**Participatory Budgeting & Racial Equity**
Equip Your Community for Racial Equity: Reorienting City Systems for Community Change
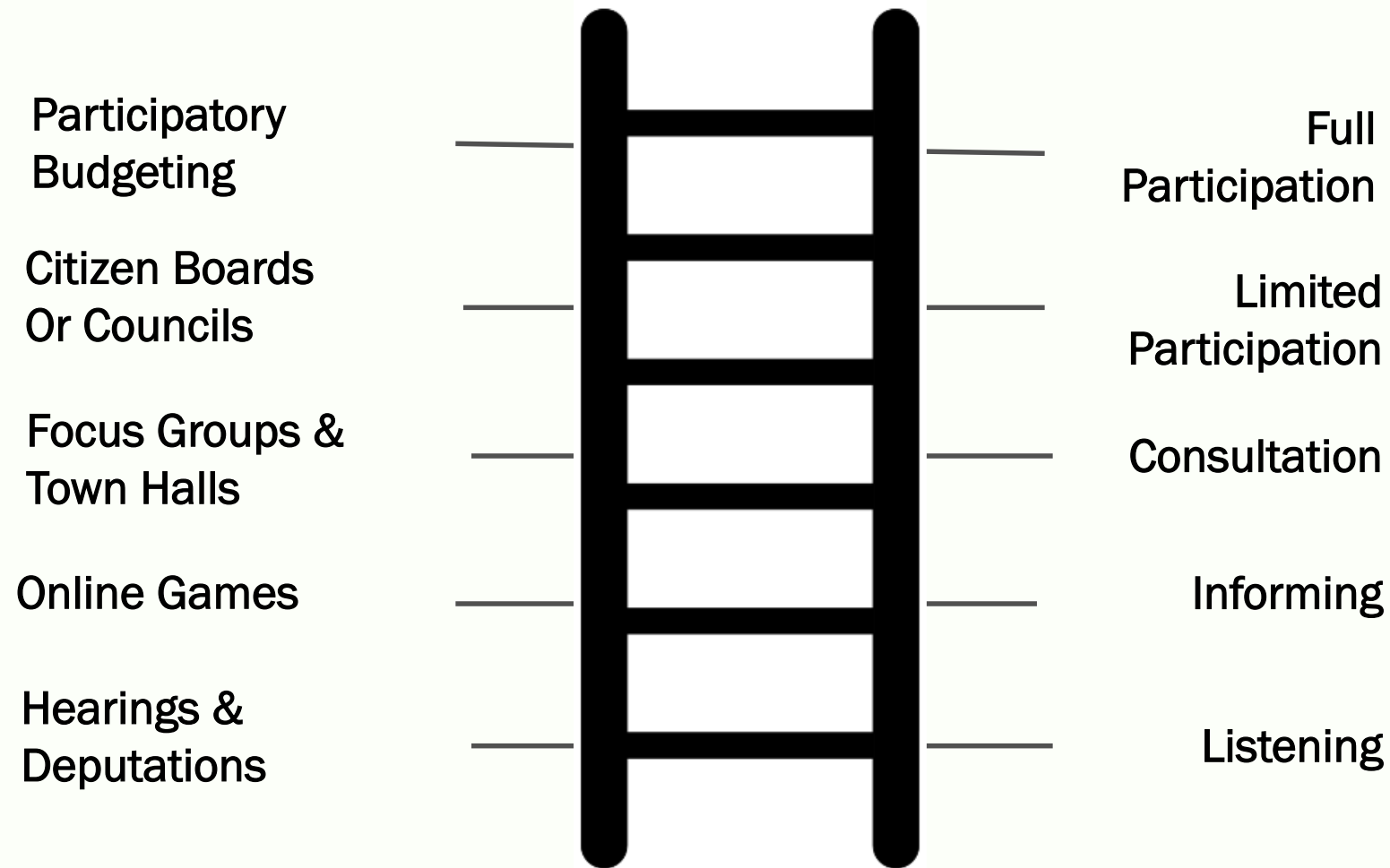
**Marti Brown**
former Vallejo City Councilmember, PBP Advisory Board Member,
& Executive Director, the North Franklin District Business Association (Sacramento)

*24th Annual Ahwahnee Conference for Local Elected Officials*
*March 19-22, 2015, Yosemite National Park*

# WHAT IS
## PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING?

A democratic process in which community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget.
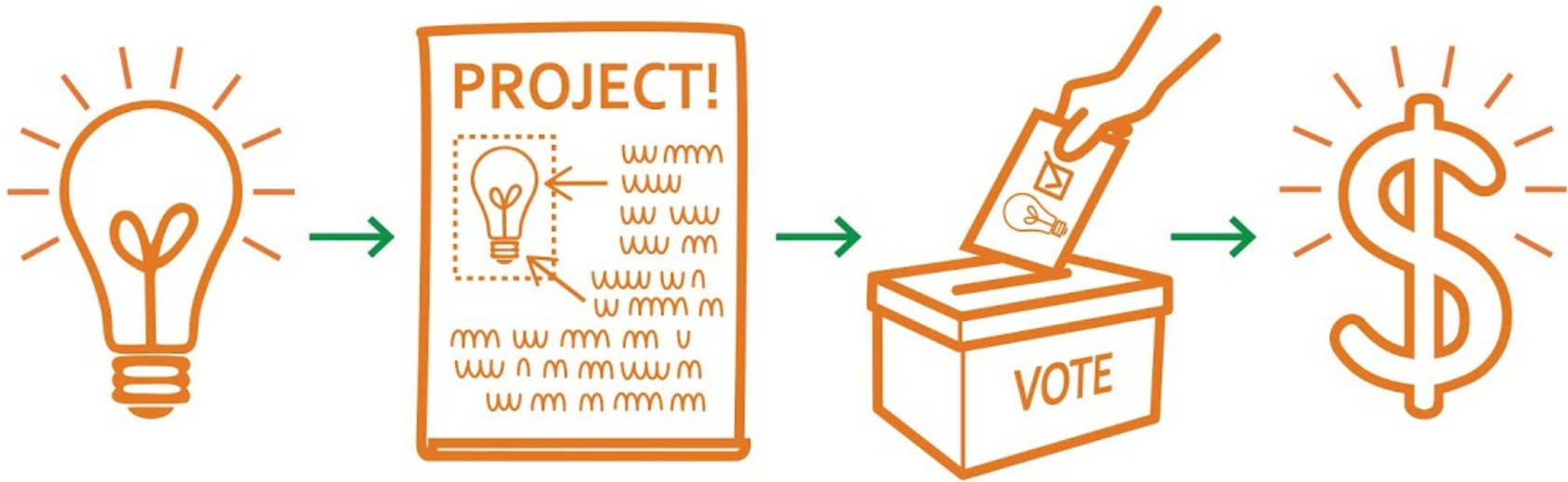
# A LADDER OF BUDGET PARTICIPATION

