

# HEMET COMPREHENSIVE SAFETY ACTION PLAN

FINAL Equity Assessment Report

DECEMBER 2025

Prepared For



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## 1.0 Introduction

Equity Considerations are one of the eight necessary components of a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP). This Equity Assessment report delves into the extent of social disparities in the City of Hemet, unveiling the impacts of prior planning and governmental actions that have negatively affected disadvantaged communities across various domains, including environmental and socioeconomic factors. This insight facilitates a proactive reevaluation of priorities to address the needs of these communities. By shedding light on these circumstances, the CSAP development process ensures that outreach and collaboration efforts are inclusively tailored, particularly towards historically marginalized and underrepresented groups. Additionally, the equity analysis informs the creation of an equitable, data-driven CSAP by prioritizing recommendations for the underserved areas of the city.

This assessment provides an overview of the City's demographics, highlighting characteristics of social vulnerability such as age, race and ethnicity, and household income. It also examines the geographic results of several social equity composite measures developed by state and federal agencies, which are used for the purpose of assessing need and administering resources.

Following the introduction, the report includes the following sections:

- **Section 2.0: Demographics:** Summarizing the Hemet population demographics and their implications.
- **Section 3.0: Measures of Equity:** Identifying and analyzing equity focus areas within Hemet using tools developed by U.S. Department of Transportation and Caltrans.
- **Section 4.0: Next Steps:** Overview of how the equity assessment relates to the forthcoming activities and components of the CSAP.

## 2.0 Demographics

This section provides an overview of select demographics, highlighting characteristics of social vulnerability such as age, race and ethnicity, annual median household income, and average vehicles per household. Comparisons of Hemet’s demographics are made to the Riverside County region to determine proportionality.

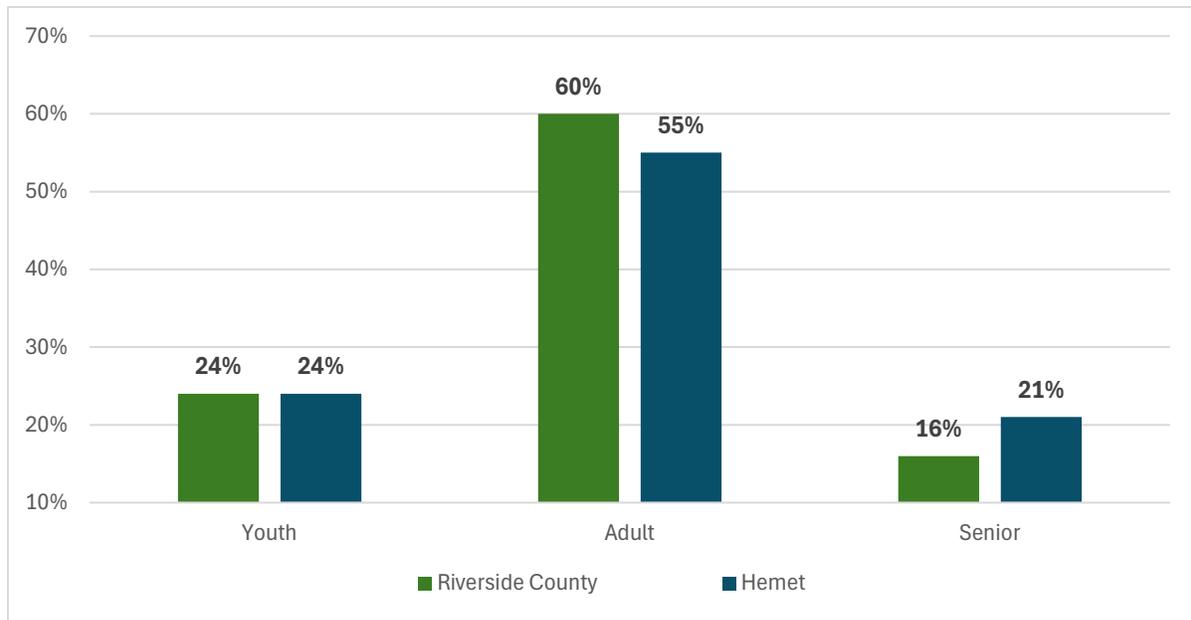
According to the most recent 2023 American Community Survey (5-Year Estimate), the City of Hemet has a population of 90,646 people living in 32,102 households, producing an occupancy rate of 2.7 people per household.

### 2.1 Age

Youth and senior populations have more limited mobility options than the general adult population, making them more reliant on alternative transportation modes and infrastructure. Unlike adults, these age groups may also be more vulnerable or susceptible to injuries due to their physical and physiological attributes, which are either less developed (youth) or declining (seniors).

**Figure 2.1** summarizes the percentage of youth (17 years and younger) and senior (65 years and older) populations for the City of Hemet and Riverside County. As shown, the age breakdown of Hemet residents and Riverside County residents is roughly comparable. Hemet and Riverside County have approximately the same percentages of youths; however, Hemet has approximately 5% fewer adults and 5% more seniors compared to Riverside County.

