

LINK21

CONNECT NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

MARKET ANALYSIS REPORT

APPENDIX F: PRIORITY POPULATIONS DEFINITION

March 2022

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ISSUE AND REVISION RECORD

REVISION	DATE	PREPARER(S)	PMC REVIEWER(S)	APPROVER	DESCRIPTION/ NOTES
			BART/CCJPA REVIEWER(S)	BART/CCJPA APPROVER	
0	03/18/2022	Derek Cheah, Steer	Elisa Tejedor, Steer	Sudhish Verma, HNTB	DRAFT submittal
		---			<i>No review requirement</i>

SHAREPOINT PATH

Records Center/BUSC Record Center/WPA.02/
 1-BUSC-PH0-Market_Analysis_Report_Appendix_F-DRAFT

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PRIORITY POPULATIONS DEFINITION

Priority populations (PP) is a geographic designation that has been defined specifically for Link21, and it will be used to analyze impacts to areas from an equity perspective. All other areas within the Megaregion will be referred to as general population.

This designation will allow the Link21 Team to understand distribution of project benefits or negative impacts. Ultimately, it will flag alternatives or scenarios with positive or negative equity implications and help evaluate whether goals and objectives are achieved in communities that stand to benefit the most from improved mobility and connections to opportunities. It will also help identify instances where mitigation measures are needed to prevent harm.

Specifically, for the market analysis, the PP designation is used to measure certain outcomes that are relevant to Link21's broader goal of advancing equity. PP were double counted when identifying hubs and determining unmet rail potential, as described further in Chapters 7 and 8 as well as Appendix B.

Key takeaways from literature reviews and landscaping interviews with transit agency staff and community advocates identified a need for this type of designation for several reasons:

- Being able to allocate benefits and impacts against areas of equity priority is necessary in order to evaluate whether a project/program/policy is advancing equity or causing harm.
- Equity must be consistently evaluated throughout Link21, it is not a single assessment. This designation will be used throughout multiple analyses within Phase 0.
- Mitigating harm is not enough. Link21 must aim to prevent harm and maximize benefits to already disadvantaged areas. Being able to identify and monitor potential harm and allocate benefits to disadvantaged areas is essential.

In order to develop the PP designation, the Program Management Team (PMT)¹ looked at existing examples used in the Megaregion to identify populations they may want to focus on for equity. A summary of these can be found in the next subsection, Priority Populations Inputs.

Ultimately, Link21 PP were created by combining designations identified and adopted by key stakeholders in the Megaregion: State priority populations (low-income and disadvantaged communities), Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Equity Priority Communities (EPC, formerly called Communities of Concern), and Congestion

¹ San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA), and Program Management Consultants (PMC)



Management Agencies' (CMA) adjustments to the designation of EPC.² Currently, the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) designations for environmental justice communities are not used in the PP designation as this analysis is not intended to replace or replicate the environmental justice analysis that will be developed in future phases of work, in conjunction with OCR.

The state designation of PP addresses inequity and disadvantage in areas across the state and captures areas that may not have their own version of EPCs, which are Bay Area specific. By combining the localized definitions of EPCs within the Bay Area, the Link21 designation of PP aims to be inclusive of prior work.

The following section provides additional insight into what is included in each component of the designation.

Priority Populations Inputs

As mentioned previously, the Link21 PP definition took into consideration three inputs: State PP, MTC EPC, and CMA's adjusted EPC.

State PP include both disadvantaged communities (Senate Bill [SB] 535) and low-income communities (Assembly Bill [AB] 1550) and are defined as follows:

- Disadvantaged Communities (based on CalEPA definition): top 25% most impacted census tracts per CalEnviroScreen 3.0
 - CalEnviroScreen Score = [Average of Exposures and $\frac{1}{2}$ x Environment Effects] x [Average of Sensitive Populations and Socioeconomic Factors]
 - › Exposure: air quality-ozone, air quality – PM2.5, diesel particulate matter, drinking water contaminants, pesticide use, toxic releases from facilities, traffic density
 - › Environmental Effects: cleanup sites, groundwater threats, hazardous waste generators and facilities, impaired water bodies, solid waste sites and facilities
 - › Sensitive Populations: asthma, cardiovascular disease, low birth weight infants
 - › Socioeconomic Factors: educational attainment, housing burden, linguistic isolation, poverty, unemployment
- Low-income (CA HCD³): either below 80% of statewide median income OR qualifies as “Low” by state income limits (measured by county and household size) (2016)

² After completion of the market analysis, the Link21 Team updated its PP definition. This updated definition is not a part of this report but will be used in future work.

