



GREEN ZONES ACROSS CALIFORNIA

TRANSFORMING TOXIC HOTSPOTS INTO HEALTHY HOODS

California Environmental Justice Alliance



About the California Environmental Justice Alliance

The California Environmental Justice Alliance is a statewide, community-led alliance that works to achieve environmental justice by advancing policy solutions. We unite the powerful local organizing of our members in the communities most impacted by environmental hazards – low-income communities and communities of color – to create comprehensive opportunities for change at a statewide level. We build the power of communities across California to create policies that will alleviate poverty and pollution. Together, we are growing the statewide movement for environmental health and social justice.

Our core members:

Asian Pacific Environmental Network
Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice
Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment
Communities for a Better Environment
Environmental Health Coalition
People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights

Our partners:

Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy
Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability
Pacoima Beautiful
Physicians for Social Responsibility – Los Angeles

For more about CEJA, please visit: www.caleja.org

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Green Zones Across California

COMMON ROOTS AND CORE PRINCIPLES

Imagine a state made up of healthy thriving communities, where each and every urban and rural neighborhood across California has the means to reduce and prevent industrial pollution, transition off fossil fuels, generate local jobs, affordable housing, provide green open space, preserve local culture, and use community-led planning to sustain a vibrant future. There is a statewide movement growing to make this vision a reality through Green Zones.

Green Zones are a place-based strategy that uses community-led solutions to transform areas overburdened by pollution into healthy thriving neighborhoods. Green Zones are neighborhoods heavily impacted by pollution – most often low-income communities and communities of color – where residents are organizing to reduce industrial pollution and cultivate new, coordinated opportunities to implement community-based solutions.

The *Green Zones Across California* report documents the efforts of diverse communities across the state to develop new solutions to long-standing environmental health and justice issues in their neighborhoods. The report profiles the work of thirteen different organizations in eleven communities across California that are using the transformative Green Zone approach to realize community visions for sustainability and economic opportunity.



Photo Courtesy of Environmental Health Coalition



Photo Courtesy of PODER

Each Green Zone is a reflection of the specific needs, priorities, and environmental justice issues in the community, but all share common roots. They have developed from decades of organizing by groups working directly in low-income communities and communities of color to address the over-concentration of polluting facilities and the *cumulative impacts* of toxic emissions. They have emerged from community efforts to re-configure the unhealthy, often discriminatory, *land use patterns* that have shaped how our communities look today.

The following profiles document a wide range of strategies to transform neighborhoods, from creating new local ordinances to installing air filtration units to reclaiming public land for community gardens. While each community vision is unique, they all share core principles that link them together: all Green Zones are *comprehensive, community-led, solution-oriented, and collaborative.*

Common Roots: Cumulative Impacts

Low-income communities and communities of color have borne the brunt of pollution for too long. Too many of our communities suffer from asthma, cancers, and other illnesses borne from heavy industrial pollution. These neighborhoods face a daily onslaught from multiple sources of pollution, not just one factory or highway. These toxins form a deadly combination with factors like high unemployment and poverty.

Unfortunately, environmental regulations only look at pollution on a case-by-case basis and in isolation, rather than the “cumulative impacts” in an area. Our state’s laws and policies look at one source of pollution at a time, rather than examining exposures throughout an entire neighborhood. Using a “cumulative impacts” framework, it is possible to see the totality of pollution in a particular area, and the cumulative burden of multiple different sources of pollution on resident health and well-being.

Cumulative impacts is one of the most persistent and devastating issues in low-income communities and communities of color disproportionately impacted by environmental pollution. Environmental justice advocates have long pushed for a scientific methodology to assess cumulative impacts, which could be incorporated into decision-making processes.



Almost all the organizations in this report have engaged in participatory action research to document the wide range of burdens in their communities.

In 2014, as a result of years of advocacy, organizing, and research on this issue, the California Environmental Protection Agency released the second version of one of the leading cumulative impact tools in the nation, the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool, or CalEnviroScreen 2.0. As you can see from the maps on pages 8-9, almost all the Green Zones are located in highly impacted communities. No matter where the Green Zone, all the communities struggle with a deadly combination of pollution, public health burdens, and socioeconomic stressors.

Common Roots: Unhealthy Land Use Planning

Discriminatory land use practices have put the overwhelming majority of polluting sources in the backyards of the most disenfranchised. This inequity is a result of many factors: a history of residential segregation and discriminatory zoning, lower levels of political and economic power, and market-driven land use and economic development patterns that exacerbate the concentration of environmental hazards in low-income communities, while distributing their benefits elsewhere.

Improving land use is often central to creating healthy neighborhoods. Land use planning can be an empowering tool for communities to re-imagine how neighborhoods can look. Many of the organizations featured in this report are using different land use tools in their Green Zones, from working with city officials to introduce Environmental Justice Elements in the General Plan or leading community-based processes to

develop specific plans for their neighborhoods. They demonstrate that land use planning can help address old problems, while creating a path forward to implement new solutions.



Photo Courtesy of Environmental Health Coalition

Core Principles: Comprehensive



Photo Courtesy of APEN

Many of the organizations profiled in this report have won inspiring victories in their communities, ranging from fighting off new polluting facilities to securing affordable housing. However, these local success stories have not led to the comprehensive change needed in many communities of color, low-income and immigrant communities. The “piece-meal” approach of many efforts, focusing on one issue, is not sufficient to overcome systemic barriers to healthy environments and local economic opportunities.

Green Zones use a holistic approach to neighborhood transformation. They shift away from fighting community health threats one-by-one to a more comprehensive approach based on principles of justice and sustainability.

Core Principles: Community-Led

Green Zones are grounded in an authentic, community-based planning and visioning process that gives residents an opportunity to articulate visions for their neighborhoods. This provides a clear platform of community-identified needs, amplifies the voice of residents, and provides a road map for Green Zone development.

Every organization featured in this report works directly with residents in highly impacted communities, and they all have used a range of strategies to engage community members in Green Zone development. Whether it is community-based surveys, regular member meetings, local hearings, or leadership training, Green Zones lift up the voices and visions of residents first and foremost.

Green Zones build long-term opportunities for community development. A challenge in doing so is ensuring that new developments benefit existing residents, and the inspirational new projects in Green Zones don't push out the very people who helped create them. That is why many of the Green Zones are fostering community control of resources and projects, through a range of innovative initiatives, from land trusts to locally-owned cooperatives.

These forms of community governance and management not only develop local capacity and assets, but they can also be safeguards to unintended negative consequences of neighborhood-level transformation.





Core Principles: Solution-Oriented

Green Zone communities should be models for what community-led transformation can look like. The Green Zone campaigns presented in this report together advance multiple solutions, including pollution reduction, transitioning off fossil fuels, affordable housing, local jobs and training, open green space and recreation areas, access to healthy food, infrastructure equity, and preservation of community culture.

Building economic opportunities that provide environmentally sustainable, living wage jobs for long-time residents is a core component of Green Zones.

It goes hand-in-hand with our vision for reduced pollution. Many of the Green Zones featured in this report are finding innovative ways to “green up” businesses. This

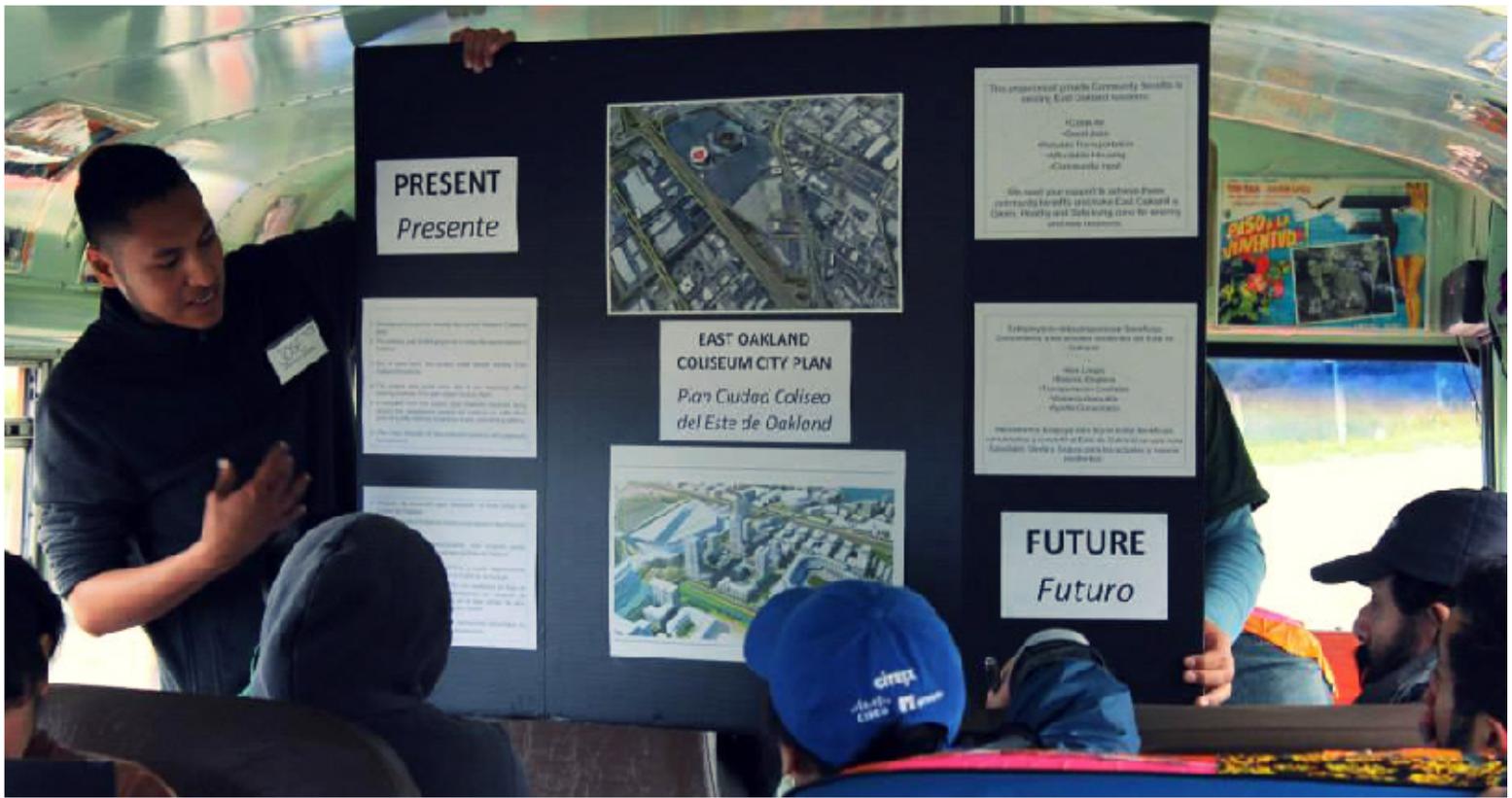
effort looks different in each place; in Los Angeles, the Clean Up Green Up campaign will facilitate the process for businesses to adopt greener practices. In San Francisco, PODER is developing completely new, worker-owned cooperatives. In National City, Environmental Health Coalition is seeking to phase-out polluting businesses while simultaneously developing a new, green industrial park that is away from homes and schools. Green Zone communities are forging new, local, living economies that are inextricably linked to the overall vision for environmental health and justice.