**Figure 2.1 - Age**



Source: 2023 American Community Survey (5-Year Estimate)

### 2.2 Race & Ethnicity

The U.S. Census Bureau asks about race and ethnicity to collect information about populations, specifically those who tend to be underserved. This data is used to ensure fairness in the distribution of aid, enforce compliance with antidiscrimination laws, develop new programs and funding to

address the needs of various groups, and address race and ethnicity issues in obtaining access to healthcare and assistance.

As shown in **Table 2.1**, Black, Indigenous or other Persons of Color (BIPOC) populations comprise well over half of Hemet’s total population (73.5%), a share higher than Riverside County, and significantly higher than in typical affluent communities. In Hemet, over half of the city’s population are Hispanic or Latino (of any race). As a result, outreach materials will be translated accordingly and there will be Spanish-fluent facilitators at in-person workshops and pop-up events.

**Table 2.1 - Percentage Share of Hemet and Riverside County’s Population that is BIPOC**

Race	Hemet		Riverside County	
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	49,662	53.8%	1,293,189	51.9%
White or European-American *	24,465	26.5%	751,725	30.2%
Black or African-American *	6,351	6.9%	145,857	5.9%
Asian *	5,949	6.4%	173,841	7.0%
Two or more Races *	4,176	4.5%	86,156	3.5%
Some other Race	1,249	1.4%	27,494	1.1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander *	431	0.5%	7,795	0.3%
American Indian and Alaska Native *	102	0.1%	6,385	0.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>92,385</b>		<b>2,492,442</b>	
<b>BIPOC Total</b>	<b>67,920</b>	<b>73.5%</b>	<b>1,740,717</b>	<b>69.8%</b>

*\*Excludes Hispanics/Latinos of that race, who are instead categorized in Hispanic or Latino (of any race)  
Source: 2023 American Community Survey (5-Year Estimate)*

## 2.3 Income and Poverty

Income data is closely connected to workforce participation, educational achievement, and health, and can be used to determine eligibility for various grant programs and initiatives. The percentage below poverty is an income metric that compares estimated incomes against a federal poverty threshold that changes every year. According to the Annual Update of the HHS Poverty Guidelines for 2023, this poverty threshold for a household of one person is \$15,480; each additional person adds \$4,200. Unlike median household income, the poverty measure incorporates household income and household size in its calculation. Further, while median household income can disguise poverty status in a geographic unit when there are enough high-income households to offset the low-income households, this is not the case with the poverty calculation.

Approximately 16% of City of Hemet residents are below the poverty threshold as per the 2023 American Community Survey (5-Year Estimate), while approximately 11% of County of Riverside residents are below the threshold. This indicates that the residents of the City of Hemet are significantly more economically challenged as compared to Riverside County. This is further corroborated when the median annual household incomes between the City of Hemet and the County of Riverside are compared. According to the 2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, the 2023 inflation-adjusted median annual household income is \$53,623 in the City of Hemet, and \$89,672 for Riverside County.

## 2.4 Household Vehicle Ownership

Vehicle ownership per household can be influenced by household size, wealth, the financial burden of transportation, and one’s accessibility to destinations by other modes. Fewer vehicles available to a household can signify more reliance on other modes of transportation, such as walking and bicycling. The Safety Analysis (under a separate cover) provides strong evidence that these modes are more susceptible to fatality and severe injury when collisions occur.

As shown in **Table 2.2**, Hemet has a considerably higher percentage of Zero Vehicle Availability (8.8% vs. 4.8%), which is indicative of the City’s poverty and median household income values. Hemet also has a lower average vehicles per household (1.9) as compared to Riverside County (2.2).

**Table 2.2** - Household Vehicle Ownership

Vehicle Ownership	Hemet	Riverside County
Zero Vehicle Ownership Households	2,835	37,996
Zero Vehicle Availability	8.8%	4.8%
Households	32,102	791,757
Average Vehicles per Household	1.9	2.2

*Source: 2023 American Community Survey (5-Year Estimate)*

## 2.5 School Free or Reduced-Price Meal

The Free or Reduced-Price Meals (FRPM) is a State program which provides students from financially burdened households meals during school. Eligibility for this benefit is typically based on household income but can also be determined by categorical eligibility factors like foster status, migrant status, or homeless status. In some cases, students may be directly certified for free meals based on their participation in certain government programs, like California's food stamp program. FRPM data is important for schools and educational agencies as it helps them understand the socioeconomic needs of their student population and allocate resources appropriately. The California Department of Education, for example, provides data files and reports related to FRPM eligibility.

In 2024, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) published guidelines<sup>1</sup> and methodologies to use when applying for grant funding for active transportation projects via the 2025 Active Transportation Program (ATP). These guidelines define a threshold of 75% of student eligibility for Free or Reduced-Price Meals for a school to be considered as disadvantaged. Sixteen schools have been identified within the City of Hemet’s boundary and 14 of which are considered disadvantaged, as shown in **Table 2.3**. The two schools with less than 75% of student eligibility for Free or Reduced-Price Meals are Western Center Academy and Springs Charter School.