Participatory Budgeting

Citizen Boards Or Councils

Focus Groups & Town Halls

Online Games

Hearings & Deputations

Full Participation

Limited Participation

Consultation

Informing

Listening

# WHAT IS
## PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING?

# HOW DOES IT WORK?

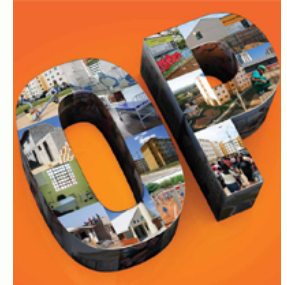Residents brainstorm ideas

Delegates develop proposals

Residents vote

The top projects win funding

# PORTO ALEGRE, BRAZIL
## 1989

1.5 million residents | up to **50,000 participants per year**

Decide as much as **20%** of the budget | **$200 million**

## KEY VICTORIES

**Doubled sanitation** coverage

Doubled the number of **students in schools**

**Expanded bus service** to neglected areas

# TORONTO COMMUNITY HOUSING

2001

- 164,000 tenants -
*The second largest public housing provider in North America*

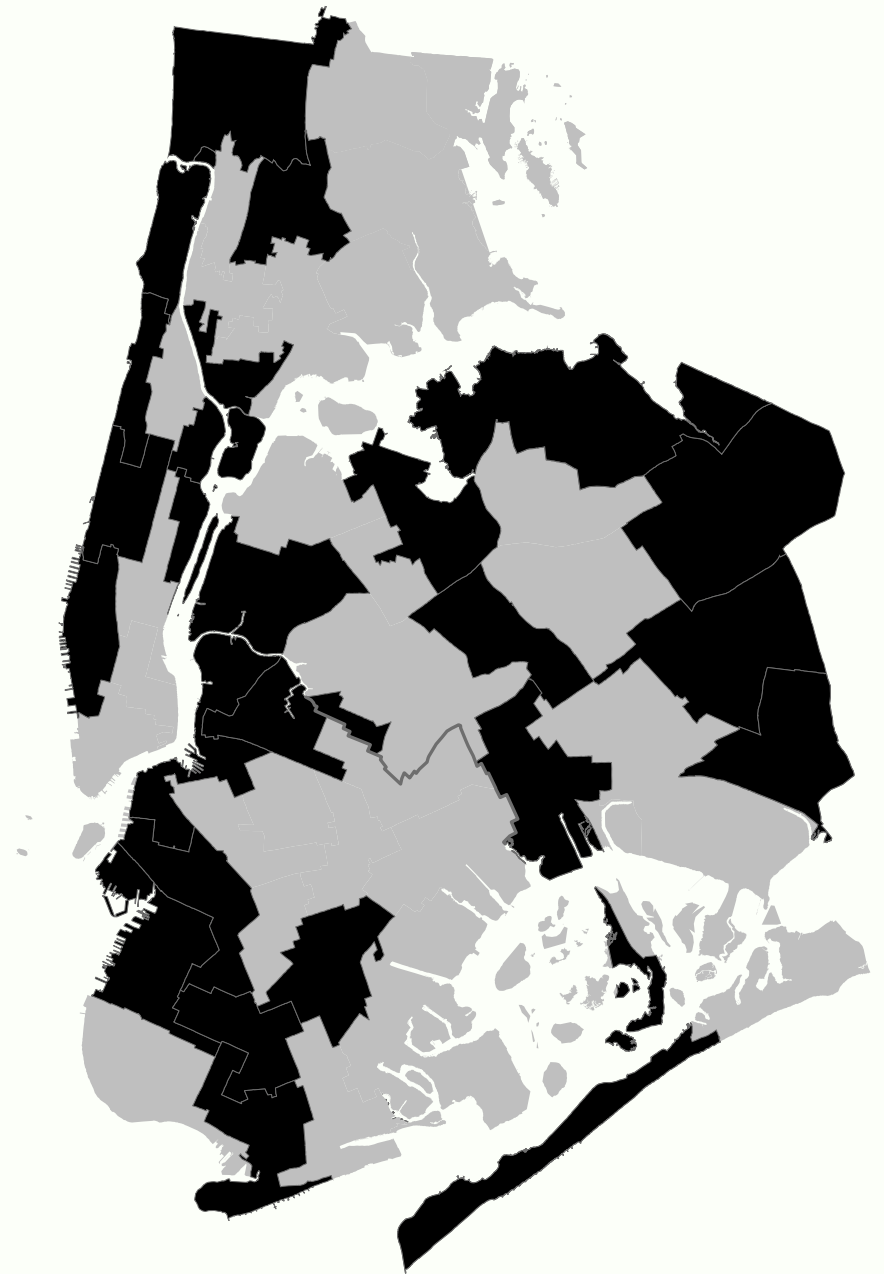As many as **6,000 tenants** per year have allocated

up to **$9 million** in capital funds per year

# NEW YORK CITY
## 2011

$30 million reaching over
3.5 million residents in
24 districts

# VALLEJO, CA

## 2012

FIRST CITYWIDE PB PROCESS IN NORTH AMERICA

- 117,000 residents

- $3.2 million (sales tax revenue)

- $200,000 allocated for implementation of process

- Funds for capital projects and programs & services

- 20-member Steering Committee

# VALLEJO, CA
2012



> *"Whenever possible,*
> *err on the side of inclusion."*
> Pelton Stewart, PB Steering Committee Member

