

## 2. Introduction



Photo: Karl Nielsen

### Background

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The Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Program, administered by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), has historically provided funding for regionally driven implementation projects that help meet the long-term water needs of the state, such as recycled water, water conservation, flood protection infrastructure, habitat restoration, and water supply projects. In recent years, recognizing that local and regional water planning and decision-making often overlook Disadvantaged Community-specific needs, there have been efforts to include and elevate projects that benefit Disadvantaged Communities into IRWM grant funding rounds. Such efforts have involved setting aside a percentage of funding specifically for these projects, and giving extra evaluation criteria points to, or waiving certain local match and permitting requirements for, projects that benefit Disadvantaged Communities. However, these efforts did not explicitly include Tribes, and IRWM projects that have in the past claimed to benefit Disadvantaged Communities have been initiated or fully developed from outside of the communities they were intended to benefit.

On November 4, 2014, California voters approved the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act (Proposition 1). Proposition 1 authorized \$510 million to the Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Program. 10% of this funding (\$51 million) was allocated across the 12 IRWM Funding Areas to the Disadvantaged Community Involvement (DACI) Program, the first round of outreach funding administered through IRWM. The DACI Program was designed to ensure the involvement of disadvantaged communities, economically distressed areas, and underrepresented communities (collectively referred to as Disadvantaged Communities) in IRWM planning efforts. The remainder of Proposition 1 funding for IRWM was allocated for implementation projects.

# San Francisco Bay Area DACTI Program

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In 2016, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) granted \$6,500,000 to the San Francisco Bay Funding Area of the IRWM Program as part of the statewide DACI Program. The broad mandate to include Disadvantaged Communities in IRWM planning was implemented differently by the 12 IRWM Funding Areas throughout California. The San Francisco Bay Funding Area, which covers the majority of the nine Bay Area counties, expanded DACI to Disadvantaged Community and Tribal Involvement Program (DACTI Program) to explicitly include Tribes.

## Structure

The San Francisco Bay DACTI Program Manager and Grant Administrator—initially, the Environmental Justice Coalition for Water (EJCW)—partnered with the California Indian Environmental Alliance (CIEA) and selected a suite of Outreach Partners to directly receive funding to conduct outreach and community-based needs assessments with Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes around the Bay Area. This funding structure was maintained when the program management and administration transitioned to the San Francisco Estuary Partnership (SFEP) in 2019. The Outreach Partners, consisting of community-based organizations, nonprofits, Tribal organizations, and agencies with existing relationships with Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes throughout the Bay Area, then designed and conducted outreach and assessments to empower those Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes to define their own water-related challenges and solutions.

## Goals

Despite many decades of advocacy by environmental justice leaders around the world, Disadvantaged Community and Tribal expertise and lived experience rarely drive project development in water resources management. Those involved in decision-making and planning, however well-intentioned, rarely come from the communities and Tribes who experience the impacts of the proposed solutions and resulting projects, despite these groups having deeply embedded knowledge and experience to identify their own needs and lead project development. The very definition of the problem, and the process to address it, often gets developed by outside agencies without the meaningful inclusion or leadership of the people most affected. Most often, communities and Tribes are brought in to give feedback on an already established project, long after the initial stages of development. These projects then may claim to benefit the Disadvantaged Community or Tribe, while in reality, the resulting solution misses the mark on addressing real, community-identified needs.

As one example, Marin City experiences chronic flooding from stormwater and lack of drainage and is vulnerable to groundwater rise and sea level rise. In 2014, 2017, and 2021 these factors combined to flood Highway 101 and block the only entry to and exit from Marin City. One of the proposed solutions was to raise the freeway, which solves the problem of flooding for highway commuters but does nothing to address the flooding, lack of drainage, and resulting public health problems for the Marin City community. In contrast, Marin City Climate Resilience and Health Justice, a community-based organization made up of Marin City community members and allies, has led efforts to re-imagine and revitalize the drainage pond next to Highway 101 as a multi-benefit site for flood mitigation, restored wetland habitat, and much needed recreational outdoor green space in the community. Processes such as this that are led by Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes can ensure that issues are identified and addressed in ways that are meaningful to the people most impacted.



