

# HEALTHY Neighborhoods For All

Background Review Report

March 2025



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## Introduction

### What is Healthy Neighborhoods for All?

Senate Bill (SB) 1000 requires local governments to address pollution and other hazards that disproportionately impact low-income communities and communities of color in their jurisdiction by identifying any “disadvantaged communities” within its planning area. State law defines “disadvantaged communities” as either:

1. *An area identified by the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) using the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen), or*
2. *An area that is low-income and disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation.*

If a local government identifies one or more disadvantaged communities within its planning area, its general plan must include “Environmental Justice” goals, policies, and objectives that reduce the unique or compounded health risks in these disadvantaged communities by addressing eight different topics:

- Reducing pollution exposure;
- Promoting public facilities;
- Promoting food access;
- Promoting safe and sanitary homes;
- Promoting physical activity;
- Reducing unique or compounded health risks;
- Promoting civic engagement; and
- Prioritizing the needs of disadvantaged communities.

In place of using the State term “Environmental Justice”, the City of Morgan Hill has coined the term “Healthy Neighborhoods for All” in this study.

### Related Efforts

In 2021, the City approved a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan to be a more inclusive and welcoming community. The City also embarked on a Morgan Hill Together campaign to promote engagement, trust, and inclusiveness through listening and working together. The Morgan Hill Together campaign outreach efforts identified that members of the Spanish-speaking community do not have a strong sense of belonging.

In 2024, the City of Morgan Hill completed the ELEVATE Morgan Hill report, an economic mobility program to connect Spanish-speaking and lower-income community members, predominantly concentrated in the City’s disadvantaged community and Low-Income communities, to jobs and housing while increasing their sense of belonging to the community. The study found that half of the

City’s residents are cost-burdened, and nearly a third rely on some form of financial assistance. Hispanics make up about one-third of the population, have the highest poverty rate, and are most severely burdened, with 21.5 percent spending more than half of their income on housing. This racial group also has the highest overcrowding and represents 42.7% of the population experiencing homelessness.

ELEVATE Morgan Hill identified nine strategies and 40 action items that are intentional in creating equitable access to opportunities for everyone, connecting residents to job opportunities and housing resources while enhancing their sense of belonging in Morgan Hill, improving the quality of life for all.



## Assessing Healthy Neighborhoods for All

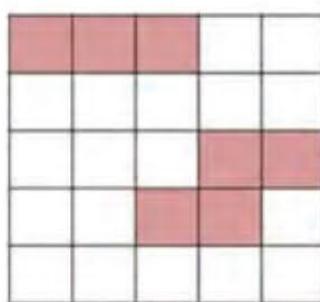
The Office of Planning and Research (OPR) General Plan Guidelines for Environmental Justice recommend a screening process (see below image) for identifying disadvantaged communities that overlays census tracts with a combined CalEnviroScreen score of 75 or higher (i.e., top 25th percentile) with the two definitions of low-income areas (discussed on page 5), as well as community-specific data and additional pollution burdens that were not included in the statewide analysis.

This study builds on existing efforts by the City to continue to refine the identification of under-resourced communities within the City of Morgan Hill. It assesses additional data from studies related to the topics covered by SB 1000, as well as considering new indicators analyzed using data provided by the City and other available sources. The findings will be used to inform conversations with the community and ultimately will be used in the City's Healthy Neighborhoods for All Element in the General Plan.

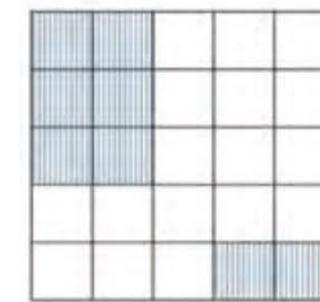
In this document, the term “Communities of Concern” will be utilized in place of ‘disadvantaged communities’ as identified in SB 1000 and will refer to census tracts officially designated by the State as such. Communities that will be the focus of the City’s Healthy Neighborhoods for All Element have not yet been defined, but potential areas highlighted by this study are referred to as “Communities of Concern.”

Communities of Concern means a neighborhood or community that is low-income and disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation and/or significantly reduced quality of life relative to surrounding or comparative communities.

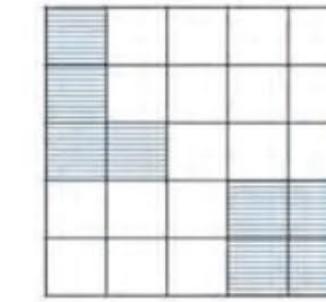
Data throughout this study is compiled at the census tract level, as shown in the map to the right, and are identified throughout this study within the city limits.



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1.

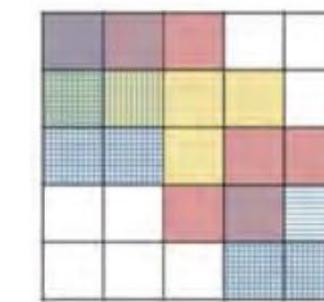
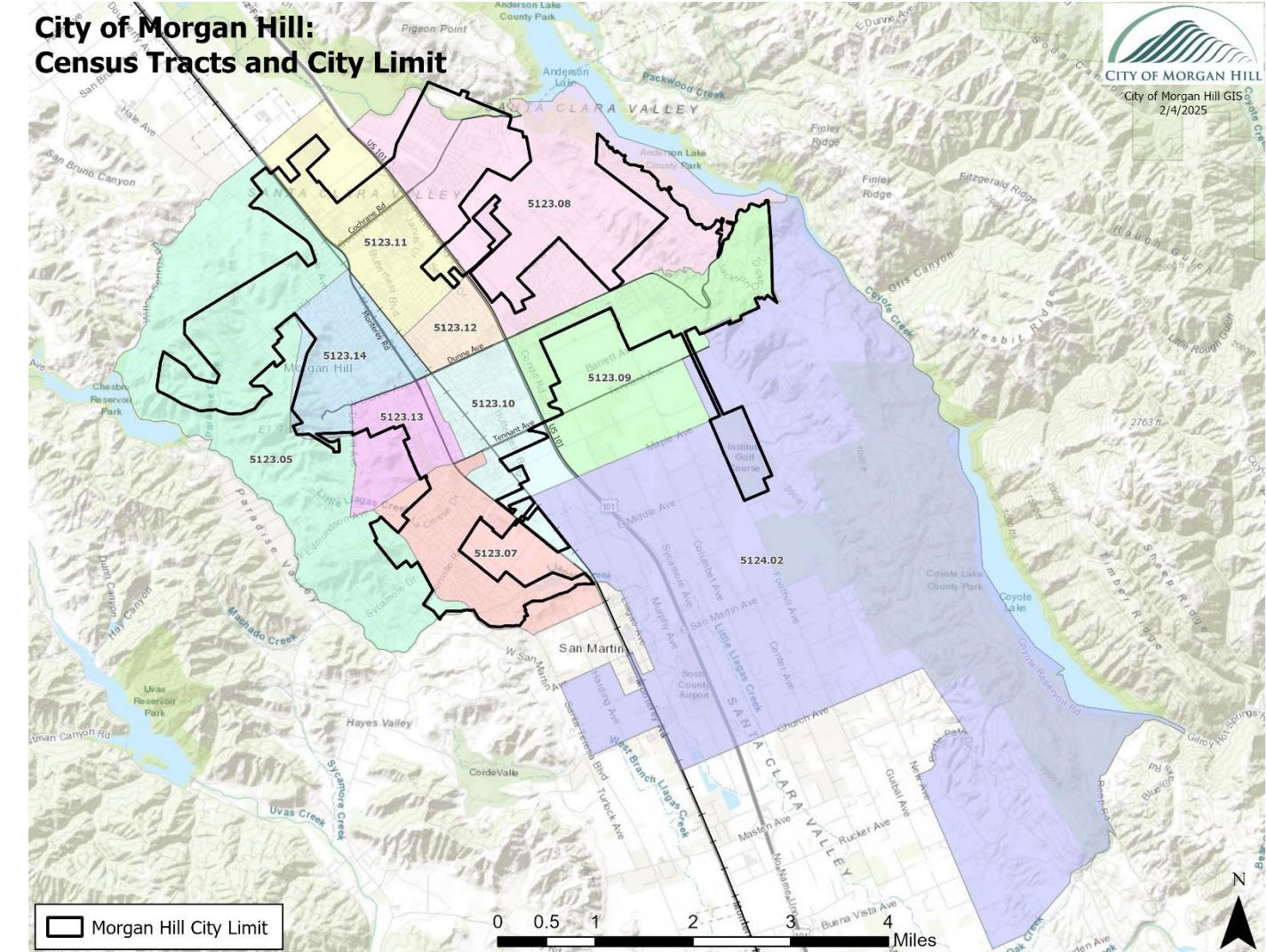
Map the planning area census tracts that have a combined score of 75 percent or higher in CalEnviroScreen.

2.

Map the planning area census tracts at or below statewide median income.

3.

Map the planning area at or below the Department of Housing and Community Development's state income limits.



4.

Incorporate community-specific data and examine for additional pollution burden.

## Environmental Justice Screen

## CalEnviroScreen

CalEnviroScreen 4.0, adopted in 2021, assesses 21 indicators that measure the pollution burden and population characteristics of all census tracts in California to identify those that are most impacted and most vulnerable.

Pollution burden represents the potential exposures to pollutants and the adverse environmental conditions caused by pollution. Whereas population characteristics represent physiological traits, health status, or community characteristics that can result in increased vulnerability to pollution.

The map to the right shows the CalEnviroScreen scores of census tracts in Morgan Hill, which generally indicate that the central area of the City, south of downtown, is the most impacted (shown in dark purple), while the least impacted areas (shown in very light purple) are primarily located west of Monterey Road and the eastern half of the City (east of Highway 101).

As seen in the map, there is a huge disparity within the City, with scores ranging below the 20<sup>th</sup> percentile on the east side of the City, to scores ranging from the 60<sup>th</sup> to 80<sup>th</sup> percentile within the center of Morgan Hill.

The top issues contributing to high scores in the southern central area of the City include Diesel Particulate Matter, Traffic, Pesticides, Cleanup Sites, Groundwater Threats, Hazardous Waste, Solid Waste, Low Birth Weights, Cardiovascular Disease, Unemployment, and Housing Burden.

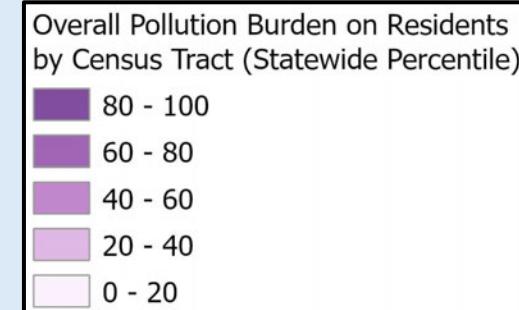
## How to Read this Study

Maps throughout this study are generally symbolized by statewide quantiles, which show the percentile rank of the geographical unit (a census tract, census block, community, etc.) in relation to the rest of the state.

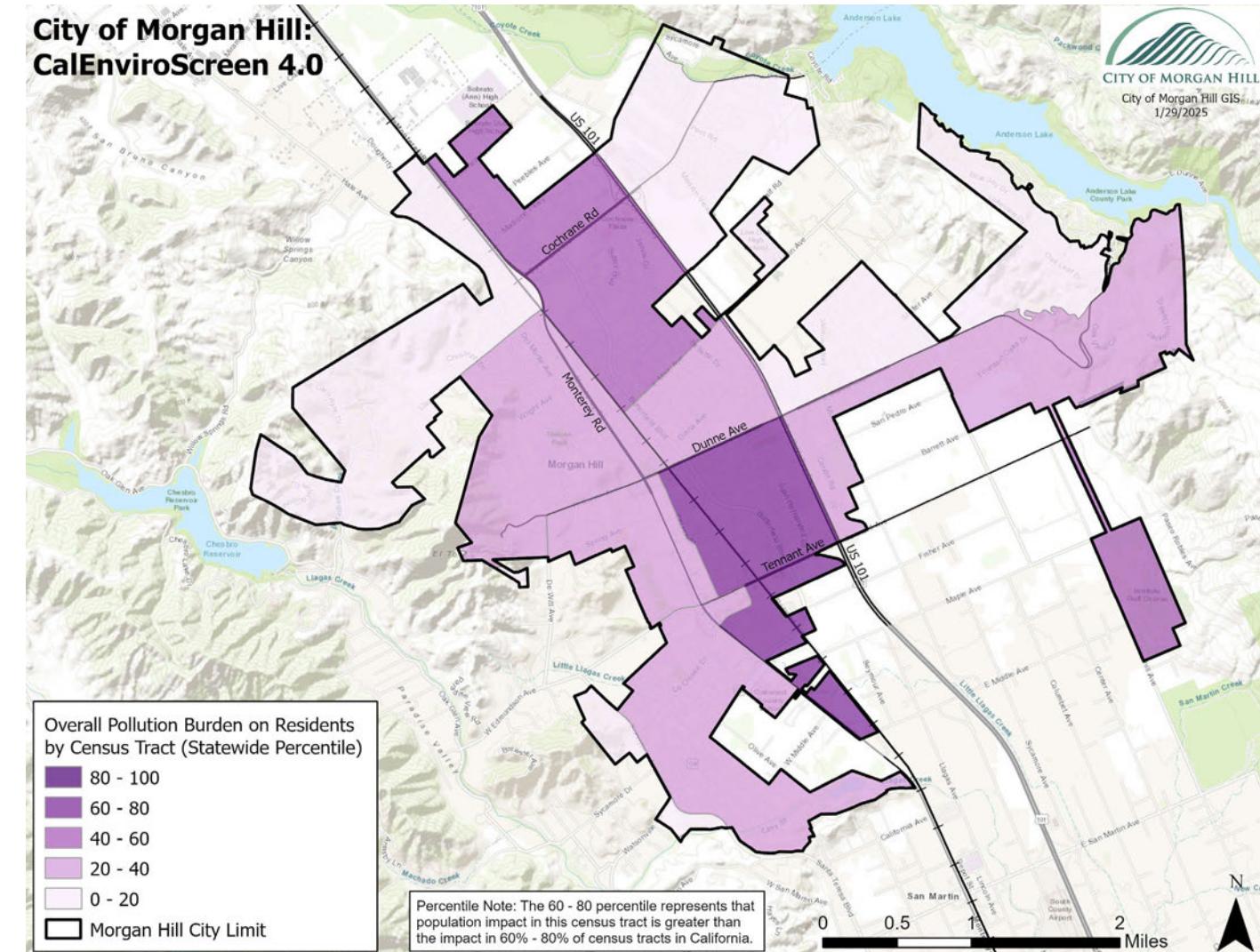
Darker colors and higher values generally correspond to more impacted areas such as those with higher pollution burden (with some exceptions, depending on the data).

For example, census tracts in the darkest color of the legend are in the top 20<sup>th</sup> percentile, meaning they score higher than 80 percent of census tracts in the state.

The legend will also specify the range of raw data values included within each quantile grouping. For example, the legend below shows that tracts with a raw value between 80% to 100% are in the top 20<sup>th</sup> percentile, or the top “quintile” because there are 5 groupings. These census tracts are ranked 80% higher than all census tracts within California.

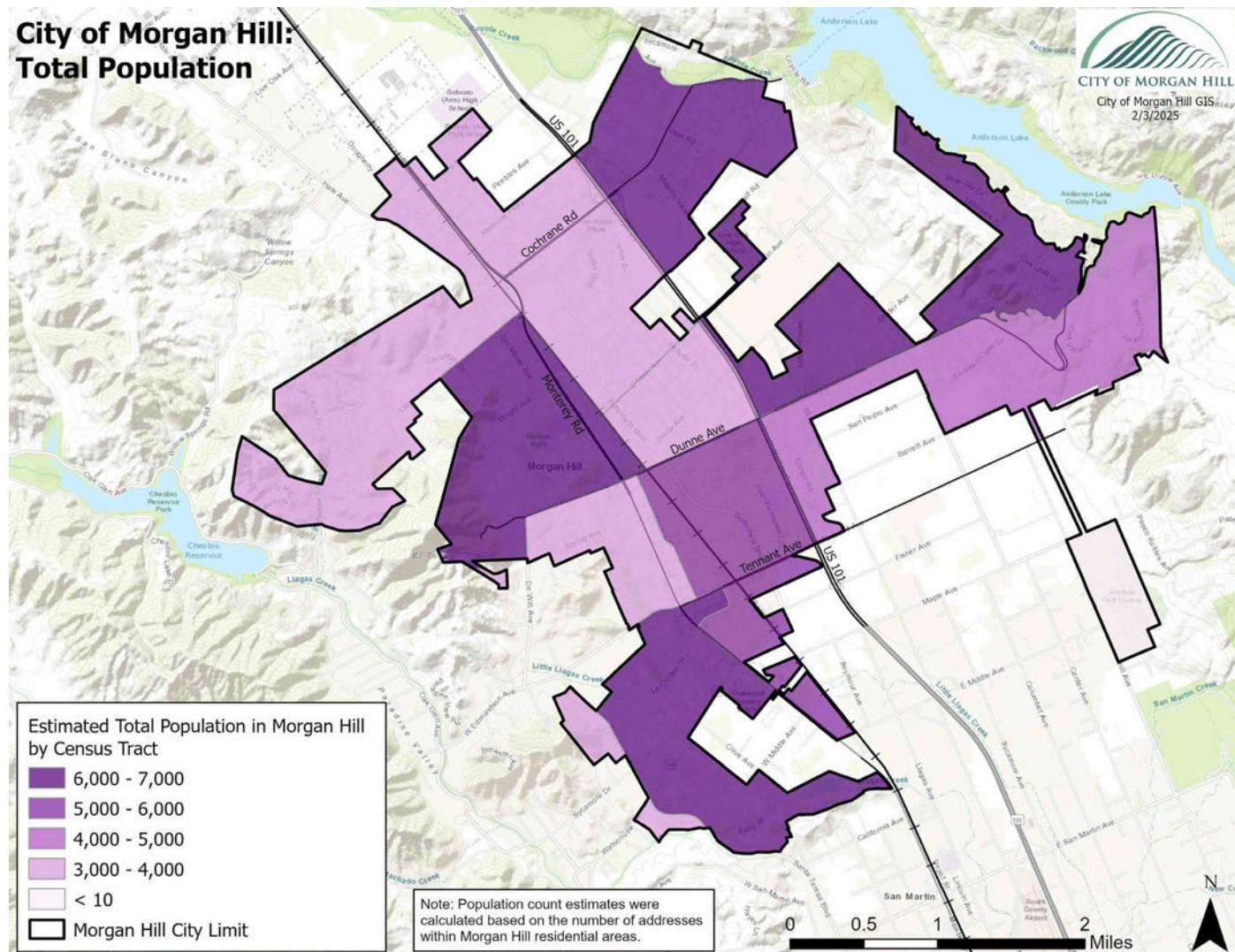


Based on the topics covered by SB 1000, this study assesses differences in indicators to identify areas in the city that are disproportionately disadvantaged. By comparing these maps and noting the emerging trends, this study will highlight key communities and issues of concern.



## Population

The map below shows the population in the city by census tract. It is important to note that the City is separated into ten census tracts, varying in size and population, and includes areas beyond the city limits. Although large populations on the below map are shown to be located toward the extremities of the City, such as on the east side of Highway 101, the land area within each census tract differs drastically. Many central communities within the City, such as downtown and neighborhoods near Monterey Road, are densely populated, while other areas like east of Highway 101 are much more sparsely populated.



Data and maps discussed throughout this study may show areas with large proportions (e.g., percentage or ratios) of population affected by certain conditions, but these areas may be geographies with low population densities (population per square mile).

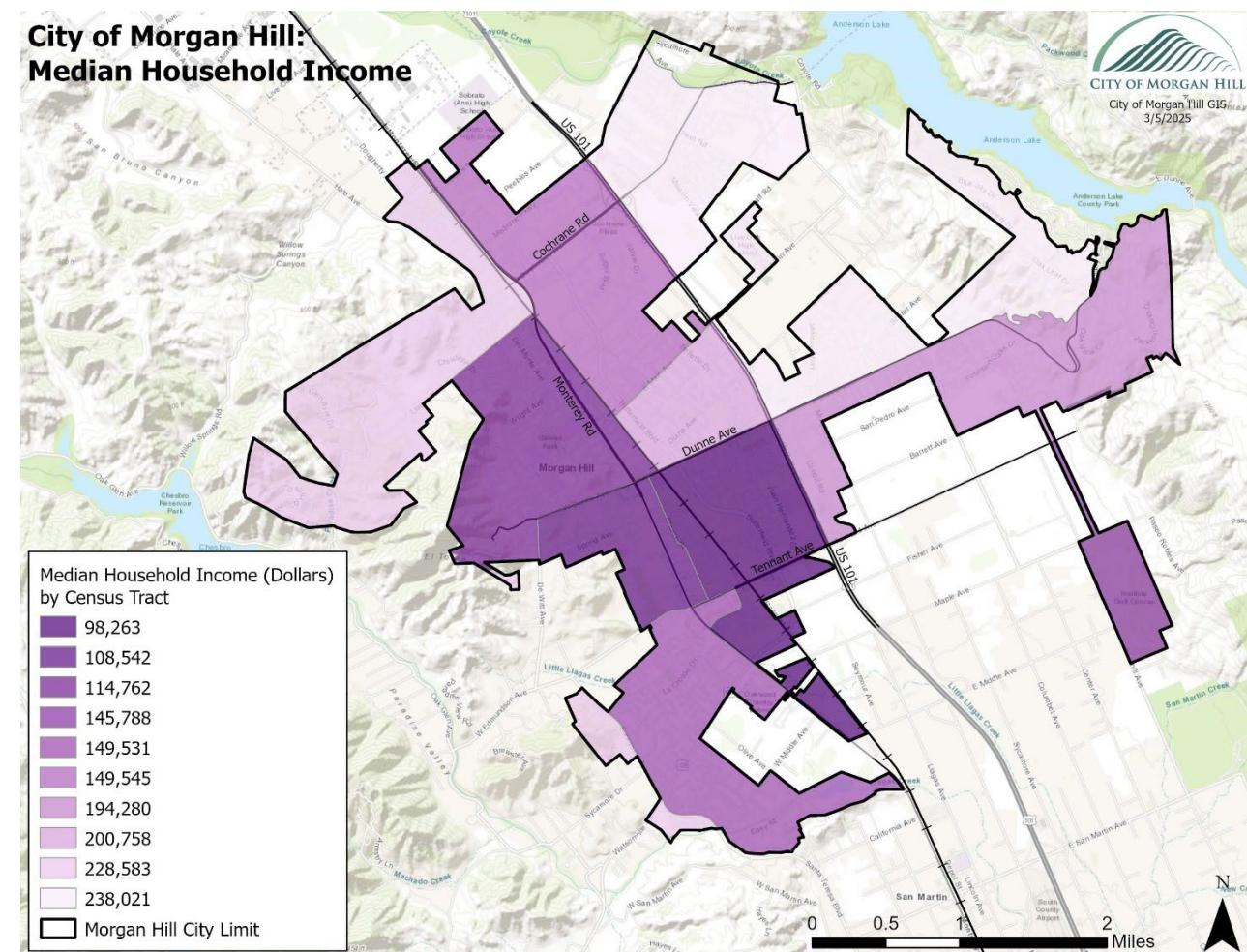
## Low Income Areas

There are two definitions of “low-income areas” in Senate Bill 1000 that use different thresholds. California Office of Planning and Research (OPR) Environmental Justice guidelines recommend considering both definitions when screening for potential Communities of Concern.

The first is based on the *statewide* median income. Low-income areas are those “with household incomes at or below 80 percent of the statewide median income.” Based on the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD)’s 2024 State Income Limits, the statewide median income for 2024 was \$111,300, and 80 percent of this value is \$89,040.

The second is based on the *area* median income defined as those “below the threshold designated as low income by the Department of Housing and Community Development’s list of state income limits.” Based on this, the low-income limit for Morgan Hill is \$146,100 annually.

As such, the area median income of \$146,100 annually was utilized in the evaluation of thresholds, instead of the statewide median income, for the City of Morgan Hill due to the cost of living within the Silicon Valley. Therefore, the map directly below shows census tracts by median household income levels; low-income areas are those shown in very light purple.

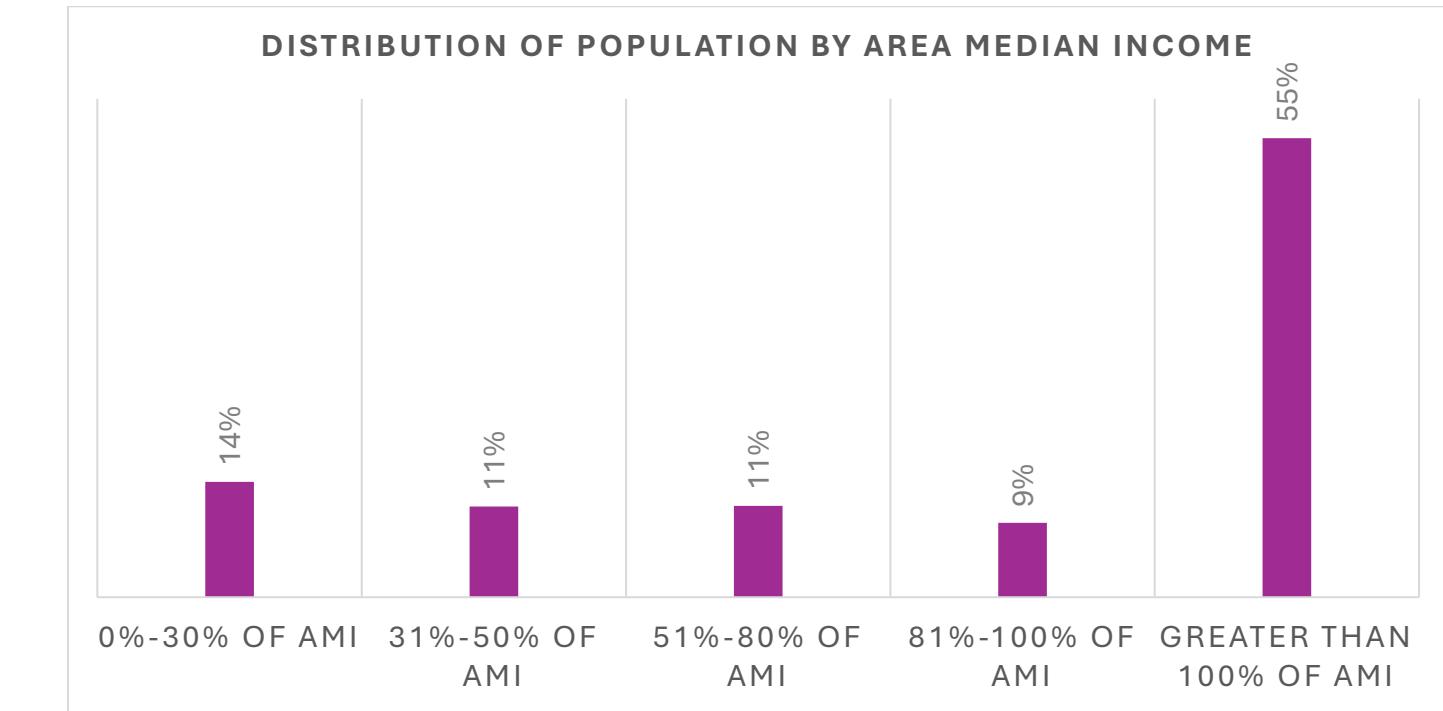
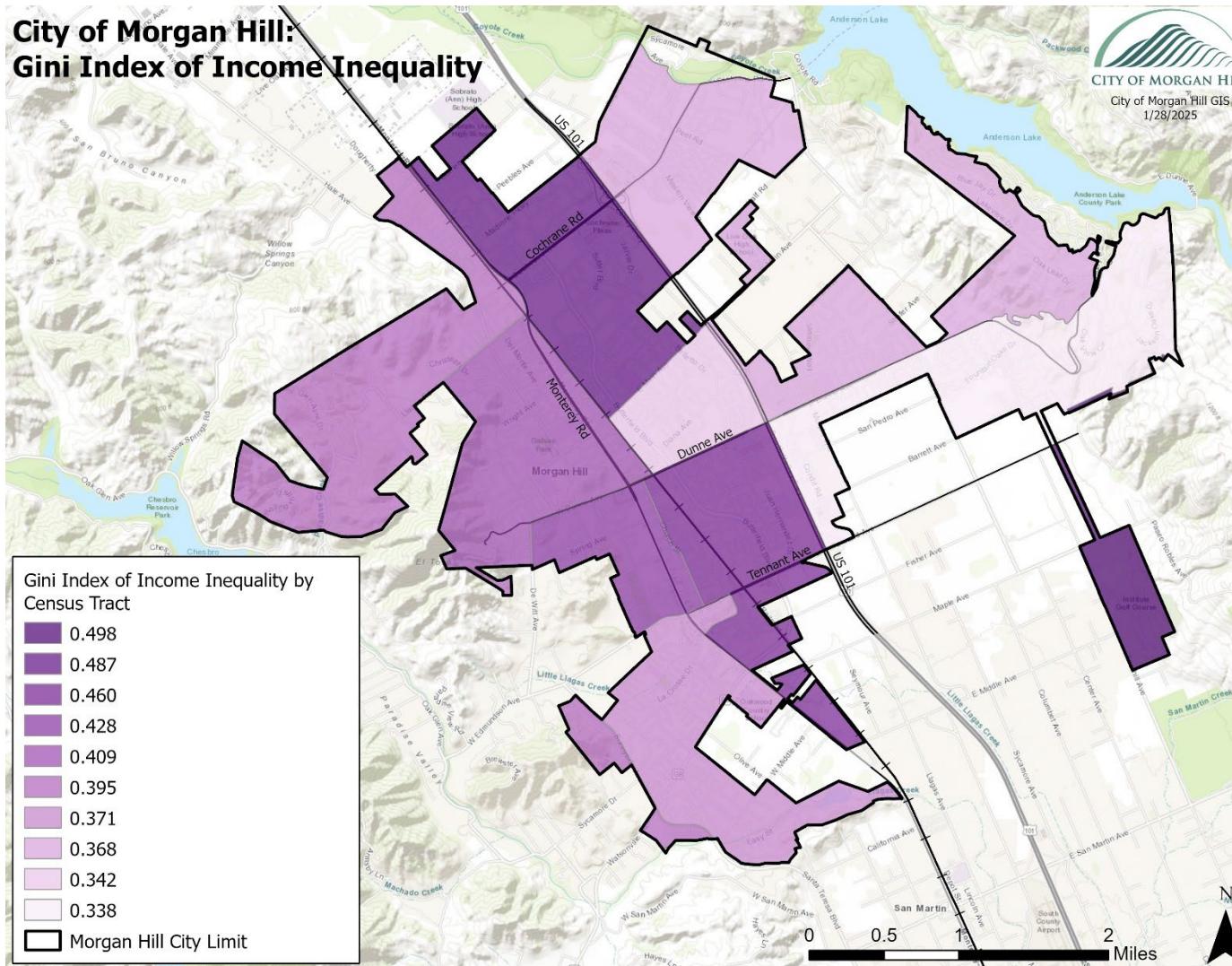


## Income Inequality

The map below shows the Gini Index of Income Inequality, which is a summary measure of the dispersion of incomes within the census tract. The Gini coefficient ranges from 0, indicating perfect equality (where everyone receives an equal share), to 1, perfect inequality (where only one recipient or group of recipients receives all the income).

The city ranges between 0.3 to 0.5 within the Gini Index of Income Inequality, but some areas are notably greater inequality (dark purple).

The chart shows the citywide distribution of incomes by area median income (AMI) and indicates that higher income ranges generally have a greater share than lower income ranges.



# Community Profile

## Socioeconomic Disparities

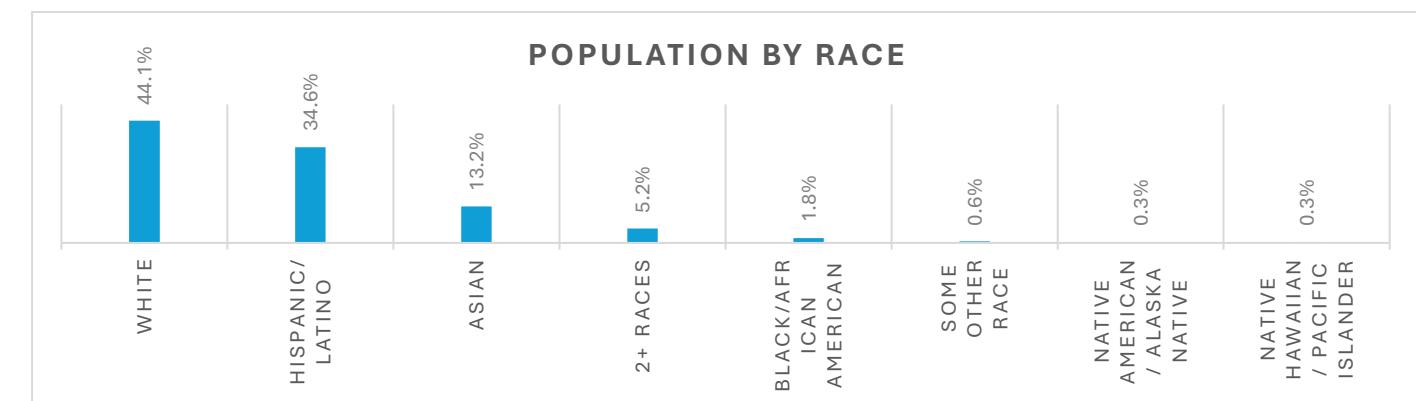
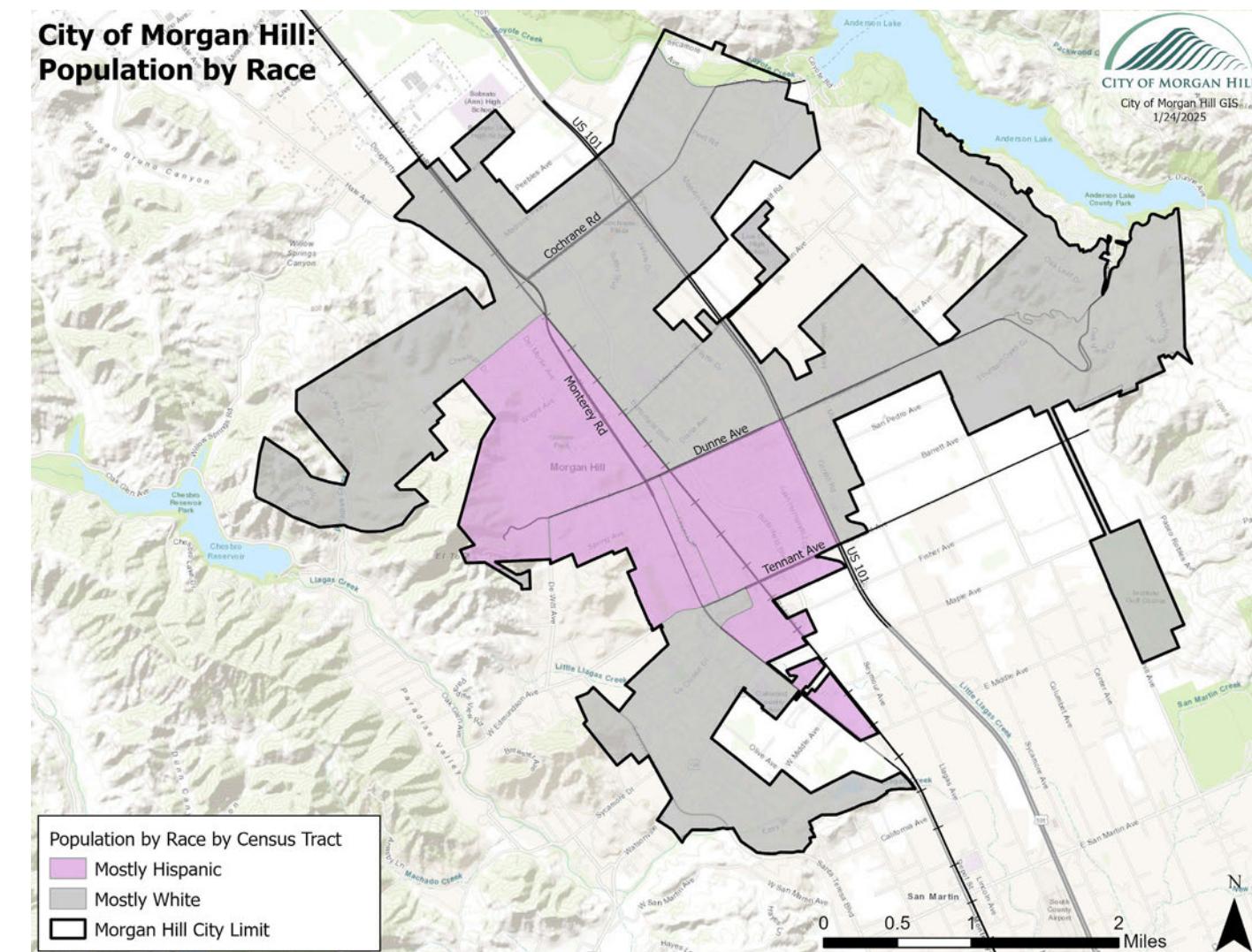
Morgan Hill shares the rich blend of cultures and ethnic diversity of Santa Clara County and the greater Bay Area. However, compared to other cities in the Bay Area, Morgan Hill is slightly less diverse. Hispanic residents make up about 35 percent of the City's population, and 13 percent of the population is Asian, 2 percent is Black, and 5 percent are of two or more races. Morgan Hill, like the rest of Silicon Valley, is seeing demographic changes in the population, with Hispanic/Latino and Asian residents growing at a faster rate than other demographics.

