

7TH STREET CONNECTION PROJECT

Racial Equity Impact Analysis



July 22, 2024 - Draft for Public Review



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7TH STREET CONNECTION PROJECT

Racial Equity Impact Analysis

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1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

What is Racial Equity Impact Analysis?

The framework for **Racial Equity Impact Analysis (REIA)** was developed by the Department of Race and Equity to explicitly embed racial equity into the City's decisions and policies. Unlike the blatantly discriminatory policies of the past, most policies today are not designed to intentionally exclude or to create additional barriers for people of color. But unfortunately, many policies still have real consequences that adversely affect how people of color experience and are impacted by systems.

For these conditions to change, City staff and policymakers must grow the capacity to assess and design explicitly for racial equity. REIA is a template to guide this process of change.

REIA is a tool for revealing racial disparities, unearthing root causes, engaging impacted communities and ultimately provides a set of specific recommendations to work with and a framework for evaluating impacts of decisions on equity.



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1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

What is Racial Equity Impact Analysis?

The City of Oakland REIA framework aims to:

- Explicitly address issues of social and economic injustice, and structural racism
- Use data to identify groups impacted by racial disparities and racial equity outcomes
- Disrupt racial bias and assumptions embedded in policies, procedures and systems
- Build in decision-making prompts that evoke consideration of equity and inclusion of community
- Foster focused engagement of underserved stakeholders
- Systemically analyze potential impacts of City action or inaction on groups impacted by disparities
- Increase institution's capacity for, and commitment to results based accountability



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1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Applying REIA to 7th Street

This REIA is conducted on the **7th Street Connection Project**, which will be implemented on 7th Street between Mandela Parkway and MLK Jr. Way. The scope of the project includes:

- Fiber optic cable (to enable expansion of [OAK WiFi](#))
- New or upgraded traffic signals and pedestrian signals
- Pedestrian lighting, wayfinding, and placemaking improvements
- Curb ramps, bulb-outs, and pedestrian refuge islands
- Upgraded sidewalk
- High-visibility crosswalk markings
- Protected bike lanes
- Street trees



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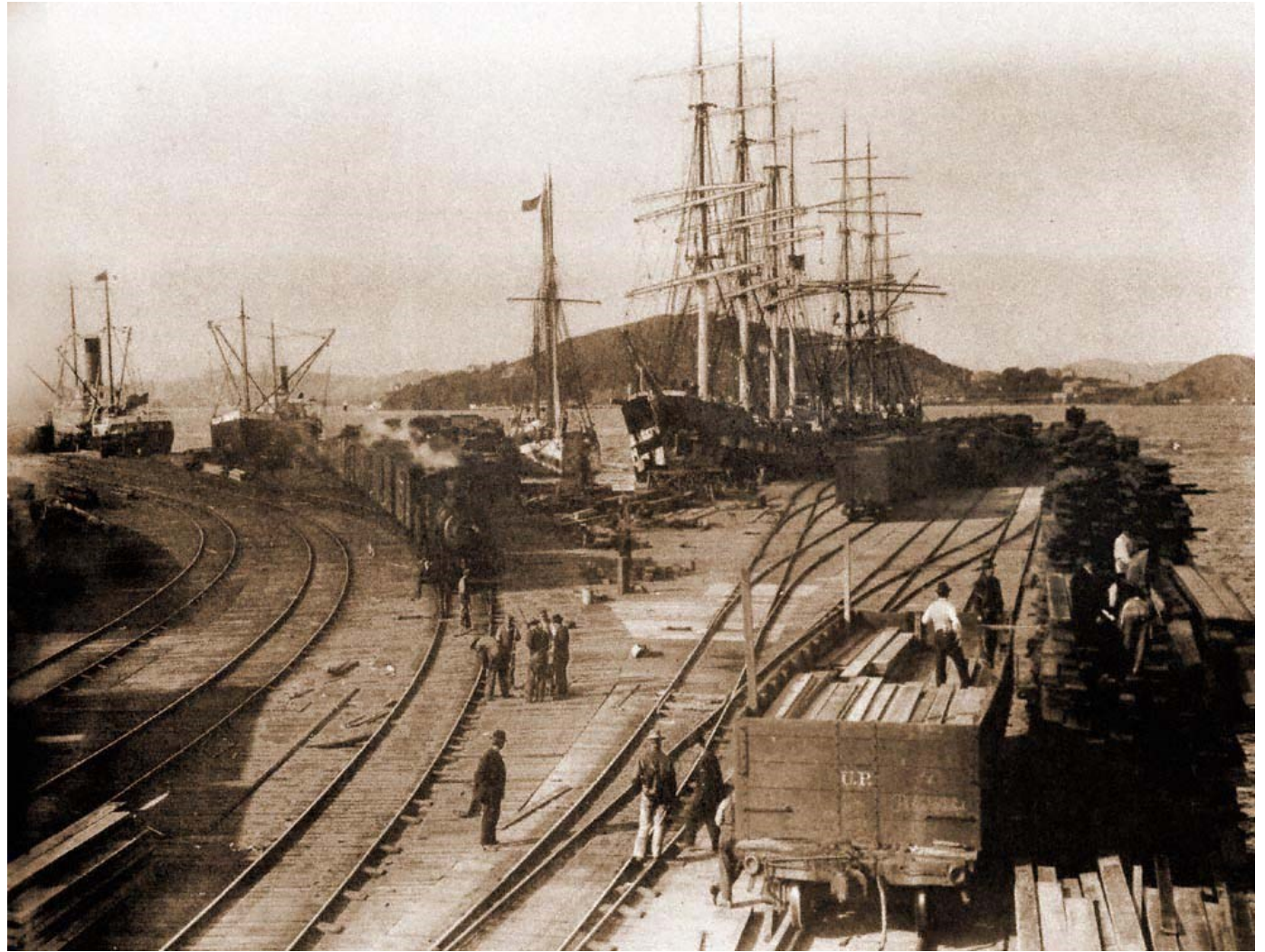
Project Area Communities

What is the history of transportation and land use in the project area? How has it led to disparities that we see today?

2. PROJECT AREA COMMUNITIES

How does history impact project area communities today?

From the 1870s to the 1960s, the most western end of 7th Street connected to the Oakland Mole, a long wharf and ferry pier for both passengers and automobiles. 7th Street also had local electric trams and steam trains running down its center, terminating at the ferry pier. Local trains connected Oakland with nearby cities while steam trains brought passengers to and from Chicago and New York.



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Source: African American Museum and Library at Oakland, Oakland Public Library.

2. PROJECT AREA COMMUNITIES

How does history impact project area communities today?

The west end of 7th Street in the Prescott neighborhood was the center of Black jazz and blues culture in the Bay Area—known as the Harlem of the West. From the 1930s to 1960s, 7th Street was lined with Black-owned restaurants, jazz clubs, a record store and recording company, and much more.

Shown in the photographs is Slim Jenkins Club (exterior, interior, and patrons) which hosted musicians such as Earl Hines, Louis Jordan, The Inkspots, and B.B. King.



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Source: African American Museum and Library at Oakland, Oakland Public Library.

2. PROJECT AREA COMMUNITIES

How does history impact project area communities today?

Although no longer open, Esther's Orbit Room* is one of the remaining nightclubs still standing. This nightclub was opened and run by Esther Mabry, who moved to Oakland during World War II.

An oral history interview with Esther Mabry is available [here](#) at the Internet Archive and at the African American Museum and Library at Oakland Oral History Collection.

**As of 2024, East Bay Permanent Real Estate Cooperative is working on a mixed-use pilot called the Esther's Orbit Room Cultural Revival Project.*



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Source: African American Museum and Library at Oakland, Oakland Public Library.

2. PROJECT AREA COMMUNITIES

How does history impact project area communities today?

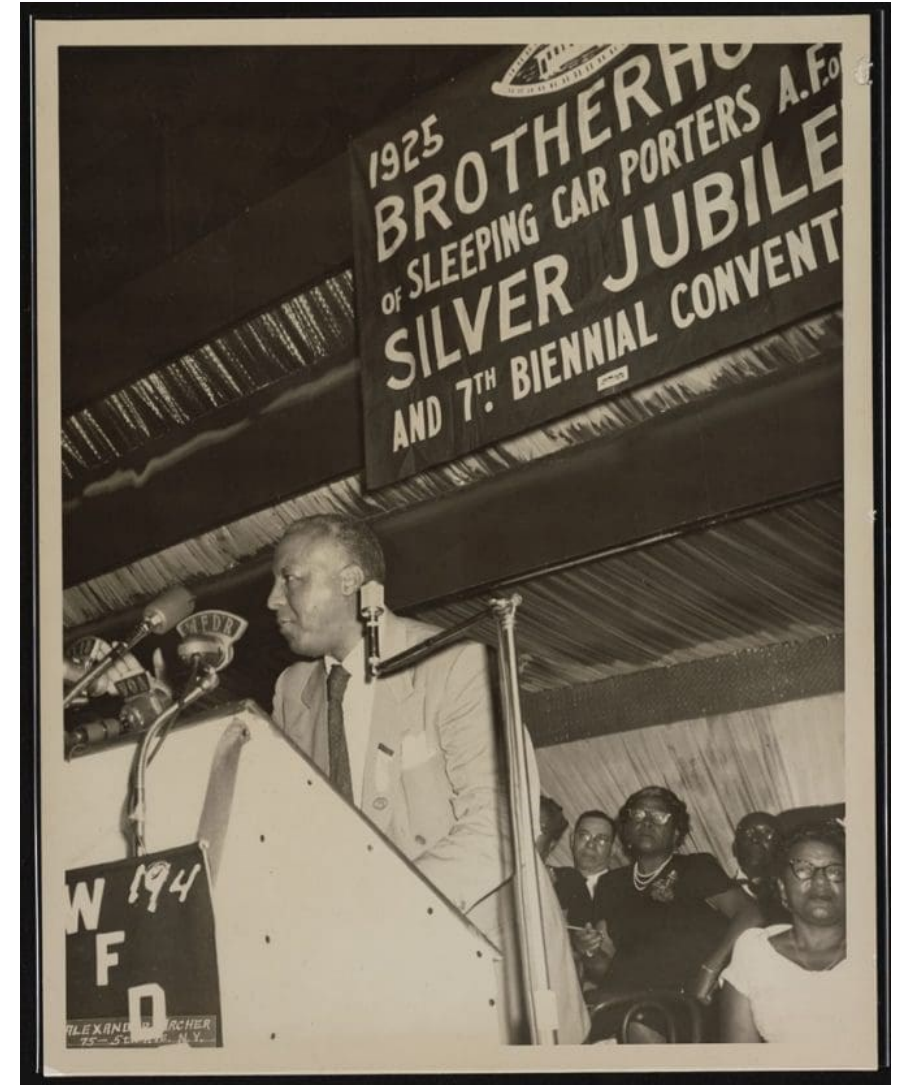
7th Street was also home to the Brotherhood of the Sleeping Car Porters headquarters, the first national black labor union. This organization was formed in 1925 by A. Philip Randolph and C.L. Dellums, both who had worked as porters for the Pullman Company.

This union and its leaders, Randolph and Dellums, were significant contributors to the Civil Rights movement. The west coast headquarters was located at 1716 7th Street on the second floor of the building. The first floor was a pool hall owned by C.L. Dellums.