Core Principles: Collaborative

When reading each of the Green Zone profiles, the depth of partnerships in every local campaign stands out. From local coalitions like the L.A. Collaborative for Environmental Health and Justice or the Richmond Environmental Justice Coalition, to task forces and working groups that bring together community-based organizations with local, state, and federal agencies, implementing Green Zones requires multi-faceted partnerships. Green Zones seek to implement big changes, and no one organization can do it alone.



Photo by Warren Hill



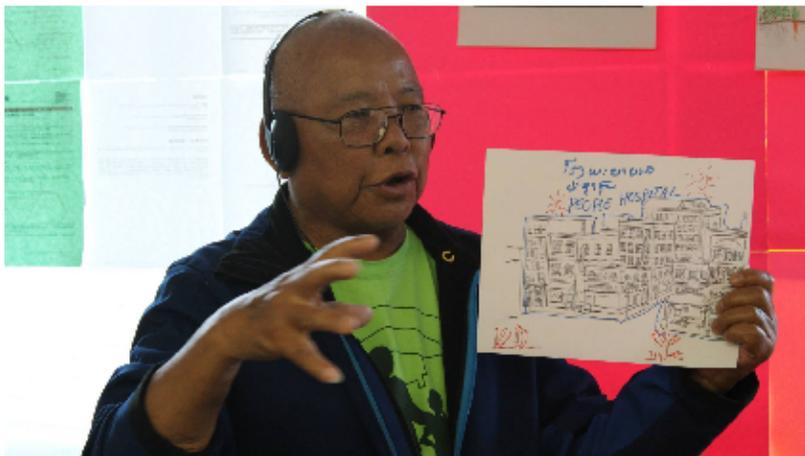
Growing the Statewide Movement for Green Zones

From San Diego to the Inland and Central Valleys, and from Los Angeles to the Bay Area, the efforts outlined in this report are demonstrating how toxic hotspots can be transformed into healthy communities.

Environmental justice communities are taking the health of their neighborhoods and environment into their own hands. Green Zones are advancing comprehensive, community-led solutions. With this integrated approach to transformation, communities can address the long-standing environmental justice issues they face. It is a new strategy to achieve healthy environments and thriving, local and sustainable development that all communities deserve.



Photo Courtesy of Environmental Health Coalition



Ultimately, Green Zones is not just an opportunity for low-income communities and communities of color to live in healthy, thriving neighborhoods. It is an opportunity for all of California and the country to begin implementing the just, sustainable policies that are needed to face the changing climate and changing world. Green Zones can become a model for strengthening local economies, environments, and democracies across California and the country.

GREEN ZONES ACROSS CALIFORNIA



iPODER!
Shaping new equitable development opportunities and neighborhood assets that will benefit residents.

APEN
ASIAN PACIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK

CBE

Asian Pacific Environmental Network & Communities for a Better Environment
Working toward a just transit on from an extractive and exploitative economy to a local living economy.

LEADERSHIP COUNSEL
FOR JUSTICE & ACCOUNTABILITY

Winning new land use policies that address the needs of residents most burdened by pollution.

CBE

Communities for a Better Environment
Changing local zoning to healthier land use options to ensure that public land is used for public good.

CRPE

Center on Race, Poverty, and the Environment
Improving community planning, increasing investments, and improving infrastructure in small, rural communities.

clean UP

Reducing and preventing pollution to revitalize neighborhoods and support businesses to green up.

Wilmington:
Communities for a Better Environment

Boyle Heights:
Unión de Marineros

Pacoima:
Pacoima Beautiful

Communities for a Safe Environment

CBE **CRPE**

East Yard Communities

East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice
Preventing toxic exposure, reducing existing impacts, revitalizing local economic opportunities, and reinvesting in infrastructure.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH COALITION

Creating community-based land use plans that reduce pollution, protect health and the environment.

C · C · A · E · J

Center for Community Action & Environmental Justice
Implementing community-based solutions to high levels of pollution and incompatible land use policies.

CalEnviroScreen 2.0

A NEW TOOL TO ADVANCE GREEN ZONES AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

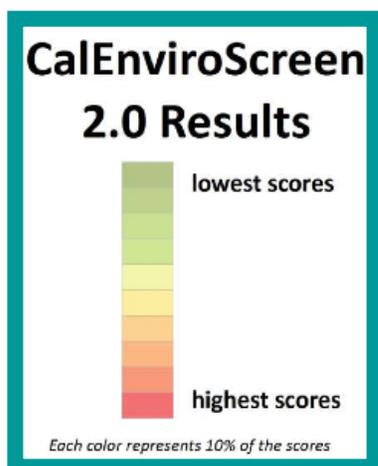
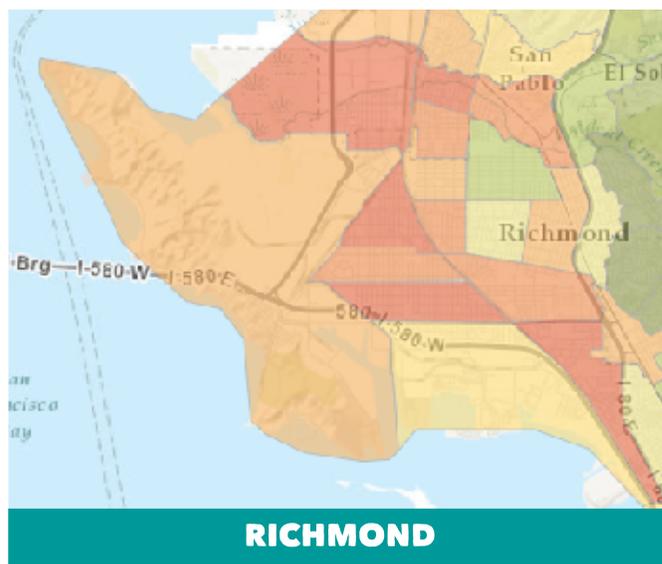
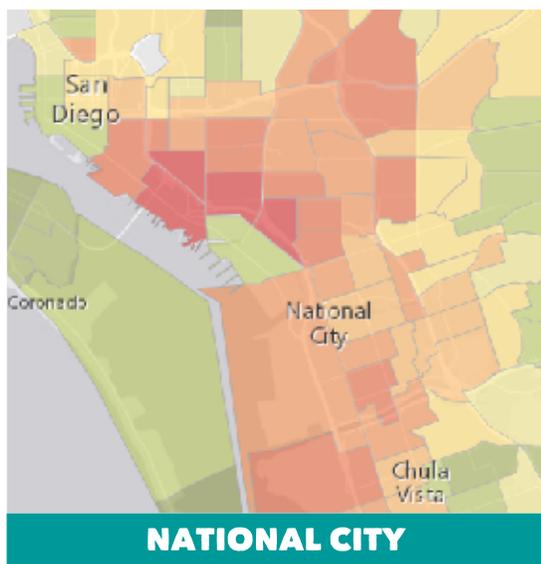
The California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), after years of input from community organizers and advocates, has developed a cumulative impact screening tool called California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool: CalEnviroScreen 2.0. The tool identifies highly impacted areas that face a combination of environmental burdens, public health stressors, and socioeconomic issues.

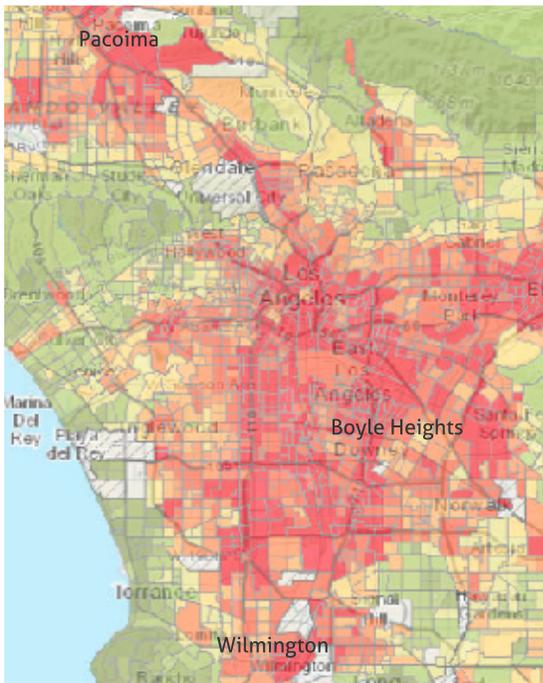
CalEnviroScreen 2.0 uses 19 indicators to provide a statewide ranking for all 8,000 census tracts in California. The higher the total score, the higher the burden. Communities with high CalEnviroScreen 2.0 scores have a high *cumulative impact* of pollution, population characteristics that make residents more susceptible to the negative effects of toxic emissions, and socioeconomic stressors that can be exacerbating factors, such as poverty.

Green Zones recognizes that everyone can breathe easier and live better when conditions for those most impacted are improved. However, it can be difficult for policy makers to identify overburdened communities. CalEnviroScreen 2.0 provides one clarified system to identify environmental justice communities. With it, we can effectively link these identified communities to visionary Green Zone policies and direct a variety of resources and programs into the areas that need it the most.

