

**Alameda County**  
**Housing and Community Development Department**  
**FY25 – FY29**  
**Unincorporated County Neighborhood Plan**



# **The Neighborhood Plan for the Unincorporated Communities of Alameda County**

Including Ashland, Castro Valley, Cherryland, Fairview, San Lorenzo and Sunol

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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Alameda County's Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) is a recipient of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The grant is awarded annually, and local governments like Alameda County must complete a five-year framework to guide the use of CDBG funds within the unincorporated Alameda County areas for community development planning efforts and implementation strategies. As the needs in the Unincorporated County greatly exceed the resources CDBG is able to cover, this plan also guides local resources that are available to the unincorporated areas.

The last Neighborhood Plan for the Unincorporated County was approved by the Board of Supervisors on December 17, 2019, and covers the period of January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2024. The plan adopted the community priorities outlined in the Health and Wellness Element and aligned with the County's Vision 2026 10x Goals. There was a robust community engagement process, and the final Goals in the 2020-2024 Neighborhood Plan period were:

- Eliminating Homelessness
- Employment for All
- Eliminate Poverty and Hunger
- Accessible Infrastructure

During this this past five-year period, HCD focused its CDBG and discretionary funding on supporting local homeless shelter upgrades at First Presbyterian Church of Hayward, HCD provided funds to a mobile pantry and 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the market/café entrepreneurship program located in San Leandro, allowing these projects to expand their service area and provide jobs and resources to more unincorporated county residents. Additionally, HCD has provided funding to support the Alameda County Child Care Council (4C's) which trains priority area residents to become in-home childcare providers. This has been a great benefit to the Unincorporated County as it provides both the opportunity to operate and ability to find local affordable licensed childcare in the priority areas. HCD funds have also supported the rehabilitation of local area parks in unincorporated Alameda County: Ashland Community Center, San Lorenzo Park, Marvin Morris Park and Edendale Park. HCD, has worked in conjunction with the Alameda County Deputy Sheriff's Department, the Deputy Sheriff's Activity League (DSAL), Hope for the Heart, and the Civic and Economic Development Department, to develop food hubs that process locally grown fruits and vegetables for storage or commercial uses; rebuild a food distribution warehouse; and develop a food market/café for food entrepreneurs. All three projects were designed to bring higher quality food into the Ashland and Cherryland neighborhoods. Most recently, HCD partnered with the Civic and Economic Development Department to create the Food Entrepreneurship Training Academy (FETA) which offers a free 10-part series on "Food Business Entrepreneurship" for participants interested to launch and grow food businesses in Alameda County. It is imperative that we continue to support the development of childcare training and access to affordable childcare for residents.

This Neighborhood Plan will utilize the priorities of several adopted initiatives that also had robust community engagement. First the Environmental Justice Element (EJ Element) of the County's General Plan, adopted in January 2024 was developed through an extensive community engagement process, which

included focused meetings with partner agencies, community workshops, and bilingual (Spanish/English) community surveys provided at a variety of engagement options. In response to the ongoing COVID pandemic, most partner agency meetings and community workshops were held virtually. The feedback gained during the community engagement, planning and public review phase were used to inform the EJ Element goals, and objectives.

The *Alameda County Environmental Justice Element* outlines the high-level needs of unincorporated communities, which are often underserved and face unique challenges related to environmental and social equity. These needs can be summarized as follows:

- Improved Health and Safety
- Affordable Housing
- Public Services and Infrastructure
- Environmental Protection and Resilience
- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Economic Opportunities for community members
- Cultural and Social Services

These needs reflect the broader goals of the community and aims to address historical inequities and create more resilient, healthy, and equitable communities in Alameda County.

In addition to the EJ element, the Neighborhood Plan will seek to incorporate the priorities and goals detailed in the *Alameda County Housing Community Development Department 10-year Housing Plan*. <http://www.achcd.org>, released in January 2024. The priorities set by the Housing Plan are aligned with the needs and goals of the entire County area:

- Address Homelessness and the Risk of Homelessness
- Build More Affordable Housing
- Preserve Affordable Housing
- Stabilize Families in Crisis and Protect Tenants
- Promote Equity and Prevent Displacement
- Expand Developer Pool and Create New Opportunities for Emerging Developers
- Investigate Sustainable Funding Modes for Affordable Housing

Finally, it will also rely upon *First Five's Urban Unincorporated Areas of Alameda County Early Care and Educational Needs Assessment* and Resource for Community Development's *Eden Resource Center Needs Assessment* to help analyze current local conditions, identify problems and opportunities, and define the vision and goals of the local community.

The needs of the Unincorporated County are many and the resources to fund these priorities are few. The CDBG grant is limited in its scale and reach, the funds are insufficient to cover all the goals and objectives of the EJ Element. Further the use of CDBG funds is heavily restricted to Federal HUD objectives making them often difficult to utilize in the most efficient manner. It is important to note that while we can utilize the limited resources available to support the communities' goals, we will need to identify additional resources to fully implement both plans.

Alameda County Unincorporated County CDBG funds will be focused on the following priority funding Goals during the **FY2025-2029 Neighborhood Plan** period:

- Decreasing Homelessness and increasing affordable housing
- Improving public facilities/community amenities (parks/childcare centers)
- Supporting access to Healthy Food
- Actively leveraging other funding opportunities to increase CDBG capacity.

The County will seek to fund programs and projects which prioritize funding in these areas, however, if there are other emerging or emergency needs, those applications will also be considered. The funding priority areas set are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and applicant collaboration and/or leveraging of CDBG funds is welcome.

## **II. WHAT IS A NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN**

The Neighborhood Plan provides a 5-year framework for the use of Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) and local funds within the Unincorporated Alameda County areas and for community development planning efforts and implementation strategies.