The map to the right shows the geographic distribution of Morgan Hill residents by race, aggregated at the census tract level. Although Morgan Hill is diverse, nearly a majority of the population is White. Only a few census tracts are heavily Hispanic/Latino as shown in purple, which also coincidentally are the lowest income census tracts within the City.

While racial and cultural diversity is a celebrated value today, national and local history includes past policies and governmental actions that have disenfranchised communities of color and continue to have impacts into the present. Redlining was a process used by the federal Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) in the 1930s to guide federal subsidies and mortgage lending and was largely determined by racial demographics. Red or "hazardous" neighborhoods were deemed riskiest, making it hard for residents from those communities to get loans for homeownership or maintenance and resulting in disinvestment. Its legacy still affects people of color locally and nationally today.

Although historical redlining did not appear to occur within Morgan Hill, the City's large detached zoning districts has had a significant impact on shaping the social and economic landscape that hinder cultural diversity within the City. Zoning laws that restrict certain types of housing, such as multi-family units or affordable housing, can limit the availability of diverse housing options. This can prevent lower-income and minority residents from moving into more affluent neighborhoods, reinforcing segregation and limiting access to resources like quality schools and healthcare.

Creating a true sense of belonging can help build trust, elevate and empower communities, and boost economic mobility. To enhance a sense of belonging and trust throughout the Community, but especially between the City and Spanish-speaking residents, the City needs to increase opportunities for engagement.

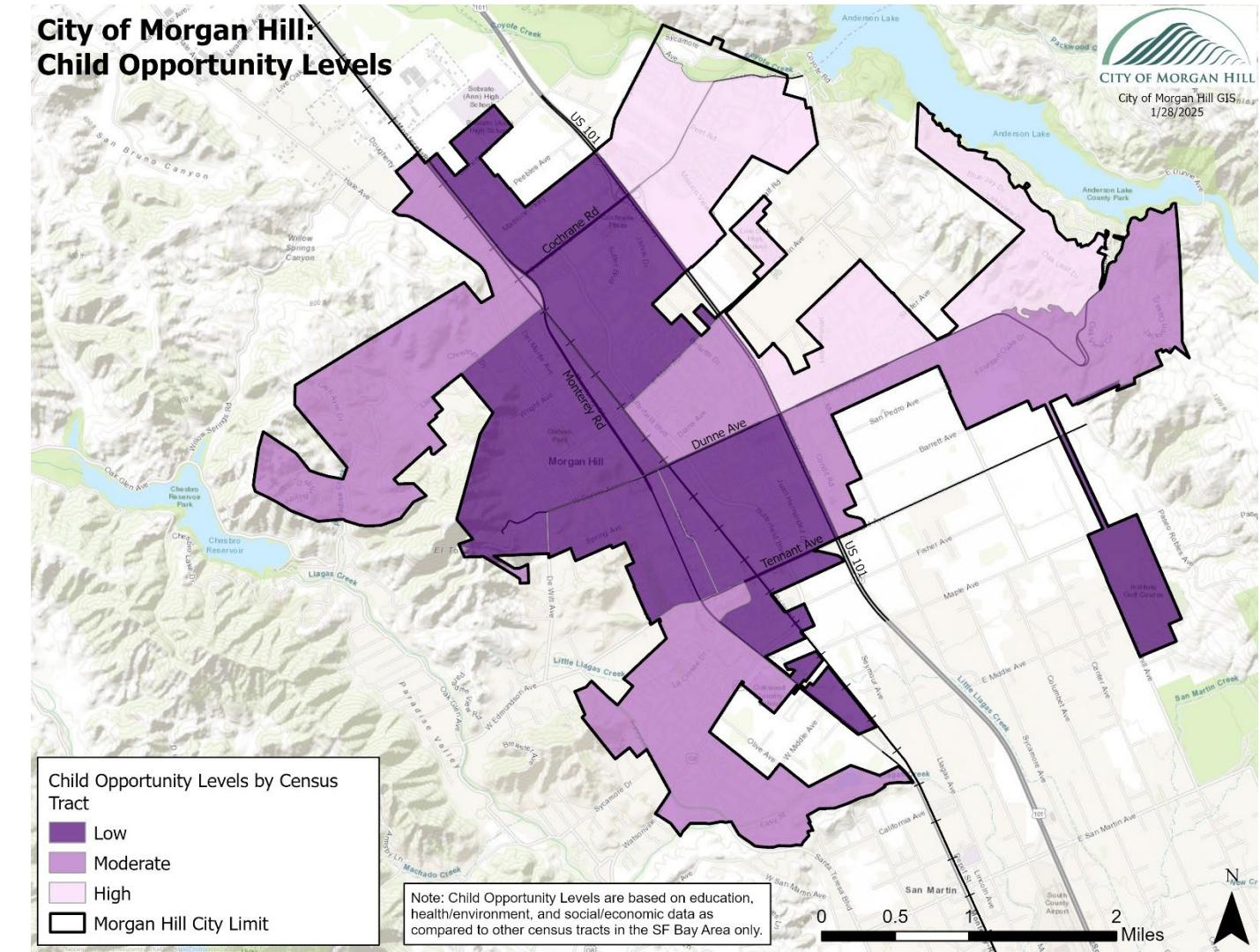
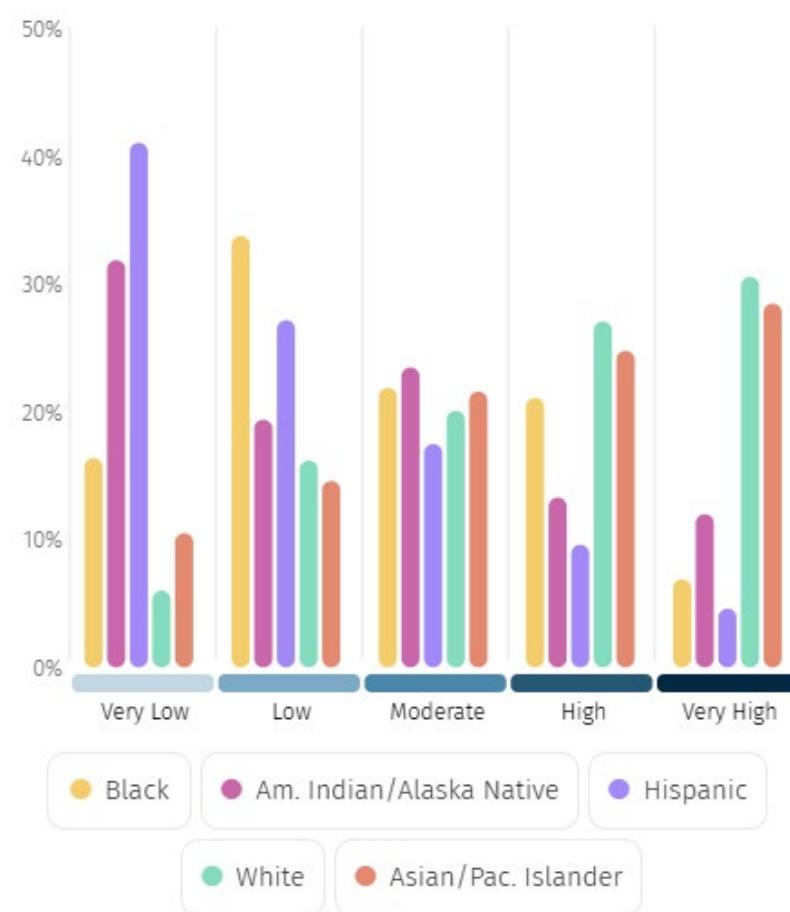


The Child Opportunity Index (COI) is a metric developed by the Kirwan Institute (diversitydatakids.org) that measures neighborhood resources and conditions that affect childhood development. COI 3.0, updated in 2024, has 44 neighborhood-level indicators in three domains (education, health and environment, and social and economic) and 14 subdomains including early childhood education, elementary education, secondary and post-secondary education, educational and social resources indicators; healthy environment, toxic exposure and health resource indicators; and poverty rate, public assistance rate, homeownership rate, high skill employment, and median household income.

The COI score ranges from Very Low Opportunity to Very High Opportunity. The map to the right shows that opportunity is not equal in Morgan Hill; tracts in the eastern half of the city tend to be higher, while tracts in the central portion of the City score much lower.

There is also a racial opportunity gap, within the City. While Morgan Hill is culturally diverse, White racial groups are far more represented in the High and Moderate opportunity categories, while Hispanic populations have significantly higher proportions in the Low opportunity groups. Plus, the most significant racial opportunity gap is within the Community of Concern of the City, which has a Hispanic population four times higher than all of the other racial groups combined.

Overall Child Opportunity by Ethnicity

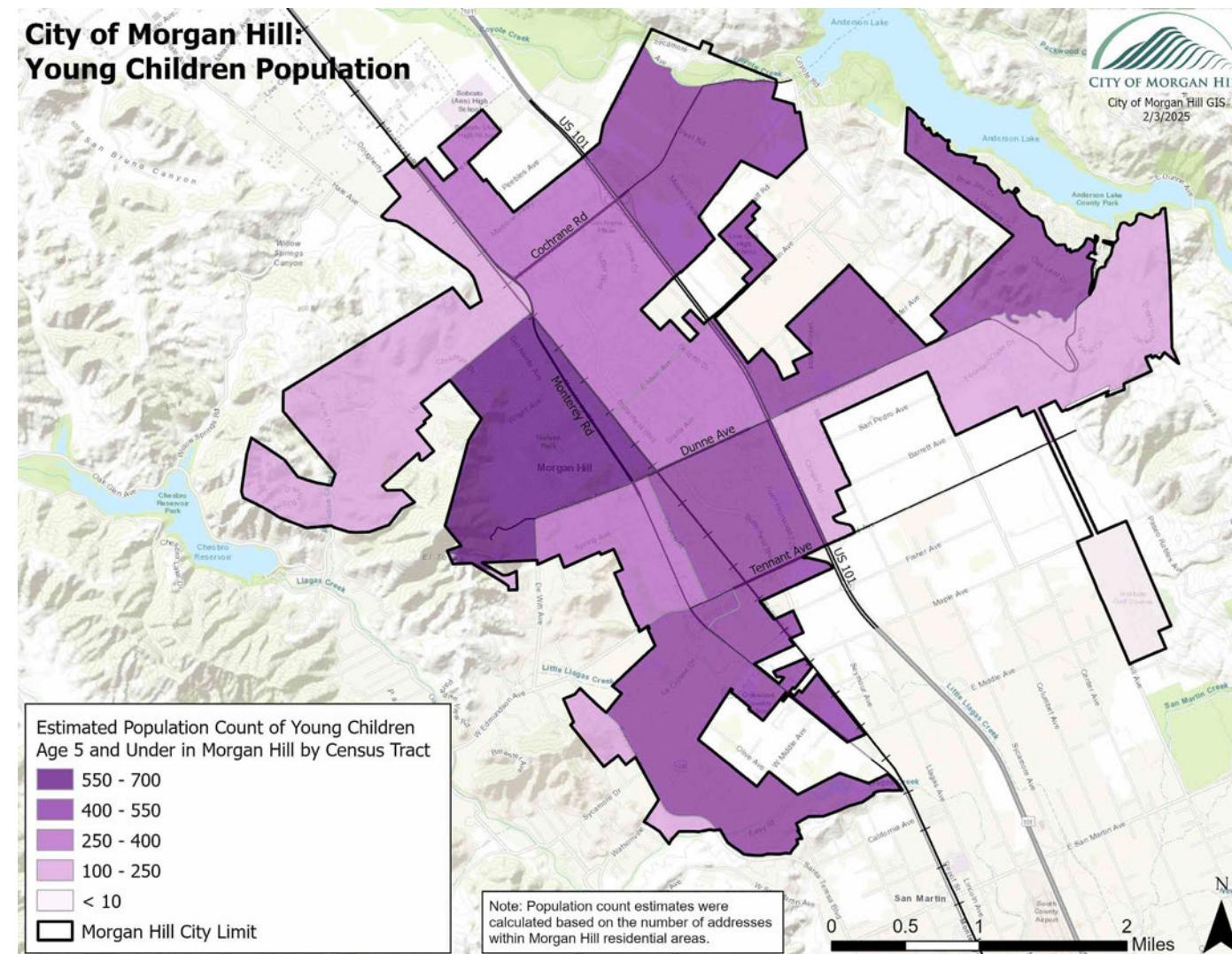


## Vulnerable & Sensitive Populations

Certain groups of individuals are more vulnerable or susceptible to negative health effects when exposed to various kinds of pollution, including individuals with existing health conditions, young children, and seniors. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) identifies uses that serve these populations as “sensitive receptor uses,” which include hospitals, schools, daycare facilities, elderly housing and convalescent facilities.

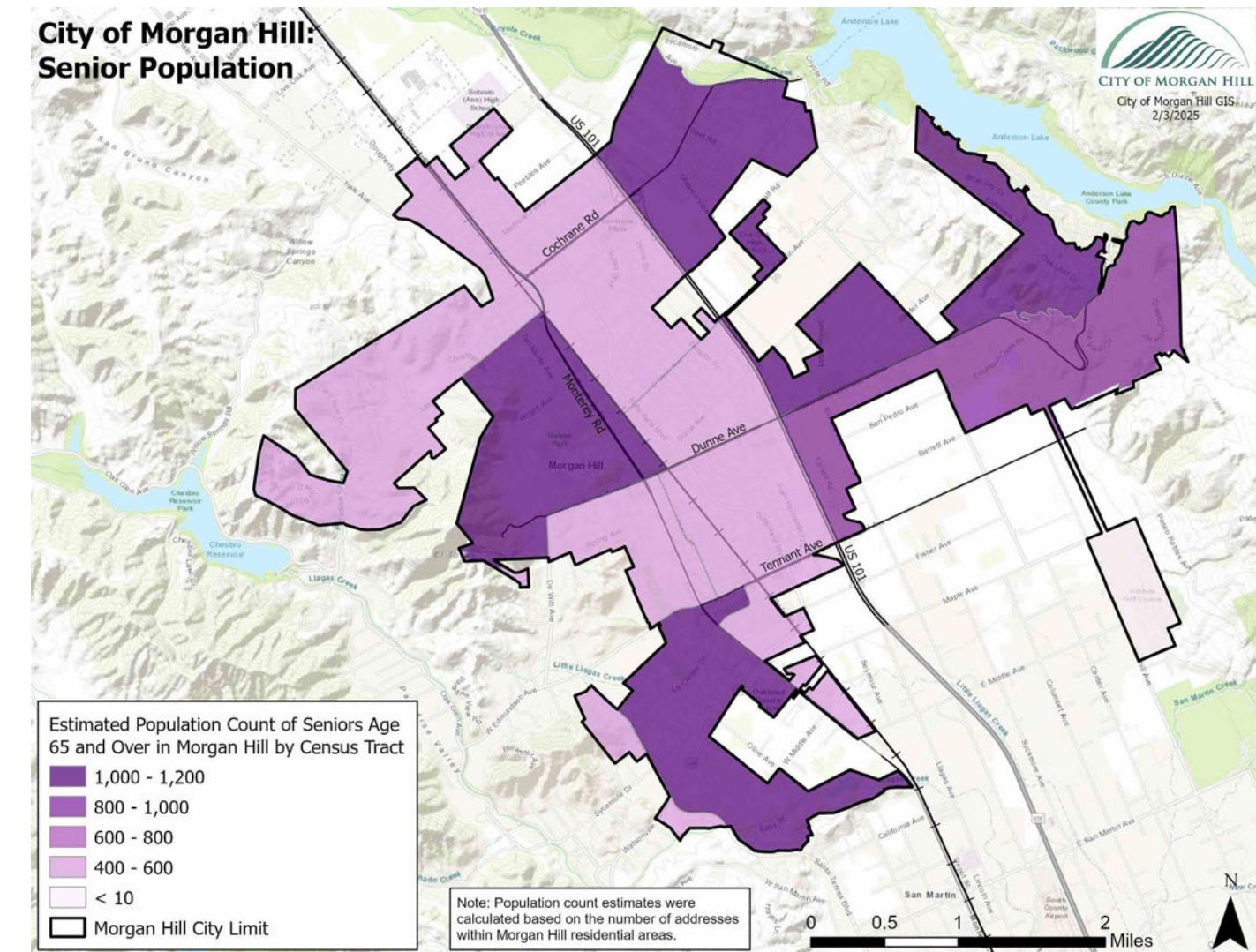
According to the American Community Survey (ACS) 2023 5-year estimates by the United States Census, the median age in Morgan Hill is 38.8, compared to 38.2 statewide and 38.3 countywide.

The distribution of young children ages 5 and under is relatively even throughout the city, except in the northwestern and eastern side of the City, which has only 5%, 6%, and 3% of its population age 5 and under, respectively, as mapped to the left. Coincidentally, these areas have the highest resources within the City as indicated on the previous page.



The map on the right illustrates senior populations (ages 65 and older), which vary throughout the city. Seniors are particularly concentrated on the East side of Highway 101 and the western northern and southern extremities of the City, ranging from 17% to 20%. Due to the aging of the baby boomer generation, growth in the City's senior population is expected. The City's Community of Concern has the lowest senior population at 10%.

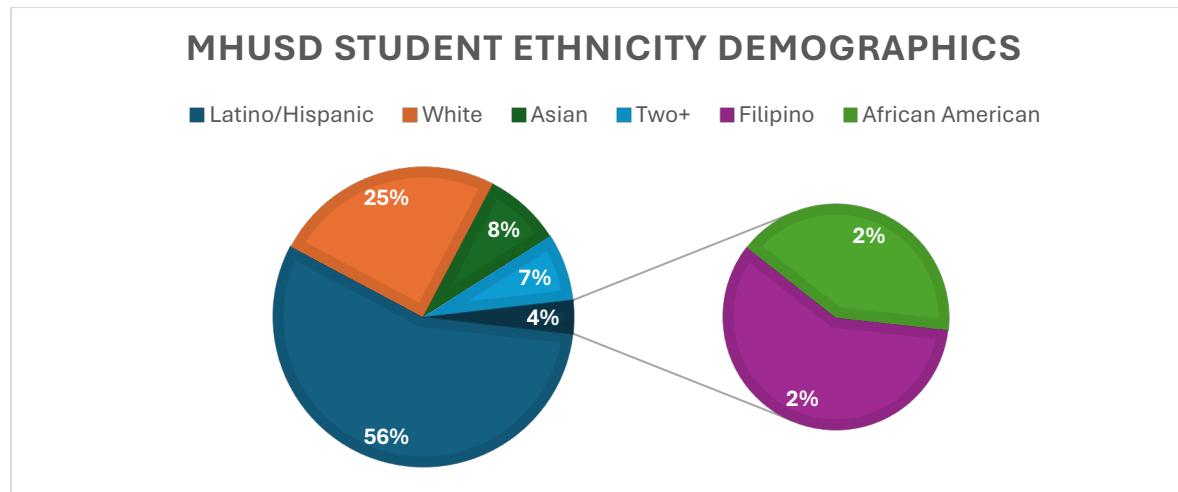
Negative health outcomes can result from ongoing pollution exposure, impacting children and seniors the most. Existing health conditions among Morgan Hill residents are shown on the next page.



## Education

### 2024-2025 MHUSD Student Demographic

Morgan Hill Unified School District (MHUSD) consists of 13 schools and 7,910 students for the 2024-2025 school year. The graph below shows the student body ethnicity demographics at the schools served by Morgan Hill Unified School District, of which a majority of the student population is Latino/Hispanic.



Four out of every ten students identify as socioeconomically disadvantaged. Socioeconomically disadvantaged includes students who met at least one of the following criteria: parents has not received a high school diploma; eligible for the Free Meal program or Reduced-Price Meal program; eligible for the Title I Part C Migrant program; considered Homeless; Foster Program Eligible; enrolled in a Juvenile Court School; or eligible as Tribal Foster Youth.

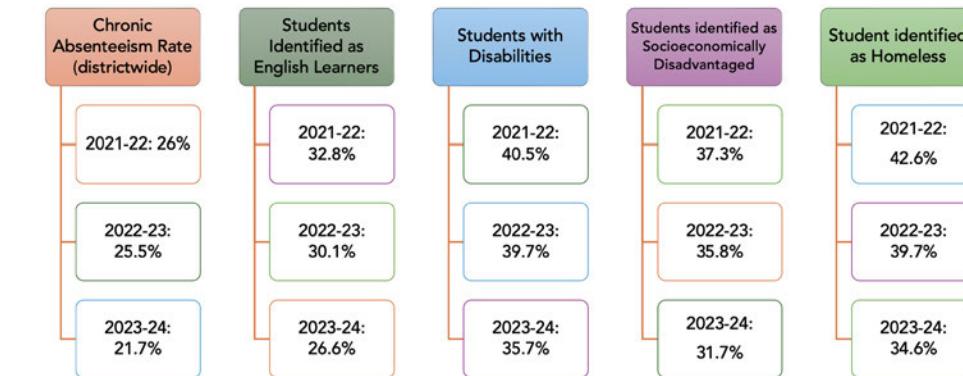
As such, nearly one out of every 10 students are unhoused; nearly one out of every five students are English learners; and more than one out of every ten students are in special education or have an IEP (Individualized Education Program).

Chronic absenteeism in schools refers to a student missing 10% or more of their school days during a school year, for any reason, including excused and unexcused absences; essentially, it means a student is missing a substantial amount of school time throughout the year. Reasons for chronic absences can include health issues, family situations, transportation problems, mental health concerns, bullying, or lack of engagement with school.

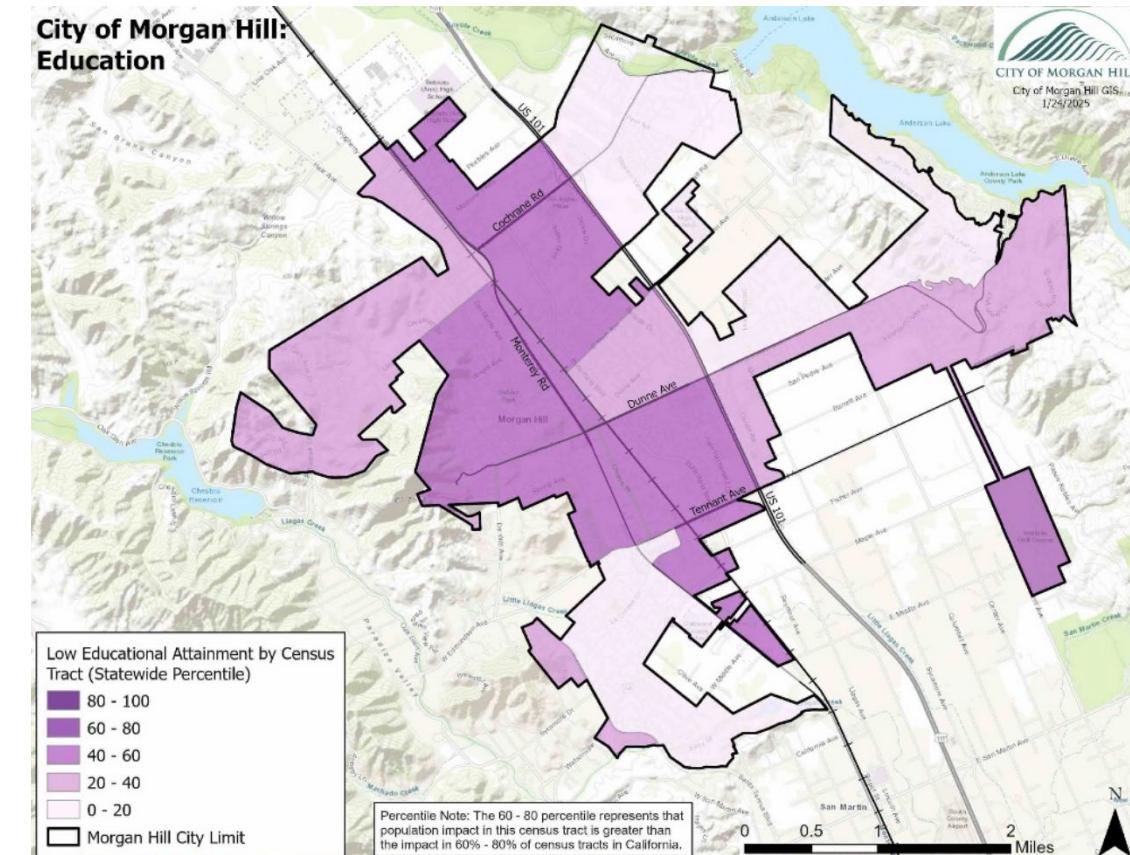
Left unaddressed, chronic absence can translate into difficulties in learning, especially in younger students, and can hinder academic achievement. Chronic absenteeism has soared in California and

nationally in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, and addressing this extraordinary increase is crucial to helping students catch up academically.

### MHUSD Student Chronic Absenteeism



Educational attainment is the highest level of education a person has completed. People with more education usually earn more than people with less education. California has a high percentage of people without high school degrees compared to the rest of the United States, which makes education important to consider. Many studies have found that the health effects of air pollution are worse among people with low educational attainment.

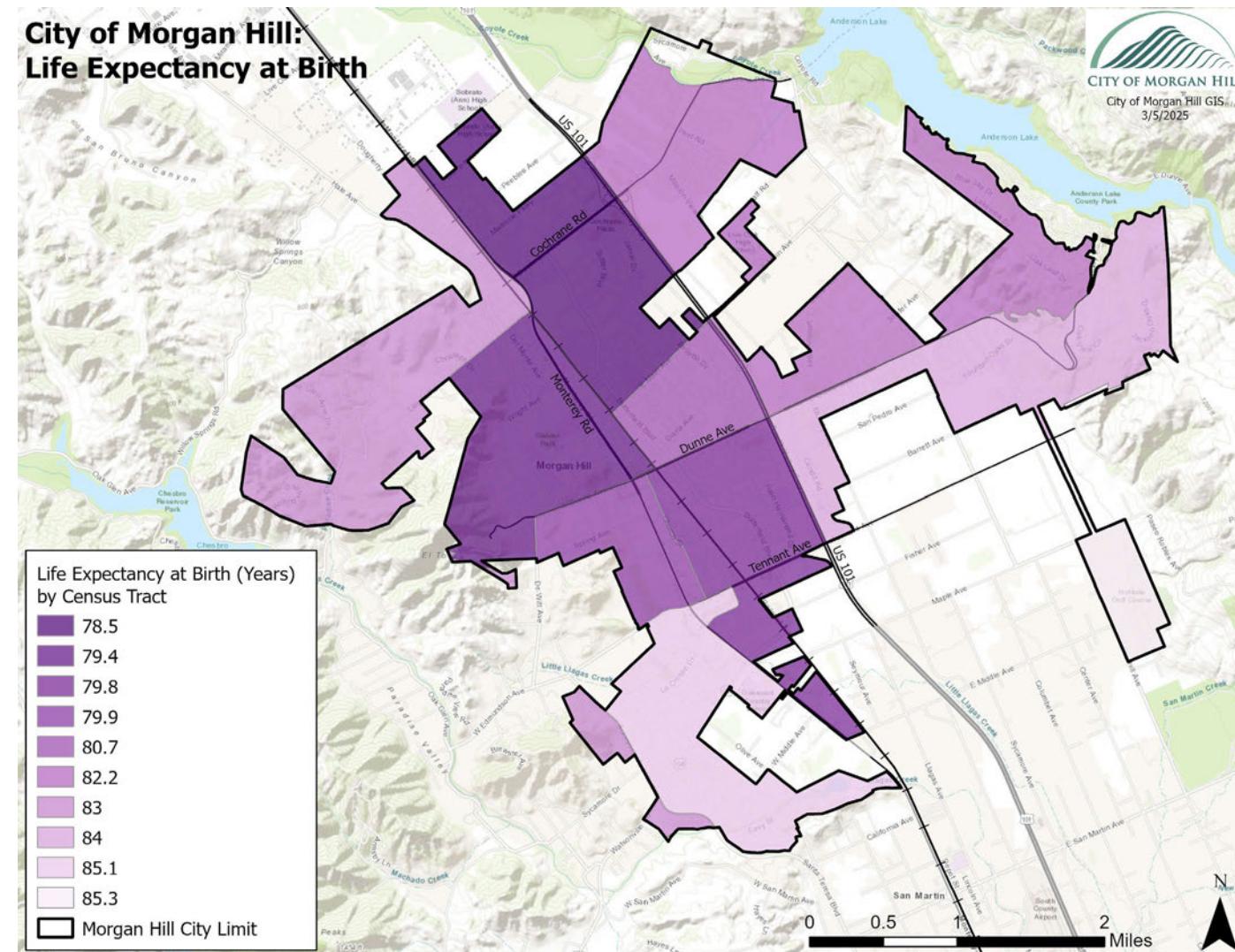


# Health Outcomes & Healthcare

## Health Inequalities

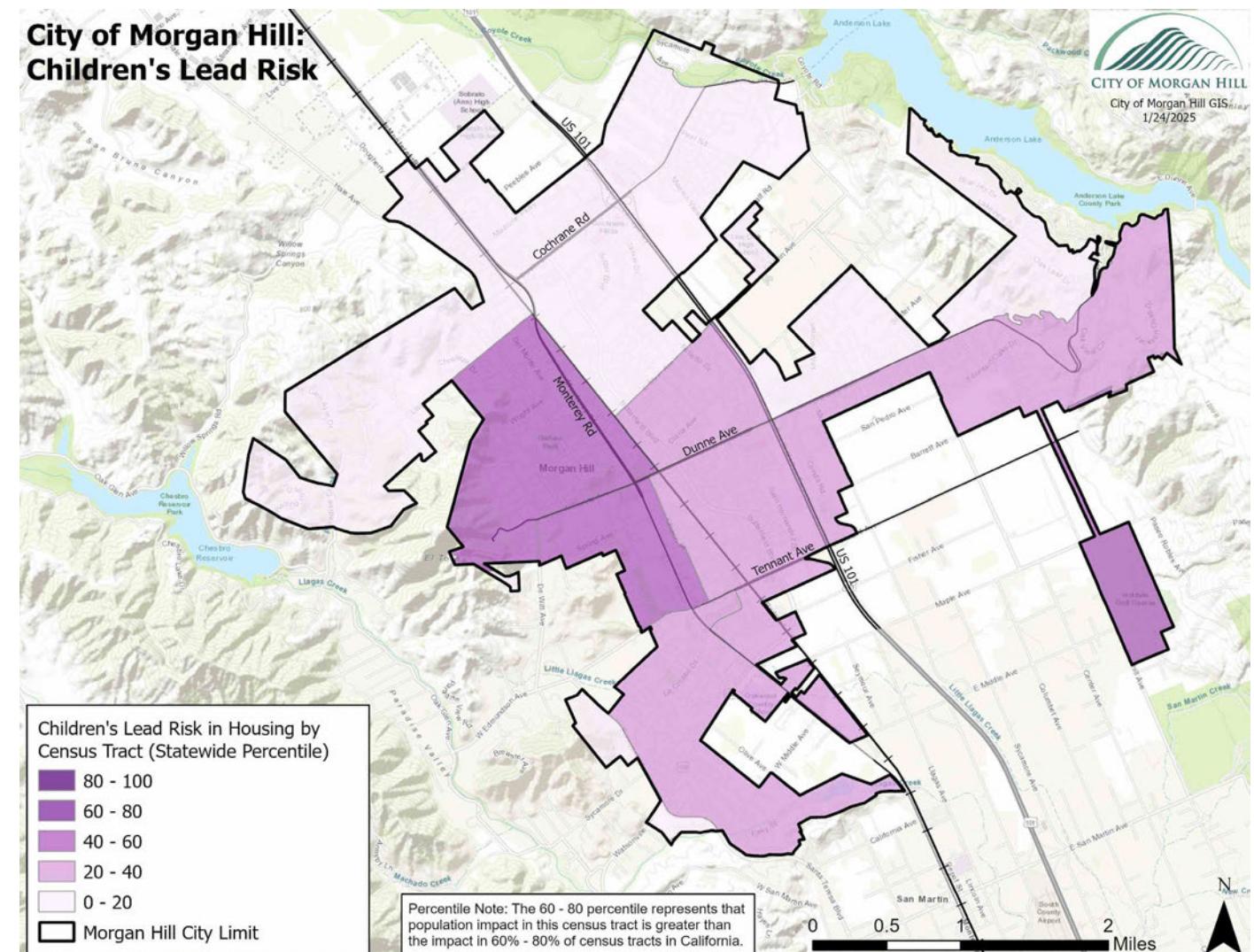
Life expectancy is one of the most basic measures of public health. In Morgan Hill, the median life expectancy is 81 years, but there is a 7-year difference in life expectancy between the highest and lowest census tract. Furthermore, life expectancy is lower in neighborhoods along the Monterey Road corridor.

Life expectancy is directly tied to individual health, which can vary based on a person's environmental exposure. The maps to the right show trends of negative health outcomes, which generally overlap in the same areas – along the Monterey Road corridor and the southwestern portion of the City.

