

Cooling our Communities

Program Summary:

With the average number of extreme heat days annually in Alameda County expected to triple by 2050, the Planning Department, Public Health Department, and General Services Agency Office of Sustainability initiated Cooling our Communities, a heat preparedness climate change adaptation program in the unincorporated Eden Area. The program has two primary objectives:

1. Inform residents in Ashland, Cherryland, Hayward Acres, and San Lorenzo of the health impacts associated with rising temperatures, and connect them to cooling strategies and community capacity building efforts.
2. Reduce heat impacts by facilitating the planting of 300 shade trees to increase canopy cover on properties within the communities of in Ashland, Cherryland, Hayward Acres, and San Lorenzo.

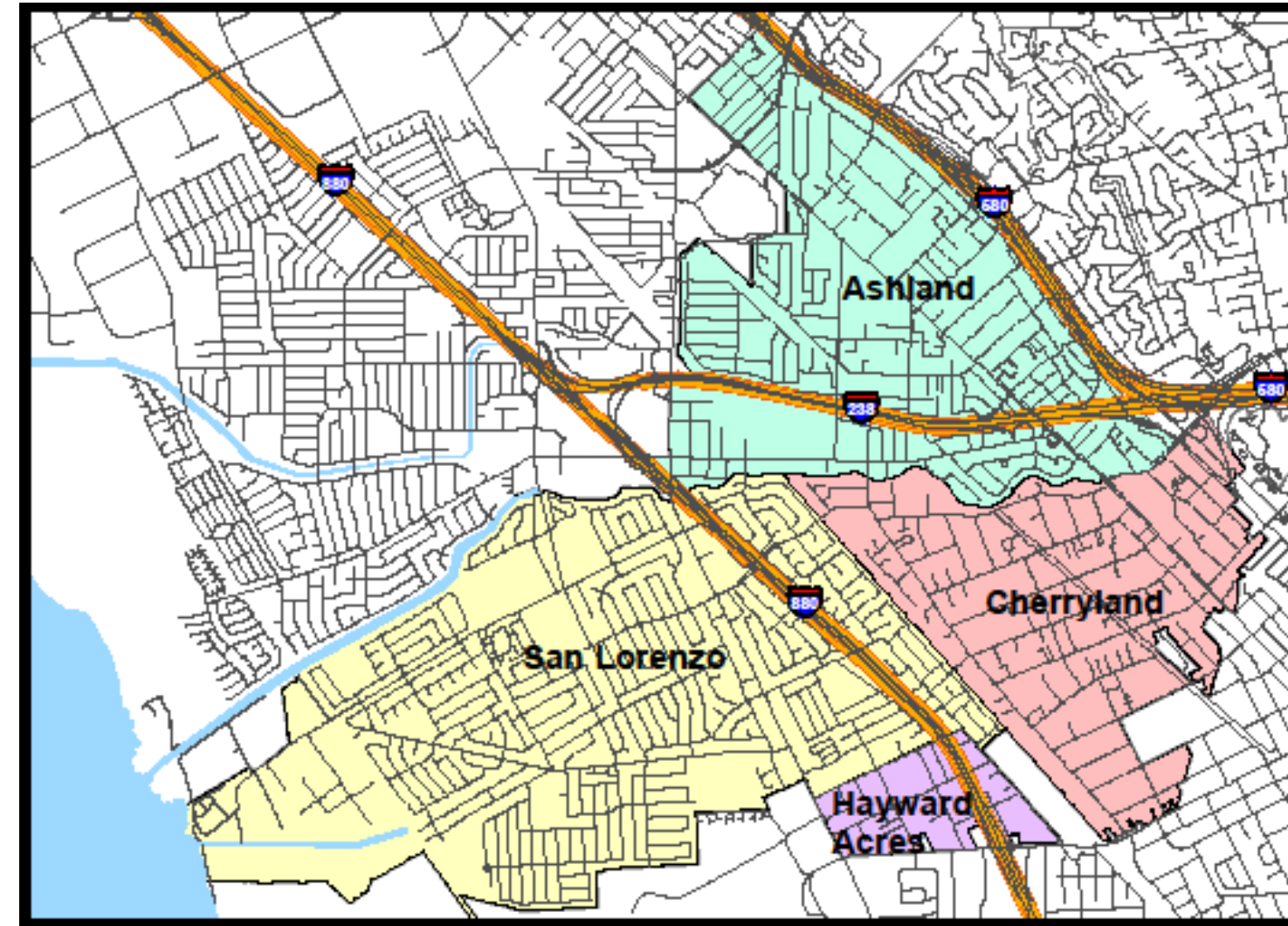


Fig. 1: Map of the Eden Area of Alameda County



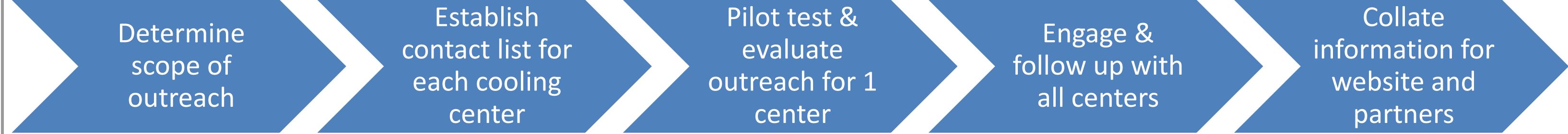
Fig 2: Heat & health flyer, translated into Spanish

Cooling Center focus:

Cooling centers are publicly accessible locations, such as churches, libraries, and community centers, that Eden Area residents can go to get out of life-threatening heat during a heat wave. Engaging with these cooling centers through focused outreach was key to ensure they understood their role in supporting the communities served as a resource hub in addition to promoting tree registrations.

Project Management & Milestones

Project Management Process:



Outreach Highlights:

- A majority of centers contacted understood their role in supporting vulnerable community members during heat waves
- San Lorenzo Library and Hayward Downtown Library emerged as enthusiastic centers that could act as champions and model best practices
- 1750 tree registration flyers and emergency preparedness pocket guides in 5 different languages were distributed as a result of outreach
- All contacted centers signed up for community partners' emergency alert subscription

Lessons Learned

Best Practices and Successful Strategies:

- Be mindful of internal hierarchy and organizational practices when contacting folks in the public sector
- Collating and sorting information throughout the outreach process can simplify extracting key takeaways and metrics for the project
- Practice patience when waiting for responses, and send follow-up correspondence promptly after engagement
- Actively demonstrate listening to the person on the other end of the conversation by reiterating major themes or ideas that come up and thoughtfully responding
- Thank or compensate, if possible, all participants and assure that feedback will be used

Kamya Sud, 2019-2020 Climate Corps Fellow

Prior to Climate Corps, Kamya worked in a variety of climate mitigation and sustainability roles. After being immersed in the world of adaptation and resilience during the fellowship, she is excited to continue down a climate-focused career path with this new lens in mind.

Acknowledgements

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