



2018 GREEN ZONES ACROSS CALIFORNIA

TRANSFORMING TOXIC HOT SPOTS 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
Physicians for Social Responsibility – Los Angeles
Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education

For more about CEJA, please visit: www.caleja.org
To contact us, please email: ceja@caleja.org

Lead Authors: Tiffany Eng and Amy Vanderwarker

Design: Kay Cuajunco

Cover Photos: Brooke Anderson, Beth Buglione, and Oscar Grande

Green Zones Map: Design Action Collective

Copy Editing: Lawrence Sanfilippo

Contributors and Acknowledgements

CEJA would like to thank the following people and organizations that contributed to this report and the development of the Green Zones framework:

Ratha Lai, Asian Pacific Environmental Network
Jose Lopez & Bahram Fazeli, Communities for a Better Environment
Esther Portillo & Michele Hasson, Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice
Gustavo Aguirre, Chelsea Tu, Ingrid Brostrom, & Juan Flores, Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment
Diane Takvorian & Carolina Martinez, Environmental Health Coalition
Ashley Werner & Grecia Elenes, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability
Michele Prichard, Liberty Hill Foundation
Antonio Diaz, People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights
Monika Shankar & Jazmine Johnson, Physicians for Social Responsibility – Los Angeles
Jessica Medina & Laura Muraida, Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education

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Fresno: Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability

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Southern San Joaquin Valley: Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment

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Green Zones Across California

COMMON ROOTS AND CORE PRINCIPLES

Imagine a state made up of healthy and thriving communities, where every urban and rural neighborhood across California has the means to prevent industrial pollution and transition off fossil fuels.

Residents have sustainable living wage jobs, affordable housing, and green open space, and use community-led planning to sustain their vibrant future. There is a statewide movement growing to make this vision a reality through the **Green Zones Initiative**.

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.

CEJA first launched our Green Zones Initiative in 2010, building upon years of local organizing. Since then, our members and partners have developed and grown their place-based Green Zones campaigns. CEJA connects these statewide efforts into a unified voice for change, winning new policies that reflect the Green Zone principles, opening up new opportunities for local campaigns to advance, and creating new possibilities for even more bold and transformative state programs and policies.



Photo courtesy of Environmental Health Coalition



Photo courtesy of PODER

Each local Green Zone reflects the needs and priorities in a particular community. But all Green Zones share common roots. Each has developed from decades of organizing by groups working directly in low-income communities and communities of color to address the overconcentration of polluting facilities and the cumulative impacts of toxic emissions. They have emerged from community efforts to reconfigure the unhealthy — and often discriminatory — land use patterns that shape how our communities look today. And although 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*.

This report documents nine local Green Zone communities that are developing solutions to long-standing environmental health and justice issues across the state. It also provides information on the statewide tools that CEJA uses or has helped create to advance Green Zones as an overall movement. Both statewide and local efforts are connected through the transformative Green Zone approach to realize community visions for sustainability and economic opportunity.

Common Roots: Cumulative Impacts

Low-income communities and communities of color have borne the brunt of pollution for too long. Too many continue to suffer from asthma, cancers, and other illnesses resulting from the daily onslaught of heavy industrial pollution. These toxins come from multiple sources, not just one factory or highway. Pollution mixes with other social inequalities, such as unemployment and poverty, to create a deadly mix that leads to severe, negative impacts on the health and quality of life in communities of color across the state. Unfortunately, most environmental regulations only look at pollution on a case-by-case basis and in isolation, rather than the cumulative impacts in an area. Laws and policies address one source of pollution at a time, rather than examining exposures throughout an entire neighborhood. Likewise, regulators do not take into consideration other factors that may exacerbate the impacts of pollution, such as health vulnerabilities.

The Green Zones Initiative uses a cumulative impacts framework, which looks at the totality of pollution in a particular area in combination with other socioeconomic and health inequalities. 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. For years, decision makers would not take action on environmental justice issues by claiming that they could not identify communities, despite clear evidence from residents living in polluted neighborhoods. Many of the organizations in this report have used participatory research to document and ground-truth



the great number of polluting sites in their communities, partnering with academics on community surveys and data gathering as a strategy to corroborate the lived experience of residents and ultimately get action from decision makers.

In 2017, as a result of years of advocacy, organizing, and research on this issue, the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) released the third version of one of the leading cumulative impacts tools in the nation, the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool, or CalEnviroScreen 3.0. Almost all of the communities where CEJA members are moving local Green Zones campaigns are located in highly impacted communities. No matter where the Green Zone, all the communities struggle with a deadly combination of pollution, public health vulnerabilities, and socioeconomic stressors. CalEnviroScreen 3.0 has reshaped what is possible in statewide environmental policy, opening up new opportunities to pass laws and regulations targeting programs and investments into overburdened communities. For more on CalEnviroScreen 3.0, see pages 10-11.

Common Roots: Poor Land Use Planning

The way local governments plan and permit various kinds of development — otherwise known as land use planning — shapes how neighborhoods look. The clustering of polluting facilities in low-income communities and communities of color can often be traced back to histories of discriminatory land use practices, such as residential segregation and racially restrictive zoning. Today, rampant discrimination in the housing market and financing options limit where people of color can live, while market-driven economic development patterns



continue to lead to a concentration of environmental hazards in low-income communities.

However, land use planning can also be an empowering tool for communities to reimagine how their neighborhood can look, and altering land use policies and practices is often needed to create a healthier neighborhood. Many of the organizations featured in this report use different land use tools in their Green Zones, such as creating environmental justice elements in General Plans, or leading community-based processes to create a resident-driven development plan for a specific site or parcel. These campaigns demonstrate that land use planning can help address old problems, while creating a path forward to implement new solutions.

Land use planning decisions happen for the most part on the local level, so achieving statewide action to address underlying issues can be hard. In 2016, we partnered with our members, in particular the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCA EJ), to lead a statewide campaign to win the first state law to require the inclusion of environmental justice in General Plans.

SB 1000, authored by Sen. Connie Leyva, went into effect January 2018. The legislation grew directly out of the experience of our members' work in Green Zones to integrate environmental justice in local land use planning. To read more about SB 1000, please see pages 32-33.



Photo courtesy of CCAEJ

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. But there are systemic barriers to a healthy environment and local economic opportunities — a Green Zone community might win a huge fight to get a local polluter to clean up, but may still struggle with other polluted facilities in the area or lack environmental amenities such as parks. Local, site-by-site successes alone do not add up to the comprehensive change needed in many low-income and immigrant communities of color.

The Green Zones Initiative shifts away from fighting community health threats one by one to a more comprehensive approach based on principles of justice and sustainability. Each Green Zone uses a holistic vision for neighborhood transformation, which is grounded in the voice of local residents. This pushes back on the siloed, issue-by-issue approach that we must navigate because of policy and regulatory frameworks. By using a broader vision for change that is grounded in the lived realities and solutions developed by residents, we create an alternative path for change and shift what is possible in our communities.

Core Principles: Community-Based



Photo courtesy of T.R.U.S.T. South LA

Green Zones are grounded in an authentic, community-based planning process that gives residents an opportunity to articulate the needs and vision for their neighborhoods. This creates a clear platform of community-identified priorities, 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.

Core Principles: Solution-Oriented

Green Zone communities are models for what community-led transformation can look like. The Green Zone campaigns presented in this report advance multiple solutions that reflect the interconnected issues on the ground and resident visions for change. Green Zone communities are advancing strategies for change that include everything from bicycle cooperatives, to new Specific Plans to improve zoning in a community, to phasing out polluting land uses, to citywide ordinances setting higher standards for business operations in heavily impacted communities, to community-controlled urban farms. Green Zones don't just fight the bad, they also bring in the good.

As community groups have embarked upon these visioning and planning efforts, a common challenge has been the dearth of funding for the many innovative projects developed. Local Green Zone campaigns need

state funding to make their visions a reality, and we believe public funding should be linked to community priorities. To address this issue, CEJA worked to create a new statewide program to fund community-led solutions. The new Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) program, launched in 2016 by the Strategic Growth Council (SGC), uses public resources to fund large-scale community-led projects that achieve multiple climate, public health, air quality, and economic development goals in overburdened communities. In 2018, the program announced its first major awards to Fresno, Ontario, and South Los Angeles, along with 10 additional planning grants, totaling \$141.6 million in statewide investments. Through the program's development and implementation, CEJA is experimenting to see if we can link community-led planning to major statewide investments and public programs, which have their own constraints. Read more about the program on pages 32-33.



Photo courtesy of CRPE

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 Los Angeles 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 multifaceted partnerships. Green Zones seek to implement big changes, and no one organization can do it alone.