- All residents over 16 can vote, regardless of immigration status

- Special assemblies for youth, seniors, Spanish speakers

- Delegate committees for youth and Spanish speakers

- Targeted outreach workers

# VALLEJO, CA

2012

**Key Outcomes:**

- o **809** participants at assemblies & online

- o **829** project ideas generated

- o **115** volunteer budget delegates

- o **60** project proposals submitted for vetting

- o **502** attended Project Expos

- o **33** projects on final ballot

- o Nearly **4,000** people turned out to vote

# VALLEJO, CA
## 2012

### Cycle #1, 2013 winning projects ($3.2 Million)!

1. Potholes and Street Repair — $550,000
2. Light up Vallejo! A lighting improvement project — $170,000
3. Parks and Recreation Improvements to 16 Parks — $609,500 *
4. Support School Libraries and STEAM Program — $270,000 *
5. Street Cleaning and City Clean Up — $120,000
6. College Bound Vallejo – Scholarship Program — $320,000 *
7. 10 Community Gardens and a Nutrition Program — $146,500 *
8. Small business grants for Mare Island and Downtown — $300,000 *
9. The Spay Neuter Project — $165,000 *
10. Florence Douglas Senior Center — $109,149
11. Omega Girls and Boys Club Gym Renovation — $60,000
12. 150 Pilot Cameras with Intelligent Archives — $450,000

# VALLEJO, CA

2012

## Cycle #2, 2014 winning projects ($2.4 Million)!

1. Help the Homeless Veterans, Seniors, Disabled & Kids ........... $ 588,000 *

2. Prioritizing Street & Pothole Repair-Repaving .................... $ 1,000,000

3. Improving School Meals ........................................... $ 18,000 *

4. Summer Youth Employment & Internship Program .................... $ 186,000 *

5. Sidewalk Repair & Street Tree Preservation ...................... $162,000

6. Strike Up the Bands ............................................. $ 90,000 *

7. A.B.C. Arts, Beautification, Community Development ............... $ 96,000 *

8. Special Fire Rescue Vehicle Replacement*** ...................... $ 302,500

# BOSTON

2014

$1 million decided entirely by
YOUTH residents
ages 12-25

# ENSURING EQUITY THROUGH PB

- ✓ Grassroots leadership

- ✓ Inclusive design

- ✓ Targeted outreach

- ✓ Equity criteria

# WHAT ARE THE

# IMPACTS OF PB?

# BROADER POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

**VALLEJO**
20% of PB voters were ineligible to vote in regular elections.

**NYC**
Higher percentage of low-income residents voted in PB (40%) compared to full population (34%) & local elections (29%).

**BOSTON**
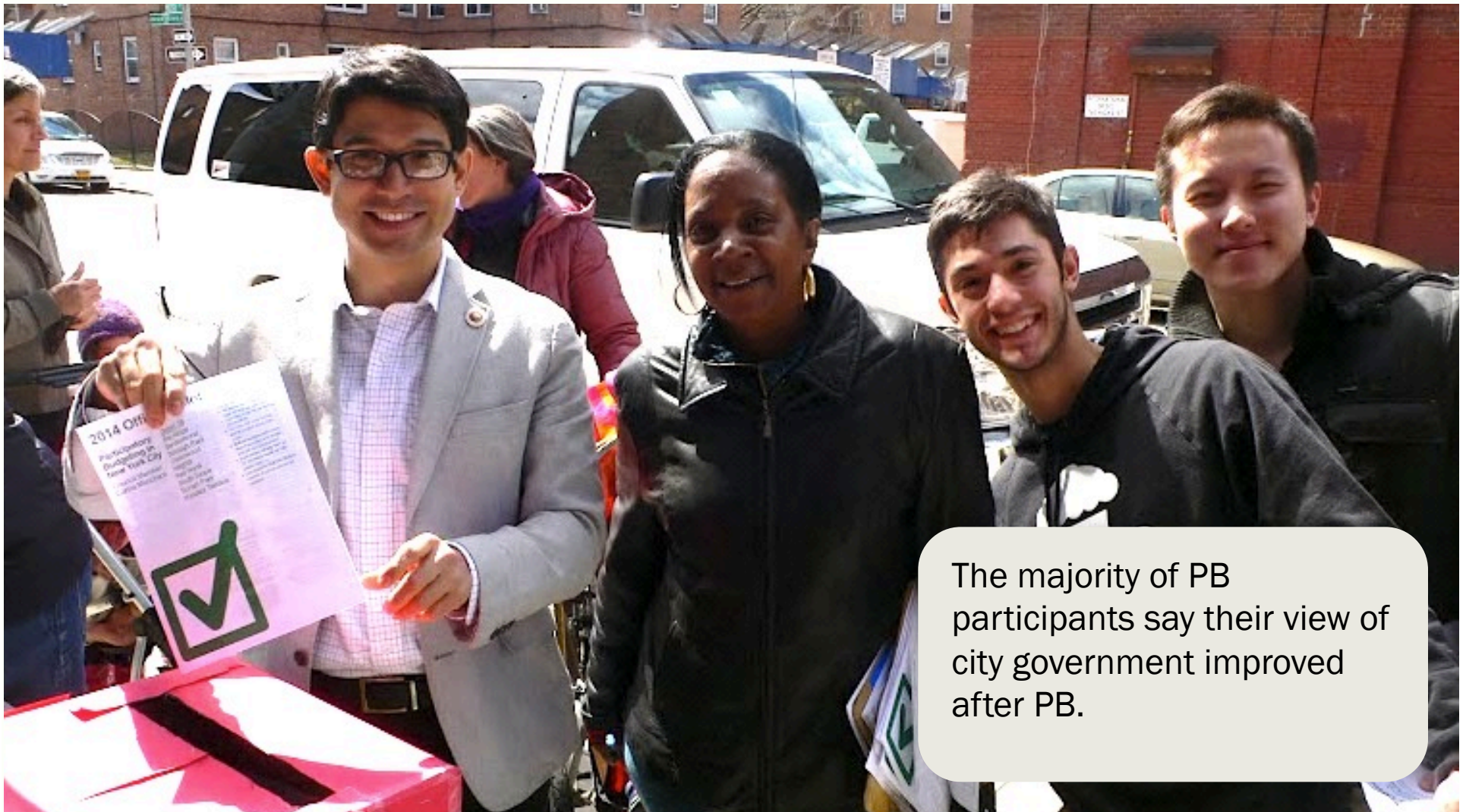95% of most engaged participants were youth of color.

# NEW COMMUNITY LEADERS



Participants report increased skills in public speaking, negotiating, building agreements, and contacting officials.

# STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS
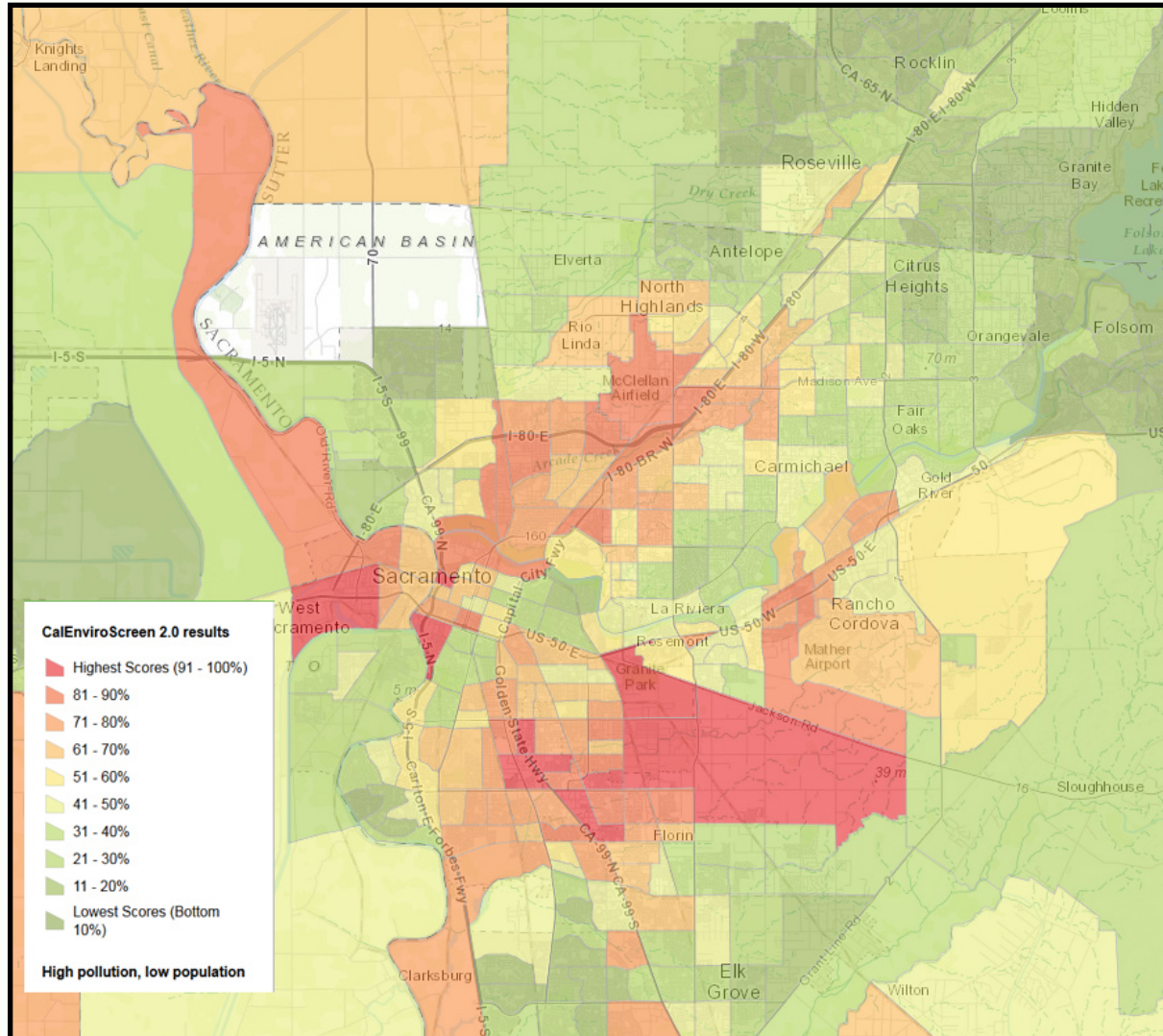## BETWEEN GOVERNMENT, ORGS, AND RESIDENTS



The majority of PB participants say their view of city government improved after PB.

