Racial Equity Impact Analysis

February 5, 2024 - Draft for Public Review

CITY OF OAKLAND | DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MLK JR. WAY STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS
Racial Equity Impact Analysis

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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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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
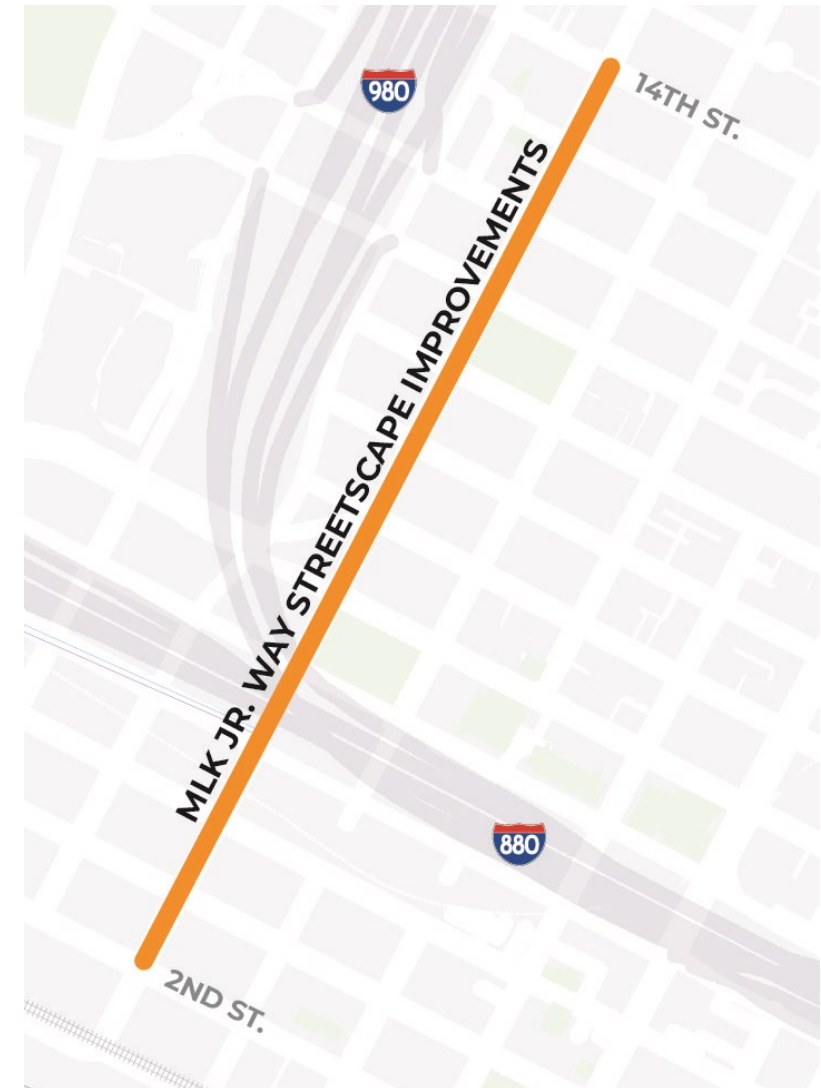
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1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND
Applying REIA to MLK Jr. Way

This REIA is conducted on the **Martin Luther King Jr. Way Streetscape Improvements,** a project that will be implemented on MLK Jr. Way between 2nd Street and 14th Street. The scope of the project includes:

- Protected bike lanes
- Curb ramps and bulb-outs
- High-visibility crosswalk markings
- Street and pedestrian lighting
- Street trees and street furniture
- Fiber optic cable (to enable expansion of OAK WiFi)
- Traffic signal mast arms, protected left turns, bicycle signals, and pedestrian countdown heads

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MLK Jr. Way once represented the dividing line between neighborhoods where Black and Brown Oaklanders could and could not live or buy property.

About half the project area was redlined* and continues to be harmed by I-980.

*Areas in red were given a "D" grade by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC). These areas were "*characterized by detrimental influences in a pronounced degree, undesirable population or an infiltration of it.*" They recommended lenders "*refuse to make loans in these areas [or] only on a conservative basis.*"

MLK Jr. Way Streetscape Improvements

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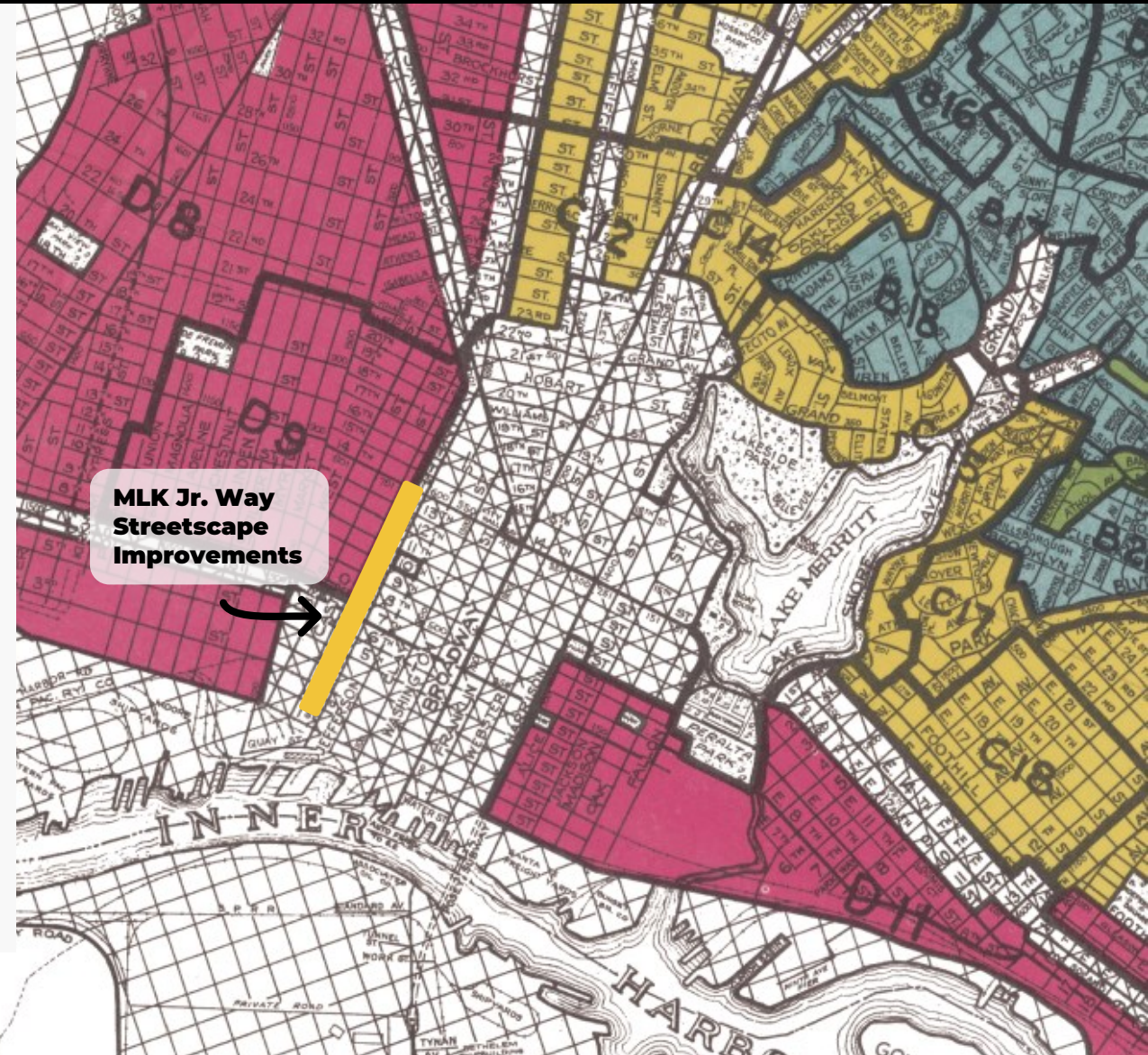
The project area is defined by six census tracts that are within or adjacent to the project corridor.