Photo by Warren Hill

New Challenges: Resources, Economic Development, and Displacement

A challenge in building long-term opportunities for community development is ensuring that the very people who helped bring in visionary new projects are not displaced as a result. With housing costs soaring across the state, Green Zone communities are grappling with ways to ensure that new investments, resources, or projects that green up the neighborhood bring direct benefits to longtime residents and do not inadvertently push people out. Some Green Zones are tackling this by fostering community control of resources and projects, through innovative efforts such as land trusts and locally owned cooperatives.

These types of community governance and resource management develop local capacity and assets, as well as safeguard against unintended negative consequences of neighborhood-level transformation. We are also working to identify statewide tools and policies that can prevent displacement, such as inclusion of anti-displacement criteria in statewide funding programs like TCC.

Even with these challenges, generating economic opportunities that provide environmentally sustainable living wage jobs for longtime residents is a core component of Green Zones. Green Zones across California are showing how we can generate economic development while reducing pollution.

As part of the Clean Up Green Up ordinance in Los Angeles, the businesses featured on pages 28-31 are able to access new resources to help them adopt greener practices. In San Francisco, People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights is developing a community-led farm that will employ youth. In National City, the Environmental Health Coalition is seeking to phase out polluting businesses while simultaneously developing a 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.



Photo courtesy of Environmental Health Coalition



Green Zones: Transforming Toxic Hot Spots into Healthy, Thriving Neighborhoods

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.

The Green Zones model of a comprehensive place-based strategy that advances sustainable community solutions is a part of our long-term vision to see a Just Transition toward the resilient, sustainable economy that our communities and our planet need. The solutions held within Green Zone campaigns are the same solutions that will help move our entire state away from the extractive economy that is destroying the climate. Green Zones embody the community leadership, sustainability, and vision for local thriving economies that our communities and planet need.



Ultimately, Green Zones is not just an opportunity for low-income communities and communities of color to live in healthy, thriving neighborhoods. It is also 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.



Asian Pacific Environmental Network & Communities for a Better Environment
Working toward a Just Transition 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.



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



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



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

Wilmington:
Communities for a Better Environment
Communities for a Safe Environment



Boyle Heights:
Unión de Vecinos

Pacoima:
Pacoima Beautiful

Los Angeles

Inland Valley

San Diego



CCA EJ

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



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



Photo by Kay Cuajunco



Photo by Tiffany Eng

In 2016, CEJA facilitated community workshops on Green Zones bill SB 1000 with CEJA organizations such as APEN and CBE. CEJA continues to work with communities across the state to educate residents, advocates, planners, and local governments on the importance of SB 1000 and how to best implement the law.



Photo courtesy of PODER



Photo courtesy of Environmental Health Coalition

CEJA member organizations PODER and EHC break ground on new Green Zones projects — including a community-led garden for the Mission District of San Francisco, and an affordable housing development in National City. For more information on these projects, please see pages 13 and 25.



Photo by Carolina Martinez



Photo by Carolina Martinez

In March 2018, EHC led CEJA's first Green Zones community tour of National City area neighborhoods such as City Heights and Barrio Logan. Participants learned about the EJ and land use problems that EHC has been addressing through their campaigns, and participated in a strategy session to discuss best practices for implementing Green Zones solutions.

CalEnviroScreen 3.0

A TOOL TO ADVANCE GREEN ZONES AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

After years of advocacy by EJ community members, CalEPA directed the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) to create the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen) to identify the areas of our state that are most impacted by pollution, poverty, and poor health. California is the first state in the nation to develop and adopt a strong cumulative impacts tool that can advance environmental justice goals in state policies and programs.

CalEnviroScreen 3.0 is the most recent version of the tool, which uses 20 different indicators to provide a statewide ranking of all 8,000 Census tracts in California. The higher the total score, the higher the cumulative or combined burdens affecting a neighborhood. CalEnviroScreen breaks down silos by recognizing that communities do not experience pollution by just one source, showing how population-related vulnerabilities such as poverty and poor health can make residents even more susceptible to the negative effects of toxic emissions.

Green Zones are based upon the idea that everyone can breathe easier and live healthier lives when greater resources and stricter regulations are implemented in communities. In the past, however, it has been difficult for both policymakers and advocates to define and pinpoint where these overburdened communities are located. CalEnviroScreen 3.0 provides the state of California with

one clear, credible, and scientific methodology to identify disadvantaged or environmental justice communities for further interventions or investments.

CalEnviroScreen remains an incredibly important tool and resource for many environmental justice communities. It has strengthened our ability to direct critical funding and protections to those areas that are most impacted by both pollution and socioeconomic vulnerabilities. At the local level, it has also allowed communities to develop visionary Green Zone policies, resources, and programs that can positively transform and uplift neighborhoods. The tool has also given communities more leverage and a voice in the policies and land use decisions that impact their health.

The CalEnviroScreen 3.0 maps below reveal the neighborhoods where each of our Green Zones projects are located. As you can see, the vast majority of Green Zones are found in Census tracts that experience high cumulative burdens.

More about CalEnviroScreen 3.0 can be found on OEHHA's website: <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/>
Read CEJA's new report, *CalEnviroScreen: A Critical Tool for Achieving Environmental Justice*, at: www.caleja.org/CESreport

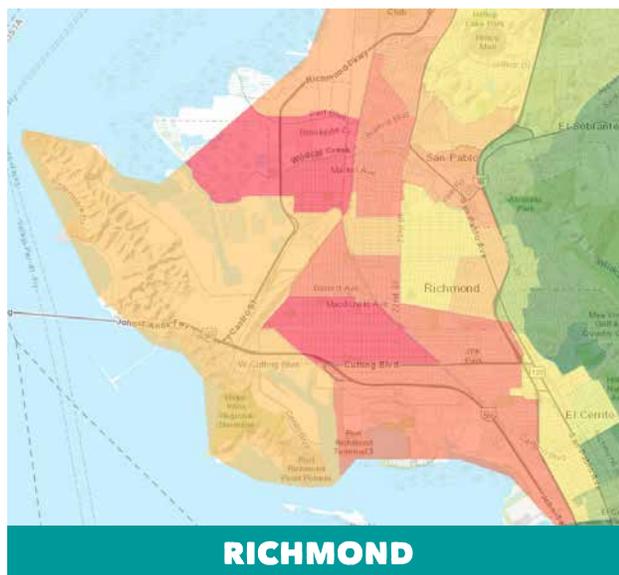
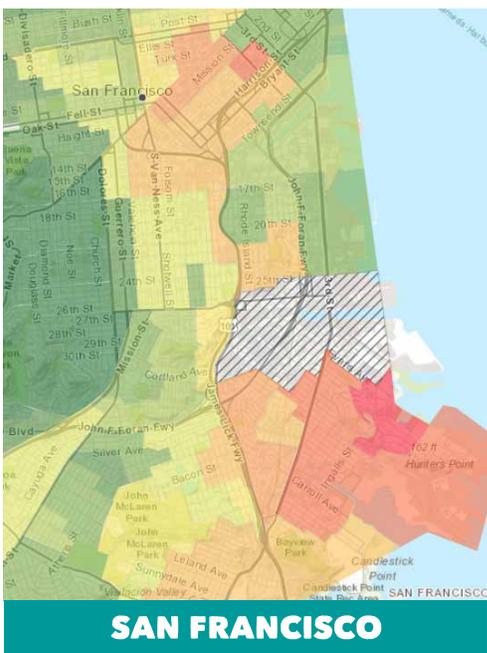
Legend

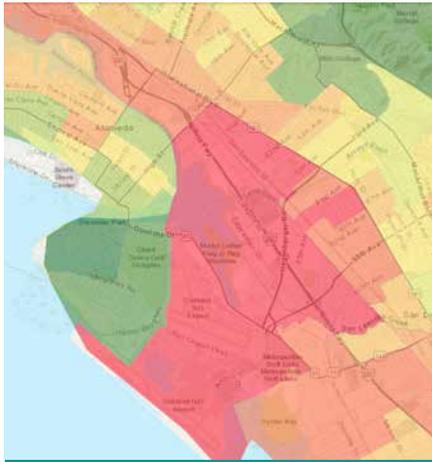
CalEnviroScreen 3.0 Results

- 91 - 100% (Highest Scores)
- 81 - 90%
- 71 - 80%
- 61 - 70%
- 51 - 60%
- 41 - 50%
- 31 - 40%
- 21 - 30%
- 11 - 20%
- 1 - 10% (Lowest Scores)