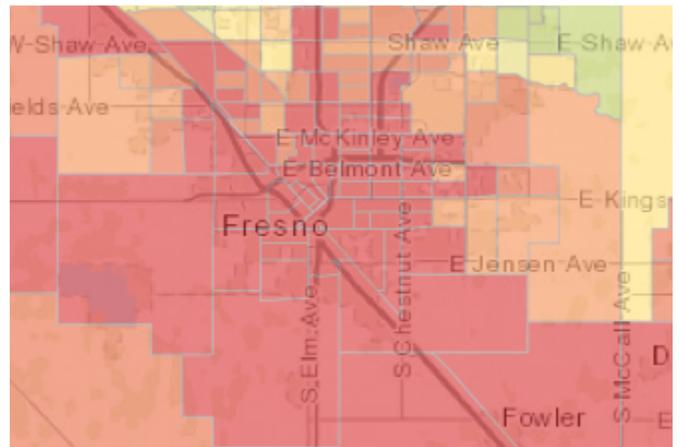
The below CalEnviroScreen 2.0 maps show each of the neighborhoods where the Green Zones profiled in this report are located. As you can see, the vast majority are located in highly impacted Census Tracts.

More about CalEnviroScreen2.0 can be found at: <http://oehha.ca.gov/ej/ces2.html>

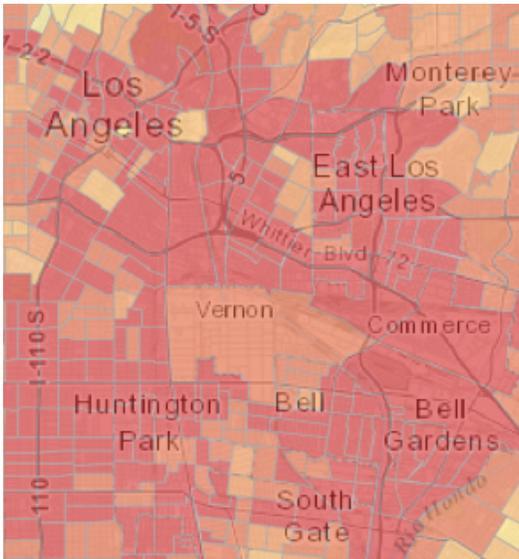




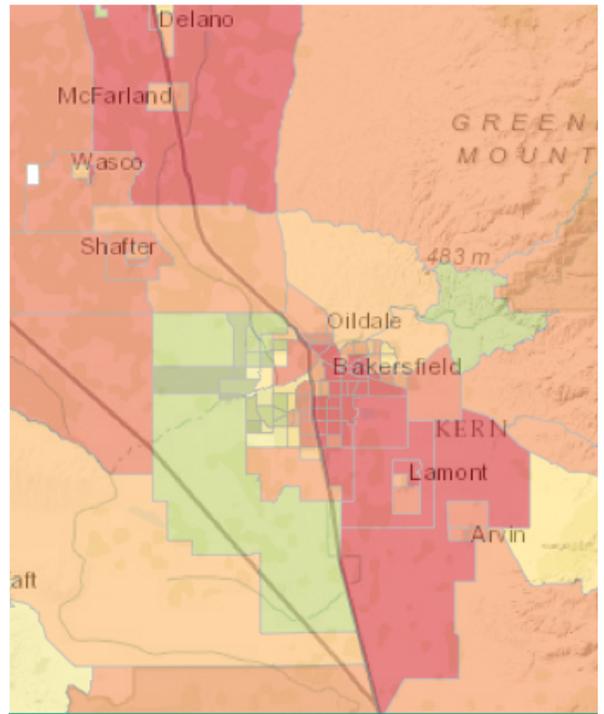
**PACOIMA
BOYLE HEIGHTS
WILMINGTON**



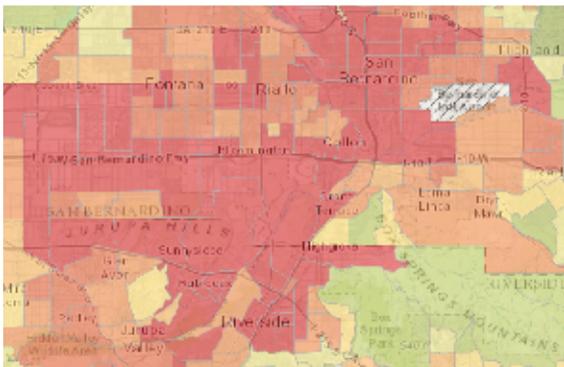
FRESNO



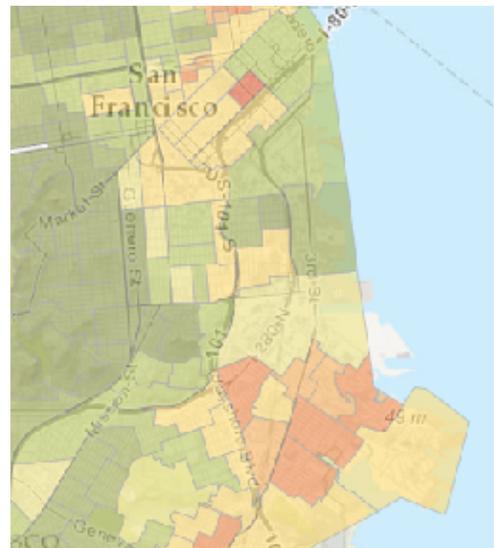
COMMERCE



SOUTHERN SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY



INLAND VALLEY



SAN FRANCISCO



Photo Courtesy of PODER

Transforming a Toxic Hotspot with Community-Led Solutions

San Francisco's Mission District is the heart of the city's working class Latino community. In the Northeast area of the Mission District, land use planning policies have prioritized expensive condominium and retail spaces, often pushing out long-time residents and the small, locally-owned stores and the sources of income they provide for residents. This contributes to ongoing gentrification in San Francisco by raising the cost of living and pricing out low-income families and renters.

The Excelsior District in Southeast San Francisco is a diverse and growing community of predominantly working class people of color. The area is home to the city's two major freeways. In San Francisco, 88 percent of the people living near the freeways are people of color and the Excelsior has had the highest overall number of people hospitalized for asthma for 6 years in a row. It has been historically neglected and under-represented in City Hall. Up until a few years ago, the district received little to no direct affordable housing and workforce development investments from the City of San Francisco.

People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights (PODER) envisions a community where everyday people are the planners of their own



neighborhoods. They have been working with residents in San Francisco's Mission and Excelsior Districts to create new equitable development opportunities that will directly benefit residents. PODER and local residents have been organizing to reclaim public lands for neighborhood assets such as parks and open space, affordable housing, urban agriculture, and worker/community cooperatives. PODER believes in equitable development that is accessible and affordable for everyone regardless of immigration status, is protective of public health and the environment, and includes community based governance and stewardship. PODER uses people-powered planning, town hall forums, and in-depth community surveying and organizing to achieve this vision.

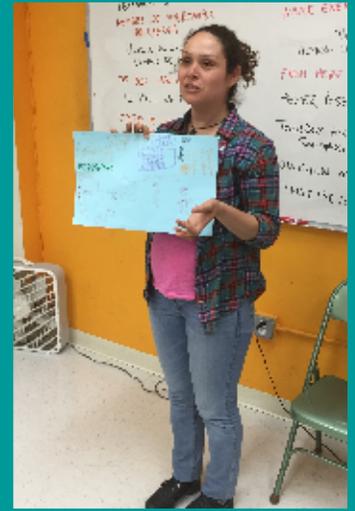


"Growing up in an immigrant family in San Francisco's Mission District, PODER was my outlet to express myself completely and honestly. It was also a way of giving back."

Edgar Molina
PODER Member

"As a member of PODER, I met with people that are creating immigrant-led worker-owned cooperatives. I think there should be a neighborhood center that does this right here in my neighborhood. Those most in need can get ahead by working with one another, so we can stop working for exploitative bosses".

Lourdes Rodriguez
PODER Member



Building Solutions From the Ground Up

PODER is creating new people-powered equitable development opportunities in both the Mission and Excelsior Districts. In response to the Mission District's housing affordability crisis, PODER is working with the City to identify public and private sites that can be acquired for affordable housing development. They are actively organizing against displacement and have also secured the development of new affordable housing, as well as a park and garden, at 17th and Folsom. They are also the stewards of another 2,700 square-foot garden and cultural space.

The people-powered vision in the Excelsior District has centered on equitable development of two sites: an urban farm in the local Crocker Amazon Park, and a mixed-use affordable housing development. Youth in PODER's Urban Campesinos program are engaging local residents to develop a farm design that maximizes green space and local food production. The farm is expected to break ground in 2016 under PODER's management.

PODER has also joined forces with other community-based organizations in the neighborhood through the Communities United for Health and Justice (CUHJ) alliance. CUHJ is moving forward a mixed-use affordable housing development in the Excelsior at the Balboa Park BART Station Upper Yard. Instead of relying on a developer to lead the design process, CUHJ has

engaged over 300 community members in face-to-face community surveys to determine priorities around affordability, community-based development, public space, healthy development, and community-based decision-making and self-governance.

For PODER, building neighborhood assets and fostering equitable development also includes creating innovative, community-based models for meeting economic needs that simultaneously build networks of support. In addition to the Upper Yard development, PODER and other neighborhood partners are also creating a culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate workforce hub in the neighborhood, which is set to open in early 2016.

The organization has launched a political education and leadership development series on community and worker-owned cooperatives and is supporting youth-led social enterprises. One example is the Bicis del Pueblo initiative, which provides free bikes and maintenance workshops to youth in San Francisco.

PODER's Green Zones efforts counter the gentrification pressures in San Francisco impacting the Mission and Excelsior neighborhoods by fostering people-powered equitable development that benefits local residents and nurtures a healthy, local, living economy.

People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights organizes Latino immigrant families to address environmental injustices and implement solutions to achieve healthy, sustainable communities. PODER works in San Francisco's Mission and Excelsior Districts on community-based campaigns and projects in collaboration with neighborhood-based organizations, government agencies, and academic institutions, to achieve change. www.podersf.org



Richmond

ASIAN PACIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK COMMUNITIES FOR A BETTER ENVIRONMENT

Photo by Shadia Fayne Wood

Transforming a Toxic Hotspot with Community-Led Solutions

Richmond, a city with a population of almost 90 percent people of color, has faced a legacy of environmental racism, blight and economic divestment for decades. Contra Costa County, where the city is located, has the second highest concentration of heavy industry in the state, and the City of Richmond lies in the shadows of the 3,000 acre Chevron Oil Refinery. The refinery processes 240,000 barrels of oil per day and is the largest greenhouse gas emitter in California. The burden of pollution has led to severe consequences in air quality, public health, and safety.