³ California Department of Housing and Community Development

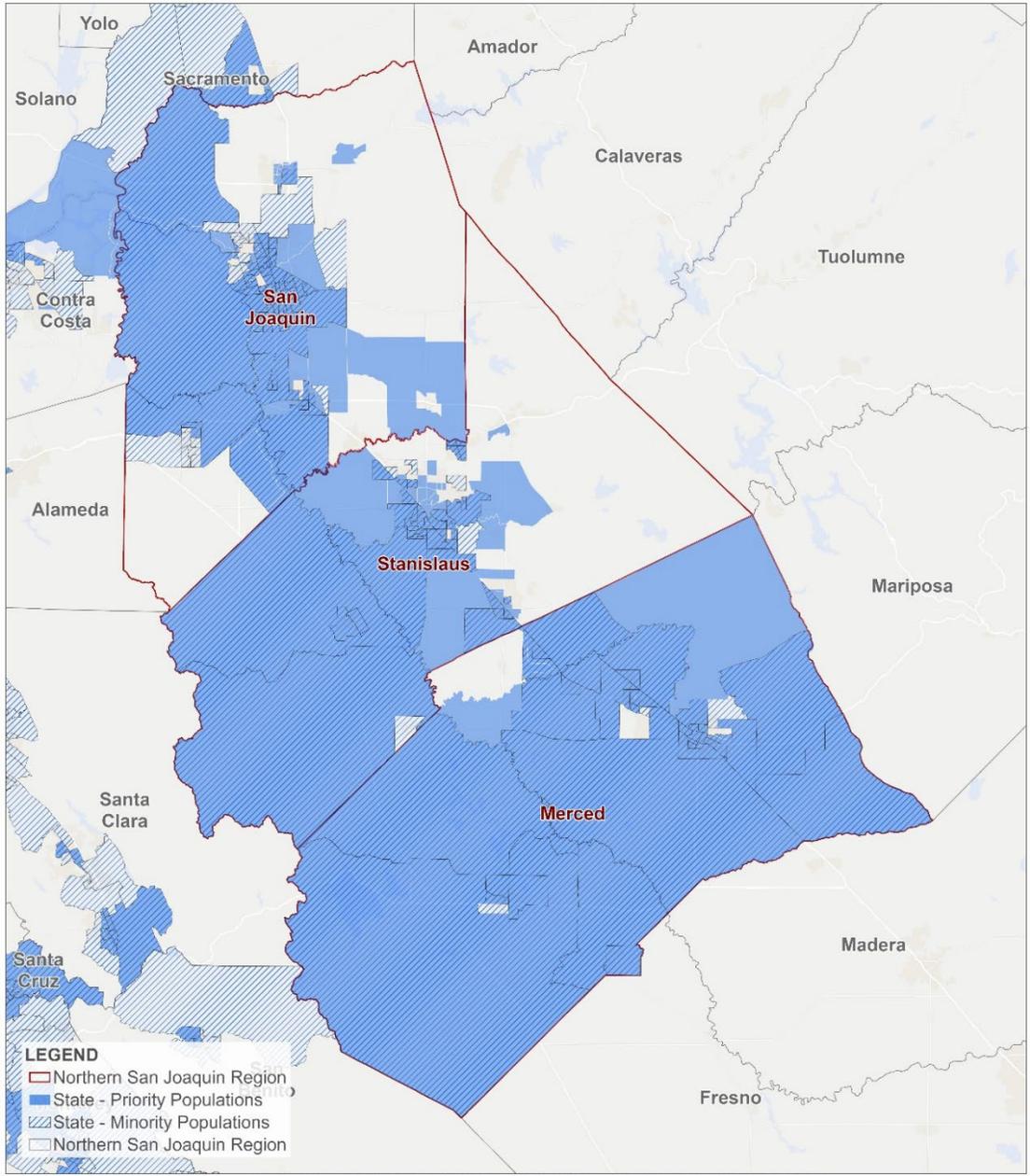


One key concern with using the State PP designation is that race is not explicitly evaluated in the framework, whereas MTC's EPC analyses account for race. The PMT further investigated the counties outside the Bay Area (referred to as Halo Counties) to make sure that by using the State PP designation, minority populations would not be excluded from the Link21 definition. Based on the analysis, most census tracts designated as being minority populations are already included as a State PP, e.g., the Northern San Joaquin Region in the Central Valley (see **Figure 1**). As mentioned previously, MTC's definition includes minority population census tracts that are low-income. Given that the state definition of PP includes low-income census tracts, these minority population census tracts (diagonal stripes in **Figure 1** through **Figure 3**) that are not low-income are excluded from the Link21 PP definition. **Figure 4** shows state PP and Bay Area CoC definitions.

