

LAND USE AND PLANNING

I.H.H.E.E.L.

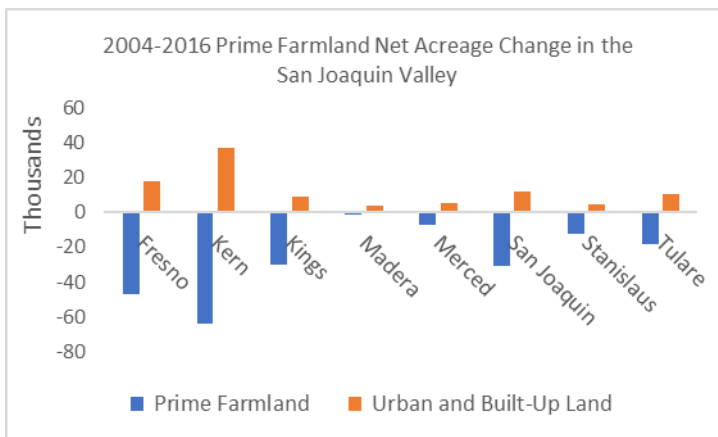
INTRODUCTION

Land use is an integral component of sustainable and equitable community and regional planning. The allocation of land for different purposes has long-lasting effects on community and regional health and well-being. In the San Joaquin Valley, a sprawling development pattern has threatened the viability of agriculture, resulted in a loss of open space, and created urban and suburban landscapes that generate significant auto emissions and other environmental impacts. Equitable land use planning considers both the location of health-promoting amenities (such as parks, grocery stores, and public transit) and those that negatively affect health (such as hazardous industries).

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

- Over the past three decades, rapid urban and suburban development has converted large amounts of land that was previously used for agriculture in the San Joaquin Valley to urban and suburban uses.
- Health-promoting amenities such as parks and grocery stores are inequitably distributed across the valley.
- The percentage of people commuting by public transit, biking, or walking in the valley is lower than it is statewide.
- Many jurisdictions in the valley did not build low-income housing units from 2013-2018.

URBANIZATION AND LAND USE ALLOCATION



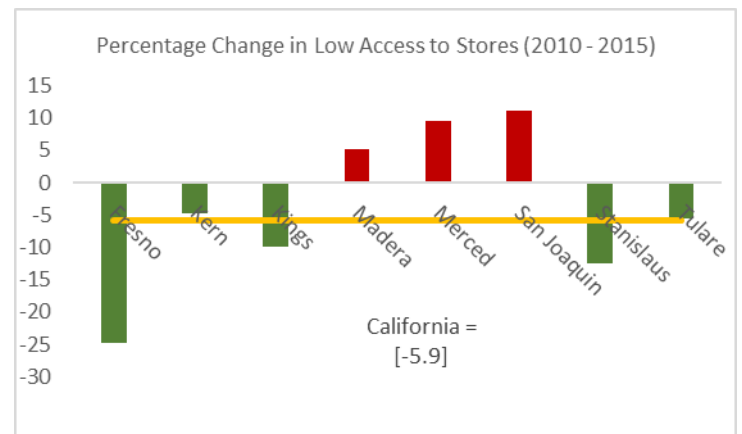
Source: Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, 2016

The San Joaquin Valley currently has an annual growth rate of 2%. It is expected to account for 25% of the state population by the year 2050.ⁱ

To accommodate this increase in population, urban and suburban growth have led to sprawling development, resulting in the loss of prime farmland. In total, 25% of the valley's land has been converted to urban and suburban land uses in the past three decades.ⁱⁱ