Photo: San Francisco Estuary Partnership

## Intended Outcomes

The intended outcomes of the DACTI Program in the Bay Area are to:

1. Identify, understand, and assess water-related issues and challenges and assets in the Bay Area from the perspective of Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes, including the impacts of these challenges and community preferences on how these issues should be addressed.
2. Connect Disadvantaged Communities, Tribes, and organizations with each other, building networks and campaigns to advocate for equitable inclusion of Disadvantaged Community and Tribal voices in water-related policy and planning decision-making processes.
3. Inform the creation of lasting social infrastructure to elevate Disadvantaged Community and Tribal voices. This includes connecting Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes to relevant agents of change (e.g., local water utilities and municipal governments) who can support them in addressing identified challenges and implement desired changes, as well as developing formal ways to include Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes in governance processes, ensuring that Disadvantaged Community and Tribal voices and priorities are part of future water-related decision-making processes.
4. Support the capacity of community-based organizations, Tribes, and Disadvantaged Community members to participate in IRWM and other water-related planning and policy decision-making processes and promote community-led change.
5. Collaboratively develop solutions to Disadvantaged Community and Tribal-identified water-related issues by supporting Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes to develop priority projects that can be funded in the next IRWM implementation round as well as other sources.
6. Connect Tribes and Disadvantaged Communities to additional funding sources to address their water-related priorities outside of the IRWM Grant Program.
7. Derive and amplify Best Practices from the needs assessment process so that this work can be understood by entities striving to address inequities in planning and policy decision-making processes, especially in Disadvantaged and underrepresented Communities and Tribes.



8. Educate the public about the particular impacts of flooding, sea level rise, water quality and availability and the related issues that will be exacerbated by climate change as they are faced by Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes.
9. Recognize, respect, and amplify Disadvantaged Community and Tribal self-determination and Tribal sovereignty and support Disadvantaged Communities and the Bay Area California Tribes to accurately represent their neighborhoods and Traditional Lands.
10. Support the First Peoples of the lands in accurately representing their Traditional Lands and providing Traditional Ecological Knowledge throughout the IRWM as they feel appropriate. Support Disadvantaged Communities in providing their lived expertise.

## Needs Assessments

The needs assessments, undertaken by Outreach Partners through the DACTI Program, are integral to these overall goals by supporting Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes in defining their own water-related challenges and priorities. Understanding the issues that Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes face, as well as the systemic and historical barriers to participation in decision-making processes, is a necessary step in addressing these issues and creating lasting and resilient social infrastructure.



Photo: Karl Nielsen

### Outreach Partners: Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes and their Locations

#### **Disadvantaged Community Partners**

In 2017, to carry out the Regional Needs Assessment with Disadvantaged Community partners, EJCW originally partnered with and passed funding through to 14 groups (Outreach Partners) working within more than 20 Disadvantaged Communities in the Bay Area, to do outreach and needs assessments.

These groups included:

- All Positives Possible (South Vallejo neighborhood of the City of Vallejo)
- City of Hayward (Tennyson Corridor of the City of Hayward)
- Contra Costa Resource Conservation District (Cities of Antioch, Pittsburg, Bay Point)
- David R. Brower, Ronald V. Dellums Institute for Sustainable Policy Studies and Action (Sobranite Park, Columbia Gardens, and Brookfield Village neighborhoods of Deep East Oakland)
- Friends of Sausal Creek (Fruitvale neighborhood of Oakland)
- Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice (Bayview Hunters Point neighborhood of San Francisco)
- Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful (City of San Jose along Coyote Creek)
- Marin County Community Development Agency (Unincorporated communities of Dillon Beach, Point Reyes Station)
- Resilient Communities Initiative (Regionwide)
- Shore Up Marin (Unincorporated community of Marin City; the Canal District neighborhood of the City of San Rafael)
- Sonoma Ecology Center/Daily Acts (City of Petaluma and the Springs neighborhood of Sonoma Valley)
- The Watershed Project/San Francisco Estuary Partnership (Unincorporated community of North Richmond)
- Youth United for Community Action/Nuestra Casa (City of East Palo Alto)



Photo courtesy of Contra Costa Resource Conservation District

Most of these original Disadvantaged Community Outreach Partners were selected through a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process administered by the Bay Area IRWM Region Coordinating Committee. Three of these partners (in South Vallejo, East Palo Alto, Antioch/Pittsburg/Bay Point) were identified through an initial “gap analysis” of high priority Disadvantaged Communities not covered by the initial 10 Disadvantaged Community Outreach Partners selected through the RFQ process.