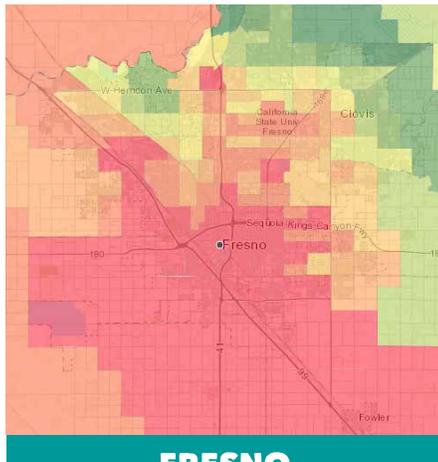
CalEnviroScreen 3.0 Results

High Pollution, Low Population

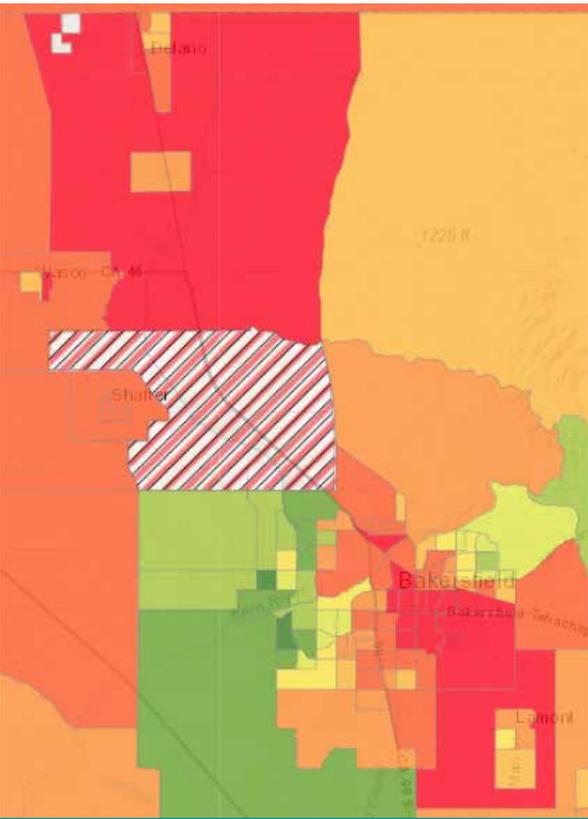




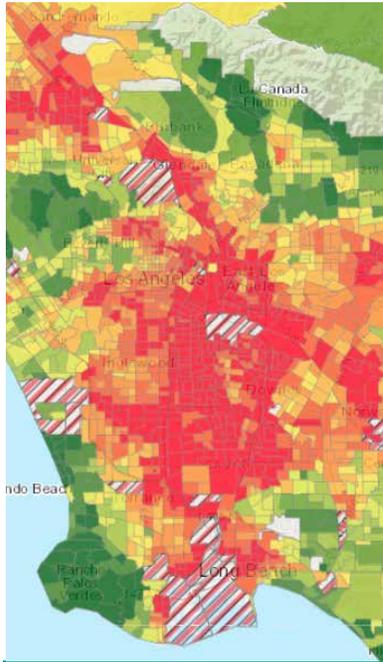
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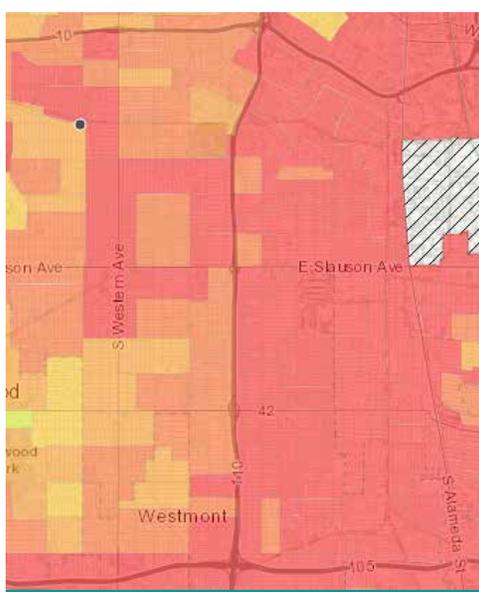
FRESNO



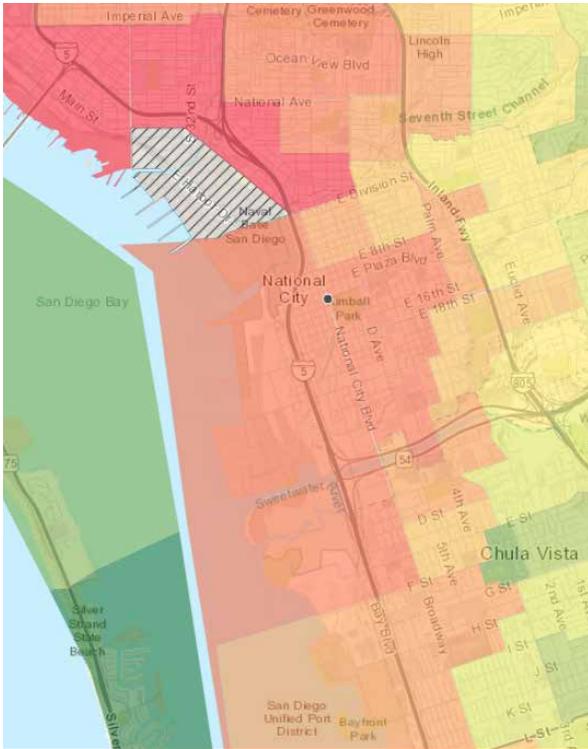
SOUTHERN SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY



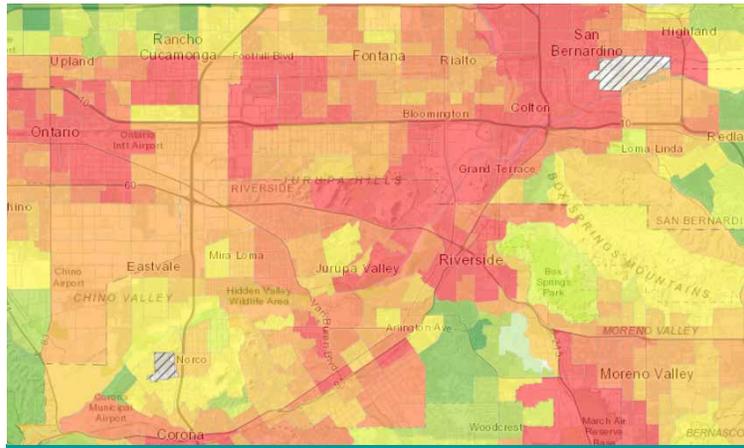
**PACOIMA
BOYLE HEIGHTS
WILMINGTON**



**SOUTH CENTRAL
LOS ANGELES**



NATIONAL CITY



INLAND VALLEY



Photo courtesy of PODER

Transforming a Toxic Hot Spot 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, land use policies have prioritized expensive condominium and retail spaces, often pushing out longtime residents and the small locally owned stores that provide income to neighborhood 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 that is predominantly working-class people of color. The area is also home to the city’s two major freeways. In San Francisco, 88 percent of the people living near the freeways are people of color, while the Excelsior has had the highest overall number of people hospitalized for asthma for six years in a row. It has been historically neglected and underrepresented in City Hall.

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

Equitable Development and Affordable Housing

PODER is creating new people-powered equitable development opportunities in both the Mission and Excelsior districts by organizing against displacement and working with the city to identify public and private sites for affordable housing development.

In August 2016, PODER released *Better Neighborhoods, Same Neighbors*, the results of a community mapping effort in San Francisco’s District 11 that identified appropriate sites for investments and equitable community development. The report highlights potential locations for affordable housing, community-serving businesses and social enterprises, open public space, and spaces for nonprofit and community-based organizations. Since then, an Action Team composed of more than 20 residents convenes regularly to strengthen their organizing skills, monitor development, and advocate for community priorities based on the mapping effort.

Building Solutions from the Ground Up

PODER has also partnered with nonprofit affordable housing developers to ensure the development of affordable housing in the neighborhoods they organize. In 2016, PODER organized with a developer to secure the permits for two 100 percent affordable housing projects in the Mission: a 94-unit building for seniors and a 127-unit family housing building. Through various Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors hearings, several dozen residents and allies mobilized to support the projects. By spring 2017, permits for both projects were approved.

In addition, PODER has also joined forces with other local community-based organizations 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 more than 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.

Parks and Farms for the People

The people-powered vision in the Excelsior District has centered on equitable development of two sites: an urban farm in Crocker Amazon Park, and a mixed-use affordable housing development. PODER's Urban Campesinxs program engages local residents to develop a farm design that maximizes green space and local food production.

Chan Kaajal Park (Mayan for "my little town") opened with a community celebration in June 2017. The Mission and the Tenderloin neighborhoods have the highest number of Mayans from the Mexican state of Yucatán outside of Mexico. PODER organized to rezone this city-owned land 15 years ago from a parking lot to open green space and engaged residents in the park design and naming process. Built at a cost of \$5.2 million, it is the first new park to open in San Francisco in 10 years. PODER youth leaders are stewarding the garden at the park with weekly volunteer days.