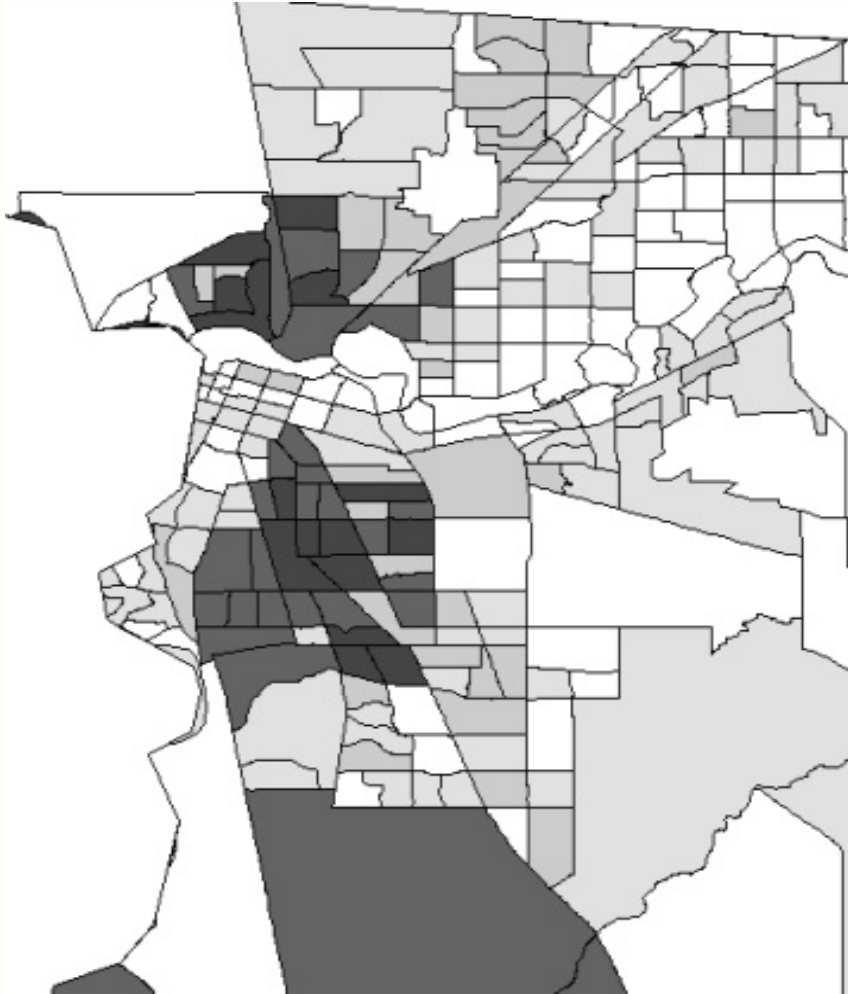Sacramento, Greatest Need & Greatest Public Investment – Racial Equity?
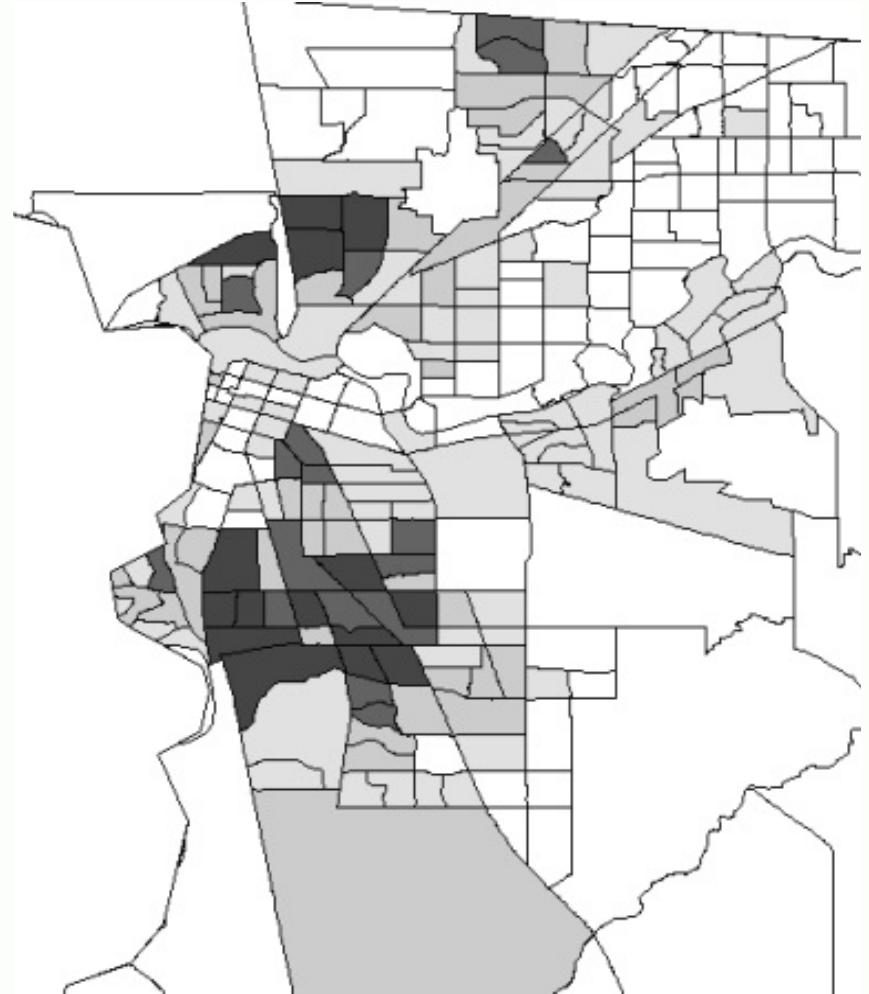
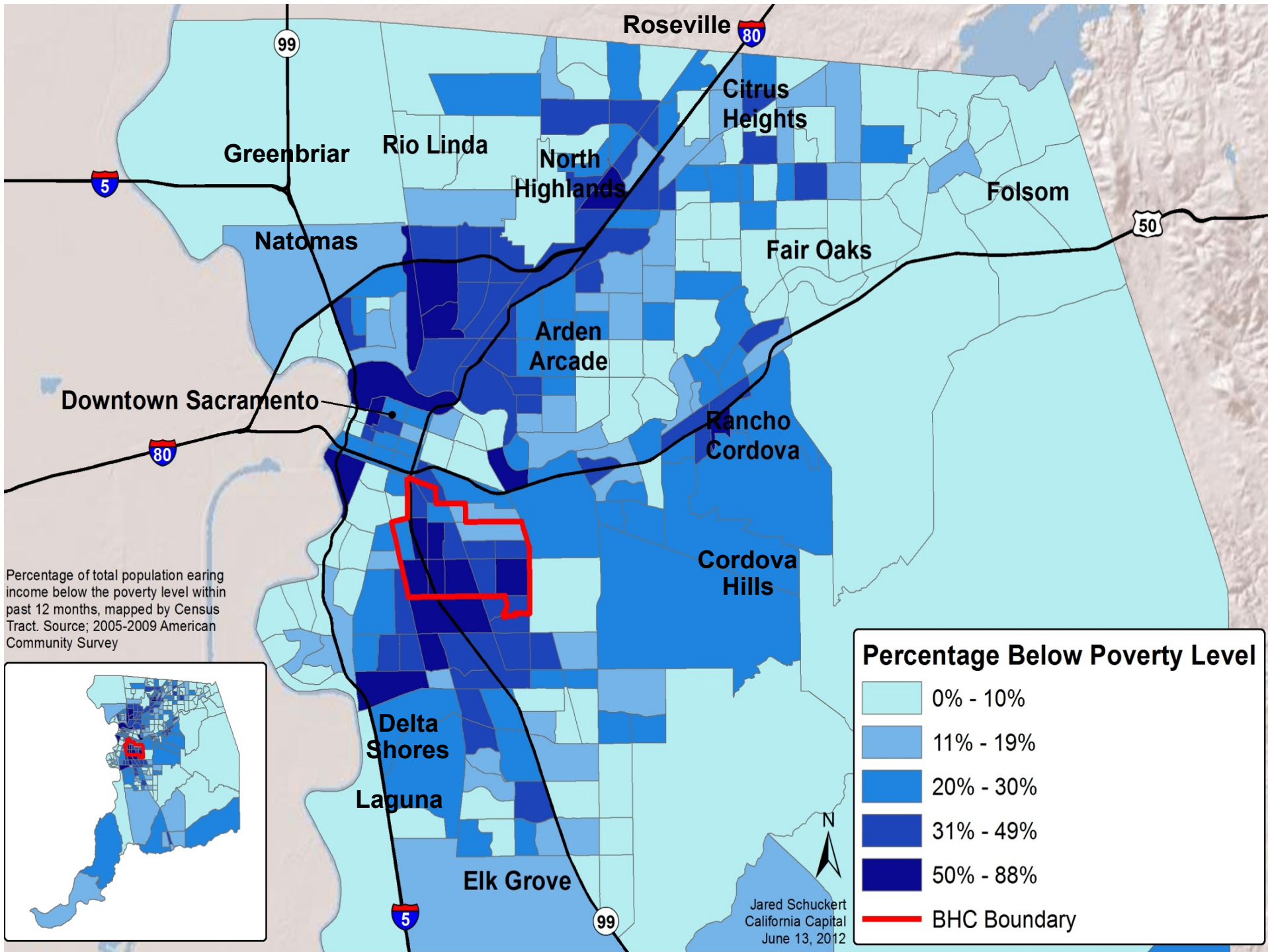# CalEnviroScreen 2.0
## The Nexus between Pollution & Poverty