**Table 2.3** - FRPM Eligibility Status in Hemet

Student Body FRPM Status	Number of Schools
75% or more students eligible	14
Fewer than 75% of students eligible	2

*Source: California Department of Education*

<sup>1</sup> California Transportation Commission (CTC) Active Transportation Program (ATP) Guidelines: <https://catc.ca.gov/-/media/catc-media/documents/programs/atp/2025-active-transportation-program-guidelines-final-adopted-a11y.pdf>

## 3.0 Measures of Equity

This section outlines four equity composite measures developed and used by various government agencies to identify areas of equity need for allocation and prioritization of resources. They include the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST), Cal Enviro Screen (CES), Healthy Places Index (HPI), and the Caltrans Transportation Equity Index (EQI). These measures were applied to the City of Hemet to develop a comprehensive equity focus areas. Together, these tools cover the various equity considerations that will be utilized for the identification of equity focus areas in Hemet.

The critical connection between equity and safety is recognizing that equitable treatment and fair access to resources are crucial for creating safe environments and achieving positive outcomes for all. This includes addressing disparities in access to safe housing, healthcare, transportation, and other essential services. In other words, true safety isn't just about physical safety, but also about ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to thrive and live a safe life.

### 3.1 Climate and Environmental Justice Screening Tool

The Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) is a nationwide measure that has been used by federal agencies since 2022 to identify disadvantaged communities that are experiencing significant climate-related, environmental justice, and/or economic justice burdens. These are socio-economically disadvantaged areas where environmental degradation, underdevelopment and/or other structural inequalities are likely to have contributed to a disproportionately poor quality of life by one or more categories of climate and environmental justice burdens. The measure is taken at the Census Tract geography. Only meeting one of eight possible environmental burden factors (along with a socio-economic burden) is necessary for identification by the CEJST. Each category of environmental burden is operationalized with more specific quantitative thresholds needed to trigger identification by the CEJST<sup>2</sup>. The eight possible categories of burden include:

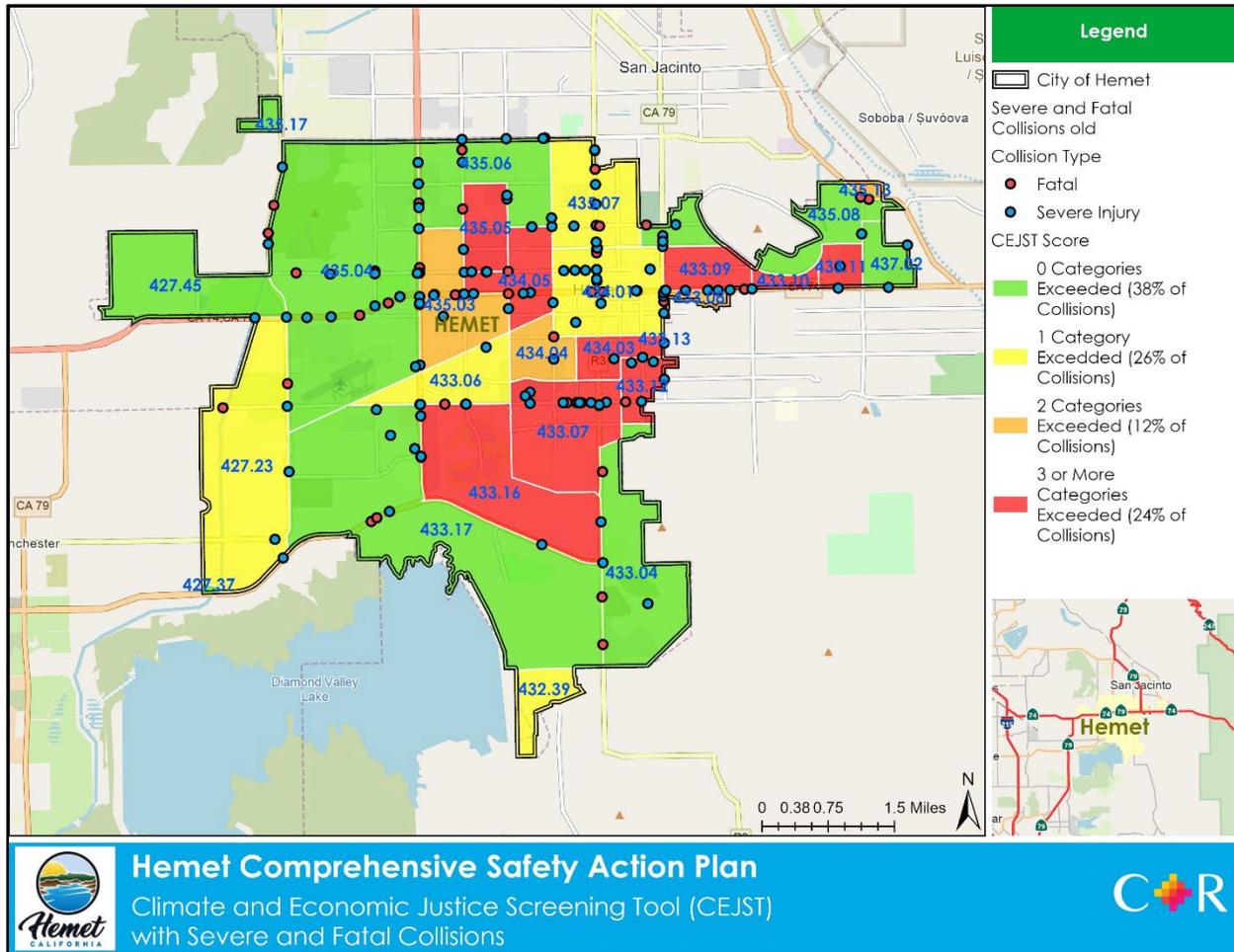
- Climate change burdens
- Energy cost/energy pollution
- Public health
- Housing quality
- Legacy pollution
- Transportation externalities
- Water and wastewater quality
- Workforce (under)development