### **A. Why is the Neighborhood Plan important?**

The plan is important because it is the formal plan detailing the goals and objectives that have been identified by the community. The Neighborhood Plan provides a roadmap of activities that can be funded and a plan for continuing to build a thriving community.

### **B. What does the Neighborhood Plan Cover?**

The total Urban County CDBG FY 2024 allocation is \$2,143,759. These funds are split between the Urban County jurisdictions, including the five small cities and the unincorporated county. The funds are divided into three main program areas including Jurisdictional Improvements (60%), Minor Home Repair (20%), and Capital Projects Pool (20%). Funds are also allocated to HUD required Fair Housing Counseling services for Urban County residents.

See Exhibit XX for a copy of the 2024/25 disbursement plan. The funds available to the Unincorporated County are the Jurisdictional Pool of xx and and capital project pool.

Additionally, we cover local funding sources like Boomerang and ARPA.

## **III. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT FUNDING**

The CDBG Program is a federal program, authorized under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, which was established to support local efforts in low-income communities. CDBG is a flexible program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of community development needs. CDBG can be used to provide affordable housing, to provide services to very low-income residents and to create jobs for low-income residents through the expansion of local businesses. Alameda County has been a recipient of CDBG funds since the program's inception in 1974. Through a formula allocation process, funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) are distributed to local governments in Alameda County participating in the CDBG Entitlement Program (for cities over 50,000 in population and urban counties with a population of more than 200,000). Alameda County Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) administers the CDBG Entitlement grant for the Unincorporated County and the Cities of Albany, Dublin, Emeryville, Newark, and Piedmont, collectively called the Urban County (see map in Appendix A).

### ***ALAMEDA COUNTY BEST PRACTICES***

Over the last 20 years Alameda County Housing and Community Development Department has developed some best practices to benefit its residents. The best practices employed are:

- analyzing community needs;
- collaborating with public and private non-profit entities to fund innovative projects; and funding projects with the most “bang-for-the-buck” that meet more than one CDBG nation

### **A. What does CDBG Cover?**

Under CDBG, all programs, projects and services must be eligible activities and they must meet **one** of these national objectives:

- Benefits low- and moderate-income people (with incomes at or below 80% of area median income);
- Prevent or eliminate slums or blighting conditions;
- Address a critical (federally declared emergency) community need.

In order to qualify as an activity benefiting low- to moderate-income persons, at least 51% of the beneficiaries must be low- to moderate-income families or individuals. Currently median income for a family of four is \$155,700; low income for a family of four is \$120,800. When a census tract has over 51% of the population meeting these income limits, the entire census tract qualifies as a low income CDBG target area and projects with area-wide benefit may be funded in those tracts.

In the Unincorporated County, Ashland and Cherryland's census tracts qualify as low-income census tracts (Ashland census tracts 4337 – 4340; Cherryland census tracts 4356-4357; 4362-4363). Additionally, Castro Valley (4309-4312), Fairview (4353) and San Lorenzo (4360-4361) had at least one block group within the identified census tract that was low-income. These areas will continue to be a priority for CDBG funding.

## B. How can CDBG be used?

The following types of activities are eligible to be funded with CDBG funds:

| Activity                                                                                                                           | Benefit Type                   | Example                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Acquisition and disposition of real property                                                                                       | Direct or Area Benefit         | Purchasing land to be used as a park serving a qualifying neighborhood                                               |
| Rehabilitation of residential and non-residential structures                                                                       | Direct or Area Benefit         | Homeowner needing to install an ADA wheelchair ramp.                                                                 |
| Code enforcement                                                                                                                   | Area Benefit                   | Code enforcement efforts in a qualifying deteriorating or deteriorated neighborhood                                  |
| Housing development activities carried out through nonprofit development organizations                                             | Area Benefit                   | Pre-development activities for housing development                                                                   |
| Construction of public facilities and improvements                                                                                 | Area Benefit                   | Replacing the roof of a nonprofit organization's building in a qualifying neighborhood                               |
| Architectural barrier removal                                                                                                      | Direct Benefit or Area Benefit | Removing architectural barriers for accessibility                                                                    |
| Activities relating to energy conservation and renewable energy resources                                                          | Direct Benefit or Area Benefit | Weatherizing a home or apartment building                                                                            |
| Planning and capacity building                                                                                                     | Area Benefit                   | Creating a community development plan for a qualifying neighborhood                                                  |
| Provision of assistance to for-profit-motivated businesses to carry out economic development and job creation/retention activities | Direct Benefit or Area Benefit | Providing technical assistance and training directly to businesses on topics such as business planning or accounting |
| Public services                                                                                                                    | Area Benefit                   | Providing tenant/landlord counseling in a qualifying neighborhood                                                    |

These CDBG-eligible activities provide a framework for addressing the community's needs.

### One Time ARPA Funding

As part of the COVID Response, the Board of Supervisors allocated \$28 million dollars to the Unincorporated County, some of which was dedicated to programs and services for low income residents of the community.

## **IV. NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN CURRENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES WITHIN A CDBG FRAMEWORK**

### **A. Priority Areas**

The County has made progress during the past decade in addressing health burdens faced by residents in the priority communities. During the last planning period utilizing the best practices mentioned above, HCD together with partner agencies embarked on an in-depth process of community engagement meetings, to analyze current trends and re-evaluate current community needs. These meetings, mostly virtual due to COVID 19 pandemic.