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Figure 1. Halo Counties' State Priority and Minority Populations - Northern San Joaquin Region

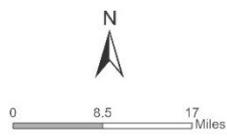


STATE PRIORITY POPULATION AND MINORITY POPULATION

Caltrans Priority Population Caltrans Priority Population



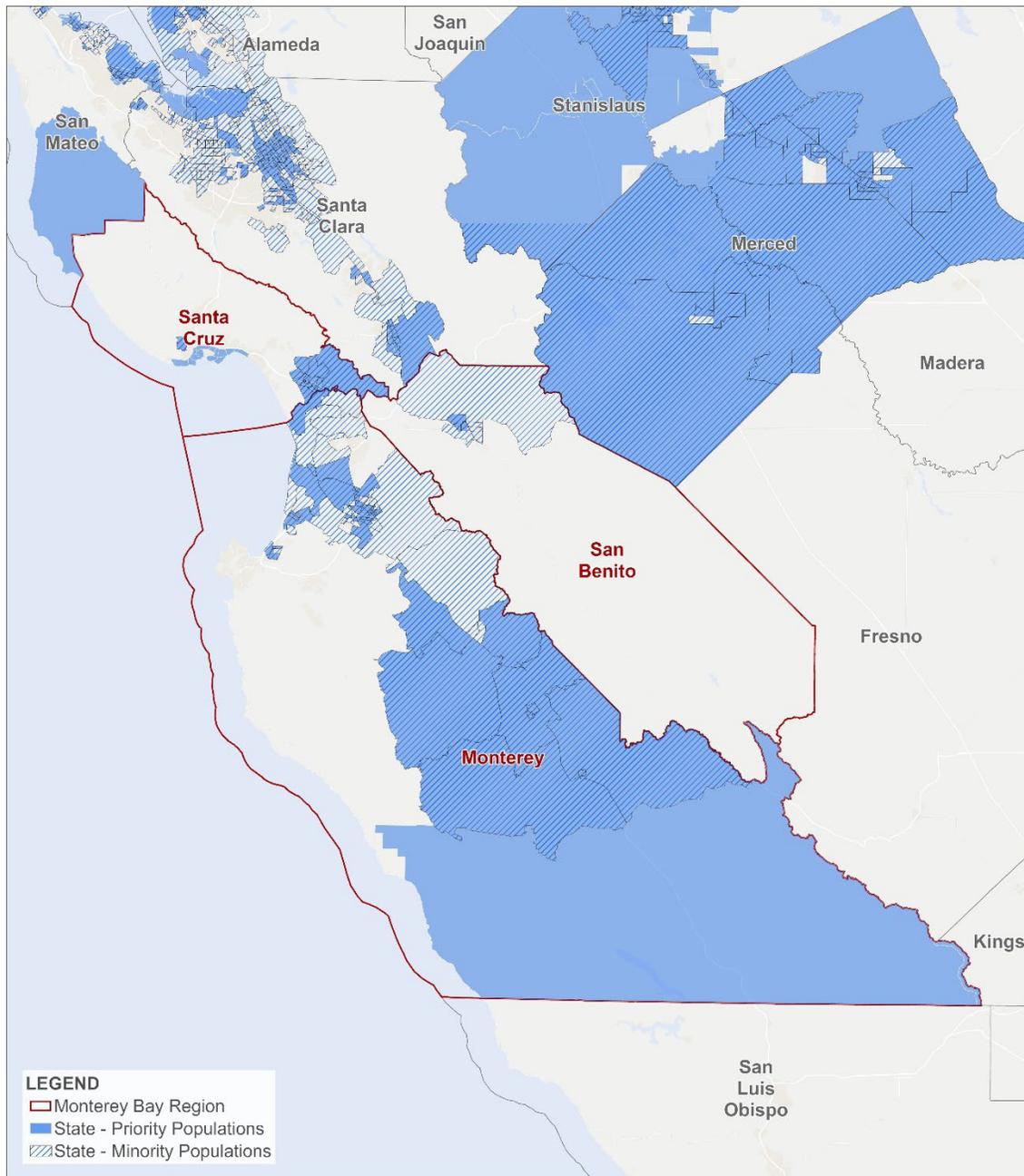
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Figure 2. Halo Counties' State Priority and Minority Populations - Monterey Bay Region