Since the inception of the grant, the group of Disadvantaged Community Outreach Partners has changed. Nuestra Casa took over their collaborative effort with Youth United for Community Action (YUCA) in East Palo Alto. In the transfer of Grant Administration and Program Management from EJCW to SFEP in 2019, Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful and Resilient Communities Initiative discontinued their involvement in the Program. SFEP stepped out of its role as an Outreach Partner with The Watershed Project to be Project Administrator. Shore Up Marin split into two groups, each focused on one of the two Disadvantaged Communities they were working in: the Multicultural Center of Marin in the Canal District of San Rafael, and Marin City Climate Justice and Health Justice (Previously Shore Up Marin City) in Marin City. Additionally, prior to the transfer, All Positives Possible and the City of Hayward completed their needs assessment activities. After SFEP took the role of Grant Administrator and Program Manager, a new South Bay partner, Mujeres Empresarias Tomando Acción (META), was recruited to ensure representation of Disadvantaged Communities from all sub-areas of the Bay (East, South, West, North).

The final list of Disadvantaged Community Outreach Partners that completed Needs Assessments is:

- All Positives Possible (South Vallejo neighborhood of the City of Vallejo)
- City of Hayward (Tennyson Corridor of the City of Hayward)
- Contra Costa Resource Conservation District (Cities of Antioch, Pittsburg, Bay Point)
- David R. Brower, Ronald V. Dellums Institute for Sustainable Policy Studies and Action (Sobrante Park, Columbia Gardens, and Brookfield Village neighborhoods of Deep East Oakland)



- Friends of Sausal Creek (Fruitvale neighborhood of Oakland)
- Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice (Bayview Hunters Point neighborhood of San Francisco)
- Marin City Climate Resilience and Health Justice (Marin City)
- Marin County Community Development Agency (Unincorporated communities of Dillon Beach, Point Reyes Station)
- Mujeres Empresarias Tomando Acción (East San Jose neighborhood of the City of San Jose)
- The Multicultural Center of Marin (Canal District of San Rafael)
- Nuestra Casa (East Palo Alto)
- Sonoma Ecology Center/Daily Acts (City of Petaluma and the Springs neighborhood of Sonoma Valley)
- The Watershed Project/San Francisco Estuary Partnership (Unincorporated community of North Richmond)



Photo courtesy of The Watershed Project

### Tribal Partners

California Indian Environmental Alliance (CIEA) worked with the following six Tribal partners to develop the Tribal needs assessment survey:

- Amah Mutsun Tribal Band/ Amah Mutsun Land Trust
- Association of Ramaytush Ohlone
- Him-r^n Ohlone, Jalquin, Saclan Tribe, Bay Miwok, Plains Miwok
- Indian People Organizing for Change (IPOC) / Sogorea Te' Land Trust
- Muwékma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area
- Napa Suscol Intertribal Council

Five of these Tribal partners administered the needs assessment surveys to their Tribal communities, including:

- Amah Mutsun Tribal Band/ Amah Mutsun Land Trust
  - Association of Ramaytush Ohlone
  - Him-r^n Ohlone, Jalquin, Saclan Tribe, Bay Miwok, Plains Miwok
  - Muwékma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area
  - Napa Suscol Intertribal Council
- The condensed Tribal Partner Needs Assessment section is an initial assessment of the results of the targeted Tribal Needs Assessment surveys, follow-up interviews and meetings that were completed from April 24, 2019 through December 1, 2020 by CIEA. **The full San Francisco Bay Area Funding Area (SF Bay Area) Tribal Needs Assessment Report is available in Appendix A.**

CIEA acknowledges that the San Francisco Bay is home to many Tribes. During initial outreach, CIEA reached out to all Tribes with ties to historical use and subsequent management responsibilities in the Bay Area, including Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, Lytton Band of Pomo Indians, Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of the Stewarts Point Rancheria, and Mishewal Wappo of Alexander Valley. Some of these Tribes expressed interest in participating but due to capacity issues were not able to join. Others wanted to provide other Tribes within the San Francisco Bay Area the opportunity to expand and grow their capacity but wanted to be kept informed as the work continues.