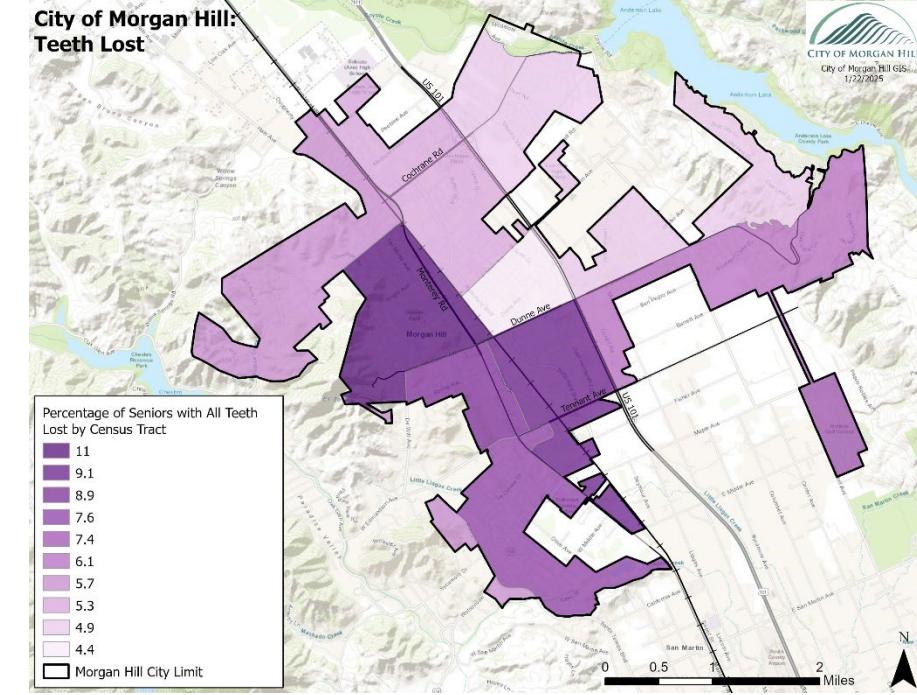
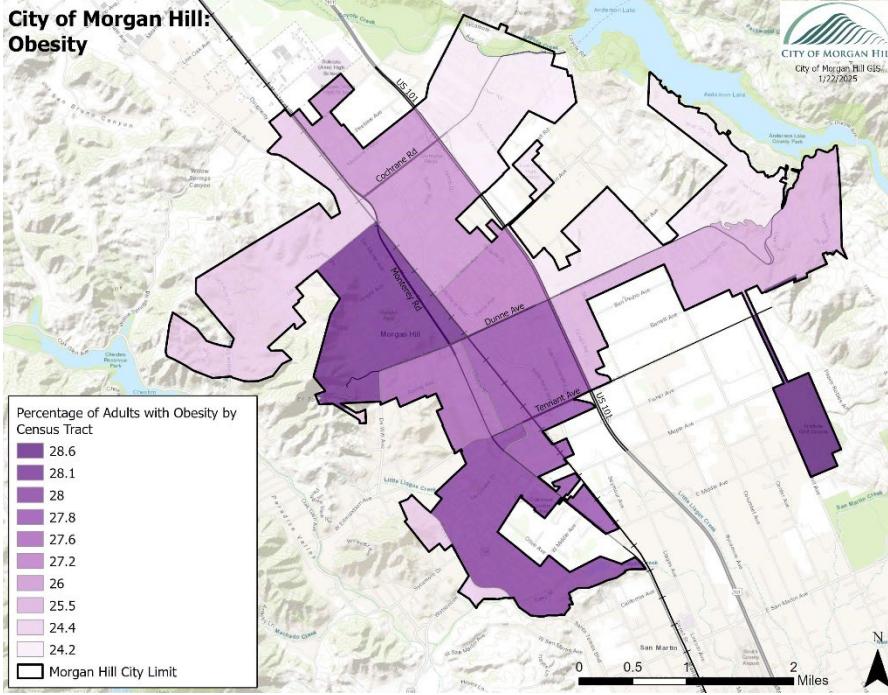
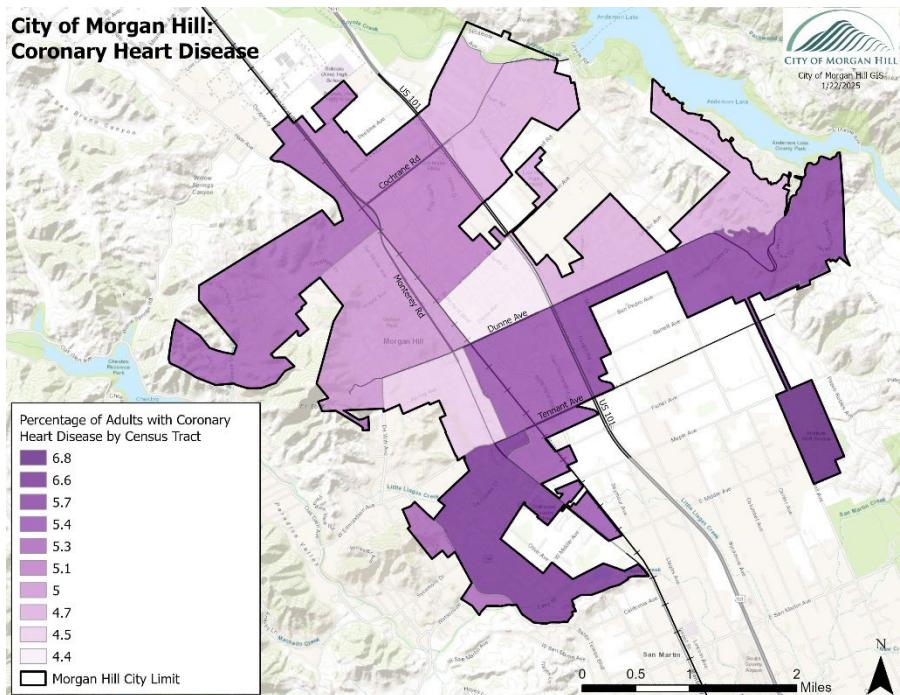
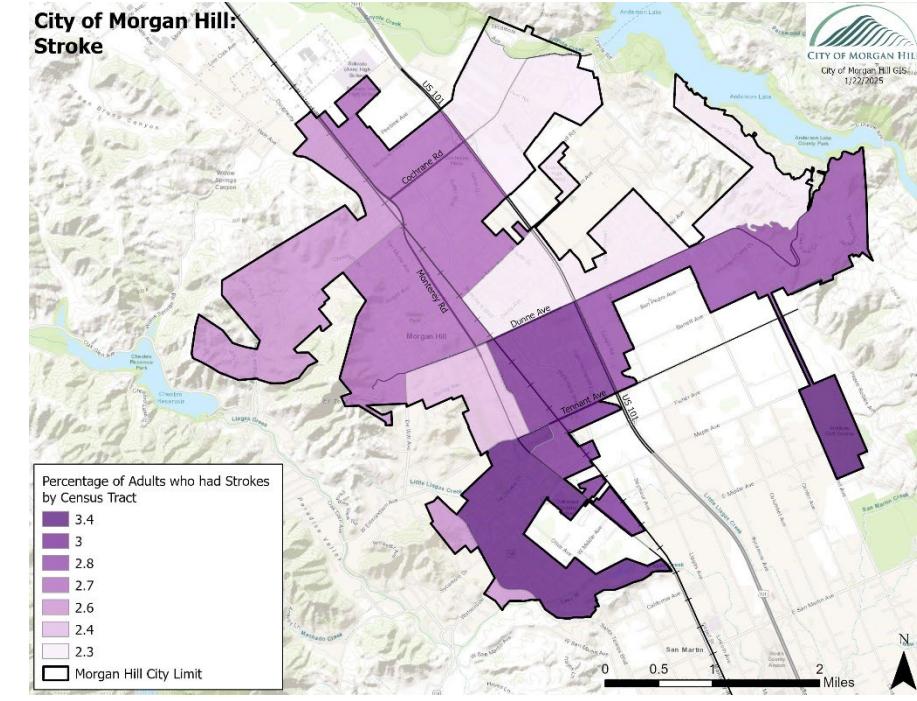
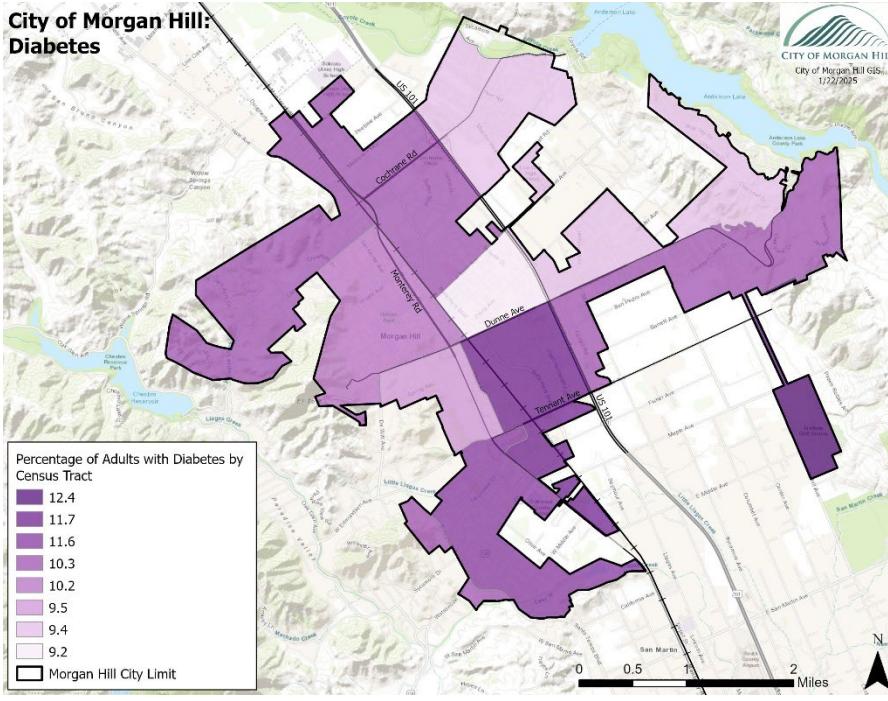
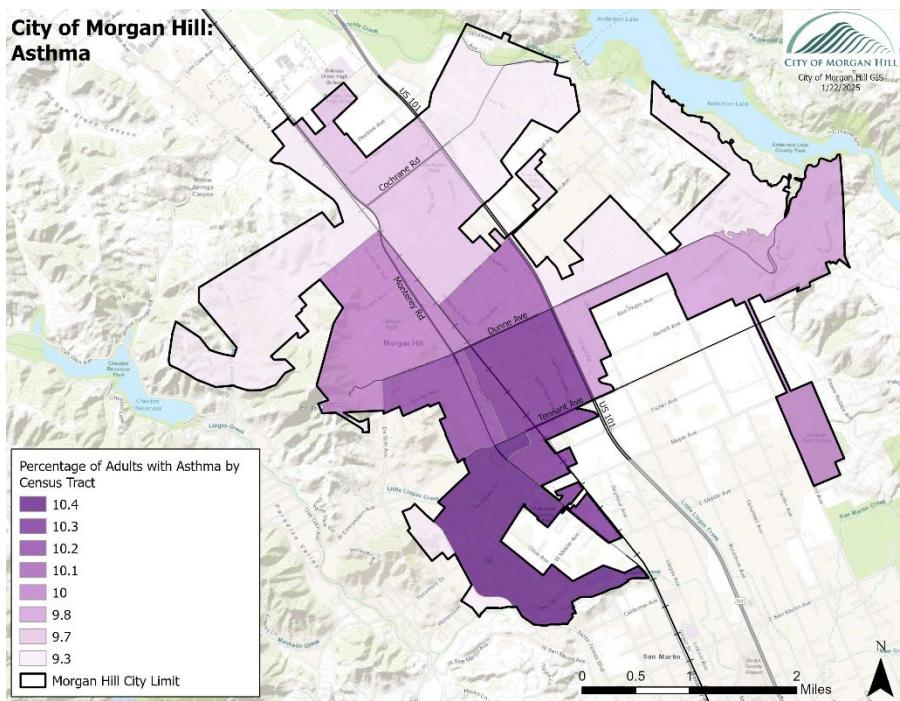


Lead is a toxic metal that occurs naturally in the environment. However, the highest levels of lead present in the environment are a result of human activities. Historically, lead has been used in house paint, plumbing, and as a gasoline additive. While lead levels have declined over the past five decades in the United States, it still persists in older housing. Exposure to lead through paint is the most significant source of lead exposure for children.

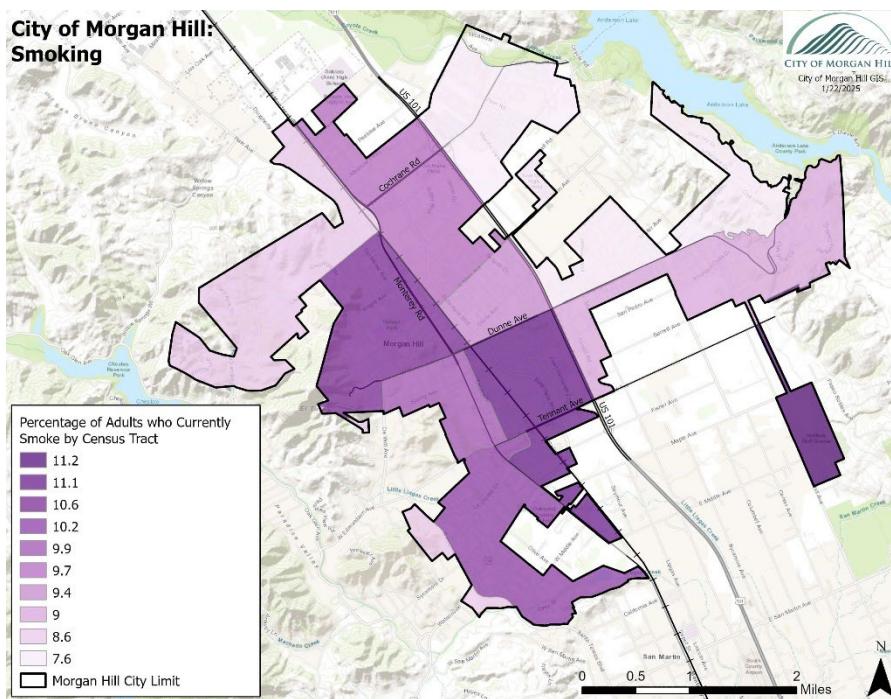
There are no known safe levels of lead exposure. Young children are especially susceptible to the effects of lead exposure and can suffer adverse health effects, particularly in the brain and nervous system. This increased susceptibility is due to children's unique exposure pathways, developing brains, and differences in the absorption of ingested lead. Children's exposure to lead even at low levels can lead to a higher likelihood of lower IQ and educational performance outcomes, and symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).



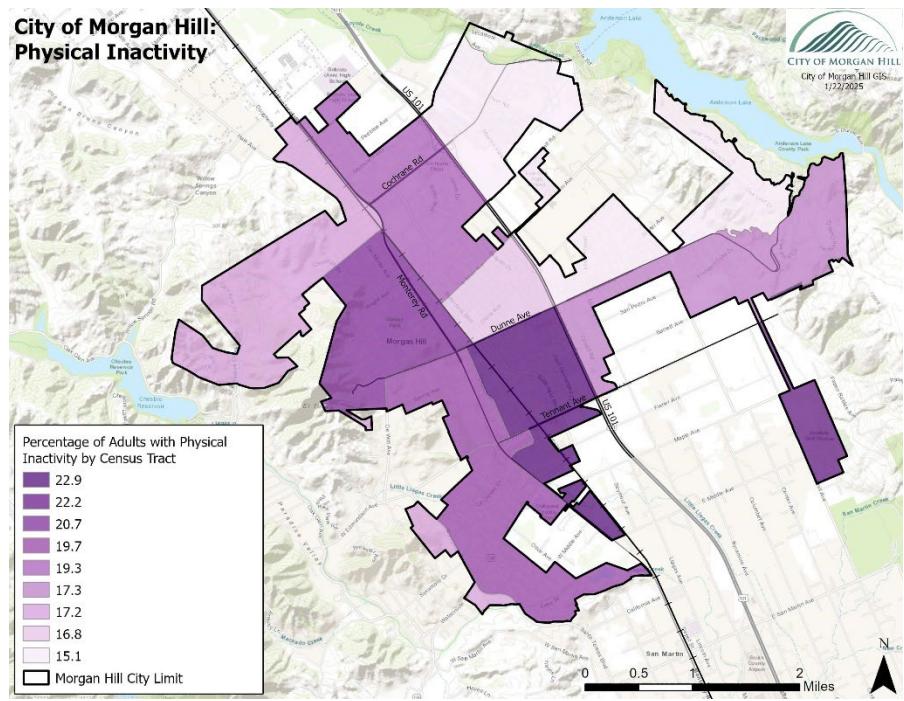
## Negative Health Outcomes



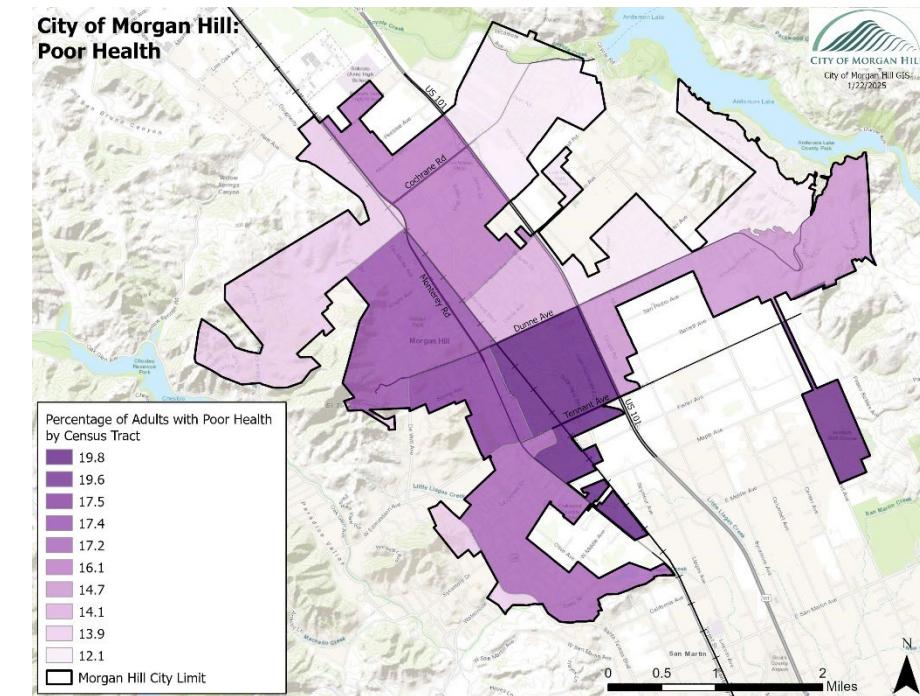
More than 480,000 deaths each year are attributed to cigarette smoking and exposure to tobacco smoke, making it the leading preventable cause of death in the United States.<sup>1</sup> In 2021, 11.5% of adults smoked cigarettes.<sup>2</sup> Smoking increases the risk of heart disease, stroke, multiple types of cancer, and chronic lung disease.<sup>3</sup> Quitting smoking is beneficial to health at any age, reduces the risk of premature death, and can add as much as 10 years to life expectancy.<sup>4</sup>



Regular physical activity can improve the health and quality of life of Americans of all ages, regardless of the presence of a chronic disease or disability. Among adults and older adults, physical activity can lower the risk of early death, coronary heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, breast and colon cancer, falls, and depression.<sup>5</sup> The second edition of the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans states that adults should move more and sit less throughout the day. Some physical activity is better than none. Adults who sit less and do any amount of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity gain some health benefits. Despite the benefits, in 2023, 24.5% of adults reported engaging in no leisure-time physical activity.<sup>6</sup>



Health status is a measure of how people perceive their health and is considered a good global assessment of a person's well-being. Furthermore, it is a predictor of important health outcomes including mortality, morbidity, and functional status.<sup>7</sup> Health status is also used to measure healthy life expectancy at the population level. In 2023, 15.1% of adults assessed their health as fair or poor.<sup>8</sup> Substantial differences in the prevalence of fair or poor self-reported health status exist by age group, race, education level, urbanization level, and poverty status.



<sup>1</sup> National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health. *The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, US Dept of Health and Human Services; 2014. [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK179276/pdf/Bookshelf\\_NBK179276.pdf](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK179276/pdf/Bookshelf_NBK179276.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Cornelius ME, Loretan CG, Jamal A, et al. Tobacco product use among adults—United States, 2021. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep*. 2023;72(18):475-483. doi:10.15585/mmwr.mm7218a1

<sup>3</sup> Office of the Surgeon General. 2010 Surgeon General's Report: *How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease: The Biology and Behavioral Basis for Smoking-Attributable*

Disease. US Dept of Health and Human Services; 2010. [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK53017/pdf/Bookshelf\\_NBK53017.pdf](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK53017/pdf/Bookshelf_NBK53017.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Office of the Surgeon General. *Smoking Cessation: A Report of the Surgeon General*. US Dept of Health and Human Services; 2020. <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/2020-cessation-sgr-full-report.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*, 2nd edition. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2018. [https://health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/Physical\\_Activity\\_Guidelines\\_2nd\\_edition.pdf](https://health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/Physical_Activity_Guidelines_2nd_edition.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity. Data, Trend and Maps. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/nccdpdp/dnpao/data-trends-maps/index.html>

<sup>7</sup> DeSalvo KB, Blosner N, Reynolds K, He J, Muntner P. Mortality prediction with a single general self-rated health question. A meta-analysis. *J Gen Intern Med*. 2006;21(3):267-275. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1525-1497.2005.00291.x>

<sup>8</sup> National Center for Health Statistics. Percentage of fair or poor health status for adults aged 18 and over, United States, 2023. National Health Interview Survey. Accessed October 25, 2024. [https://www.cdc.gov/NHISDataQueryTool/SHS\\_adult/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/NHISDataQueryTool/SHS_adult/index.html)

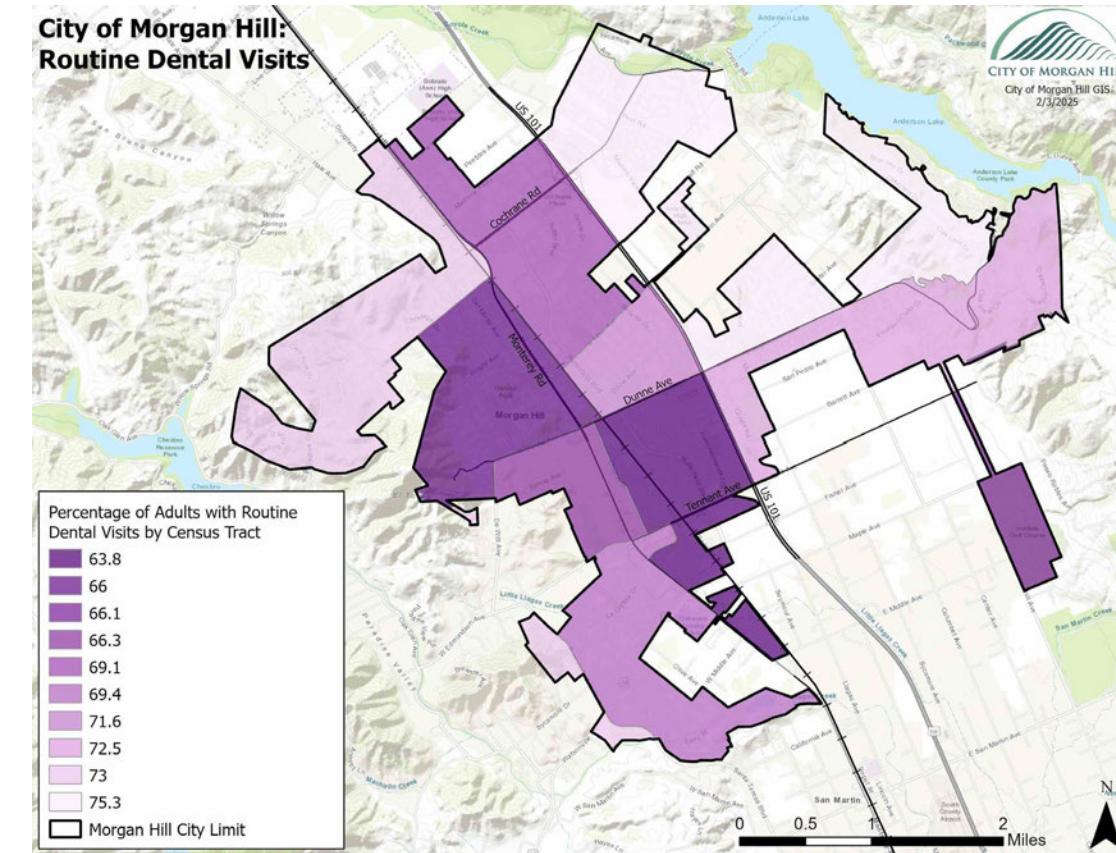
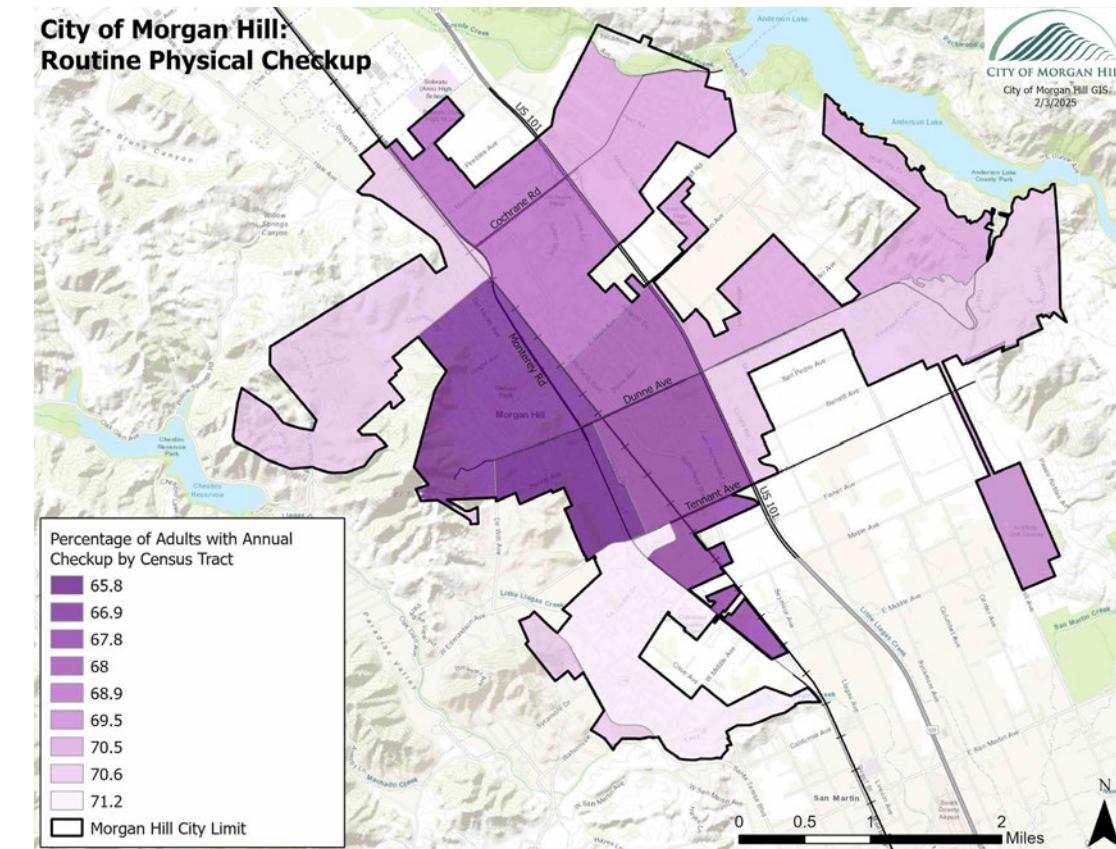
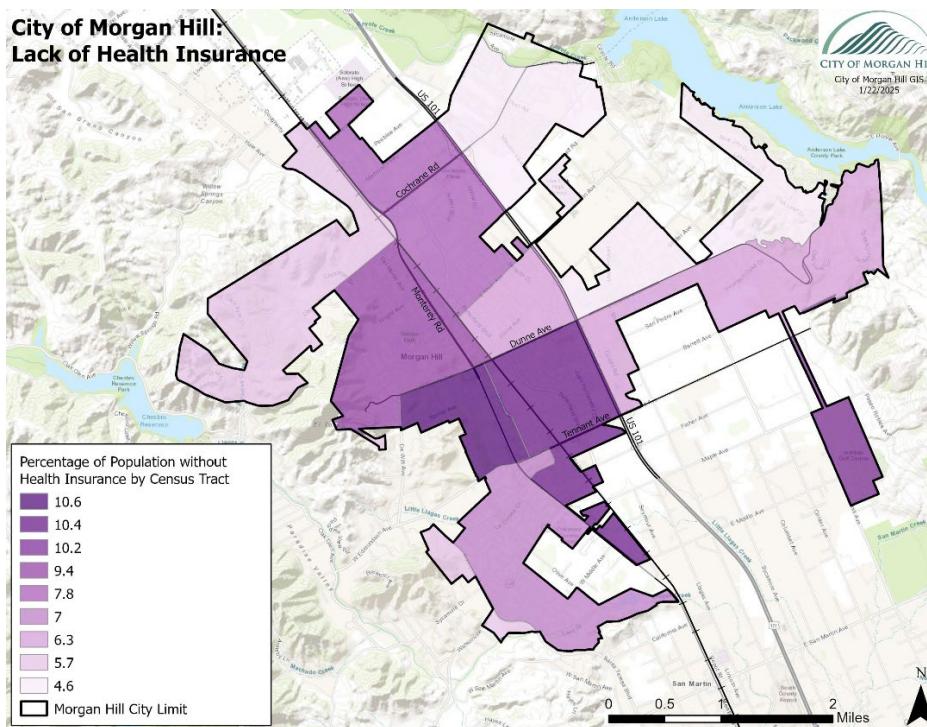
## Access to Healthcare

Proper medical care is a vital component of maintaining personal health. However, not everyone can afford healthcare, and certain areas of the city have less access to these services than others.

The map to the bottom left shows the highest concentration of residents who lack health insurance by census tract, with as high as 10.6 percent of the adult population less than 65 years old without health insurance, encompassing the southwestern portion of the city. These areas correspond with the lowest income areas of the City.

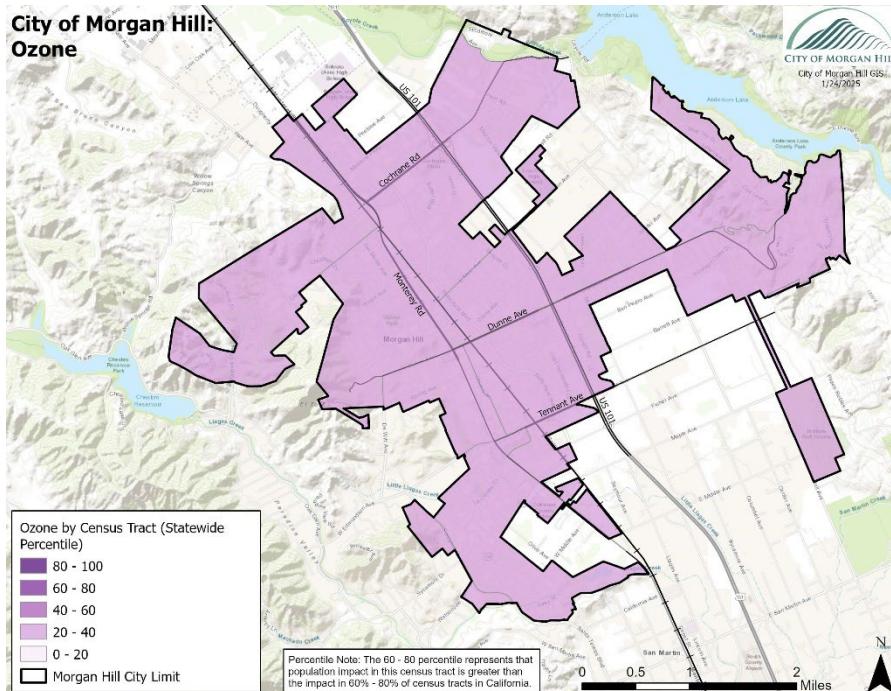
Based on data from the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) PLACES dataset, receiving annual physical checkups is an important preventive behavior that correlates with improved health. The map to the top right shows that for most tracts in the city, between 65% and 71% of adults get routine physical checkups. Similarly, routine dental visits range between 63% and 75% throughout the city as shown in the map on the bottom right. Routine dental visits allow for oral health education, preventive care services, and early detection and treatment of oral diseases such as dental cavities, gum disease, and oral cancer.

As the baby boomer generation ages (born between 1946 and 1964), the need for appropriate care is apparent. Adults ages 65 and older are more likely to develop chronic illnesses and related disabilities, so national experts recommend a set of clinical preventive services to detect and treat them at early stages. These services include influenza and pneumonia vaccinations, colorectal cancer screening, and mammography screening for women. Seniors in lower income neighborhoods are less likely to receive these core preventive services, and men are less likely (58% to 67%) to be up to date on these services than women (78% to 80%).



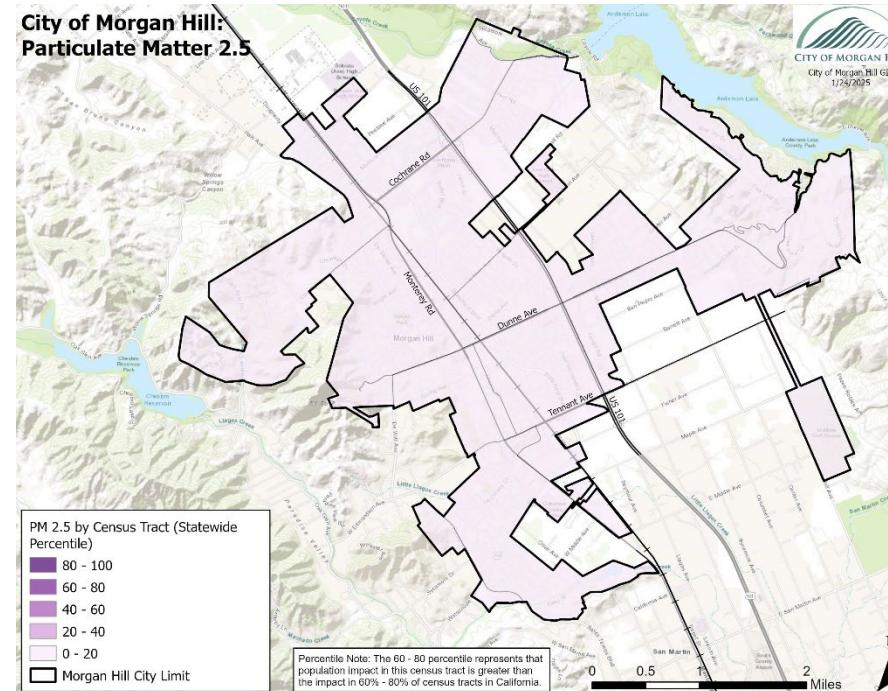
# Pollution Exposure

## Air Pollution



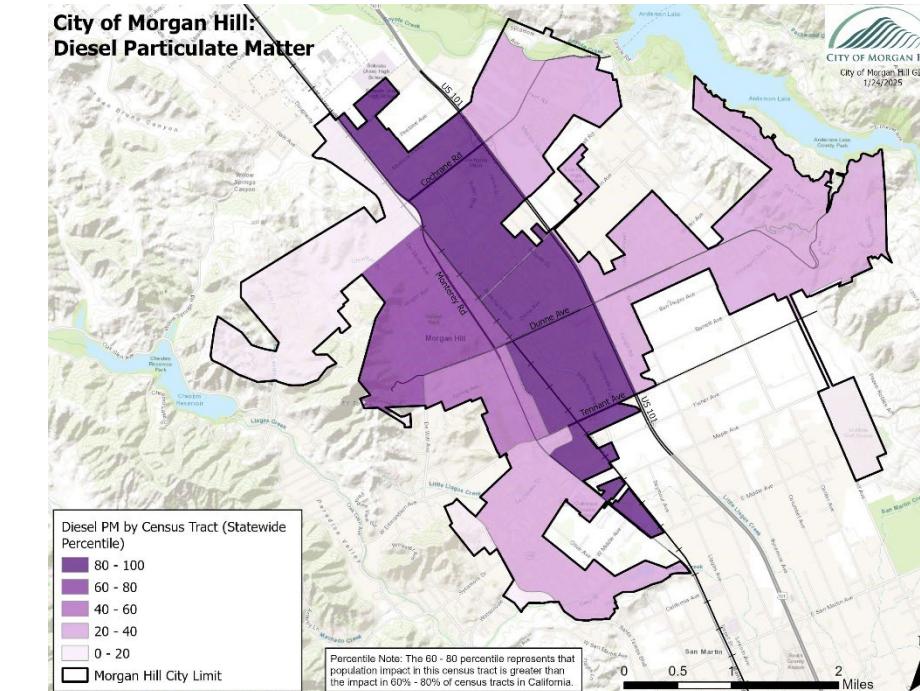
Ground-level ozone is the main ingredient of smog and primarily comes from trucks, cars, planes, trains, factories, farms, construction, and dry cleaners. It is one of the most widespread and significant air pollution health threats in California and can cause lung irritation, inflammation, and worsening of existing chronic health conditions like asthma.