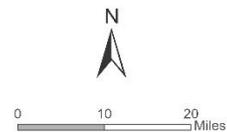


STATE PRIORITY POPULATION AND MINORITY POPULATION

Caltrans Priority Population Caltrans Priority Population



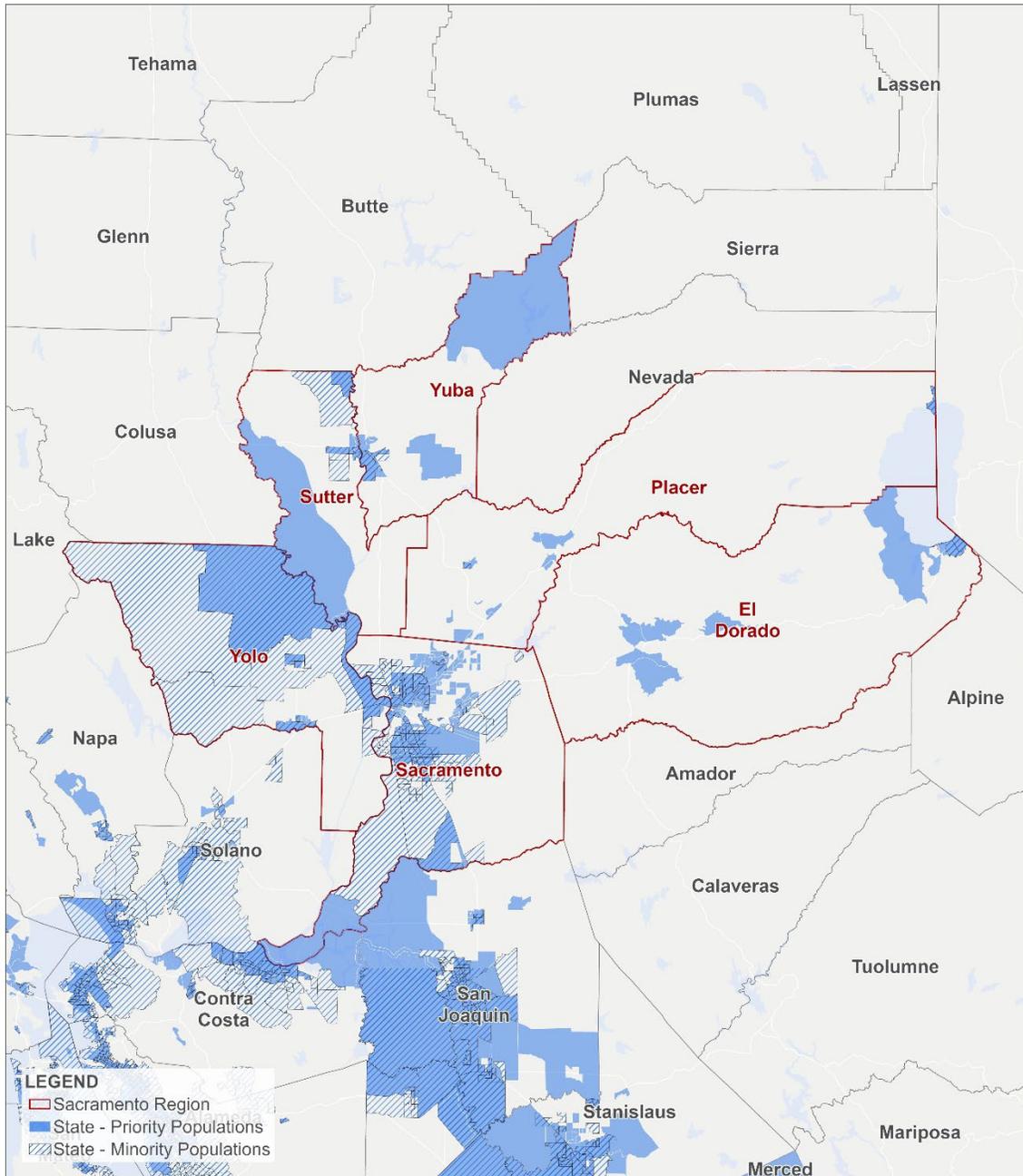
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Figure 3. Halo Counties' State Priority and Minority Populations - Sacramento Region