Photo courtesy of Alex Tavizon





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Source: TomTom North America (2019)

Metropolitan Transportation Commission (2021)

Map Author: MDS, August 2022





Photo: Peter Beeler

### **People Experiencing Homelessness**

Homelessness was brought up in conversations with Disadvantaged Community members through Outreach Partners' needs assessment processes as a concern relating to water quality, environmental impacts, and safety. The Bay Area DACTI Program wanted to ensure the inclusion and elevate the direct perspectives of people experiencing homelessness, one of the communities most often overlooked in planning processes, even in efforts meant to benefit the most underserved communities.

To do so, the Bay Area DACTI Program partnered with two direct service providers, Downtown Streets Team and VOICES Youth Programs (VOICES), to conduct a survey to understand challenges to access to water for drinking, sanitation, and hygiene services from the perspectives of people experiencing homelessness. Downtown Streets Team and VOICES team members who are or were experiencing homelessness, and who represent many different identities, conducted peer-to-peer surveys with over 650 people experiencing homelessness in Napa County, Marin County, Solano County, and the cities of San Jose, San Francisco, Hayward, and Oakland.

### **Follow Up**

Since the completion of the needs assessments, the San Francisco Bay Funding Area DACTI Program has been supporting Outreach Partners in developing Disadvantaged Community and Tribal-driven projects to address water-related issues that were prioritized in the needs assessments for the next rounds of IRWM Implementation funding and other funding sources.

### Existing and Concurrent Equity and Environmental Justice Efforts

The DACTI Program is one of many programs and processes earmarked to benefit Disadvantaged and Underrepresented Communities and Tribes, and many local groups are already leading work to improve conditions in their communities. The DACTI Program is focused specifically on water, and there are many parallel programs that focus on overlapping issues, such as climate change. Appendix B demonstrates a snapshot of the many efforts that Outreach Partners are involved in or aware of, although it is not an exhaustive list of equity or EJ efforts taking place in the Bay Area.

Too often, parallel efforts are undertaken in silos in the same Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes, without awareness of or coordination with each other. Many of these efforts often ask for similar information, forcing community members and Tribes to repeatedly provide local context and perspective. Many Disadvantaged Communities experience fatigue from contributing to many uncoordinated efforts which mine community knowledge without acknowledgment or compensation and with little to no follow-up.

It was particularly important for this program to coordinate with existing efforts because water intersects with most other issues, including housing, health, and climate change. As an example, the DACTI Program collaborated with the Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative (BARHII), the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), and Nuestra Casa to hold listening sessions for both groups' efforts around Environmental Justice (EJ) and equity in East Palo Alto. However, there is a long way to go.

New programs or projects should continue to build on previously collected information and existing efforts, and agencies should coordinate with one another. Coordinated efforts allow agencies to learn from each other and make use of community and Tribal members' limited time. As part of these processes, agencies should ensure there is follow-up and follow-through on all commitments.

Ultimately, funding programs need to base funding priorities on Disadvantaged Community- and Tribal-led priorities, and directly fund community and Tribal members for their time and expertise. This will ensure funding meaningfully addresses current and future needs. Too often, the burden falls on Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes to apply for many types of funding to address interconnected and intersectional issues.