The analysis for the City of Hemet, shown in **Figure 3.1**, depicts seven whole or partial Tracts with zero categories exceeded, which means these Tracts are not considered to be disadvantaged. The severe and fatal collisions have been added for the analysis, including the aggregated percentages of collision by CEJST score. Four Tracts have one category exceeded, three Tracts have two categories exceeded, and nine Tracts have 3 or more categories exceeded. As shown, most of the urbanized parts of Hemet exceed multiple categories of environmental burden, and the primary factors contributing to these scores include Workforce, Climate, Housing, and Public Health. Fatal and severe injury collisions are also displayed in the figure to highlight their spatial relationship with areas experiencing higher cumulative environmental burdens.

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<sup>2</sup> Climate and Environmental Justice Screening Tool Technical Support Document (2024) <https://static-data-screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/data-versions/2.0/data/score/downloadable/cejst-technical-support-document.pdf>

**Figure 3.1 - Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool Burdened Categories Exceeded**



Source: CR Associates; Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool

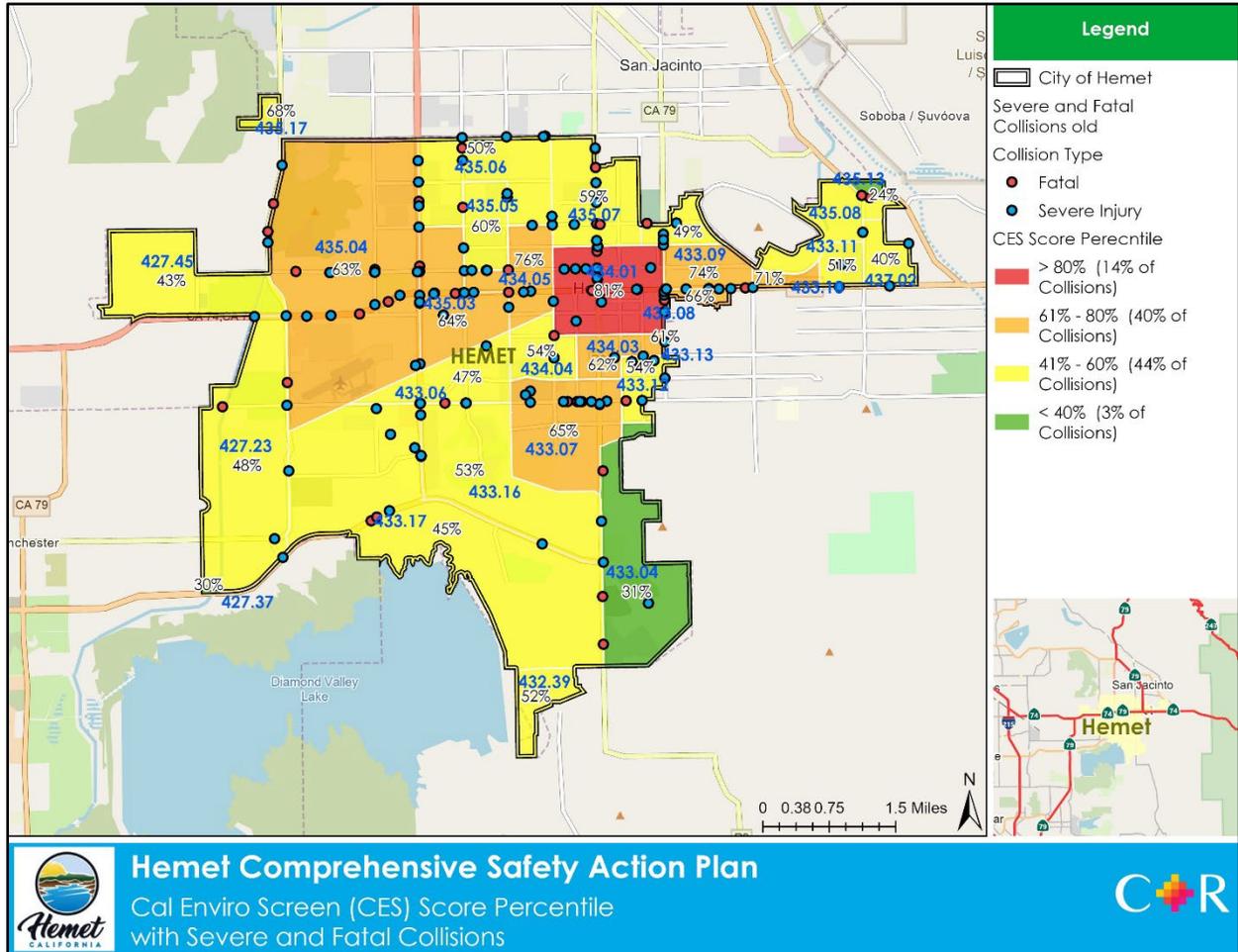
### 3.2 Cal Enviro Screen 4.0 (CES) Tool