Access to Grocery Stores

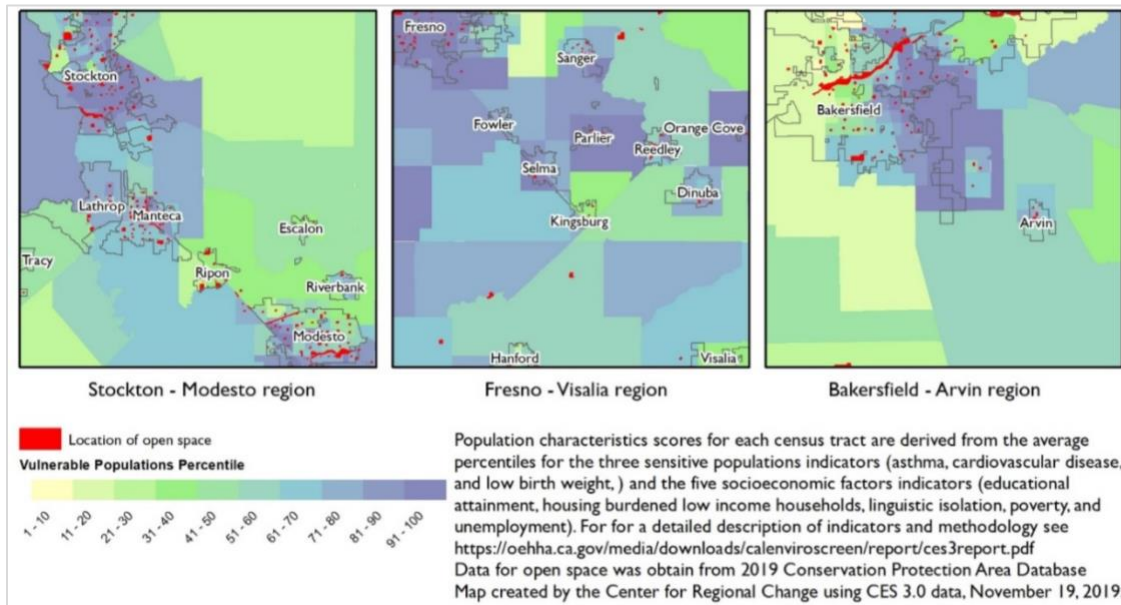
Residents with greater access to grocery stores are likely to consume more healthy foods.ⁱⁱⁱ In the valley, access to grocery stores increased between 2010 and 2015; however, access decreased in some counties during the same time period. Overall, the percentage of the population with low access to grocery stores decreased by (-6.48%), as compared to a statewide decrease of (-5.9%) from 2010 to 2015. However, during the same period, several counties experienced an increase in the percent of the population with low access to grocery stores, including San Joaquin (11.17%), Merced (9.52%) and Madera (5.2%) Counties.



Source: USDA Food Atlas, 2015

Access to Open Space

Location of Open Space in the San Joaquin Valley (2019)



In the San Joaquin Valley, there are 32 acres per 1,000 residents of local-level open space. However, there are many neighborhoods that have less open space, and lower-quality space, than the region as a whole.^{iv}

Exposure to Toxic Releases

Racial segregation, redlining, and their historical legacies have tended to result in the location of hazardous land uses in and near low-income communities and communities of color. According to CalEnviroScreen, Fresno, Madera, and Stanislaus Counties rank above the 50th percentile compared to the state as a whole in the amount of toxic materials emitted from industrial facilities. Communities within or near the cities of Madera, Fresno, and Bakersfield are particularly affected, ranking in the 90th percentile for the state.^v

Active Transportation

When places are walkable and in close proximity between homes, jobs, schools, and other daily necessities, people are more likely to walk, bike, or use public transit and benefit from increased exercise.^{vi} However, the percentage of people in the San Joaquin Valley who actively commute (via bike, walking, and public transit) is far lower (ranging from 2.5% to 3.8%) than the percentage statewide (9%).^{vii}

Complete Streets

In 2008, the State of California passed the Complete Streets Act, which requires cities and counties to include Complete Streets policies in their general plans. The intent of Complete Streets policies is to help create safe streets for users regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation.^{viii} However, the only city in the San Joaquin Valley that complied with this new law was the City of Manteca (located in San Joaquin County). Furthermore, there are many communities in the valley's unincorporated areas that do not have sidewalks, gutters, street lights, or paved streets.

Affordable Housing

The State of California mandates that all jurisdictions (cities and counties) must provide homes across all income levels. Yet, 29 of the 70 jurisdictions in the San Joaquin Valley did not build homes for low-income populations from 2013-2018.^{ix}

Citations are available at [The Center web site](#).