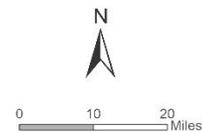


STATE PRIORITY POPULATION AND MINORITY POPULATION

Caltrans Priority Population Caltrans Priority Population



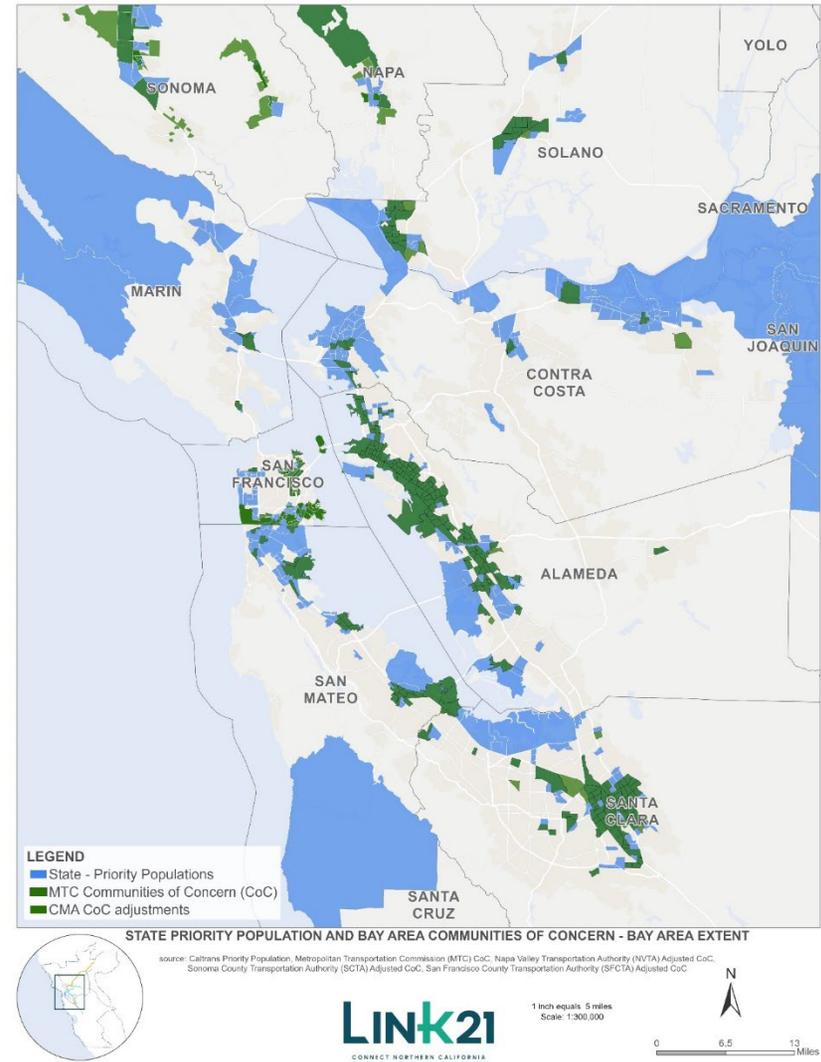
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Scale: 1:604,169



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Figure 4. State Priority Populations and Bay Area Equity Priority Communities Definitions