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Source: African American Museum and Library at Oakland, Oakland Public Library.

2. PROJECT AREA COMMUNITIES

How does history impact project area communities today?

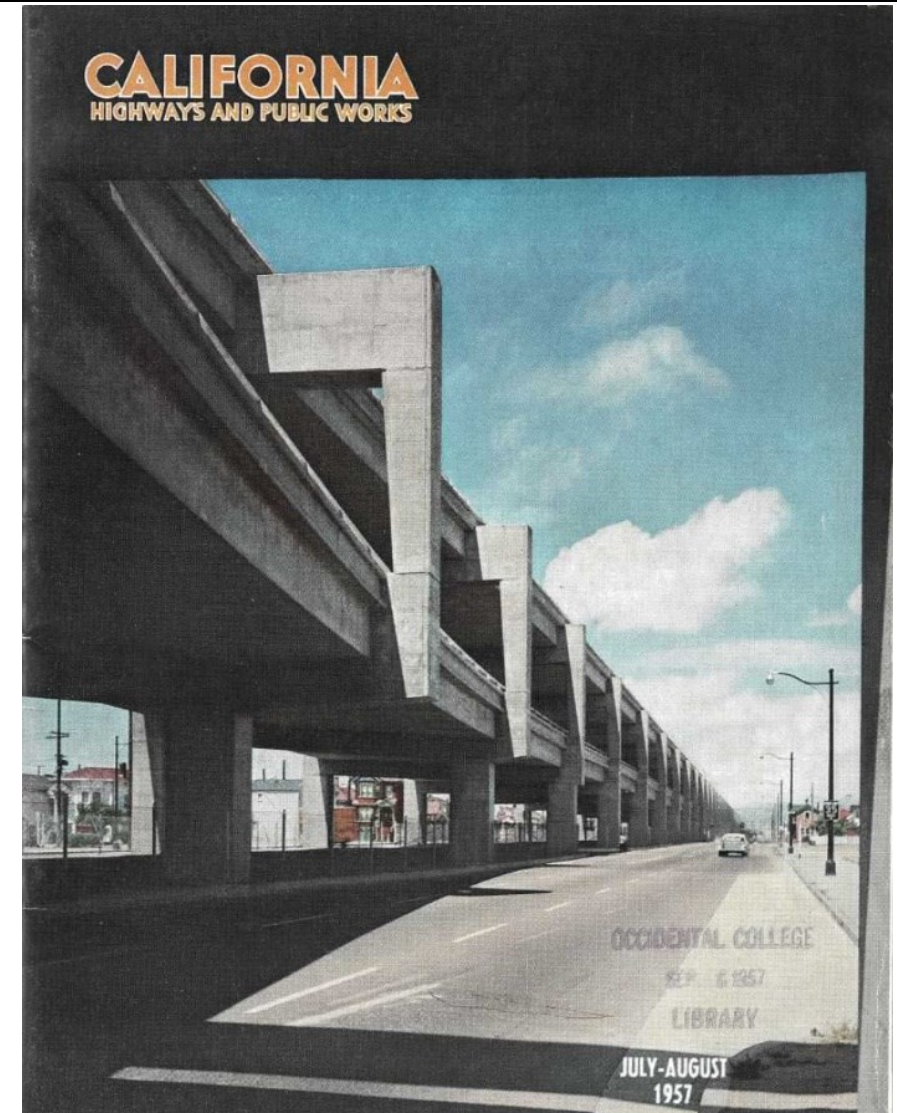
As a result of racist federal policies and actions, including redlining and Urban Renewal, 7th Street and the surrounding communities went through decades of upheaval by large infrastructure and industrial projects, namely the Cypress Freeway, the Oakland Main Post Office, the overhead BART trackway, and the expansion of the Port of Oakland.

The Cypress Freeway construction curved across 7th Street onto what is now Mandela Parkway. Demolition of housing and displacement of residents and businesses began in the early 1950s, displacing about 600 families. The Cypress Freeway (also known as the Cypress Street Viaduct) opened in 1957.



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Source: African American Museum and Library at Oakland, Oakland Public Library.

2. PROJECT AREA COMMUNITIES

How does history impact project area communities today?

Demolition of homes to make way for the regional Post Office on 7th Street began in 1960, destroying 12 blocks and displacing more than 1000 residents. The person hired to demolish homes and buildings used a retired World War II tank to reduce costs. The Post Office construction was complete in 1969.

18

The
Face
of
AMERICA

Old War Horse Gets New Job

The Sherman tank, now retired from combat, can still smash an obstacle in the manner of General Patton's mechanized forces breaking through Hitler's defenses in France sixteen and a half years ago. Tank-crew veterans of World War II and Korea may deplore the Sherman's obsolescence as a fighter, but demolition contractors in various cities have discovered that the tank is still valuable. The thirty-five-ton mobile battering ram at right was photographed last fall in Oakland, California.

Its owner is Abdo S. Allen, who paid a Surplus dealer \$2000 for the tank—an unused World War II model which cost \$60,000 to produce in pre-inflation 1943. With his snorting monster in hand, Allen won the bid to demolish frame houses on a twelve-block site where a multimillion-dollar automated post office is to be built. Not only was the tank cheaper and safer than prosaic demolition tools; Allen also credits it with getting the job finished in half the 120-day time limit. A machinist in the Navy during World War II, Allen had never driven a tank before he fired up his Sherman and crunched into the first house. His peak performance on the job: Forty-two buildings knocked down in one day. *Photograph by Jack Fields



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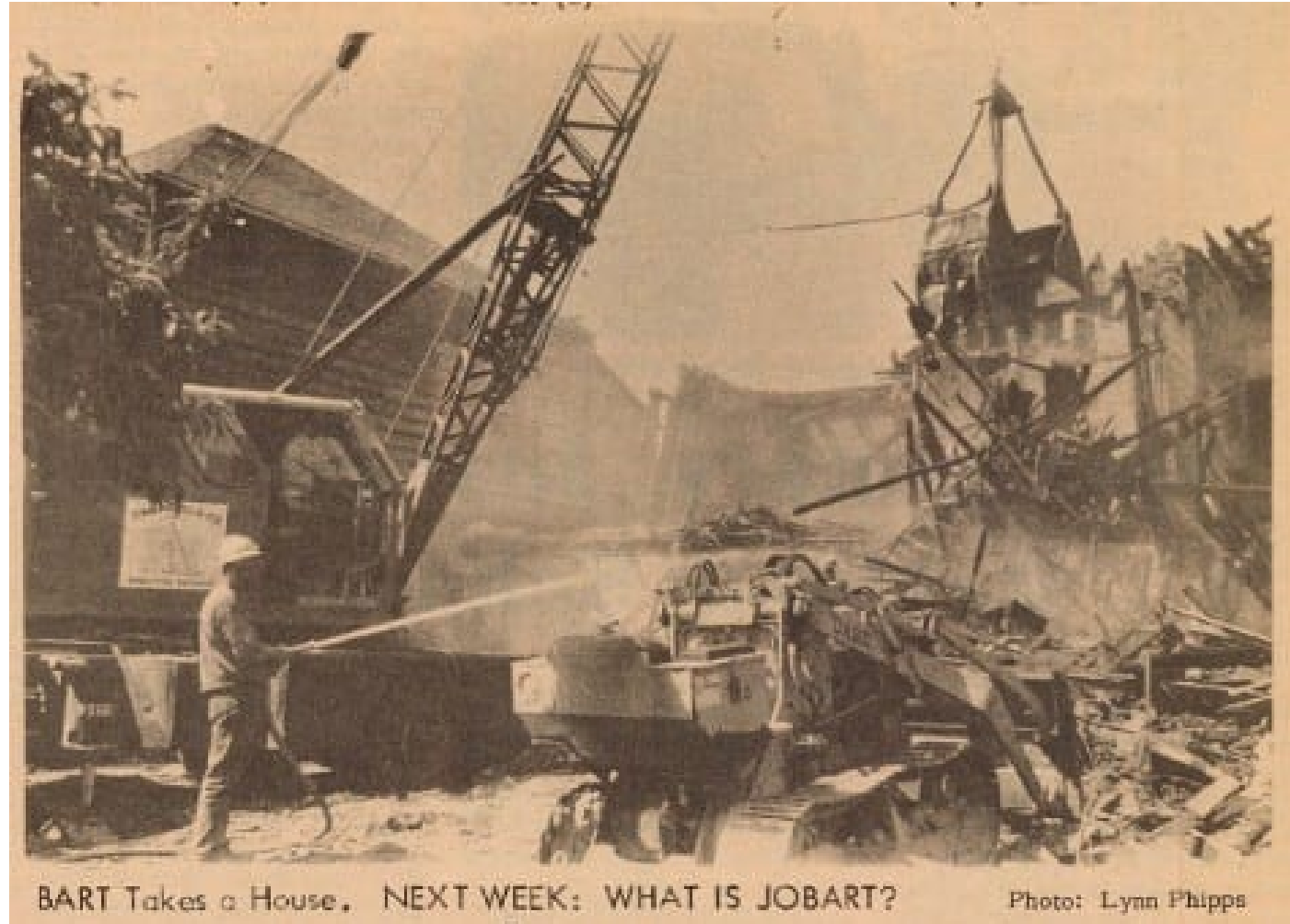
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Source: African American Museum and Library at Oakland, Oakland Public Library.

2. PROJECT AREA COMMUNITIES

How does history impact project area communities today?

West Oakland BART station opened in 1973 (initially called Oakland West station). Demolition of homes and businesses along 7th Street began in the 1960s. “JOBART” or Justice on BART was a group of local activists which organized meetings and protests to demand a relocation plan for those displaced from construction, fair compensation for homes demolished, and for BART to implement non-discriminatory hiring practices. JOBART also provided help to and elevated the stories of those affected by BART.



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Source: African American Museum and Library at Oakland, Oakland Public Library.

2. PROJECT AREA COMMUNITIES

How does history impact project area communities today?

In the 1970s, the Acorn neighborhood underwent the Acorn Urban Renewal Project, that included several blocks along 7th Street and adjacent blocks to the north.

During this time, Mr. Ray Dones, who has been referred to as an “unsung civil rights hero”, had a part in the construction of several buildings in West Oakland, such as the West Oakland Health Center and the MORH housing development. Mr. Dones was also a founding member of the National Association of Minority Contractors (NAMC), a nonprofit trade association that was established in 1969 to address the concerns of minority contractors. Mr. Dones also co-founded Transbay Engineering & Builders. Under Mr. Dones’ leadership, Transbay trained more minority workers for union membership than any other construction company in the country. To read more about the work of Ray Dones, click [here](#).



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2. PROJECT AREA COMMUNITIES

How does history impact project area communities today?

The history of 7th Street is well documented and remembered by residents. Project staff who have had the opportunity to engage with project area communities have learned a few key points about how the history has impacted project area communities today:

- The history of music in the area is rich and has had far reaching impacts in the music industry, yet this history is not commemorated to the level that it deserves.
- The history of civil rights movements that started on or around 7th Street have also impacted the rest of the nation, yet this history is not often associated with 7th Street or West Oakland.
- The demolition of housing and displacement of residents and businesses, along with redlining and disinvestment, has created lasting harm on project area communities. Unaddressed maintenance needs and slow action to address trucks and air quality in West Oakland create frustration and make it easy to assume that it is intentional neglect and a continuation of the unjust harms of the past.