This area has about 10,600 residents, with the majority living north of I-880.

MLK Jr. Way Streetscape Improvements →

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Population data source: *American Community Survey (ACS) 2019 and 2021 5-Year Estimates.*

The project area residents differ from the City of Oakland as a whole in that there are more Black or African American residents(32% versus 22% citywide), more Asian residents (22% versus 16% citywide), and less Hispanic or Latino residents (10% versus 27% citywide).
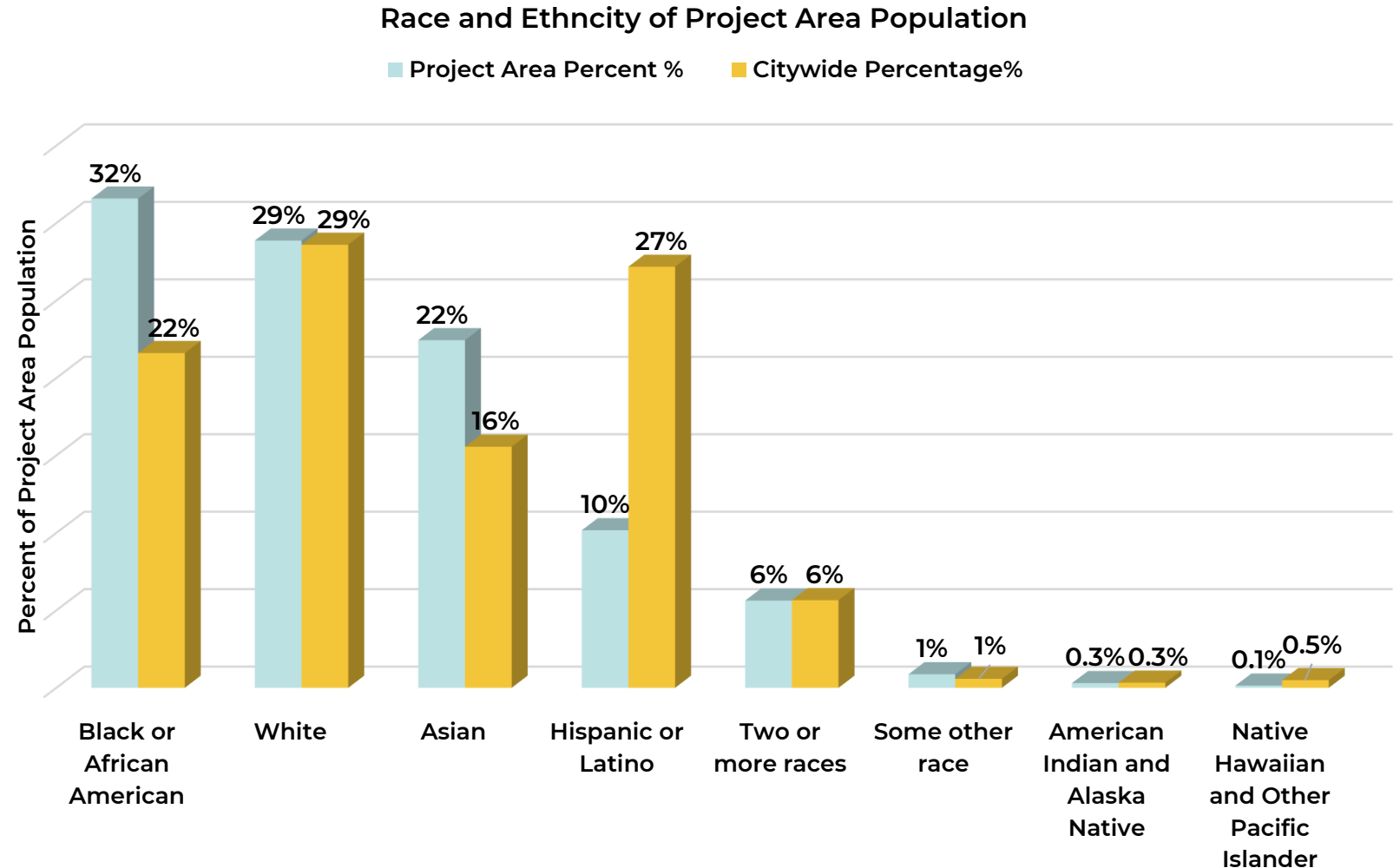
Race and Ethncity of Project Area Population

■ Project Area Percent %   ■ Citywide Percentage%

Y-axis: Percent of Project Area Population

- Black or African American: 32% / 22%
- White: 29% / 29%
- Asian: 22% / 16%
- Hispanic or Latino: 10% / 27%
- Two or more races: 6% / 6%
- Some other race: 1% / 1%
- American Indian and Alaska Native: 0.3% / 0.3%
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander: 0.1% / 0.5%

Population data source: *American Community Survey (ACS)* 2020 5-Year Estimates.

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The project area has a high number of residents with very low incomes—30% of residents make less than $20,000/year, compared to 13% citywide.

The number of residents with disabilities and who are over the age of 65, are slightly higher than residents citywide.