California Air Resources Board (CARB) monitors ozone at stations across the state, and thresholds are regularly set to ensure air districts are within acceptable levels. Because this data is based on the closest air monitoring station within 50 kilometers, all areas within Morgan Hill have the same score [0.044 parts per million (ppm)]. The ozone percentile concentration within Morgan Hill is higher than 35% of the census tracts in California.



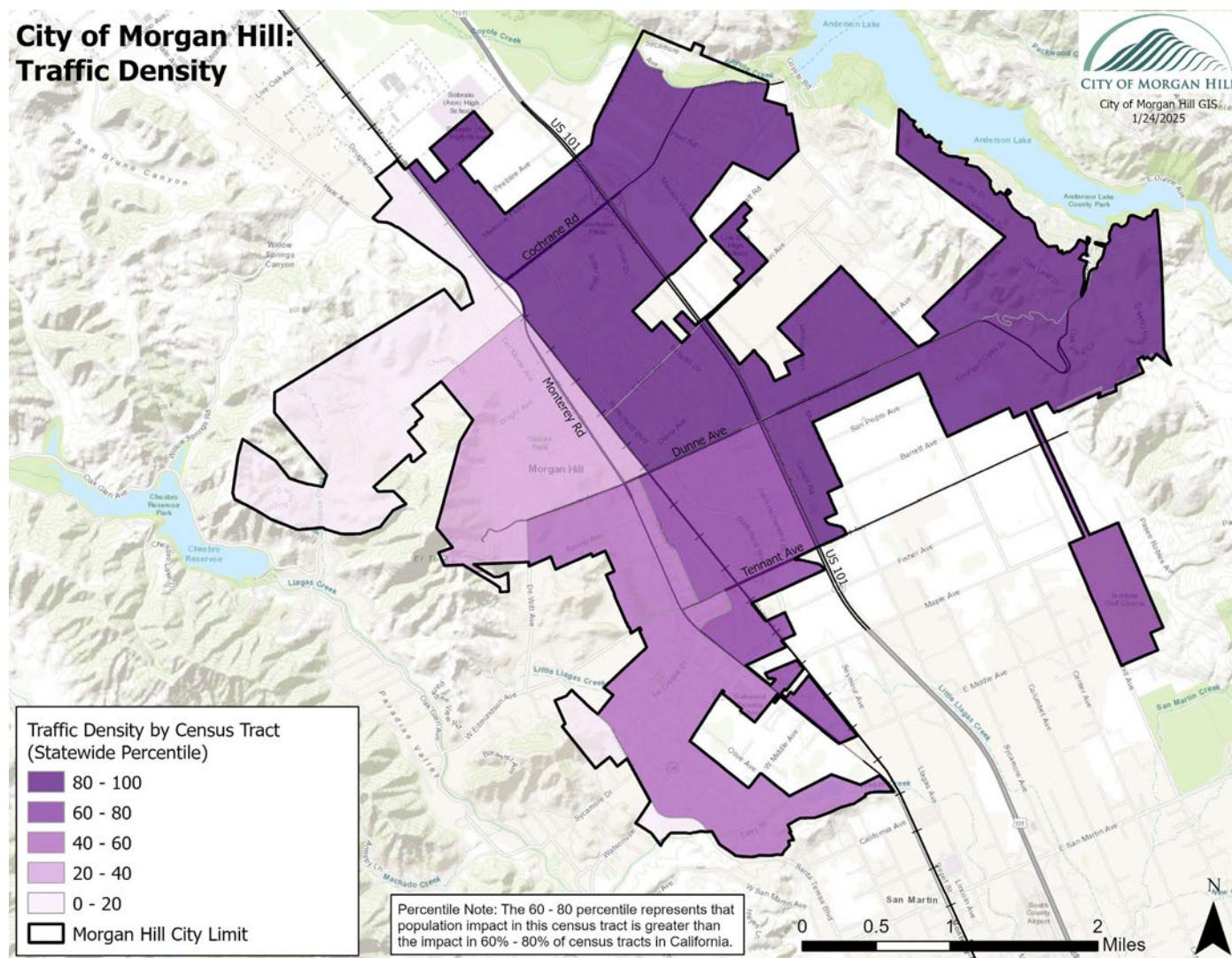
Particulate matter (PM) 2.5 is a mixture of very fine particles less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter – less than the thickness of a human hair – that includes organic chemicals, dust, soot, and metals that come from automobiles, factories, and wood burning. PM 2.5 can enter deep into the lungs and can cause serious health effects like heart and lung disease.

Like ozone, CARB measures PM 2.5 at air monitoring stations throughout the state. Throughout the City, PM 2.5 is relatively the same, ranging from 6.80 to 7.21  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  [micrograms (one-millionth of a gram) per meter cube]. PM 2.5 concentrations in California range between 1.9 to 16.4  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ .

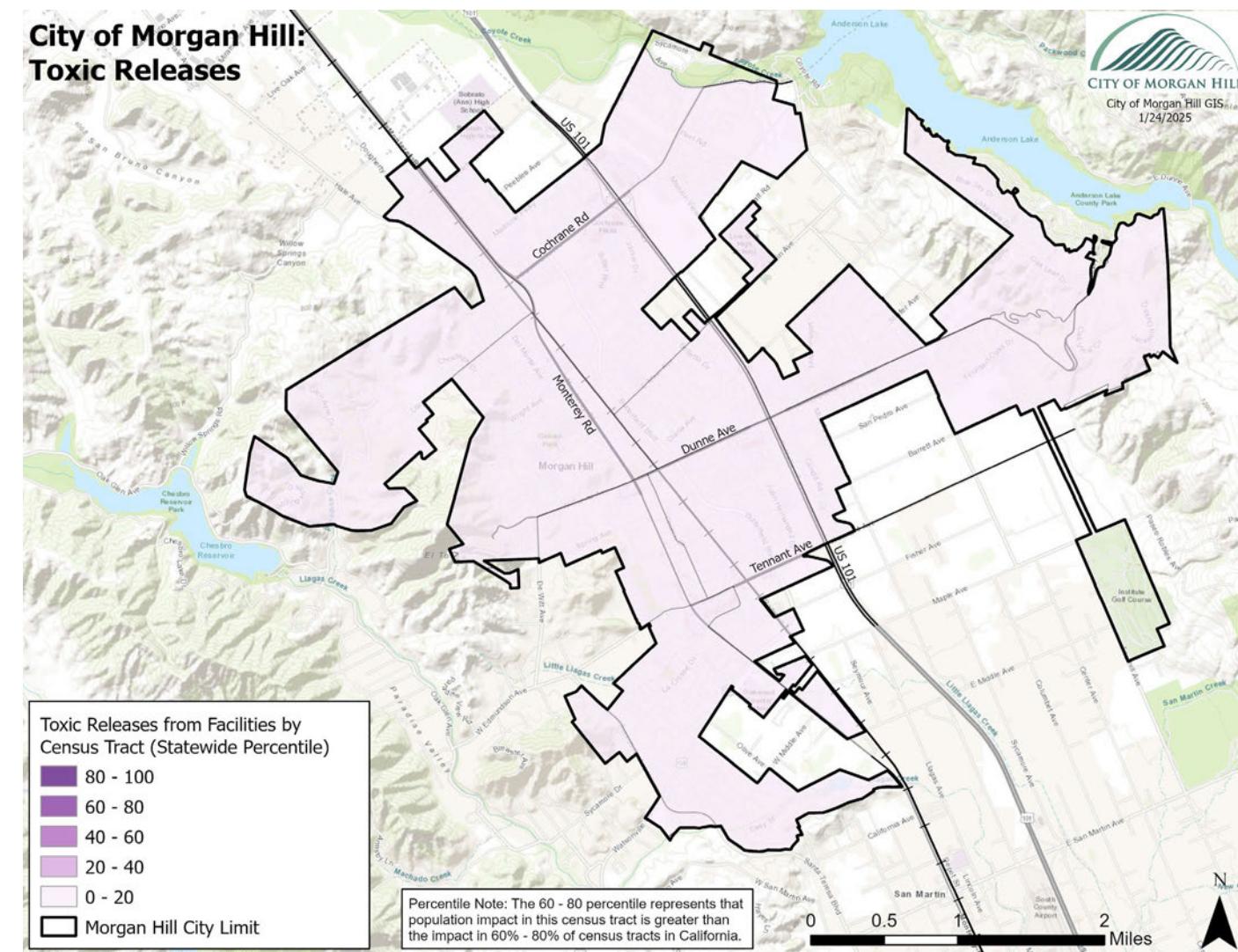


Diesel PM are particles found in the exhaust from trucks, buses, trains, ships, and other equipment with diesel engines, and the highest levels of diesel PM are near ports, rail yards, and freeways. People who are regularly exposed to industrial areas and heavy truck or train traffic are more likely to develop illnesses including heart and lung disease or lung cancer.

Diesel emissions data is available at a 4-kilometer resolution statewide, and CARB collects data from both on-road (trucks and buses) and offroad (ships and trains) sources. In Morgan Hill, Diesel PM ranges drastically depending on the location within the city, ranging from 0.037 tons per year in the northwestern extremities of the City to 0.516 tons per year within the downtown. These ranges places Morgan Hill near both the bottom and top tenth percentile of the State.



While California has strict vehicle-emissions standards, vehicular exhaust is the main source of air pollution in much of the state, and low-income communities and people of color are more likely to live near areas with high traffic. Many census tracts along Highway 101 that transects the city rank among the top 20th statewide percentile, as seen in the map above.



Stationary sources such as large facilities can also emit large quantities of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) maintains a Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) of on-site releases to air, water, and land and underground injection of any classified chemical, as well as quantities transferred off-site. The data are reported by each facility.

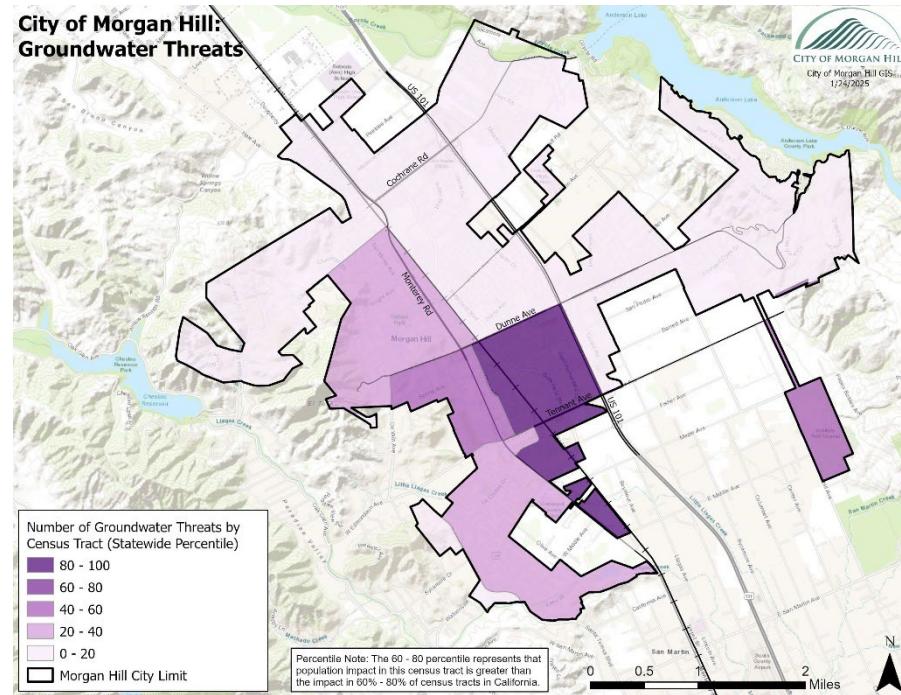
The above map shows that there are no sources in Morgan Hill. However, most of Morgan Hill ranks in the bottom 13<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> percentile of the State due to facility sources which are located within San Jose near the Campbell boundary.

## Water Pollution

Hazardous chemicals are often stored in containers on land or in underground storage tanks. Leaks from tanks can contaminate soil and groundwater. Common soil and groundwater pollutants include gasoline and diesel fuels at gas stations, as well as solvents, heavy metals and pesticides.

Leaking tanks can affect drinking water and expose people to contaminated soil and air. The land and groundwater may take many years or decades to clean up.

Based on this metric, southern census tracts are most impacted by toxic releases, with the Community of Concern being the most impacted in the City with the number and type of groundwater threats higher than 81% of the census tracts in California.



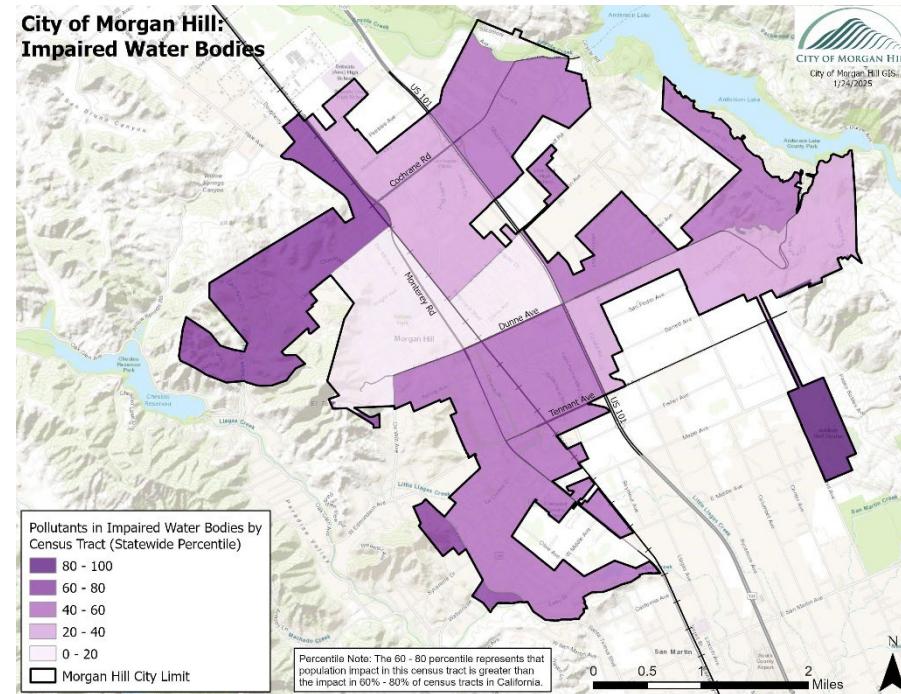
Impaired water bodies are those contaminated by pollutants that can harm wildlife habitats and prevent recreation and other uses of the water body. The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) maintains information on water bodies in California by tracking them on what is referred to as the Section 303(d) List of Impaired Water Bodies, which is assessed every two years.

Within the Morgan Hill area, there are three impaired water bodies, including Anderson Reservoir [Mercury; PCBs

(Polychlorinated biphenyls)], Llagas Creek [Chloride; Sodium; Escherichia coli (E. coli); Specific Conductivity; Chlorpyrifos; Total Dissolved Solids; Turbidity; Oxygen, Dissolved; Nitrate; Sedimentation/Siltation; Fecal Coliform], and Coyote Creek [Diazinon; Trash; Toxicity].

When water bodies are contaminated by pollutants, they are considered impaired. These impairments can harm wildlife habitats and prevent recreational and other uses of the water body.

Certain groups such as tribal or low-income communities may depend on the fish and wildlife in nearby water bodies more than the general public.



Drinking water quality, a CES indicator, measures the concentration of selected contaminants and history of violations for a given water system. Most drinking water in California meets health standards. However, drinking water sometimes becomes contaminated with chemicals or bacteria above the standards. Contaminants come from both natural and human sources such as rocks and soil or sewage and farm runoff.

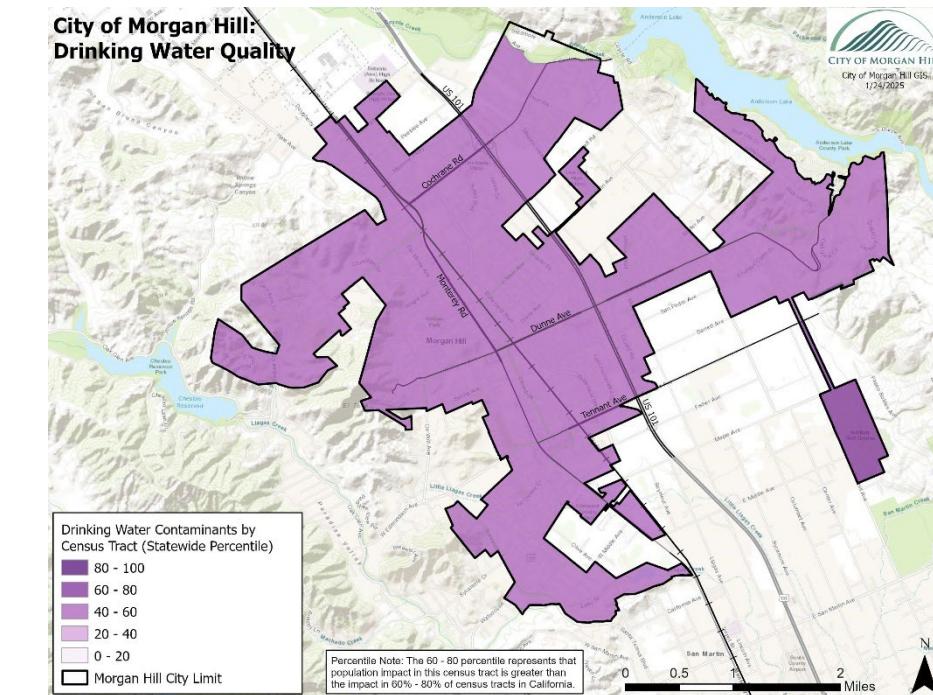
Within Morgan Hill, all census tracts are about average compared to all census tracts within the State.

## PFAS Levels in Morgan Hill

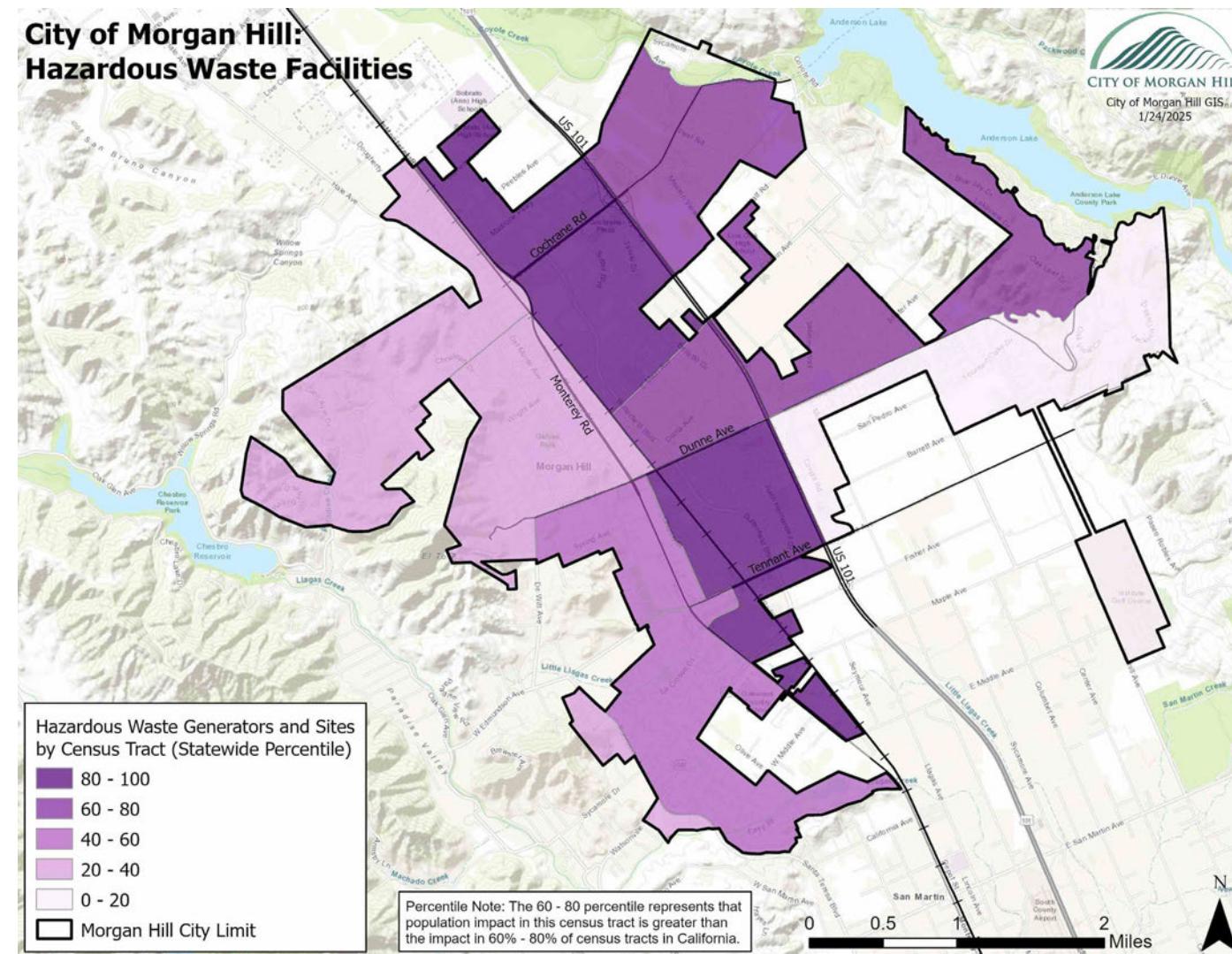
Testing has revealed that one of the City's wells, Main Well 2, has a result for Perfluorohexanesulfonic acid (PFHxS) of 0.0033 micrograms per liter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{L}$ ), which is above the notification level of 0.003  $\mu\text{g}/\text{L}$ . This result is far below the response level for PFHxS, which is 0.010  $\mu\text{g}/\text{L}$ . While the level is below the required level for treatment, this finding still highlights the need for continued vigilance in monitoring our water sources.

PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substance) levels through the remaining wells in the City water system are at levels that are undetectable or below response levels.

**Note:** The indicator below is a relative measure of water quality samples in census tracts throughout the state and does not indicate whether water is safe to drink. Furthermore, because data was obtained at the water system level, it does not necessarily reflect the water that an individual resident of that tract is drinking.



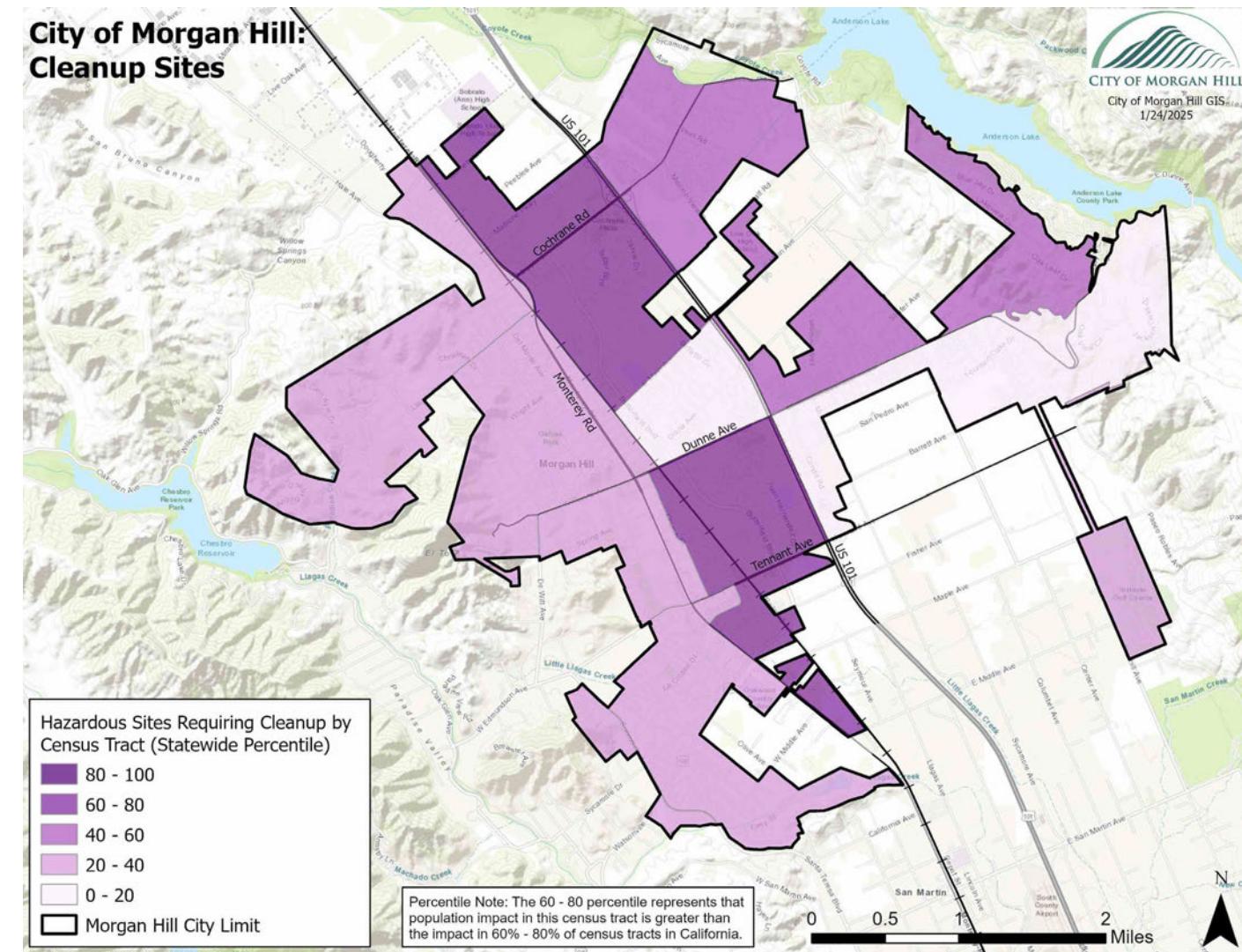
## Toxics & Hazardous Waste



Hazardous waste contains chemicals that may be harmful to health. Only certain facilities are allowed to treat, store or dispose of this type of waste. Hazardous waste can range from chemicals from cleaning products, batteries, and certain electronics to highly toxic waste materials produced by factories and businesses. Hazardous waste is transported from businesses that generate waste to permitted facilities for recycling, treatment, storage or disposal.

Hazardous waste facilities often are cause for concerns about effects on health and the environment in the communities where they operate. Improper handling and management of chemical waste can contaminate air, water, and soil and harm both the natural environment as well as people. In California, information about hazardous waste generators and facilities is maintained by the Department of Toxic Substances and Control.

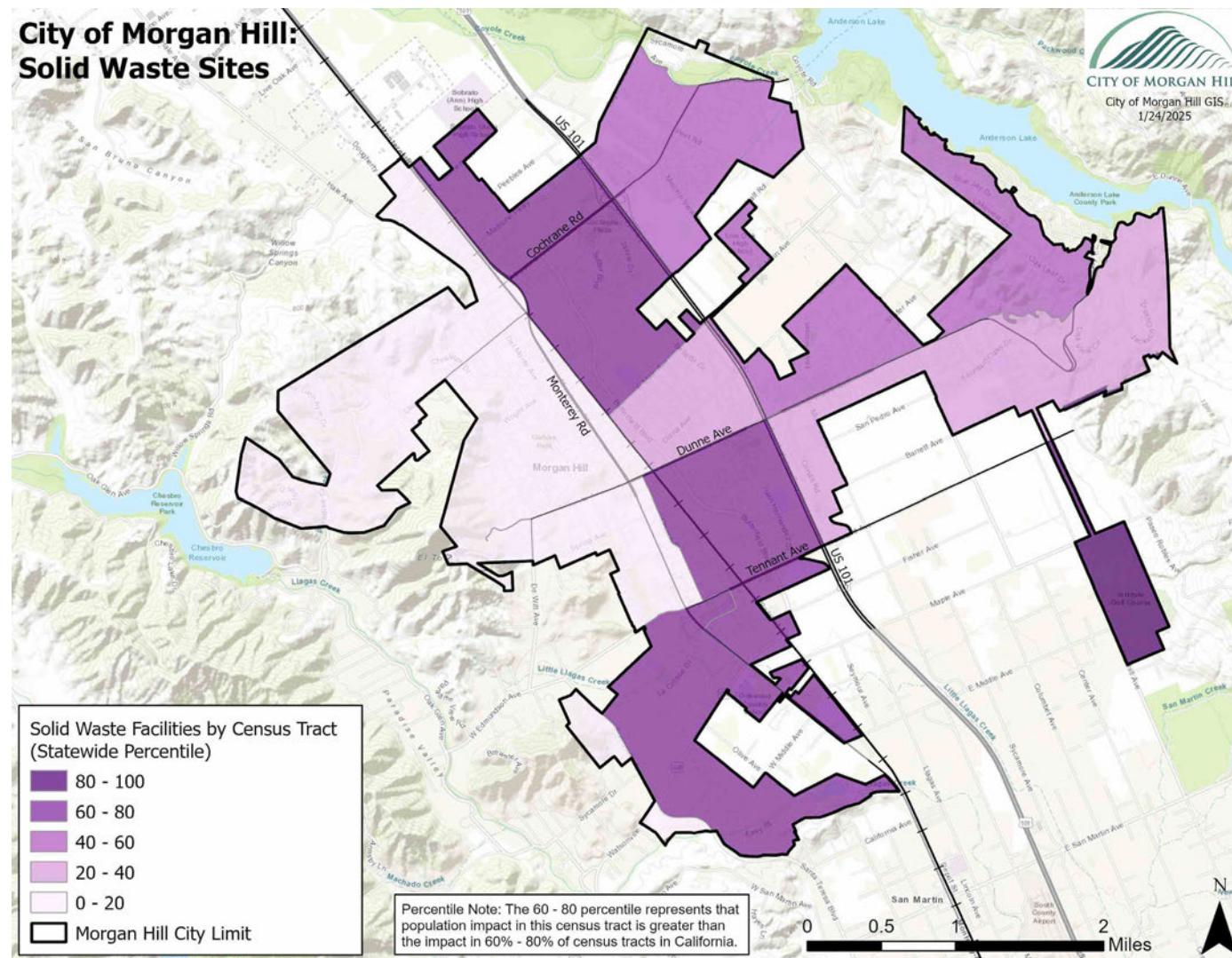
Within Morgan Hill, several industrial buildings are considered hazardous waste facilities, as well as some businesses such as Target, CVS, Rite Aid, and Walgreens, due to hazardous waste generated by its operations.



Cleanup sites are places that are contaminated with hazardous chemicals and require clean up by the property owners or government. Chemicals at cleanup sites can move through the air or groundwater. People living near these sites have a greater potential to be exposed to chemicals from the sites than people living further away.

Studies have shown that neighborhoods with hazardous waste facilities and/or cleanup sites are generally poorer and have more people of color than other neighborhoods. The land may take many years or decades to clean up, reducing possible benefits to the community.

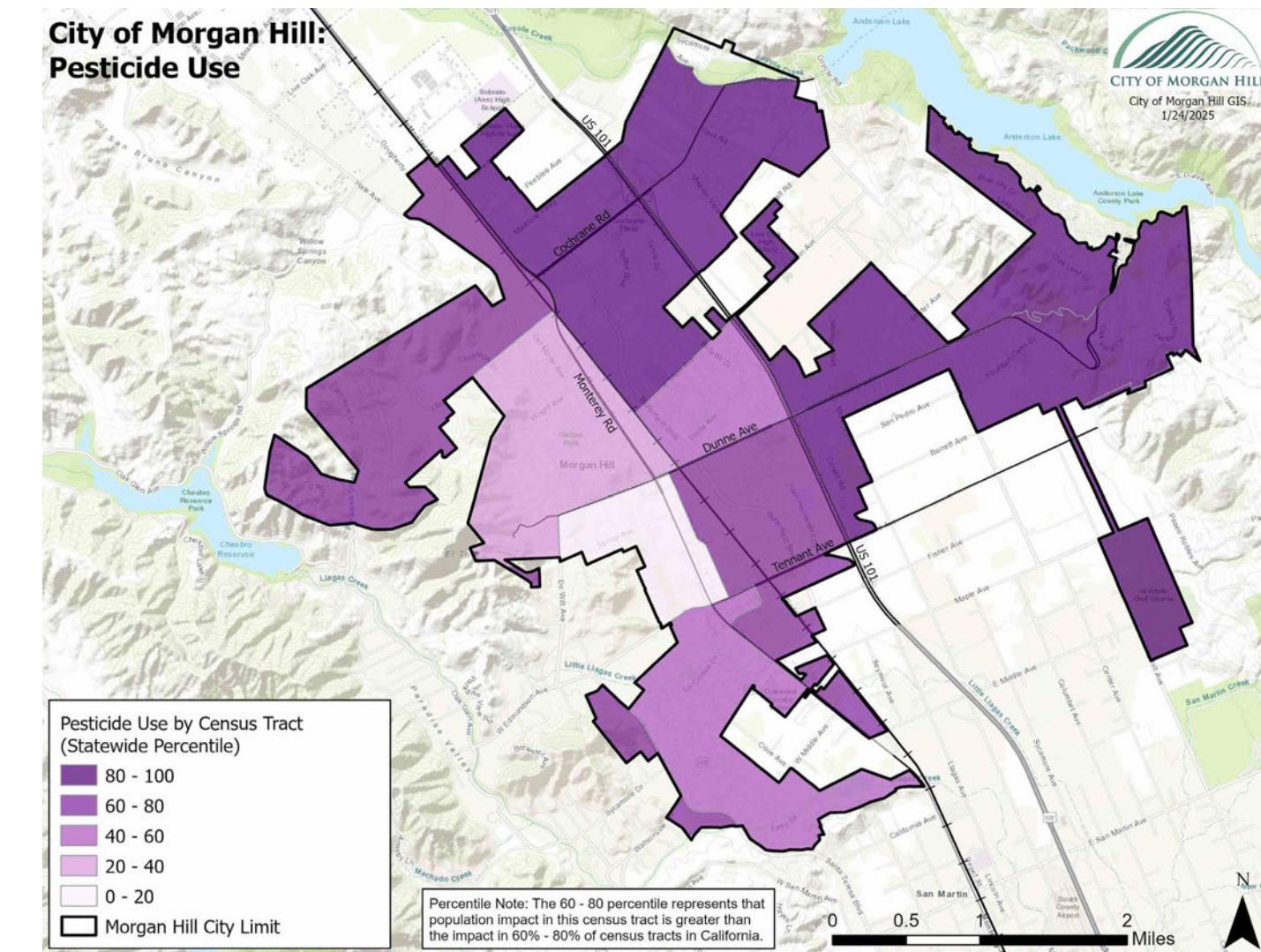
Some census tracts in the city are notably more at risk, especially those in the central stretch of the city between Highway 101 and the Monterey Road corridor.