To that end, Alameda County HCD priority funding areas for the Unincorporated County CDBG funds will be focused on the following goals in the 2025-2029 Plan period:

- Decreasing Homelessness and increasing affordable housing,
  - i. Produce new homeless shelters by creating more interim and perm supportive housing and supporting homeless services.
  - ii. Preserving affordable housing at many income levels by supporting access to existing affordable housing units
  - iii. Protect affordable housing by supporting protections for tenants and those at risk of homelessness.
- Public Facilities
  - i. Improve community access to parks and other public outdoor spaces by supporting ADA upgrades, etc. to increase public safety and accessibility.
  - ii. Support the development of public and private in-home Early Childcare Education ECE centers and provide funds to existing centers to complete needed repairs and/or upgrades, such as ADA-compliant measures, lead abatement and asbestos removal and abatement and other safety upgrades needed to maintain the center.
- Food Security
  - i. Improve access to healthy food by supporting community gardens, food pantries and mobile food distribution programs.
  - ii. Support the creation of local food hubs and cafes which provide space for training and local microenterprise food entrepreneurship opportunities for low-income residents.
- Actively seeking new resources for the unincorporated county
  - i. Supporting community philanthropy
  - ii. Actively applying for resources to bring to the Unincorporated County

Applications will prioritize funding in these areas, however, if there are emerging or emergency needs, those applications will also be considered. HCD recognizes that these funding priority areas are not



necessarily mutually exclusive and welcomes collaboration amongst service providers. The priority funding areas outlined above provide the overarching goals for the 2025-2029 Neighborhood Plan period, below are examples of specific outcomes and objectives intended to achieve these goals.

## **B. Background and Community Input**

### **Background**

In 2016, California lawmakers adopted SB 1000, which required planning agencies to incorporate Environmental Justice (EJ)<sup>1</sup> principles into planning documents and increase citizen involvement in public decision-making. SB 1000 requires cities and counties that have “disadvantaged communities” to incorporate EJ policies into their general plans and identify goals and policies to reduce the unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities, prioritize improvements and create programs that meet the needs of those communities, and promote civic engagement in the public decision-making process. As a result, Alameda County planning agencies and decisionmakers seeking to address historic discrimination and disenfranchisement, and improve environmental health, in the unincorporated communities added an Environmental Justice (EJ) element to the County’s General Plan, referred to as the Environmental Justice Element (EJ Element).<sup>2</sup> The EJ element establishes goals, policies and objectives that center equity and provide an environmental-justice centered foundation for future growth and community development in the unincorporated areas. The funding priorities for this Neighborhood Plan are therefore focused on providing equity in access to community resources and services, so that the entire community can thrive.

The *Alameda County Environmental Justice Element* outlines the high-level needs of unincorporated communities, which are often underserved and face unique challenges related to environmental and social equity. These needs can be summarized as follows:

1. *Improved Health and Safety*: Many unincorporated areas face higher risks of pollution, poor air quality, and inadequate access to healthcare. There is a need for improved public health infrastructure and stronger environmental protections to reduce exposure to harmful pollutants.
2. *Affordable Housing*: Affordable and safe housing is a significant need, as these communities often struggle with housing instability and a lack of affordable options.
3. *Access to Public Services and Infrastructure*: Many unincorporated communities lack adequate access to critical services, such as transportation, sanitation, clean drinking water, and waste management. There is a need for better infrastructure and public services to improve quality of life.
4. *Environmental Protection and Resilience*: These communities often experience the disproportionate effects of climate change, such as flooding, heat islands, and poor air quality.

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<sup>1</sup> The California Environmental Justice Alliance (2018) defines EJ as "the basic right of people to live, work, go to school, and pray in a healthy and clean environment, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, culture, ability, nationality, or income."

<sup>2</sup> "G:\HCD\Community Development\CDBG\CDBGNEIG\Neighborhood Plan\FY24 Plan\Environmental Justice Element 1.24.pdf"

There's a need for increased environmental resilience, including disaster preparedness, green spaces, and climate adaptation strategies.

5. *Community Engagement and Empowerment*: Residents of unincorporated areas often lack a voice in decision-making processes. Strengthening community engagement, leadership development, and advocacy is essential to ensure these communities can participate in planning and policy development.
6. *Economic Opportunities*: Economic development is needed to improve job opportunities, access to workforce training, and create sustainable economic pathways for residents, reducing poverty and increasing financial stability.
7. *Cultural and Social Services*: Unincorporated communities often have diverse populations with distinct cultural needs. Social services that respect and support cultural identities, as well as access to community spaces, are critical for fostering social cohesion and well-being.

These needs reflect the broader goals of the community and aims to address historical inequities and create more resilient, healthy, and equitable communities in Alameda County.

## **Community Input**

The Ashland Cherryland Healthy Communities Collaborative (ACHCC) EJ Bucket met in monthly virtual meetings over the course of the EJ Element planning process to guide the development of the EJ Element. In these interactive meetings, participating service provider staff shared information, ideas, and perspectives that informed the development of the EJ Element and the Implementation Plan. The ACHCC EJ Bucket also helped the County develop community engagement strategies to increase Priority Community participation in the EJ process.

Three community workshop meetings were held in May 2022, August 2022, and May 2023. The first workshop prioritized community input to help identify the needs of the area. The second workshop outlined the goals and objectives of the EJ Plan and detailed action items. The third workshop, held on May 23, 2023, allowed for public comment of the draft plan, which was released for public comment on May 5, 2023. Lastly, County staff introduced the EJ Plan project to local decision-making bodies and provided regular updates at a series of public meetings in 2021 and 2022. Residents had opportunities to comment at formal meetings of the Board of Supervisors Unincorporated Services Committee (May 2024), the Castro Valley Municipal Advisory Committee (MAC) (June 2023), the Eden Area MAC (July 2023) and the Planning Commission (July 2023).

