map are points that survey respondents identified as issue areas. The number of points shown is not representative of all survey responses, as not all respondents answered the mapping question.

Figure 9-27 Community Survey Responses of Pedestrian Issues



Note: The community survey responses shown on the map are points that survey respondents identified as issue areas. The number of points shown is not representative of all survey responses, as not all respondents answered the mapping question.



Figure 9-28 Community Survey Responses – Barriers to walking

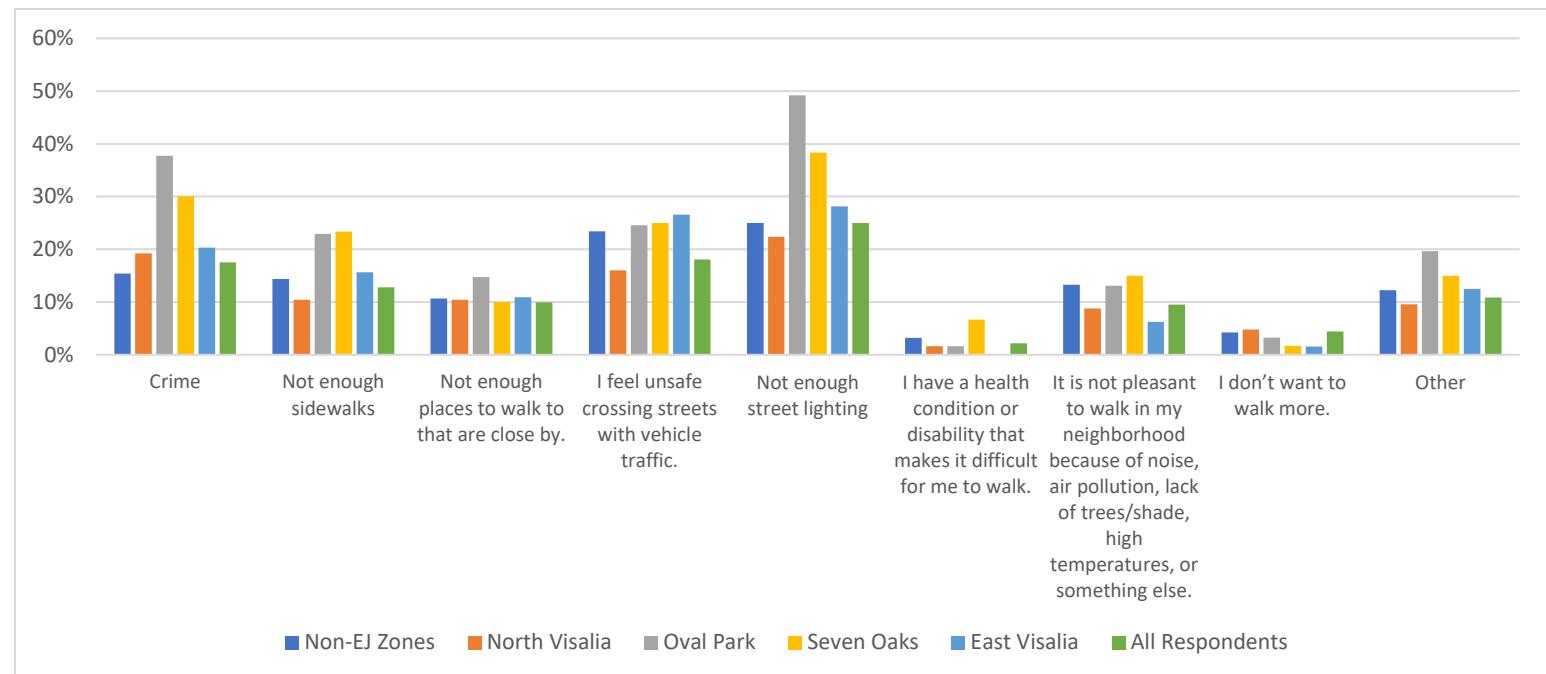
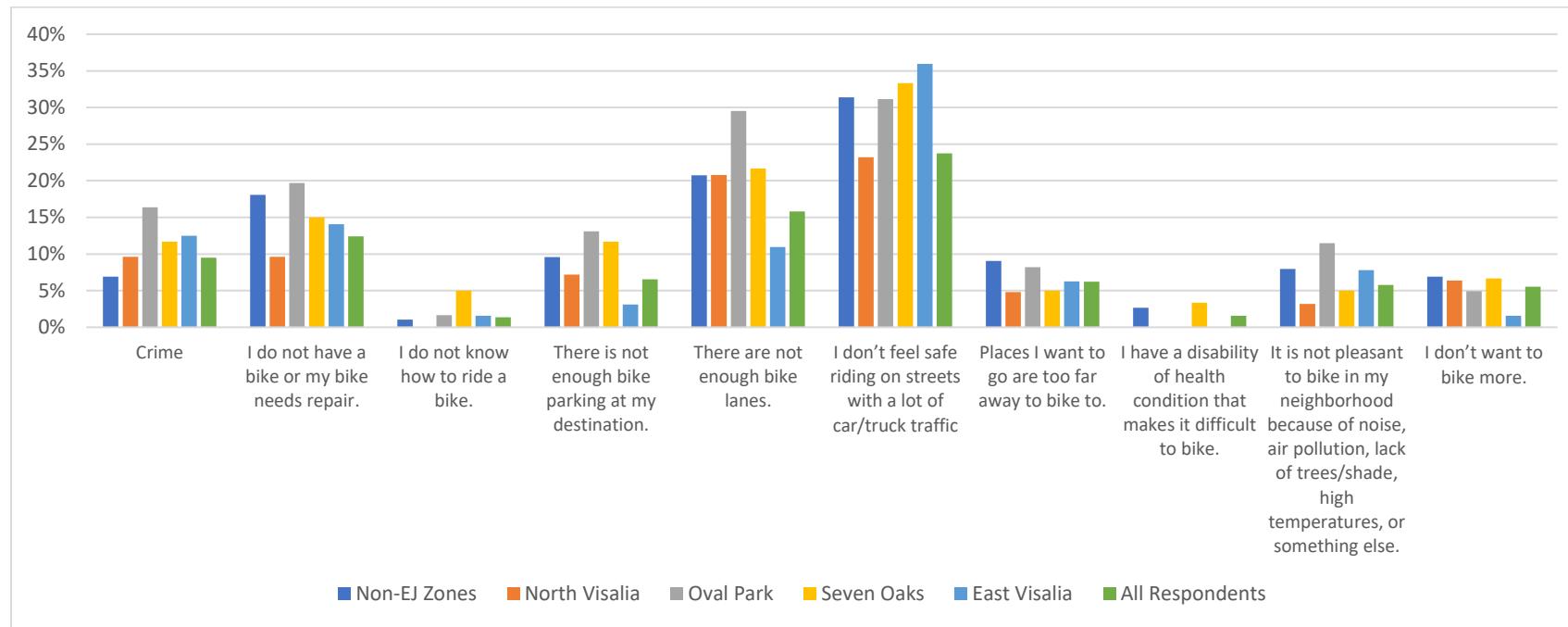


Figure 9-29 Community Survey Responses – Barriers to Biking



## Park Accessibility

Access to quality parks and other recreational areas promote physical activity and provide green spaces that help reduce the effects of air pollution and extreme heat. There are 34 parks, one plaza, one skate park, and one sports park in Visalia, 16 of which are located within the Neighborhoods of Focus:

1. **Lion's Park** is located at 6500 West Ferguson Avenue. The park includes trees, barbeques, a playground, a basketball court, and a multi-purpose field.
2. **Foxwood Park** is located just south of the intersection of West Ferguson Avenue and North Roeben Street. This small park contains trees, grassy open space, and benches.
3. **Soroptimist Park** is located at the intersection of Linwood Street and Prospect Avenue, immediately adjacent to Oak Grove Elementary School. This park's amenities include picnic tables, barbeques, a playground, a basketball court, and a multi-purpose field.
4. **Woodland Park** is located at 1701 North Woodland Street. Its amenities include covered



picnic tables, a barbecue, a playground, a basketball court, a ball field, a walking path, and an open play area.

5. **Riverway Sports Park** is located at 3611 North Dinuba Boulevard, just off Highway 63. This is a highly popular sports park, particularly in the spring and fall seasons. Its amenities include a splash pad, picnic areas, a tot lot, a playground, soccer fields, a baseball complex, and a softball complex.
6. **Fairview Park** is located at the intersection of West Wren Drive and North Highland Street, immediately adjacent to the Global Learning Charter School. Its amenities include a walking loop, a playground, and soccer fields.
7. **Riverbend Park** is located at the intersection of Court Street and Wren Drive. This park's amenities include a covered picnic area, a playground, a walking path, and an open play area.
8. **Summers Park** is located at the intersection of Summers Lane and West Fergusen Avenue, immediately adjacent to the Manuel F. Hernandez Community Center. This 3.7 acre park has three lighted basketball courts, picnic tables, a barbecue, and a children's play area.
9. **Wittman Village Park** is located just west of the intersection of Pearl Street and North Court Street. This park offers picnic tables, barbeques, an open play area, a playground, and a basketball court. This park is also adjacent to the Wittman Village Community Center and a community garden.
10. **Lincoln Oval Park** is located just north of the intersection of North Court Street and Northeast 2nd Avenue. Its amenities include trees and an open play area.
11. **Provident Skate Park** is located at 345 North Jacob Street, behind the Anthony Community Center and immediately adjacent to Recreation Park. This 24,00 square feet skate park is one of the largest municipal skate parks in California and includes a large fun box, barbell, volcanoes, and a snake run ending in a bowl. The park can accommodate 50 to 75 skaters at one time.
12. **Recreation Park** is located at the intersection of North Jacob Street and West Center Avenue. Its facilities include a baseball stadium, picnic tables, a barbecue, an ADA accessible playground, a lighted basketball court, a lighted volleyball court, and a pickleball court.
13. **Miki City Park** is located at the intersection of South Stevenson Street and West Mineral King Avenue. This park honors the 50-year relationship between Visalia and Miki, Japan, Visalia's sister city. Its amenities include drought-tolerant landscaping, a small walking path, and a small plaza.
14. **Jefferson Park** is located at the intersection of South Watson Street and West Myrtle Avenue, across the street from Mt. Whitney High

School. This park's amenities include a playground, picnic tables, barbeques, a multi-purpose field, a lighted softball field, and a lighted basketball court.