Solid waste facilities are places where household garbage and similar kinds of waste are collected, processed, or stored. These include landfills and composting or recycling facilities. The waste material may come from homes, factories or businesses. Most of these operations require permits.

Regulated facilities as well as illegal sites that do not comply with the law can harm the environment and potentially expose people to hazardous substances. Solid waste facilities can also raise concern in a community about odors, insect pests, vermin, and truck traffic. The communities near solid waste facilities are usually home to poor and communities of color.

Within Morgan Hill, the census tracts that are a higher risk are due to the proximity to facilities outside of the city limits, most notably within San Martin to the South.



Pesticides are chemicals used to control insects, weeds and plant diseases. Over 1,000 pesticides are registered for use in California. They are applied to fields by air, by farm machinery, or by workers on the ground.

Farmworker families and other people who live near fields can be exposed to pesticides, both outdoors and inside homes. Exposure to high levels of some pesticides can cause immediate illness or lead to conditions such as birth defects or cancer.

Most notably, the census tracts with the highest exposure to pesticides are the ones along the city limits which are due to the historic and current agricultural uses surrounding the city.

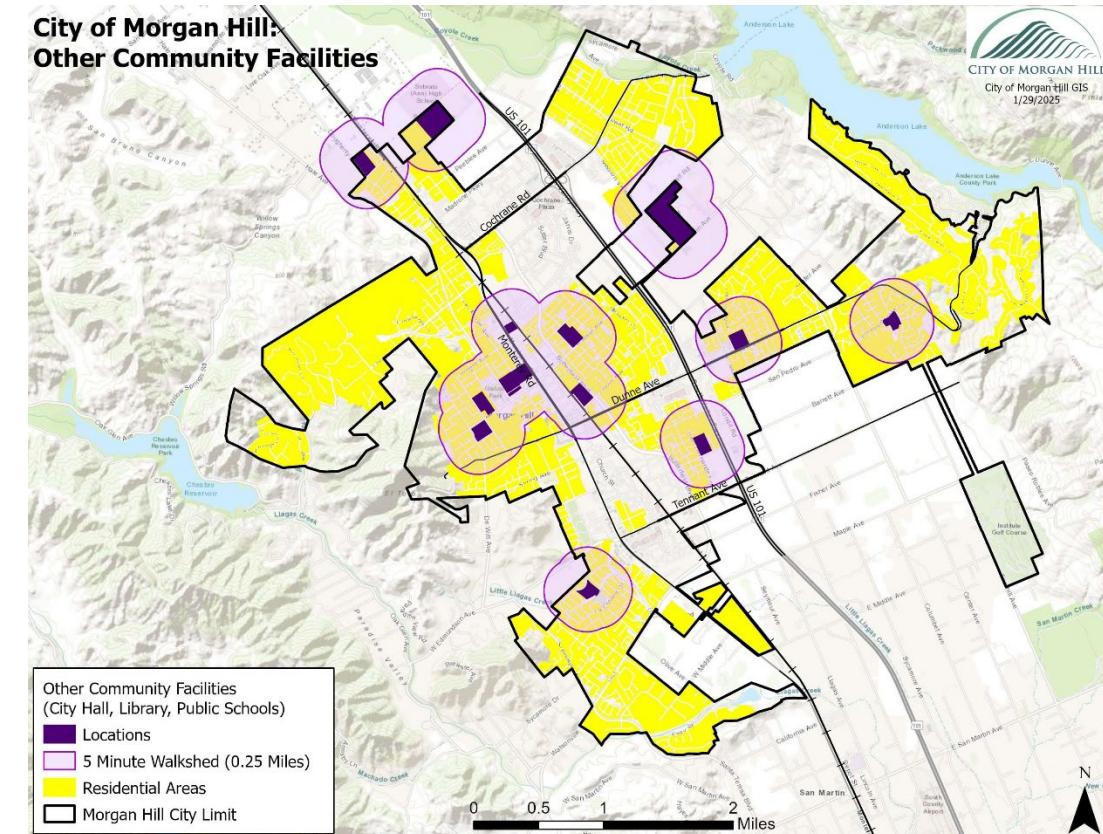
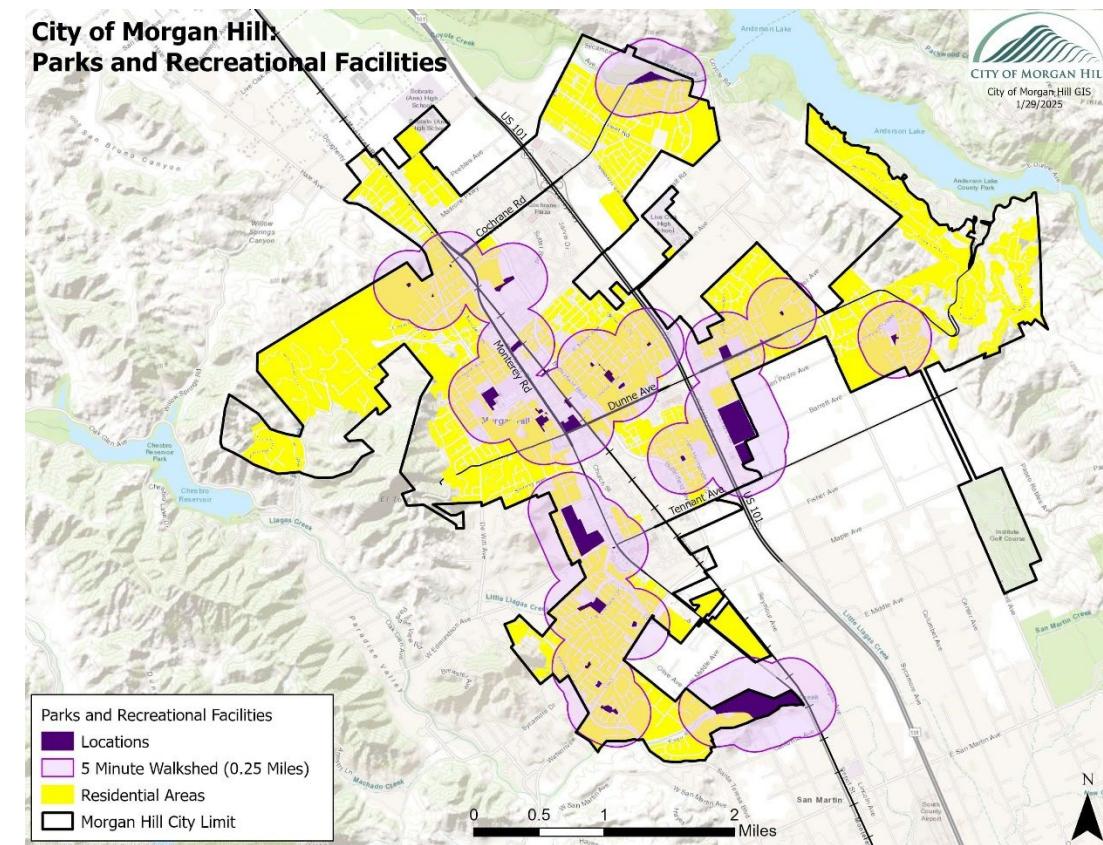
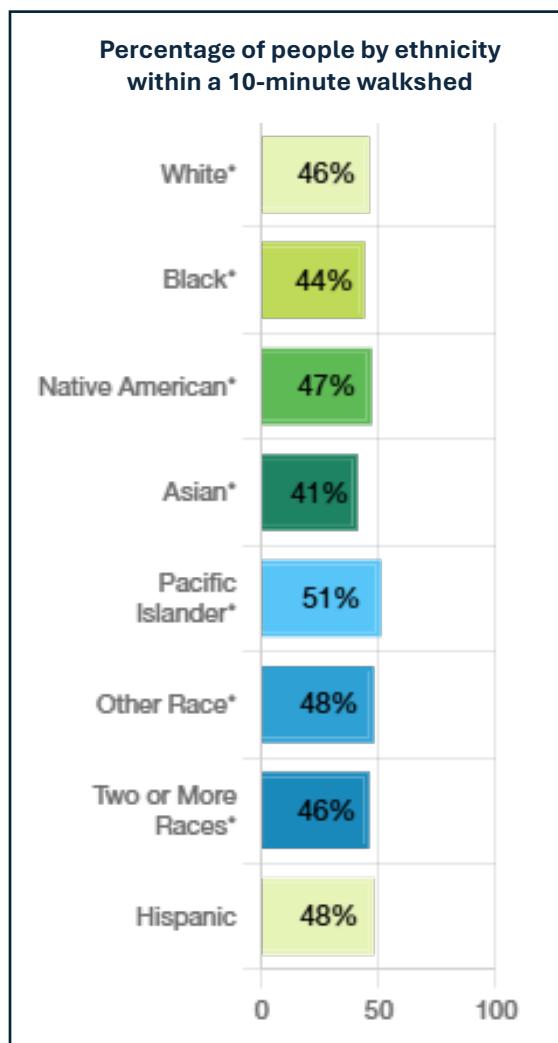
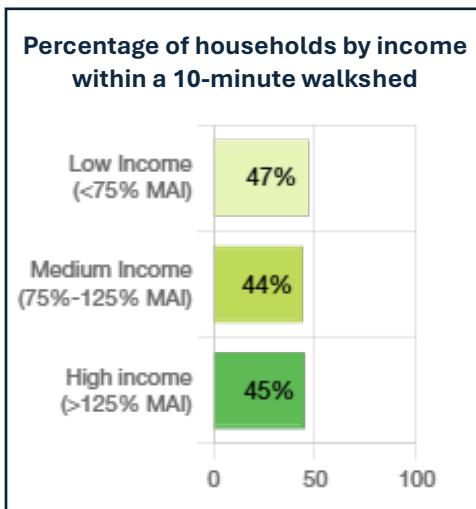
# Public Facilities & Physical Activity

## Access to Facilities & Services

Access to public amenities, including community facilities, parks, and recreational facilities, is an important component of community health. These facilities help provide necessary services and promote active lifestyles.

Parks and recreational facilities are essential resources for encouraging active play and healthy lifestyles. The map to the top right shows the 5-minute walksheds of parks and recreational facilities in the city, which is generally well-served. Areas that are underserved include parts of the city that are towards the western and eastern extremities of the city limits which are areas that are less dense, have larger homes, and larger yards. According to Trust for Public Land ParkServe 2023 data, provision of parks and facilities is fairly equitable as shown in the charts below.

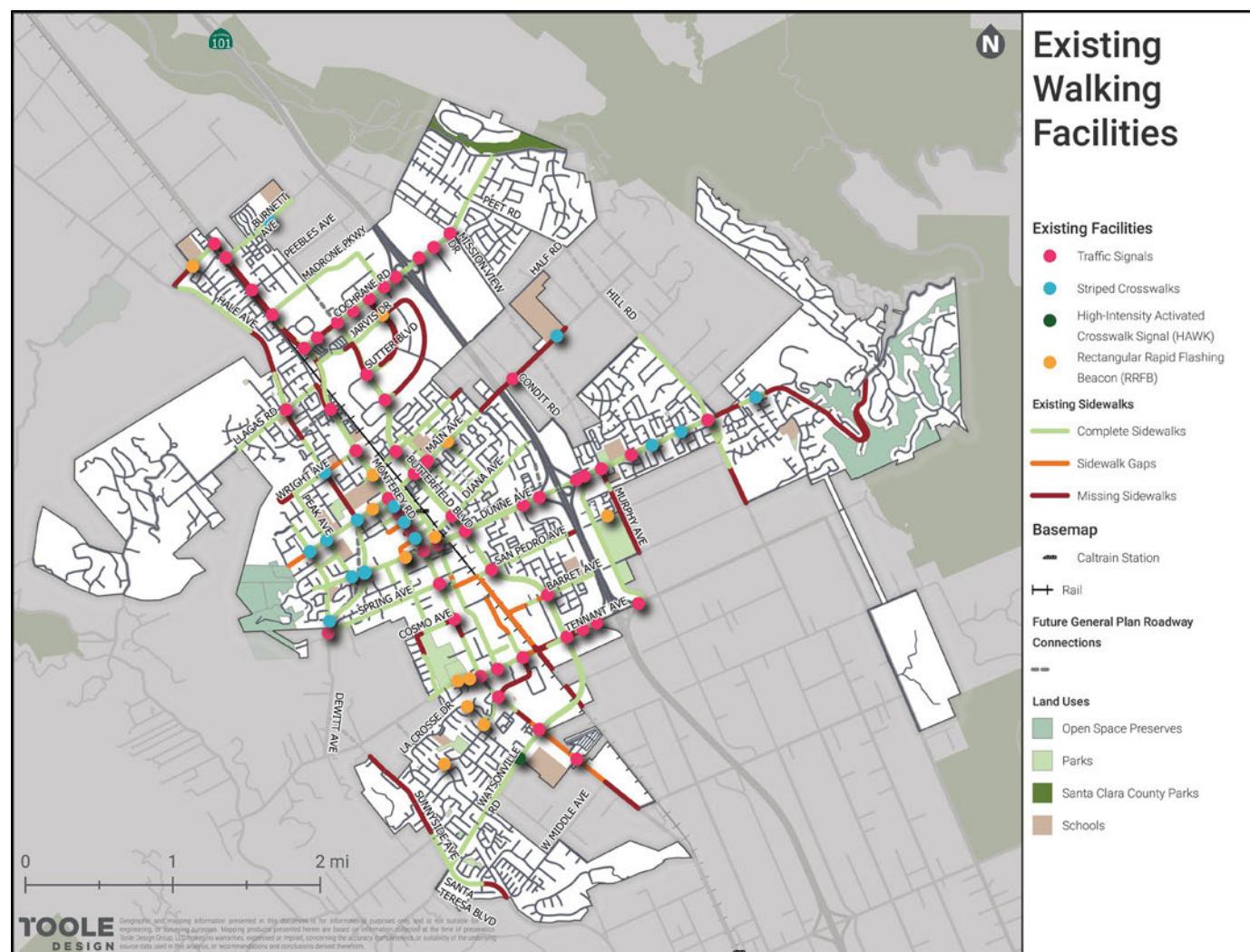
The map to the bottom right shows that public facilities including libraries, schools, childcare centers, and community centers are fairly well-distributed throughout the city. Some residential areas are within walking distance of these locations, such as in the downtown and central area of the city. It is noted that low-income areas between Dunne Ave and Tennant Avenue west of Highway 101 are somewhat underserved by libraries, schools, and civic buildings. However, parks, recreational facilities, and community centers are also found in these low-income areas and serve as important venues for community programs and resources.



## Accessibility & Mobility

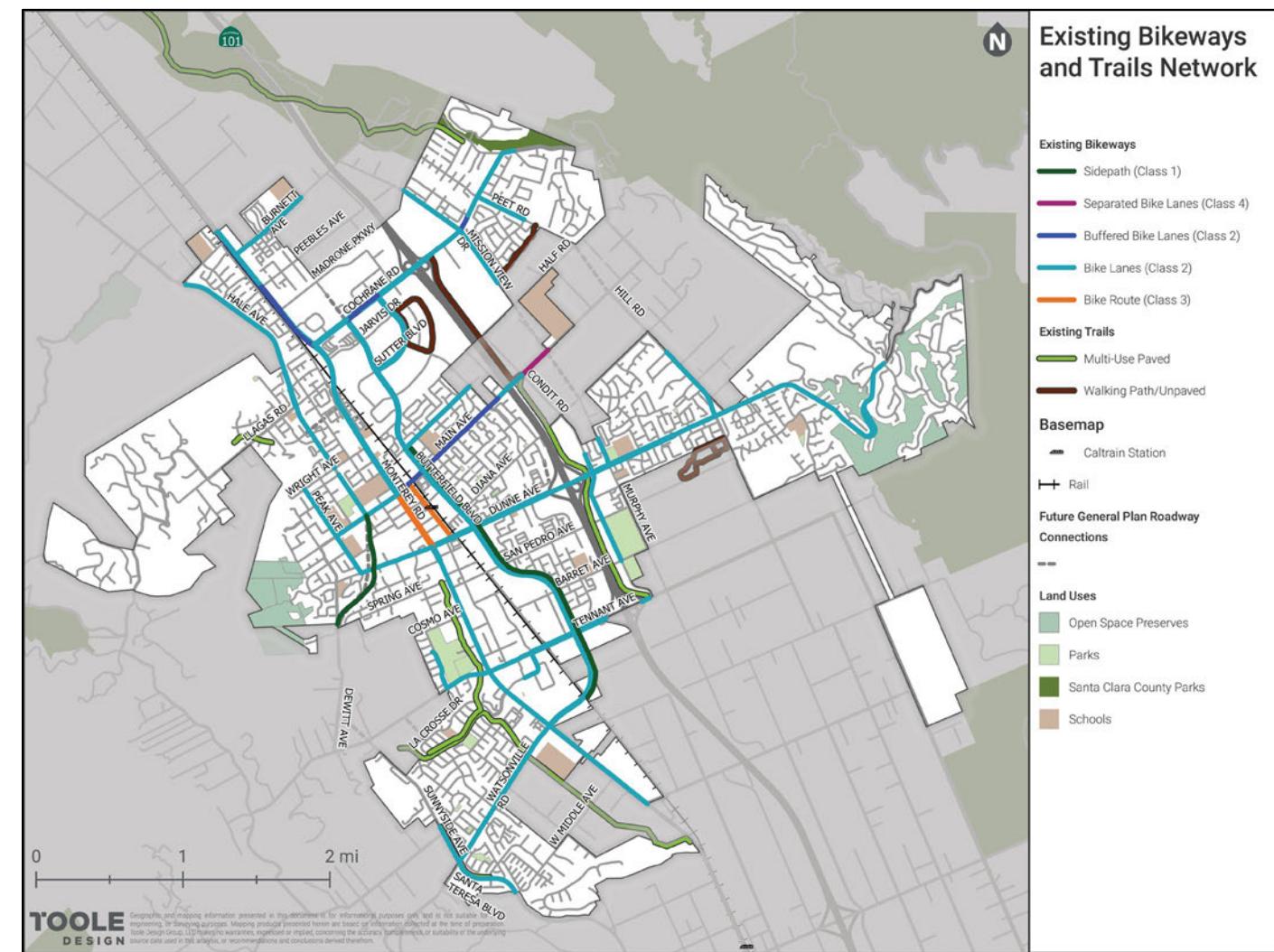
In 2023, most workers in Morgan Hill take a car, truck, or van to work, and 66 percent drive alone. In comparison, only 2 percent take public transportation, and 19 percent work from home. An active commute—walking or biking—is one way to increase daily physical activity to maintain a healthy lifestyle. However, in places where infrastructure does not support safe and convenient routes for pedestrians and cyclists or where jobs are far from residential areas, it may not be feasible for residents to choose an active mode to commute.

Walking destinations in Morgan Hill are connected by a system of sidewalks and crosswalks. While most major streets have sidewalks, there are just under 16 miles of missing sidewalks or sidewalks with gaps in Morgan Hill, which pose connectivity, safety, and accessibility issues. There are generally frequent opportunities to cross major streets in Morgan Hill particularly surrounding Downtown Morgan Hill. Most intersections along major roads in Morgan Hill are signalized, and a growing number of intersections feature Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) and mid-block crossings, most of which are located near schools.



Morgan Hill features a growing network of on-street bikeways and multi-use trails that provide recreational opportunities and transportation connections to destinations across the City. The existing on-street bicycle network includes a mix of dedicated bike lanes and designated bike routes (i.e., shared lanes), while the trail network includes off-street multi-use paved and unpaved walking paths/trail segments. Past planning efforts in Morgan Hill identified potential bikeway and trail network improvements, some of which have been implemented as part of identified bikeway projects or as part of larger roadway improvement efforts. Currently, many streets in the City have bike lanes.

The existing multi-use trail network includes approximately 16 miles of off-street trails, with approximately nine miles of paved multi-use trails and approximately seven miles of unpaved walking paths. In addition to recreational uses, some trails also play important roles in the City's transportation system by providing connections to key destinations and filling in network gaps. However, some trails have paved sections that transition to unpaved sections, this inconsistency can cause challenges and difficulties for people, especially for those who lack proper equipment and who have mobility limitations.



Existing fixed route transit service in Morgan Hill is limited, particularly on weekends, with regional services focused primarily on commuting trips. Existing transit service is provided by five Valley Transit Authority (VTA) bus routes (rapid, frequent, local, school, and express), and Caltrain regional rail service. These services are intended to address two categories of trip types: regional travel/commuting to San Jose and other employment areas in Santa Clara County to the north and local travel within the City of Morgan Hill.

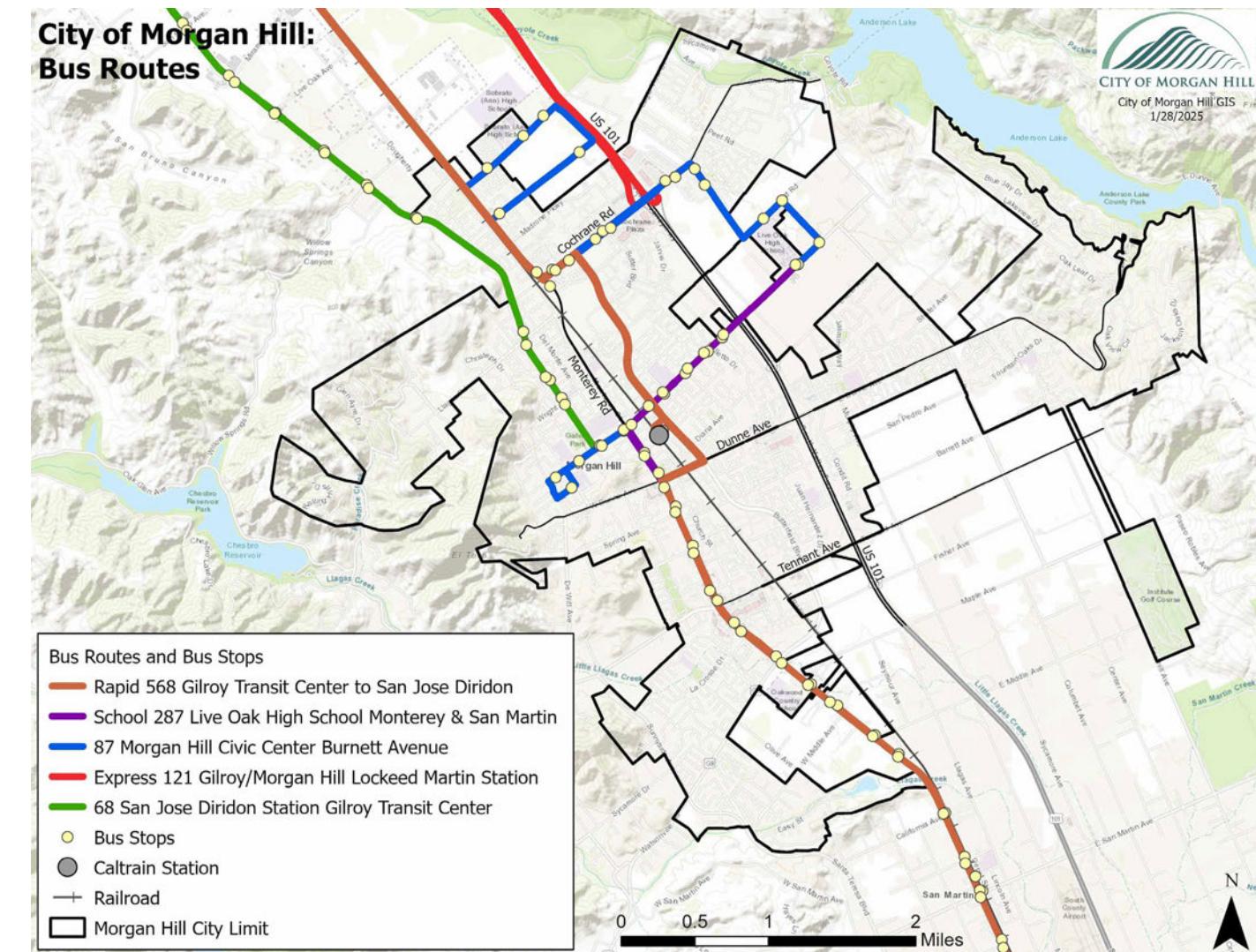
Regional VTA bus transit routes operate every 15 to 30 minutes and provide all-day service between Gilroy and San Jose, with various stops in Morgan Hill. Routes #68 (Frequent) and #568 (Rapid) are interlined along Monterey Road with the #568 (Rapid) operating at a lower frequency with fewer stops. The level of service for Route #68 (i.e., one bus every 15 minutes) enables Monterey Road to qualify as a high frequency transit corridor, allowing for higher density development and eliminating minimum parking requirements. Route #121 (Express) also has various stops in Morgan Hill and provides commuting service from Gilroy to San Jose, operating three times in the morning and in the evening.



VTA also operates two lines of fixed route service within the City of Morgan Hill. Route #87 primarily serves the west side of Morgan Hill, from Civic Center to Sobrato High School, while Route #287 primarily serves school students from San Martin Transit Center to Live Oak High School. Both routes operate on weekdays only.



Caltrain serves Morgan Hill with access via rail to Gilroy in the south and San Jose and San Francisco in the north. Service is oriented around commuting trips, with peak commute direction only trains concentrated during peak periods and no-mid day or weekend service. The Caltrain station is located in Downtown Morgan Hill and features surface parking and pedestrian access from surrounding neighborhoods. Recent Caltrain electrification requires train transfers at Diridon Station in San Jose for northbound travel from South County and southbound travel to South County since new electrified trains cannot operate on tracks south of San Jose.



## Access Analysis & Barriers to Mobility

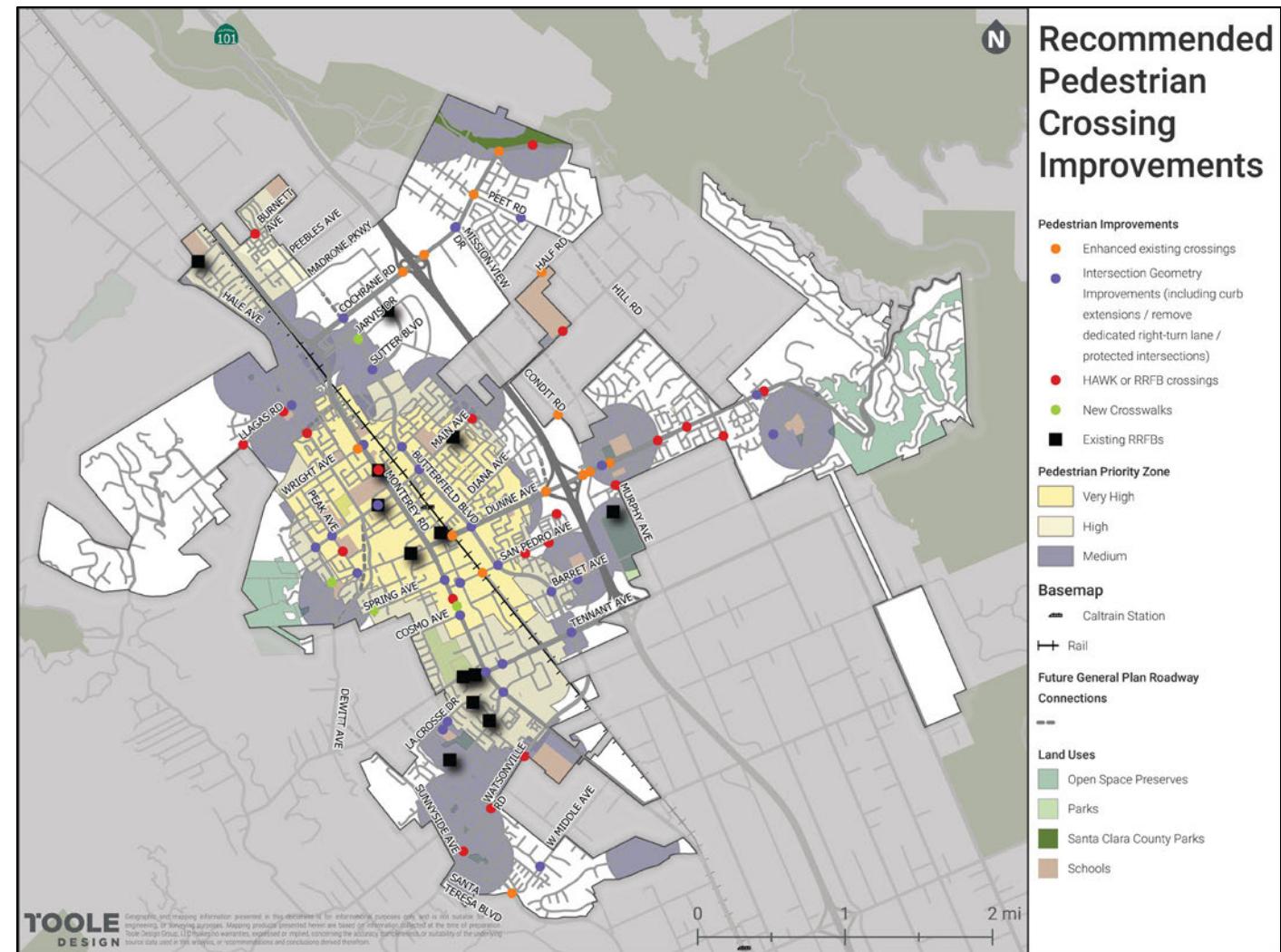
When a person lives far from regular destinations such as work or school, they spend more time and income getting to the places they need to go. Over time, this transportation burden can impact health—for example, through elevated levels of stress—and this outcome falls disproportionately on lower income residents and populations of color.

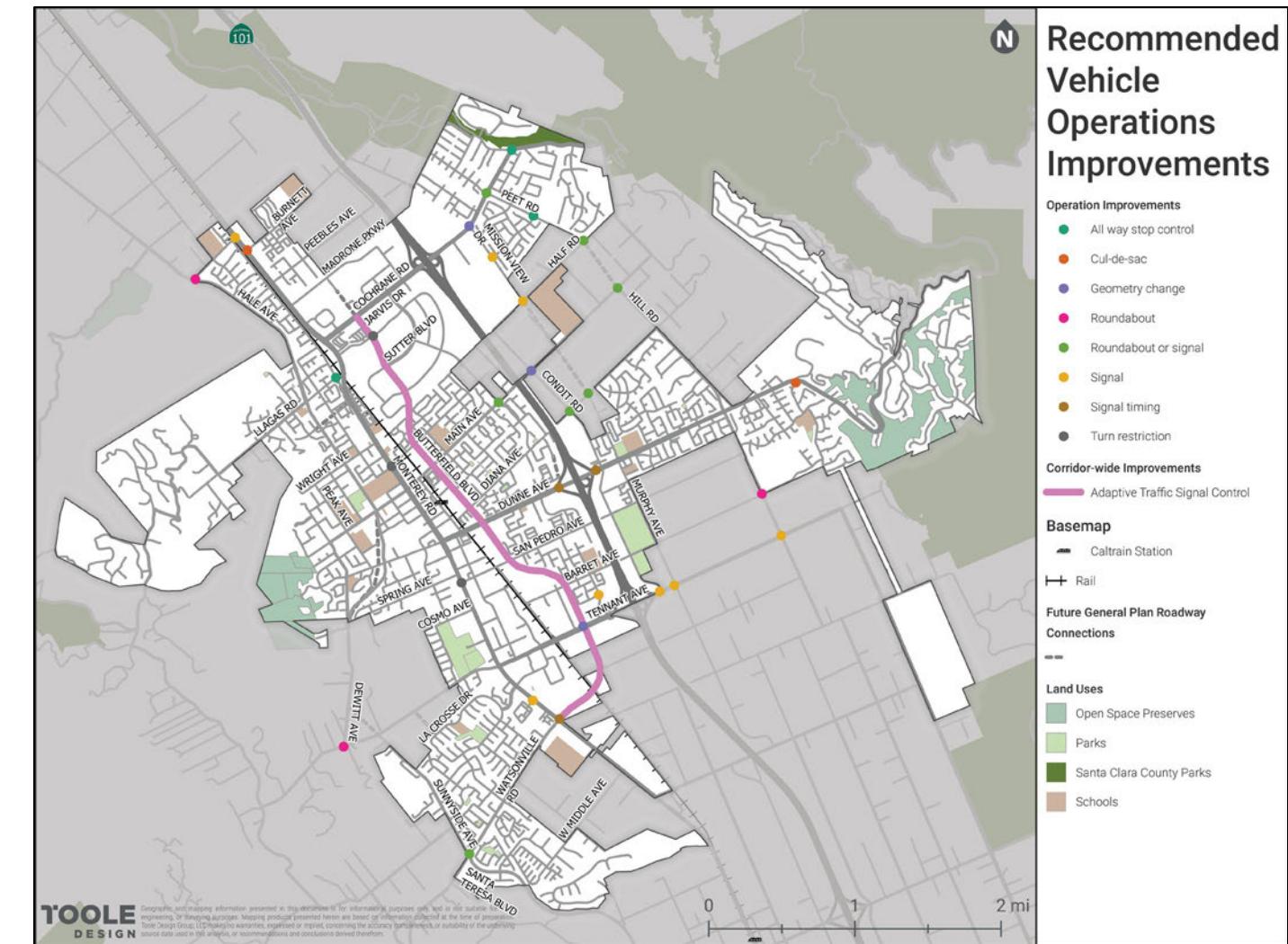
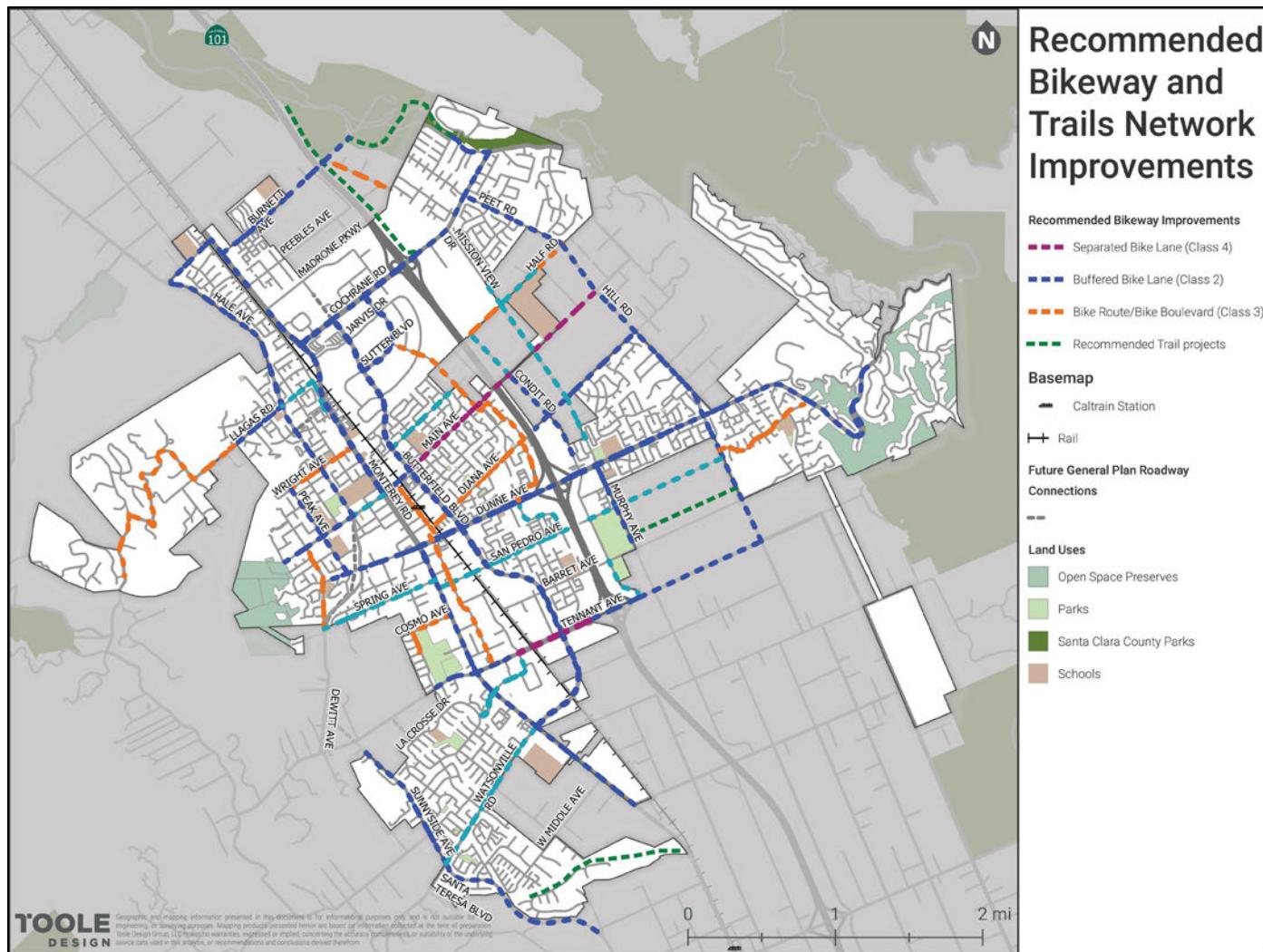
The City's Transportation Master Plan, adopted in December 2024, identifies a series of pedestrian priority zones to indicate areas with higher levels of pedestrian activity and guide pedestrian improvements and project prioritization. Pedestrian priority zones are based around trip generators (i.e., attractors) to estimate potential pedestrian demand. Trip generators include the following categories: healthcare, parks, community resources, commercial, and transportation.