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Project Area Communities

What is the project area and who will be impacted by the project?

2. PROJECT AREA COMMUNITIES

How is the project area defined?



The project area is defined by five census tracts that are within or adjacent to the project corridor.

This area has about 10,600 residents.



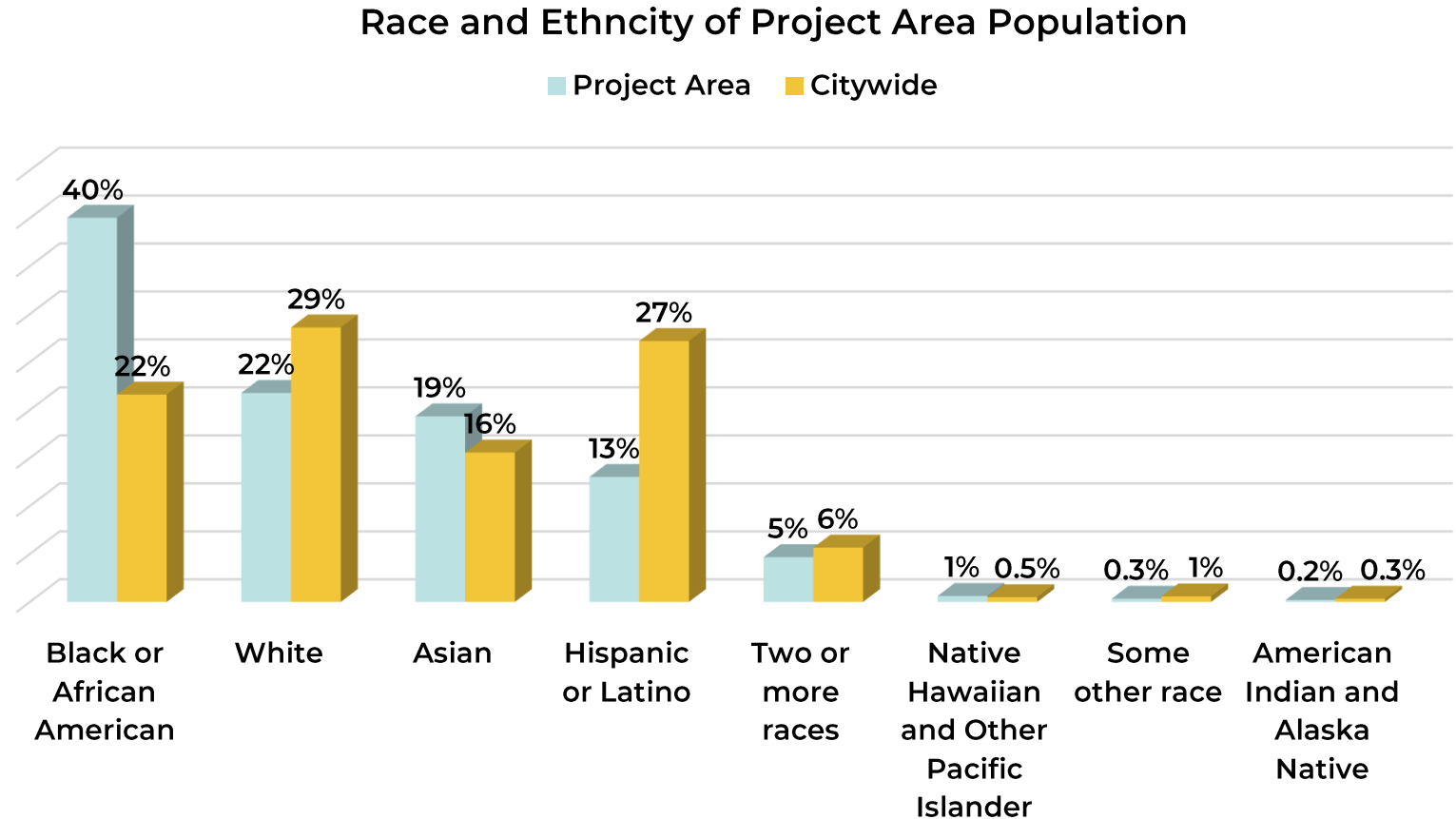
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2. PROJECT AREA COMMUNITIES

Who are the people that will be impacted by this project?

The project area residents differ from the City of Oakland as a whole. There are a higher percentage of Black or African American residents (40% versus 22% citywide), and lower percentage of Hispanic or Latino residents (10% versus 27% citywide).



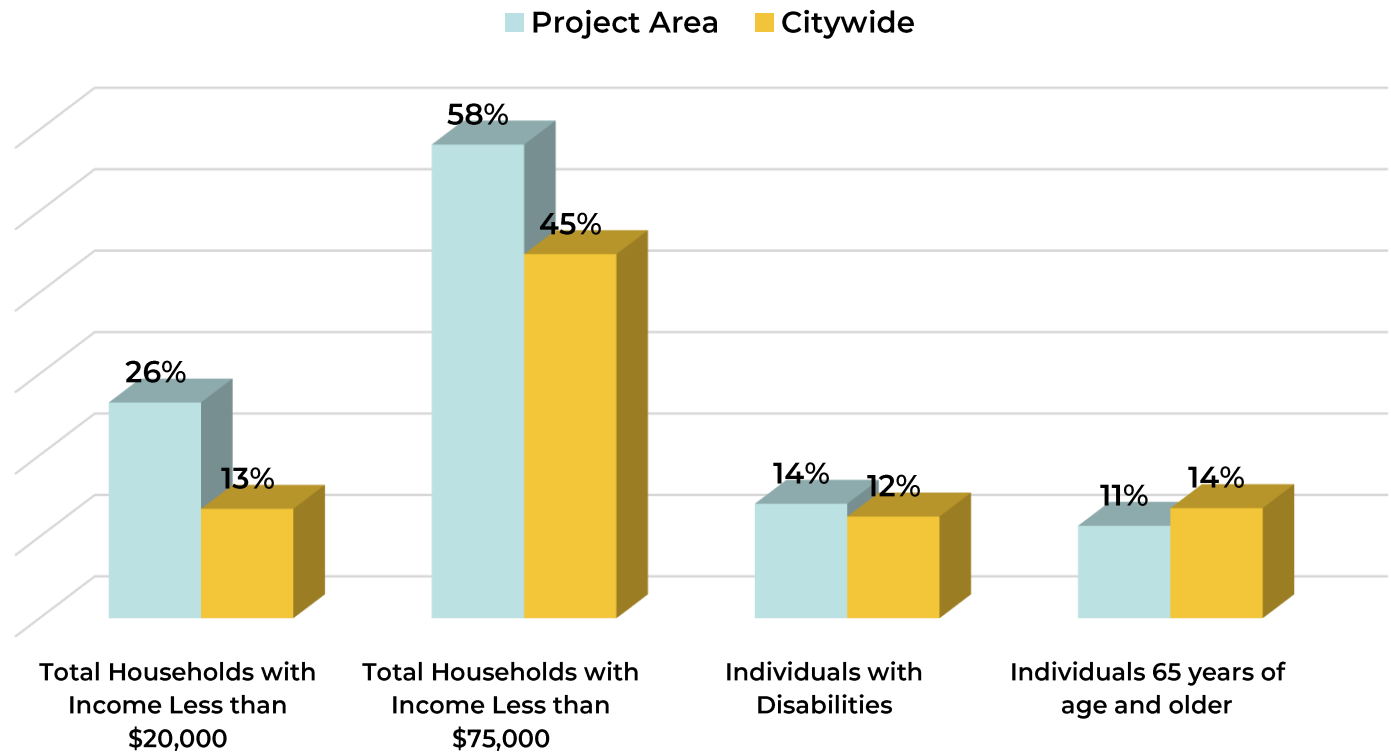
2. PROJECT AREA COMMUNITIES

Who are the people that will be impacted by this project?

The project area has a high number of residents with very low incomes—26% of households make less than \$20,000/year, compared to 13% citywide.

The percentage of residents in the project area that have disabilities or are over the age of 65 are comparable to the rest of the Oakland.

Income of project area residents compared to residents citywide



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Population data source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2021 5-Year Estimates.

2. PROJECT AREA COMMUNITIES

Who are the people that will be impacted by this project?

7th Street Connection Project Stakeholders

- Residents who live on or near 7th Street
- Businesses, organizations, and places of worship along and near 7th Street
- People who take transit, walk, and roll along 7th Street
- City of Oakland Commissions, Boards, and Councilmember office
- Advocacy groups
- Community-based organizations
- Other local agencies



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Equity Indicators

What does the data tell us about existing disparities in the project area?

3. EQUITY INDICATORS

Overview of equity indicators

Equity indicators help us to quantify, measure, and understand complex disparities. Indicators are chosen based on the anticipated project impacts. The indicators selected for this REIA include:

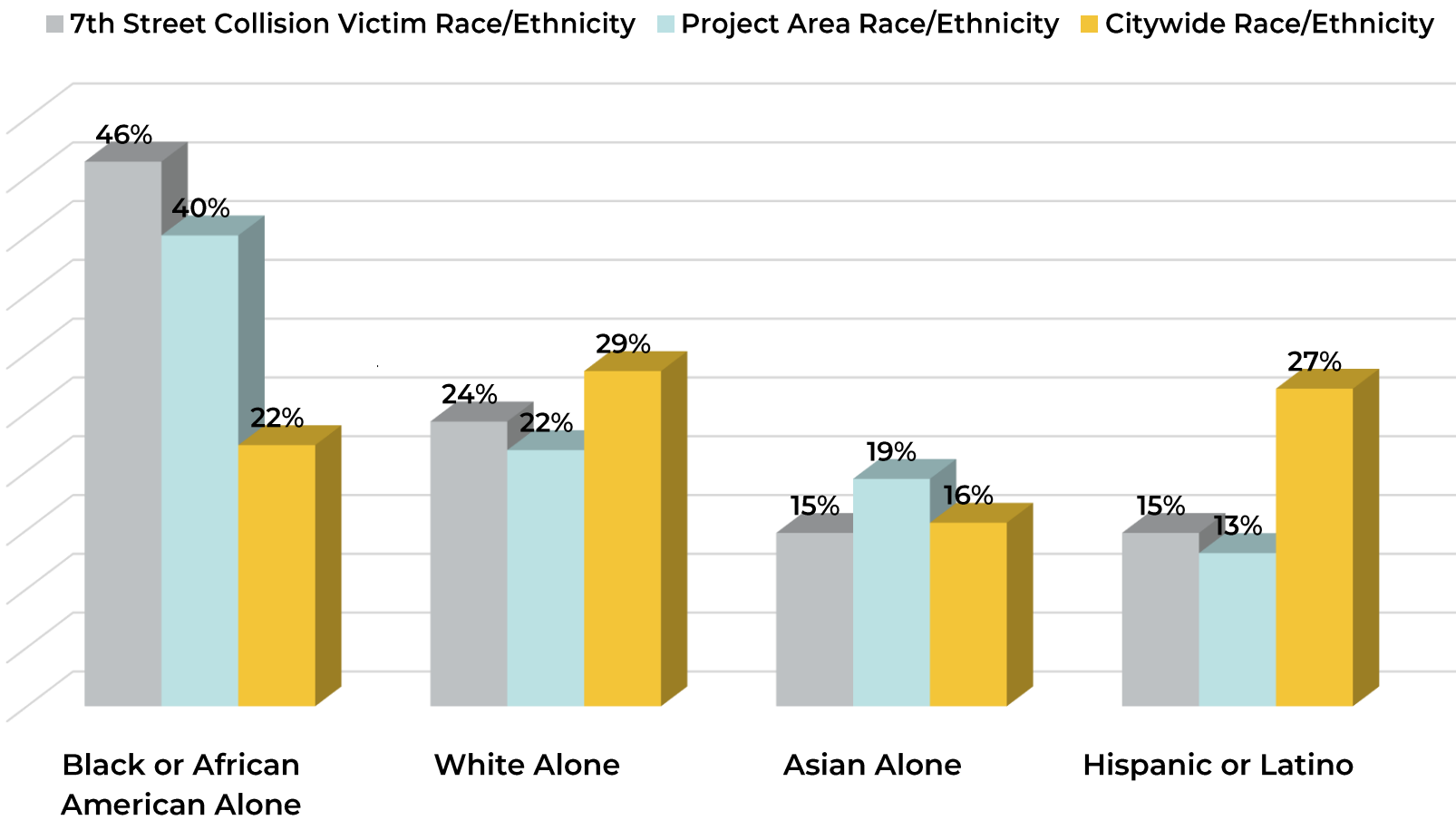
- Traffic collisions by race and age
- Air quality (traffic-related air pollution)
- Asthma emergency department visits
- Air pollution's impact on heart health in the elderly
- Mortality, attributed to Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂)—an emission that results from burning fuel
- Urban tree canopy
- Household vehicle availability
- Barriers to biking
- Bus frequency
- Food access



