



# LAND USE: IMPACTS OF LAND USE ON AIR QUALITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH

**Economic Consideration:** Land use decisions guide where business dollars are invested, where tourists can stay and how far they need to walk or drive to spend their tourism dollars. Land use policies shape where we can grow food, manufacture products, build our homes and find open spaces to recreate in, all of which impact our local economy.

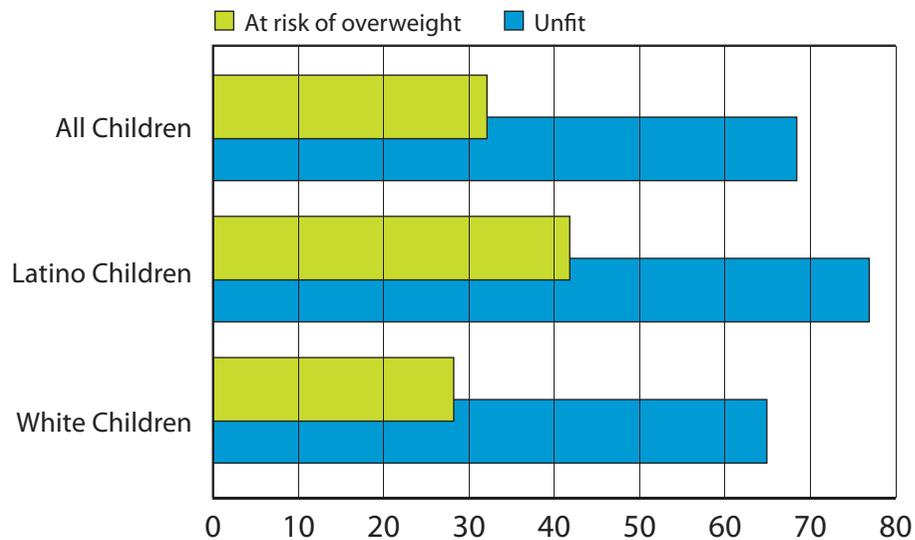
Land use affects the health of people and the environment, and the County is already dealing with the impacts of land use on air quality and public health. By improving land use patterns, the County will create a legacy of healthy people and thriving ecosystems.

## Land Use Affects Our Children

Unfit or overweight children can benefit from complete communities that encourage walking and biking activity. Trends in the county indicate that our children have suffered from disconnected land uses, as illustrated in the percentages of unfit and overweight children.

Interrelated land uses that are not dependent on cars create opportunities for healthy activities that keep children fit. By creating safe, pedestrian-friendly environments, the County can target these reversible trends and ensure that children are able to enjoy active lifestyles and build good habits for life.

**Percentages of At-Risk, Unfit or Overweight Children in San Luis Obispo County.**



From Childhood Obesity Prevention Task Force (2007). Community Action Plan to Increase Healthful Eating and Regular Physical Activity among Children in SLO County.

## Land Use Affects the Air We Breathe

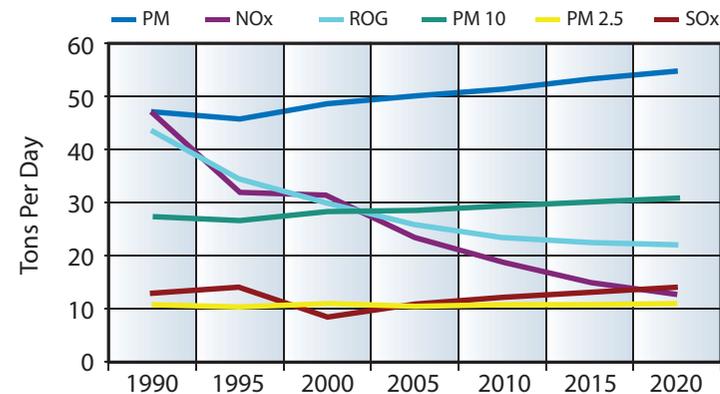
Dispersed land uses cause increased drive times, and result in increased air pollution. Air pollution is an immediate threat to people and resources in our county.

- **Children and the elderly are especially prone to air quality impacts.** Air pollution exacerbates respiratory illnesses such as asthma. Even moderate air pollution can permanently harm these sensitive age groups; according to the San Luis Obispo Air Pollution Control District, dirty air can slow down the lung function growth rate of children by 10%.
- **Dirty air damages natural resources and man-made infrastructure.** Air pollution damages vegetation and agricultural production. Pollutants such as ozone, released through vehicular fuel combustion, inhibit photosynthesis and harms leaves. Pollution also wears down infrastructure, for instance, causing rubber to crack at relatively low concentrations.

California farmers and consumers lose over \$500 million each year because of reduced crop yields that are caused by ozone pollution

## Projected Levels of Air Pollution through 2020.

Most types of air pollution are projected to continue increasing, as shown in projected emissions PM, NOx, PM 10, and SOx.



San Luis Obispo Air Pollution Control District: 2001 Clean Air Plan, citing the California Air Resources Board; 2005 Annual Air Quality Report.