Bad policies have allowed high-emission, low-job industries to concentrate in Richmond to steal the health and wealth of local residents. Children in Richmond are twice as likely to have asthma as compared to children in the rest of the state, and there are higher rates of low birth weight babies, cancer, and respiratory illnesses. The city has also been hit hard by foreclosures.

Despite these conditions, community groups in Richmond are advancing innovative community-led solutions to build strong and resilient communities. As the first majority people of color city in the nation to have Community Choice Energy and a progressive City Council majority, Richmond is poised to become a thriving Green Zone.



Photos by Ryan Sin

APEN standing up for jobs, health, safety and community benefits at a Richmond Planning Commission Hearing.

Building Solutions From the Ground Up

The Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN) and Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) anchor the Green Zones campaign in Richmond. Working with the Richmond Environmental Justice Coalition (REJC) of labor, health, business, housing, and community advocates, they are building a “Just Transition” from an extractive and exploitative economy to a local living economy that supports the well-being of families, empowers people, cleans the environment, and creates safe and healthy neighborhoods. REJC is building a people-powered cooperative economy that puts residents back to work with sustainable, living wage jobs. By partnering with unions to build working class power in the clean energy economy, REJC is ensuring that community members in Richmond are united in the fight for community ownership and worker-directed enterprises. They are also developing sustainable demonstration projects that highlight models of Just Transition, such as community solar cooperatives.

Community leaders on the frontlines of pollution themselves are developing these innovative solutions. Lipo Chanthanasak, an APEN member and Richmond resident, was named by the White House as a Champion of Change for Climate Resilience in recognition of his leadership and organizing efforts. APEN and CBE are creating curriculum on the Just Transition framework for their leadership development programs to continue growing the political consciousness and leadership of community residents. By working to institute community governance over key resources such as housing, energy, water, waste, and public land, APEN and CBE envision the creation of councils that ensure community control over public resources. This vision for community leadership and ownership is at the heart of the Green Zones work in Richmond.

Richmond is a Green Zone, building Just Transition projects that will revitalize the city by investing in community innovation and governance, while fostering local resiliency.

Asian Pacific Environmental Network is one of the few organizations in the country explicitly developing the leadership and power of low-income Asian immigrant and refugee communities to fight for environmental, social, and economic justice. APEN is building new models of development, land use, and resource allocation in Richmond and Oakland, and across the state, to bring fundamental changes to our economic and social institutions to promote healthy, green, just communities. www.apen4ej.org

Communities for a Better Environment works in working class Latino and African American communities of Oakland, Richmond, Wilmington, and cities of Southeast Los Angeles County. CBE combines community grassroots organizing, science-based advocacy and legal intervention into a uniquely effective strategy to successfully impact change and improve the quality of lives for the residents. www.cbecal.org



Stephanie Hervey, CBE Member

"When I first came to the Bay Area, I didn't know a lot about environmental injustice. I knew about pollution and knew it was something that we had to pay attention to. When I got to Richmond and there was an explosion at Chevron, that's when I realized I had to do something about this, that I was not going to sit and let some big corporation just pollute the air and walk away without remedy or accountability. That's when I started to get involved with Communities for a Better Environment. CBE really taught me a lot about policy making. They took me into the trenches of grassroots work, seeing people directly impacted, connect with them, share our stories and see how we're connected. One of the solutions that we've been working on is implementing the Green Zone. The Green Zone is really important because it's a protective zone for vulnerable communities who suffer disproportionately from climate change. We need to feel confident that we have the answers within ourselves and that we don't need anyone telling us. We're on the frontlines. We have a vision so we also have the solution."



Transforming a Toxic Hotspot with Community-Led Solutions

East Oakland is a vibrant community with a largely Latino and African American population. It is also a highly industrialized area. The 880 freeway traverses the heart of the neighborhood, carrying diesel trucks laden with goods from the Port of Oakland, which is the fifth busiest container port in the nation, that spew high amounts of toxic air contaminants daily. Other pollution-producing industrial facilities, such as the AB&I Foundry, sit right next to homes. As a result, East Oakland has one of the highest asthma hospitalization rates in Alameda County, with children under five especially hard-hit.

In the Elmhurst neighborhood of East Oakland, Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) is working with residents to change the long-standing patterns of poor land-use. CBE works with community leaders to make the connections between land use, pollution, and health impacts that inform their Green Zones work. Using a range of strategies, such as community-based participatory air monitoring, alliance-building, and organizing, CBE is working with residents to develop initiatives that will implement community-led visions for an equitable, healthy and resilient community.



CBE members demonstrate how to monitor air quality at AB&I during a Land Use and Built Environment Tour of East Oakland.

Building Solutions From the Ground Up

In order to revitalize East Oakland, CBE is working on changing local zoning to promote healthier land use options that ensures public land is used for public good. For years, CBE has worked with residents to document the impacts of diesel trucking on local health and air quality using community-led data collection and research. In July 2015, the City of Oakland passed an ordinance that established new truck routes to limit the residential areas that diesel trucks pass through in East Oakland. CBE has also been working to prevent new toxic facilities from coming into the neighborhood, such as a proposed mega-crematorium. These efforts reduce local emissions, improve air quality, and provide benefits to local residents.

CBE works in collaboration with diverse stakeholders and partners such as the California Endowment's East Oakland Building Healthy Communities Initiative. As the chair of the Land Use Committee, CBE launched a partnership with the City of Oakland and the Alameda County Department of Public Health to develop new Healthy Development Guidelines for the City of Oakland. The guidelines will help city planners evaluate whether new developments in East Oakland and throughout the City truly protect and benefit community health and the environment.

CBE is also working with residents and other local organizations to develop a community-based plan through the Elmhurst Neighborhood Planning Initiative. This effort has included two years of community meetings and participatory mapping to address the

challenges, and advance the vision, neighborhood assets, and opportunities identified by local residents for better air quality and a cleaner environment.

Coliseum City, a massive sports complex in East Oakland, has emerged as a major focus of land use struggles in the area. The City of Oakland is planning to sell hundreds of acres of public land to a developer to build three new sports venues, thousands of new homes, and nearly 8 million square feet of urban retail and office space near a public transit stop. CBE and other community-based organizations, including a broad base of labor, youth, faith, housing and transportation advocates, are working to ensure the Coliseum City Development Plan includes community benefits to East Oakland residents.

CBE's Green Zones work is also addressing the shortage of green space, healthy food options, and urban agriculture for local youth and residents. They have facilitated a unique partnership between the City of Oakland Tassafaronga Recreation Center and Acta Non Verba Youth Urban Farm. The farm broke ground in 2010 and is located just behind the recreation center's baseball field. The farm offers residents and children with a safe outdoor space to garden and learn about the food system. During the spring and summer, the farm offers day camps to hundreds of youth in East Oakland.

Through collaboration with the City of Oakland and community leaders, CBE's Green Zone efforts provide East Oakland residents with a voice in community planning decisions that can transform their city into a healthy, thriving, and resilient home for everyone.



Esther Goolsby is an East Oakland resident and long-time member of Communities of a Better Environment. She recognizes that the Coliseum City development will dramatically change her beloved city and organizes to defend the heart and soul of Oakland. With hundreds of acres of public land in East Oakland being developed with millions of dollars of public funds, Esther and CBE members are organizing to ensure that the any new development in Oakland serves the public good.

Esther Goolsby, CBE Member

Communities for a Better Environment works in working class Latino and African American communities of Oakland, Richmond, Wilmington, and cities of Southeast Los Angeles County. CBE combines community grassroots organizing, science-based advocacy and legal intervention into a uniquely effective strategy to successfully impact change and improve the quality of lives for the residents. www.cbecal.org



Photo Courtesy of Leadership Counsel

Transforming a Toxic Hotspot with Community-Led Solutions

Fresno and many of California's agriculturally rich regions are also some of the lowest income regions of the state. In the San Joaquin Valley, families are exposed to environmental hazards, left with water too filthy to drink and wastewater oozing from dilapidated septic systems.

For decades, the neighborhoods of Southeast and Southwest Fresno have been an unhealthy mix of homes and industry, including the notorious Darling International rendering plant, which has operated for years without proper permits.

Despite these challenges, the San Joaquin Valley has a long and rich history of community activism among residents working to bring positive change to their communities, hold decision-makers accountable, and create opportunities for a bright future for their children. These communities draw strength from their incredible racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity and their immigrant roots from countries around the world.



Darling International Rendering Plant in West Fresno.

Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability works in Southeast Fresno, Southwest Fresno, Calwa, and disadvantaged unincorporated communities throughout the Central Valley. In Fresno, Leadership Counsel is partnering with residents and advocates to transform neighborhoods into a thriving Green Zone where residents can live in safe and healthy neighborhoods.



"Where we live determines how we live and also how long we'll live. If we're surrounded by industrial facilities that impact our health, it shortens our life span and plays havoc with our kids' life span. If people have jobs and are able to take care of themselves, have clean water, clean air, and a decent place to live, they have better outcomes all around. Everybody deserves that."

Mrs. Mary Curry,
Chair of Concerned Citizens of West Fresno

Building Solutions From the Ground Up

The 2014 Fresno General Plan update process provided an opportunity to address resident needs in overburdened areas. Together with the Fresno Building Healthy Communities Initiative, Leadership Counsel held numerous community forums and workshops to determine resident priorities for land use changes that would lead to less polluted, healthier and more affordable neighborhoods.

Through this outreach effort, the coalition identified several key issues in the community: the overconcentration of industrial and other polluting land uses; the need for increased investments in South Fresno neighborhoods; and more access to affordable housing throughout the City.