15. **Garden Street Plaza** is located in downtown Visalia on 300 E. Main St. This shaded outdoor space contains trees and a water feature and hosts many outdoor events throughout the year.
16. **Mill Creek Garden Park** is located at the intersection of North Lovers Lane and Mill Creek Parkway. Its amenities include picnic tables, a barbeque, a multi-purpose field, a

walking path, an open play area, and a soccer field.

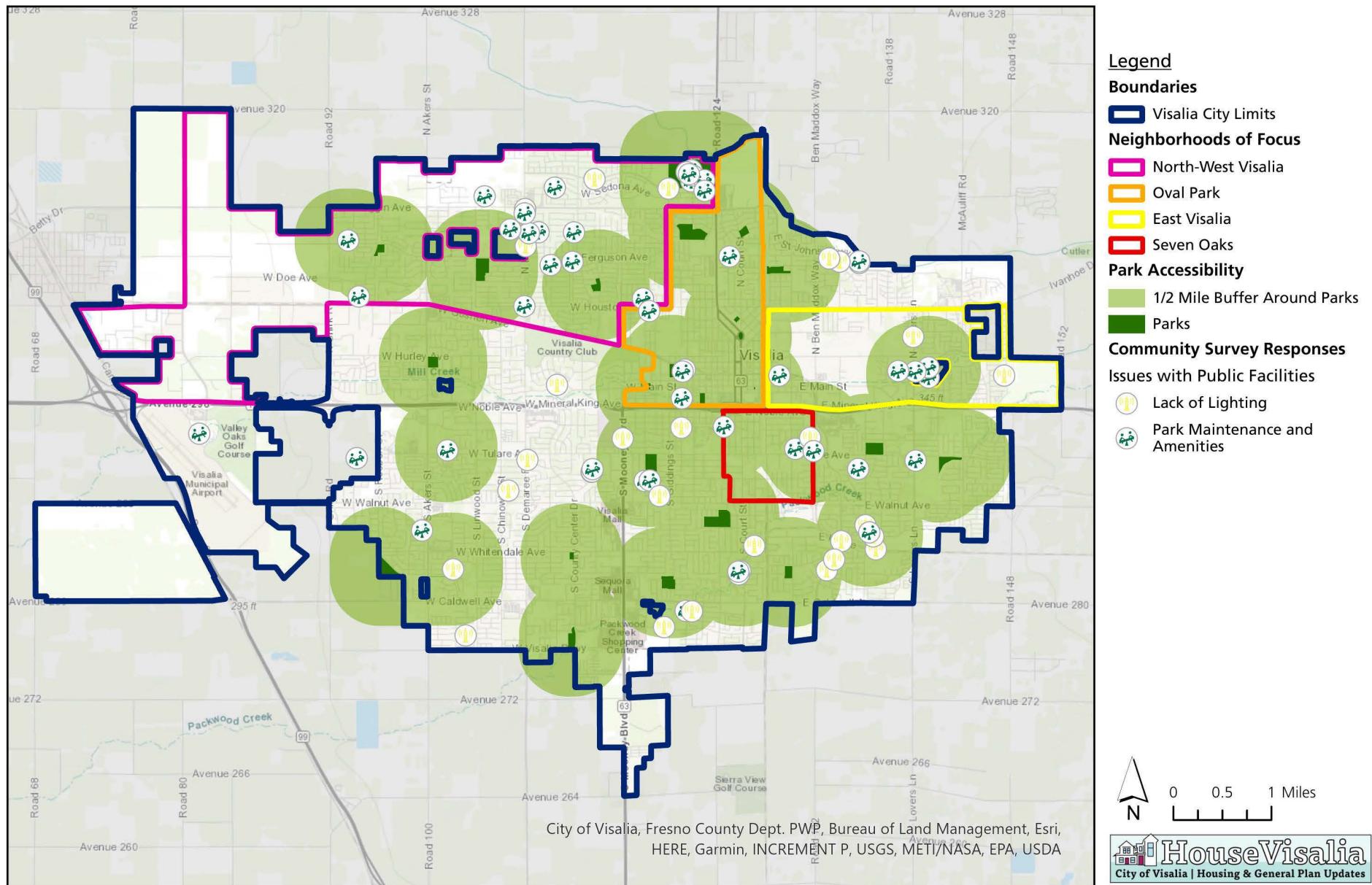
Figure 9-30 shows the locations of parks within Visalia as well as a half mile buffer area around each park, plaza, and sports field. As shown in Table 9-19, about 78 percent of residentially zoned parcels in the Neighborhoods of Focus are within a half mile walking distance of a park; interestingly, this is about six percent higher than other residentially zoned areas in the city. Although access to parks is very high in Oval Park and Seven Oaks, approximately 28 percent of North-West Visalia residents and 42 percent of East Visalia residents do not live within a half mile walking distance of a park.

**Table 9-19 Park Accessibility**

	<i>Number of Residentially Zoned Parcels</i>	<i>Number of Residentially Zoned Parcels within ½ mile of park</i>	<i>Percentage of Residentially Zoned Parcels within ½ mile of a park</i>
<b>Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus</b>	17,625	13,811	78.4%
<b>North-West Visalia</b>	9,403	6,774	72.0%
<b>Oval Park</b>	4,382	4,224	96.4%
<b>East Visalia</b>	2,363	1,373	58.1%
<b>Seven Oaks</b>	1,477	1,441	97.6%
<b>Non-Neighborhoods of Focus</b>	26,603	19,072	71.7%
<b>Citywide</b>	44,228	32,883	74.3%



Figure 9-30 Park Accessibility in Visalia



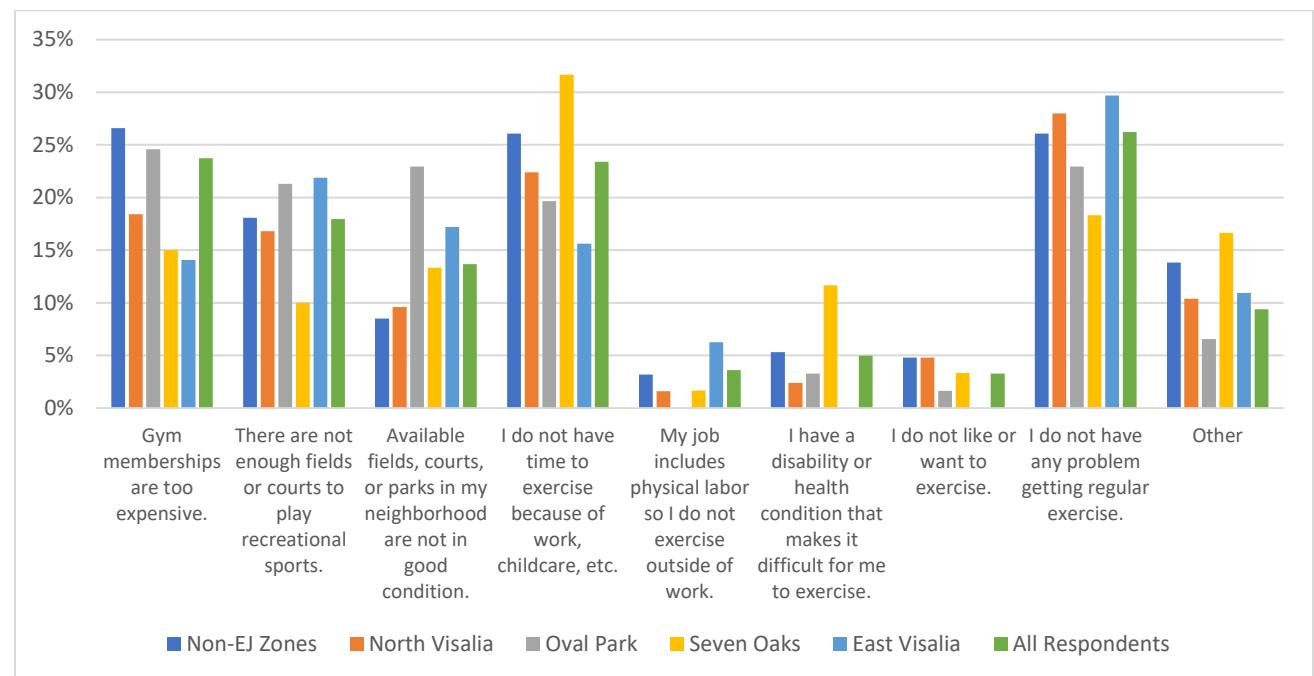
Note: The community survey responses shown on the map are points that survey respondents identified as issue areas. The number of points shown is not representative of all survey responses, as not all respondents answered the mapping question.

In the community survey, the high cost of gym memberships, a lack of recreational sports fields, a lack of nearby neighborhood parks, and lacking the time to exercise as a result of work or childcare were reported as the main barriers to engaging in regular physical activity across all of the Neighborhoods of Focus. Although these barriers were reported, approximately a quarter of respondents across all Neighborhoods of Focus did not report having difficulty getting regular exercise. Over 31 percent of responses from Seven Oaks reported higher rates of a lacking the time to exercise as a barrier to engaging in regular physical activity, which is over eight percent more than other responses throughout the city. Oval Park and East Visalia neighborhoods reported generally higher rates of a lack of nearby sports fields and/or parks in good

condition as a barrier to engaging in regular physical activity; however, Table 9-19 shows that 96 percent of Oval Park residentially zoned parcels are located within a half mile of a park, while only 58 percent of East Visalia residentially zoned parcels are located within a half mile of a park. Individual comments from respondents clarified that concerns about park conditions generally stem from feeling unsafe, with several residents stating that the presence of unhoused individuals living in parks caused them to avoid visiting local parks. Other residents expressed concern about park access, stating that a lack of sidewalks and unsafe walking conditions kept locals, especially families with younger children, from visiting nearby parks and recreational sports fields.



**Figure 9-31 Community Survey Responses – Barriers to physical activity**



## Public Facilities

Public facilities include public service and amenities such as community centers, libraries, public transit, parks and recreation facilities, water and sewer services, streets and sidewalks, and health care services. Environmental justice communities often lack access to some or many of these public facilities, or the facilities that do exist are in poor condition, due to lack of transportation, underinvestment, or lack of engagement between public agencies and these communities when decisions on public facilities are being made. A lack of access to public facilities can negatively impact health

care access, educational opportunities, physical and mental health, and overall quality of life.