3. EQUITY INDICATORS: Race and ethnicity of collision victims

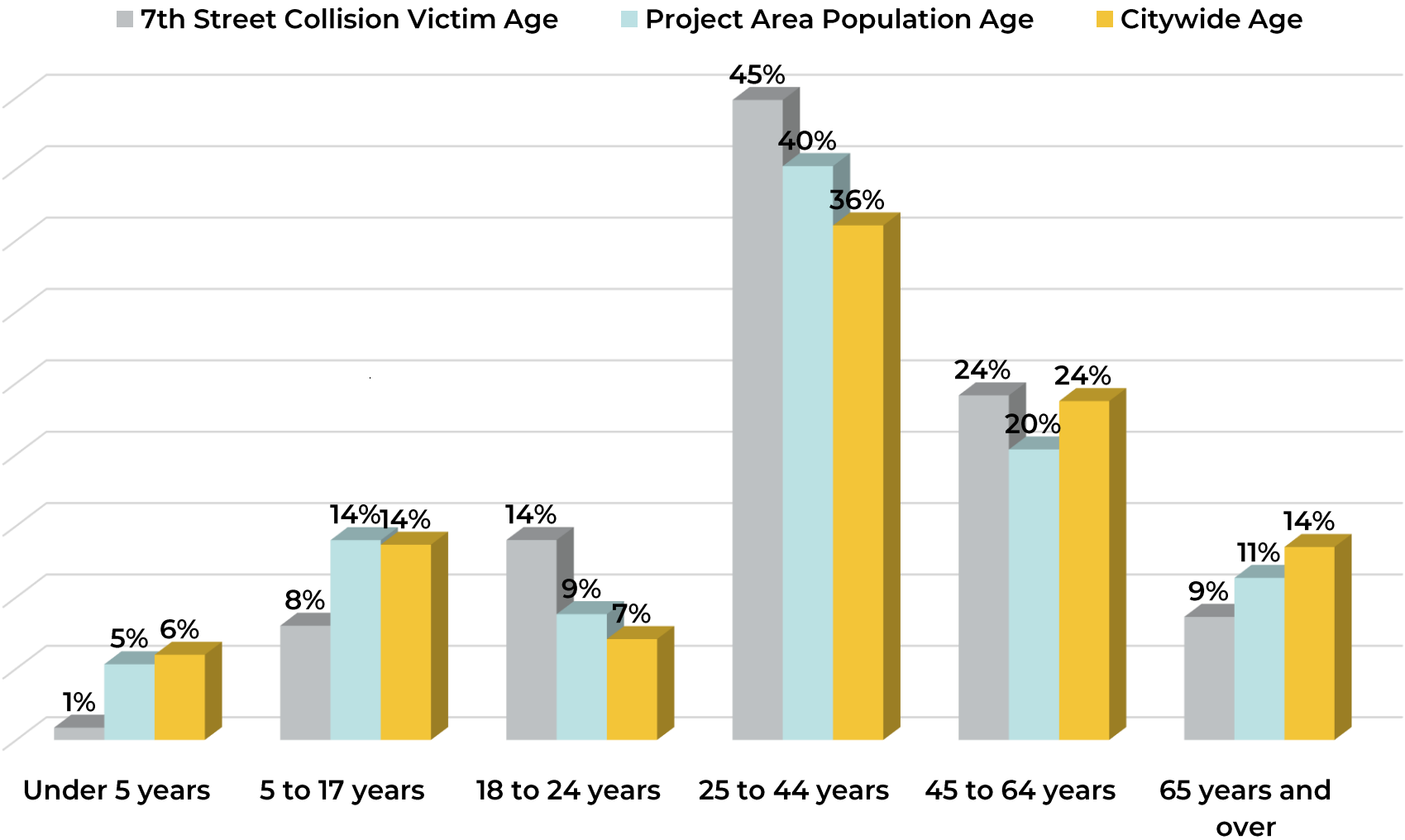
The race and ethnicities of collision victims on the 7th Street project corridor are similar to the project area demographics.

When compared to the citywide population, collision victims on 7th Street were twice as likely to be Black or African American.

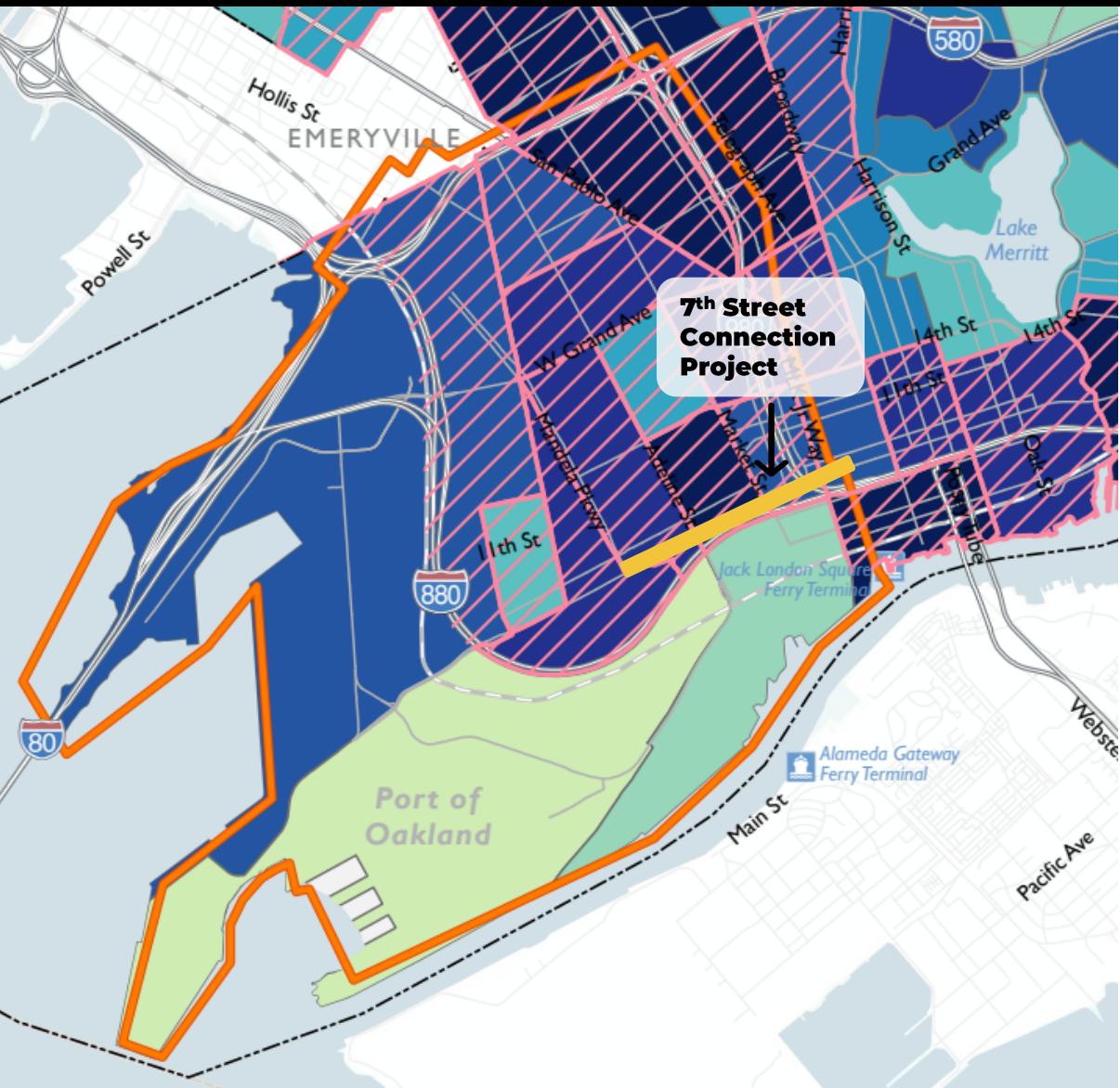


3. EQUITY INDICATORS: Age of collision victims

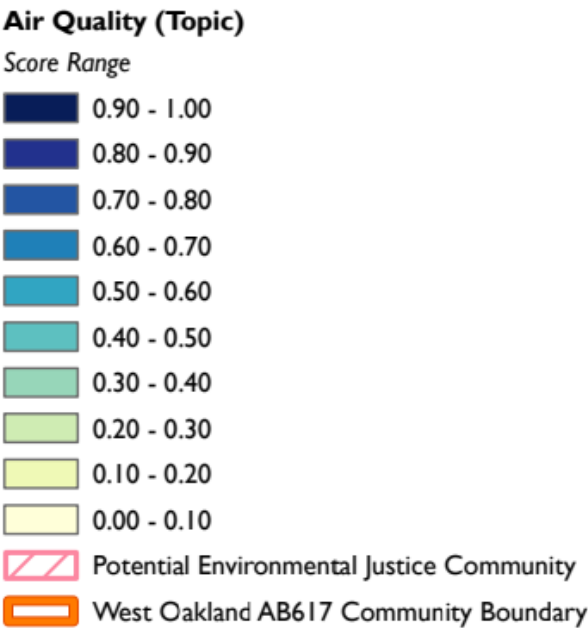
Collision victims on the 7th Street project corridor were more likely to be between the ages of 18 and 44 when compared to the project area population and Oakland’s population. This trend is similar to citywide crash data.



3. EQUITY INDICATORS: *Air quality*



West Oakland residents have endured poor air quality for decades. In 2018, the California Air Resources Board identified West Oakland as a community most impacted by air pollution in California, per Assembly Bill 617. The project corridor is within the West Oakland community.



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3. EQUITY INDICATORS: *Air quality – Black Carbon (BC)*



The 7th Street project corridor has a high concentration of black carbon compared to nearby streets.