Community-Owned Resources

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 neighborhood partners have also created a culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate workforce hub that provides employment, housing, and legal services to more than 200 mostly Chinese and Latino immigrant residents in the neighborhood. In addition, a community-based steering committee provides strategic oversight to ensure that the values of the center remain community focused and to support its long-term sustainability.

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 fosters resiliency by providing low-income youth and families in the Mission and Excelsior districts with the knowledge, skills, and resources to incorporate bicycling into their daily lives. In December 2016, PODER secured new space for the program in Bayview-Hunters Point, a historically African American neighborhood with a growing number of Latino and Asian immigrants.

PODER's Green Zone efforts counter the gentrification pressures impacting the Mission and Excelsior neighborhoods in San Francisco by fostering people-powered equitable development that benefits local residents and nurtures a healthy local living economy. They show that with sustained organizing, policy wins can lead to tangible benefits on the ground.

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

Building Solutions from the Ground Up



Participants of CBE Northern California Regional Leadership Academy

The Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN), Communities for a Better Environment (CBE), Rich City Rides (RCR), and Urban Tilth formally established the Richmond Our Power Coalition in early 2017. Since then, they have added two new member organizations, Cooperation Richmond and Safe Return Project, and two new ally organizations, Idle No More and Marin Clean Energy. Together, the coalition is determined to revitalize the city by investing in community innovation and governance, while fostering local resiliency and connections within the broader community. In April 2017, the group hosted a community forum to educate and inspire Richmond community members around the Just Transition framework. People had opportunities to discuss and generate strategies to achieve their vision for Richmond. Every August, the Our Power Festival brings hundreds of youth and families together to learn about Just Transition strategies. Participants watch musical performances powered by bicycles, eat locally grown food, and experience examples of how a Just Transition can become a reality in Richmond.

In the future, the Our Power Coalition would like to provide leadership development programs, neighborhood councils that ensure community control over public resources, and support for citywide policy campaigns. APEN and CBE are currently working on introducing a citywide energy policy that supports the expansion of equitable renewable energy access to bring sustainable development, transparency, community benefits, and energy democracy to Richmond's residents.

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



"I am a sister, friend, and student who loves her community. I study at Richmond High School and am a part of debate, choir, and Youth for Environmental Justice. I got involved with CBE because I believe in equity, including income, affordable housing, education, access to healthy foods, safe streets, and everyone getting together to fight for what is right. I've really enjoyed going on marches because I feel the most passionate when everyone is together and standing up for justice in their communities."

Isabella Gallegos, CBE Member



East Oakland

COMMUNITIES FOR A BETTER ENVIRONMENT

Photo by Kay Cuajunco

Transforming a Toxic Hot Spot with Community-Led Solutions

East Oakland is a vibrant community with a largely African American and Latino population. It is also a highly industrialized area. The 880 freeway crosses through the heart of the neighborhood, where diesel trucks filled with goods drive to and from the Port of Oakland. As the fifth busiest container port in the nation, the Port of Oakland spews high amounts of toxic air contaminants on a daily basis. 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 5 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 wide 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.



Photo by Kay Cuajunco

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

Transforming Local Land Use

To revitalize East Oakland, CBE is working on changing local zoning to promote healthier land use solutions that ensure that public land is used for public good. For years, CBE has worked with residents to document the impacts of diesel trucks on local health and air quality using community-led data collection and research. Influenced by CBE's work, the city of Oakland passed an ordinance in July 2015 that established new truck routes to limit the areas that diesel trucks pass through in residential East Oakland. CBE has also been working to prevent new toxic facilities from coming into the neighborhood, such as a proposed mega-crematorium.

CBE will also be advancing its Green Zones vision through its work to implement SB 1000 with the city of Oakland and the Planning Department. SB 1000 requires cities and counties that contain disadvantaged communities to include environmental justice in their General Plans. (For more information on SB 1000, see pages 32-33.) This effort is timely since the city's General Plan is in need of an update and Oakland's Energy and Climate Action Plan sunsets in 2020.

Forging Strong Partnerships

CBE also works in diverse coalition spaces such as the East Oakland Building Healthy Communities (EOBHC) initiative, East Oakland Congress of Neighborhoods, Oakland United Coalition, and the Oakland Citywide Anti-Displacement Network. EOBHC stakeholders, CBE, the Alameda County Public Health Department, the Oakland Planning Department, and other members from a technical advisory group developed the Healthy Development Guidelines (HDG), informed and adopted by community residents. CBE, in partnership with members of the implementation committee, is actively meeting

with city staff and Councilmember Rebecca Kaplan to champion and introduce the HDG resolution at City Council for adoption. The guidelines provide a planning framework and tools to guide new development in Oakland that can advance health equity and community engagement in the city's planning and development review process.

As a key member of the East Oakland Congress of Neighborhoods, CBE is working to develop a strong grassroots-based organizing platform throughout East Oakland to build political power around community interests. CBE's Green Zones work is also addressing the scarcity of community benefits from public lands. There are hundreds of acres of public land that are in the queue for development that could benefit Oakland residents. CBE is currently engaged in drafting a Public Land Use Policy in collaboration with members of the Oakland Citywide Anti-Displacement Network to push the city of Oakland to establish an equitable process for property development that could benefit longtime residents. In addition, the Coliseum Area Specific Plan, a massive development project that is situated on acres of public land in East Oakland, has emerged as a major focus of land use struggles in the area. CBE and the Oakland United Coalition are working to ensure the development project includes community benefits to East Oakland residents. CBE is also facilitating partnerships among residents and regional and state regulatory agencies with the goal of addressing the impacts of local emissions on residents.

CBE's work, combined with possibilities at the Oakland city level, are great opportunities to lift up residents' voices in planning decisions in order to create a healthy, thriving, and resilient East Oakland for longtime residents.



"My vision is to have Green Zones, clean streets, clean air, and healthy quality of life. For that reason, I set a goal to connect my community and inform them of how their voice has power to support housing and the environment. Let everyone hear my voice!"

Mercedes De La Torre, 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 Hot Spot with Community-Led Solutions

Fresno and many of California’s agriculturally rich regions are also home to some of the most polluted and impoverished regions of the state. Families are exposed to environmental hazards in their air and water, leaving them with unsafe drinking water, wastewater oozing from dilapidated septic systems, and toxic air pollutants coming from myriad sources — including biomass incinerators and thousands of diesel trucks passing by each day.

Based in the San Joaquin and Eastern Coachella valleys, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability (LCJA) works in partnership with some of the most environmentally impacted communities in California. In the city of Fresno, LCJA partners with residents from South Fresno and other advocates to transform historically neglected neighborhoods into healthy, safe, and thriving Green Zones.

Improving Land Use Planning

For decades in South Fresno, residents have lived near capped landfills called “parks,” suffered from severe air pollution, and found that playing outside could mean an emergency hospital trip for the thousands of kids suffering from asthma. Severe environmental degradation in the area has also resulted in drying domestic wells and elevated cancer rates. These neighborhoods are located in Census tracts identified by CalEnviroScreen as among the most polluted in the state.

To address these environmental justice issues, LCJA, as part of the Building Healthy Communities (BHC) coalition, worked alongside West Fresno residents and community stakeholders to provide input to the outdated Southwest Fresno Specific Plan (SWFSP). During this two-year-long process, community residents met frequently to advocate for community priorities. The final plan incorporates ideas that residents have wanted for decades: more parks, a variety of housing, grocery stores, a community college, bus rapid transit, community greening, and no new industrial development.

Industrial Compatibility Assessment

LCJA is also raising awareness around investment opportunities for historically neglected communities and ensuring that low-income communities of color are included in key decision-making processes. Working with Fresno BHC, LCJA has supported a budget advocacy campaign in which community residents learn about and give input on how the city budget should be spent. Part of this campaign includes conducting an Industrial Compatibility Assessment (ICA) that can address Fresno’s toxic mix of industrial and residential land uses. As envisioned, this community-driven assessment will identify harmful land uses that are incompatible

Building Solutions from the Ground Up

with sensitive uses such as homes and schools. It will then identify solutions to eliminate and mitigate those conflicts. The ICA implements policies from the General Plan and the SWFSP that LCJA, Fresno BHC, and residents won through their advocacy.

Transforming Fresno: Transformative Climate Communities

In January 2018, the city of Fresno was awarded \$70 million through the state's TCC program. (For more information on the program, see pages 32–33.) Southwest Fresno residents, with support from LCJA, Fresno BHC, and partner organizations, were instrumental in ensuring that an open, transparent, and community-led process guided the plans to allocate funding. Ultimately, a community-driven steering committee voted almost unanimously to award the majority of funding to projects located in West Fresno, with the remaining funding dedicated to Chinatown, Downtown, and various neighborhoods in between. Building upon the SWFSP, this large-scale TCC grant will begin to connect these neighborhoods and provide affordable housing, economic development, a grocery store, healthy green spaces, solar panels, electric vehicle charging stations, and a community college center.