**Census Tracts With Concentrations of Latino Households**

**Census Tracts With Concentrations of African American Households**

Roseville

I-99

I-80

Citrus Heights

Greenbriar

Rio Linda

North Highlands

Folsom

Natomas

Fair Oaks

U.S. 50
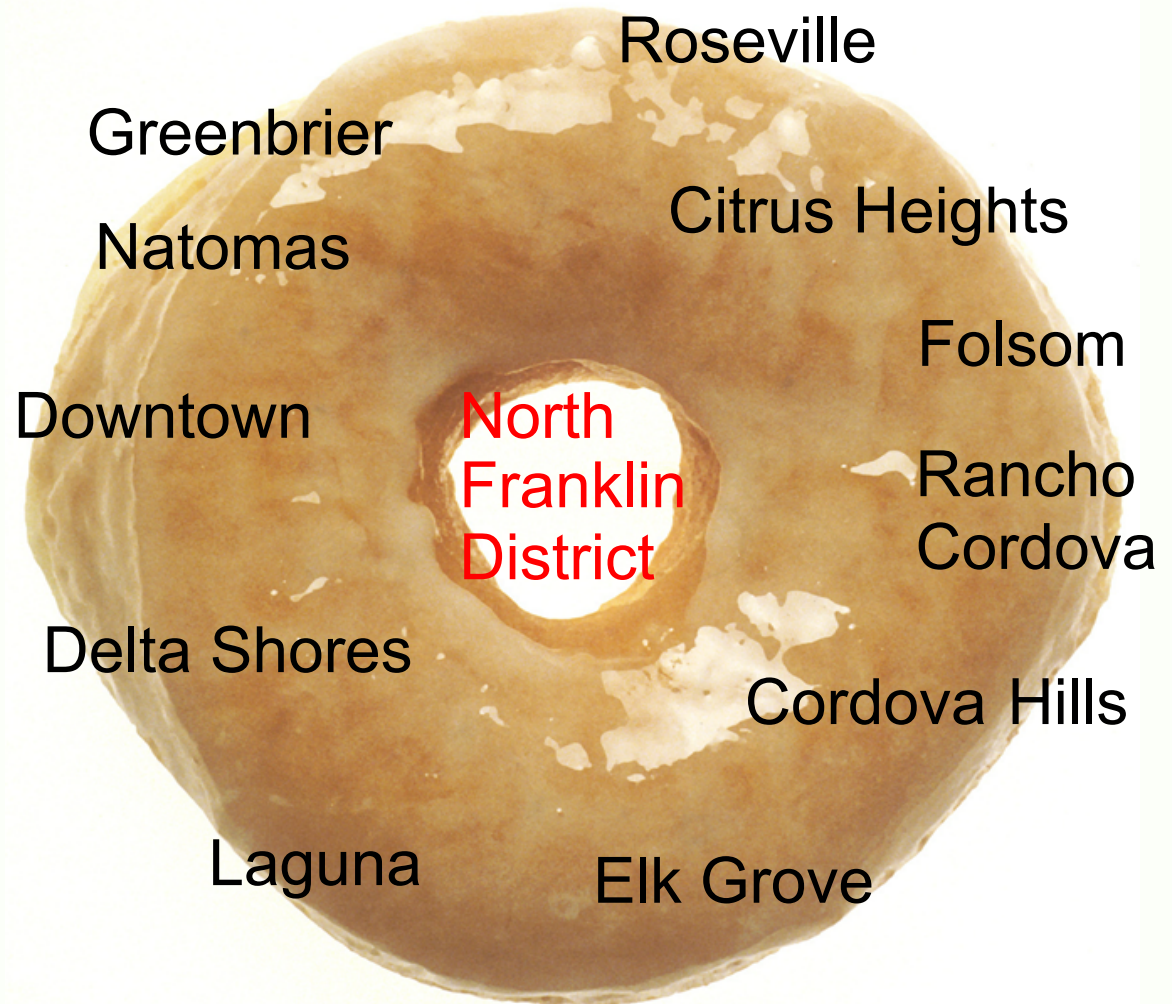
Arden Arcade

Downtown Sacramento

I-80

Rancho Cordova

Percentage of total population earing income below the poverty level within past 12 months, mapped by Census Tract. Source; 2005-2009 American Community Survey