## **V. IMPLEMENTATION**

### **Funding Priority #1: Decreasing Homelessness**

The Alameda County 2022 Point-in-Time Homeless Count showed that there were over 9,000 individuals countywide experiencing homelessness sheltered and unsheltered during a single 24-hour period. A total of 510 individuals, or 5% of the county-wide total, were in the Unincorporated County, of those 419 were

unsheltered and 91 were sheltered.<sup>3</sup> Nearly 80% of those were unsheltered due to lack of permanent affordable housing options coupled with limited emergency and temporary housing options. As discussed in the 10-year housing plan, the only way to permanently house those with Extremely Low Incomes or Acutely Low Incomes is to provide an affordable unit linked with an ongoing operation Subsidy. The Alameda County Housing Needs Assessment indicates that the RHNA for the Unincorporated County between 2023 and 2031 is 4711 – this is the number of affordable housing units that must be built to meet the unmet need.<sup>4</sup>

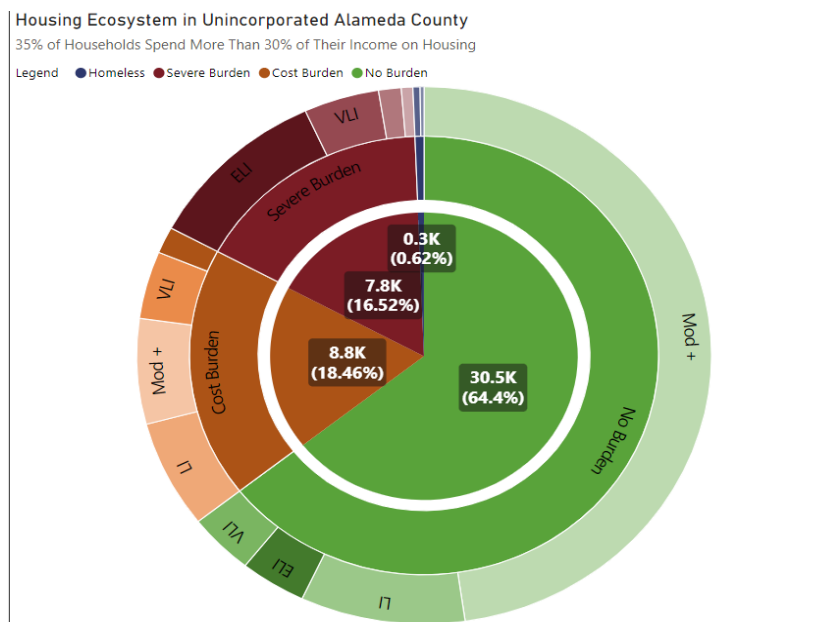
#### 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle RHNA

| Very-Low Income | Low-Income | Moderate Income | Above Moderate Income | Total |
|-----------------|------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------|
| 1,251           | 721        | 763             | 1,976                 | 4,711 |

This Neighborhood Plans uses the term ‘housing ecosystem’ to refer to the current range of housing and shelter choices available to all residents, both market rate and publicly supported. Some housing options are healthy and sustainable – providing an affordable option that meet the needs of a given household for shelter, space, access to employment, and accommodation for health and lifestyle needs. Some housing situations are unhealthy and unsustainable –paying more than one can afford for housing, temporarily doubling-up with relatives or friends, living with the threat of domestic abuse, staying at a homeless shelter, living in a vehicle, or living on the street. The illustration below shows is the Housing Ecosystem of Unincorporated County Area.

## Unincorporated Areas of Alameda County

### Housing Ecosystem



2022 & 2024 PIT Count (Unsheltered in Red)

<sup>3</sup> <https://everyonehome.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Unincorporated-County-PIT-2022-Infographic-Report.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [AC-Housing-Needs-Dec-2023](#)

The green section represents those households that are paying an appropriate amount of their monthly income for their housing costs (64% of households) with the outer ring denoting the AMI category of those households (ELI, VLI, LI, or Mod+). The light brown section represents the households paying between 30% and 50% of their income on housing costs (18% of households). The darker portion represents those households that are paying more than 50% of their income on housing costs (17% of Households). The dark blue section represents those who were not housed as of the 2024 Point In Time Count (1% of households).

The range of housing ecosystem options reflects the range of incomes in our community, with market rate homeownership available to top earners, then shifts to rental housing, publicly subsidized housing, and finally, temporary shelter and interim housing options for those in emergency situations. Living on the street is never a sufficient housing situation. To maintain the health and stability of our communities, sufficient housing options should exist for the current needs of Alameda County’s residents at all income levels. When these housing resources do not exist at the scale needed, the housing ecosystem is unhealthy, leading to a range of negative outcomes for the unhoused, renters, and homeowners.

Table A-1 provides a look into the places of habitation of those unsheltered individuals and offers recommendations on resources needed to decrease homelessness.

**Table A-1: Places of habitation for unsheltered individuals in Unincorporated Alameda County**

| Place of Habitation                                             | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Tent                                                            | 42%        |
| Car/Van                                                         | 18%        |
| RV                                                              | 12%        |
| Outside                                                         | 28%        |
| <b>Resources that would have helped to prevent homelessness</b> |            |
| Rental Assistance                                               | 33%        |
| Benefits/Income                                                 | 30%        |
| Employment Assistance                                           | 23%        |
| Mental Health Services                                          | 21%        |

*Source: EveryOne Counts! 2022 Point in time Homeless Count and Survey*

The 2024 Alameda County Homeless Point-in Time Count<sup>5</sup> (PIT24) showed a 3% decrease over the previous two years countywide, over all categories of homeless counted. The Point-In-Time count shows that while homelessness overall has not decreased dramatically (still over 9,000) the number of unsheltered homeless has (Figure A-1). This provides some evidence that efforts made during and after the pandemic