## Educational Facilities

Educational attainment can be a predictor of income, socioeconomic status, and health. People with higher educational attainment not only tend to have higher incomes than people with lower educational attainment, but also tend to be at lower risk of serious health conditions and pollution exposure. Access to educational institutions such as primary and secondary schools; continuing education; and community colleges

and universities are important in providing educational opportunities to environmental justice communities.

### **Primary and Secondary Schools**

Primary and secondary schools include schools that serve kindergarten through 12th grade. Visalia is served by a single school district, Visalia Unified School District, which serves a total of 28,893 students across Visalia, Goshen CDP, Ivanhoe CDP, Patterson Tract CDP, West Goshen CDP, and other surrounding unincorporated areas. Out of the 42 public schools in the district, 38 are located within the Visalia City Limits. Of those 38 schools, 15 are located within the Neighborhoods of Focus. These schools teach a range of grade groups from preschool through 12th grade, including 11 elementary schools, 1 middle school, and 3 high schools. However, it should be noted that the East Visalia Neighborhood encompasses no public schools. In addition to the community's public schools, there are nine private schools in Visalia, three of which are located in the Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus: Catholic School of Visalia (pre-kindergarten through 12th grade), Charter Home School Academy (kindergarten through 8th grade), and St. Paul's School (pre-kindergarten through 8th grade). All schools within the Neighborhoods of Focus have adequate sidewalks adjacent to school campuses as well as adequate sports field facilities for their respective students.

### **Continuing and Higher Education**

Visalia Unified School District offers continuing education programs for adults to earn their high school diplomas or GED, complete language courses, and complete career technical programs. These courses are

provided at Sequoia High School (continuation high school) and Visalia Adult School, however only Sequoia High School is located within the Neighborhoods of Focus. Additionally, Visalia Unified School District offers early college high school courses at Visalia Technical Early College High School; although this high school is not located within the Neighborhoods of Focus, any high school student living within the District may attend. One private career-training college (San Joaquin Valley College's Visalia Campus), one community college (College of the Sequoias), and two universities (Fresno Pacific University Visalia campus and Golden State College) are located within Visalia City limits; however, none are located within the Neighborhoods of Focus.

### **Public Libraries**

Libraries are an important public service that ensures that books, literary resources, media, databases, and services are accessible to the public. Visalia has one public library, located at 200 W Oak Avenue in Visalia. The library is a branch of the Tulare County Library system and offers access to books, eBooks, magazines, and other digital media loans, as well as large printing services, a music recording space and equipment, help for students, adult literacy classes, basic computer skills classes, and preparation classes for both the U.S. citizenship test and the written driver's license test. The Visalia Public Library is located within the Oval Park neighborhood.

### **Public Transportation**

Public transportation can serve as an important public service, especially for households and individuals who do not have regular access to a personal vehicle or are



unable to walk or bike. As shown in Figure 9-32, the City of Visalia Transit operates 12 fixed bus routes which operate year round and are only closed on various holidays. This transit system serves Visalia, Farmersville, Exeter, Goshen, and Tulare. Ten of these twelve routes intersect the Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus: Route 1, Route 2, Route 5, Route 6, Route 7, Route 8, Route 9, Route 11, Route 15, and Route 16.

The fixed-route service provides transportation services to 13 local schools located within and adjacent to City limits, including three which are located within the Neighborhoods of Focus: Green Acres Middle School, Redwood High School, and Sequoia High School. In addition to its fixed-route service within the transit system's boundaries, the City's transit system connects with Tulare InterModal Express, Tulare County Area Transit, Kings Area Regional Transit and Greyhound. The City also operates the Sequoia Shuttle from Memorial Day weekend through early September, which offers round-trip transportation between Sequoia National Park and Visalia. Accommodations for passengers with disabilities are offered through the City's Complementary Paratransit "Dial-A-Ride" service. The Dial-A-Ride is organized to provide comparable paratransit services for ADA certified individuals with disabilities that prevent them from riding the VT fixed-route buses.

According to City's 2016 Long Range Transit Plan, Visalia Transit saw approximately 5,700 riders in 2016 and aims to have 18,350 riders in 2035. The main transit center for the City is located at 425 E Oak Avenue, which is within the Oval Park neighborhood. One-way fares are \$1.75 and \$3.00 for a full day bus pass. The

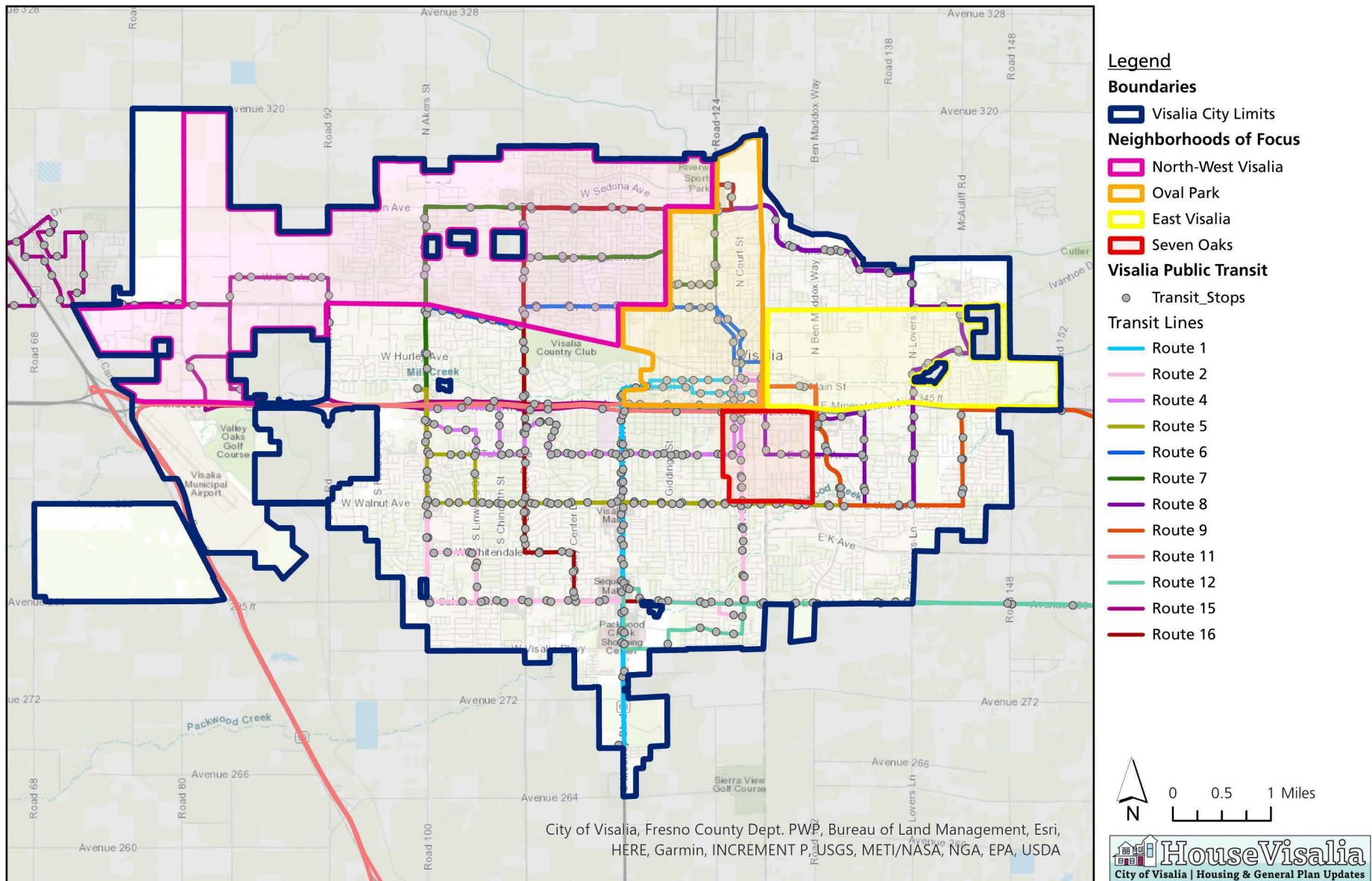
City provides discounted fares for seniors, ADA certified, and disabled passengers, as well as free ridership to children six years old and younger.

## Medical and Emergency Services

### Hospitals

Living close to a range of nearby medical facilities greatly improves access to necessary healthcare. According to the California Department of Public Health, there are 45 medical facilities in Visalia. Of these facilities, there are sixteen skilled nursing facilities, two surgical clinics, three chronic dialysis clinics, four home health agencies, six hospice centers, fourteen primary care clinics, and one general hospital that provides emergency services. As shown in Table 9-20, 10 of these facilities are within the Neighborhoods of Focus, including one general care hospital, one surgical center, three clinics, two hospice centers, two home health agencies, and three intermediate skilled care facilities.

Figure 9-32 Public Transit System, Visalia




**Table 9-20     Medical Facilities in the Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus**

Facility Name	Type/Services Provided	Address
<b>Visalia Ambulatory Surgical Center</b>	Ambulatory Surgical Center	105 E Noble Avenue
<b>Family Healthcare Network</b>	Community Clinic	501 N Bridge Street
<b>Omni Family Health</b>	Community Clinic	311 W Noble Avenue
<b>Planned Parenthood</b>	Community Clinic	211 N Stevenson Street
<b>Kaweah Health Medical Center</b>	Emergency Care Hospital, General Acute Care Hospital, Home Health, Hospice	400 W Mineral King Avenue
<b>Lenity Home Care</b>	Home Health Agency	315 W Oak Avenue
<b>Seva Hospice</b>	Hospice	100 Willow Plaza
<b>Sierra Vista Residential Care Home</b>	Intermediate Care Facility/Developmentally Disabled – Nursing	1412 N Maple Street
<b>Steele's Visions – Terrace</b>	Intermediate Care Facility/Developmentally Disabled – Nursing	2146 N Terrace Court

## Emergency Facilities

In times of emergency, it is important for citizens to have nearby emergency services to ensure prompt, safe handling of a variety of urgent situations. Close proximity to emergency services such as fire and police stations increases the response time to emergency situations that can affect the life and safety of residents. This section discusses the emergency facilities available in Visalia.