Community-Based Advocacy for Neighborhood Priorities

LCJA has used its community lawyering to promote the environmental health and priorities of South Fresno, while also ensuring that communities have a seat at the table. Since 2013, LCJA, along with California Rural Legal Assistance, has represented Concerned Citizens of West Fresno (CCWF) in a lawsuit against Darling Ingredients

and the city of Fresno. For decades, Darling Ingredients has operated a meat rendering plant without required permits in Southwest Fresno. The plant emits noxious odors that make residents keep their doors and windows shut to avoid the air outside. After years of advocacy, mediation, and litigation by community members, lawyers, and advocates, the Fresno City Council approved a development agreement that relocates the plant to a new site located outside the city. This action is critical to revitalizing Southwest Fresno by allowing community assets such as housing, grocery stores, and retail to flourish through the SWFSP and the recent TCC funding.

In 2016 and 2017, the city of Fresno approved a series of large industrial warehouses next to several homes and a school in South Fresno, with little to no environmental review, mitigation, or a public process. When the city proposed a new 2.1 million-square-foot industrial development, LCJA and residents decided to fight back. Working with Fresno BHC, Faith in Fresno, and the community, LCJA submitted detailed legal comments regarding the projects' inadequate environmental review and civil rights implications. They also supported residents in testifying at hearings to oppose the project. When the city approved the project without addressing residents' concerns, LCJA and its co-counsel filed suit to prevent the project from moving forward without adequate protections for local residents and the neighborhood.

LCJA's Green Zones work continues to improve the entire San Joaquin and Eastern Coachella regions by supporting residents to transform local, regional, and state decision-making processes and hold their elected leaders accountable.



"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

Through co-powerment, community organizing, policy advocacy, and legal representation, **Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability** ensures that low-income communities and communities of color are meaningfully included in decision-making processes. By including communities in these processes, LCJA works to address the historic underinvestment, disproportionate environmental impacts, and poor land use planning patterns. www.leadershipcounsel.org



Southern San Joaquin Valley

CENTER ON RACE, POVERTY & THE ENVIRONMENT

Photo by Brooke Anderson

Transforming a Toxic Hot Spot with Community-Led Solutions

Low-income communities and communities of color in the Southern San Joaquin Valley (Kern, Kings, and Tulare counties) are exposed to severe environmental hazards, including toxic pesticides and some of the worst air quality in the nation. More than 90 percent of California's fracking operations take place in Kern County alone. The city of Bakersfield in Kern County ranks as one of the worst in the nation when it comes to particulate matter and ozone pollution. Despite serving as the agricultural center of the United States, the San Joaquin Valley also faces deep poverty, food insecurity, and unemployment. Many of these communities also lack access to basic infrastructure such as roads, clean drinking water, and sewer systems. Kern, Kings, and Tulare counties have significantly greater percentages of people in poverty and people of color compared to the rest of the state.

The Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment's (CRPE's) Forgotten Voices Campaign builds the power of

underrepresented communities in California's San Joaquin Valley to reverse decades of pollution and lack of investment in these communities. CRPE collaborates directly with residents to achieve community-led solutions that create healthy places to live, work, play, and learn.

The Forgotten Voices Campaign has three areas of work: 1) Advancing underserved community priorities through local and regional land use planning processes; 2) Connecting community-identified basic infrastructure projects to local, state, and federal funding opportunities to build healthy communities; and 3) Building community leadership, self-governance, and resilience.

Advancing Community Priorities Through Land Use Planning

In order to achieve the long-term vision and needs of underserved communities, CRPE works directly with residents to improve local land use planning. For instance, CRPE is currently collaborating with community-based

Building Solutions from the Ground Up

organizations and other partners to advocate for their vision to be at the core of a comprehensive update to the Kern County General Plan, which will form the basis of the county's land use decision-making for the next two decades. This vision includes better air and water quality, and siting toxic oil wells and refineries, as well as industrial agricultural operations, away from homes and schools. It also couples pollution-reduction solutions with increased investments, both of which are key to transitioning the valley to a healthier, more prosperous place to live. For more information on community vision and priorities, see CRPE's *Our Valley, Our Voices*, a policy platform created by underserved community residents that includes a set of concrete, achievable policy priorities that will bring clean air, water, land, and quality local jobs.

Funding Community-identified Infrastructure Projects

The San Joaquin Valley as a region has been historically underinvested for a host of reasons. As a result, underserved community residents continue to live in highly polluted environments without the basic infrastructure or services that are necessary to improve their health and quality of life.

CRPE works with communities, local governments, and state agencies to break through these barriers and increase the competitiveness of community-led projects in the valley. For instance, through a collaboration with the Greenfield Walking Group, LCJA, and residents from Southern Kern County, CRPE successfully convinced Kern County to make an additional \$2 million investment in community parks within its 2017 budget. CRPE has also

been successful in using innovative funding mechanisms that focus on getting polluters to pay for community-led solutions.

CRPE negotiated a Good Neighbor Agreement with Recology, a composting facility in Lamont that contributes a significant amount of localized pollution. Based on the amount of composting accepted at its facility, Recology is now depositing money into a fund that is being administered by a community-led funding board. It has already invested in youth track and field programs, as well as lights in a local playground. These projects provide youth and families with more recreation opportunities while also making their community safer. Coupling EJ community-led pollution-reduction solutions with increased investments is key to transitioning the valley to a healthier, more prosperous place to live.

Building Community Leadership, Self-Governance, and Resilience

CRPE also actively builds underserved residents' capacity to lead and sustain community-based organizations and community-owned assets. For instance, CRPE works with residents to form and sustain their own community-led organizations in Tulare and Kern counties, including the Committee for a Better Arvin and Comite Progreso de Lamont. In order to shift the Central Valley's overall structure to create built environments that are good for people and the planet, CRPE is also building projects that support community resiliency. Since 2012, the organization has supported several community gardens in Shafter, Greenfield, and Arvin, with the goal of achieving community food independence.



Photo by Brooke Anderson

Rodrigo Romo works with CRPE members at the community garden in Shafter, which is eight 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. He is currently 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

From cultivating individual leadership to building community ownership, to finding creative, community-led solutions, the **Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment** amplifies the needs of low-income communities of color, and supports communities in claiming their right to a clean and healthy environment. www.crpe-ej.org



Photo courtesy of CCAIEJ

Transforming a Toxic Hot Spot with Community-Led Solutions

California’s Inland Valley was once a thriving agricultural center that specialized in citrus, dairy, and winemaking. Over the past two decades, however, this region has transformed into a major logistics center distribution hub filled with miles of warehouses. This shift is due to the fact that about 52 percent of Southern California’s freight network is now located in this area that encompasses both Riverside and San Bernardino counties. The Inland Valley is now home to three air cargo terminals and a network of major commercial routes that connect to the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. These two ports handle one-quarter of all imports coming into the U.S. each year, 40 percent of which is transported through the Inland Valley on diesel trucks.

Due to a long history of poor land use planning, trucks often crowd residential streets and prevent local residents from using their backyards due to the overwhelming noise, pollution, and fumes. As a result of this concentration of freight and industrial-related pollution, the Inland Valley is notorious for having some of the highest rates of asthma, coronary heart disease, and diabetes in the state, if not the nation. San Bernardino’s West Side has the highest cancer risk of any rail yard in the state, while the city as a whole contains some of the worst air pollution in the U.S. The Mira Loma community in Jurupa Valley leads the nation with its high levels of particulate pollution, resulting in the weakest lung

capacity and the slowest lung growth of children aged 0-18 according to one University of Southern California study.

In response to these challenges, the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCAIEJ) has been organizing with local residents to implement community-led Green Zones solutions for the Inland Valley. CCAIEJ’s Green Zones strategies have focused on improving air quality by advocating for comprehensive and accelerated air quality regulation on both mobile sources (such as heavy-duty diesel trucks) and indirect sources of pollution (such as warehouses and rail yards), while also securing comprehensive investments for EJ communities.



Photo courtesy of CCAIEJ

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

Building Solutions from the Ground Up

An EJ Element for Jurupa Valley

In 2013, CCAEJ successfully won a settlement that required the city of Jurupa Valley to create and adopt an Environmental Justice element for the city's General Plan. Created in partnership with local residents and various stakeholders, the Jurupa Valley Environmental Justice Element (JVEJE) presents goals and policies that protect public health and promote environmental and social equity for residents.

To develop the element, CCAEJ worked with city planners and a consultant to lead a community engagement strategy that provided affected residents with opportunities to identify EJ problems and priorities for their neighborhoods. One of the group's first efforts was to track the high rates of truck traffic in their neighborhoods. The study found that more than 800 diesel trucks per hour were passing by one residential area. Through resident participation and discussion, the city is working to develop a new truck route that will direct traffic away from homes. The group 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 installing high-performance air filtration units in every home.