The Industrial Compatibility Assessment in Fresno is one of the first efforts to address the toxic mix of industrial and residential land uses that plague Southeast and Southwest Fresno. The assessment will examine whether it is compatible to zone industrial and heavy commercial facilities next to homes, schools and other sensitive land uses. It will then create a plan to address any incompatibilities through tools such as rezoning, facility relocation, and neighborhood greening. Leadership Counsel recently won a new policy in the Fresno General Plan to conduct the Industrial Compatibility Assessment, and is now seeking political

support from the City to partner on the project. In addition to the assessment, Leadership Counsel is working to protect community health by advocating for improved permitting standards in Fresno's development code for siting and expanding facilities. The new standards would also include a strengthened public process that is responsive to community needs, and support more affordable housing development throughout the City. This work builds off organizing and community actions to oppose the siting of new industrial land uses in South Fresno neighborhoods and long-term community advocacy, including pending litigation, for the City to require the Darling International rendering plant to comply with the law.

Leadership Counsel organized residents, arranged meetings with local decision-makers and effectively used the media to advance their land use goals. As a result, they even succeeded in changing land use designations in and around low-income neighborhoods of color from industrial to less intensive uses, including retail and residential. Leadership Counsel's community-led planning efforts in Southeast and Southwest Fresno will improve the entire region, and create new standards and policies that will benefit the neighborhoods most burdened by polluting land uses.

Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability based in the San Joaquin and East Coachella Valley mobilizes community voices, advocates for sound policies, and eradicates injustice to promote equal access to opportunity regardless of race, income, and place. www.leadershipcounsel.org



Southern San Joaquin Valley

CENTER ON RACE, POVERTY & THE ENVIRONMENT

Photo by Brooke Anderson

Transforming a Toxic Hotspot with Community-Led Solutions

The Central Valley region has a long history of activism as the birthplace of the farmworker rights movement, led by Cesar Chavez. This legacy remains evident today as residents in the small, close-knit communities that dot the landscape are committed to working together to improve the health and vitality of the region.

Unfortunately, rural communities throughout California's Southern San Joaquin Valley (Kern, Kings, and Tulare counties) face significant challenges to healthy lives and neighborhoods. Many of these communities have struggled with years of disinvestment from local government and lack access to basic infrastructure, including clean drinking water and efficient sewer systems. While serving as the agricultural center of the nation, the San Joaquin Valley faces deep poverty, food insecurity, and unemployment.

Kern, Kings, and Tulare counties have significantly greater percentages of poor people and people of color than the state of California. In Shafter, for example, the population is 80 percent Latino and 20 percent of the population is below the federal poverty line.

These communities have been heavily impacted by environmental hazards including exposure to pesticides, some of worst air quality in the nation, and over 90 percent of California's fracking operations.

Through the Forgotten Voices campaign, the Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment (CRPE) is working with residents to improve community planning, increase investments, and improve infrastructure in the communities of Allensworth, Arvin, Delano, Ducor, Lamont, Greenfield, and Wasco. CRPE has helped form local community groups in these areas and provides support, training, advising, educational workshops in the community, and strategic advocacy assistance for community-led policy recommendations.

Building Solutions From the Ground Up

CRPE is working with community members to reclaim resources to revitalize their neighborhoods. Hundreds of thousands of families in California do not have access to safe drinking water in their homes, schools, or workplaces. For decades, these communities have been continuously and deliberately excluded from full participation in their local water decision-making governance.

In recent years, however, community residents have begun to challenge these systems of disempowerment. One example is in Delano, where CRPE is working with the local community group Guardians of Delano to obtain funding for new water and wastewater treatment plants to ensure clean drinking water and adequate sewage systems. CRPE and the Guardians of Delano are currently trying to find additional funding sources to cover the costs of water system upgrades so low-income residents don't see their utility rates rise.

The small town of Arvin is facing a similar crisis in infrastructure to meet basic needs. CRPE is working with residents to pressure the City and California Environmental Protection Agency to fund and construct new drinking water wells to replace the wells contaminated by a Superfund site.

Delano, Arvin, and many small towns need comprehensive, community-based planning. To address this need, CRPE is currently pushing for an update in the Kern County General Plan that would tackle some of the pressing community development needs of the Southern San Joaquin Valley.

Two critical issues CRPE and local residents hope to address through this process are restrictions on fracking, and defining alternative economic opportunities in the Valley.

California's Central Valley sits on one of the largest known oil reserves in the country and industry has been feverishly extracting this oil through fracking. This process consumes massive amounts of water and pollutes our air, soil and drinking water. In the Central Valley, fracking disproportionately impacts low-income communities and communities of color, and remains a largely unregulated practice in California. Over 90 percent of our state's toxic fracking wells are located in low-income Latino communities. CRPE is working with residents to ban fracking, which overwhelmingly occurs close to schools serving predominantly Latino students.

As CRPE and residents hope to phase fracking out, they are working to build alternative economic opportunities for the Valley's communities, such as community gardens, farmers markets, and food cooperatives. CRPE has already helped residents establish six gardens. These community gardens serve as incubators in which participants learn business skills and can eventually transition to farmworker-owned cooperatives. CRPE plans to develop local and regional distribution networks to increase community access to fresh, healthy, locally grown food.

CRPE's work demonstrates the rising potential of an entire region to become a Green Zone and how these critical efforts can provide communities with a wealth of support and resources to meet their basic needs.



Photo by Brooke Anderson

Rodrigo Romo works with CRPE members at the community garden in Shafter, which is 8 acres shared with 35 families and many low-income seniors. The garden is located right behind a school and helps teach kids how to eat healthy without pesticides. Rodrigo enjoys how the garden brings families together. Currently he is working with other community members to get the vegetables grown in the garden to be used by the school. For Rodrigo, the garden provides him with a place for relaxation and rehabilitation to recover from a recent injury, and a way to improve his health.

Rodrigo Romo

Communities for a Better Shafter

Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment works with Latino and immigrant communities in the San Joaquin Valley, including unincorporated, rural areas. CRPE's strategies include incubating community organizations, training leaders to identify community needs, and empowering them to achieve their goals. www.crpe-ej.org



Photo Courtesy of CCAEJ

Transforming a Toxic Hotspot with Community-Led Solutions

The Inland Valley region of San Bernardino and Riverside counties was once a major center of agriculture, citrus, dairy, and wine making. Today, the Inland Valley is home to some of the most extensive rail and highway systems in the country, including three air cargo terminals, and highways and railways connecting the Valley to the nearby ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. These two ports handle one-quarter of all imports coming into the U.S. 70 percent of this is transported through the Inland Valley on diesel trucks. In addition, manufacturing and industrial facilities, warehouses, and distribution centers have all moved into the area over the past two decades.

Without appropriate land use planning, the region has been transformed into an area where polluting industries are sited right next to homes, diesel trucks crowd residential streets, and neighbors cannot use their backyards because of overwhelming noise and fumes. San Bernardino is ranked as one of the counties with the worst air pollution in the U.S. The area is notorious for having some of the highest rates of asthma, coronary heart disease and diabetes.

The Mira Loma Village Area in the city of Jurupa Valley has the highest level of particulate pollution in the nation, leading to the weakest lung capacity and slowest lung growth of children studied in Southern California. The Westside of San Bernardino has the highest cancer risk of

any rail yard in the state, and both areas are home to at least one Superfund site.

The Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCAIEJ) is working to implement community-led solutions in the city of Jurupa Valley and on the Westside of San Bernardino. Over the past six years, CCAIEJ has developed a model task force program that brings community residents, federal, state, regional, and local agencies together to engage in critical problem solving on land use issues. Based on the community platform developed by the local residents, the various agencies add their regulatory authority, enforcement resources, and ideas to identify and implement comprehensive solutions.



Warehouses surrounding a residential area in the City of Jurupa Valley, sharing the fence with residential homes.

Building Solutions From the Ground Up

Working through the task force, CCAEJ and residents have been able to develop solutions to address the health impacts of pollution and poor development in the Inland Valley. Each community has developed a Platform for Action, outlining their areas of concern and proposed solutions.

The focus of the Green Zones campaign in the Jurupa Valley has been the adoption of an Environmental Justice Element in the city's General Plan. The General Plan is uplifting the principles of equity by identifying and implementing projects that can improve unhealthy land use planning in the area. One of the first efforts of the General Plan has been tackling the high rates of truck traffic in the area. Currently there are more than 800 diesel trucks per hour passing by a residential area. Through resident participation and discussion, the city is working to develop a new truck route that will direct traffic away from residential homes. The city is also working to find solutions that protect people from poor air quality, including setting new homes farther back from freeways, installing vegetative barriers, and high performance air filtration units in every home.

In San Bernardino, CCAEJ has been working to reduce the massive public health threat from giant natural gas containers stored in the midst of a residential neighborhood and across the street from an elementary school. Residents won a major victory in getting commitment from the owners to relocate the potentially explosive 80,000 gallon tanks away from the homes. Simultaneously, CCAEJ has been working to provide relief for the health disparities that San Bernardino residents struggle with. CCAEJ worked with Loma Linda University to interview more than 900 residents and 750 elementary school students as part of a comprehensive health study examining the impacts of living next to a rail yard. As a result of the study, Westside San Bernardino now has a free Mobile Health Clinic for county residents and a Breath Mobile that assesses the lung function of children ages 18 and under.

Other task force successes include installing high performance air filtration units at schools in near rail yards, getting local businesses to comply with their permits, and installing truck anti-idling signs and conducting trainings on anti-idling laws.

CCAIEJ's work with the task force has served as a comprehensive model for addressing environmental justice issues and developing community driven public policy, moving the Inland Valley toward a thriving Green Zone.

Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice works in the Inland Valley of California, primarily Riverside and San Bernardino County areas. The Center is actively seeking opportunities to bring together groups of people working on a variety of social, economic and environmental justice issues. We believe that by exploring the interconnections among issues and seeking common ground for cooperative actions, we enhance the ability to create fundamental change. Our mission is bringing people together to improve our social and natural environment in order to create safe, toxic free places to live, work, learn and play. www.ccae.org



Ada Trujillo, CCAEJ Member

Ada Trujillo and her husband are residents of the West Side of San Bernardino, raising their family of 3 small children. Ada and her family, like many other residents live across the street from the refueling station that fuels the public bus system in San Bernardino County. On a daily basis the station is congested by bus traffic going in and out of the facility. Public transit is important to reduce air pollution but having a refueling station that houses over 80,000 gallons of natural gas tanks in a residential area and across the street from the neighborhood's elementary school is dangerous. Ada's children go to that elementary school. The safety of the West Side is at stake. Residents, along with Ada and her family, joined forces and won a commitment from the county and the refueling station's board of directors to move the tanks away from Ada's neighborhood.