Black carbon particles come from burning fuel, especially diesel, wood and coal. High exposure is associated with heart attacks, stroke, and some forms of cancer.

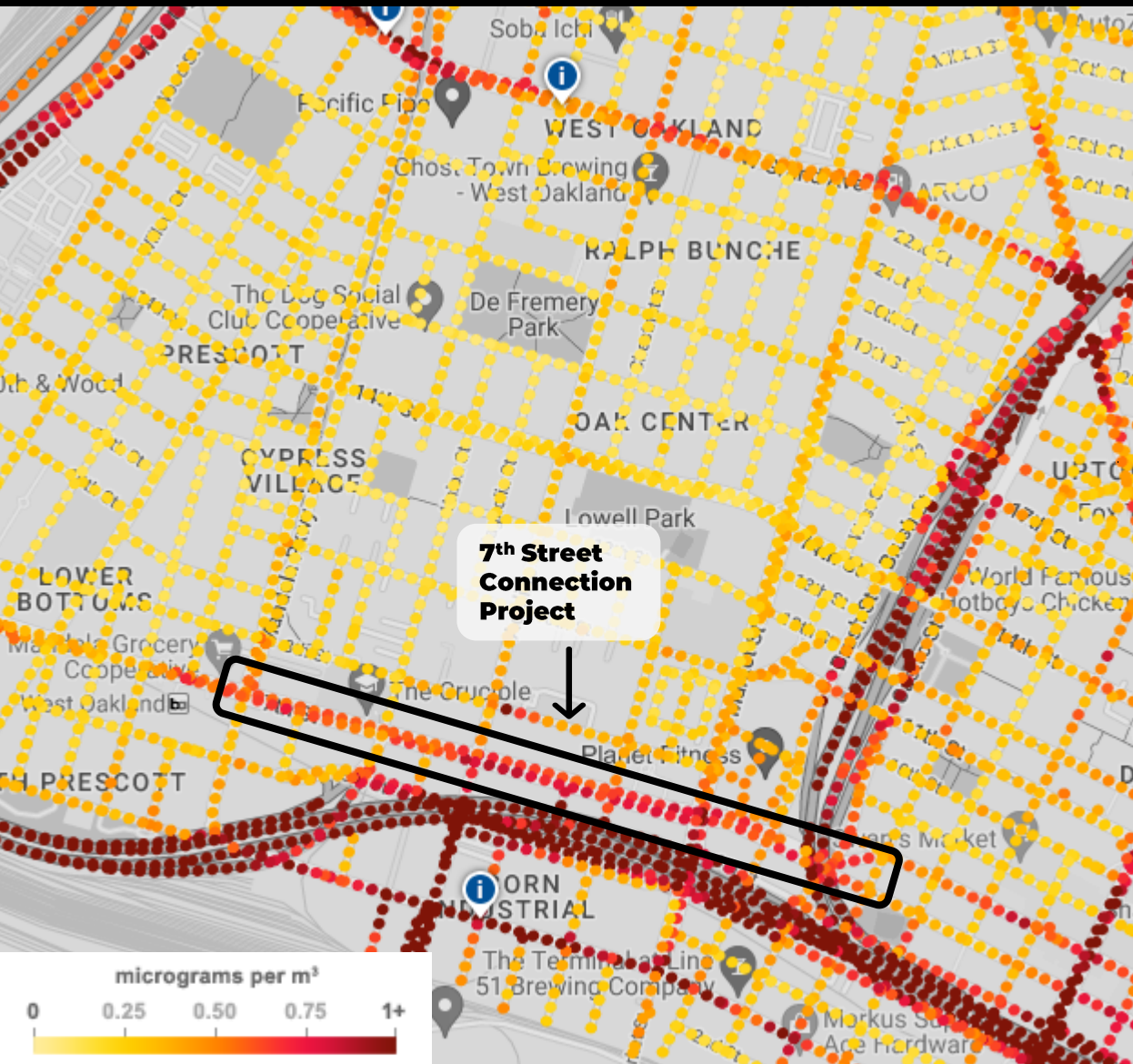
The main source of black carbon particles on 7th Street is likely from diesel powered trucks, since a portion of 7th Street is a designated truck route and near the port and freeways.



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3. EQUITY INDICATORS: *Air quality – Nitric Oxide (NO)*



The 7th Street project corridor has a very high concentration of nitric oxide (NO) compared to nearby streets.

Nitric oxide is strongly associated with heavy traffic. It forms smog and acid rain and can cause respiratory problems.

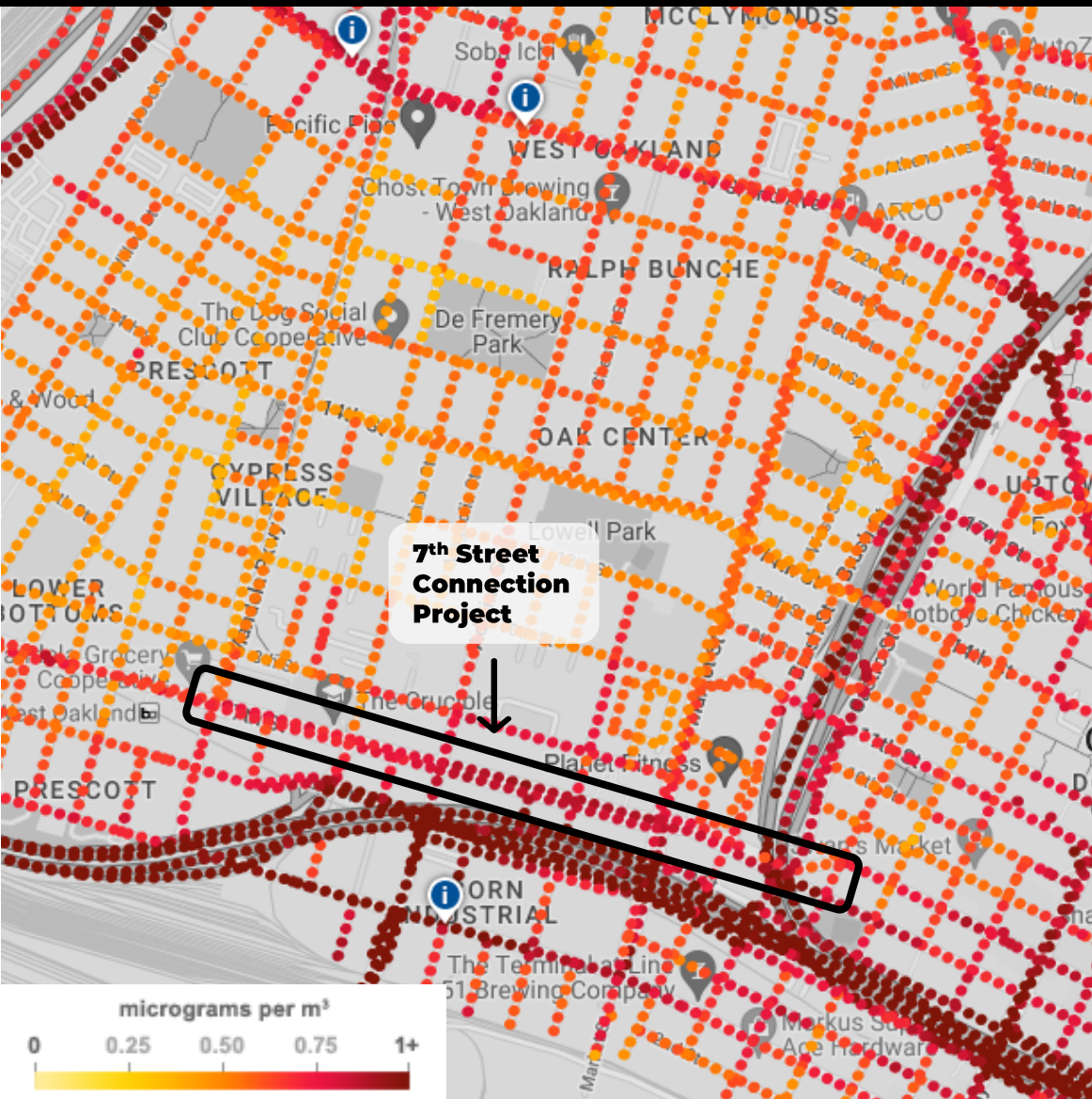
The main source of nitric oxide on 7th Street is likely from truck traffic and nearby freeways.



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3. EQUITY INDICATORS: *Air quality – Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2)*



The 7th Street project corridor has a somewhat higher concentration of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) compared to nearby streets.

Nitrogen dioxide is formed when nitric acid mixes with oxygen in the air. It's associated with respiratory problems.



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3. EQUITY INDICATORS: *Air pollution's impact on heart health in the elderly*

Along 7th Street, residents 65 years of age and older have very high traffic pollution-related health risks. The risk of heart attack or heart disease-related surgery or death for the elderly is about 40% higher than the average in West Oakland, Downtown, and East Oakland (see source data for more details).



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3. EQUITY INDICATORS: *Asthma*

Along 7th Street, a high number of residents go to the emergency department because of asthma, when compared to citywide data. About 1.2% to 1.5% of residents along the project corridor have asthma-related emergencies.

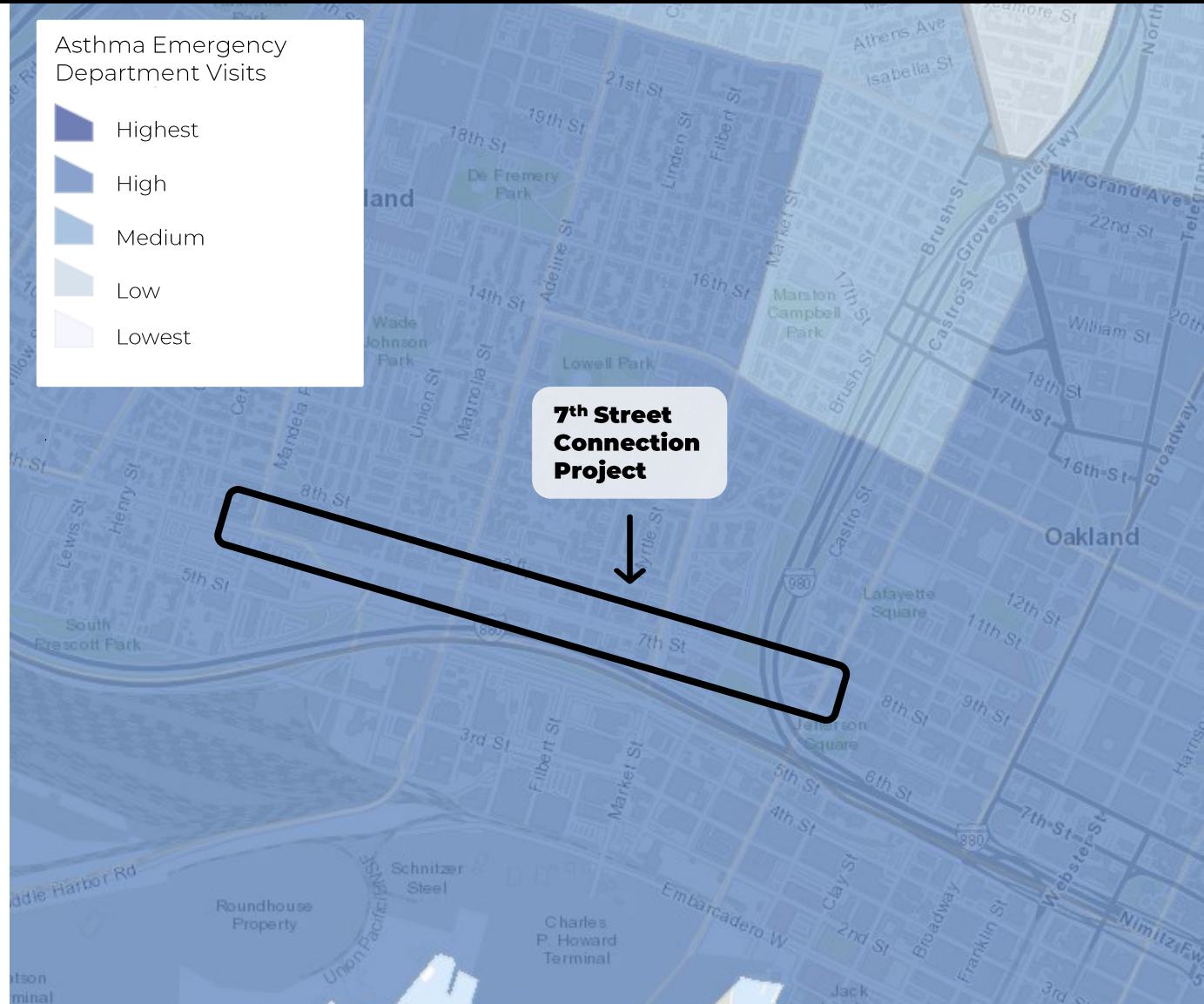
Asthma is a disease that affects the lungs and makes it hard to breathe. The causes of asthma are unknown but both genetic and environmental factors can be involved.