## Police station(s)

Police departments are an important community service that maintains public order and safety, enforces the law, and investigates criminal activity. The Visalia Police Department has four stations, with the City's headquarters located at 303 S. Johnson Street in Visalia. The remaining substations are located at 204 NW Third Street, 4100 S. County Center, and 420 N. Burke Street, all of which are located in Visalia. The department employs over 250 employees, including police personnel, community service officers, parking

enforcement officers, communications operators, records specialists, administrative support personnel, crime lab technicians, property and evidence technicians, and civilian investigators. Two of Visalia's police stations are located within the Oval Park neighborhood.

### **Fire station(s)**

The Visalia Fire Department provides a wide range of emergency and non-emergency services including fire suppression, emergency medical services, hazardous conditions, fire prevention, and public safety education. As of 2019, the Fire Department had 78 total personnel including 70 safety personnel. The most recent year of response time data for the Fire Department is from 2019; at this time, the department met the National Fire Protection Association's response time criteria of six minutes for 90 percent of all calls. The Visalia Fire Department has six stations throughout the city which are staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and are located at the following addresses:

- Fire Station 51: 309 S. Johnson Street
- Fire Station 52: 2224 W. Monte Vista
- Fire Station 53: 5025 W Walnut Avenue
- Fire Station 54: 440 W. Ferguson Street
- Fire Station 55: 6921 W. Ferguson Avenue
- Fire Station 56: 1968 S. Lovers Lane

Visalia Fire Stations 51, 54 and 55 are located within the North-West Visalia and Oval Park neighborhoods; however, firefighters from any station may respond to calls originating from within the Neighborhoods of Focus, depending on type of incident, location, existing or potential emergencies, and resources available.

### **Community Centers**

Community centers are important community assets that help provide programs and resources that support physical activity, educational opportunities, social services, youth services, and community involvement. Community centers can also serve as important community partners for government agencies since they often have established trust in the community and are already implementing programs in line with environmental justice goals. Effective environmental justice policies can help support services offered by community centers in environmental justice communities and encourage continued partnerships with these centers to increase transparency and connection with community. The following community centers and resource centers are in the Neighborhoods of Focus:

- **The Anthony Community Center (345 North Jacob Street)** is located in the City of Visalia Recreation Park and includes a community space as well as a gymnasium. The space hosts various events and classes hosted by the City's Parks and Recreation department. In addition, the community space can be rented for private and public events and meetings.
- **Visalia Senior Citizen Center (310 North Locust Street)** provides a wide variety of social and engaging activities, including recreational sports, art, and other classes on weekdays. This center also provides low cost, nutritious meals for seniors in the community.
- **The Visalia Unified School District Family and Community Resource Center (505 North Court Street)** helps families access needed



resources to increase the success of students and increase access to needed services for students and their families. Promoted services range based on individual student needs and includes support groups, support for American Indian students, support for foster youth, support for students experiencing homelessness, and support for migratory students.

- **The Source LGBT+ Center (109 NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue)** is a community space that supports the LGBT+ community in Visalia through research, education, and advocacy in the community. The Center aims to improve access to mental health systems, promote community health equity for all, and create a more inclusive and accepting community.

## Safe and Sanitary Housing

Housing conditions contribute to the overall health and safety of residents. Household income heavily determines the type, location, and quality of housing someone lives in since newer housing in neighborhoods with more community amenities (i.e., good schools, parks, safe streets) tend to be more expensive. Occupants of housing built before the widespread adoption of building standards and regulations are at higher risk of pollution exposure in their homes, particularly asbestos and lead. Additionally, older housing may have poor ventilation that can lead to mold, uncomfortable indoor temperatures, and increased exposure to indoor and outdoor pollutants.

Household overcrowding can also have serious health impacts on occupants. Overcrowding occurs when the number of occupants in a household exceeds the

capacity of a dwelling unit, typically measured by the number of rooms and the age and relationship of the occupants. Overcrowding can lead to a variety of adverse health outcomes, such as exposure to infectious disease, increased stress, and sleep disorders. High rent and home prices increase risks of overcrowding and homelessness and leave households with less income to spend on home improvement/repairs, healthy food, healthcare, and other goods and services. The following sections describe the existing housing conditions in Visalia.

### Lead Exposure

Lead is a toxic heavy metal that can enter the bloodstream and cause serious neurological or behavioral health problems, especially in young children due to their developing brains and increased risk of exposure. Historically, lead was used as an additive in house paint, plumbing materials, and gasoline. Although the use of lead in common household items and building materials is now regulated, house paint is still a significant source of lead exposure in older, unrenovated homes.

CalEnviroScreen 4.0's Children's Lead Risk from Housing indicator calculates lead exposure risk by combining the percentage of homes with a higher likelihood of having lead-based paint (LBP) hazards and the percentage of low-income households with children. CalEnviroScreen 4.0 calculates the likelihood of LBP hazards based on the age of housing. The older the home, the higher likelihood of LBP hazards.

As shown in Figure 9-33, Oval Park is the only Neighborhood of Focus in Visalia with a Children's

Lead Risk from Housing indicator score in the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher, ranging between 77 and 98. The homes in the Oval Park neighborhood, especially those closer to Downtown Visalia, tend to be older than those in other areas of the city that have newer growth and development. It should be noted that Seven Oaks has a percentile score of 74, which is high compared to other areas of the city even though it is not above the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile threshold. Seven Oaks is also located more centrally near downtown where there are older homes.

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), homes built prior to 1978

are at a much higher risk of LBP exposure if proper measures have not been taken to test for and mitigate the presence of LBT in the home. As shown in Table 9-21, Oval Park and Seven Oaks have a much higher percentage of homes built prior to 1980 (61 percent and 77 percent respectively) compared to other Neighborhoods of Focus, the city, and the county. This means housing units in Oval Park and Seven Oaks are at a higher risk of LBP exposure. Additionally, renters in these areas may not have the knowledge of the home's history and renovations or may not be allowed to make renovations due to lease restrictions.

**Table 9-21 Age of Housing Stock**

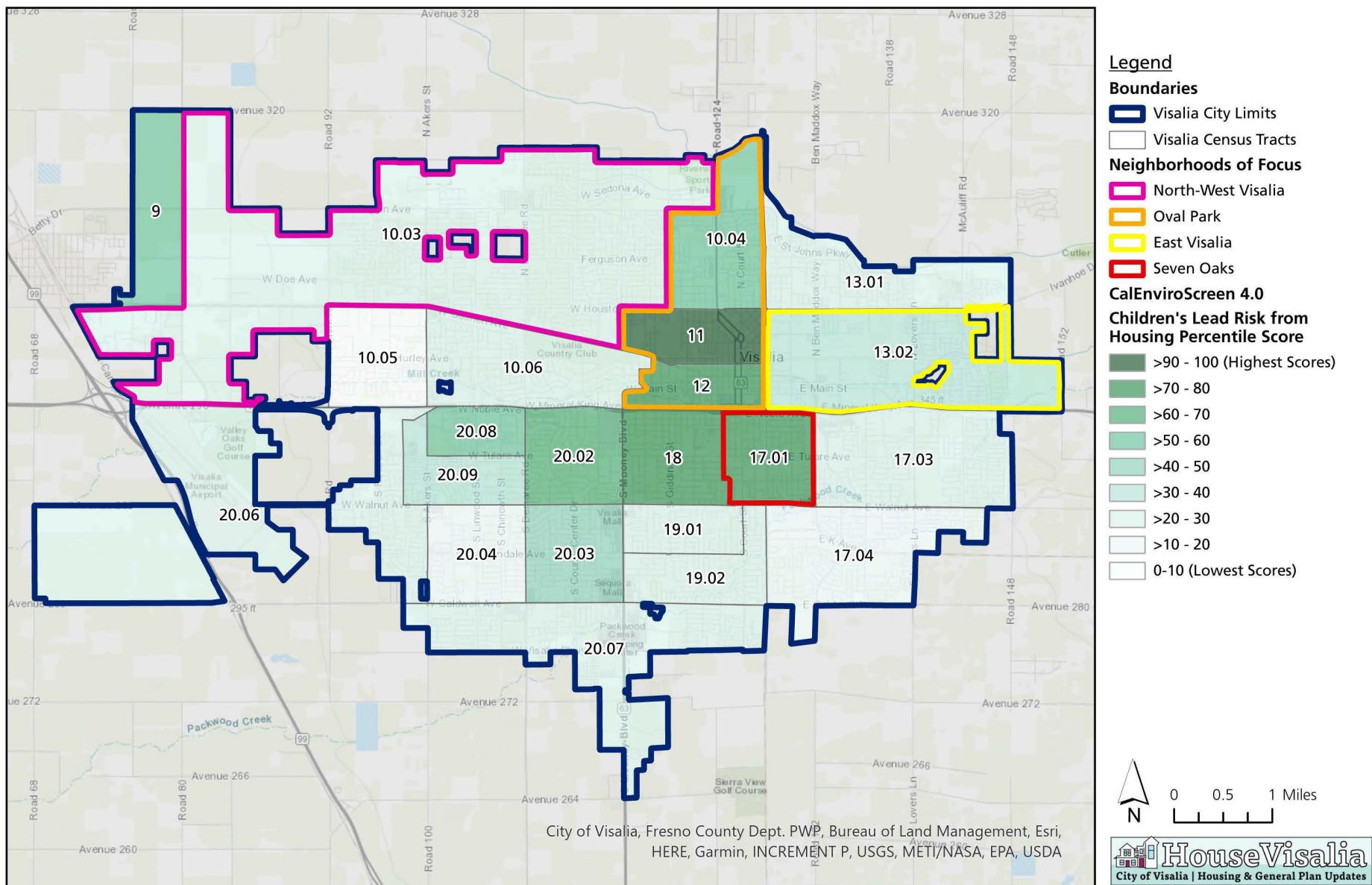
<i>Year Built</i>	<i>North-West Visalia</i>	<i>Oval Park</i>	<i>East Visalia</i>	<i>Seven Oaks</i>	<i>City of Visalia</i>	<i>Tulare County</i>
<b>Built 2020 or later</b>	30	37	-	-	325	841
<b>Built 2010 to 2019</b>	1,565	135	175	10	4,770	12,156
<b>Built 2000 to 2009</b>	2,544	449	705	12	10,164	24,053
<b>Built 1990 to 1999</b>	677	423	666	169	6,708	22,834
<b>Built 1980 to 1989</b>	225	835	610	308	7,205	22,058
<b>Built 1970 to 1979</b>	491	539	123	615	8,993	27,175
<b>Built 1960 to 1969</b>	-	529	71	248	3,322	14,797
<b>Built 1950 to 1959</b>	86	880	132	316	3,441	12,591
<b>Built 1940 to 1949</b>	-	378	147	312	1,528	6,729
<b>Built 1939 or earlier</b>	16	575	14	151	1,348	7,956
<b>Total Occupied Housing Units</b>	5,634	4,780	2,643	2,141	47,804	151,190

**Table 9-21      Age of Housing Stock**

<i>Year Built</i>	<i>North-West Visalia</i>	<i>Oval Park</i>	<i>East Visalia</i>	<i>Seven Oaks</i>	<i>City of Visalia</i>	<i>Tulare County</i>
<b>Percentage of occupied housing units built prior to 1980</b>	10.5%	60.7%	18.4%	76.7%	39.0%	45.8%

Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates (2022), Table B25034.