Photo Courtesy of Environmental Health Coalition

Transforming a Toxic Hotspot with Community-Led Solutions

Old Town National City on the Westside of National City just south of San Diego, is home to predominantly Chicano and Latino families, some recent immigrants, and some who have been living in the neighborhood for generations. Old Town National City is a family-oriented neighborhood. Local residents have a strong sense of connection and collective responsibility to improve the quality of life in their neighborhood.

Unfortunately, for decades, land use planners have treated Old Town National City as a dumping ground for polluting industries and warehouses. Walking around National City, you pass over 35 auto body and repair shops in a 70 block area. Combined with other industrial uses, approximately 32,000 pounds of toxic air contaminants are released per year. Not surprisingly, asthma rates are disproportionately high in the neighborhood. There is a clear lack of green space and affordable housing.

Old Town is one of the poorest neighborhoods in National City, with a renter household median income of \$18,000, in contrast to an area income of \$63,000. Only 28 percent of residents own their homes, about half the country average. The community is a textbook example of how industries and people don't mix.

Through the Green Zones campaign, Environmental Health Coalition has been developing and implementing community-based land use planning improvements to address the unhealthy mix of industry and homes in Old Town.

For over 10 years, EHC has been working with local residents to develop, pass, and implement their neighborhood vision in partnership with the City. They have helped develop community leadership, making the residents of Old Town National City the experts on land use planning through tools such as neighborhood assessments, surveys, and conducting audits for industrial violations.

EHC also holds monthly Community Action Team meetings and engages in door knocking campaigns. Their Salud Ambiental Lideres Tomando Accion (SALTA) trainings educate residents on issues of leadership, energy, land use, climate justice, and transportation justice. EHC regularly organizes residents to show up at City Council and other decision-making venues to ensure the issues they care about are being addressed.

Building Solutions From the Ground Up

Through this people-led planning, EHC and the Old Town community developed a land use plan that reflects residents' aspirations for a healthy community. The "Westside Specific Plan," adopted in 2010, includes policies to protect the residential character of the neighborhood, improve environmental health conditions for residents, install pedestrian safety enhancement, and protect of the local Paradise Creek waterway. The Westside Specific Plan for Old Town National City will help ensure a vibrant healthy community with affordable housing, well serviced public transportation, safe pedestrian walkways, compatible land uses, and increased use of clean energy.

A cornerstone of the plan is rezoning in the area and the phase-out of unhealthy land uses such as auto body shops, which is being facilitated through an amortization ordinance adopted in 2006. However, EHC is working to ensure that Old Town and local residents do not lose the vital economic base that these small businesses provide. EHC has been working to develop a Green Industrial Auto Park away from the residential area, which would serve as an innovative, environmentally sound and economically viable destination for auto repair businesses phasing out of Old Town. It would also be a hub for the paint and auto body industry and would allow them to maintain their businesses in National City while protecting resident health in Old Town.

The Westside Specific Plan also included a number of visionary projects that are in different phases of implementation. In 2015, the Paradise Creek Affordable Housing Project received \$9.2 million in state funding for the construction of 201 units. The development, originally conceived as part of the plan, cleans up vacant land next to public transit, creates a public park and a creek restoration project, and builds biking and walking paths.

The Westside Specific Plan has also been a springboard for city-wide land use planning efforts. In 2011, National City adopted a full Environmental Justice element in its General Plan, the first city in California to do so. The element outlines a range of solutions to unhealthy land use patterns that address respiratory health and air quality.

EHC continues to advance community-led land use planning in National City, as well as the Barrio Logan, City Heights, and Sherman/Logan Heights neighborhoods in San Diego. These efforts ensure community members can determine their vision and values for building healthy neighborhoods.

Environmental Health Coalition works to improve the well-being of families and children in low-income communities of color in the San Diego/Tijuana region. EHC's integrated approach engages residents in meaningful civic participation. Through organizing, advocacy and leadership training, residents are empowered to determine their visions for their neighborhoods and achieve public policies that reflect their desired changes.

www.environmentalhealth.org



Lorena Chavez, EHC Member

Lorena Chavez has been involved with EHC since 2005, mostly because she lives in Old Town National City, where industry is mixed with residential land uses. This mixed zoning affects the health of the families living in Lorena's neighborhood since most of the industry there consists of auto body and paint shops. For Lorena, protecting the health of her three children is most important. She participated in the implementation of the Old Town Specific Plan which changed the land use for this area. The plan, approved in 2010 by the National City City Council, will no longer allow polluting industries into the community. Lorena has also participated in the Healthy Homes program, showing families how to make their homes toxic-free and energy efficient. She has been an active National City Community Action Team member and wants to continue being involved in making positive changes in her community.



Photo courtesy of EYCEJ

Transforming a Toxic Hotspot with Community-Led Solutions

The City of Commerce is one of the most concentrated sites of freight-related diesel pollution in the country, with four rail yards in the area. Every day approximately 47,000 diesel trucks drive on the I-710 freeway through the area in Southeast Los Angeles. The exposure from both mobile and stationary sources leaves the communities of Commerce vulnerable to large amounts of diesel exhaust, which increases the rate of cancer, asthma, and other respiratory illnesses for many local residents, including elders and young children.

The health issues from diesel traffic disproportionately impact people of color. Commerce is comprised of 96.9 percent people of color, primarily Latina/o, with 17.9 percent below the poverty level, which is higher than the California state average. The city is also in the top 10 percent most impacted communities according to the California Environmental Protection Agency's cumulative impact screening tool, CalEnviroScreen 2.0. Despite these impacts, the community is close-knit, with extensive family networks that span several generations.

Since 2012, the Green Zones campaign in Commerce has been led by East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice (EYCEJ), a community-based organization. EYCEJ helped push the City of Commerce to start a Green Zones Policy Working Group. The Policy Working Group includes local residents, academic partners, businesses and labor representatives. It came together to develop a set of recommendations for strategies to prevent toxic exposure, reduce the level of existing impacts, revitalize local economic opportunities and generate jobs, and reinvest in infrastructure that supports community health and a better quality of life. The Working Group has focused on identifying additional land use limits and initial performance standards to reduce and prevent pollution, and promote revitalization.

Building Solutions From the Ground Up

In November 2013, with overwhelming support from local residents, Commerce City Council voted unanimously in favor of a Green Zones Policy that included the community solutions for reduction, reinvestment, and revitalization. EYCEJ is still pressing for the adoption of the “prevention” component and is pushing for the Council to consider an ordinance to change local zoning to be more protective of public health. The passage of the City Council resolution makes Commerce one of the first communities in the nation to have a Green Zones policy.

EYCEJ’s vision for a Green Zone in the City of Commerce includes supporting local businesses and developing good, green jobs. Towards this goal, EYCEJ recently released a comprehensive directory of local, regional, state, and federal programs available to help small and medium sized businesses save money by going green. It establishes a voluntary financial and technical assistance program called the “Green Zone Banner Program,” which includes financing, training, audits, and covering business start-up costs. The goal of this program is to improve the financial stability of existing businesses, improve worker health, increase performance and productivity, and provide financial assistance to reduce pollution and cost, and increase profit.

Given the high level of harmful emissions that come from diesel trucks in the City of Commerce, EYCEJ organized

members to engage in grassroots community research to develop a truck idling hot spot map. The Truck Truthing project engaged 15 youth members to conduct field surveys, where they identified truck idling hot spots and measured the frequency and duration of idling.

The Truck Truthing project directly informed the placement of brand new “No Idling Signs” to enforce rules that reduce the frequency of parked diesel trucks on busy streets throughout Commerce. EYCEJ members and staff presented the findings to the City of Commerce. Now, with the support of the California Air Resources Board, No Idling Signs are being put up at the recommended hot spots. The project is a partnership with the City of Commerce, the California Air Resources Board, and the Department of Toxic Substance Control.

EYCEJ is continuing to collaborate with the City of Commerce to educate truck drivers on the No Idling laws with handouts and door hangers around the hotspots where the new “No Truck Idling” signs are located. Reducing idling will lead to cleaner air and health benefits for local residents.

The Green Zone policies advanced by EYCEJ pave the way for other visionary community-led partnerships to implement vibrant and healthy communities.



Photo courtesy of EYCEJ

East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice is an environmental health and justice non-profit organization working towards a safe and healthy environment for communities that are disproportionately suffering the negative impacts of industrial pollution. EYCEJ promotes direct democratic decision-making and taking collective action for safe and healthy communities where we live, work, learn and play. www.eycej.org



Los Angeles

CLEAN UP GREEN UP

Photo Courtesy of LA Collaborative for Environmental Health and Justice

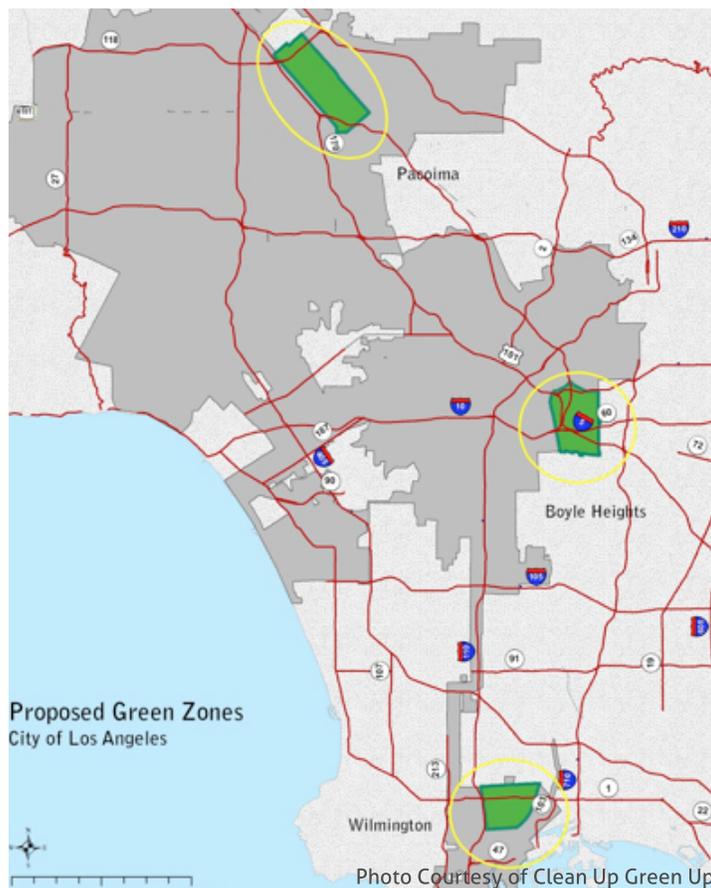
Transforming a Toxic Hotspot with Community-Led Solutions

The City of Los Angeles struggles with poor air quality, but some communities get a double dose. These neighborhoods are toxic hotspots, with an intense concentration of pollution sources adjacent to residential and sensitive areas such as schools, playgrounds, and elder care centers. The risk of pollution-related illness — asthma attacks, heart disease, respiratory distress, cancer, and premature death — is higher in these areas compared to many other areas of L.A.