Cal Enviro Screen 4.0 is the latest iteration of the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool. The original and subsequent versions were developed by the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, or OEHHA, an office within the California Environmental Protection Agency. Cal Enviro Screen scoring is based on multiple variables within two main categories: a Pollution Burden and a Population\Socio-economic Burden. Many communities continue to bear a disproportionate burden of pollution not only from multiple nearby sources, but also from pollution in multiple media (e.g., air or water). Some of these communities experience the additional burden of socioeconomic stressors and health conditions that render them more vulnerable to the impacts of pollution. Cal Enviro Screen is a science-based method for identifying impacted communities by taking into consideration pollution exposure and its effects, as well as health and socioeconomic status, at the census-tract level. The tool utilizes these environmental factors to produce a composite Score Percentile where the *higher* the percentile value, the higher the environmental burden experienced by the residents.

As shown in **Figure 3.2**, the majority of the Census Tracts within the City of Hemet falls within the middle ranges (41% - 80%). There is one Census Tract that has a score below 40%, however the bulk of that Census Tract is located beyond Hemet’s border. There is one Census Tract with a score

higher than 80% that lies in the heart of Hemet (Tract 434.01). This Tract represents the area around where State Routes 74 and 79 converge in the city’s commercial district, and the high Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volumes on the State Routes within this Tract are a major contributor to the poor composite score. Severe-injury and fatal collisions were incorporated into the analysis, including aggregated percentages of collisions by CalEnviroScreen score percentile, to help illustrate the relationship between environmental burden and collision patterns.

**Figure 3.2 - Cal Enviro Screen Score Percentile**



### 3.3 Healthy Places Index (HPI)

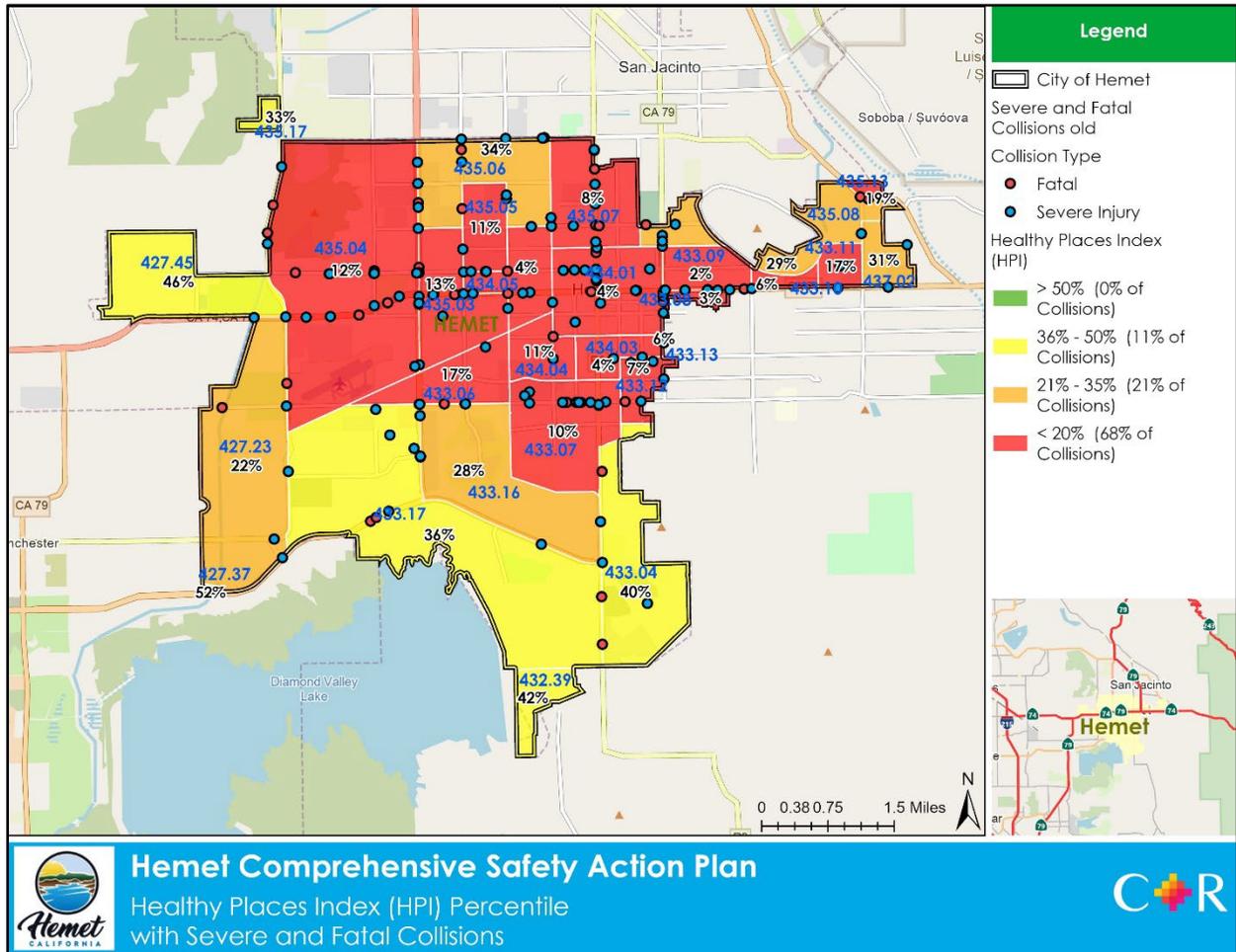
The Healthy Places Index (HPI) is a powerful and easy-to-use data and policy platform created to advance health equity through open and accessible data; the main goal of the HPI is to advance health equity through open data. The tool provides community leaders, policymakers, academics and other stakeholders with the data they need to identify inequity, prioritize equitable investment and strengthen community voices for sound policy decisions.