Income, disability, and age of project area residents versus residents citywide
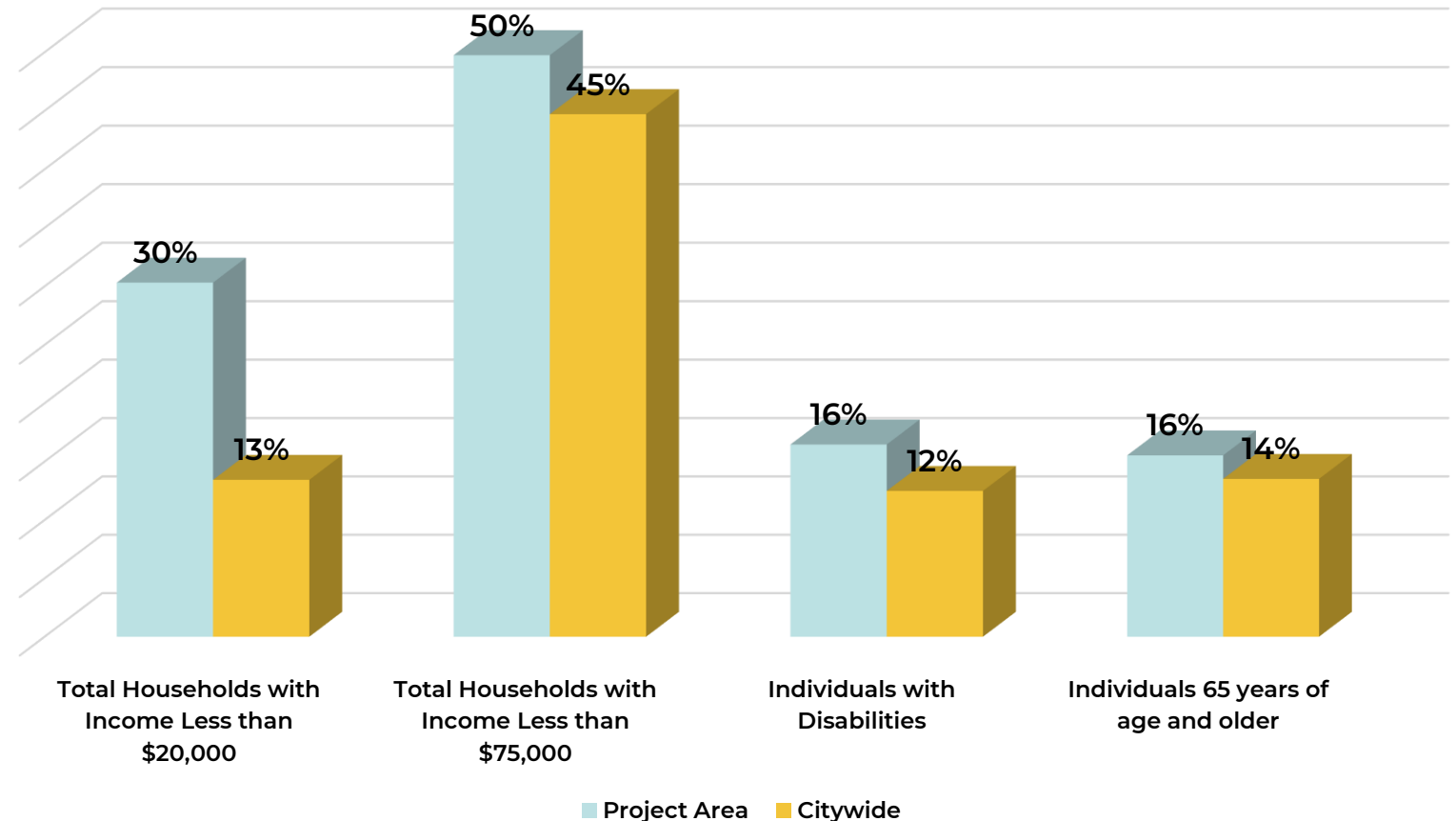
	Project Area	Citywide
Total Households with Income Less than $20,000	30%	13%
Total Households with Income Less than $75,000	50%	45%
Individuals with Disabilities	16%	12%
Individuals 65 years of age and older	16%	14%

Population data source: *American Community Survey (ACS)* 2020 5-Year Estimates.

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MLK Jr. Way Streetscape Stakeholders

- Residents around MLK Jr. Way

- Businesses and non-profits along MLK Jr. Way

- People who take transit, walk, and roll along MLK Jr. Way

- Neighborhood Councils

- Business Improvement Districts

- City of Oakland Commissions and Boards

- Places of worship

- Advocacy groups

- Community-based organizations

- Other local agencies

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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
- Mortality, attributed to Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2)—an emission that results from burning fuel
- Urban tree canopy
- Internet access at home
- Household vehicle availability
- Barriers to biking
- Walkability

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3. EQUITY INDICATORS: *Race and ethnicity of collision victims*

Collision victims on the MLK Jr. Way corridor were twice as likely to be Black Oaklanders when compared to Oakland's population as a whole. This is similar to outcomes found in the citywide crash data analysis.

■ MLK Jr. Way Collision Victim Race/Ethnicity
■ Project Area Population Race/Ethnicity
■ Oakland Population Race/Ethnicity

Black or African American Alone: 43%, 32%, 22%
White Alone: 28%, 29%, 29%
Asian Alone: 15%, 22%, 16%
Hispanic or Latino: 11%, 10%, 27%

Collision data source: Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS), *Safe Transportation Research and Education Center, University of California, Berkeley*. Analysis used 5 years of data (2016 – 2020). Crashes include all modes. **Population data source:** *American Community Survey (ACS)* 2020 5-Year Estimates.