Cordova Hills

Delta Shores

## Percentage Below Poverty Level

Laguna

0% - 10%

11% - 19%

20% - 30%

N

31% - 49%

50% - 88%

Elk Grove

I-5

I-99

Jared Schuckert
California Capital
June 13, 2012

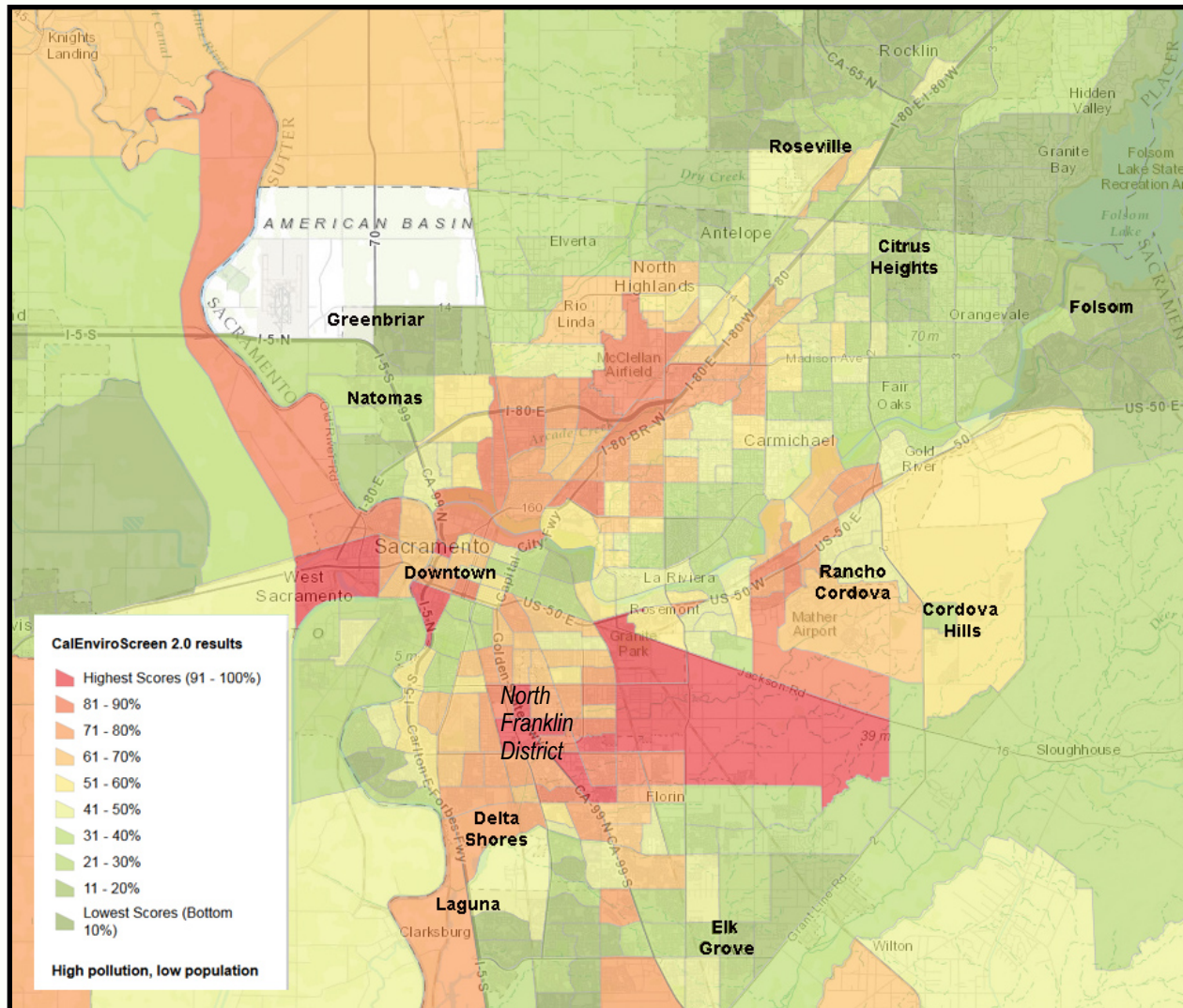BHC Boundary
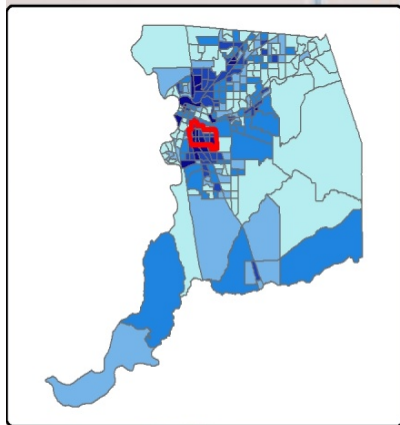
# History of Public Investment (Sacramento)
## SACOG & STA

- Intergenerational investment practices provide economic advantages to certain neighborhoods.

- Market driven and "ROI" strategies perpetuate disparate public investments.

- divestment has placed poorer neighborhoods in a down-ward spiral



Roseville
Greenbrier
Citrus Heights
Natomas
Folsom
Downtown
North Franklin District
Rancho Cordova
Delta Shores
Cordova Hills
Laguna
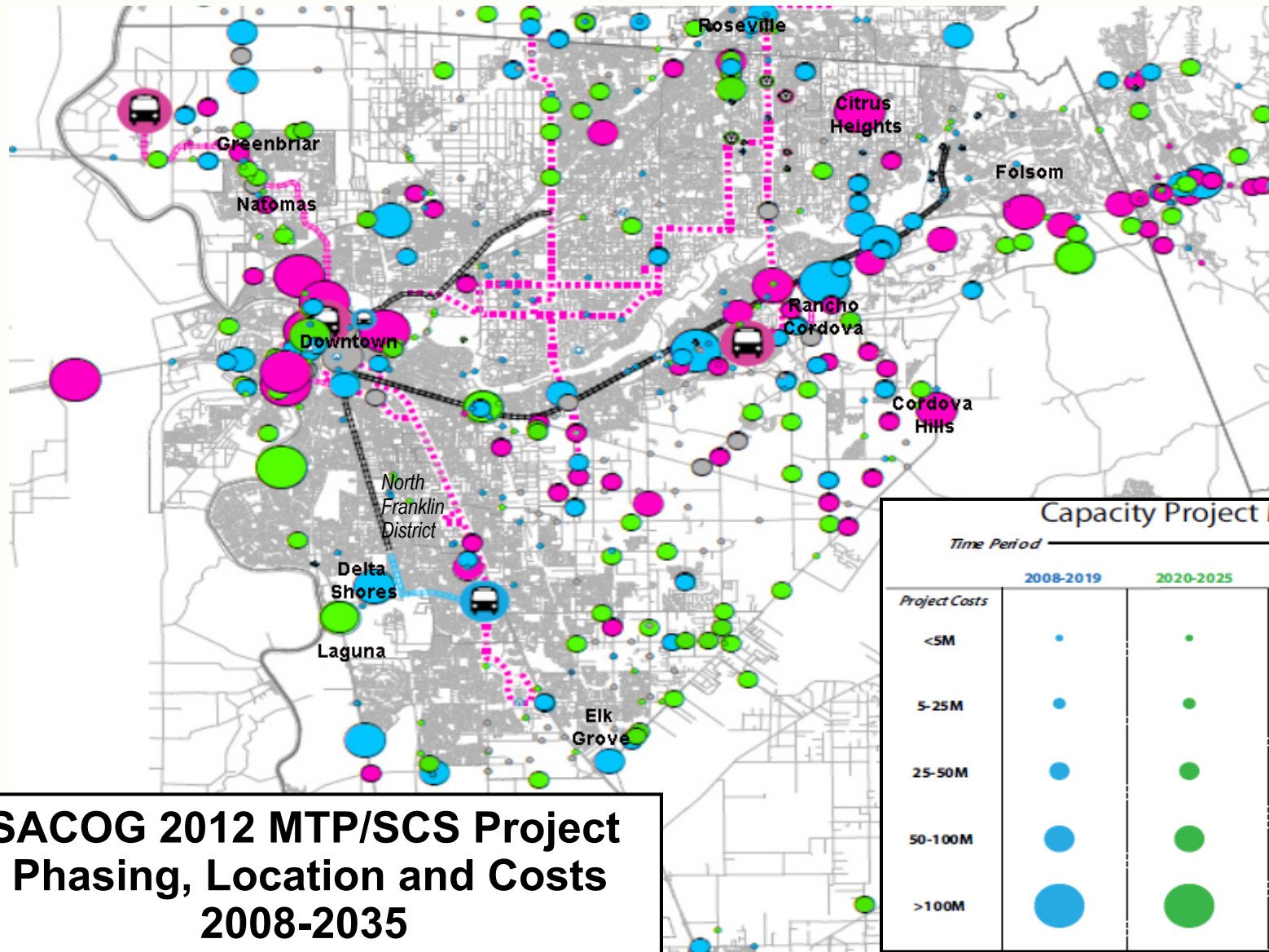Elk Grove