Unfortunately, current land uses in Los Angeles allow families to live just over the fence from diesel truck depots, warehouses, rail yards and refineries. These land use patterns put pollution sources right in the backyard of residents.

Three heavily polluted Los Angeles neighborhoods — Boyle Heights, Pacoima and Wilmington — are working to transform their neighborhoods into safer, more vibrant communities by reducing and preventing further pollution. Grassroots groups from these toxic hotspots joined together in 2006 to form the L.A. Collaborative for Environmental Health and Justice, which includes Communities for a Better Environment, Coalition for a Safe Environment, Pacoima Beautiful, and Unión de Vecinos.

Together, members of the collaborative have developed the Clean Up Green Up (CUGU) Initiative. The goal of CUGU is to prevent the further concentration of environmental hazards in overburdened neighborhoods, reduce pollution, and help businesses clean up and green up their operations, while retaining and creating more jobs in the neighborhood.



Clean Up Green Up is comprised of three heavily-polluted neighborhoods: Pacoima, Boyle Heights, and Wilmington.

CUGU is a public health measure that would declare highly polluted toxic hotspot neighborhoods as environmental justice protection zones – “Green Zones.” Once designated as Green Zones, the City of Los Angeles will work to reduce pollution impacts through enhanced enforcement, coordinated inspections, more health-protective standards for new and expanded businesses, and stronger public participation from local residents.

A healthier community equals a healthier local business climate. A key element of CUGU is the creation of an Ombudsperson in the City of Los Angeles, who will assist local businesses in Green Zones comply with regulations and navigate the permitting system. CUGU also focuses on revitalizing neighborhoods by helping businesses access financial support and technical incentives, such as such as low-interest loans, energy audits and upgrades to help save on energy and water costs.

CUGU demonstrates that local planning and land use policies can address community health and sustainability. It is a pilot ordinance that could be applied in other heavily-polluted Los Angeles communities.

CUGU was developed through a community-based research and engagement process. Residents in each of the target communities documented the high levels of pollution and range of sources in the area. Through this “ground-truthing” process, residents looked not only at individual causes of pollution, but documented the concentration of many sources, large and small, that add up to create a cumulative health burden.

In early 2011, L.A. City Council directed the Department of City Planning to develop a draft Green Zones ordinance.



Photo Courtesy of Clean Up Green Up

Pacoima residents at a Clean Up Green Up workshop envisioning a cleaner and healthier neighborhood.



Photo Courtesy of LA Collaborative for Environmental Health and Justice

CBE Member showing their love for a clean green Wilmington.

The L.A. Collaborative has been working with the City Council, Planning Department and other agencies to move the measure forward. In May of 2015, the Department of City Planning released a Draft Ordinance. It includes measures to ensure that new and expanded businesses located within Green Zones use signage to deter diesel truck idling, implement new standards that will cover noise, and provide enclosures for air emissions to reduce smoke, dust, and fumes. The draft ordinance also includes citywide provisions to offer more protection for residents living near oil refineries, and supports a parallel regulatory measure in requiring mandatory air filters that minimize inhalation of carcinogens near freeways.

The L.A. Collaborative has worked to ensure that residents from proposed Green Zones are truly leading the effort. They have engaged residents and local businesses to review and comment on recommendations through public hearings and stakeholder meetings. Community leaders are the spokespeople for the campaign. Organizations have also focused on outreach to businesses, creating opportunities for feedback and input from a business perspective, while developing support for the measure.



Photo Courtesy of LA Collaborative for Environmental Health and Justice

CUGU members pack the LA City Council hearing.



Photo by Martha Matsuoka

Unión de Vecinos members with a LA City Councilmember.

As a result of this organizing, CUGU has gained major support as a cutting edge environmental justice policy. It is currently included in the City of Los Angeles' Health and Wellness Element of the General Plan and Mayor Garcetti's Sustainability Plan. More than 180 public health, environmental, faith-based, local business and community groups have endorsed the measure.

In June of 2015, an overwhelming majority of almost 200 residents in the Pacoima, Wilmington and Boyle Heights expressed their support for the policy at local hearings. The Draft Ordinance is making its way through the city process, but once approved, it will become part of the City's Municipal Planning and Zoning Code.

CUGU is a new model to reduce pollution in toxic hotspot communities. It is demonstrating that the movement for environmental justice is fighting local pollution, finding greener ways to improve businesses, and building a more clean, safe, and healthy environment.



Photo Courtesy of Warren Hill

Studying unhealthy land use patterns in Pacoima.

Clean Up Green Up is a cutting-edge policy that addresses both public health and economic well-being in Los Angeles communities that have long struggled to go green. www.cleanupgreenup.wordpress.com

Clean Up Green Up Proposed Zones



Boyle Heights

UNION DE VECINOS

Photo Courtesy of LA Collaborative for Environmental Health and Justice

Boyle Heights, located East of Downtown L.A., across from the Los Angeles River, is a community with rich history and culture. Historically, the area was one of the few neighborhoods where immigrant working class families could live in decent housing for affordable prices. The Boyle Heights community is 94 percent Latino and 77 percent renters, which is one of the highest population densities in the country.

Boyle Heights is bordered by multiple interstate highways, rail yards, auto shops, and factories. The area was once a stronghold of L.A.'s manufacturing economy. While manufacturing has declined in the past decades, leaving both contaminated sites and a loss in jobs, the area remains characterized by a mix of industrial and residential land uses. The East Los Angeles Interchange, which connects four major freeways and is located in Boyle Heights, is one of the busiest and most congested freeways in the U.S., carrying over 500,000 cars each day.

The concentration of pollution sources from these industrial facilities has created severe health risks for residents, such as asthma and cancer. There is a high prevalence of cardiovascular and respiratory disease, high obesity rates, and high rates of traffic-related injuries or deaths to pedestrians and cyclists.

Gentrification has also hit Boyle Heights hard. The area is just a few miles from Downtown L.A., and with the

"We want the support of our governmental leaders to take action and encourage business owners to prevent and reduce pollution, and revitalize and invest in our communities to be healthier with green companies and spaces."

Alma Salcido

UV Organizer with LA City Councilmember Jose Huizar



opening of a new metro stop in the area, it has become attractive to young professionals. This has led to increased pressures on overall housing prices, putting long-time residents at risk of displacement.

The Clean Up Green Up campaign is a chance to help existing businesses in the area become more environmentally friendly and work with residents to reduce air quality impacts.

La Unión de Vecinos is a network of neighborhood and building communities where working families get together to SEE the conditions of their neighborhood, REFLECT on the root causes for these conditions and ACT to bring about real, concrete change. www.uniondevecinos.net



Wilmington is a toxic hotspot in Los Angeles. Wilmington and the surrounding areas are host to the highest concentration of oil refineries in California. The community is also located next to the San Pedro Bay Port Complex, the largest and most polluting port complex in the country. Large quantities of goods moving in and out of the Long Beach and Los Angeles ports require a massive infrastructure of highways, busy roadways and rail. Often these transport corridors run through or adjacent too residential areas in Wilmington. In addition to the impacts of the ports, refineries, and other industrial operations, there are many other environmental hazards, such as oil drilling and contaminated land, that impact the health of community.

A quarter of residents in Wilmington live below the poverty line, and 90 percent of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino. Despite an enormous pollution burden and many other social challenges, Wilmington is home to a rich culture and a vibrant community. Residents have fought for and won nationally precedent-setting regulations and have pushed for cleaner operations by ports, refineries and other industries. The Clean Up Green Up Initiative is a unique opportunity to offer a much needed, additional layer of protection to the community in Wilmington. Clean Up Green Up strives to establish win-win partnerships among residents, businesses, and government agencies, and create more sustainable economic growth for a more resilient Wilmington.

Communities for a Better Environment works in working class Latino and African American communities of Oakland, Richmond, Wilmington, and cities of Southeast Los Angeles County. CBE combines community grassroots organizing, science-based advocacy and legal intervention into a uniquely effective strategy to successfully impact change and improve the quality of lives for the residents. www.cbecal.org

Coalition For A Safe Environment (CFASE) is a nonprofit community-based organization based in Wilmington, CA that seeks to improve environmental health and justice in the Harbor communities near the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. CFASE is involved in policy issues at all levels of government.

"I always wanted to do something to improve the quality of the air in my community, and now I have the chance to do it. As a volunteer with Communities for a Better Environment, we're working with the Clean Up Green Up Campaign, which is helping us to reduce pollution. We're preventing and reducing pollution in our community and other communities, to help make Wilmington become cleaner and greener."

Ana Cano
CBE Member

Clean Up Green Up Proposed Zones



Photo Courtesy of Pacoima Beautiful

In the community of **Pacoima**, in the San Fernando Valley, there is a place known as “Dismantler Row.” It is lined with metal recyclers, trucking yards, rock cutters, salvage yards, and auto body shops. The entire area of Pacoima has long been dominated by industry. The area is bordered by three freeways, a private airport that hosts diesel planes and helicopters, 7 active landfills, and multiple factories. There is also a railroad that has frequent traffic, bringing additional diesel emissions.