Pedestrian priority zones are concentrated west of Highway 101 and include a majority of the western portion of Morgan Hill, with a “very high” priority zone surrounding Downtown Morgan Hill. “Medium” priority zones are scattered around Morgan Hill and reflect areas with one or a small number of adjacent trip generators, such as parks and schools.

Pedestrian priority zones do not reflect the quality of sidewalks or comfort level of conditions for pedestrians today. Rather, the pedestrian priority zones information can be combined with the assessment of sidewalk gaps and crossing opportunities to identify the need for enhancements and to determine improvement priorities.

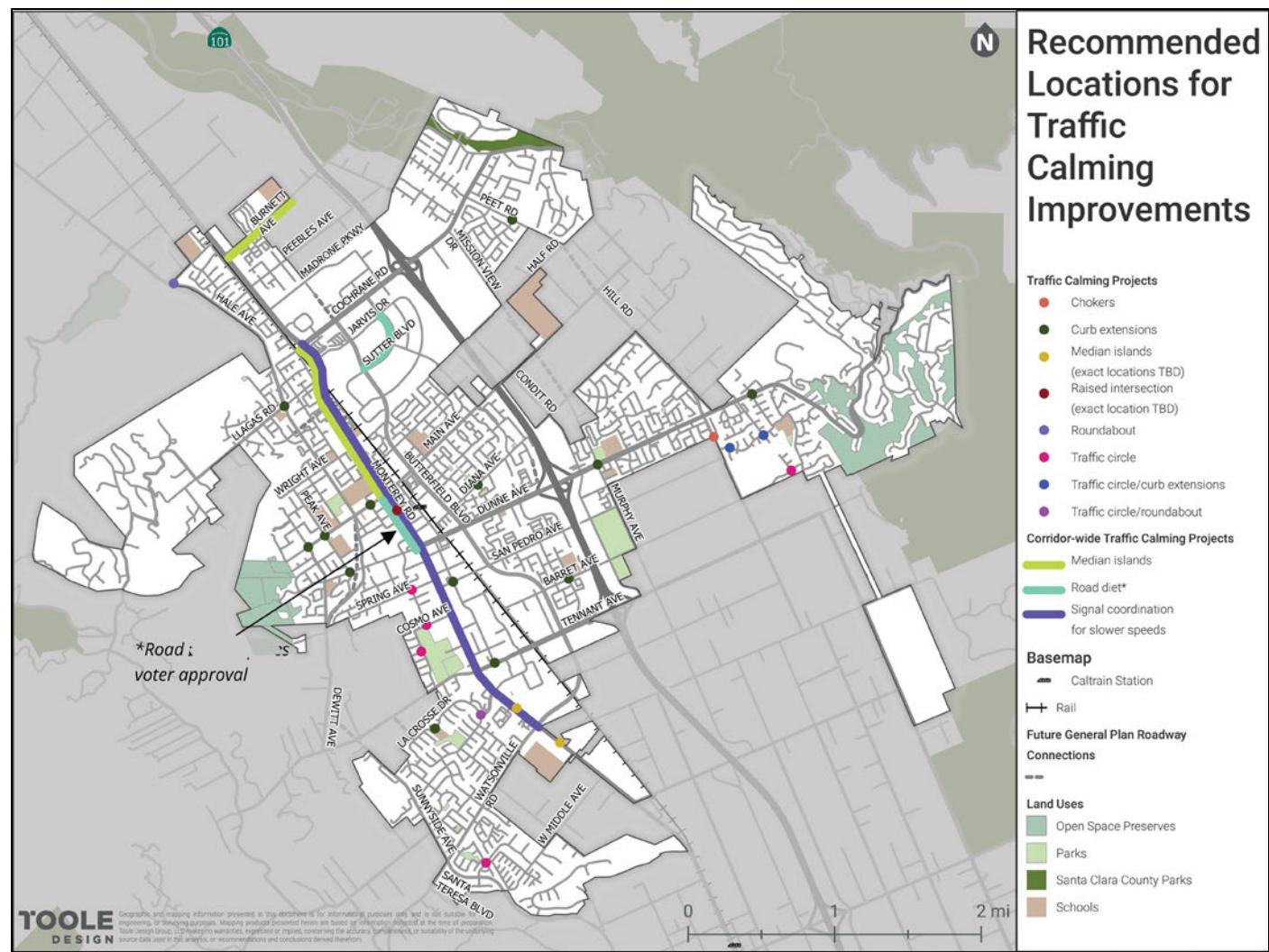
The pedestrian improvement projects recommended in the Transportation Master Plan intend to create a safer, accessible, connected, and more robust pedestrian network in Morgan Hill. Pedestrian improvements recommended include new pedestrian crossings and existing pedestrian crossings with enhanced features to create higher levels of comfort, more frequent crossing opportunities, and greater connections to and within Pedestrian Priority Zones as identified in the map to the right.





The bikeway projects proposed in the Transportation Master Plan, as identified in the above map, intend to create a safer and more comfortable network for riders of all ages and abilities. Where feasible, greater physical separation is recommended between the proposed bike lane and vehicular traffic. Additionally, the proposed network will provide greater connectivity throughout the City, including to schools, parks, and destination centers, and provides greater access between the west and east sides of Morgan Hill.

Areas with high commercial and employment activity, such as Downtown, and major streets that serve regional commuters, like Butterfield Boulevard, experience greater-than-average levels of peak period congestion. In addition to the multimodal improvements identified, enhancements to directly reduce vehicle congestion and delay will improve the overall experience for all users. Enhancements may range from traffic flow improvements such as signal coordination and turn restrictions to allow for more efficient travel along a corridor, to major intersection treatments to meet the needs of the City's planned growth while providing safe opportunities for alternative modes of travel within the City, as identified in the above map.

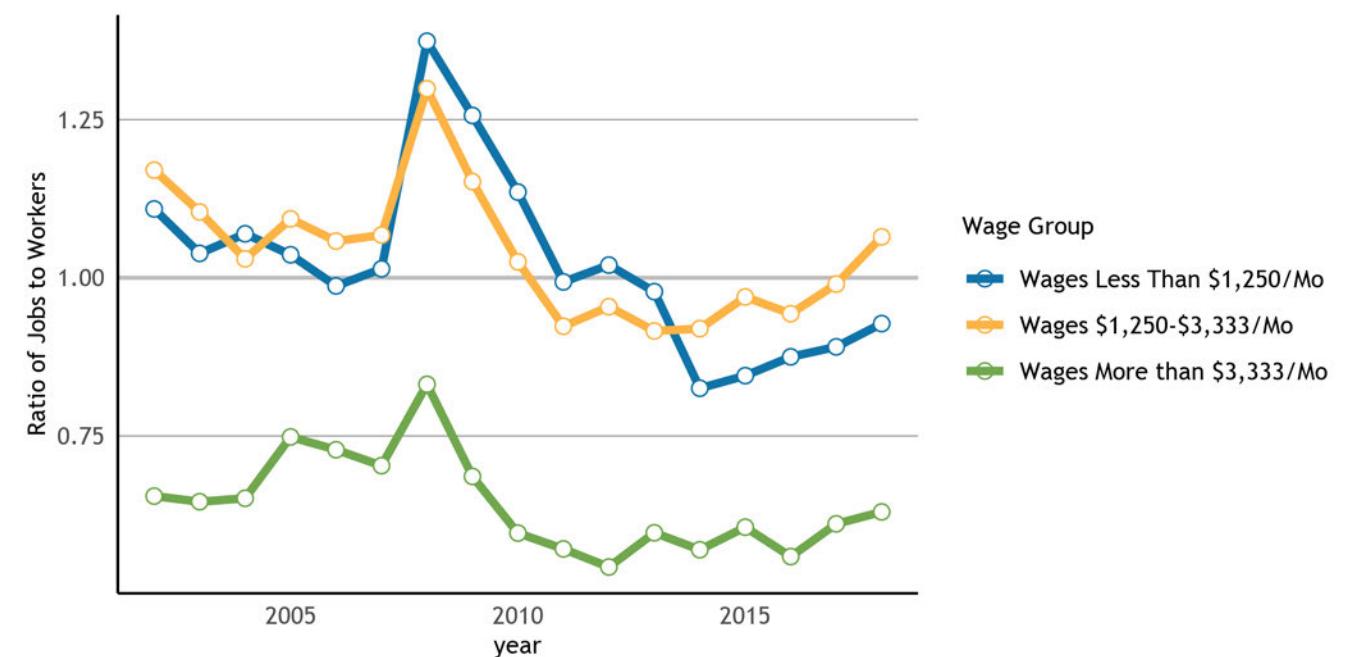


The intent of traffic calming projects proposed in the Transportation Master Plan, as identified in the above map, is to manage vehicular speeds along corridors in the City near destinations like schools, Downtown, and parks, and generally where speeding issues were observed to create a safer network for all users of the street. Where feasible, it is generally recommended that lanes be narrowed to ten feet. Key physical improvements proposed include signal synchronization for slower speeds along Monterey Road, road diet along Monterey Road (voter approval required), roundabout at Hale Avenue and Tilton Avenue, and curb extensions and traffic circles at several intersections along local streets.

In Morgan Hill, the average length of commute is 36.9 minutes, according to ACS 2023. This is longer than the statewide average commute length of 29.2 minutes. Average commute times throughout the City range from 31.6 minutes (within the city's poorest area, Census Tract 5123.10 encompassing the area within the city between Church Street and Highway 101 south of Dunne Avenue) through 41.9 minutes (within Census Tract 5123.09 encompassing the southeast portion of the City, south of Dunne Avenue and to the east of Highway 101). Coincidentally, both of these Census Tracts are adjacent to each other indicating there is a clear delineation of commute burden in the city based on income, in which higher income residents are commuting further, typically to the north, for higher

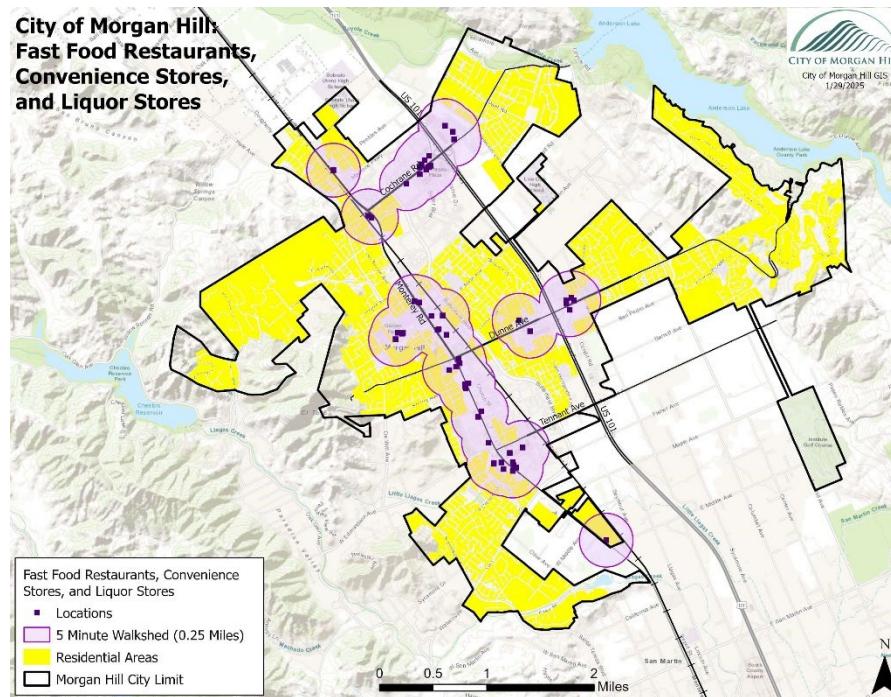
paying jobs. The lack of personal automobiles and public transit opportunities is an undue burden on lower-income residents having the ability to access higher paying jobs in northern Santa Clara County.

The chart below shows the imbalance of Morgan Hill's resident workers to the jobs located in the City for different wage groups as a ratio - a value of 1 means that a city has the same number of jobs in a wage group as it has resident workers - in principle, a balance. Values above 1 indicate a jurisdiction will need to import workers for jobs in a given wage group. The chart below indicates that Morgan Hill is importing low-wage workers from outside the City and exporting residents to higher paying wages outside of the City.



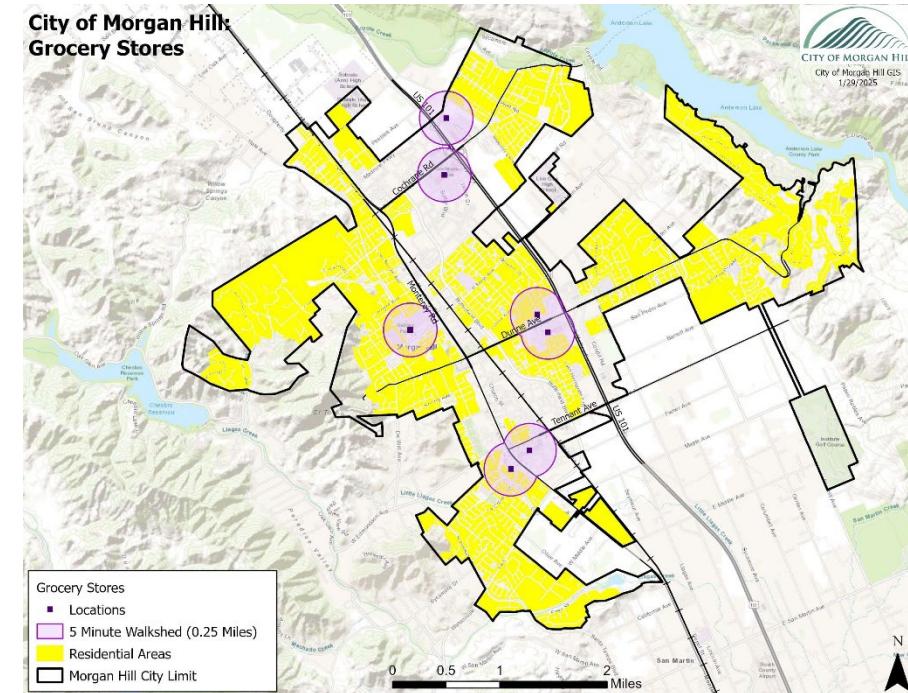
# Healthy Food

## Supply & Access to Healthy Food

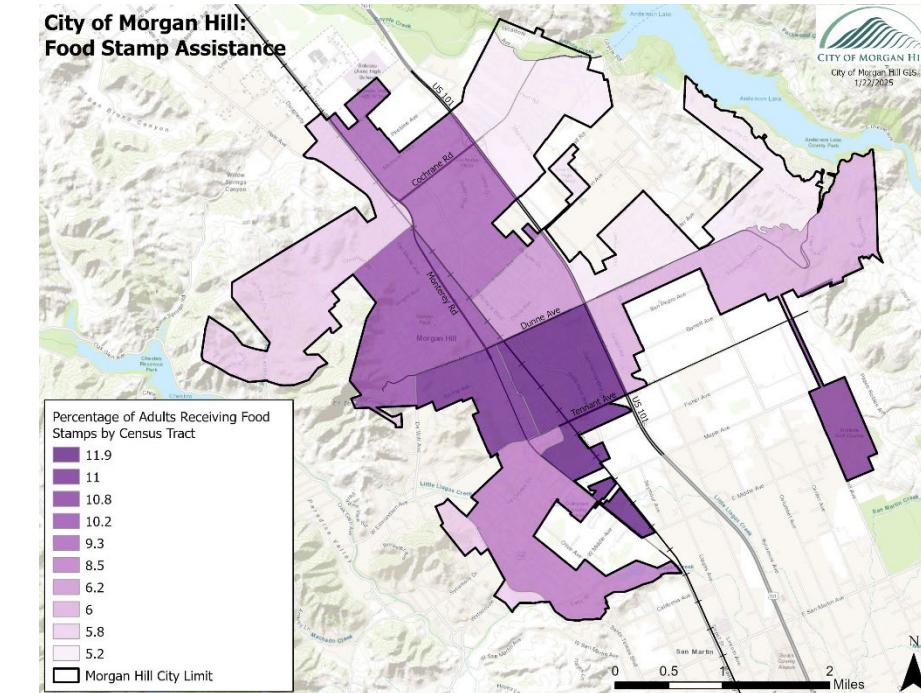


Retail food environment has a large influence on a person's food choices, and oversaturation of unhealthy food retailers such as fast-food outlets, convenience stores, and liquor licenses (for off-site consumption) can lead to greater incidences of negative health outcomes including obesity, high cholesterol, and diabetes.

The map above shows the location of fast-food restaurants, convenience stores, and liquor stores, which is concentrated in the area along Monterey Road, Cochrane Road and Dunne Avenue, and the walkability to these unhealthy food choices.



Healthy food sources offer fresh and nutritious foods including fruits and vegetables and are ideally locally produced and/or organic. The map above reveals that many areas of the city do not have walkable access to healthy food sources including grocery stores.

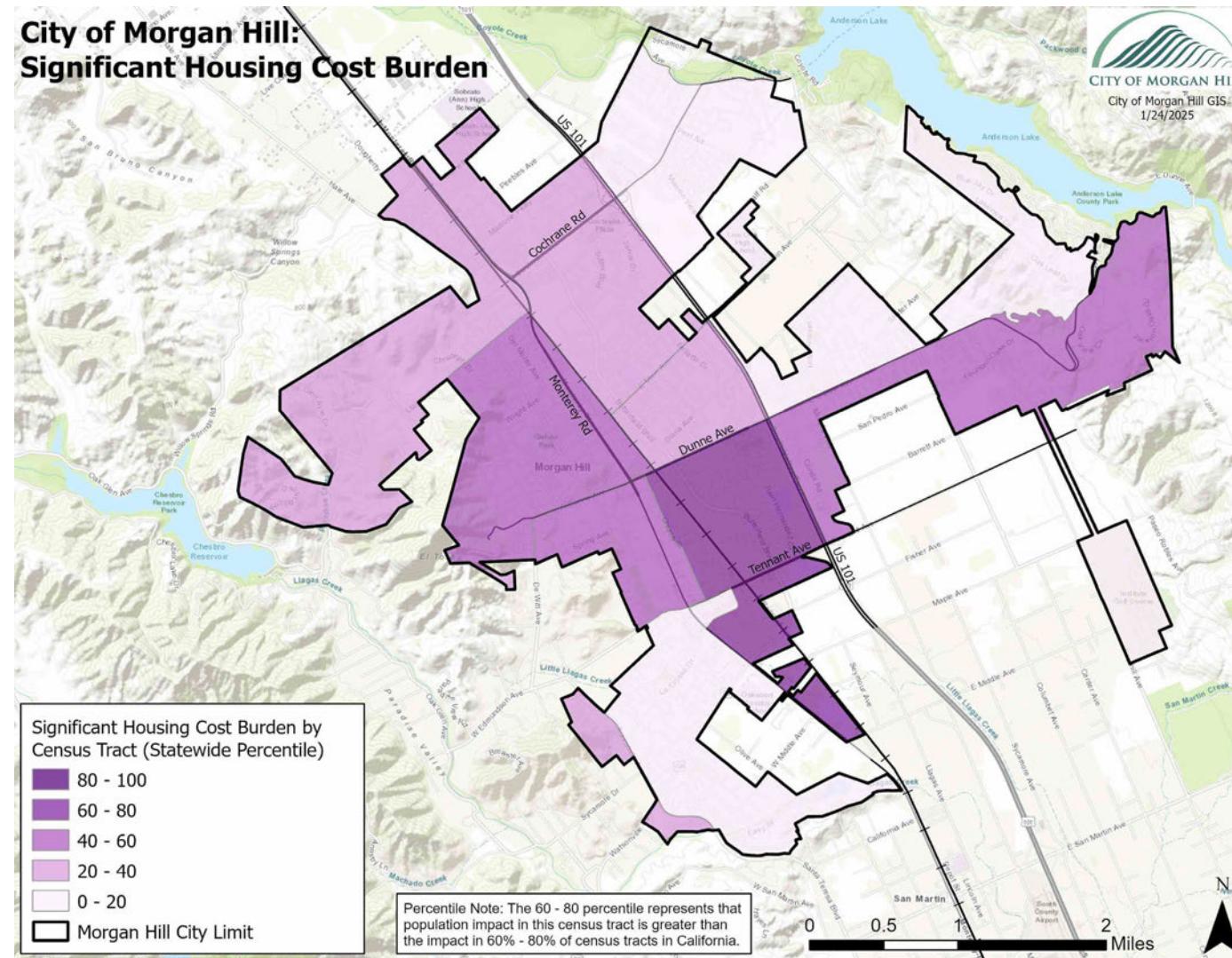


According to USDA, high food security means an individual does not have food-access problems or limitation. On the other hand, food insecurity can be described as a lack of consistent access to sufficient food and is a measure of how many people cannot afford food.

People experiencing food insecurity may participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as "food stamps") or receive public assistance income. Based on ACS 2023, 7.2 percent of households in Morgan Hill receive SNAP and 2.0 percent are single mothers receiving SNAP. SNAP usage is particularly prominent in the central southwestern portion of the city.

## Safe & Sanitary Housing

### Housing Burden & Insecurity

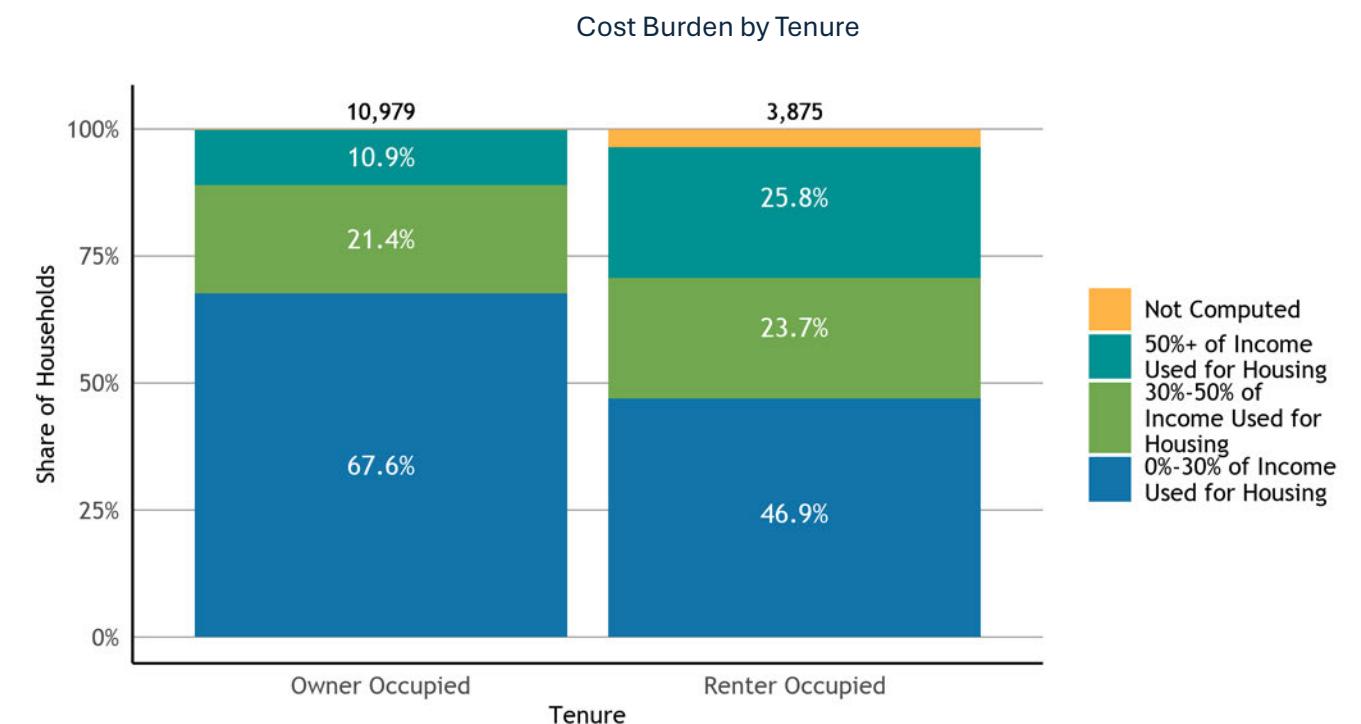


Rising housing costs and lack of affordability is a primary driver of housing insecurity. Households that spend 30 percent or more of their income on housing costs are deemed housing burdened, and those that spend 50 percent or more are significantly housing burdened. Households that are housing burdened have fewer financial resources for food, healthcare, and other needs. The inability of households to afford necessary non-housing goods after paying for shelter is known as housing-induced poverty. California has very high housing costs relative to much of the country, making it difficult for many to afford adequate housing. Within California, the cost of living varies significantly and is largely dependent on housing cost, availability, and demand.

A household is considered “cost-burdened” if it spends more than 30% of its monthly income on housing costs, while those who spend more than 50% of their income on housing costs are

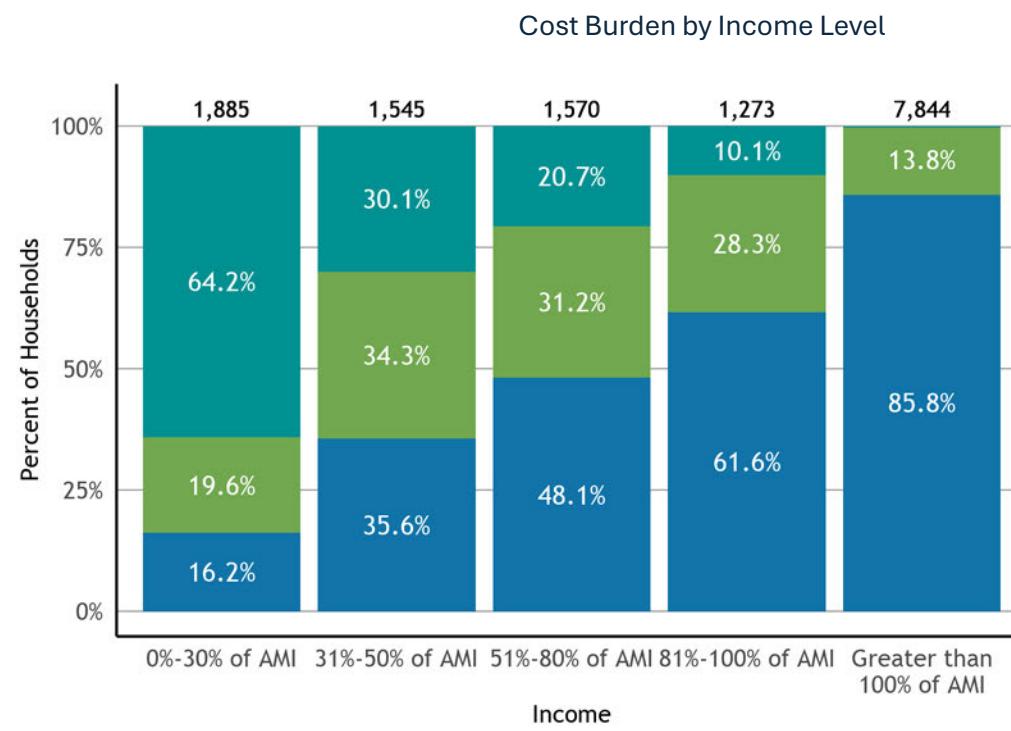
considered “severely cost-burdened.” Low-income residents are the most impacted by high housing costs and experience the highest rates of cost burden. Spending such large portions of their income on housing puts low-income households at higher risk of displacement, eviction, or homelessness.

Renters are often more cost-burdened than owners. While the housing market has resulted in home prices increasing dramatically, homeowners often have mortgages with fixed rates, whereas renters are more likely to be impacted by market increases. When looking at the cost burden across tenure in Morgan Hill, 23.7% of renters spend 30% to 50% of their income on housing compared to 21.4% of those that own. Additionally, 25.8% of renters spend 50% or more of their income on housing, while 10.9% of owners are severely cost-burdened.



In Morgan Hill, 15.3% of households spend 50% or more of their income on housing, while 20.1% spend 30% to 50%. However, these rates vary greatly across income categories. For example, 64.2% of Morgan Hill households making less than 30% of AMI spend the majority of their income on housing. For Morgan Hill residents making more than 100% of AMI, just 0.4% are severely cost-burdened, and 85.8% of those making more than 100% of AMI spend less than 30% of their income on housing.

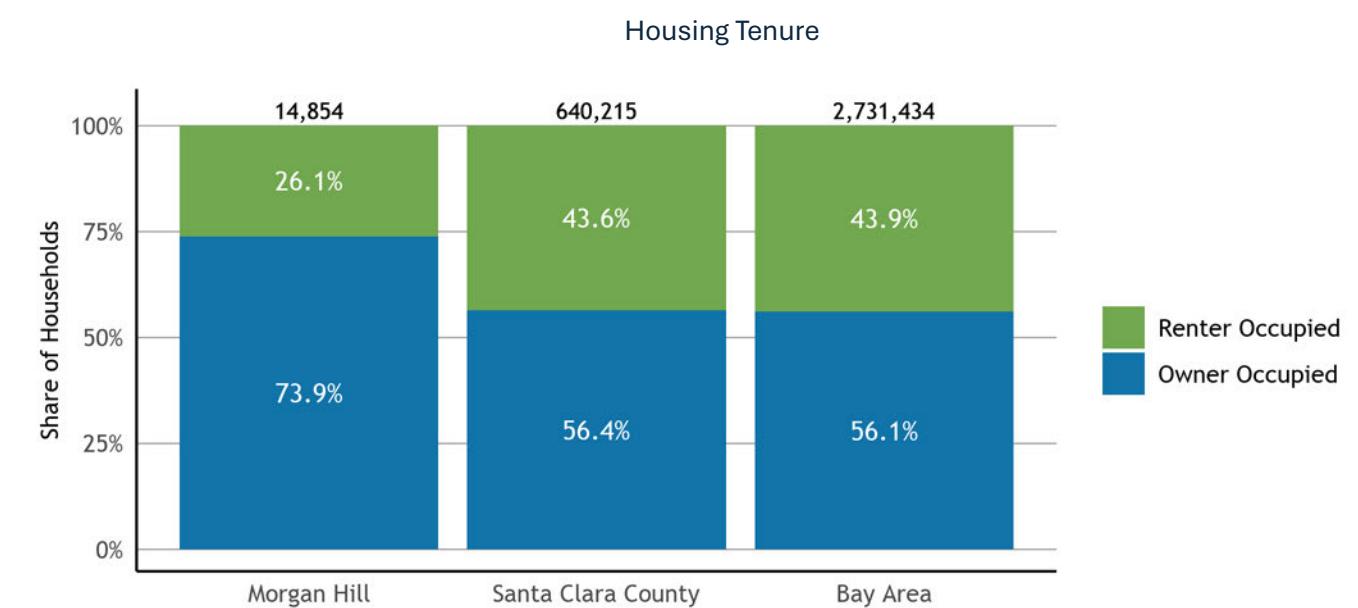
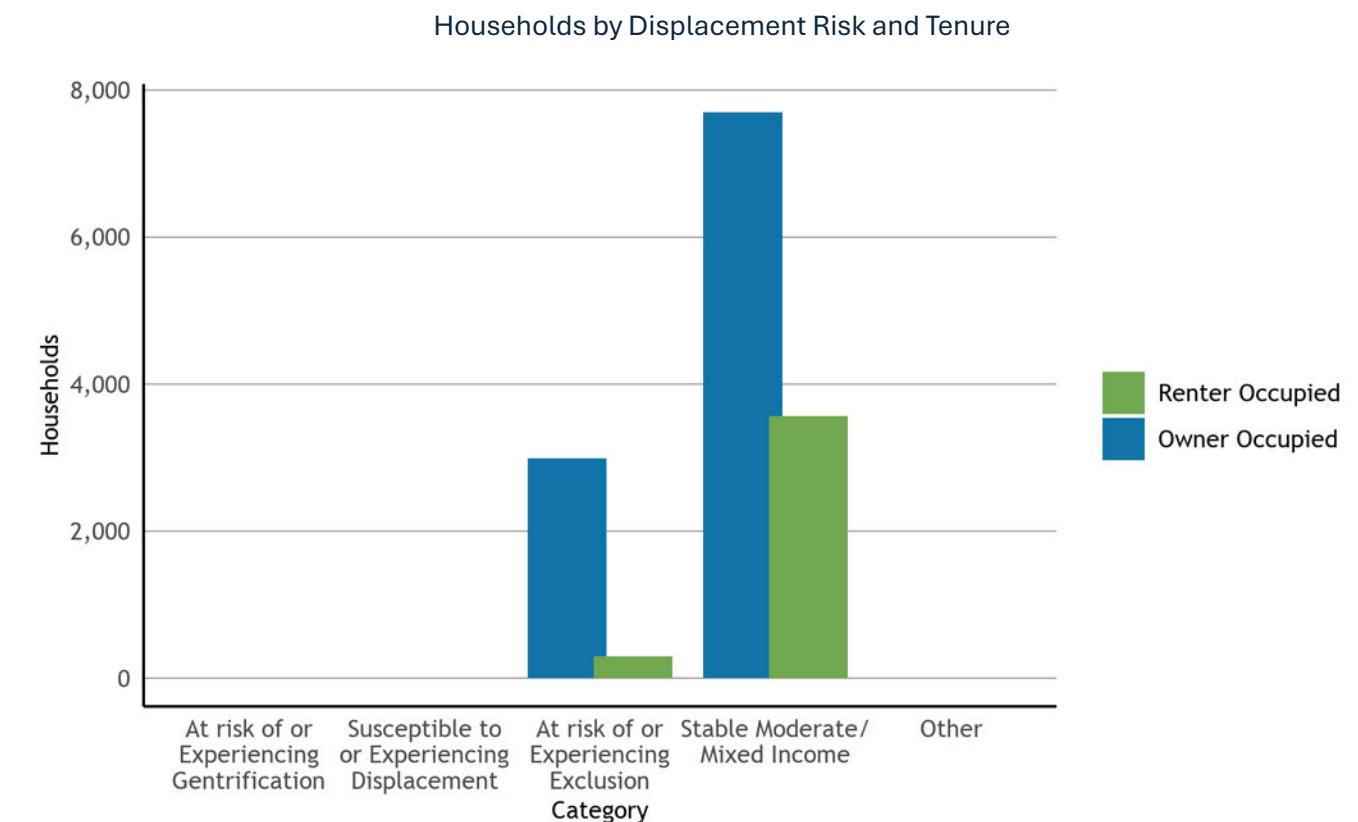
Because of increasing housing prices, displacement is a major concern in the Bay Area. Displacement has the most severe impacts on low- and moderate-income residents. When individuals or families are forced to leave their homes and communities, they also lose their support network.