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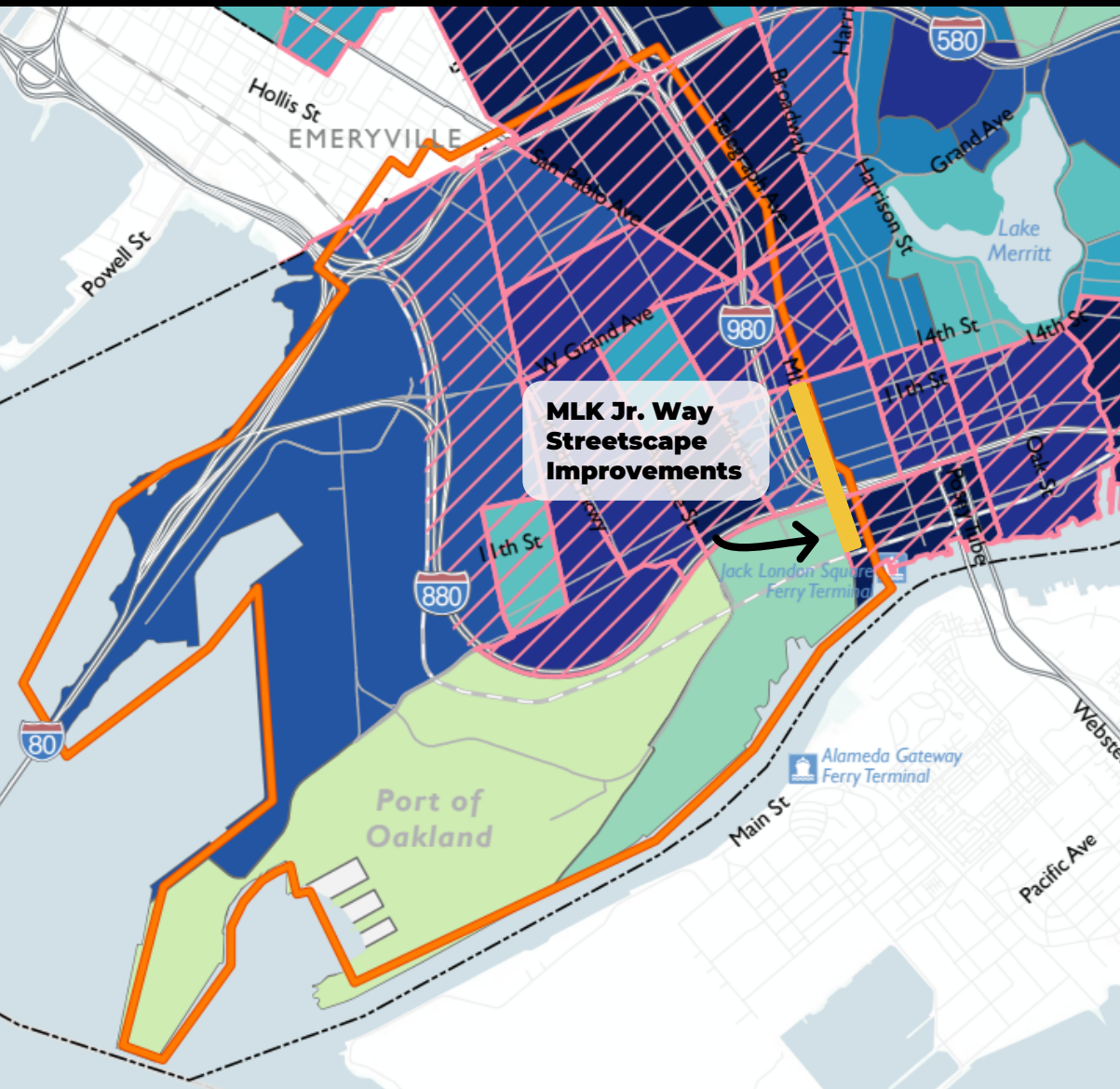
3. EQUITY INDICATORS: *Age of collision victims*

Collision victims on the MLK Jr. Way corridor were more likely to be between the ages of 25 and 64. Other age groups were underrepresented.

■ MLK Jr. Way Collision Victim Age   ■ Project Area Population Age   ■ Oakland Population Age

Age group	MLK Jr. Way	Project Area	Oakland
Under 5 years	0%	4%	6%
5 to 14 years	3%	4%	11%
15 to 24 years	9%	9%	10%
25 to 44 years	50%	45%	36%
45 to 64 years	29%	22%	24%
65 years and over	8%	17%	14%

Collision data source: Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS), *Safe Transportation Research and Education Center, University of California, Berkeley*. Analysis used 5 years of data (2016 – 2020). Crashes include all modes. **Population data source:** *American Community Survey (ACS)* 2020 5-Year Estimates.
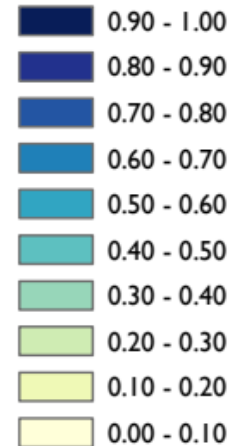
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3. EQUITY INDICATORS: *Air quality*

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.

MLK Jr. Way Streetscape Improvements

Air Quality (Topic)
Score Range

- 0.90 - 1.00
- 0.80 - 0.90
- 0.70 - 0.80
- 0.60 - 0.70
- 0.50 - 0.60
- 0.40 - 0.50
- 0.30 - 0.40
- 0.20 - 0.30
- 0.10 - 0.20
- 0.00 - 0.10
- Potential Environmental Justice Community
- West Oakland AB617 Community Boundary

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The MLK Jr. Way project corridor is in an area with the highest number of deaths attributable to nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) in Oakland.
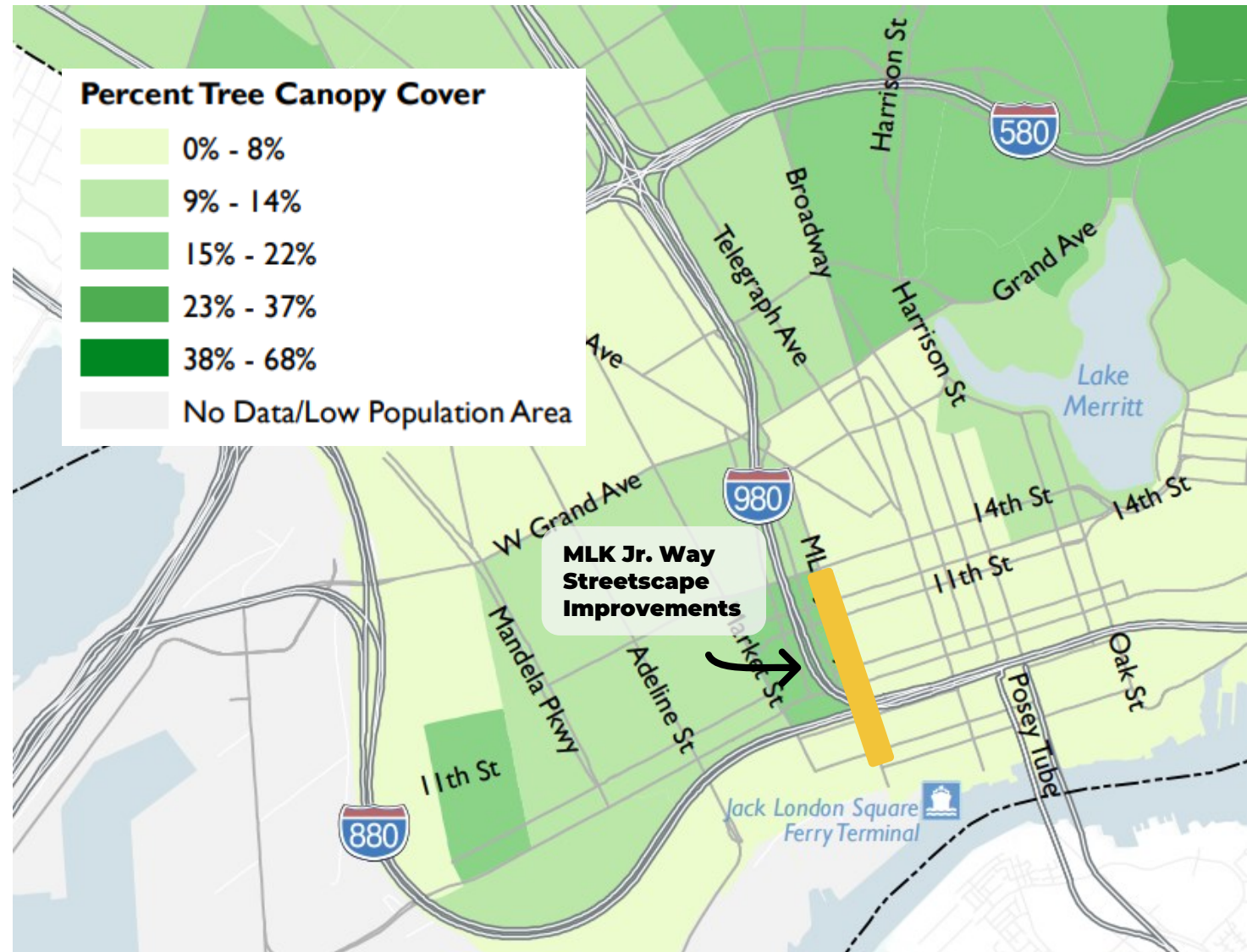
Nitrogen dioxide is a traffic-related emission, and results from burning fuel. This data indicates that residents in this area likely face negative health outcomes from traffic-related emissions.