The tool relies on several indicators, including Economic variables, Education status, Social aspects, Transportation accessibilities, Neighborhood characteristics, Housing availability, Environmental factors, and access to Healthcare. The tool also features a Decision Support function to help evaluate other environmental factors such as Extreme Heat, Impervious Surfaces, Outdoor Worker

status, Public Transit access, Retail access, Parental status, and the potential effects of Sea Level Rise. The tool utilizes all these factors to produce a composite Score Percentile where the *lower* the percentile value, the higher the environmental burden experienced by the residents.

**Figure 3.3** presents the results of the Healthy Places Index (HPI) analysis for the City of Hemet. More than two-thirds of the Census Tracts within the city have percentile scores below 20%, indicating unhealthy conditions. The remaining Tracts fall within the 21% to 50% range, and none within the city boundaries exceed the 50th percentile, meaning no Tracts are considered healthy based on the HPI measure. Severe and fatal collisions were incorporated into the analysis, along with aggregated percentages of collisions by HPI percentile, to highlight the relationship between health-related disparities and traffic safety outcomes.

**Figure 3.3 - Healthy Places Index (HPI) Score Percentile**



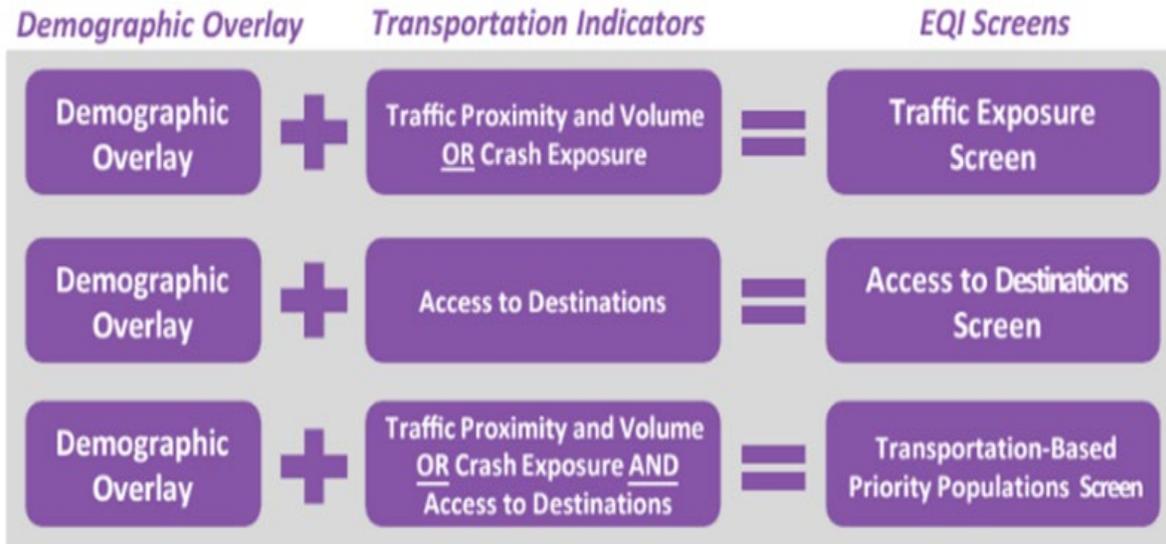
Source: CR Associates; the Public Health Alliance of Southern California

### 3.4 Caltrans Transportation Equity Index

The Transportation Equity Index (EQI) is a census block level equity composite measure used by Caltrans to assess transportation equity needs. The tool identifies areas where disadvantaged populations experience the highest burden from negative characteristics of transportation. Indicators measured in the EQI include proximity and exposure to heavy traffic volumes, proximity to locations with high injury collision histories, and accessibility to trip destinations. The inequities captured in

EQI identify places at a higher risk and exposure to being injured in a traffic collision. Unlike the previous metrics described, the EQI's units of geography are applied to Census Blocks, which are smaller in area than Census Tracts.

The EQI's methodology<sup>3</sup> identifies census blocks that are encompassed by a “demographic overlay” (either California AB 1550-defined low income areas<sup>4</sup> or Tribal land areas) and which meet the criteria of three possible screening categories: Traffic Exposure (based on heavy traffic volumes or the high injury collision history criteria), Access to Destinations (based on low accessibility by walking, bicycling, and transit to work and non-work destinations), and Transportation-Based Priority Populations (triggered when conditions are met for the two other screening identifiers).