## Definitions of Disadvantaged Community and Eligibility for Funding

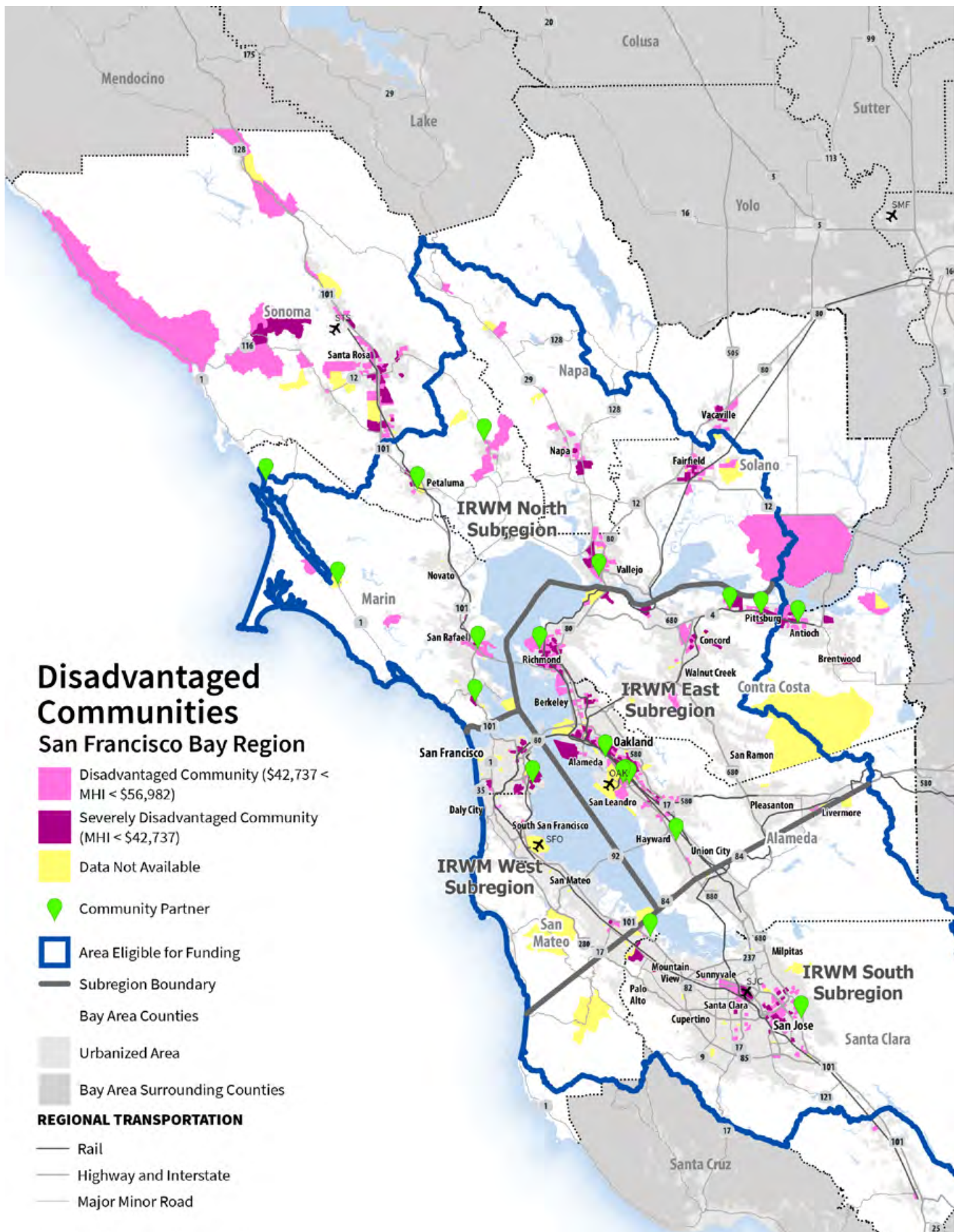
The definition Proposition 1 uses for a Disadvantaged Community is below 80% of the state median household income (MHI). This report acknowledges the one-dimensional nature of defining disadvantages only in terms of income for the purposes of prioritizing funding allocation. This is particularly true in densely populated places like the Bay Area where there is extreme wealth in close proximity to deprivation. Depending on how dividing lines are drawn around different geographic areas, the median income of an area might be significantly higher than the majority of the population or might not reflect cumulative burdens such as historic discrimination and other environmental challenges, including lack of drainage infrastructure and flooding.