Regional Coalition Building

To address Jurupa Valley's poor air quality issues, CCAEJ has been working with a developer, the city, state legislators, and the California attorney general's office. This interagency collaboration aims to create strategies that can mitigate the severe air pollution affecting residents living close to an industrial park. As a result of their work, the group has been able to secure funding for a draft environmental impact report that will advance plans for a restricted truck route along Etiwanda Avenue. Freight trucks currently drive down Etiwanda at all hours of the day, passing by more than 100 homes in the Mira Loma neighborhood.

In San Bernardino, CCAEJ has worked with Loma Linda University to create a comprehensive study that examines the health impacts of rail yards. The study is based on interviews with more than 1,000 residents and

750 elementary school students. As a result of this research, West Side San Bernardino now has a free mobile health clinic for county residents and a breathmobile that assesses children's lung functions.

In addition, CCAEJ has recently served as an anchor organization for the Inland Coalition for Equity and Prosperity. The coalition aims to address the Inland Valley's surge in warehouse development through a comprehensive lens that addresses air quality, land use, safe routes to school, warehouse worker justice, and public health.

Removing Toxic Tanks

In 2017, CCAEJ and the West Side community of San Bernardino celebrated their successful and long-fought campaign to remove dangerous storage tanks containing more than 60,000 gallons of liquefied natural gas located right next to homes and an elementary school. This hard-won victory came after more than two decades of organizing against Omnitrans, a major transit operator for San Bernardino County. For more than 20 years, recurring gas leaks became a massive public health threat to a nearby elementary school, a community center, and many homes.

Transformative Climate Communities: Ontario Connects

In 2018, a coalition of Inland Valley stakeholders including CCAEJ supported a winning TCC grant proposal for the city of Ontario. The \$35 million grant will fund groundbreaking projects and improvements for the city's EJ communities that endure some of the worst air pollution and socioeconomic challenges in the state. Ontario Connects will create a mobility hub, affordable housing, job training and workforce development, energy efficiency upgrades, electric buses, active transportation infrastructure, food security projects, and urban greening projects throughout the city.

CCAIEJ's long-standing work to create stronger regulations, multi-sector partnerships, and community-serving plans is a comprehensive model for environmental justice and people-driven policymaking. By working alongside community residents, CCAEJ is 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 counties. 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



Photo courtesy of Environmental Health Coalition

Transforming a Toxic Hot Spot with Community-Led Solutions

Located on the west side of National City, Old Town is home to predominantly Chicano and Latino families, both recent immigrants and people who have been living in the neighborhood for generations. Old Town is a family-oriented neighborhood where local residents have a strong connection and feel a collective responsibility to improve the quality of life there.

Unfortunately, the community is a textbook example of how industries and homes shouldn't mix. For decades, land use planners have treated Old Town as a dumping ground for polluting industries and warehouses. In this neighborhood, it is common to come across more than 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 here per year. In addition, 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, which is roughly half the county average. Not surprisingly, the neighborhood suffers from disproportionately high asthma rates, a clear lack of green space, and affordable housing.

Through the Green Zones campaign, the Environmental Health Coalition (EHC) has engaged in community-based land use planning and improvements that aim to address the unhealthy mix of industry and homes in Old Town.

Cultivating Local Leadership

For more than 10 years, EHC has been working with local residents to develop, pass, and implement their neighborhood vision in partnership with the city. By engaging in community leadership development, the residents of Old Town have become experts in land use planning, using tools such as neighborhood assessments and surveys, and conducting audits for industrial violations.

EHC also holds monthly Community Action Team meetings and engages in door knocking campaigns. Their Salud Ambiental, Líderes Tomando Acción (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

Community Planning and Healthier Land Use

Through 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 that protect the residential character of the neighborhood, improve environmental health conditions for residents, install pedestrian safety enhancements, and protect the local Paradise Creek waterway. The plan 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 using rezoning to phase out of unhealthy land uses such as auto body shops — a process that is being facilitated through the city's 2006 amortization ordinance. At the same time, however, EHC is working to ensure that Old Town and its residents do not lose the vital economic base that these small businesses provide. EHC has been working to develop an innovative green industrial auto park away from the residential area, which could serve as an 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 still protecting resident health in Old Town.

The Westside Specific Plan also included a number of visionary projects that are at 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 citywide land use planning efforts. In 2011, National City adopted a Health and Environmental Justice element into its General Plan, the first city in California to do so. The element outlines a range of solutions to address unhealthy land use patterns to improve 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, Sherman Heights, and Logan Heights neighborhoods in San Diego. These efforts ensure that community members can achieve 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, where industry is mixed with residential land uses. This inappropriate 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 toxin-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.



South Central Los Angeles THE 500 FEET COLLABORATIVE

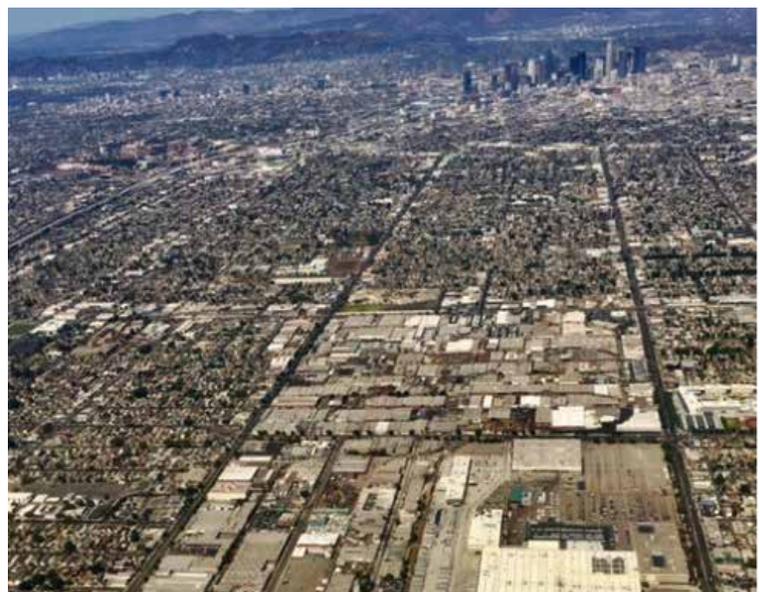
Photo by Erick Huerta

Transforming a Toxic Hot Spot with Community-Led Solutions

Despite being known for its tremendous resilience and a rich history of activism and culture, the South Central Los Angeles community also has a long history of environmental injustices. In the 1920s and '30s, LA rivaled Akron, Ohio, in rubber production and Detroit in auto production. Many of these massive industrial facilities were located in the heart of South Central, where lax land use planning allowed for noxious industries to be sited where land was cheap and available. Racialized planning practices like redlining and restrictive covenants left many communities of color with living in places like South Central as their only option. Inevitably, that meant living, working, and playing in close proximity to both stationary and mobile pollution sources.

Today, South Central's land use map looks like a colorful patchwork quilt of different land use types. According to the *Health Atlas for the City of Los Angeles*, approximately 59,000 residents in the Southeast LA Community Plan — or 21 percent of the area — lived adjacent to noxious land uses in 2012, such as manufacturing facilities, auto body shops, and dry cleaners. Studies have shown that sensitive uses such as

schools, homes, and community centers should not be within 500 feet of a high polluting source. This has resulted in poor health outcomes that include higher rates of asthma, heart disease, and low birth weight compared to more affluent neighborhoods.



The Goodyear Industrial Block surrounded by residences in Southeast Los Angeles.

Building Solutions from the Ground Up

Community-Led Ground Truthing

Although residents understand the reality of living next to polluting facilities, these experiences are not always captured (or documented accurately) in government data. The 500 Feet Project relied on community leaders across South Central to gather on-the-ground data and elevate hidden conditions. Through an innovative approach called ground truthing — a community-based participatory research method that incorporates community knowledge into research design — residents walked their neighborhood to identify industries not captured by official data sources. This process also ensured that analysis of data was linked to policy outcomes. So far, community members have walked five different Census tracts and have discovered 158 unlisted uses and corrected approximately 50 percent of the uses that were already accounted for in the South and Southeast Community Plans.