People with asthma can be especially susceptible to pneumonia, flu and other illnesses. Outdoor air pollution can trigger asthma attacks.



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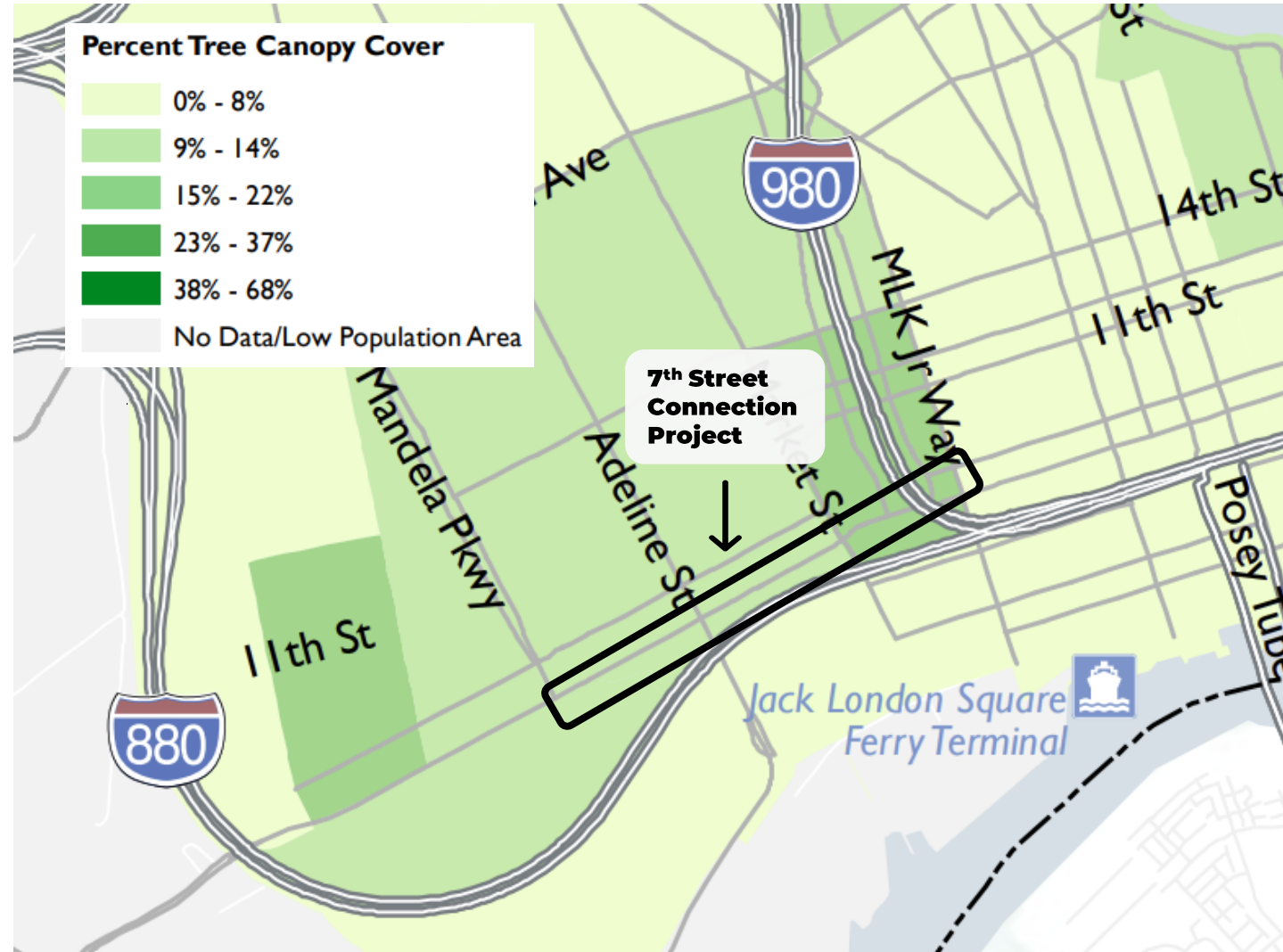


Source: [Map of Oakland EJ Communities](#) and [CalEnviroScreen 4.0](#).

3. EQUITY INDICATORS: *Urban tree canopy*

The 7th Street project corridor has less urban tree canopy when compared to citywide data.

Trees play a key role in the climate as they absorb carbon dioxide and help manage stormwater runoff. They also help fight pollution by improving air quality, aid in cooling on hot days, and generally make it more pleasant to recreate outside.



Source: Oakland 2045 General Plan | Environmental Justice Element Public Hearing Draft | July 2023



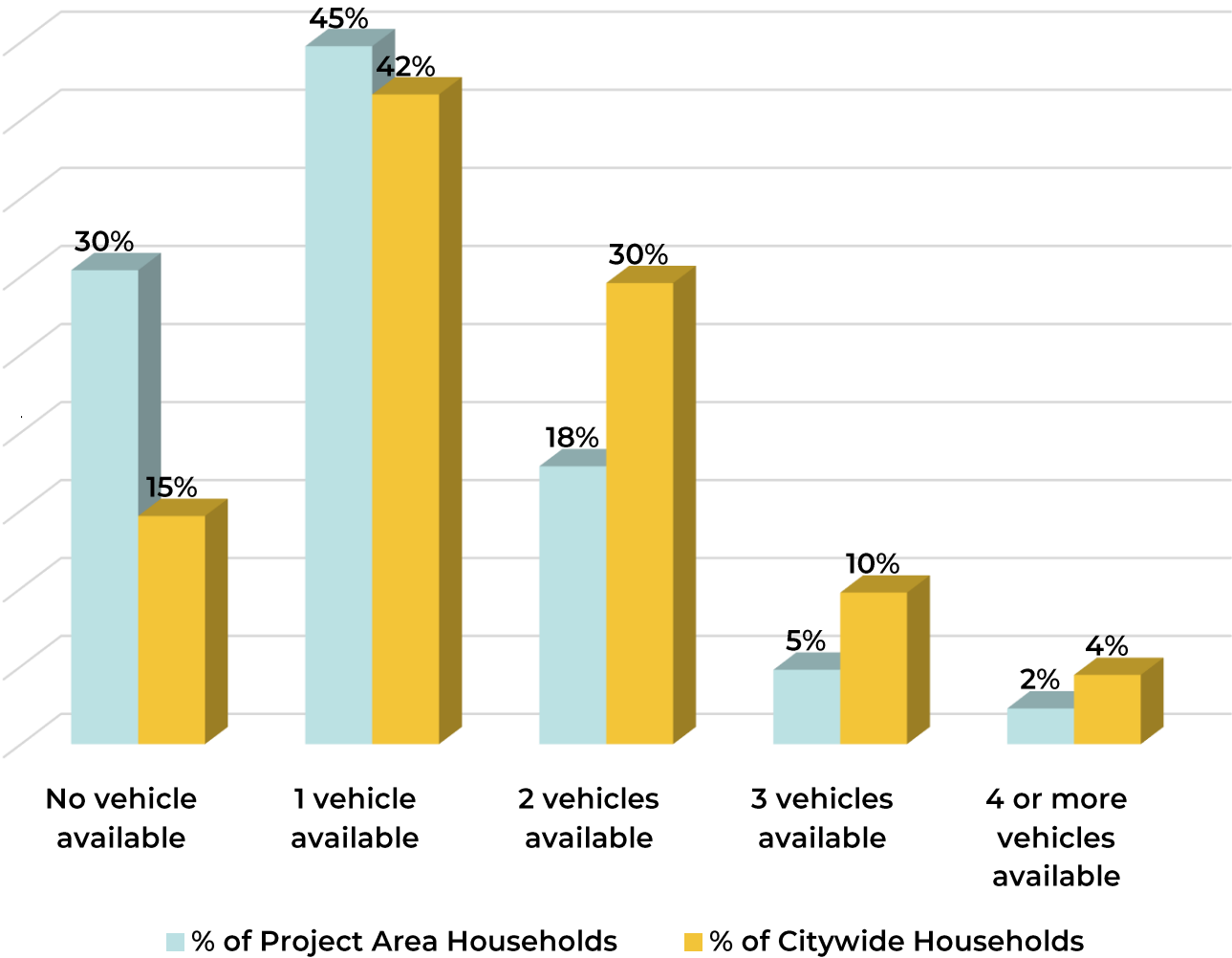
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3. EQUITY INDICATORS: Household vehicle availability

Households living near the 7th Street project corridor have less access to vehicles than Oakland as a whole. About 30% of the project area households do not have access to a vehicle at home, compared to 15% of households citywide.

Cars remain an important mode of transportation for traveling to work, school, appointments, social gatherings, and getting groceries or other shopping. Car access is particularly beneficial in areas of the city where public transit is either inconsistent or unavailable and where streets are unsafe or inaccessible for pedestrians and bicyclists.