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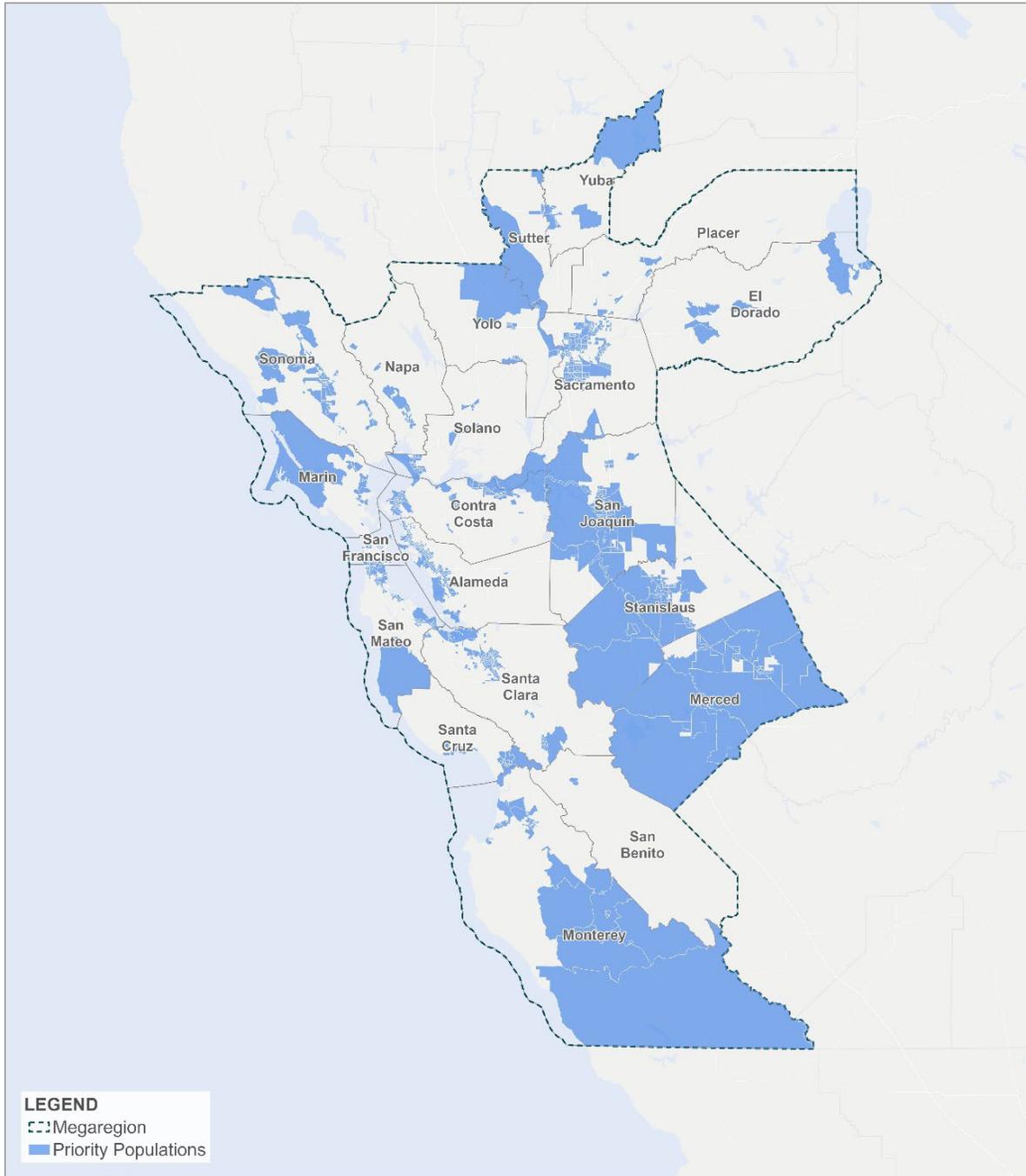


The PMT also compared MTC's definition with San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA), Napa Valley Transportation Authority (NVTA), and Sonoma Transportation Authority (SCTA) EPC adjustments and compared MTC's definition to the *San Mateo Countywide Final Plan Poverty Level Analysis*. In San Francisco, a small number of additional tracts were added to the PP based on adjustments that were made in a local analysis to identify EPC. In San Mateo, the overlay analysis found that PP covered areas flagged through the poverty level analysis.

Erring on the side of inclusion, no tract identified by the state, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, or CMAs was eliminated. Under this approach about 43% of the Megaregion census tracts are being considered as PP. This designation captures multiple factors (environmental, health, and socioeconomic) in response to the regional differences in the Megaregion. **Figure 5** and **Figure 6** show the Link21 PP areas.