The University of California, Berkeley has mapped all neighborhoods in the Bay area, identifying their risk for gentrification. They find that in Morgan Hill, no households live in neighborhoods that are susceptible to or experiencing displacement or live in neighborhoods at risk of or undergoing gentrification.

Equally important, some neighborhoods in the Bay Area do not have housing appropriate for a broad section of the workforce. UC Berkeley estimates that 22.6% of households in Morgan Hill live in neighborhoods where low-income households are likely to be excluded due to prohibitive housing costs.<sup>9</sup>

The number of residents who own their homes compared to those who rent their homes can help identify the level of housing insecurity – ability for individuals to stay in their homes – in a city and region. Generally, renters may be displaced more quickly if prices increase. In Morgan Hill fewer residents rent than own their homes: 26.1% versus 73.9%. By comparison, 43.6% of households in Santa Clara County are renters, while 44% of Bay Area households rent their homes.

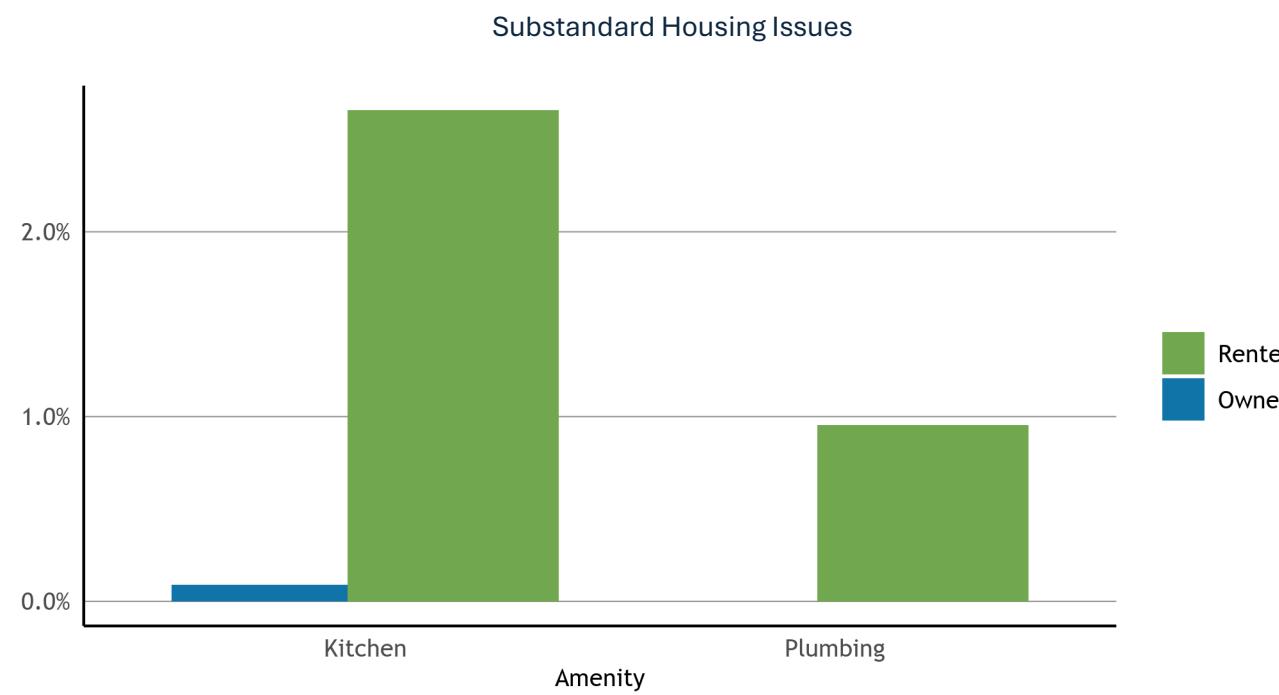


<sup>9</sup> More information about this gentrification and displacement data is available at the Urban Displacement Project's webpage: <https://www.urbandisplacement.org/>. Specifically, one can learn more about the different gentrification/displacement typologies shown in Figure 18 at this link: [https://www.urbandisplacement.org/sites/default/files/typology\\_sheet\\_2018\\_0.png](https://www.urbandisplacement.org/sites/default/files/typology_sheet_2018_0.png).

Additionally, one can view maps that show which typologies correspond to which parts of a jurisdiction here: <https://www.urbandisplacement.org/san-francisco/sf-bay-area-gentrification-and-displacement>

## Housing Quality & Choice

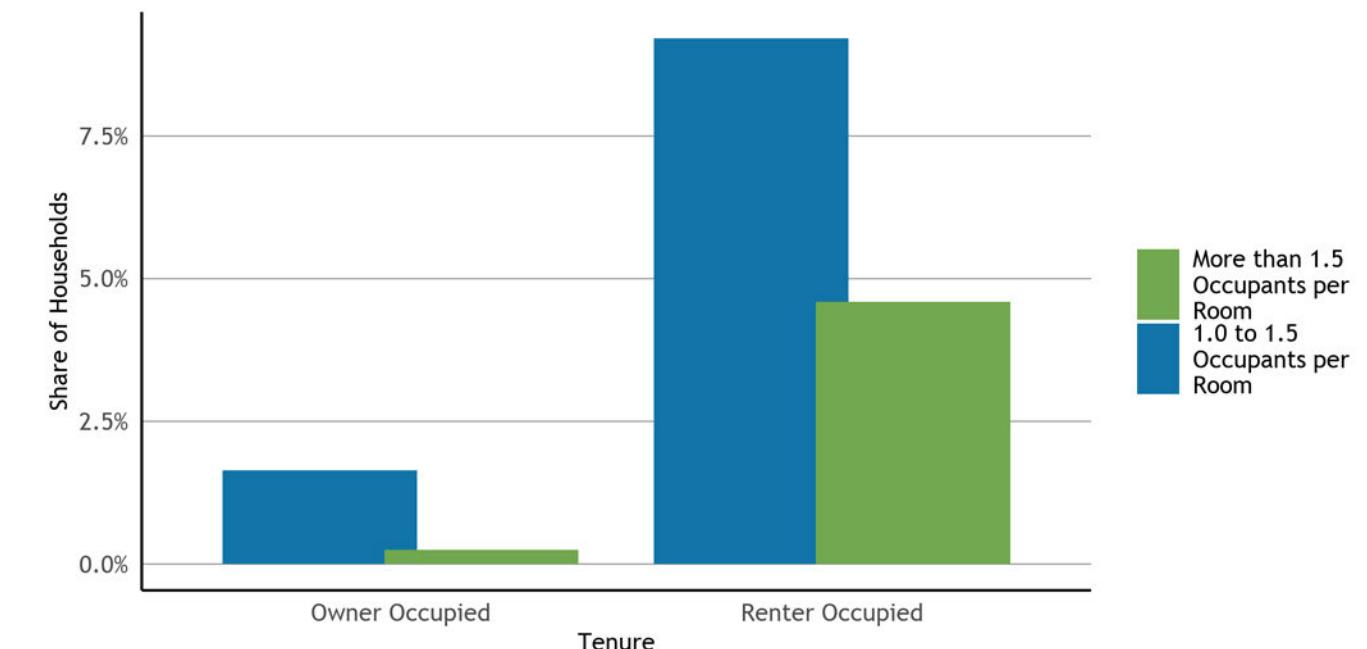
Housing costs in the region are among the highest in the country, which could result in households, particularly renters, needing to live in substandard conditions in order to afford housing. Generally, there is limited data on the extent of substandard housing issues in a community. However, the Census Bureau data included in the graph below gives a sense of some of the substandard conditions that may be present in Morgan Hill. For example, 2.7% of renters in Morgan Hill reported lacking a kitchen and 1.0% of renters lack plumbing, compared to 0.1% of owners who lack a kitchen and 0.0% of owners who lack plumbing.



Overcrowding occurs when the number of people living in a household is greater than the home was designed to hold. There are several different standards for defining overcrowding, but this report uses the Census Bureau definition, which is more than one occupant per room (not including bathrooms or kitchens). Additionally, the Census Bureau considers units with more than 1.5 occupants per room to be severely overcrowded.

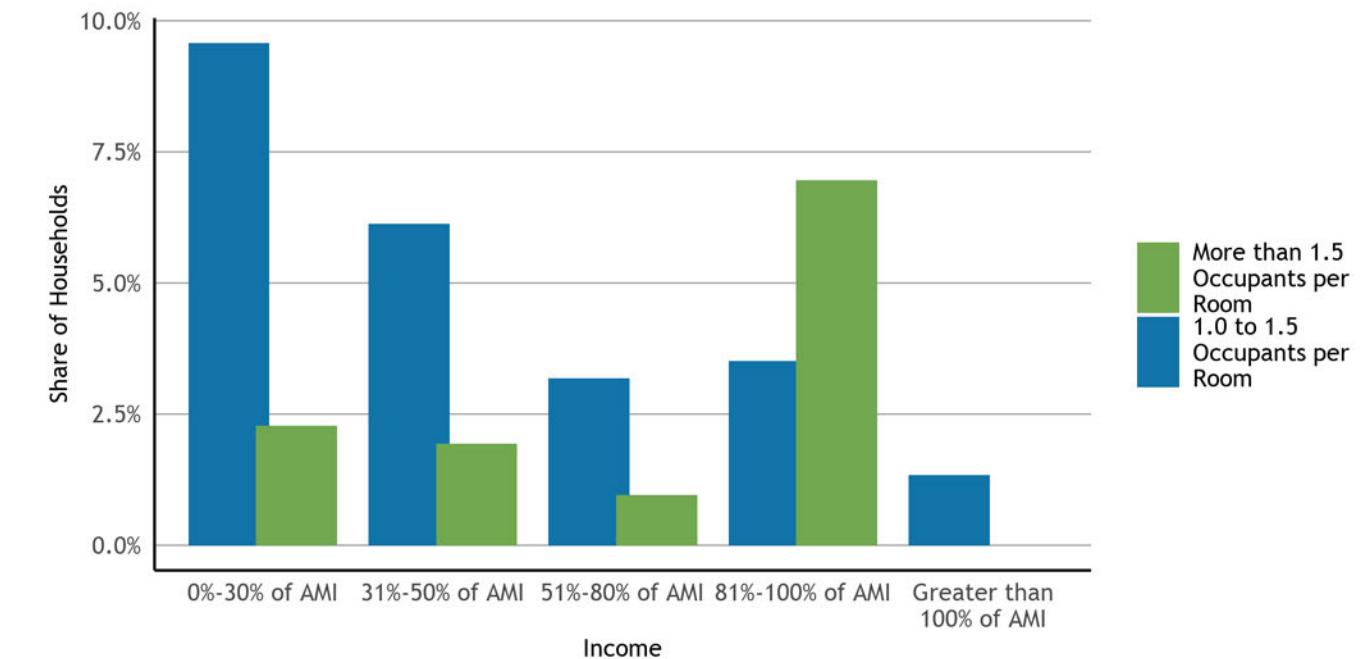
Overcrowding is often related to the cost of housing and can occur when demand in a city or region is high. In many cities, overcrowding is seen more amongst those that are renting, with multiple households sharing a unit to make it possible to stay in their communities. In Morgan Hill, 4.6% of households that rent are severely overcrowded (more than 1.5 occupants per room), compared to 0.2% of households that own. In Morgan Hill, 9.2% of renters experience moderate overcrowding (1 to 1.5 occupants per room), compared to 1.6% for those own.

## Overcrowding by Tenure and Severity

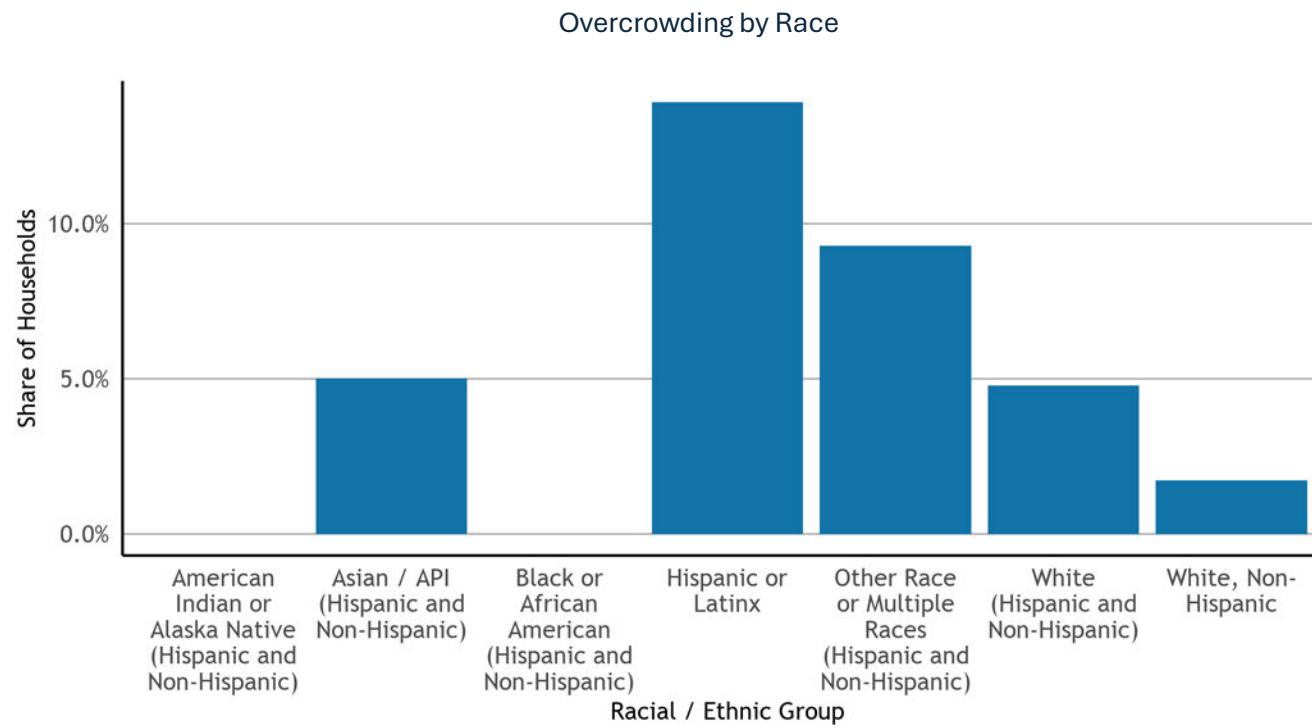


Overcrowding often disproportionately impacts low-income households. 2.3% of very low-income households (below 50% AMI) experience severe overcrowding, while 0.0% of households above 100% experience this level of overcrowding.

## Overcrowding by Income Level and Severity

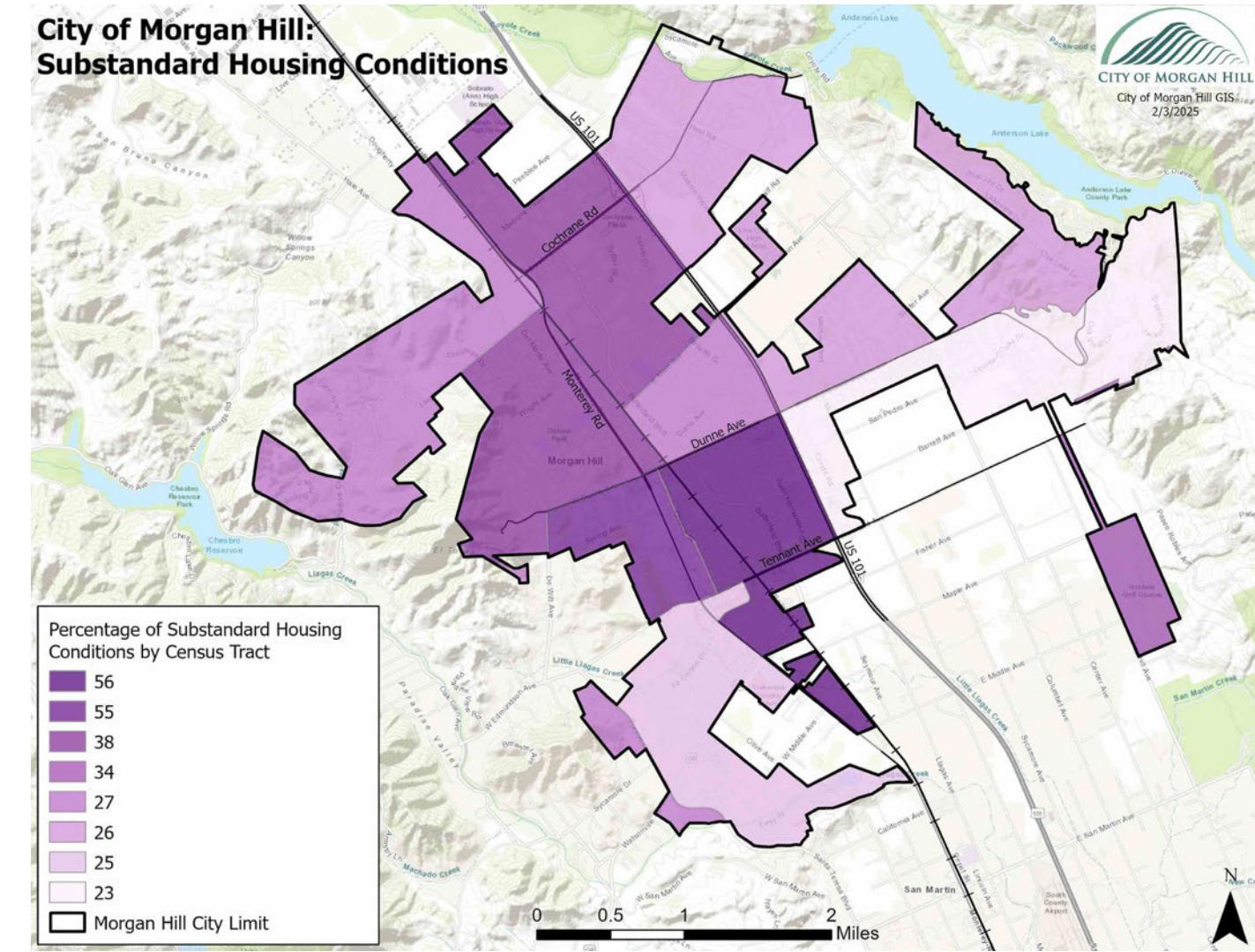


Communities of color are more likely to experience overcrowding similar to how they are more likely to experience poverty, financial instability, and housing insecurity. People of color tend to experience overcrowding at higher rates than White residents. In Morgan Hill, the racial group with the largest overcrowding rate is Hispanic or Latino.



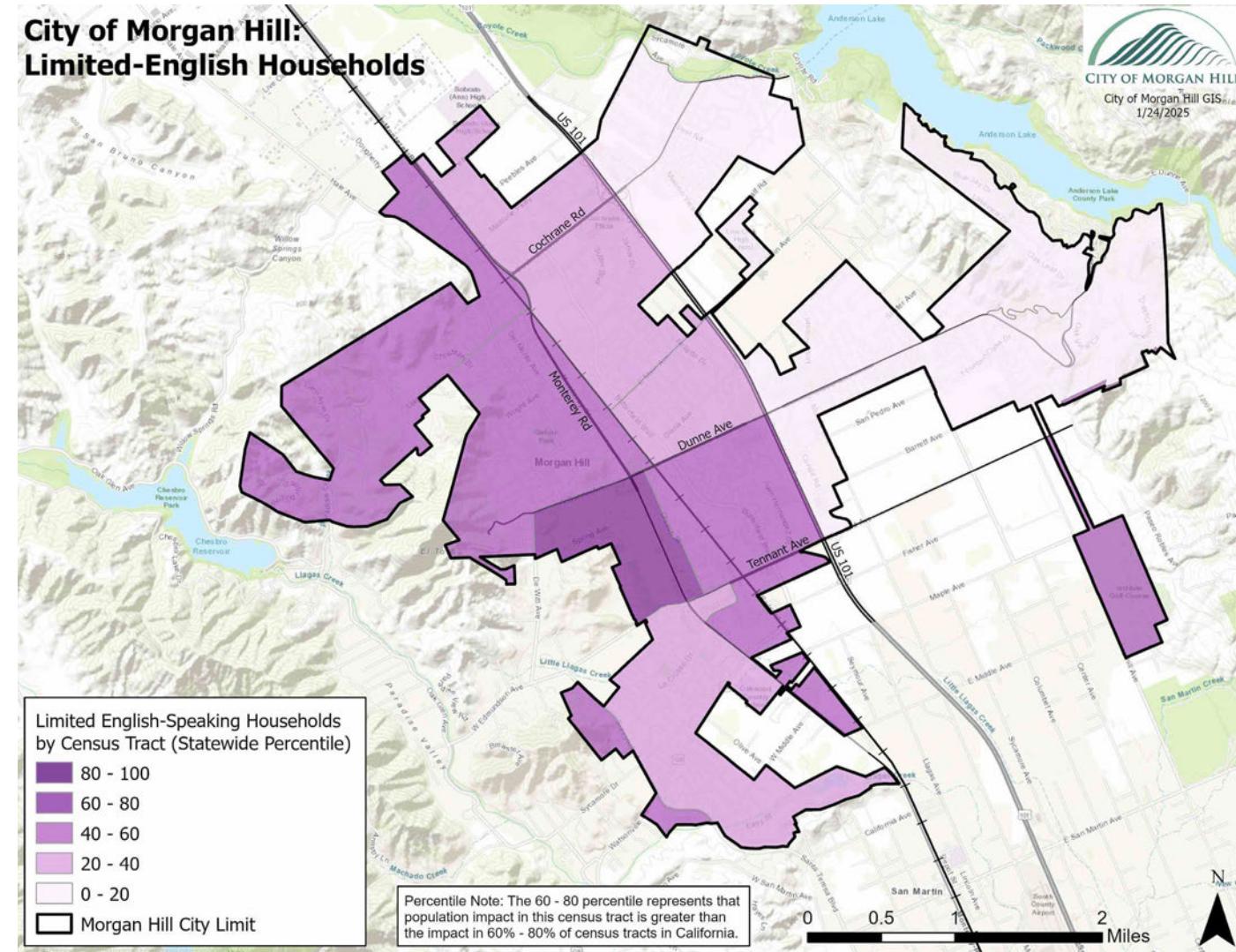
Selected financial and physical conditions including lack of complete plumbing facilities, lack of complete kitchen facilities, overcrowding, and housing are used by the Census Bureau to identify homes in which the quality of living and housing can be considered substandard.

Based on this definition and data from ACS 2023, the map to the right shows the percentage of households with the selected physical conditions by Census Tract.



## Civic Engagement & Investment Priority

### Barriers to Civic Engagement

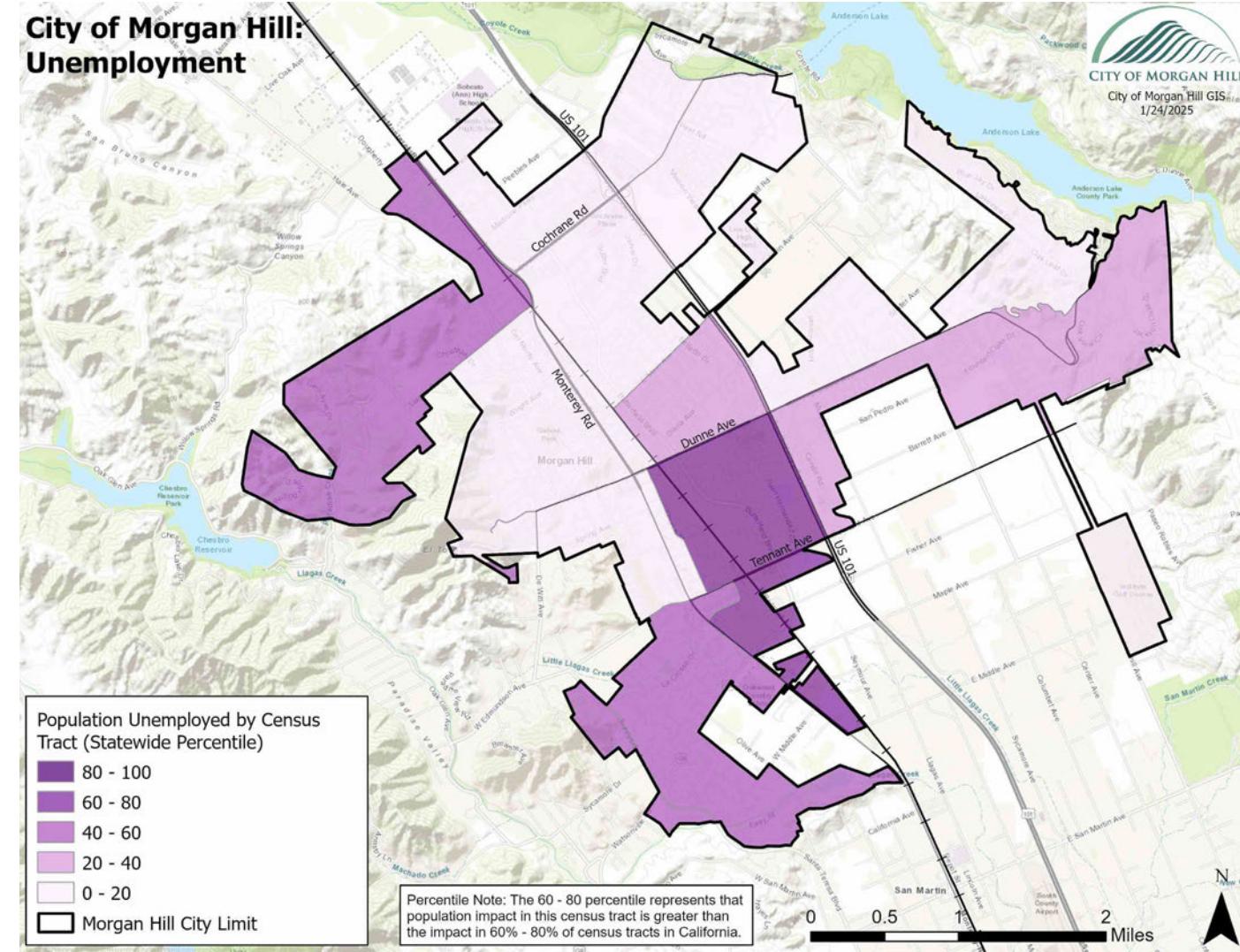


Individuals with limited English-speaking ability (also referred to as linguistic isolation) may not be able to properly communicate their needs or receive vital information to access resources and services. This barrier to access is even more pronounced when an entire household has limited English-speaking ability.

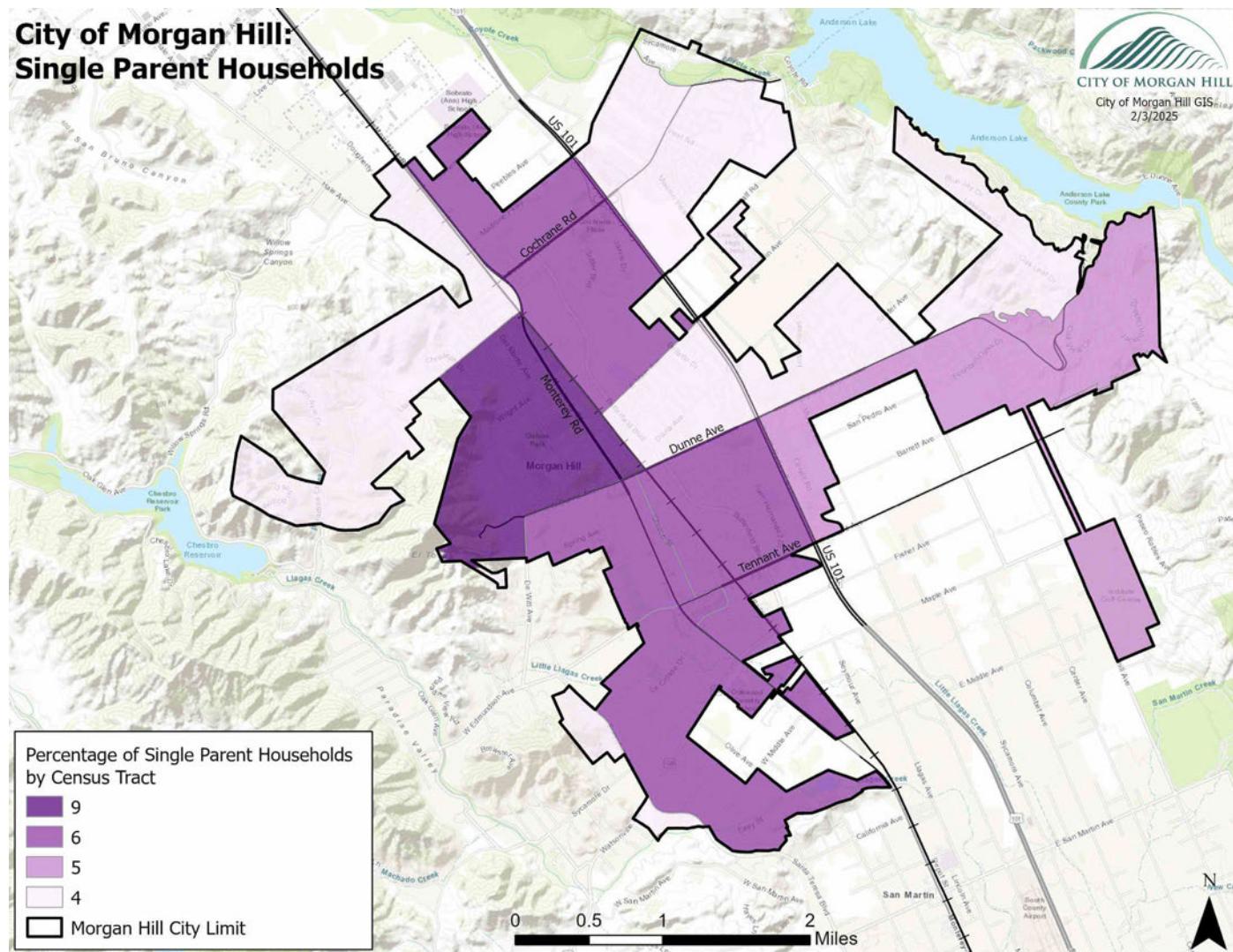
Linguistic isolation is a term used by the U.S. Census Bureau for limited English-speaking households. More than 40 percent of Californians speak a language other than English at home. About half of those do not speak English well or at all. Adults who are not able to speak English well often have trouble talking to the people who provide social services and medical care. Linguistically isolated households may also not hear or understand important information when there is an emergency like an accidental chemical release or spill. In addition, a high degree of linguistic

isolation among members of a community raises concerns about access to health information and public services, and effective engagement with regulatory processes.

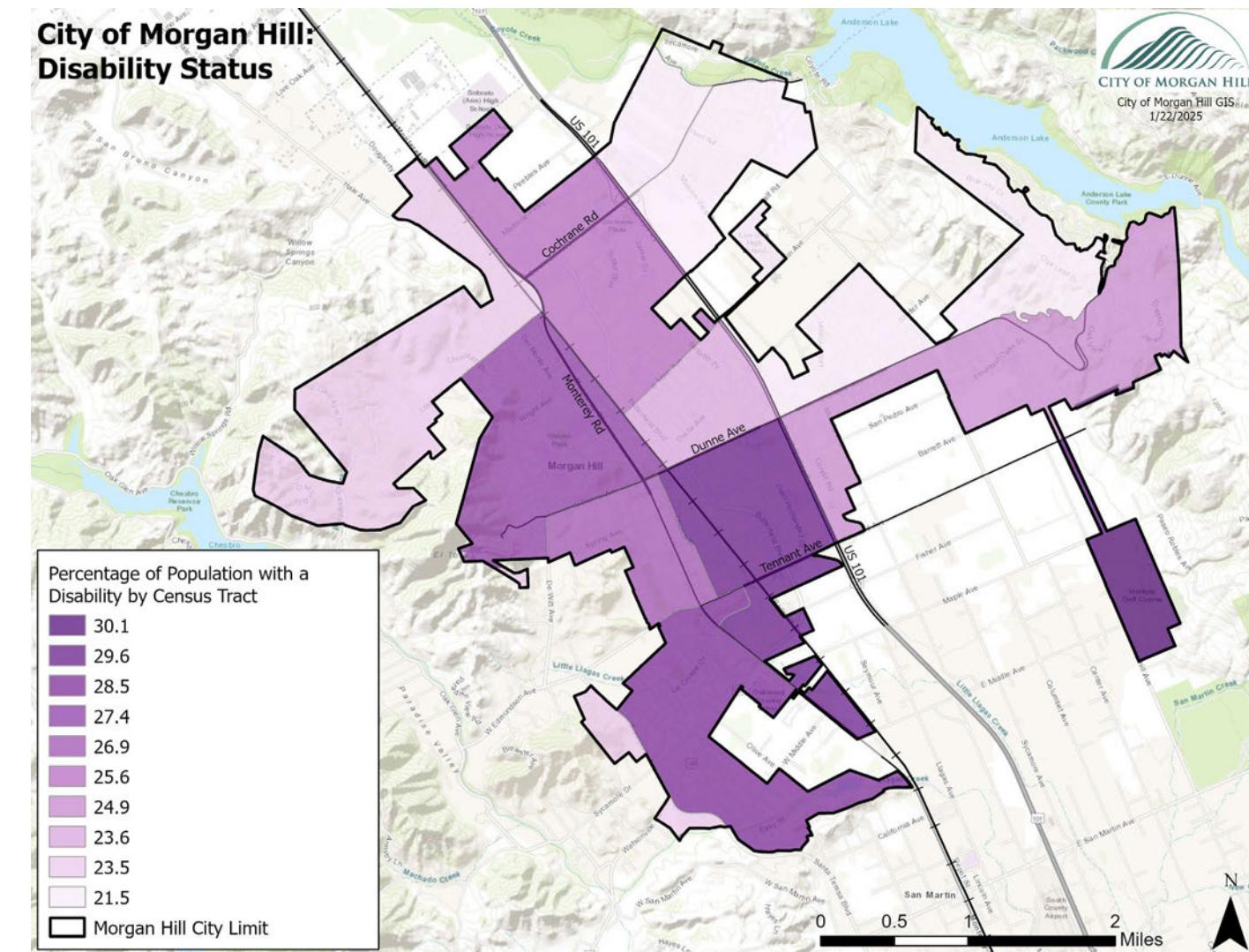
In Morgan Hill, as much as 11 percent of a tract's population is linguistically isolated. The most common language spoken in these limited-English households is Spanish.