Percent of Annual Deaths

- 9.1% - 10.3%
- 7.7% - 9.0%
- 6.3% - 7.6%
- 5.0% - 6.2%
- 3.5% - 4.9%
- No Data

MLK Jr. Way Streetscape Improvements

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

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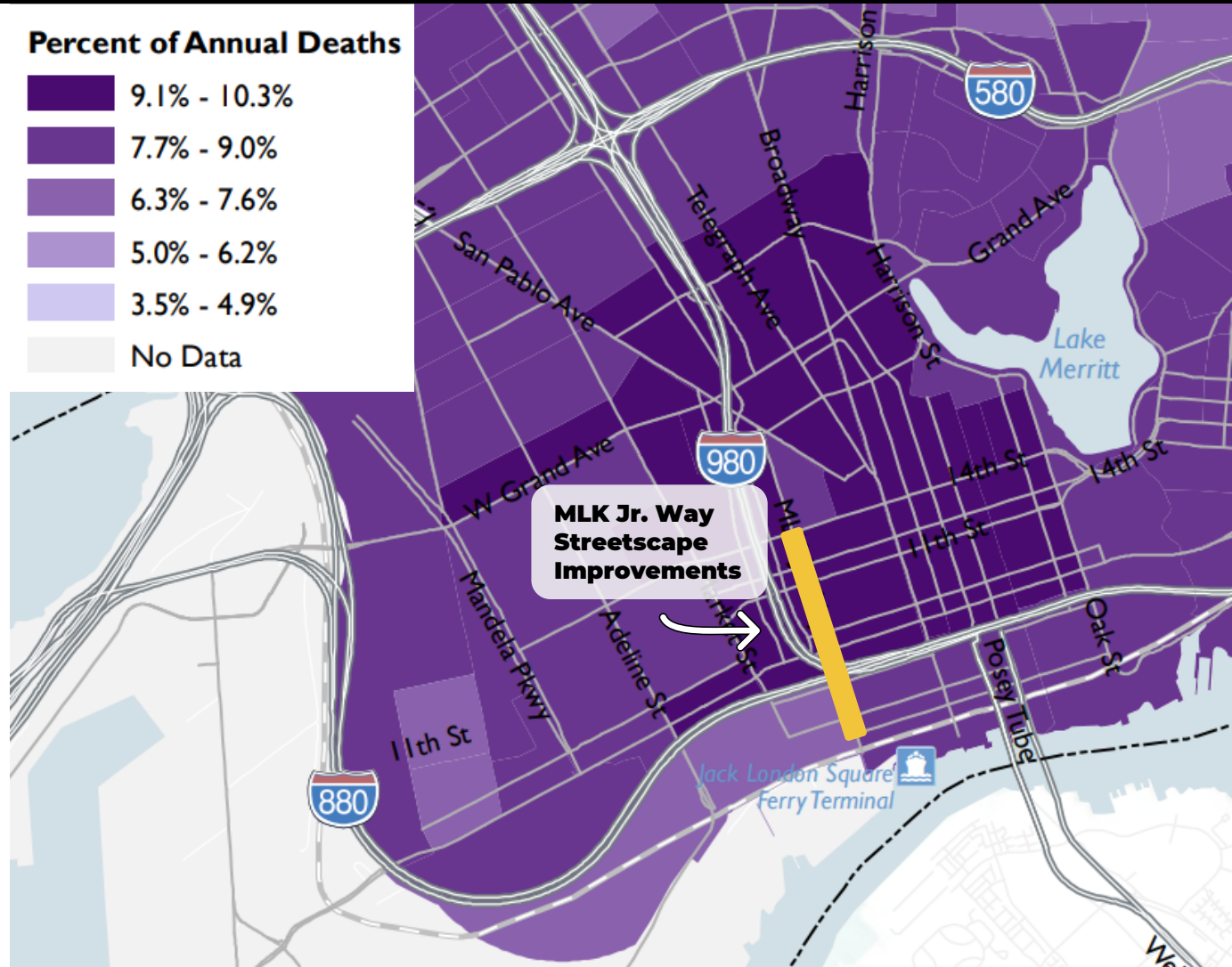
The MLK Jr. Way project corridor borders an area with less urban trees than most of Oakland.

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.