3. EQUITY INDICATORS: *Barriers to bicycling*

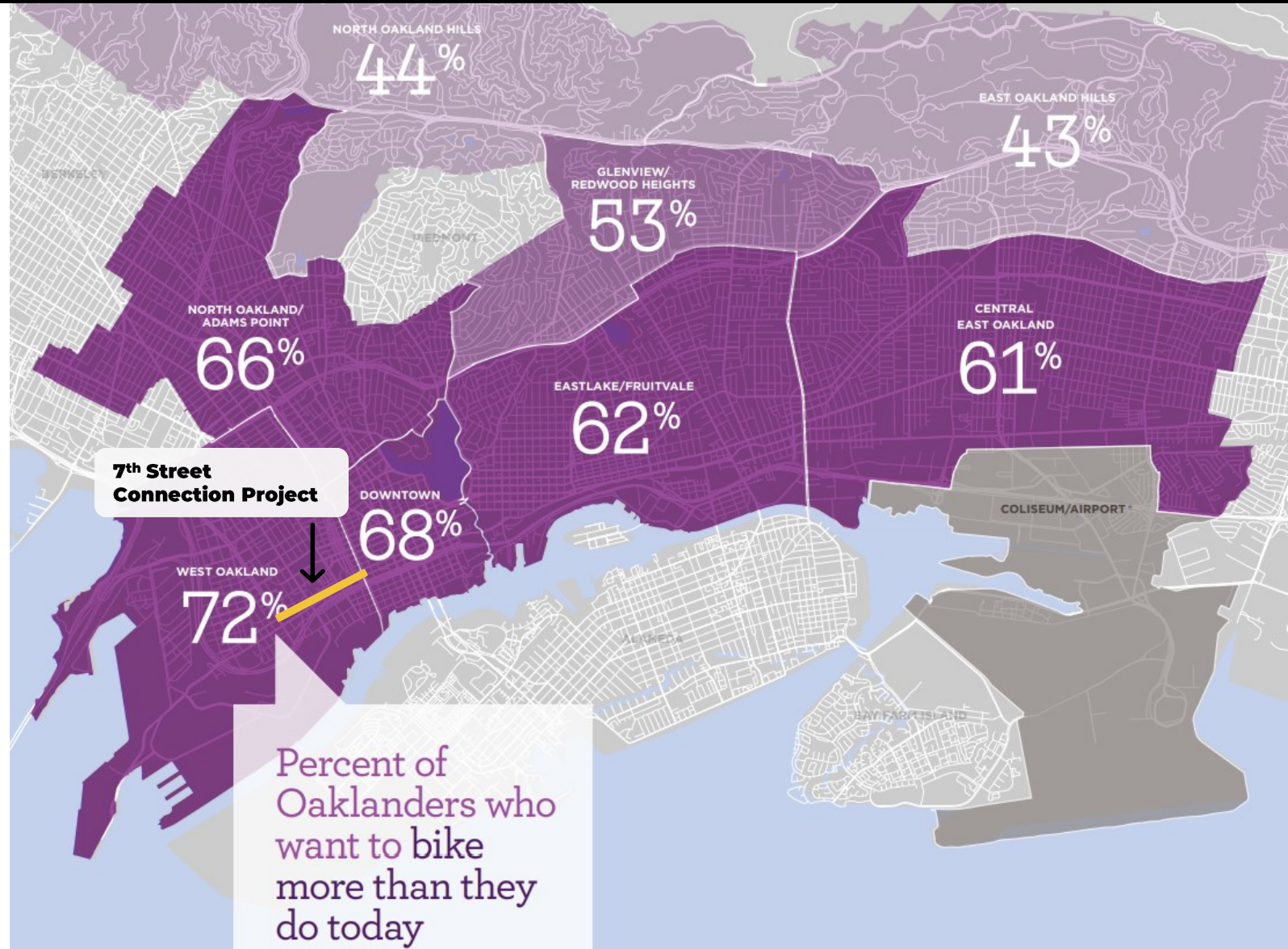
Survey results from the “Let’s Bike Oakland” 2019 Bike Plan showed that 72% of West Oakland residents want to bike more than they did currently.

West Oakland residents who responded to the survey also reported demographic information. 46% of respondents identified as Black or African American, 28% identified as White, 17% identified as Hispanic, and 13% identified as Asian. The survey respondents also were younger than the population as a whole, with 42% of respondents between age 16 and 35.



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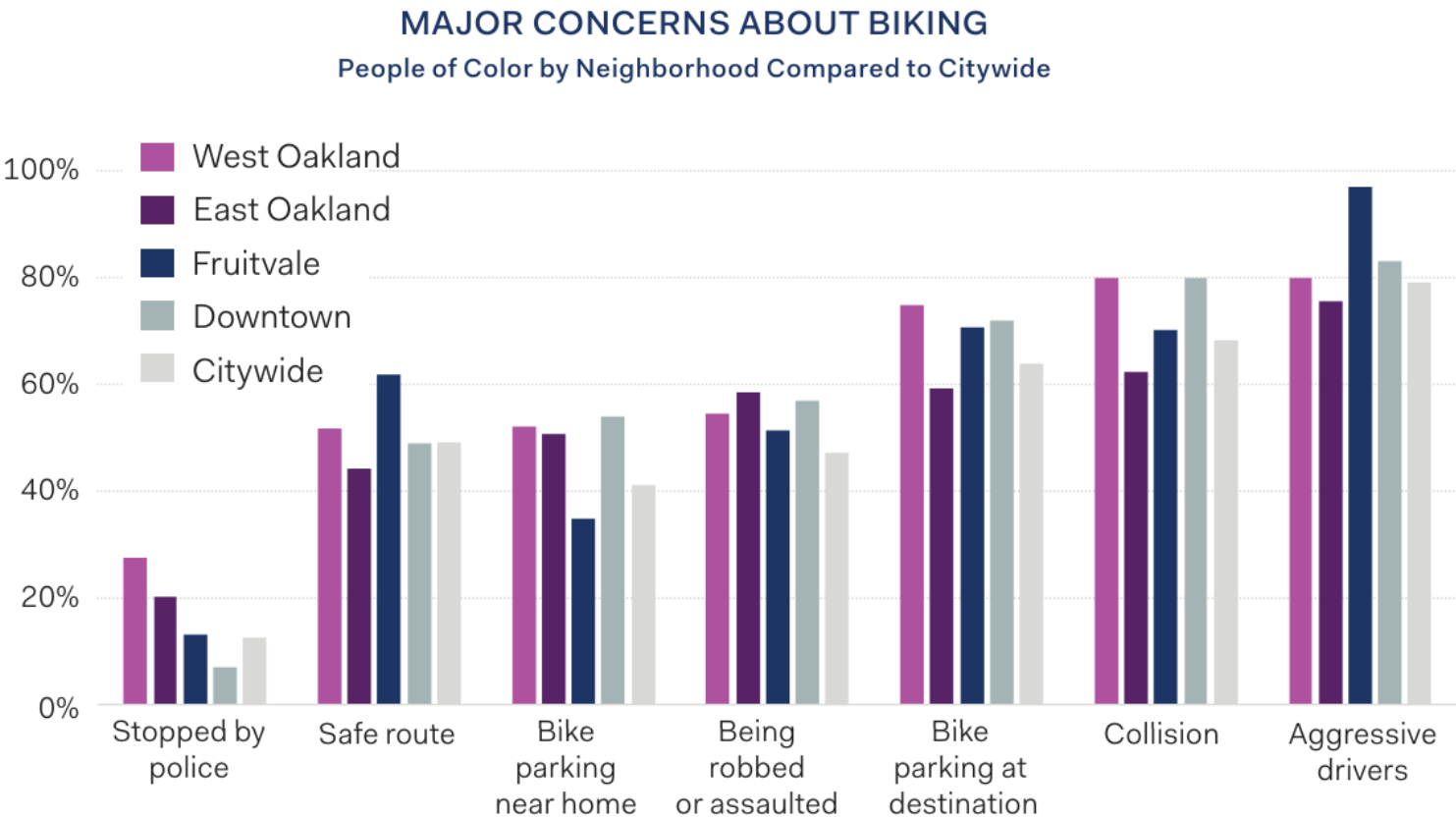
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Data source: Let's Bike Oakland, 2019 Bike Plan

3. EQUITY INDICATORS: *Barriers to bicycling*

For people of color in West Oakland, major concerns about biking included collisions, bike parking at destination or at home, aggressive drivers, being robbed or assaulted, lack of a safe route, and being stopped by police.



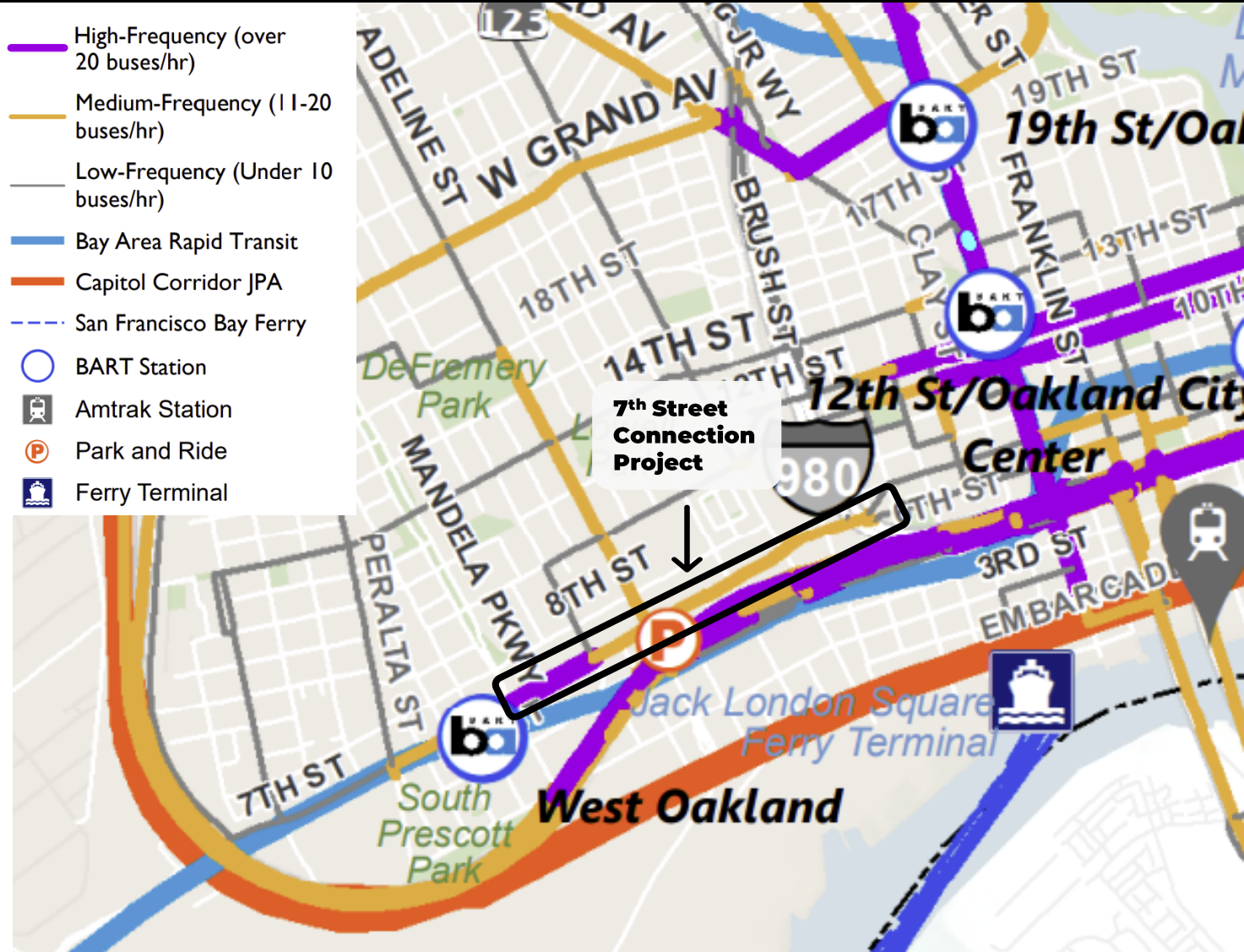
3. EQUITY INDICATORS: *Bus frequency*

The 7th Street project corridor has medium frequency bus service (11-20 buses/hour).