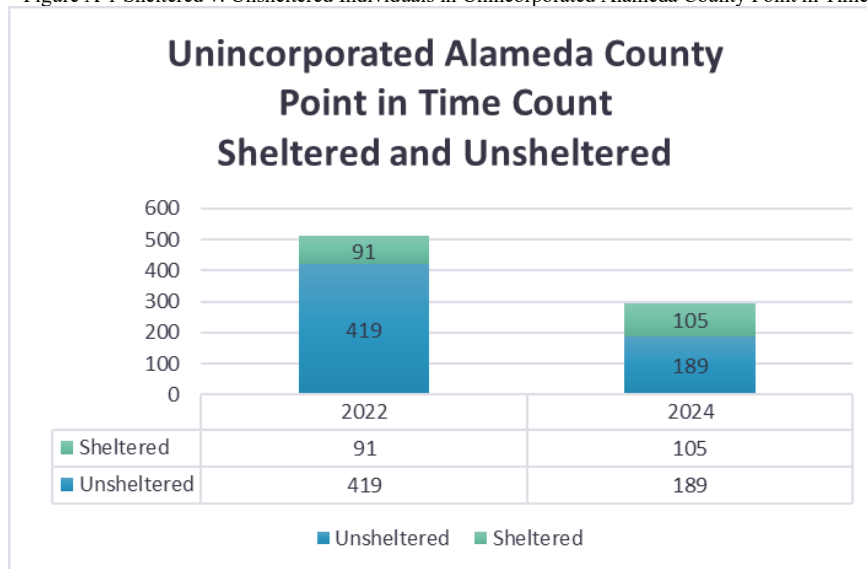
<sup>5</sup> [Point-in-Time Count 2024 - EveryOneHome.org](https://www.alameda-county-ca.gov/point-in-time-count-2024) Every two years, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires communities to conduct a Point-in-Time (PIT) Count of individuals, youth, and families experiencing homelessness and provide specific data about their demographics and characteristics. This Count is a “snapshot” of homelessness (both sheltered and unsheltered) in our community and nationally. Locally, the data helps:

- Inform program, policy, funding, and system design decisions
- Measure progress in decreasing homelessness
- Increase public awareness
- Advocate for additional resources in our effort to end homelessness countywide.

The Count includes those who are forced to sleep outdoors, in vehicles, tents or makeshift structures as well as a count of people residing in shelters, transitional housing and safe parking programs.

to provide temporary shelter and access to housing resources as recommended in the Unincorporated County Homelessness Action Plan 2018-2021 has been effective in getting more people safely housed.<sup>6</sup>

Figure A-1 Sheltered v. Unsheltered Individuals in Unincorporated Alameda County Point in Time Count



Source: EveryOne Counts! Point in time Homeless Count and Survey 2022 and 2024

The 2018-2021 Unincorporated County Homeless Action plan recommended funding programs to expand outreach and temporary shelter options for the homeless to provide health and safety interventions, while linking unsheltered people to additional needed services and housing. The projects and programs funded under the Plan included:

- Additional homeless prevention
- Expanded outreach to unsheltered people
- Purchase and operation of a mobile hygiene unit (shower bus)
- Safe Parking for people living in their vehicles
- RV Waste Disposal Program for people living in recreational vehicles
- Expansion/provision of men's shelter beds
- Navigation Center shelter and service site
- Services at tiny homes site in western unincorporated county area
- Conversion of two winter warming centers into winter shelters
- Project management to carry out these programs and coordinate with other homeless services

Based upon the effectiveness of the programs and resources mentioned above in helping to lower the numbers of unsheltered homeless individuals in the priority areas, this will continue to be an area of funding priority for the next plan period.

<sup>6</sup> "G:\HCD\Homeless\Unincorporated\UC-3Year-HomelessActionPlan-12-4-18.pdf"

## **FY25-FY29 Neighborhood Plan Goals for Decreasing Homelessness.**

***Goal 1: Reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness in the Unincorporated County and meet the immediate needs of those experiencing homelessness in Unincorporated Alameda County.***

***Outcome in five years:*** Show a significant reduction (10% or more,) in the number of people experiencing homelessness in the Unincorporated County Area per the Point In Time count. Homeless Services and Housing Resources are linked and coordinated.

***Objectives: What CDBG funds can do:*** CDBG funds can be used to support the provision of housing intended to provide temporary and transitional shelter for the homeless. CDBG can provide funding for pre-development activities, or rehab of existing buildings that provide shelter beds and affordable housing. Safe, sanitary temporary housing is necessary to move people from homelessness to being sustainably housed. CDBG public service funds can be used (15% cap)<sup>7</sup> to fund homeless services to provide resources, referrals and education to those experiencing homelessness in the Unincorporated County Areas.

***Goal 2: Preserve existing assisted and affordable rental housing.***

***Outcome in five years:*** Improve availability of affordable housing units in the Unincorporated County by preserving and rehabilitating existing units.

***Objectives: What CDBG funds can do:*** CDBG funds can be used to rehabilitate existing assisted units to maintain and increase affordable rental housing stock. CDBG funds can also be used to support the provision of affordable rental housing development by CDBO's<sup>8</sup> to increase the availability of affordable rental units in the Unincorporated County Area.

### **Funding Priority #2: Access to Public Facilities**

CDBG regulations broadly defines “public facilities” to include “public improvements, and community amenities” such as parks, public schools, public transportation, and basic infrastructure. See below for a more comprehensive list of public facilities:

| COMMUNITY AMENITIES | PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS |
|---------------------|---------------------|
|---------------------|---------------------|

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<sup>7</sup> The Unincorporated County shares the 15% services funding cap with the rest of the Urban County. For FY24 CDBG funding allocation to the Unincorporated County, the 15% services funding cap equals \$84,000.

<sup>8</sup> CDBG regulations do not allow for the new construction of housing units unless the project is developed by a Community-Based Development Organization (CBDO).