The cumulative impact of these pollution sources makes Pacoima one of the most heavily impacted communities in the state, according to the California Environmental Protection Agency’s cumulative impact screening tool CalEnviroScreen2.0. Residents suffer from high rates of asthma and a significant lack of open space and parks.

However, Pacoima is also a young, culturally vibrant community that is home to a rich history of indigenous and immigrant populations. It is 85 percent Latino and mostly working class. Recently, it has also become the center of an exciting public art movement that has resulted in colorful murals across the neighborhood. It is adjacent to the Angeles National Forest, providing a backdrop of mountains unlike any other in the City of Los Angeles.

While the burden of the pollution can often blur the beauty, Pacoima Beautiful and local residents are working together to create positive change through efforts such as the Clean Up Green Up campaign.

Pacoima Beautiful works to empower the Pacoima community through programs that provide environmental education, advocacy, and local leadership in order to foster a healthy and safe environment. www.pacoimabeautiful.org



Isaac Luna's business has operated in Pacoima for 43 years. He learned about Clean Up Green Up when organizers from Pacoima Beautiful invited local business owners to a workshop where Isaac and other entrepreneurs connected with state and local agencies who answered questions and provided resources to run cleaner, greener and more efficient operations.

Isaac Luna
Pacoima Community Member

Lessons Learned

INSIGHTS INTO SUCCESSFUL LOCAL GREEN ZONE CAMPAIGNS

Valuable advice from leaders who are developing and implementing the Green Zones framework: Daniela Simunovic, Environmental Health and Justice Program Manager, Liberty Hill Foundation and a coordinator for the Clean Up Green Up campaign, and Carolina Martinez, Policy Advocate, and Georgette Gómez, Associate Director, at Environmental Health Coalition.

Community Engagement is Essential

Clean Up Green Up: Community participation is a core aspect of the Los Angeles Collaborative for Environmental Health and Justice's vision for Green Zones. Our Clean Up Green Up policy is rooted in the experiences, research, and input of the diverse grassroots leaders of our member organizations. Community leaders have driven this process and are the heart of the initiative. Providing leaders the space to reflect on what Green Zones mean to them and to share their common experiences, has given them the sense that this policy is not just about their

neighborhood, but about creating a larger movement that will benefit the entire city.

National City: Community engagement has been key to Green Zones. Resident engagement in the planning process developed a vision for a much-needed healthy neighborhood, and is now working to implement the community's priorities. If you don't have the residents engaged, you're missing a key ingredient in the recipe. Green Zones must be resident driven to be authentic.

Community-Based and Academic Research Lay a Strong Foundation

Clean Up Green Up: We conducted a community-based participatory research project that identified environmental hazards in the community and their proximity to sensitive land uses such as homes, schools, and daycare facilities. These findings formed the basis of our Green Zones policy. Working with leading researchers and policy consultants with expertise in urban planning and facilitation strengthened our capacity to translate our vision into a concrete policy.

National City: After our SALTA leadership training residents conducted a community survey. Residents interviewed their neighbors and identified the need for affordable housing, move industrial uses away from residential areas, and preserve neighborhood character. These priorities helped outline EHC's work for the next 10 years. Tools like CalEnviroScreen also allow us to implement that vision since it makes a clear case for where resources should be invested.

Partnerships With Diverse Stakeholders are Strategic

Clean Up Green Up: It is important to develop strong working relationships with partner organizations, as well as with a diverse set of stakeholders. We invested significant time at the beginning to build consensus amongst our collaborative and develop a strategy that all our groups could agree on. Leveraging the strengths that each organization brings to the table is important to ensuring you have the capacity that you need to advance policy change. Non-traditional partnerships are also key. For instance, small local businesses owners were key stakeholders in our process. Economic

revitalization and providing support to the small businesses in the community to *clean up and green up* their operations is a central piece of our policy.

National City: It is key to engage a diverse group of stakeholders, inclusive of partner organizations, local groups, faith groups, and local schools. Their support is essential in order to move policy forward. It's important to focus on the areas that you're able to bridge and think about about the things that connect you to their work and build from there.

Green Zones Have Multiple Benefits

Clean Up Green Up: Designating these longstanding environmental justice communities as Green Zones uplifts them and re-frames the challenges they face in a positive light. Our work to implement Green Zones empowers communities to be active participants in crafting the future of their communities.

We are finding that the Green Zone label makes these communities more attractive for new public and private investments and partnerships to help them transform their communities. For instance, as a result of our efforts, CalEPA's Environmental Justice Compliance and Enforcement Working Group is planning on focusing their next initiative in Boyle Heights and Pacoima.

While Clean Up Green Up is focused on three pilot communities, we are excited to see that the City has decided to expand key provisions of our policy recommendations across Los Angeles. We are particularly excited that new and expanding residential, commercial and industrial developments within 1,000 feet of the freeway will be required to install high grade air filters that will protect the health of residents and workers across LA. These key wins illustrate that Green Zone policies can be a win for everybody. We have been able to harness our collective strengths and create a policy that stands to improve the health of residents beyond our Green Zones.

"We've learned that once you initiate the process, it opens doors to expand and implement different ways of creating a healthy community. The National City work has uplifted the need to work on transportation access, and voter turnout."

-Carolina Martinez

Environmental Health Coalition

Challenges to Implementing Green Zones

Clean Up Green Up: One of our biggest challenges has been the length of time it takes to pass a policy of this magnitude in the City of Los Angeles. We've learned that pushing for this kind of transformational policy requires a sustained commitment on the part of every partner at the table, as well as extra capacity and funding. Organizations going into this work need to be ready for the long haul. It is important to stay steadfast and strong in your vision.

National City: The greatest challenges are resources. Residents are invested in making their neighborhood a healthier place to live. They are constantly participating and envisioning solutions. However, the visioning process also needs to be linked to implementation. In the case of the affordable housing project in National City, it has taken about 10 years due financing gaps.

Securing Political Support is Key

"Take the time at the onset of your campaign to research and identify the various policy mechanisms available to implement your vision, such as Community Plans, or as in CUGU's case, establishing a Supplemental Use District, and find the policy route that is best suited for the community to reach its goals."

-Daniela Simunovic

Liberty Hill Foundation

Clean Up Green Up: Having the support of your city council representative is critical if you want to advance land use policy at a city level. We've had a lot of positive experiences working with our City Council Champions and their staff; their support has been critical to our success. A key to our success has been the strong working relationship we were able to establish with the staff of the City of LA's Planning Department. Our work has made our city's Planning Department more open to incorporating policies to address environmental justice issues through the planning process, which represents a significant paradigm shift.

National City: Build strong relationships with elected officials, while creating visibility by constantly participating in meetings with elected officials. It's really important to keep the pressure on decision makers by activating and supporting our residents to share their stories.

Conclusion

ADVANCING GREEN ZONES STATEWIDE

For the California Environmental Justice Alliance, a statewide coalition that works in partnership with many organizations, Green Zones is about developing policies guided by community priorities. We strive to advance visionary statewide policies that move us away from environmental silos and towards the transformation of toxic hotspots. We see three critical areas of work to help advance the overall movement for Green Zones.



1. Lift up the success of local Green Zones across the state.

This report is an effort to highlight the inspiring work of members, partners, and allies across California and demonstrate just how effective the Green Zones model can be. We honor the hard work of community-based organizations, the residents they work with, and believe the solutions being developed on-the-ground must be elevated to a statewide level.

2. Advance statewide efforts to identify overburdened communities.

A common root to all Green Zones is the devastating reality of environmental injustice. Cumulative impact screening methodologies like CalEnviroScreen 2.0 can be critical tools to link overburdened communities to statewide resources, policies and benefits that support Green Zone solutions. The use of CalEnviroScreen 2.0 to shape the distribution of hundreds of millions of dollars in climate investments from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund is just one example of how the tool can be used. In the future, CalEnviroScreen 2.0 can also be used for local, regional, and statewide environmental enforcement, permitting, and other regulatory decisions that help reduce toxic burdens in Green Zones.

3. Win visionary policies that support all Green Zones.

Grounded in the local organizing of Green Zones across the state, CEJA seeks to advance statewide policies that address the common roots and lift up the core principles of all Green Zones. One example of CEJA's statewide Green Zones policy work is our effort to increase public investments in Green Zone communities. No matter what the strategies or specific projects in a Green Zone community, they all need resources to become a reality. Communities need increased power to guide development and investments in their neighborhoods. State and local agencies should distribute public funding in a way that is responsive, and accountable, to community visions. By better focusing existing public resources, we can demonstrate the effectiveness of deep, solution-oriented investments in communities that need it the most.

CEJA is advancing a range of policy measures to accomplish these goals:

- Linking green development initiatives, such as statewide policies to fund small-scale renewable energy, directly to Green Zone communities .
- Increasing public funding for community-based organizations working on environmental justice issues by expanding the state-funded Environmental Justice Small Grant program.
- Creating “community benefit funds” from polluter fines that can be directed back into communities impacted by pollution and environmental violations.

We believe that targeted, more closely coordinated and leveraged public spending in Green Zones on a local, state, and federal level can stimulate private and philanthropic investment and form new public-private partnerships. As we develop innovative ways to resource Green Zones, it is imperative that we proactively include protections to prevent the displacement of long-time residents.



Across California, Green Zone communities and CEJA are strategically connecting solutions identified by residents to new resources and policies. The communities highlighted in this report are demonstrating the effectiveness of a place-based model of collaborative, environmental justice policy-making that can increase community capacity and power.

CEJA, our members, partners, the Los Angeles Collaborative for Environmental Health and Justice, and East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice, and hopefully more organizations and communities in the future, will continue to advance the transformative Green Zones model both on the ground and statewide. Through this multifaceted, coordinated approach we will strengthen the statewide movement to transform toxic hotspots into healthy, thriving Green Zones.

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SF indicators Project

SF Planning Department, District 11 Neighborhood Profile.

US EPA Region 9 List of Superfund Sites.

What Kind of Neighborhood do we Want? Organizing for a Healthy Future for our Children & Families. Excelsior District, San Francisco.

Additional Green Zone Resources

Creating Healthy Neighborhoods: Community Planning to Overcome Injustice video learning tool. Environmental Health Coalition. Available at: <http://www.environmentalhealth.org>

Green Zones City of Commerce: Create Healthy Communities and Job Opportunities. East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice. Available at:
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