Oakland residents in majority Black census tracts have access to less than half the average number of buses per hour than residents in majority White tracts. In addition, American Community Survey (ACS) data demonstrates that provision of services does not align with needs, as almost all racial groups have similar percentages of residents who commute to work by transit.

Although 7th Street has medium frequency bus service, it may not adequately serve the needs of residents.

- High-Frequency (over 20 buses/hr)
- Medium-Frequency (11-20 buses/hr)
- Low-Frequency (Under 10 buses/hr)
- Bay Area Rapid Transit
- Capitol Corridor JPA
- San Francisco Bay Ferry
- BART Station
- Amtrak Station
- Park and Ride
- Ferry Terminal



Source: Oakland 2045 General Plan | Environmental Justice Element Public Hearing Draft | July 2023



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3. EQUITY INDICATORS: *Food access*

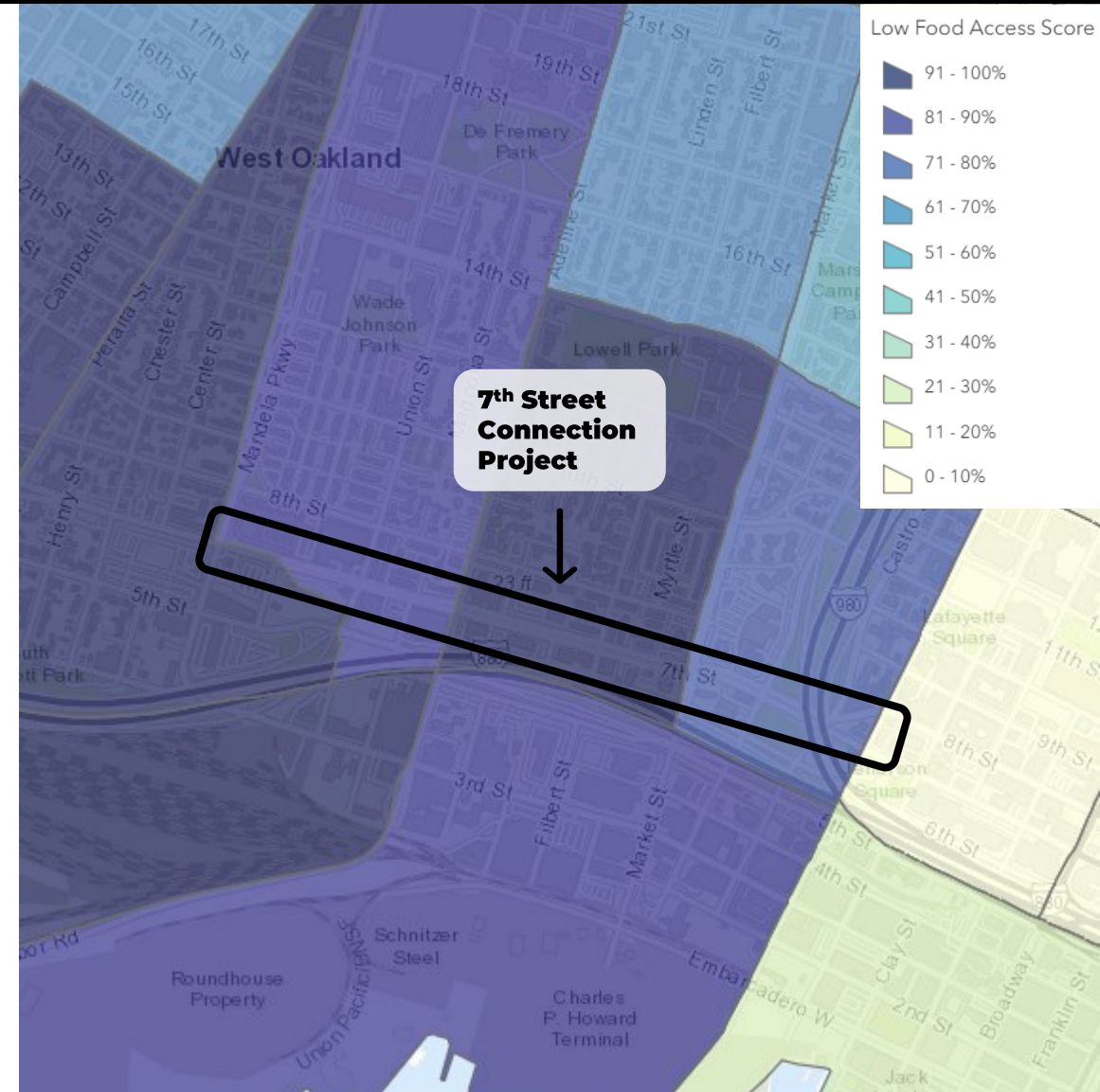
Food access refers to a person's ability to access healthy, culturally appropriate, and affordable food. Having a sufficient income to purchase healthy food and the proximity or ability to travel to food markets are essential elements of equitable access. Challenges to accessing healthy food can lead to a higher risk of chronic diseases. When people cannot get to grocery stores that sell healthy foods, they may shop at nearby corner stores, which often carry fewer healthy options.

Neighborhoods around 7th Street in West Oakland have very low food access compared to the rest of Oakland. Although smaller co-op's and markets have provided healthy options to West Oakland residents for years, most West Oakland residents still lack access to healthy and affordable food options.



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Source: [Map of Oakland EJ Communities](#).

3. SUMMARY OF EXISTING DISPARITIES

Collision victims are 2 times as likely to be Black or African American.

Traffic collisions disproportionately impact Black Oaklanders on this corridor; 46% of collision victims on the corridor are Black or African American. 40% of residents identify as Black or African American along the project corridor, whereas 22% of residents Citywide are Black or African American.

Air quality is worse along 7th Street, impacting nearby residents, bus riders, and individuals experiencing homelessness.

7th Street has significantly higher levels of traffic-related air pollution (TRAP) than other nearby streets in West Oakland. Nearby residents and those who spend time outside on 7th Street, such as bus riders and individuals experiencing homelessness, are frequently exposed to these air pollutants. When compared to the rest of Oakland, the project area has more Black residents and low-income households—40% of project area residents are black, and more than half of households are low-income.

Residents in the project area have very high traffic-related air pollution health risks and outcomes.

Risk of heart attack or heart disease-related surgery or death for the elderly is about 40% higher than the average in West Oakland, Downtown, and East Oakland and among the highest in the data collected. In addition, the project area has a high number of emergency department visits due to asthma.

The project area has somewhat lower urban tree canopy compared to the rest of Oakland.

The project area has between 9-22% tree canopy coverage, while the highest in the city has 68% coverage. A lack of urban tree canopy can be uncomfortable for those traveling on the street, especially for pedestrians, people waiting for the bus, and individuals experiencing homelessness.

More households do not have access to a personal vehicle compared to the rest of Oakland.

30% of households in the project area do not have access to a personal vehicle, which is double when compared to all Oakland households.

Project area residents have very low food access when compared to the rest of Oakland.

Residents in the project area have very low food access scores in Oakland—meaning they lack access to healthy, culturally appropriate, and affordable food.

Past policies and projects created racial injustices that are seen in current conditions.

7th Street went through decades of upheaval due to racist policies and projects. This history continues to impact residents today and many view existing disparities as a result of not just past decisions, but also current neglect.

Proposed Strategies to Address Disparities

5. IDENTIFYING EQUITY GAPS & RECOMMENDATIONS (PART 1 OF 2)

Disparity	How Project Addresses Disparities	Equity Gaps	Additional Recommended Actions for the City of Oakland
Traffic collisions	This project is expected to improve the safety of all road users.	The project is intended to reduce all collisions, but this does not mean that the race and ethnicity of collision victims will be proportional to the race and ethnicity of Oaklanders or those traveling on the street.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the root cause of the disparity and/or expand scope to further address safety.
Air quality and health outcomes of poor air quality	This project is expected to improve walking and rolling conditions and add street trees, thereby reducing emissions and improving air quality.	The project corridor has poor air quality and encouraging walking and rolling on the corridor by making it pedestrian-friendly could increase exposure to poor air quality and have negative impacts on health. It may take a long time before air quality improves in the area because of mode shift or new vehicle technology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with air quality experts to study wind patterns to understand optimal placement of vegetative buffers (trees and other greenery) along the corridor to improve air quality. Support strategies in the West Oakland Community Action Plan and West Oakland Truck Management Plan. Support AC Transit's transition to low emission buses. Support rerouting of diesel-powered trucks off of 7th Street. Support electrification efforts at the Port of Oakland Share air quality information with priority equity communities. Bolster capacity for interdepartmental coordination focused on improving air quality in environmental justice communities.
Urban tree canopy	This project is proposing many additional street trees.	It may take several years before the tree canopy growth provides benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that new trees reflect the needs of communities and support improved air quality. Procure trees that are mature and more likely to survive.
Access to personal vehicles	This project will improve safety, accessibility, and transit to make it easier to travel without access to a personal vehicle.	While the project is improving pedestrian safety, accessibility, and transit, this does not always replace the need for a vehicle for certain purposes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand Universal Basic Mobility program to priority equity communities in the project area and in Oakland. Engage with communities to understand what modes they most prefer and the barriers that may still exist to walking, biking, and taking transit.

5. IDENTIFYING EQUITY GAPS & RECOMMENDATIONS (PART 2 OF 2)

Disparity	How Project Addresses Disparities	Equity Gaps	Additional Recommended Actions for the City of Oakland
Barriers to bicycling	The project includes protected bike lanes, which may address the major concerns about biking (collisions and aggressive drivers) of residents in West Oakland identifying as a person of color.	The protected bike lanes will enhance safety for bicyclists, but there are still risks of collisions occurring at intersections. The project includes bulb-outs and a protected intersections at Market Street and Adeline Street, which will slow vehicle turns, but there is still risk of collisions between turning vehicles and bicyclists proceeding straight on 7 th Street.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Consider adding separate bike and pedestrian movements from turning vehicles through signal modifications/upgrades.
Food access	This project will improve safety, accessibility, and transit, which may lead to better food access.	This project cannot directly enhance food access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Support existing community efforts to enhance food access (e.g., food distribution at local schools).Distribute information about government services that support food access.
Historical and significant racial injustices	The project made inclusive engagement a priority and has included several methods to meet people in their community. This included visiting schools and businesses, tabling at farmers market and at BART, and walking around neighborhoods to distribute door hangers to share info.	Although the project has incorporated many of the requests made by community members, the grant funds allocated to the project cannot be used for many of the existing maintenance needs the community has requested.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Advocate for additional maintenance along 7th Street and in West Oakland.Support existing community groups involved in street clean-ups and maintenance.

6. NEXT STEPS

- Inform project stakeholders that REIA has been drafted
- Update REIA based on stakeholder feedback
- Develop a project evaluation plan that incorporates equity indicators and conduct the evaluation.
- Work with OakDOT's Race and Equity Team (RET) to identify next steps on recommended actions

CONTACT US



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