Figure 9-33 CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Children's Lead Risk from Housing, Visalia





## Housing Conditions

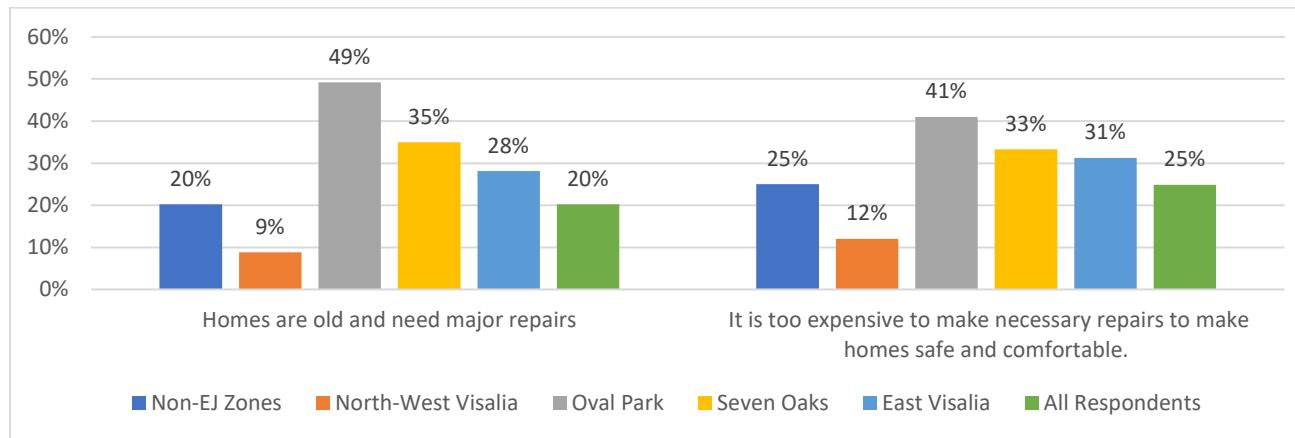
The conditions of the existing housing stock can be an indicator of the living standards of residents. Although the data on housing conditions is limited, the U.S. Census provides information on the availability of plumbing and kitchen facilities as well as the age of the housing stock (year the structure was built), which can provide a starting point for assessing the conditions of the existing housing stock. Housing units typically require more repairs and renovations as they get older to maintain a good condition, therefore knowing the year a housing unit/structure was built can be an initial indicator of substandard conditions. Homes typically start needing major repairs (i.e., roofing, major appliances, heating and air conditioning systems) after 20 to 25 years.

A majority of housing units in the Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus, with the exception of North-West Visalia, were built prior to 2000, suggesting that most housing units have already undergone major improvements and repairs, or will be in need of these improvements in the near future.

North-West Visalia, however, has seen the largest growth in the past two decades, with almost 45 percent of occupied housing units built between 2000 and 2009. This suggests that several homes in this area may be in need of major repairs in the next five years, which may result in major home costs to residents of North-West Visalia.

Although this data can provide information about how many homes may need major repairs or maintenance, it is difficult to know how many homes have undergone these repairs. As shown in Figure 9-34, about 49 percent of respondents in Oval Park and 35 percent of respondents in Seven Oaks said homes in their neighborhood are old and need major repairs, which is higher than other areas of the city and is consistent with U.S. Census data. Additionally, about 41 percent of respondents in Oval Park, 33 percent of respondents in Seven Oaks, and 31 percent of respondents in East Visalia said it is too expensive to make the necessary repairs for homes to feel safe and comfortable, which is higher than other areas of the city.

**Figure 9-34    Community Survey Responses – Housing Issues**



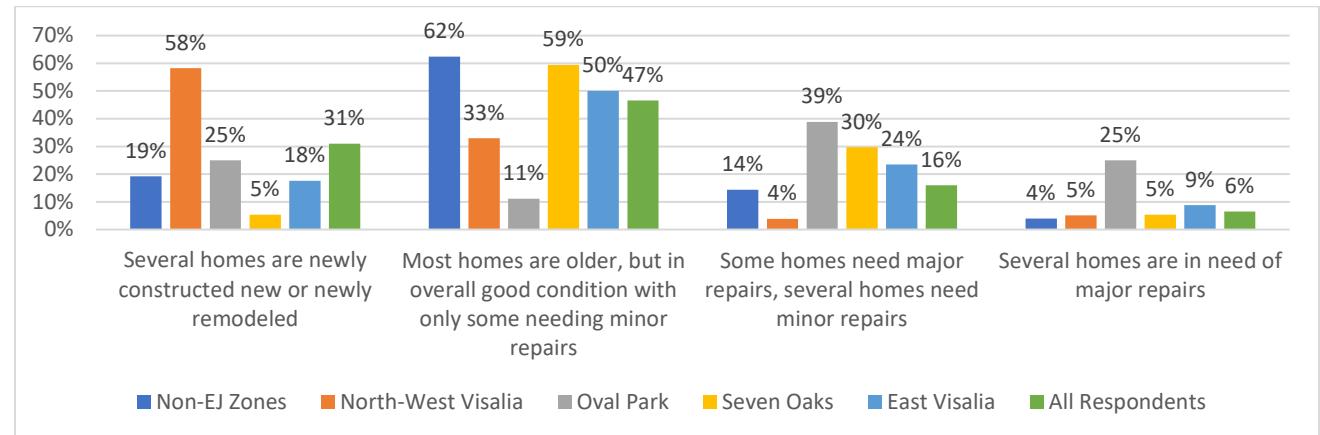
Survey respondents were asked to select one of four options that best described the physical condition of homes in their neighborhood. As shown in Figure 9-35, with the exception of Oval Park and North-West Visalia, the most common response across all areas of the city was that most homes are older but in overall good condition, needing only minor repairs. In Oval Park, 39 percent of respondents selected “some homes need major repairs, several homes need minor repairs” and 25 percent of respondents selected “several homes

are in need of major repairs”, which is a significantly higher response rate than any other area in the city. This suggests that the Oval Park Neighborhood of Focus has poorer housing conditions than other areas of the city.

As suggested by the U.S. Census data, respondents from North-West Visalia reported that most housing units in their neighborhood are newly constructed or newly remodeled.



**Figure 9-35 Community Survey Responses – Housing Conditions**



## Housing Cost Burden

A household is considered cost burdened when more than 30 percent of the household income is spent on housing (i.e., rent, mortgage payment, utilities) and severely cost burdened when more than 50 percent of the household income is spent on housing. Housing cost burden can have several negative effects on health and quality of life by limiting a household's ability to pay for other goods and services (e.g., food, transportation, recreation), increasing risk of overcrowding or homelessness, and limiting a household's ability to contribute to a savings or retirement fund.

Although any household, regardless of income, can experience housing cost burden, low-income households are at higher risk of being cost burdened and severely cost burdened. As shown in Figure 9-38,

census tracts in Oval Park and Seven Oaks have a higher Housing Cost Burden percentile scores than other areas of the city. As mentioned in the previous section, these areas also have a higher rate of older housing units that may have costly repairs or renovations that can result in higher housing maintenance costs for homeowners or increased rental costs, which can cause financial hardship for those already cost burdened.

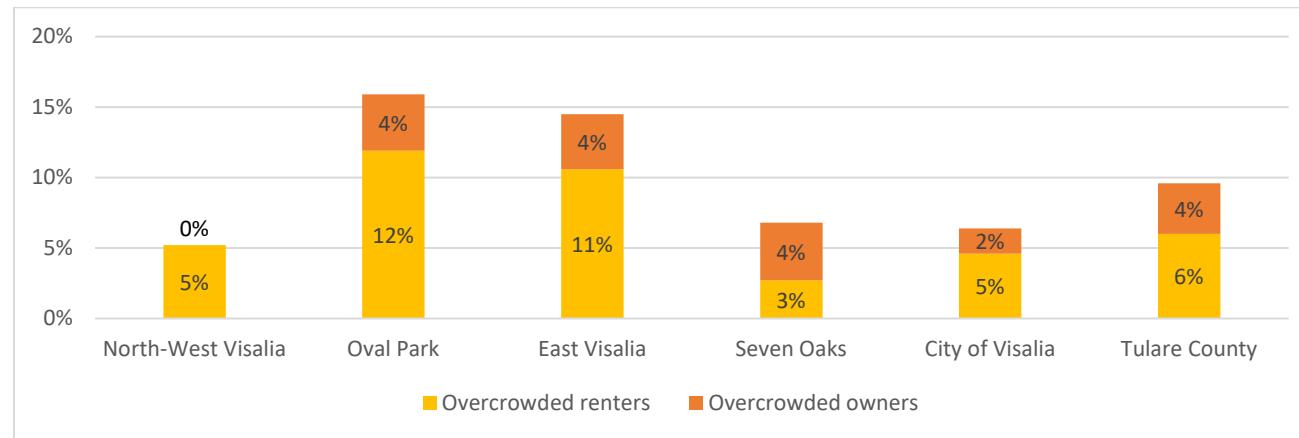
## Overcrowding

A housing unit is considered overcrowded when there is more than one person per room. Overcrowding can occur when a household either cannot find or afford housing with enough rooms to accommodate all members of the household. Figure 9-36 shows the rate of overcrowding in the Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus based on U.S. Census data. Oval Park and East Visalia

have a higher rate of overcrowding compared to other Neighborhoods of Focus, the city, and the county. In most areas across the city, except for Seven Oaks, overcrowded units are comprised mostly of renters. Figure 9-37 shows that 33 percent of survey

respondents in Oval Park reported “too many people living together in one home” as a housing issue in their neighborhood, which is significantly higher than any other area in the city.