Figure 5. Link21 Priority Populations – Megaregion



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LINK21 PRIORITY POPULATIONS
Megaregion



1 inch equals 18 miles
Scale: 1:1,125,000

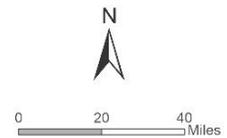
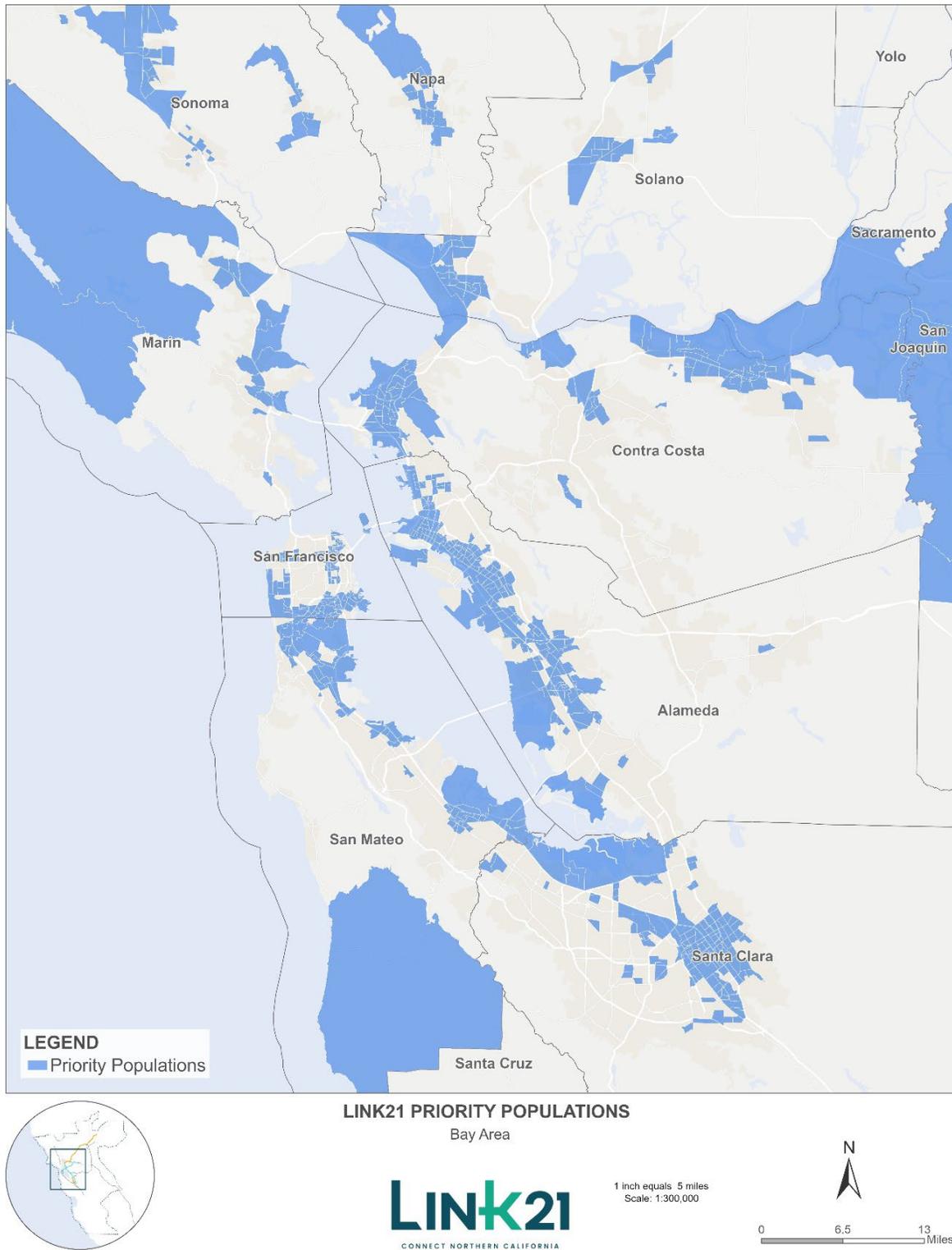




Figure 6. Link21 Priority Populations – Bay Area



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Updates to Priority Populations Definition

The PP definition may be revised and updated for future phases of the Business Case.

The first such update has occurred following the completion of the market analysis and will be incorporated into future phases of work. There may be additional points throughout the Business Case life cycle when the definition should be re-evaluated and/or refined.

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