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parks, open space, trails, and greenbelts</li> <li>• Recreation facilities (including senior and youth centers) and community centers</li> <li>• Daycare centers/Early Childcare Centers (ECE)</li> <li>• Cultural centers, science centers</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water distribution, treatment, and drainage facilities</li> <li>• Solid waste, liquid waste, recycling, and composting facilities</li> <li>• Streets and roads</li> <li>• Public utilities</li> <li>• Flood control structures</li> </ul> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Some public facilities in the Unincorporated County, such as libraries and streetscape infrastructure, are owned by the County and accountable to the Board of Supervisors and/or a specific County agency. Other key public facilities serving the Unincorporated County, such as parks, and public transportation infrastructure, are owned by non-County special districts; projects and policies that involve these non-County facilities rely on partnerships between the County and the managing entities. Establishing equitable access to public facilities through policy and programmatic improvements can help ensure that all community members are able to experience their benefits.

Public facilities provide communities with valuable opportunities that promote childhood development, safety, health, and community engagement and safe access to public facilities plays an important role in the health and overall wellbeing of community members.

## ***COMMUNITIY AMENITIES***

### ***PARKS/OPEN SPACE***

Parks are natural or semi-natural open spaces set aside for outdoor recreation, leisure, or preservation. As of July 2021, there were 19 officially designated public parks within or immediately adjacent to the Unincorporated County. Most of them are less than 12 acres in size (roughly equivalent to 7 soccer fields) and are relatively small in comparison to parks in surrounding communities. The Castro Valley census tracts are adjacent to two large regional parks, Lake Chabot Regional Park (approximately 1,755 acres) and Don Castro Regional Recreation Area (approximately 101 acres), both operated by East Bay Regional Park District. Figure A-2 shows the location of parks in the unincorporated area.

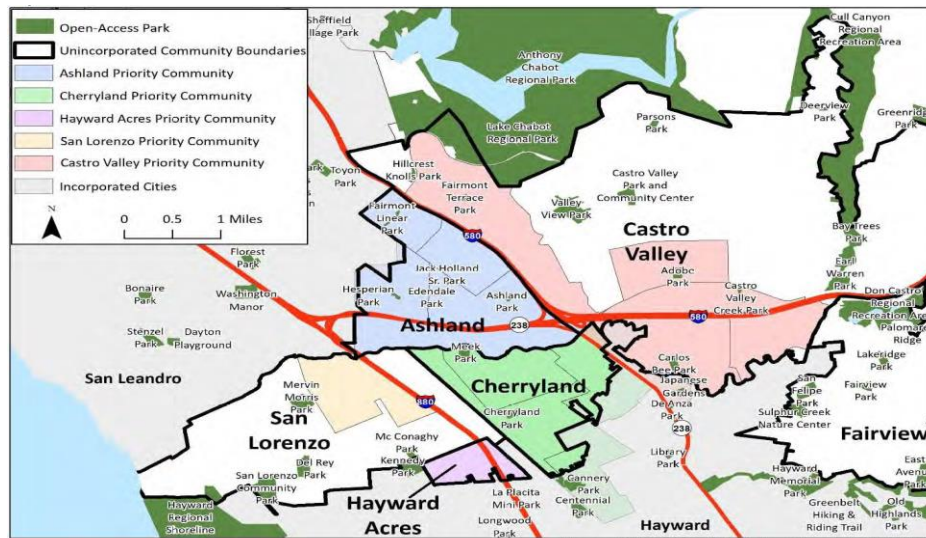


Figure A-2

Parks are important because they provide community gathering spaces, valuable greenspace, and many more benefits to community members wellbeing. California’s Quimby Act (Government Code Section 66477) established a state standard of 3 acres of parks for every 1,000 residents. According to the Alameda County Environmental Justice Report, none of the Unincorporated County areas meets the requirements for the Quimby Act (3 acres of park for every 1,000 residents). Table A-2 shows the percentage of people who live within proximity to parks.

Table A-2

| NEIGHBORHOOD OR PLACE | POPULATION PERCENTAGE WITHIN 0.5 MILES OF PARKS | POPULATION PERCENTAGE WITHIN .025 MILES OF PARKS | ACRES PER 1,000 POPULATION |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Ashland</i>        | 98.4%                                           | 67.3%                                            | 0.24                       |
| <i>Castro Valley</i>  | 96.7%                                           | 40.7%                                            | 1.88                       |
| <i>Cherryland</i>     | 86.6%                                           | 47.9%                                            | 0.74                       |
| <i>Hayward Acres</i>  | 100%                                            | 37.4%                                            | 0.00                       |
| <i>San Lorenzo</i>    | 79.2%                                           | 21.0%                                            | 1.82                       |
| <i>Sunol</i>          | 76.9%                                           | 40.7%                                            | 1.76                       |
| <i>Alameda County</i> | --                                              | --                                               | 46.60                      |

SOURCE: Esri 2020 Demographics, with open-access park data from CPAD 2019b. via Environmental Justice Plan

## DAYCARE CENTERS/ EARLY CHILDCARE CENTERS

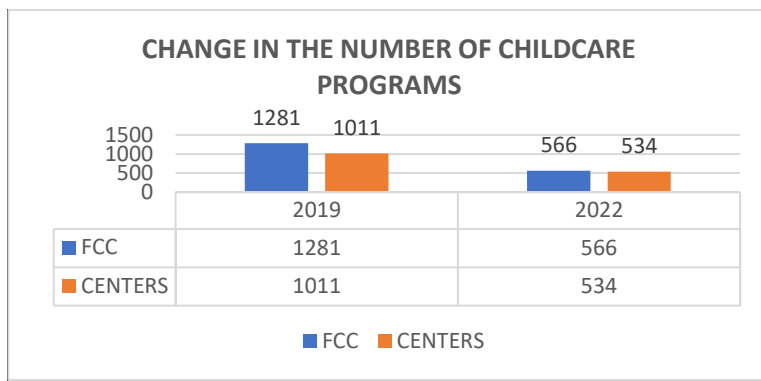
The Alameda County Early Care and Education Needs Assessment, developed by First 5 Alameda County (First 5), in partnership with the Alameda County Community Development Agency and on behalf of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors was developed with the goal of increasing access to basic needs in the unincorporated areas of Alameda County and advancing equitable outcomes for these historically



underserved communities. The report found that the Covid-19 pandemic decimated an already fragile, underfunded and fragmented “system” of licensed care.