Poignantly, over the course of the DACTI Program in the Bay Area, the data used to calculate MHI has been updated from further American Community Survey (ACS) and census data. Some communities that qualified as a Disadvantaged Community based on income at the start of the DACTI Program no longer do because their average area income has moved from below to just above the cut-off, and therefore no longer qualify for Disadvantaged Community-specific funding. Additionally, Tribes are not recognized by the American Community Survey if they are not federally recognized. This prevents these Tribes from being identified as below median household income, making them ineligible for prioritized funding allocation.

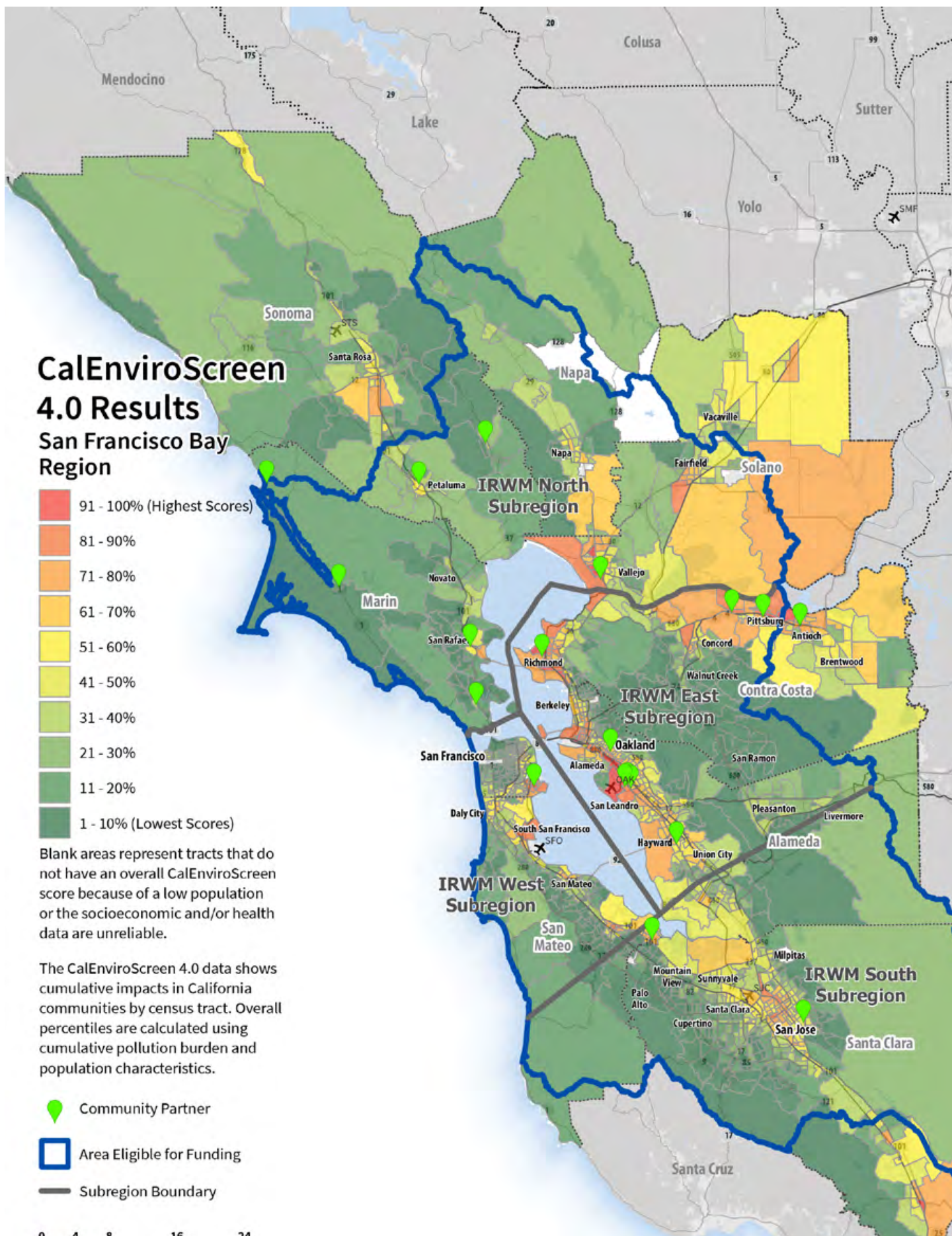
CalEnviroScreen and other tools like the Distressed Communities Index provide a more robust measure of the cumulative burdens Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes in California face from pollution, discrimination, disinvestment, and other outside forces that are not captured solely by income. However, these tools are not without their limitations. They aggregate data, and therefore do not capture impacts that are only evident at a smaller geographic scale than a census tract or county. They do not include all environmental hazards and burdens such as sea level rise and flood risk, or some important socioeconomic factors such as average lifespan. They also do not include Tribes at all, which ignores the Tribal sovereignty of both government-recognized and non-recognized Tribes. As a result of these shortcomings, many Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes are excluded from the funding programs that use these tools for eligibility requirements. Many of these issues stem from an apparent disconnect between decision-makers and those developing these tools and the intended beneficiaries.