Percent Tree Canopy Cover

- 0% - 8%
- 9% - 14%
- 15% - 22%
- 23% - 37%
- 38% - 68%
- No Data/Low Population Area

MLK Jr. Way Streetscape Improvements

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

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The MLK Jr. Way project corridor borders areas where many residents do not have internet access at home. In one census tract that borders MLK Jr. Way, approximately 24-36% of households do not have internet access.
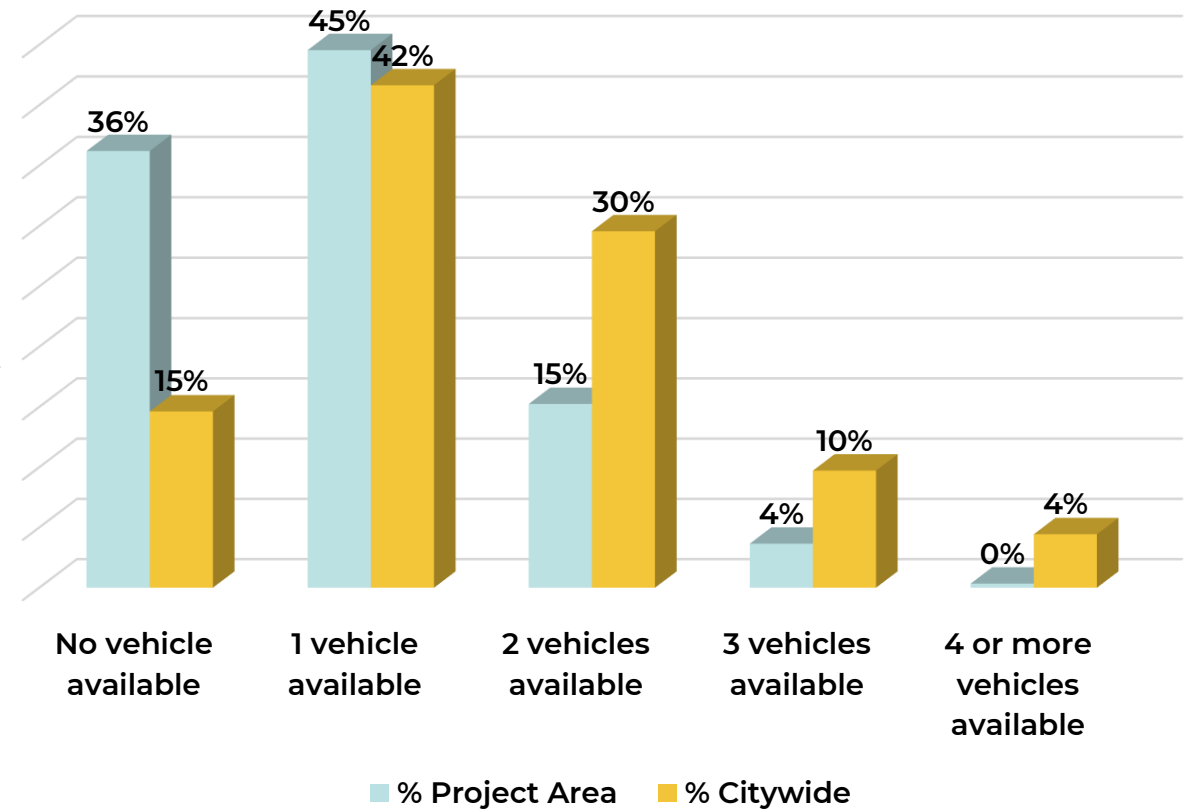
The impacts of digital isolation, especially for older adults, people with disabilities, and communities of color, include less access to resources and decreased ability to participate in civic, political, and non-political activities, which compounds other barriers to civic engagement and increases impacts of racial disparities in access to resources and opportunities.

Percent Households w/No Internet

- 24.4% - 36.3%
- 16.8% - 24.3%
- 9.7% - 16.7%
- 4.5% - 9.6%
- 0% - 4.4%
- No Data/Low Population Area

MLK Jr. Way Streetscape Improvements

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

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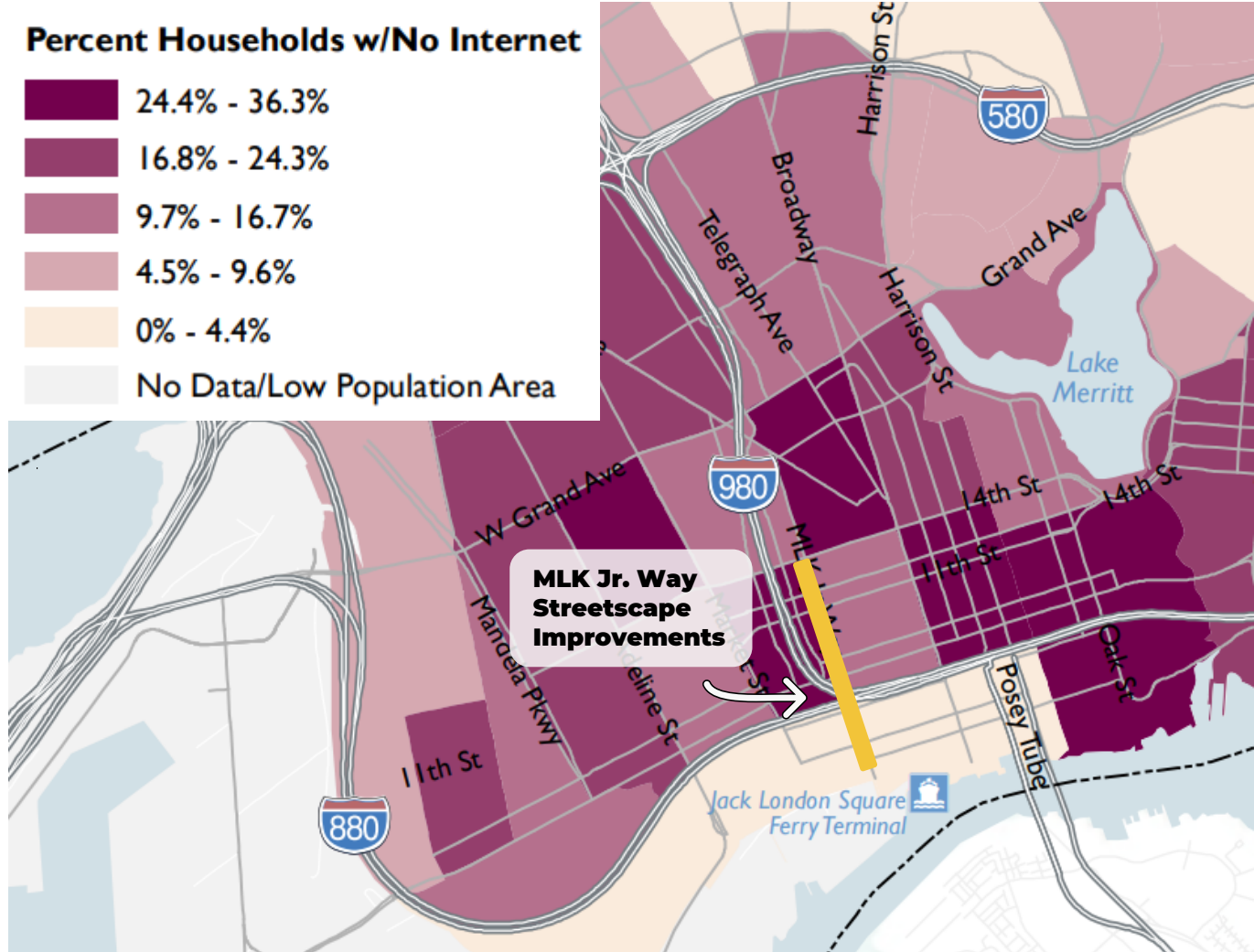
3. EQUITY INDICATORS: *Household vehicle availability*