Possible screening criteria for Caltrans EQI. Source: Caltrans

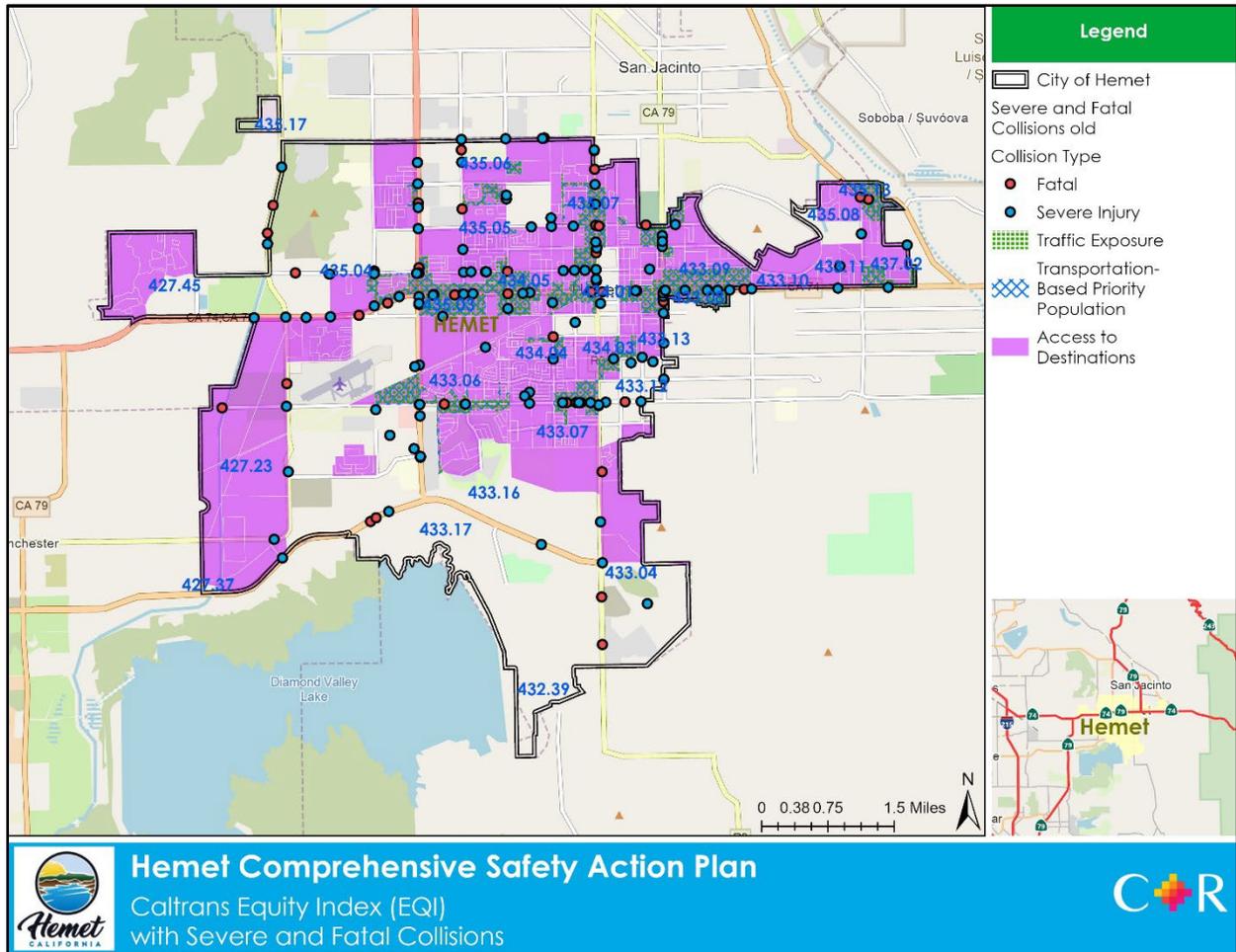
Together, these dimensions capture locations with populations that have high transportation cost burden (and thus higher reliance on transportation modes vulnerable to injury), where hostile and unsafe traffic conditions occur, and where longer multimodal trips are necessary due to poor accessibility.

As shown in **Figure 3.4**, EQI-screened areas cover much of the City of Hemet, and in particular the northeast quadrant of the city. The Traffic Exposure and Transportation-Based Priority Populations criteria produced the same set of Census Block Groups; therefore, the Transportation-Based Priority Populations criterion represents both metrics in this analysis. Severe and fatal collisions were also incorporated, revealing that 73% of these collisions occurred within EQI-designated disadvantaged areas, while 27% occurred outside of them.