**Figure 9-36 Overcrowding by Tenure in Visalia Neighborhoods of Focus**



**Figure 9-37 Community Survey Responses - Overcrowding as a Housing Issue**

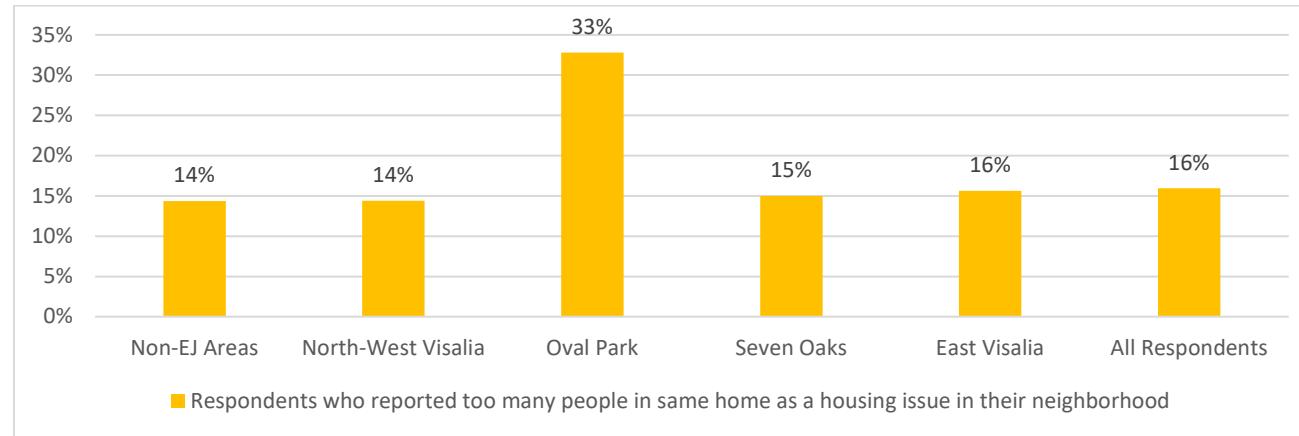
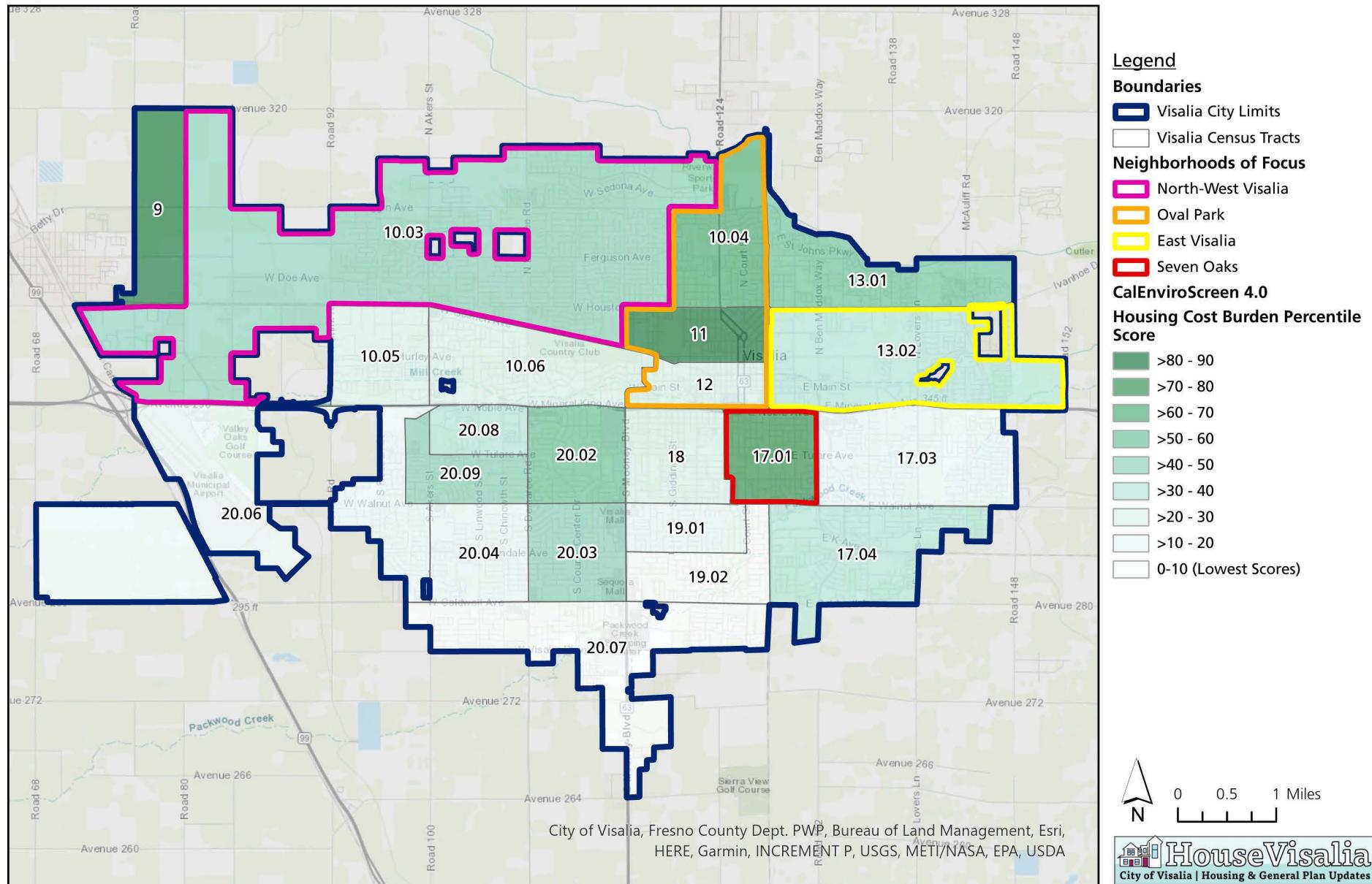




Figure 9-38 CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Housing Cost Burden, Visalia



## Civic Engagement

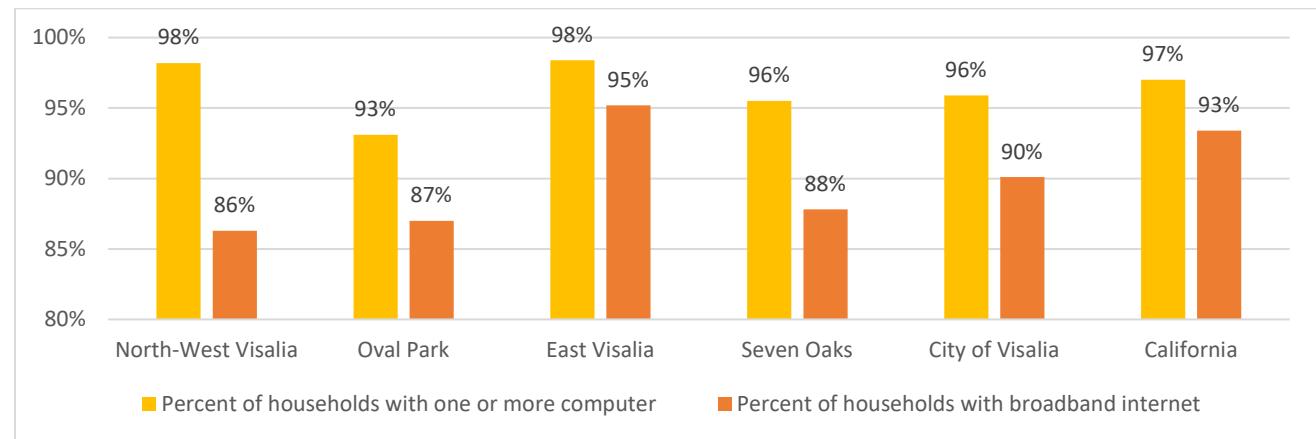
Meaningful community engagement is key to creating equitable policies and programs that meet the needs of all residents. Unfortunately, environmental justice communities have historically been excluded from these conversations, resulting in inequitable planning practices. Factors such as language barriers, time and location of public meetings, and knowledge of topics influence if and how people participate in the public decision-making process. Innovative engagement strategies and partnering with community-based organizations (CBOs) can make community workshops and meetings more accessible to environmental justice communities. Traditional methods of community engagement, such as community meetings held at government buildings can be difficult for people to attend due to scheduling conflicts, language barriers, lack of transportation, and lack of overall trust in government agencies.

## Internet Access

It is increasingly common for government agencies to post notices, documents, informational materials online and host virtual community meetings. Although an online format can make participating in the public decision-making process more convenient for many people, it also requires households to have access to a computer or smartphone and high-speed internet. As shown in Figure 9-39, the percentage of residents in the Neighborhoods of Focus with access to at least one computer or smartphone is similar to that of the city and state percentages. The percentage of residents in the Neighborhoods of Focus with a broadband internet subscription is slightly less than the city and state percentages, with the exception of East Visalia. This suggests that residents in the Neighborhoods of Focus may have a more difficult time accessing online information or virtual meetings than other areas of the city due to a lack of dependable, high-speed internet.



**Figure 9-39 Internet Access in Visalia**



## Linguistic Isolation

Language isolation occurs when households have individuals over the age of 14 who have limited English proficiency. These households face disadvantages when seeking information about meetings and engagement opportunities, particularly if the information and materials are solely available in English and no language interpretation/translation is available. According to CalEnviroScreen 4.0, two census tracts in Oval Park score above the 87th percentile for linguistic isolation (see Figure 9-41), meaning that the percentage of households in these census tracts that do not speak English well is higher than 87 percent of census tracts in California. The primary languages spoken besides English in Oval Park include Spanish, Tagalog, Chinese, and other Asian/Pacific-Islander languages.

