

2 The First National Study of Neighborhood Parks, Deborah Cohen, et al. 2016. https://www.rand.org/pubs/external_publications/EP66493.html

of color. Systemic policies, stigmas, and prejudices have purposefully disenfranchised and discriminated against certain populations, often on account of race and ethnicity, creating disparities in access to aspects of community services that support health and wellbeing³⁴. Data show that people of color in the U.S. are more likely to have higher rates of illness and chronic diseases, such as obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, hypertension, and poor mental health⁵. People of color are also more likely to live in neighborhoods affected by crime, violence, and incarceration⁶. In Tempe, it is estimated that 36 percent of the population today identifies as non-white, a percentage that has increased significantly in the past decade. Efforts to address systemic policies that have resulted in worse outcomes for communities of color are fundamental to Tempe's future.

This study's [Equity Priority Zone map](#) integrates datasets like age, race, income, health indicators (e.g., those living with a disability or with poor mental health), environmental risk factors, and concentrations of informal encampments to provide a deeper understanding of neighborhoods that populations have greater socioeconomic inequity. This map is a tool to understand where there are overlaps between inequities and park access gaps, parks and recreation spaces that are rated poorly using the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Assessment Workbook, and those in poor condition.

Essential for success is the need for the City to work in conjunction with partners, particularly historically underrepresented communities. Meaningful community engagement encompasses community

members from historically marginalized communities who are viewed, both by themselves and by others, as full partners in the decision-making, program-planning, and policy-making processes that impact their lives in significant and sustained ways. The City's outreach is guided by the recent [Equity in Action Plan](#), which set forth goals to create equitable engagement tools for the City's public involvement plans and then to develop a framework to achieve equity in the City's decision-making process. This plan identified historically underrecognized community members of which the City would like to focus engagement efforts; the City's engagement efforts identify community partners that serve these populations. One strategy contained in this plan is to strengthen the relationships with community partners that serve historically underrecognized community members by creating innovative programming with such partners, that both serve and involve Tempe's broader population, including those who have been historically disenfranchised.

As Tempe strives to create parks and recreation spaces as places for all, the community requires new strategies and approaches for reaching people and creating an inclusive and welcoming environment that celebrates diversity. Strategies focus on communication, design, and participatory planning to creatively co-create programming and use of parks and recreation spaces.

3 Causes and Consequences of Separate and Unequal Neighborhoods. Margery Austin Turner and Solomon Greene. <https://www.urban.org/racial-equity-analytics-lab/structural-racism-explainer-collection/causes-and-consequences-separate-and-unequal-neighborhoods>

4 Architectural Exclusion: Discrimination and Segregation through Physical Design of the Built Environment. Sarah Schindler, Yale Law Journal. 2015. <https://www.yalelawjournal.org/article/architectural-exclusion>

5 Racism and Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/minorityhealth/racism-disparities/index.html#:~:text=The%20data%20show%20that%20racial,compared%20to%20their%20White%20counterparts>

6 Causes and Consequences of Separate and Unequal Neighborhoods. Margery Austin Turner and Solomon Greene. <https://www.urban.org/racial-equity-analytics-lab/structural-racism-explainer-collection/causes-and-consequences-separate-and-unequal-neighborhoods>