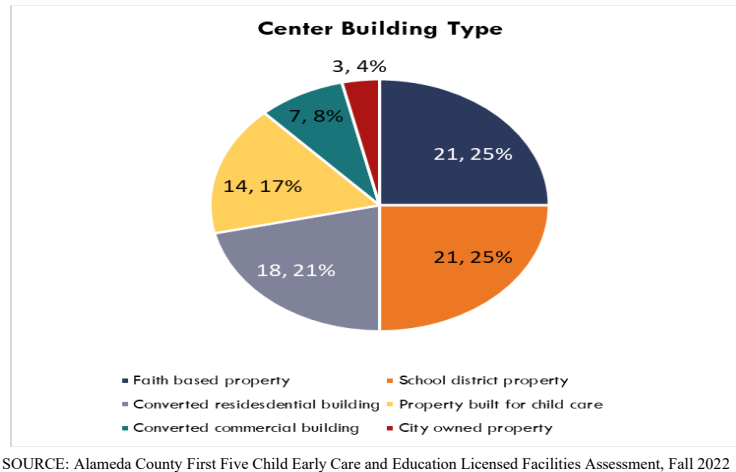
The lack of access to in-person learning, play, and interaction negatively impacted children’s learning, growth, and development. Social distancing, remote learning, and quarantine policies compounded the isolation and stress endured by low- to moderate-income families and caregivers. Licensed childcare declined at differing rates across the county during the pandemic, with family childcare sites closing at a dramatically higher rate than centers. The cities of Fremont and Oakland, as well as the unincorporated communities of the county, saw the most site closures. The report suggests that the facilities cost to build enough supply to meet demand for licensed childcare in Alameda County is likely in the range of \$2 billion to \$4 billion.

According to The Alameda County First Five Facilities Needs Assessment, published in January 2024, between March 2020 and January 2021 an estimated 153 (7%) of licensed childcare facilities in Alameda County closed permanently. <https://first5alameda.org/files/Facilities%20Needs%20Assessment%202024%20V2.pdf> .



SOURCE: Alameda County First Five Child Early Care and Education Licensed Facilities Assessment, Fall 2024

Additionally, facility conditions vary widely across the county, with significant differences by place, facility type, age of children served, and property component. Most sites report only “adequate” conditions of their site components (landscape, HVAC, outdoor area, kitchen, etc), but some property components were reported at over 30% inadequate, substandard, or worse. Figure A-3 shows the percentage by type of center for childcare centers located in Alameda County.



## **FY25-FY29 Neighborhood Plan Goals for providing access to Public Facilities.**

***Goal 1: Residents of the Priority Communities will have equitable access to high-quality public facilities, community amenities, and public improvements that prioritize their needs and facilitate health and wellbeing.***

***Outcome in five years:*** support upgrade of two new open space projects (as described above).

***Objectives: What CDBG Funds can do:*** CDBG Public Service funds can be utilized to assist in the development and/or upgrades of public facilities, community amenities and other public services that improve the well-being of the residents in the Unincorporated County. For example, American with Disability Act (ADA) upgrades of parks, plazas, playgrounds, trails, and open spaces that address existing deficits in the Priority Communities.

***Goal 2: Support the development of public and private in-home Early Childcare Education ECE centers and provide funds to existing centers to complete needed repairs and/or upgrades, such as ADA-compliant measures, lead abatement and asbestos removal and abatement.***

***Outcome in five years:*** Support the upgrade of three current public facility buildings such as daycare centers and/or early childcare facilities.

***Objectives: What CDBG funds can do:*** Utilize CDBG Public Services funds or Economic Development funds to provide for the development and/or improvement of Community Amenities such as childcare facilities (public and private). Provide low-interest loans to in-home childcare providers to complete upgrades to their homes to make them safe and healthy for children. Examples are

upgrades to flooring, updating code violations, weatherization upgrades, and improved ADA accessibility.

### **Funding Priority #3: Access to Healthy Food**

Healthy food is essential to the health, economy, and culture of thriving and sustainable communities. Access to both healthy and affordable food sources affect quality of life. And food access goes beyond just the physical ability to get both nutritious and culturally appropriate food, but also the knowledge that access to these food sources is dependable. The County's goal to eliminate poverty and hunger is designed to ensure that all residents' basic food needs are met, while building resiliency and self-sufficiency among vulnerable populations. Creating consistent opportunities for people within the Unincorporated County to buy, prepare, and eat healthy food is important in promoting equity.

Food insecurity can be defined as a lack of consistent access to food for every person in a household to live an active, healthy life. Poverty, unemployment, race, and housing cost burden are associated with food insecurity, indicating that food security is likely to be a concern for some Unincorporated County residents. People impacted by food insecurity may not know when or where they will get their next meal and may need to choose between buying food and other critical expenses like rent or medicine. According to the Alameda County Community Food Bank (ACCFB), "Food insecurity and poor nutrition cause harmful outcomes in all stages of life, including poor physical, emotional and developmental outcomes."<sup>9</sup> Food insecurity can exacerbate, or increase the risk of, diet-sensitive illnesses like diabetes and high blood pressure.