Although most survey respondents did not select “I don’t understand or have trouble understanding English” as a main barrier to community participation, about 10 percent of Oval Park respondents reported it as a barrier to participation. This is significantly higher than any other area of the city, as shown in Figure 9-42.

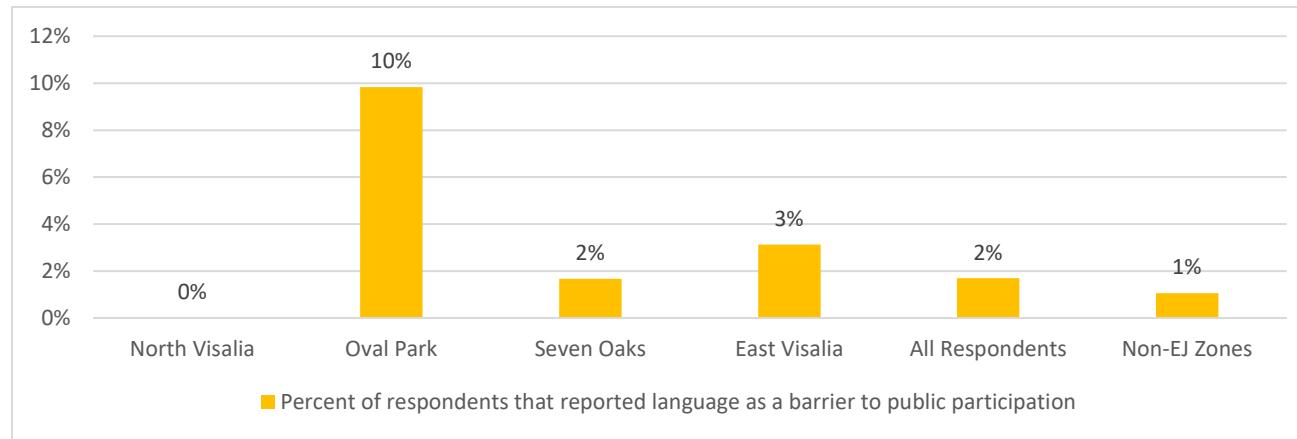
Ensuring meaningful and effective participation from individuals with limited English proficiency requires the commitment to providing meeting notices, and informational materials in languages other than English. This can bridge the language barrier and enable individuals with limited English proficiency to access crucial information about community meetings and engagement opportunities. Additionally, offering language interpretation services at these meetings is vital to facilitate active involvement from individuals with limited English proficiency, allowing them to fully

understand discussions, express concerns, and contribute to decision-making processes.

Apart from English proficiency, many people who are proficient or native English speakers can have a difficult time understanding the terminology and subject matter related to planning documents and processes. Many

planning documents can also be long, dense, and data heavy, which can be difficult for the public to read, understand, and provide meaningful feedback on. Creating engagement and information materials in a way that is easy to understand can make the subject and processes of planning more accessible to a wider audience.

**Figure 9-40 Community Survey Responses – Language barriers**



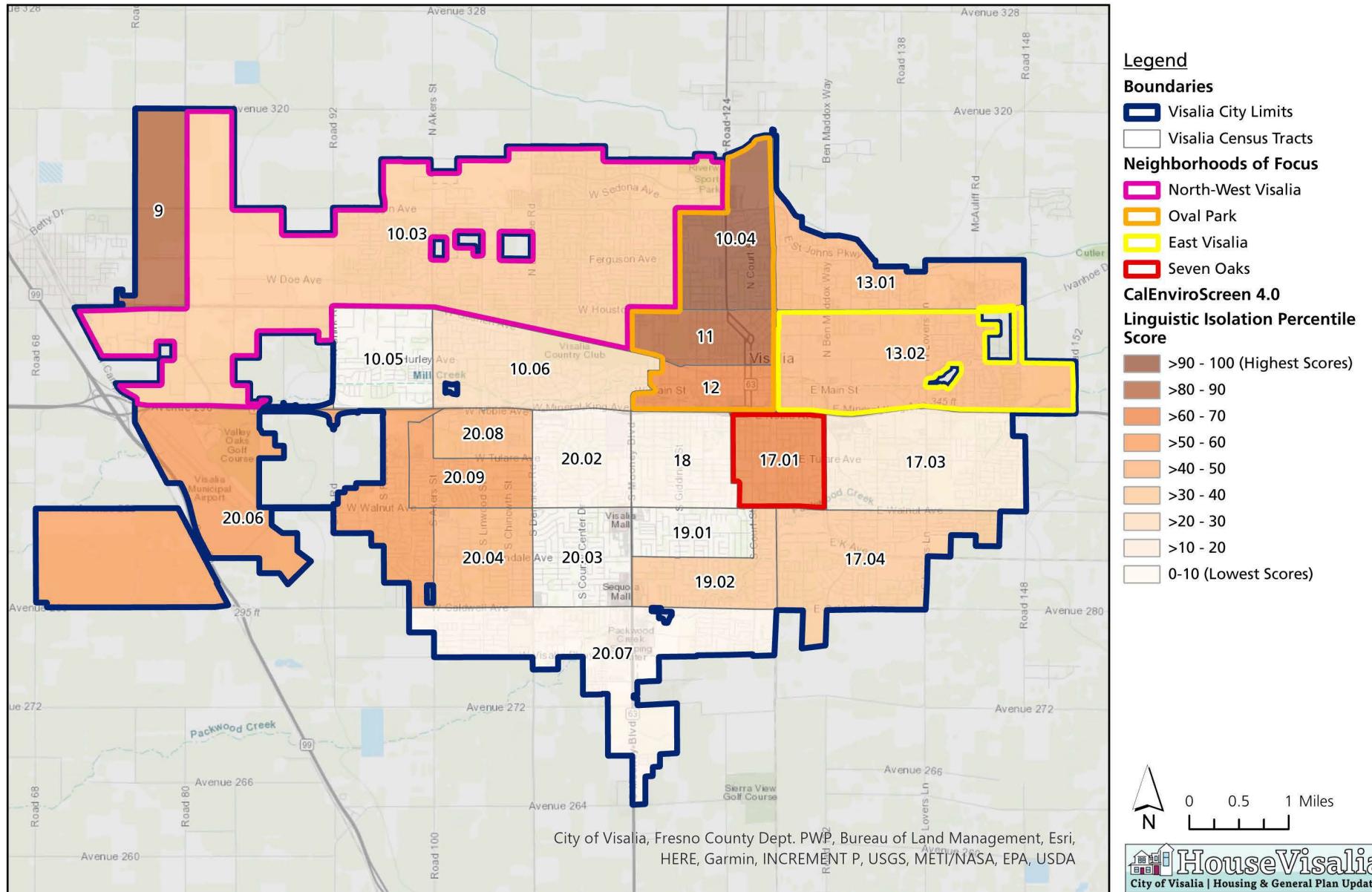
## Barriers to Community Involvement

There are several reasons that prevent people from participating in community meetings and outreach events such as scheduling, comfort level with the subject matter or speaking in front of other people, distrust in government, or lack of knowledge about how to get involved. To get more people involved in the public decision-making process, it is important to understand why people aren't participating and find ways to overcome those barriers.

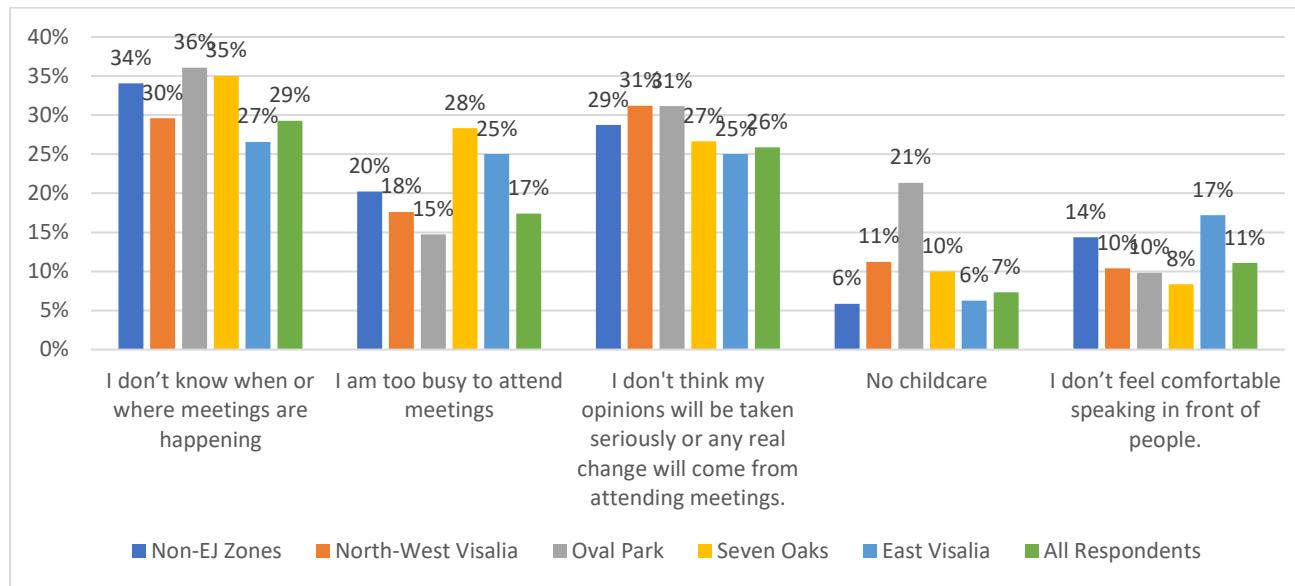
Survey respondents were asked to select the top three reasons that prevent them from attending public meetings. Figure 9-42 shows the top five reasons selected by respondents in the Neighborhoods of Focus. In Visalia, improving publicity of events and engagement opportunities, providing childcare, creating spaces that allow people to feel comfortable sharing their opinions, and explaining how community feedback will be used are all ways the City can begin to break down these barriers to participation.