# California EnviroScreen 2.0
## Pollution, Poverty & Public Investment in Sacramento
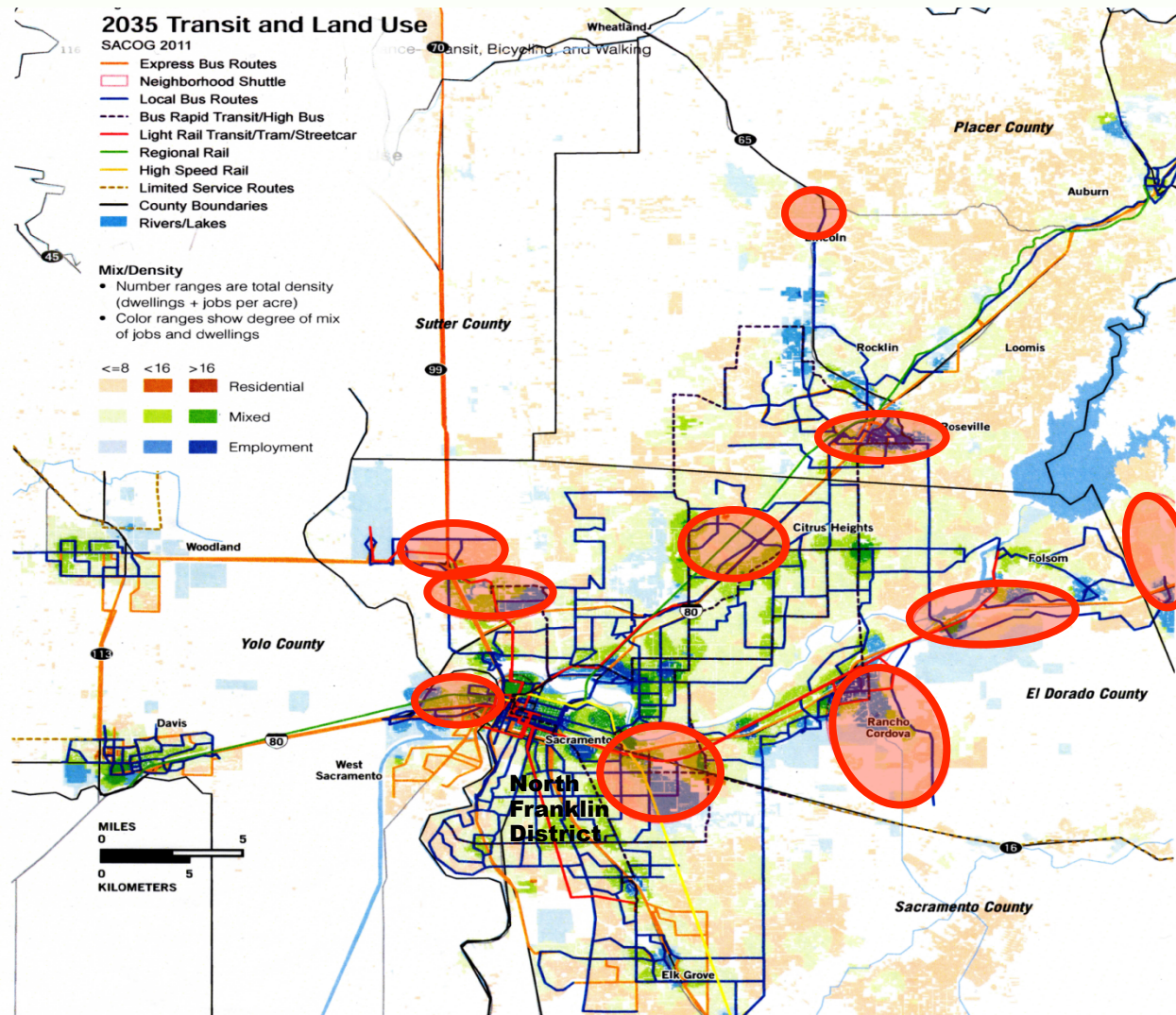


Public Funds:
- SACOG (MTIP)
- STA (Measure A)

# Projected SACOG Funding, 2008-2035



SACOG 2012 MTP/SCS Project Phasing, Location and Costs 2008-2035

**Capacity Project Mapping**

| Project Costs | Time Period | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 2008-2019 | 2020-2025 | 2026-2035 |
| <5M | | | |
| 5-25M | | | |
| 25-50M | | | |
| 50-100M | | | |
| >100M | | | |

# Transit & Land Use, 2035

# Conclusion

- Public policy and urban planning are market driven that frequently exclude low-income communities of color.

- Policy is based on a set of working rules that reflect cultural and power relations and market-based strategies.

- The public investment transaction is key to understanding past, present, and future patterns of economic and social inequalities in cities, <u>especially if it is a priority to redirect public funds to where the greatest socio-economic and environmental need is.</u>

# Now What?

- Greater distribution of public funds (e.g., Fund, CDBG, Cap and Trade, LCFF) through Participatory Budgeting (e.g., on the scale of Porto Alegre, Brazil) in an effort to bring greater equity to low income communities and communities of color.

- "Deep data dive" to look at the issues of poverty, pollution, and other demographic factors as they relate to disadvantaged communities AND compare the amount of public investment in those same communities versus more affluent communties.
  - ARE OUR PUBLIC DOLLARS HELPING THOSE WITH THE GREATEST NEED? IF NOT, CHANGE THE PROCESS SO THAT PUBLIC FUNDS ARE DISTRIBUTED MORE EQUITABLY.

# FOR MORE INFO

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