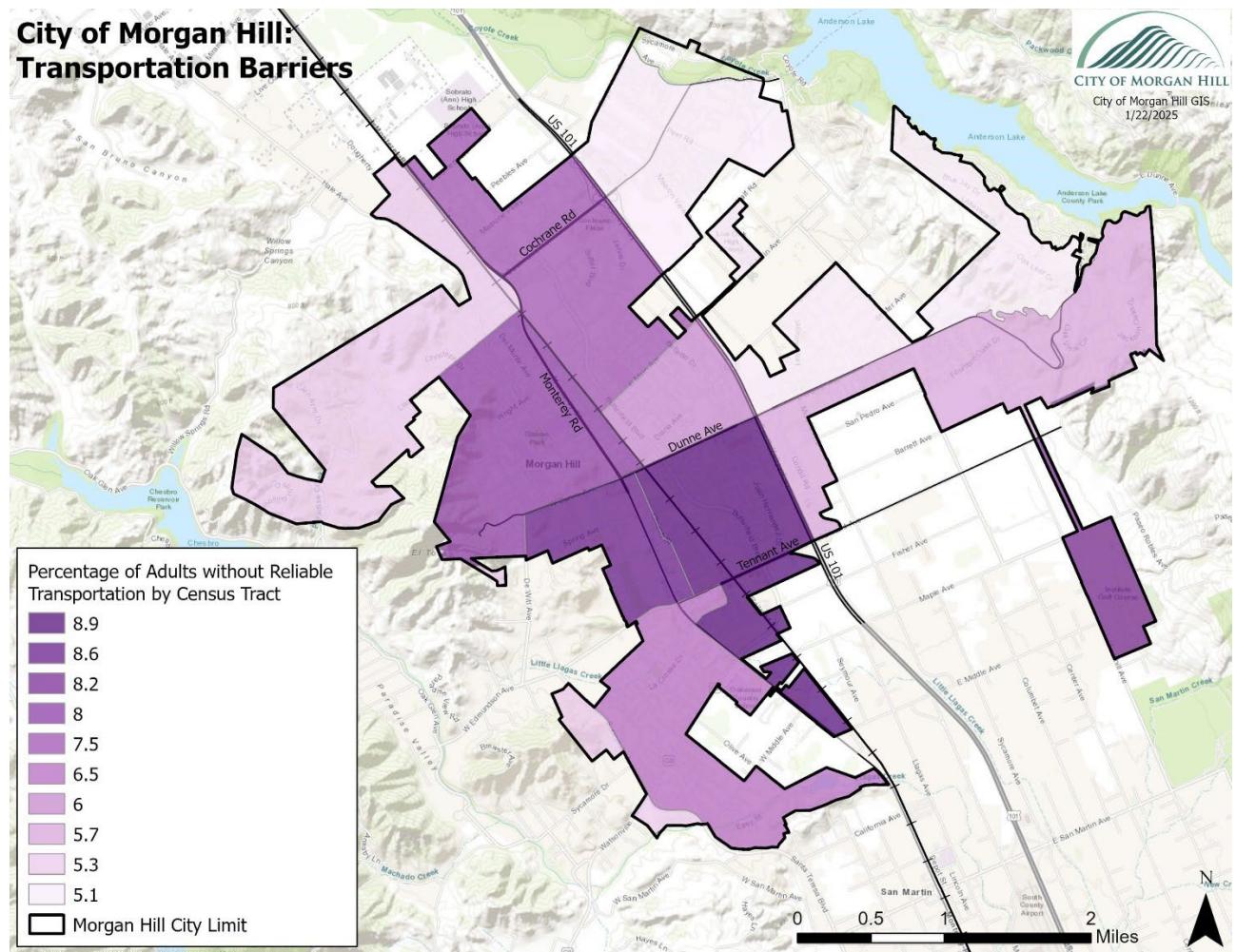
Employment is a central component of financial health and economic mobility opportunity that also has implications on a person's health. According to ACS 2023, 4.8 percent of the city's civilian labor force is unemployed. The census tract with the highest unemployment rate is 7 percent (placing it in the 67<sup>th</sup> percentile of the State), while some census tracts do not have any unemployed civilian population in the labor force as shown in the above map.



Given the increasing cost of living, maintaining a single-income household can be difficult, especially when supporting children. Single parents may not have the time or be able to afford childcare to be civically involved in their communities. The areas of the City with the highest percentage of households headed by single parent are along the Monterey Road corridor as identified in the above map.



Individuals with a disability may require additional accommodations to allow them to be meaningfully engaged in civic activities. This map shows the percentage of population by tract with one or more disabilities. The disabilities identified within this map include hearing, vision, cognitive (concentrating, remembering, or making decisions), mobility (walking or climbing stairs), self-care (dressing or bathing), and independent living (doing errands alone) disability.



Households without a vehicle may not be able to participate in civic activities due to inability or inconvenience of getting to a location. This is particularly an issue where alternative modes of transportation are not widely available. It is noted that neighborhoods with higher proportions of multi-family residences such as apartments are also likely to have higher proportions of households without a vehicle.

Lack of available, convenient, or reliable transportation can affect a person's ability to consistently access health care services, which can lead to delays in healthcare and medication use that can subsequently impact overall health<sup>10,11</sup>. In addition, the inability to access reliable transportation to work, schools, and grocery stores is associated with higher rates of unemployment, poverty, and

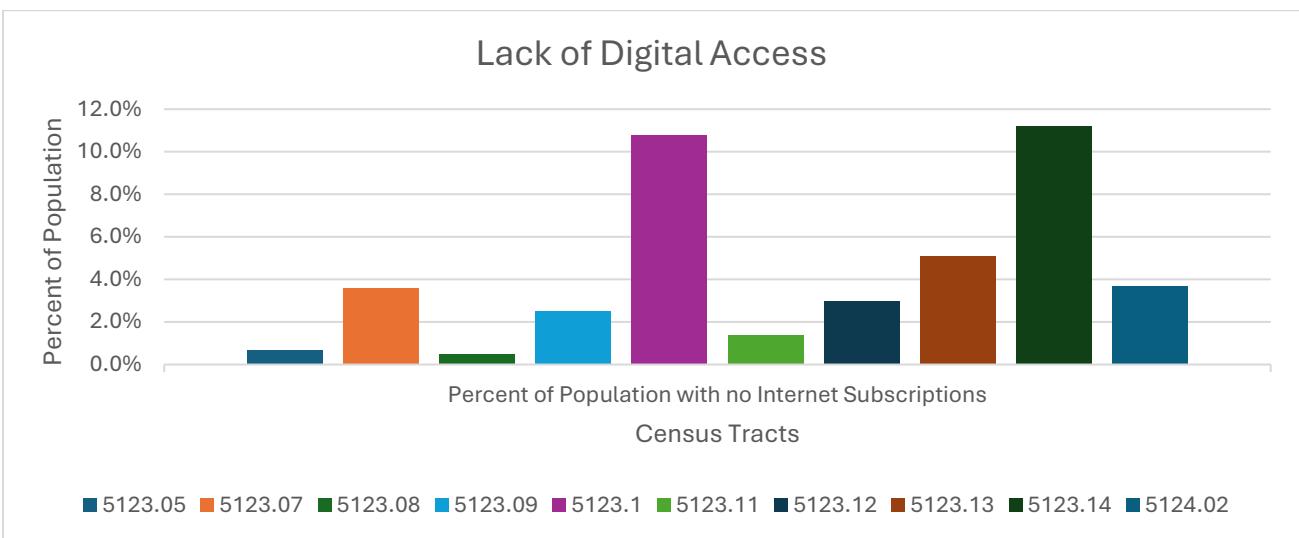
<sup>10</sup> Healthy People 2030. Access to Health Services. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Accessed February 5, 2025. <https://health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health/literature-summaries/access-health-services>

<sup>11</sup> Syed ST, Gerber BS, Sharp LK. Traveling towards disease: transportation barriers to health care access. *J Community Health*. 2013;38(5):976-93. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10900-013-9681-1>

<sup>12</sup> United States Department of Transportation. Expanding Access. United States Department of Transportation; 2022. [https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2022-04/Expanding\\_Access.pdf](https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2022-04/Expanding_Access.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Starbird LE, DiMaina C, Sun CA, Han HR. A systematic review of interventions to minimize transportation barriers among people with chronic diseases. *J Community Health*. 2019;44(2):400-411. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10900-018-0572-3>

chronic illness<sup>12</sup>. People with lower incomes and uninsured people are more likely to experience transportation barriers<sup>3, 4</sup>. Limited public transportation infrastructure in a neighborhood leaves people without access to vehicles lacking in reliable transportation options<sup>4</sup>. Offering free or reimbursed public transit or taxi costs, connecting individuals to transportation, and policies that improve the safety and accessibility of sidewalks and bike lanes can help improve transportation access<sup>4, 13</sup>.



The internet plays an increasingly central role in how people get information and connect with one another. This practice has become readily apparent throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, during which many community activities were held online. Households without computers or without internet subscriptions may rely on public resources such as libraries in order to access these platforms. In 2023, 7.9% of households in the United States did not have a broadband internet subscription<sup>14</sup>. Lack of broadband access can limit educational and economic opportunities, as well as delivery of health care services remotely through telehealth services<sup>15</sup>. Telehealth services have been shown to reduce chronic disease risk factors and improve the management of chronic disease conditions, like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and obesity<sup>16</sup>.

Some Census Tracts in the city have significantly higher proportions of households that do not have internet, and these tracts are highly correlated with low-income areas in the central portions of the City along Monterey Road, as indicated in the chart above.

<sup>14</sup> Types of Computers and Internet Subscriptions, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S2801. United States Census Bureau; 2023. Accessed October 23, 2024. <https://data.census.gov/table?q=S2801>

<sup>15</sup> Bauerly BC, McCord RF, Hulkower R, Pepin D. Broadband access as a public health issue: the role of law in expanding broadband access and connecting underserved communities for better health outcomes. *J Law Med Ethics*. 2019;47(2\_suppl):39-42. doi: [10.1177/1073110519857314](https://doi.org/10.1177/1073110519857314)

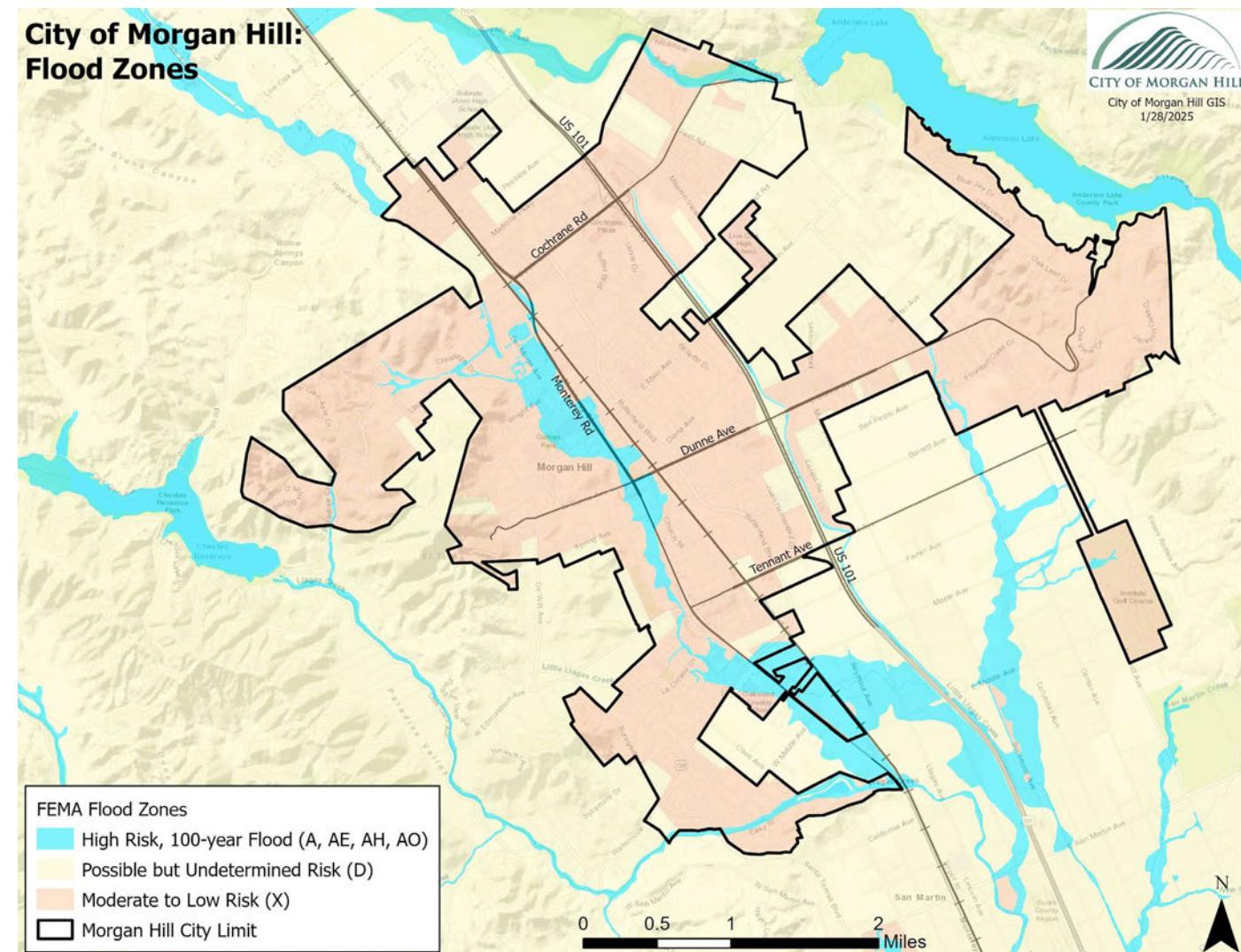
<sup>16</sup> Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention. Telehealth Interventions to Improve Chronic Disease. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Updated May 15, 2024. Accessed February 5, 2025. <https://www.cdc.gov/cardiovascular-resources/php/data-research/telehealth.html>

# Environmental Resiliency

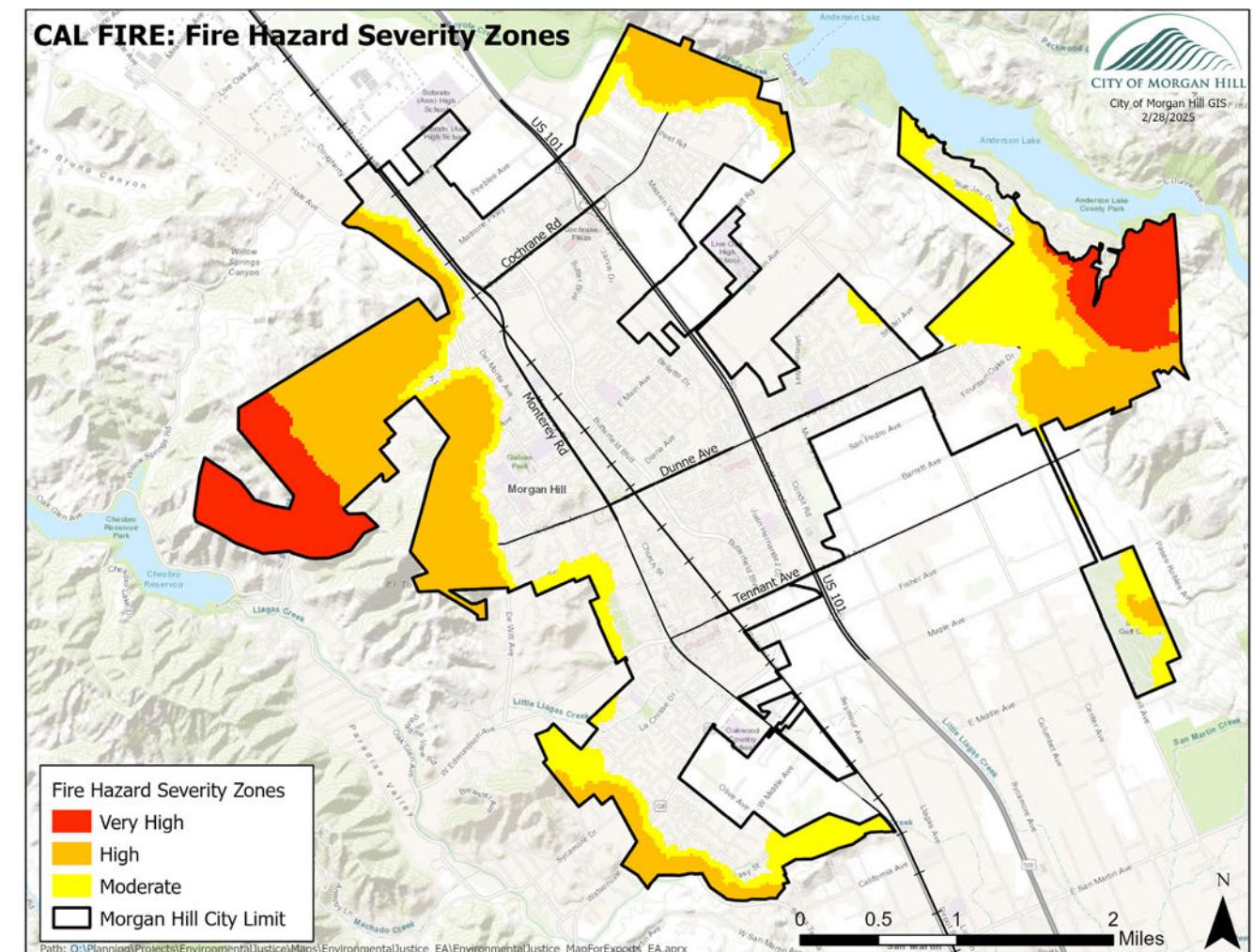
## Natural Hazards

Natural disasters and hazards such as wildfires and flooding are exacerbated by environmental changes and pose an increased threat to life and property. Due to the varying geographic nature of the city, in addition to historical development patterns that impact the contemporary environment, certain residents of the city are more at risk than others.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has identified flood risk areas, which include floodways and areas with 0.2 percent or 1 percent annual chance of flooding (known as 500-Year and 100-Year floodplains, respectively). These zones occur along West Little Llagas Creek, Llagas Creek, Coyote Creek, Paradise Creek, Madrone Channel, and Tennant Creek throughout the city.



Valley Water began construction on the final phase of the Upper Llagas Creek Flood Protection Project in September 2024, with construction to be completed in 2027. The project will provide flood protection to the Morgan Hill community along 13.9 miles of channel. The federally authorized preferred project will protect the urban area of Morgan Hill from a 1% (or 100-year) flood and reduce the frequency of flooding in surrounding areas; thereby reducing flood liability insurance (upon completion of the project and FEMA certification).



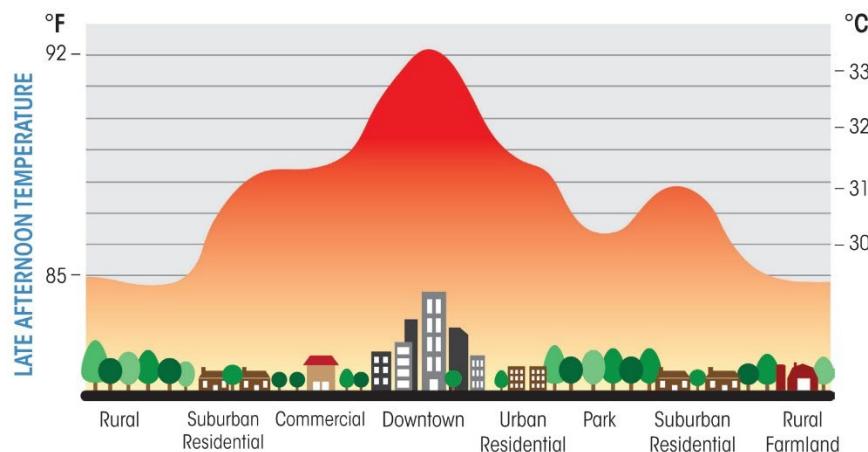
CalFire's Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) are areas in California classified based on the likelihood and behavior of wildfires, which includes only certain variables, such as wind, vegetation, ember production and movement, climate, topography, and fire history. Morgan Hill is within a local responsibility area (LRA), and areas designated as Very High FHSZ are shown in red. The above map was released by CAL FIRE on February 24, 2025.

For many years, insurance companies have been using alternate wildfire risk tools for determining where they will write and renew policies, and how much premium to charge a policyholder, not the Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps. Therefore, a change in designation on the maps for a single homeowner is unlikely to affect their insurance.

## Urban Heat

Housing and energy efficient, resilient, and healthy buildings are key components for achieving community vitality and serving the needs of residents. Energy efficient buildings increase occupant health by reducing infiltration of moisture, pests, or air pollution. They increase comfort and decrease utility bills. In the case of existing buildings, this can help prevent residents from having utilities turned off due to their inability to pay or resorting to unsafe practices for heating a home, such as relying on gas ovens. Energy efficient housing is also more resilient to prevent infiltration of wildfire smoke and keeping homes thermally comfortable during extreme heat events.

Urban Heat Island Effect

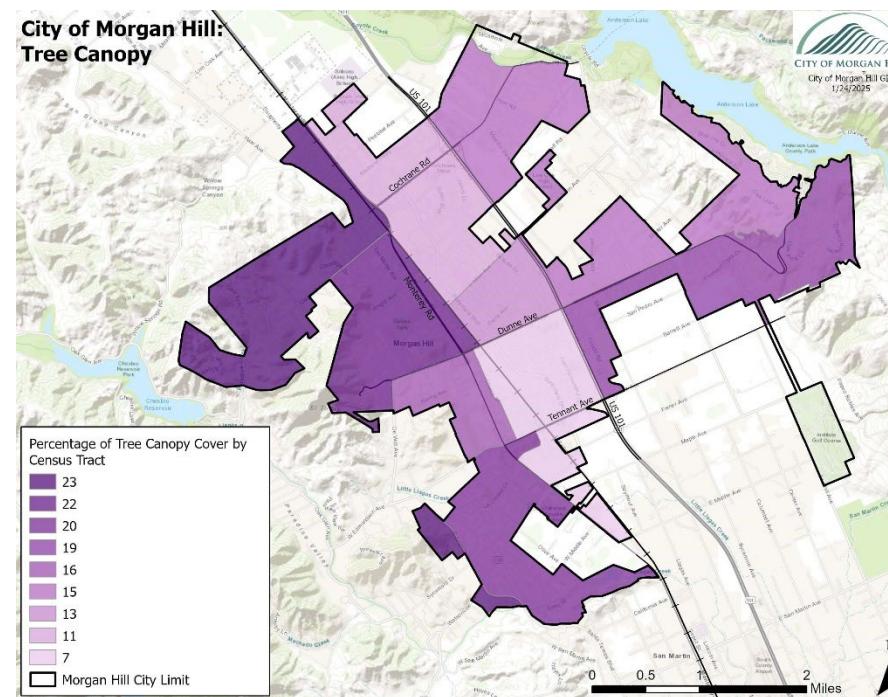


Built environments, where structures like buildings and roads are concentrated and greenery is limited, absorb and re-emit heat more than natural landscapes such as forests and water bodies. This leads to higher temperatures in urban areas that can be 1-7°F hotter during the day and 2-5°F hotter at night compared to outlying rural areas. This is referred to as the urban heat island effect. As cities grow and as climate change leads to more frequent and severe extreme heat events, risk of heat-related illnesses can be a growing concern.

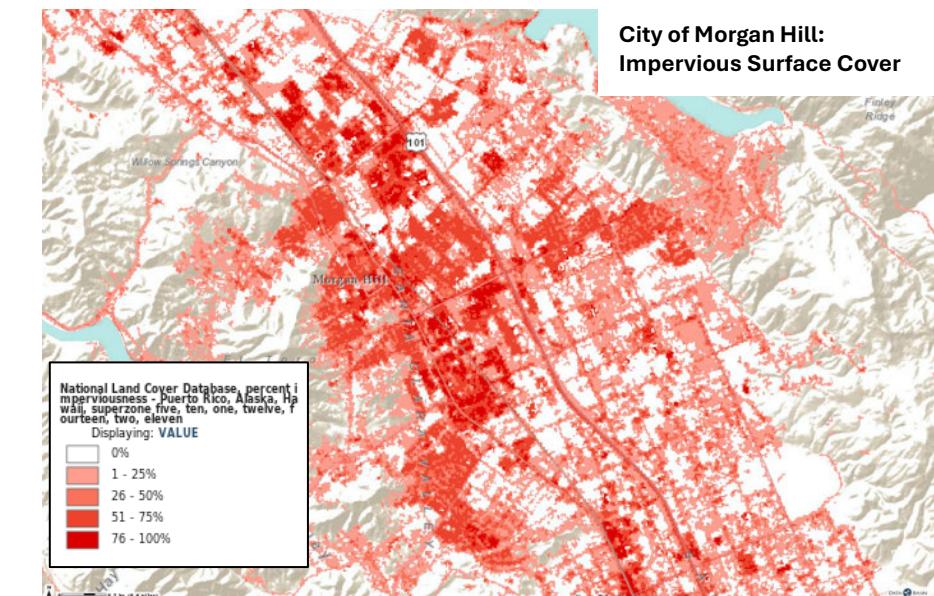
As such, Morgan Hill has, on average, an urban heat island effect ranging 56°F; a cumulative temperature difference over the day of 56°F. This measure helps in estimating the energy needs for heating or cooling buildings, as it indicates how much the temperature deviates throughout the day.

Due to the influence of the Pacific Ocean just 15 miles west, Morgan Hill enjoys a mild, comfortable climate. Temperatures range from average summer highs in the 90s °F to average winter lows in the 30s °F.

FEMA's National Risk Index indicates that the average number of extreme heat days for Morgan Hill has historically been approximately 25 days per year and indicates that Morgan Hill has a Moderate Risk to heatwaves. A Heat Wave is a period of abnormally and uncomfortably hot and unusually humid weather typically lasting two or more days with temperatures outside the historical averages for a given area.

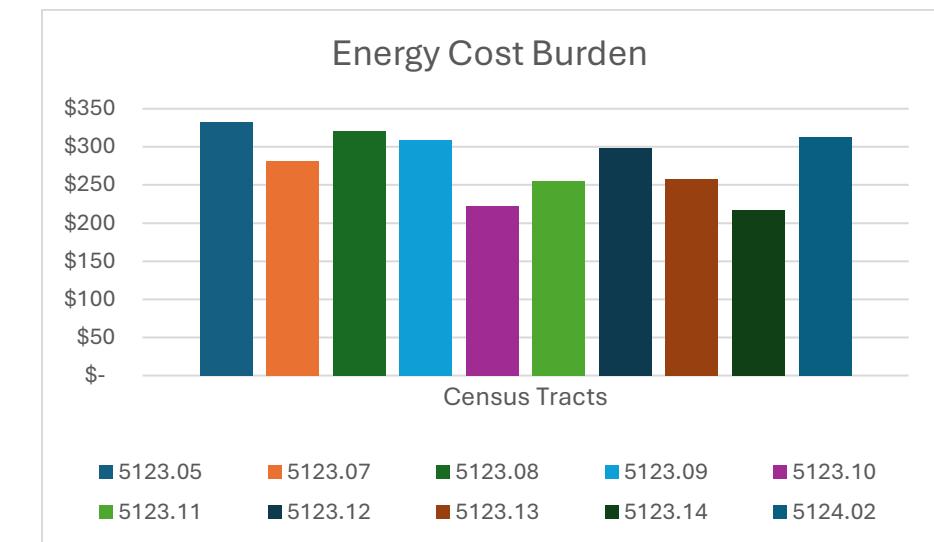


The above map shows the tree canopy coverage within the city. Lighter colors indicate less tree cover, meaning they have less shade to mitigate heat accumulation. Trees provide shade, which can help reduce heat stress and heat-related illnesses, help absorb rainwater and reduce the amount of polluted water that flows into streams, and can help slow traffic and make streets safer for pedestrians. Many of these tracts (in light purple) also do not have Cooling Centers (Morgan Hill Library and Centennial Recreation Center) where at-risk populations such as seniors can access air-conditioned settings to escape the heat.



Impervious surface cover, or urban land cover types found in developed areas such as buildings and pavement, are an indicator of places where urban heat could accumulate.

In Morgan Hill, there are many natural lands where impervious surface cover is as low as 0 percent, but other areas where development is highly concentrated including West of Highway 101, Downtown, and along the Monterey Road corridor.



As energy use needs increase to combat high heat or extreme cold, energy cost burdened households may struggle to afford the energy needed to cool and heat themselves and their homes.

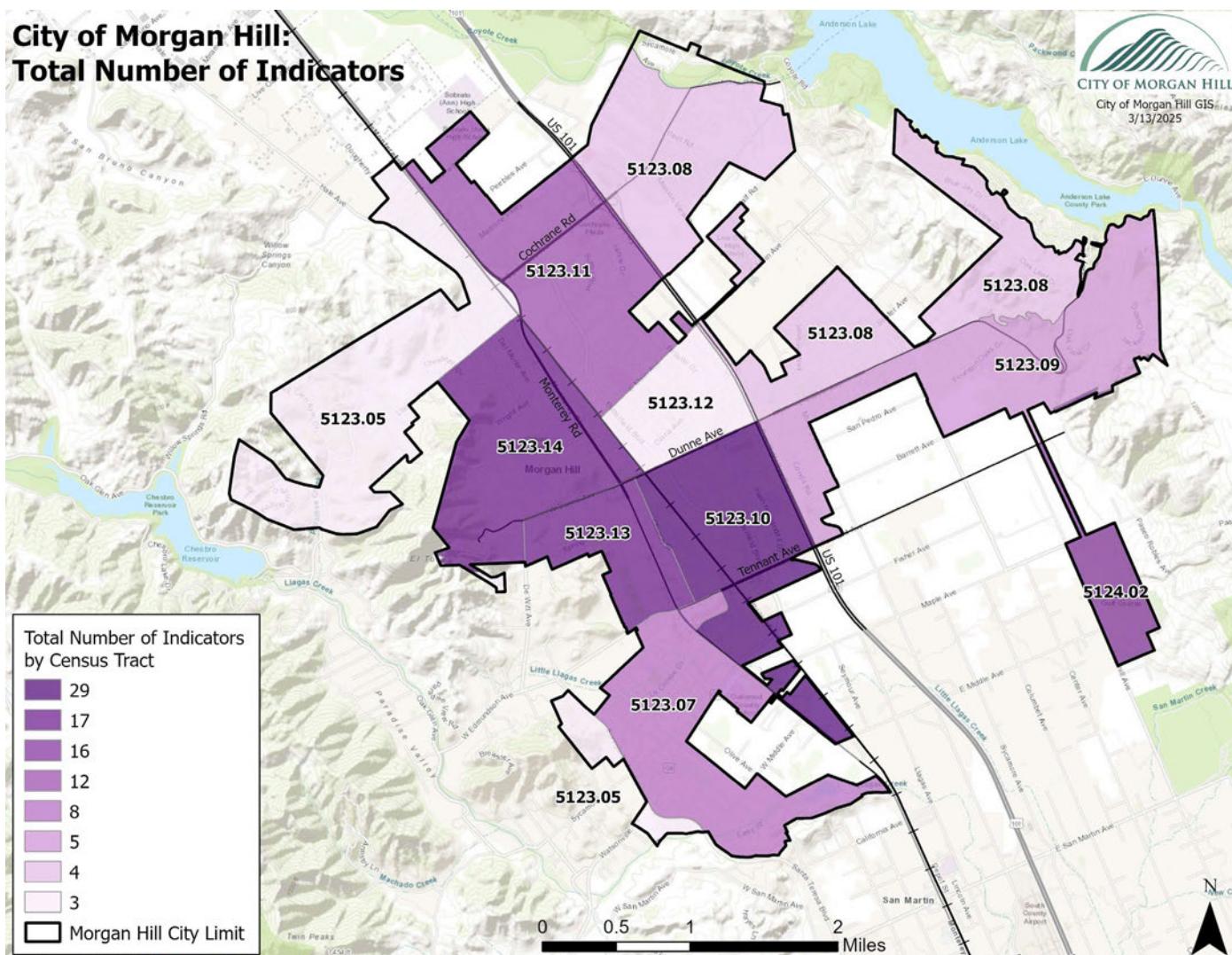
This chart illustrates the disparity in energy cost (electricity and gas) burdens in the city, which is based on data from ACS 2023.

## Conclusion

### Healthy Neighborhoods for All Indicator Summary

This report is crucial in establishing a baseline to communicate with the community on the needs and issues that various neighborhoods within Morgan Hill are facing. This report identified many topics of concern, including income, education, health inequalities, pollution exposure, access to public facilities, barriers to mobility, access to healthy food, housing burden, substandard housing, barriers to civic engagement, natural hazards, and urban heat.

All the above topics were evaluated by census tract; the table to the right provides a glance of which census tracts are most impacted by the issues identified in this report with an “X” indicating that the census tract is rank in the top quintile (top 20%) for the City, indicating it is the census tract(s) with the highest burden in the City per indicator of concern. However, it is noted that extensive community outreach is needed to determine and prioritize the needs of the community.



Indicators by Census Tract	5123.05	5123.07	5123.08	5123.09	5123.10	5123.11	5123.12	5123.13	5123.14	5123.15	5123.16	5123.17	5123.18	5123.19	5123.20	5124.02
Low Income													X			
Income Inequality													X	X		
Mostly Hispanic													X		X	
Low Child Opportunity Levels													X	X		X
Low Education Attainment													X	X		X
Lower Life Expectancy													X	X		X
Lead Risk																X
Asthma			X										X		X	
Diabetes			X										X			X
Stroke			X										X			X
Heart Disease			X										X	X		X
Obesity			X										X		X	X
Teeth Lost			X										X		X	X
Population who Smokes			X										X		X	X
Poor Health													X		X	X
Lack of Health Insurance													X		X	X
Low Health Visits													X		X	X
Diesel Particulate Matter													X	X	X	X
Traffic Density							X	X					X	X		
Groundwater Threats													X			
Impaired Water Bodies	X															X
Hazardous Waste Facilities													X	X		
Cleanup & Solid Waste Sites													X	X		X
Pesticide Use													X	X		X
Lack of Parks/Facilities	X												X	X		
Unhealthy Food Options													X	X		X
Food Stamp Assistance													X		X	X
Housing Cost Burden													X			
Substandard Housing													X	X		X
Barriers to Engagement													X		X	X
Lack of Digital Access													X			X
Flood Zones			X										X			X
Fire Hazard			X										X	X		
Lack of Tree Canopy													X	X		
<b>TOTAL INDICATORS</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>					