CASE STUDY
City of Oxnard Climate Action and Adaptation Plan: Using the Healthy Places Index (HPI) for Climate Resilience and Equity

Across the State of California, communities are facing the severe impacts of climate change. The City of Oxnard is no exception – dealing with climate-related effects of extreme heat, rising sea levels, flooding, drought, and worsening air quality. In recent years, heat waves and wildfire smoke have already impacted the health of residents. Farmworkers and other historically impacted groups have carried an inequitable amount of the climate-driven health burden. Recognizing the need for action, Oxnard utilized HPI data to develop its Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP).

The Challenge: Protecting Residents from the Impacts of Climate Change

Oxnard scores 33.8 out of 100 on the Healthy Places Index, placing the city in the second lowest quartile of the index. The ranking is based on social conditions that drive health, such as education, job opportunities, clean air and water, and other indicators that are positively associated with life expectancy at birth.

These social and economic conditions strongly influence the resilience and burden communities will face due to climate change. In addition, the impacts of climate change will also exacerbate social and racial inequities that drive health outcomes.

According to the HPI: Extreme Heat Edition, Oxnard is projected to have 13 days of extreme heat by midcentury. Oxnard scores 16.2 out of 100 on the HPI for Tree Canopy, leaving residents more vulnerable to the urban heat island effect.
The City of Oxnard’s residents and leadership realized the critical importance of implementing an action plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) that exacerbate climate change while cultivating a healthy and sustainable future for all its residents.

The City also recognized that not all residents would be impacted equally. Vulnerability in the community reflects patterns driven by socio-economic inequity, systemic racism and discrimination, and place-based factors.

The City needed data on community conditions to identify these social inequities and incorporate social and racial justice into the plan. The HPI was identified as an essential tool for moving data into action.

To meet climate change's ongoing and increasing impact, the City of Oxnard partnered with local residents, businesses, community-based organizations, and environmental organizations to draft the Oxnard Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP). The CAAP builds on the City's successes in implementing its 2030 General Plan while recommitting and furthering the City's sustainability and climate goals.

The CAAP establishes the goal to reduce the City of Oxnard's GHG to 40% below 1990 levels by 2030. The Plan includes an inventory of strategies and actions to reduce emissions and help the community adapt to climate change. The CAAP is part of a coordinated effort to build an equitable, sustainable and resilient community for current and future generations.

To reduce GHG emissions and promote climate resilience, the City will use seven core strategies:

- **Clean Energy** – Take actions to procure zero-carbon electricity, increase solar energy generation and develop energy storage/microgrids.

- **Green Buildings** – Improve the energy efficiency of existing residential, commercial, and municipal buildings.

- **Transportation** – Expand infrastructure to support zero emission vehicles (ZEV) and increase bicycle and pedestrian activity; transition the City fleet to greener alternatives; and expand car and bike sharing.
**How the HPI Helped Turn Data Into Action**

The HPI was essential for identifying policies and strategies for promoting climate resilience and sustainability within CAAP.

The HPI tool provided important data on disproportionately impacted communities, vulnerability indicators, and pollution burden, which were significant for assessing community vulnerability and adaptation capacity in Oxnard.

- The City of Oxnard found that the HPI tool provided more data on certain indicators relating to vulnerability than other tools that measure climate impacts, such as CalEnviroScreen.
- This includes data for outdoor workers, non-English speakers, people with disabilities, health insurance, tree canopy, park access, active commuting, automobile access, and people of color, which were indicators that were important to the Oxnard community.
- This data was critical for assessing people and places at heightened climate vulnerability in Oxnard and helping to prioritize adaptation strategies where it is needed the most.

HPI data, particularly on populations at increased risk and access to services and amenities, was used to help determine where more resources may be needed in the community.

**Land Use** – Support transit-oriented and mixed-use development.

**Water Conservation and Reuse** – Reduce community and municipal per capita water use through water conservation and reuse.

**Waste Reduction and Recycling** – Divert solid waste and organics from landfills.

**Nature-Based Solutions** – Increase local carbon sequestration by using native and drought resistant species in the City’s tree canopy cover.

These strategies are essential steps for a transition to sustainable green communities. However, equity must also be forefronted to promote the health and well-being of all residents.

The City of Oxnard recognized the importance of an equity-forward approach. To identify policies and strategies to promote climate equity, the City needed data on the social conditions of its residents.
The City of Oxnard is an essential example of how the HPI is an important tool for identifying the social drivers of health and community conditions needed to develop upstream solutions to promote climate resilience and environmental health equity.

Read the Full Oxnard Climate Action and Adaptation Plan Here.

**About the Healthy Places Index**

Created in 2018 by the Public Health Alliance of Southern California, the Healthy Places Index is a powerful data and policy platform that breaks down data on social conditions that affect health by neighborhood. The main goal of the Healthy Places Index is to advance health equity through open data. We provide community leaders, policymakers, academics, and other stakeholders with the tools they need to identify inequity, prioritize equitable investment, and strengthen community voices with sound validated data.

The HPI has become a go-to data tool for hundreds of state and local government agencies, foundations, advocacy groups, hospitals, and other organizations that want to apply a health equity lens to better direct over a billion dollars in community investments, and to develop critical programs and policies across the state.

For more information visit thepublichealthalliance.org