Households living near the MLK Jr. Way project corridor have less access to vehicles than Oakland as a whole. About 36% of the project area households do not have access to a vehicle at home, compared to 15% of households citywide.
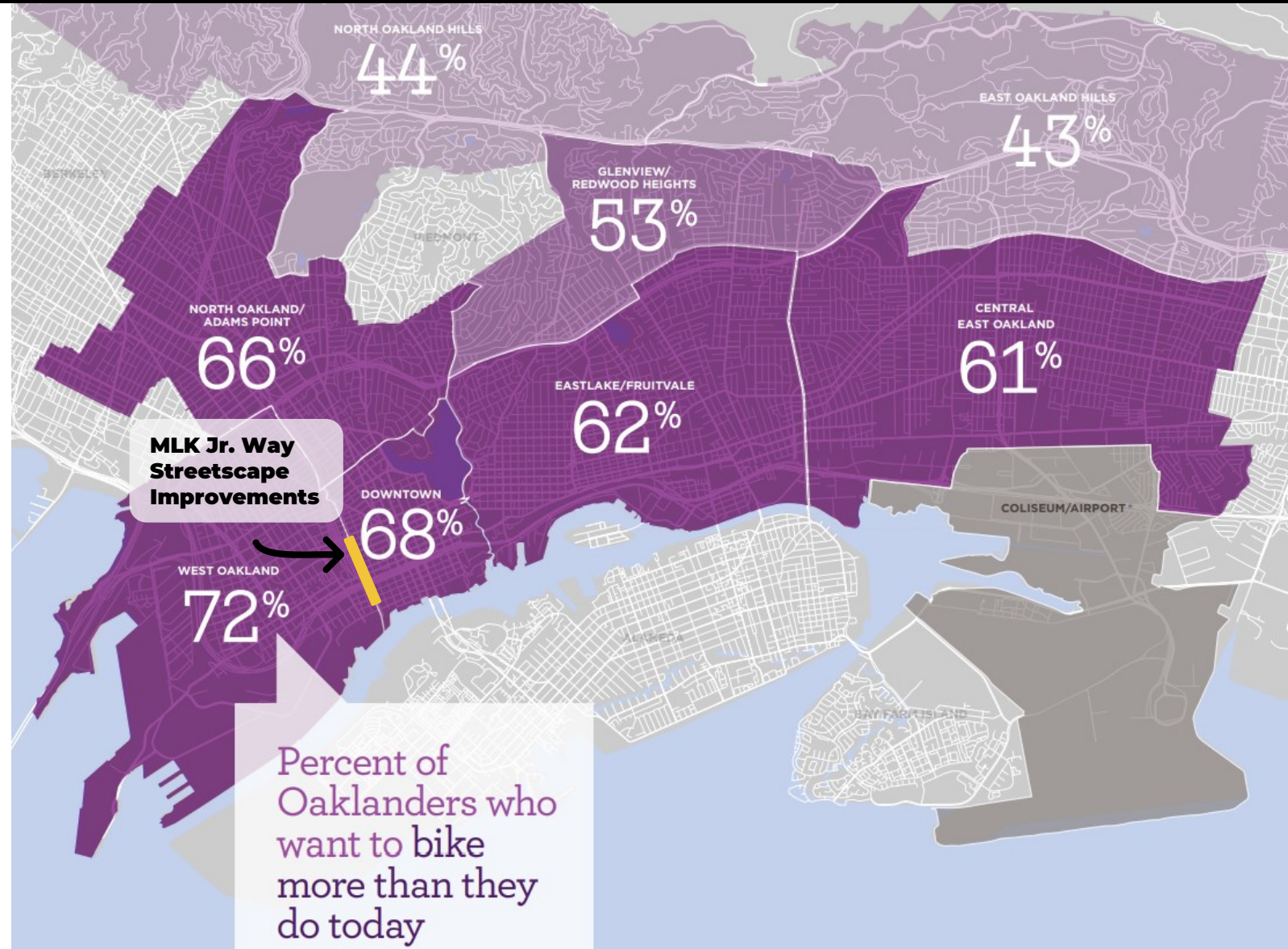
Cars remain an important mode of transportation for traveling to work, school, appointments, social gatherings, and getting groceries or other shopping. Car access is particularly beneficial in areas of the city where public transit is either inconsistent or unavailable and where streets are unsafe or inaccessible for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Chart data:

	No vehicle available	1 vehicle available	2 vehicles available	3 vehicles available	4 or more vehicles available
% Project Area	36%	45%	15%	4%	0%
% Citywide	15%	42%	30%	10%	4%

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3. EQUITY INDICATORS: *Barriers to bicycling*

Survey results from the "Let's Bike Oakland" 2019 Bike Plan showed that 72% and 68% of West Oakland and Downtown residents, respectively, want to bike more than they do today.