Community-Driven Policy Development

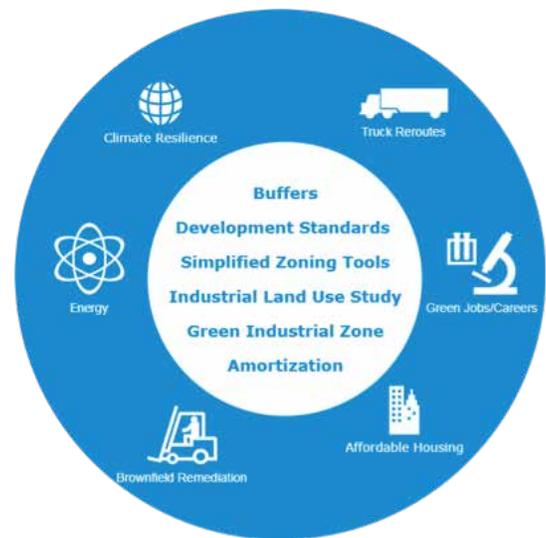
In addition to verifying data in their neighborhoods, South Central residents and organizations directly participated in shaping policy interventions. In a six-month-long process that entailed community workshops and working group meetings, collaborators identified a suite of land use interventions alongside a broader policy framework that could feasibly tackle the challenge of incompatible lands uses. In addition to direct policy interventions, the community decided that these solutions had to be grounded in a broader framework of community resilience and transformation (see policy diagram). For example, if a parcel of industrial land was to be turned into a different use, they recommended prioritizing affordable housing and community-serving uses in order to counter gentrification forces.



Photo courtesy of Omar Ureta

Bringing Clean Up Green Up to South Central

Through a multiyear campaign, South Central organizations were able to successfully elevate the challenge of land use incompatibility in the community planning process. As a result, the Department of City Planning prioritized the development of a Clean Up Green Up program in Southeast LA as part of the community plan implementation process. In upcoming years, the 500 Feet Project aims to shape a robust program that builds upon the important work conducted so far by community leaders and organizations.



For years, South Central organizations have been engaged in shaping the South and Southeast Community Plans. In 2017, Physicians for Social Responsibility – Los Angeles (PSR–LA) convened Esperanza Community Housing Corporation, Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education (SCOPE), T.R.U.S.T. South LA, and Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE) as part of the **500 Feet Collaborative** to begin addressing the problem of incompatible land uses. In addition to addressing this core issue, the collaborative aims to promote community-driven land use planning solutions that shape a long-term vision of South Central as a Green Zone, with clean land, air, and water, and community-serving amenities.



Los Angeles

CLEAN UP GREEN UP

Photo courtesy of LA Collaborative for Environmental Health and Justice

Transforming a Toxic Hot Spot with Community-Led Solutions

While Los Angeles is plagued with some of the worst air quality in the nation, some communities face an even larger pollution burden. These neighborhoods, also known as “toxic hot spots,” contain a concentration of pollution sources adjacent to residential and sensitive land uses 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 LA.

Unfortunately, LA’s current land uses 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 backyards of residents.

In 2006, grassroots groups from three heavily polluted LA neighborhoods — Boyle Heights, Pacoima, and Wilmington — joined together to form the Los Angeles Collaborative for Environmental Health and Justice. Communities for a Better Environment, the Coalition for a Safe Environment, Pacoima Beautiful, and Unión de Vecinos also joined in later years.

Together, members of the collaborative have developed the Clean Up Green Up (CUGU) initiative to transform their neighborhoods into safer and more vibrant communities. Their goals are to minimize the overconcentration of environmental hazards in overburdened neighborhoods, reduce pollution, and help businesses clean up and green up their operations while still retaining and creating more jobs in the neighborhood.

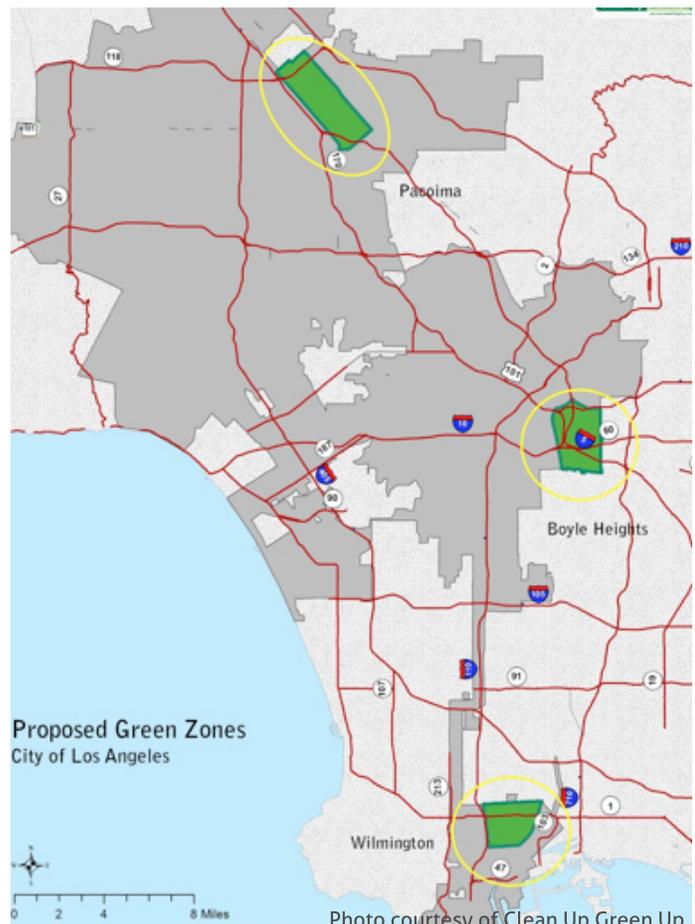


Photo courtesy of Clean Up Green Up

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

Building Solutions from the Ground Up

A Clean Up Green Up Ordinance

After a decade of community organizing, Mayor Eric Garcetti signed the Clean Up Green Up ordinance into law in April 2016. With unanimous support from the City Council, this groundbreaking environmental justice policy established pilot “Green Zones” that pioneered a municipal land use policy that will bring long-lasting benefits to these three EJ communities.

The Los Angeles Collaborative for Environmental Health and Justice worked to ensure strong engagement from both residents and local businesses. It shaped the policy through both a community-based research and a ground-truthing process in which residents documented a range of hazards and sensitive land uses in their neighborhoods. They looked not only at individual sources of pollution, but also the concentration of many toxic emitters both large and small that together add up to create a cumulative health burden.

Residents and local businesses were also involved in many community meetings and public participation workshops to help develop solutions and mitigations. They provided compelling testimony at public hearings, including more than 200 who expressed their support during official hearings in June 2015. More than 180 public health, environmental, faith-based, local business, and community groups endorsed the measure, and it is also included in both the city’s Health and Wellness element of the General Plan and Mayor Garcetti’s Sustainable City Plan.



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 members showing their love for a clean green Wilmington.

Creating New EJ Standards

Now, as part of the municipal planning and zoning code, CUGU benefits both residents and the business community through coordinated inspections, more protective health standards for new and expanded industrial operations, and stronger public participation from local residents. It also includes a citywide provision that allows the city of Los Angeles to further restrict the expansion of oil refinery operations by requiring a health impact assessment and a conditional use permit. CUGU also contains a building codes measure that requires mandatory air filters in all new residential units within 1,000 feet of a freeway.

In addition, the adopted CUGU ordinance sets forth new development standards to govern any new and/or expanded industries, such as proper building and mechanical enclosures to prevent fugitive emissions, “no idling” signage for diesel trucks at warehouses and other industrial facilities, and the creation of “buffer zones” or distance setbacks of 500 feet between new or expanded auto-related uses and residences. It also calls for improved site planning features such as proper trash enclosures, materials storage, fencing, height and yard setbacks, outdoor lighting, landscaping, and surface parking lot design, as well as new provisions for demonstrating compliance with noise standards and proper mitigations.



Photo courtesy of LA Collaborative for Environmental Health and Justice

CUGU members pack the LA City Council hearing.

Support for Small Businesses

Clean Up Green Up also established an ombudsperson position within the Bureau of Sanitation to support local businesses. The ombudsperson helps businesses access financial and technical support to improve their operations and bottom line. The ombudsperson also assists small businesses in navigating complex permitting processes, and in complying with regulatory standards. The office also responds to community complaints about nuisance businesses and coordinates with city departments and regulators to enforce any violations.

In the first year and a half, the ombudsperson has conducted visits with more than 100 businesses in the three communities, and has worked closely with council offices, community organizations, and neighborhood councils to make local establishments aware of programs that can clean up and green up their operations.

To expand Green Zone activities, in 2017 several members of the Los Angeles Collaborative for Environmental Health and Justice participated in the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power's (LADWP's) Community Partnership Grant Program. They expanded outreach efforts to local mom-and-pop businesses to promote LADWP programs that can both reduce the carbon footprint of their operations and create greater economic resilience by lowering their energy costs.