Figure A-3 displays farmers' markets and fuller-service food stores such as supermarkets and grocery stores in and near the Unincorporated County. There are notable gaps in Castro Valley and Cherryland – often referred to as "food deserts". Food deserts are areas where there is little to no access to grocery stores, markets or other places that sell food. It is important to acknowledge that farmers' markets have limited hours and days of operations; some of the food outlets on the map may not provide culturally appropriate foods that appeal to the entire diverse population of the area; and the data source for this map may not have included all stores where Priority Community residents shop for food.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/unmet-charitable-food-need-alameda-county>

Figure A-3

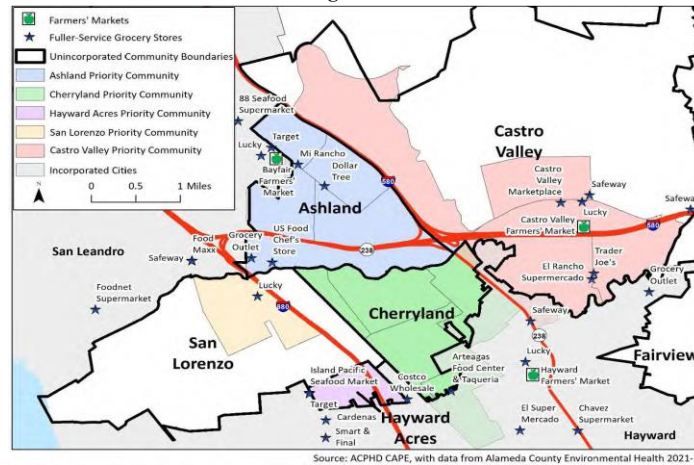


Table A-4 shows the percentage of residents living within 0.5 miles of a grocery store/supermarket or full-service food store. Only 30.1% of Cherryland residents live within walking distance of a grocery store as compared to 60% in Castro Valley, and 76.7% in Ashland.

Table A-4

| NEIGHBORHOOD OR PLACE | POPULATION PERCENTAGE WITHIN 0.5 MILES OF A GROCERY STORE |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Ashland</i>        | <b>76.7%</b>                                              |
| <i>Castro Valley</i>  | <b>60.0%</b>                                              |
| <i>Cherryland</i>     | <b>30.1%</b>                                              |
| <i>Hayward Acres</i>  | <b>100.0%</b>                                             |
| <i>San Lorenzo</i>    | <b>90.5%</b>                                              |
| <i>Alameda County</i> | <b>39.6%</b>                                              |

Source: Esri 2020 Demographics, with supermarket locations from Alameda County Environmental Health, December 2021.

In January 2020 Supervisors Nate Miley and the late Supervisor Wilma Chan launched the Grand Opening of the “Farmacy”, Dig Deep Farms food hub in Alameda County. The “food hub” is the culmination of nearly a decade of planning and collaboration between the Alameda County Sheriff’s Office, the nonprofit Alameda County Deputy Sheriffs’ Activities League and All IN Alameda County, a countywide initiative aimed at combating poverty.<sup>10</sup> The “Farmacies” are local community-supported agricultural programs utilizing home gardens, community gardens, and urban farms to improve access to fresh fruits, vegetables, and culturally appropriate foods to promote nutritional security. In addition to its direct benefits related to food access, local food production is associated with many co-benefits including access to open space, improved mental and physical health, environmental and climate benefits, economic opportunity, and community connectivity.

In the most recent CDBG funding rounds, Alameda County has supported the inception and growth of the Mandela Partners 14<sup>th</sup> Street Incubator program in Ashland. This project provides low-income residents of the profile area with opportunities to train and work as food production professionals (chef’s, restaurant

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0eZymtFq7bM>

owners, etc.), and the mobile food pantry operated by San Lorenzo Family Help Center, which provided nutritious food to immobile and infirm low-income residents.

The goals and outcomes below are intended to expand Unincorporated County CDBG goals and outcomes previously set to provide access to healthy food to residents of the unincorporated county.

### **FY25-FY29 Neighborhood Plan Goals for Access to Healthy Food**

***Goal 1: Support efforts which provide income while also increasing food access.***

***Outcome in five years:*** Assist unincorporated County residents to develop five new food-related microenterprise businesses.

***Objectives: What CDBG funds can do:*** Utilize Economic Development funds to support creation of food-related microenterprise opportunities. Utilize Public Service funds to support mobile food distribution programs.

***Goal 2: Continue to support neighborhood-Led Strategies for programs such as “Farm-acy” and Dig Deep Farms in the Unincorporated County (Ashland and Cherryland) communities.***

***Outcome in five years:*** Assist five community agencies with the infrastructure to create new projects and initiatives that support healthy food being available in Ashland and Cherryland.

***Objectives: What CDBG funds can do:*** Utilize Public Services funds or Capital Improvement funds to support programs and organizations that increase their capacity to offer new healthy community food programs or build food distribution/production centers.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The Alameda County Neighborhood Plan is the key document detailing funding priorities for long range physical, economic, and environmental growth in the Unincorporated County. The Plan identifies deficiencies, establishes goals, and provides possible actions intended to increase resources for its citizens. The plan provides an environmental justice-centered foundation for future growth and community development in the unincorporated areas. Addressing environmental injustice requires an intersectional approach which focuses on prioritizing **equity** and equitable access, and a recognition that systems of oppression – and their solutions – do not exist in isolation from one other. If we are to address the inequities that exist in the Unincorporated County, we must allow all persons **equitable** access to the process.

This Plan represents a shared value statement between the community and Alameda County and affirms the commitment of the County and its agencies and departments to work cooperatively toward a just and inclusive future for the residents of the unincorporated communities, where equitable access to all is the norm and everyone can see over the fence.