<sup>3</sup> Caltrans Transportation Equity Index (EQI) Version 1 Documentation (2024) <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/esta/documents/race-equity/eqi/v1/030124eqidocumentationv10a11y.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> California Assembly Bill (AB) 1550 (2016): [http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/15-16/bill/asm/ab\\_1501-1550/ab\\_1550\\_bill\\_20160802\\_amended\\_sen\\_v95.html](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/15-16/bill/asm/ab_1501-1550/ab_1550_bill_20160802_amended_sen_v95.html)

**Figure 3.4 - Caltrans Equality Index (EQI)**

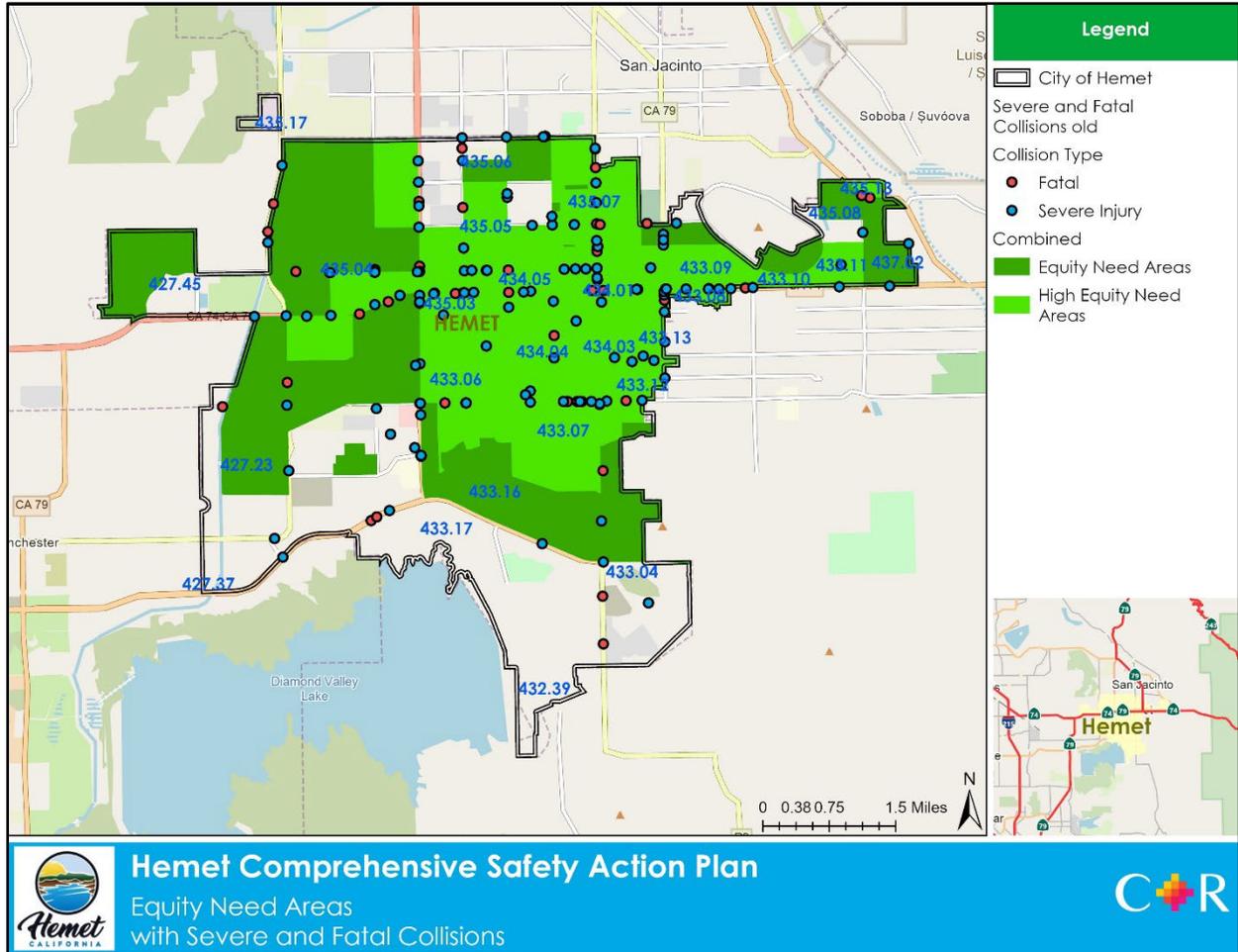


Source: CR Associates; Caltrans Transportation Equity Index

### 3.5 Hemet Equity Need Areas

The City of Hemet includes sixteen Census Tracts classified as disadvantaged by the CEJST tool, one Tract identified by the CES tool, seventeen Tracts by the HPI tool, and 795 Census Block Groups identified by EQI. Those disadvantaged geographic areas from the preceding four measures were overlaid to form an Equity Need Area composite, which is displayed in **Figure 3.5**. “High Equity Need Areas” shown are parts of the City where two or more of the disadvantaged areas from the four measures overlapped. One-hundred fifty-nine (159) of severe and fatal 171 collisions between 2020 and 2024 (about 93%) occurred within or along the boundary of an equity need area.

Figure 3.5 - Equity Need Areas



Source: CR Associates

## 4.0 Next Steps

Equity considerations are fundamental to the SS4A and ATP Grant Programs and will be integrated into every relevant phase of the development of the CSAP, including stakeholder engagement, public workshops, policy formulation, project selection, and project execution, as well as ongoing monitoring.

The findings of this equity assessment will be shared with the Task Force specifically chosen to participate in this CSAP, as well as during the initial set of public workshops. As part of the development of the CSAP, community members and Task Force participants will be invited to identify safety issues, share ideas, suggest solutions, provide input and feedback on improvement recommendations stemming from data-driven analysis and inclusive outreach efforts, as well as the prioritize the projects.

After the Action Plan is adopted, City staff will continue to engage with disadvantaged communities regarding the identified prioritized project list throughout the implementation phase, ensuring opportunities for input whenever possible.