Figure 9-41 CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Linguistic Isolation, Visalia

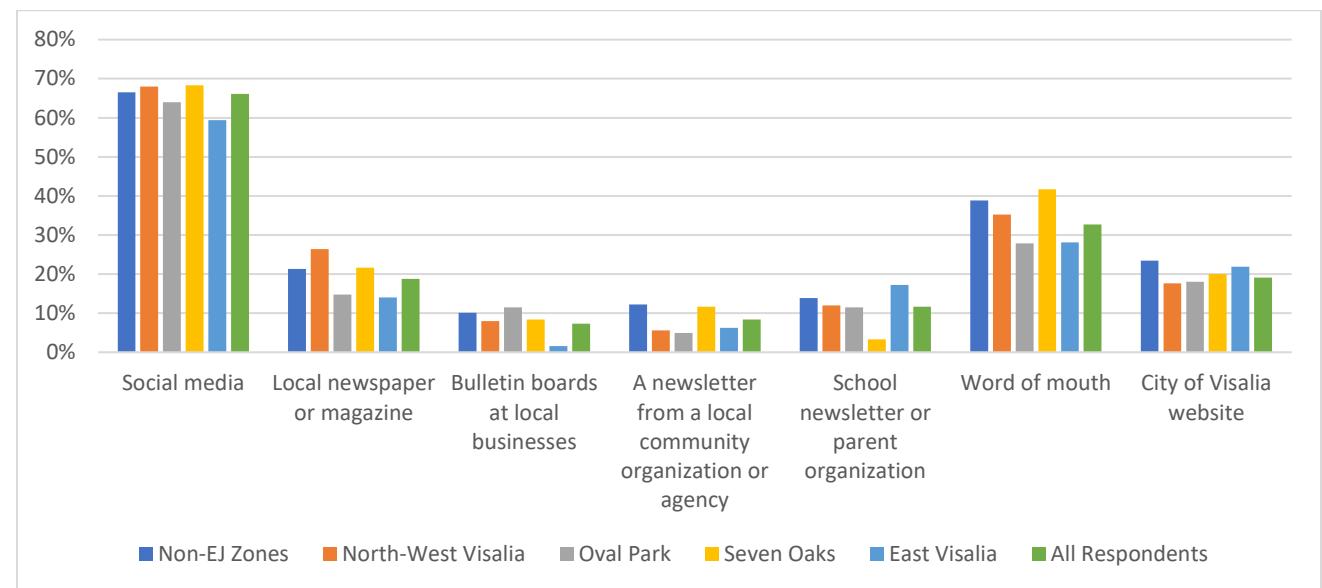


**Figure 9-42 Community Survey Responses – Barriers to participation**



Simply holding public meetings and events does not ensure meaningful engagement. Publicizing meetings and events where people are most likely to see them is essential. As shown in Figure 9-42 between 29 percent of all survey respondents said they do not know when or where meetings are happening. In the community

survey, participants were also asked where and how they get information about news and events in Visalia. As shown in Figure 9-43, an overwhelming majority of respondents reported getting their information through social media and word of mouth (i.e., friends, family, neighbors).

**Figure 9-43** Community Survey Responses – Information sources

# OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

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## **Objective EJ-1 Physical Activity and Healthy Lifestyles**

To increase physical activity and healthy lifestyles to reduce health risks for residents of all backgrounds and improve the pedestrian network for safer, more convenient travel.

[Source: New objective]

### Policies

**EJ-1.1** The City shall encourage employers and developers to include secure bicycle parking and storage in existing and new businesses and in all new development projects. [Source: New policy]

**EJ-1.2** The City shall promote physical activity programs and healthy lifestyle education programs offered to residents and encourage residents to regularly participate in active lifestyles. [Source: New policy]

**EJ-1.3** The City shall collaborate with the Visalia Unified School District, Board of Education, parent teacher associations, and community residents to identify and address access and safety issues for students arriving at school by bike or on foot. [Source: New policy]

**EJ-1.4** The City shall collaborate with private and public partners to enhance pedestrian amenities, such as lighting, shade, benches, trash and recycling receptacles, bathrooms, water fountains, particularly in the Neighborhoods of Focus. [Source: New policy]

**EJ-1.5** The City shall prioritize compliance with American Disability Act (ADA) standards and accessibility for all pedestrian, transit, and bicycle improvements, through ongoing engagement and incorporation of feedback from disability stakeholder groups. [Source: New policy]



## Objective EJ-2 Health Equity

To increase health equity and improve access to medical services. [Source: New objective]

### Policies

**EJ-2.1** The City shall encourage the provision of a range of medical and health services (e.g., primary, preventive, specialty, prenatal, dental care, mental health) in a manner accessible to all residents. [Source: New policy]

**EJ-2.2** The City shall coordinate with the Tulare County Public Health and Human Services Agency (HHS), California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and other public agencies during master planning efforts to identify and integrate design elements into land use plans that encourage physical activity and pollution exposure reduction measures. [Source: New policy]

## Objective EJ-3 Air Quality

To improve air quality conditions so all residents can live, work, and play in their community without disproportionate risk of air pollution and related negative health impacts. [Source: New objective]

### Policies

**EJ-3.1** The City shall continue working with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to determine what, if any, mitigation measures can be implemented to reduce air pollution impacts to the Neighborhoods of Focus and residential areas adjacent to the State Route 99 and State Route 198. [Source: New policy]

**EJ-3.2** The City shall encourage the retrofitting and installation of appropriate air filtration at existing schools, residences, and other sensitive receptor uses adversely affected by air pollution sources. [Source: New policy]

**EJ-3.3** The City shall enforce California's five-minute maximum diesel truck idling law, require warehouse and distribution facilities to provide adequate on-site truck parking, and require refrigerated warehouses to provide generators for refrigerated trucks. [Source: New policy]

## **Objective EJ-4 Pollution Exposure**

To actively support and expand land use development patterns, transportation infrastructure, pollution mitigation, and other techniques to reduce pollution exposure. [Source: New objective]

### **Policies**

**EJ-4.1** The City shall require new sensitive land uses and/or industrial and commercial land uses to incorporate setbacks, barriers, landscaping, or other design and development standards as necessary to minimize pollution exposure. [Source: New policy]

**EJ-4.2** The City shall encourage the Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner's Office to provide pesticide use education to raise awareness about the potential health impacts from pesticide use and process to report pesticide violations. [Source: New policy]

**EJ-4.3** The City shall encourage existing stationary sources of pollution emissions to use feasible measures to minimize emissions that could have potential impacts on community health. [Source: New policy]

**EJ-4.4** The City shall minimize heavy truck traffic by designating truck routes away from residential areas and sensitive land uses in and around the Neighborhoods of Focus. [Source: New policy]

**EJ-4.5** The City shall ensure that residents and businesses are made aware of the potential adverse pollution, noise, odor, vibration, lighting, and the effects of toxic materials and emissions when pollution generating land uses are proposed near them. [Source: New policy]



## Objective EJ-5 Access to Healthy Foods

To expand access to nutritious and affordable food to reduce food insecurity and to support varied cultural and nutritional food choices. [Source: New objective]

### Policies

**EJ-5.1** The City shall encourage food stores and retailers to improve the quality and selection of healthy foods and fresh food products, particularly in the Neighborhoods of Focus. [Source: New policy]

**EJ-5.2** The City shall support the planning and development of community gardens within walking distance of high-density residential areas. [Source: New policy]

**EJ-5.3** The City shall promote a full range of urban agriculture activities, including farmers' markets, farm stands, community gardens, on-site garden produce market stands, and urban farms. [Source: New policy]

**EJ-5.4** The City shall promote healthy food and beverages at City-sponsored events, programs, and recreation activities. [Source: New policy]

## Objective EJ-6 Public and Recreational Facilities

To ensure residents of all ages have access to a range of safe and accessible opportunities for recreation and physical activities. [Source: New objective]

### Policies

**EJ-6.1** The City shall strive to maintain and improve recreational facilities with adequate lighting, signage, extended park supervision/hours, and programs representative of the multicultural needs and income levels of the community. [Source: New policy]

**EJ-6.2** The City shall strive to enhance public facilities, infrastructure, services, and crime prevention strategies that are responsive to community needs. [Source: New policy]

**EJ-6.3** The City shall encourage the use of existing parks, public venues, and programs through marketing, promotion, and reduced rates for the Neighborhoods of Focus. [Source: New policy]

## **Objective EJ-7    Equitable Civic Engagement**

To fully engage the public in City decision-making and facilitate public involvement in civic life. [Source: New objective]

### **Policies**

**EJ-7.1** The City shall partner with appropriate organizations (e.g., community-based, faith-based, advocacy, and service) that have built relationships, trust, and cultural competency to conduct meaningful outreach for relevant planning initiatives and environmental justice concerns. [Source: New policy]

**EJ-7.2** The City shall provide translation and interpretation services at public meetings on issues affecting populations whose primary language is not English. Translation time should not be counted as a part of a person's time limit for comments. [Source: New policy]

**EJ-7.3** The City shall strive to make public meetings, notices, and education materials available online and in-person and accessible to all residents. [Source: New policy]

**EJ-7.4** The City shall strive to schedule events using different days, times, and formats (e.g., virtual and digital accessibility) to encourage and facilitate participation among community members with work, school, family, and other obligations that conflict with more traditional scheduling. [Source: New policy]

**EJ-7.5** The City shall implement a transparent public decision-making process through effective public outreach, engagement, and participation that is inclusive of socially disadvantaged individuals and groups. [Source: New policy]



**EJ-7.6** The City shall support opportunities for all residents to engage in community service that integrates community health and civic engagement. [Source: New policy]

## Objective EJ-8 Safe and Sanitary Homes

To ensure all residents enjoy living conditions that are both safe and healthy, while also providing a mix of affordability. [Source: New objective]

### Policies

**EJ-8.1** The City shall promote awareness of City regulations and enforcement measures citywide to improve unsafe and unsanitary conditions, focusing on trash and dumping, overcrowded housing, maintenance of older homes, graffiti, and lack of building and yard maintenance. [Source: New policy]

**EJ-8.2** The City shall encourage the rehabilitation of substandard housing conditions and preservation of affordability for dwellings owned/occupied by lower-income households in the Neighborhoods of Focus. [Source: New policy]

**EJ-8.3** The City shall review new development projects for natural surveillance design techniques and apply proven best practices in urban planning for crime reduction. [Source: New policy]