For people of color in these neighborhoods, 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.
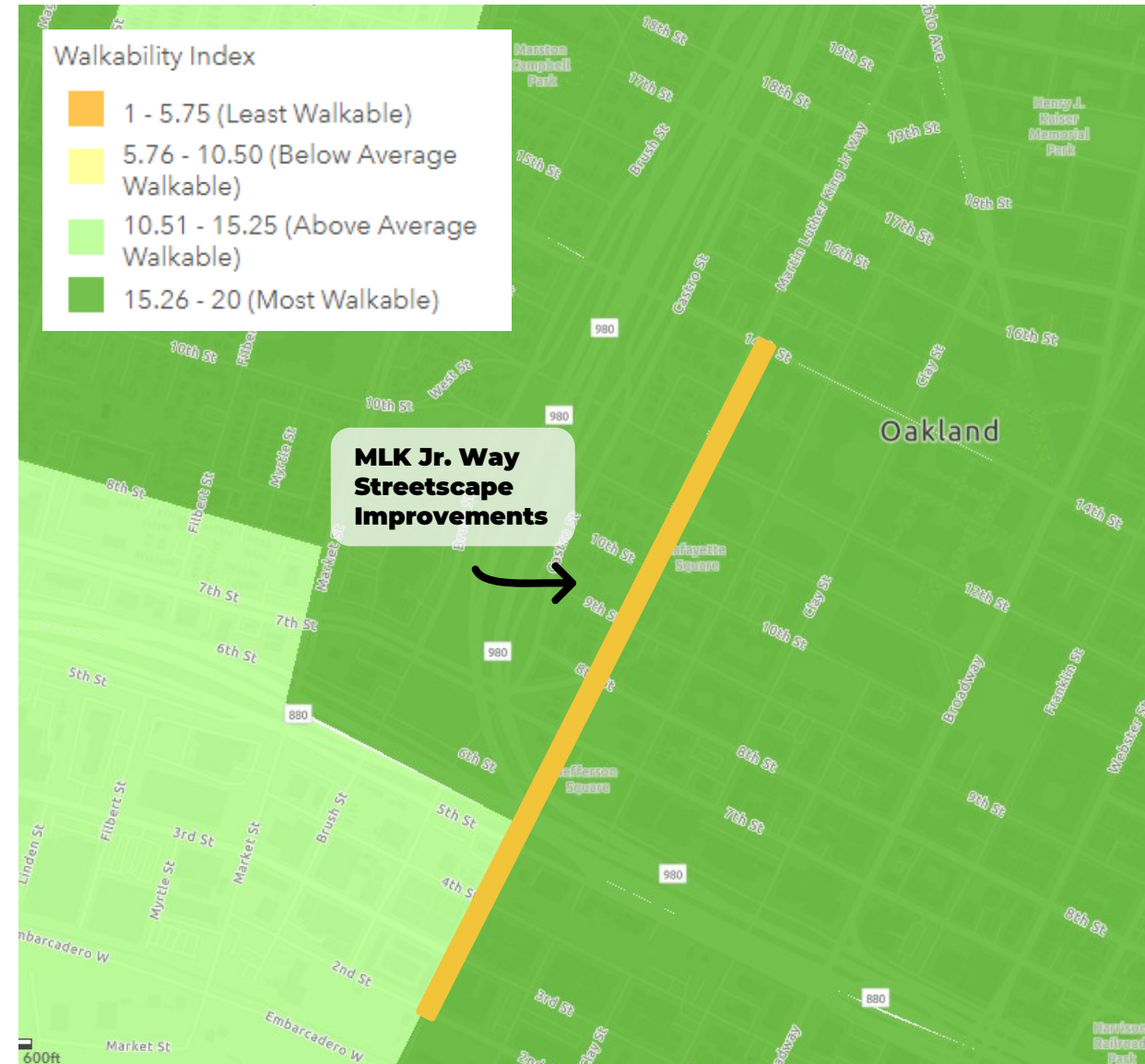
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NORTH OAKLAND HILLS
44%

EAST OAKLAND HILLS
43%

GLENVIEW/ REDWOOD HEIGHTS
53%

NORTH OAKLAND/ ADAMS POINT
66%

CENTRAL EAST OAKLAND
61%

EASTLAKE/FRUITVALE
62%

MLK Jr. Way Streetscape Improvements

DOWNTOWN
68%

COLISEUM/AIRPORT

WEST OAKLAND
72%

Percent of Oaklanders who want to bike more than they do today

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

MLK Jr. Way and the surrounding area are very walkable, based on the National Walkability Index data from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The National Walkability Index is calculated based on intersection density (the number of intersections in a given area), proximity to transit stops, and diversity of land uses. This walkability index does not factor in the actual conditions along MLK Jr. Way.

While MLK Jr. Way, is ranked high for walkability, the reality of the street and sidewalk—such as the lack of crosswalk markings, high vehicle speeds, and lack of lighting or shade—make it unattractive to walk or roll on.

Walkability Index
- 1 - 5.75 (Least Walkable)
- 5.76 - 10.50 (Below Average Walkable)
- 10.51 - 15.25 (Above Average Walkable)
- 15.26 - 20 (Most Walkable)

MLK Jr. Way Streetscape Improvements

Data source: *EPA, National Walkability Index Interactive Map, 2021*

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4. ADDRESSING DISPARITIES

Existing Disparities

Traffic collisions disproportionately impact Black Oaklanders on this corridor

30% of project area residents do not have access to a personal vehicle

People of color in the project area would like to bike more but face barriers to biking

In an area with a higher proportion of residents who are Black and very low income, there is worse air quality and associated health outcomes and fewer trees

A higher proportion of residents here do not have internet access at home

How the project addresses disparities

This project is expected to improve the safety of all road users

This project will create a complete street, so all road users can travel along the corridor safely and connect to other safe bicycle, pedestrian, and transit networks

This project will create a safe, comfortable, well-lit bicycle path that will mitigate barriers to biking

This project is planting new trees to help improve air quality through filtration and cooler temperatures

This project is expected to reduce driving, thereby reducing emissions and improving air quality.

This project will install fiber optic cable that will enable the implementation of free WiFi along the corridor

5. EQUITY GAPS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Gap #1:** The project may improve safety and reduce collisions overall, but this does not necessarily mean that the race and ethnicity of collision victims will be proportional to the race and ethnicity of Oaklanders. The disparity could only be addressed through the current scope of the project if zero collisions occur after the project is constructed.

- **Recommendation #1:** Identify the root cause of the disparity and/or expand scope to further address safety.

- **Gap #2:** The project corridor has poor air quality and encouraging walking and rolling on the corridor by making it bike- and 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.

- **Recommendation #2:** Maximize the number of trees and landscaping along this corridor to reduce exposure to pollution. Distance between the cycle track and vehicle traffic, along with the presence of a vegetative buffer, contributes to lower pollution exposure to bicyclists and pedestrians.[1]

[1]MacNaughton, Piers et al. "Impact of bicycle route type on exposure to traffic-related air pollution." The Science of the total environment vol. 490 (2014): 37-43. doi:10.1016/j.scitotenv.2014.04.111

5. EQUITY GAPS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Gap #3:** The current scope of the project includes implementing free OakWiFi from 2nd Street to 7th Street, however, most residents without internet live between 6th Street and 14th Street. Furthermore, OakWiFi has not had a performance evaluation. It is unknown how often it works or how often people can connect to it within buildings.

- **Recommendation #3:** Work with Oakland's Information Technology Department (ITD) to evaluate OakWiFi. Depending on the outcome of the evaluation, expand OakWiFi in areas where residents do not have internet access at home.

6. NEXT STEPS

- ✓ **Inform project stakeholders that this REIA has been drafted**

- ✓ **Update REIA based on stakeholder feedback**

- ✓ **Develop a project evaluation plan that incorporates equity indicators and conduct the evaluation**

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