San Francisco: St. Mary's Park

In a nation increasingly divided by race and economic status, some American neighborhoods are bucking the trend. These neighborhoods have high levels of racial, ethnic and income diversity–which research has shown reduces poverty and promotes economic mobility.

About St. Mary's Park, Bernal Heights

Part of the larger Bernal Heights area, St. Mary's Park lies just north of Interstate 280 and Alemany Boulevard.

The neighborhood was the original site of St. Mary's University, which has since relocated to the East Bay; in the 1920s the area was redeveloped for housing, and has a unusual street grid laid out in the shape of a bell.

The area around St. Mary's Park (census tract 254.03) is one of the most diverse, mixed-income tracts in the nation; it ranks in the top 5 percent of all tracts nationally in racial/ethnic diversity and top 1 percent in income diversity. The neighborhood is 35 percent Asian, 29 percent white, 16 percent Latino and 12 percent black, the remainder mixed race or other. Nearly equal segments of its population are in each of the five income categories we examined.

Originally home to a largely Italian and Irish community, the area's population has grown more diverse in recent decades and the neighborhood is now home to substantial Latino and African-American communities. The area's chief landmark is a city park of the same name and a recreation center. The park was built in the 1930s as a Works Progress Administration project, and is the site of regular community barbeques.

METHODOLOGY

For purposes of this study, neighborhood populations are divided into five broad groupings: Asian, Black, Latino, White and all other. We also used an income diversity index—which measures how varied incomes are in an area—to identify which neighborhoods had the most mixed incomes.

America's Most Diverse, Mixed-Income Neighborhoods

COMPARING NEIGHBORHOODS:

St. Mary's Park diversity index: **71.6**

St. Mary's Park has greater ethnic diversity than about 96 percent of all US urban neighborhoods.

St. Mary's Park income diversity index: **78.9**

St. Mary's Park has greater income diversity than 99 percent of all urban US neighborhoods.

St. Mary's Park Walk Score: **75**

Racial and ethnic diversity of San Francisco neighborhoods

- Each circle corresponds to the racial/ethnic diversity index of one neighborhood
- Racial/ethnic diversity index of St. Mary's Park

Income diversity of San Francisco neighborhoods

- Each circle corresponds to the income diversity index of one neighborhood
- Income diversity index of St. Mary's Park

This report is produced by City Observatory, a virtual think tank, contributing original data-driven research and regular commentary on what matters to city success, focused on how building great places to live can attract, develop and harness talent to create widely shared opportunity.