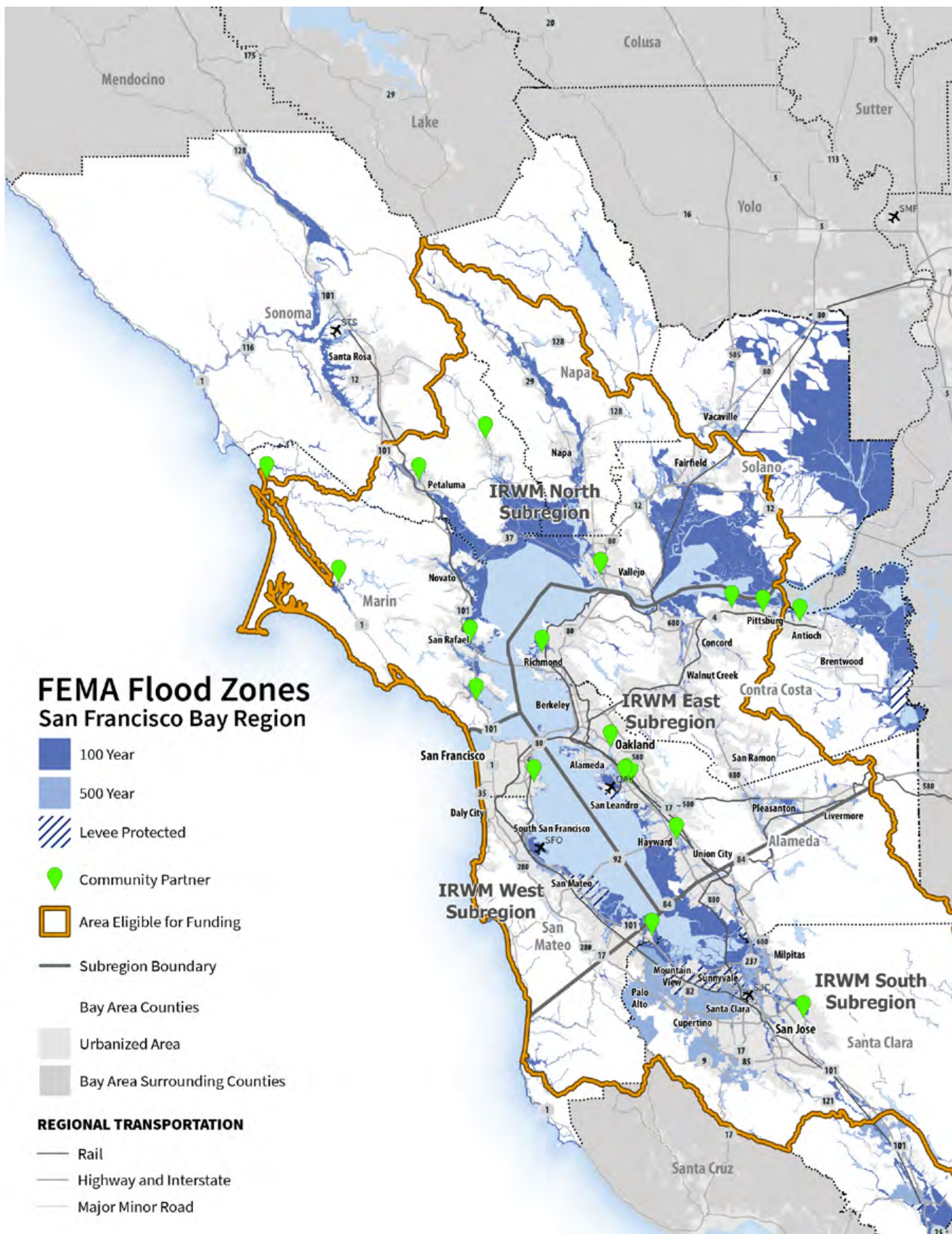
Photo courtesy of Brower Dellums Institute of Sustainable Policy Studies and Action











The Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes that participated in the DACTI Program have experienced discrimination and disinvestment in unique ways, resulting in diverse perspectives regarding key terminology. For example, throughout the course of the program, participating Outreach Partner organizations used different and sometimes conflicting terms to describe the Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes they represent. For some Outreach Partners, systemic discrimination, disinvestment, and exclusion are best expressed with the term “disadvantaged;” others, the prefer terms “overburdened,” “frontline,” “underrepresented,” or “historically marginalized.” Furthermore, the communities themselves are made up of diverse residents with varied perspectives and preferences regarding community identification. For many Outreach Partners, the term “Disadvantaged Community” is important because of its use in funding allocation decisions, though these terms and the corresponding metrics to determine eligibility have often been applied and decided on outside of these communities. The DACTI Program supports community and Tribal self-determination and encourages funding and decision-making bodies to follow community and Tribes’ lead on how they identify, whether by the terms “Disadvantaged,” “frontline,” “historically marginalized,” “overburdened,” or others, and the connected metrics. Supporting community and Tribal self-determination also includes respecting the unique histories of different communities and Tribes and Tribal sovereignty. Different Disadvantaged Communities and their respective needs should not be lumped together, nor different Tribes or communities with Tribes.

This report uses “Disadvantaged Community” in the sections that are not Disadvantaged Community or Tribal specific because it is the term used in Proposition 1. In the Disadvantaged Community and Tribal-specific sections of the report, different terms are used by different Outreach Partners to describe their community or Tribe. Other identifying terms, such as Latinx/Latino/Latina or Black/African American, reflect the usage preference of each Outreach Partner in the Community Partner sections.

It is important to emphasize that while the DACTI Program included Tribes and underrepresented communities, including cumulatively burdened communities and unincorporated communities without equal representation in decision-making that do not meet the State’s definition of a Disadvantaged Community by MHI, these DACTI Program participants do not qualify for funding earmarked for Disadvantaged Communities for IRWM Implementation funding. This means that Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes that do not qualify based on income must meet all of the additional local match and permitting requirements that apply to general applicants. These metrics are thus extremely important because they dictate which areas and groups qualify for funding, and they should be evaluated and re-evaluated to ensure they are capturing those communities and Tribes who have historically been excluded and are most overburdened. An important next step for the Legislature and other state agencies is to update and revise the requirements and any metrics used for prioritizing funding allocation for underrepresented and overburdened communities. These decisions should ensure the inclusion of Tribes and follow the lead of Disadvantaged Communities and Tribes.



## Report Overview

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This Regional Needs Assessment report presents the findings from 13 individual needs assessment processes that were conducted between 2017 and 2021 by the Disadvantaged Community Outreach Partners, from a Tribal needs assessment process administered by five Tribal Outreach Partners, and from the peer-to-peer needs assessment to understand how people experiencing homelessness are accessing water for drinking, sanitation, and hygiene.

The needs assessment with people experiencing homelessness is presented first to elevate these voices because often people experiencing homelessness are not included in problem-identification or solutions-development processes. After the needs assessment with people experiencing homelessness, findings from the Disadvantaged Community and Tribal partners' needs assessments are presented, followed by a Regional Connections section summarizing the consistently similar priorities for water management across participating Communities and Tribes. Best Practices for making grant programs more equitable and accessible to Disadvantaged Community groups and Tribes and other overall recommendations from the San Francisco Bay Area IRWM Region DACTI Program are presented at the end of this report.



Photo: Karl Nielsen