The organizers went door-to-door to 329 local businesses, promoting the *Guide to Green* business resource directory and LADWP incentives. As a result, 79 businesses signed up to receive a complimentary energy audit through the LADWP Commercial Direct Install program. More than 30 businesses also qualified for full

energy audits. Based on the amount of energy savings that's been projected for completed projects, more than 150,000 kilowatt hours of energy are estimated to be saved every year. In addition, 96 businesses signed pledges to reduce their energy use, while 85 of them completed surveys about their energy consumption patterns and the kinds of energy efficiency technologies that would be most useful to their business operations.

This partnership between the local businesses and the city provided LADWP with valuable information to shape its current programs. Together, they continue to ensure strong community engagement throughout the implementation of Clean Up Green Up.

CUGU demonstrates that local planning and land use policies can improve community health and sustainability. It also shows that the movement for environmental justice can succeed in 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: Community Business Profiles



Los Tres Cochinitos has been owned by the Montes family since 1973. Their aim was to have a space to highlight their Mexican culture through music and food that can cater to a mix of community members. The Montes family is dedicated to the Wilmington area and hopes to set a good example by being a green business.

From replacing their lighting with LED bulbs to making it routine to turn off the lights during the daytime, they have seen big changes in their energy bills as well as impacts on their restaurant's daily activities. The restaurant is brighter, the kitchen and dining area are kept even cleaner, and the conditions for the cooks and kitchen staff have also improved.

Through Clean Up Green Up, the Montes family has learned how to save energy while preventing pollution and reducing waste. They make it a practice to recycle their own bottles and cans at a local center, donating all proceeds to a community member. The business continues to bring social awareness to the community of Wilmington and encourages other small businesses to also take the pledge to go green.

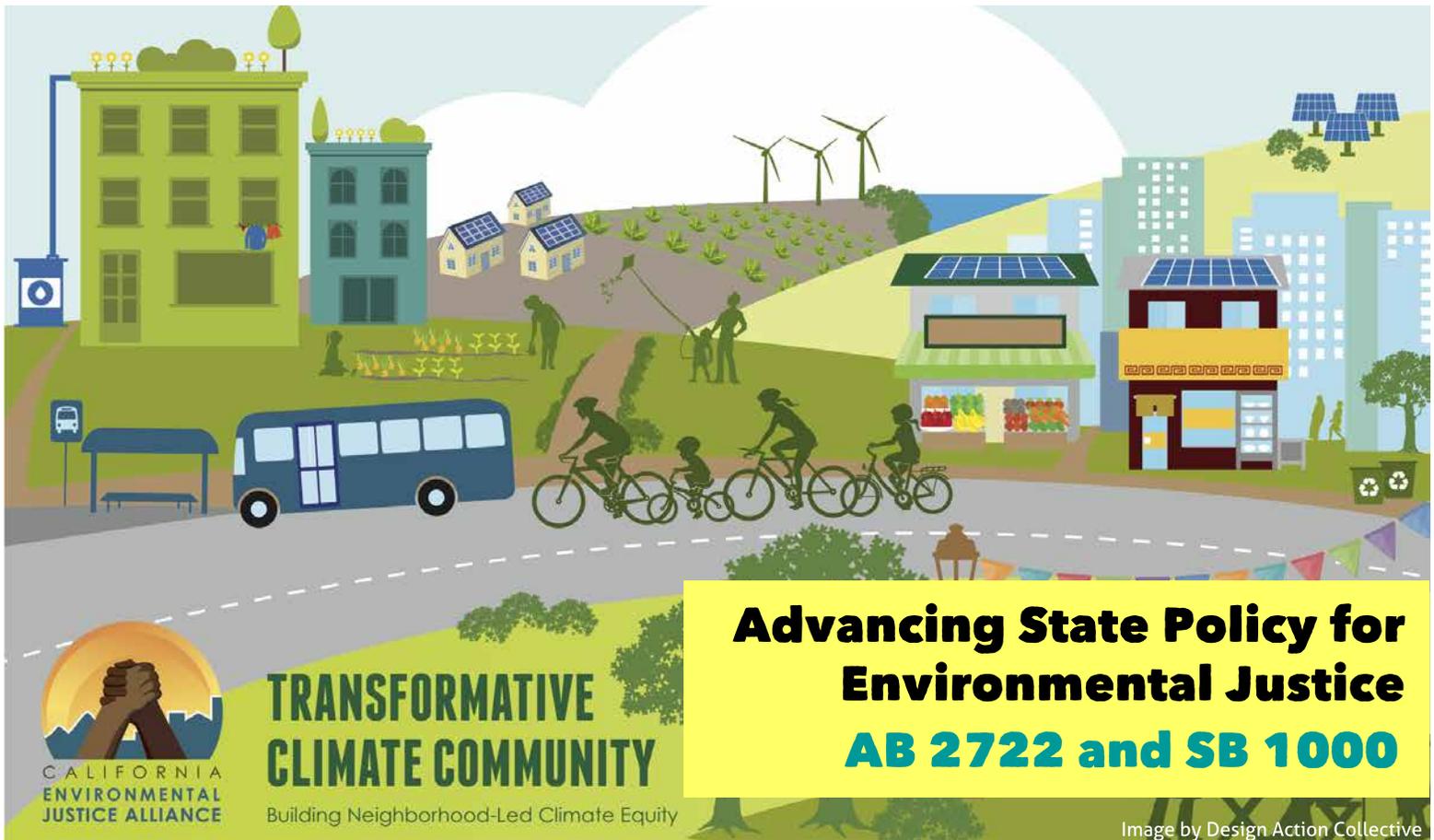
After 15 years as an employee, Martha Garcia is now the owner of Camila's Beauty Salon in Pacoima. She takes pride in the comfortable setting she provides customers with her environmentally friendly

business practices, prioritizing energy-saving habits and passing on the value of energy conservation to her children. She saves energy and money by utilizing natural lighting for her business and keeping the door open for fresh air. She believes all business owners must do what they can to protect their environment from polluting energy sources.

Martha received six light fixture replacements and 14 new LED light bulbs from an LADWP partnership with community organizations like Pacoima Beautiful, with the goal of providing energy efficiency solutions to local business owners. Thanks to this partnership, Martha feels motivated to continue her role as a green business leader and has found a new sense of trust in public agencies.



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



Advancing State Policy for Environmental Justice

AB 2722 and SB 1000



TRANSFORMATIVE CLIMATE COMMUNITY
Building Neighborhood-Led Climate Equity

Image by Design Action Collective

In addition to supporting neighborhood-based Green Zone strategies, the Green Zones Initiative believes that effective and community-driven solutions for environmental justice should also be advanced at the statewide level.

In 2016, CEJA succeeded in getting two groundbreaking Green Zones bills, AB 2722 (Burke) and SB 1000 (Leyva), signed into law by Gov. Jerry Brown. Since the passage of both bills, CEJA has been actively engaged in the implementation of both new policies to ensure these statewide efforts are directly connected to local community priorities.

AB 2722: Transformative Climate Communities

Since one main focus of the Green Zones Initiative is to channel greater public resources into community leadership and EJ solutions, CEJA and the Greenlining Institute co-sponsored AB 2722 to fund comprehensive EJ solutions led by frontline communities. AB 2722 created the TCC program, a groundbreaking new program that reduces greenhouse gases while achieving important economic, environmental, and public health benefits in our state’s most disadvantaged neighborhoods. The program’s high emphasis on community engagement and multiagency coordination stands out among all state programs. By directing large-scale funding to comprehensive plans at the

neighborhood level, TCC breaks down silos to address multiple EJ issues, while lifting up community-led solutions that address residents’ needs.

In order to ensure a robust program, CEJA and allies provided critical feedback during the public process to develop and strengthen the TCC guidelines. As a result of our efforts, strong community engagement, displacement avoidance safeguards, and more equitable eligibility requirements were included in the final guidelines.

In January 2018, the Strategic Growth Council announced the winners of the state’s first round of implementation and planning grants. We were pleased to see \$70 million awarded to the city of Fresno for their proposal that was developed by Southwest Fresno leaders. The community’s proposal seeks to address decades of neglect by investing a majority of the funds for projects in California’s most disproportionately polluted neighborhoods.

Community leaders, with support from LCJA and Fresno BHC, were also instrumental in ensuring a participatory process that led to the development of the final list of projects for Fresno’s TCC grant application. We were also excited to see \$35 million awarded to the city of Ontario for the Ontario Connects plan, a project supported by a multi-stakeholder coalition that included CCAEJ. This plan builds upon previous community efforts to provide a mobility hub, affordable housing, electric buses, active transportation, and urban greening for the Inland Valley.

While not awarded an implementation grant, the South LA TCC plan remains a strong example of what community-led Green Zones can look like for the Los Angeles region. Led by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the city of Los Angeles, and the South Los Angeles Transit Empowerment Zone, with input and direction from members of the Los Angeles Equity Alliance (including SCOPE, T.R.U.S.T. South LA, SAJE, and the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust), the plan creates much needed green space and an enhanced active transportation corridor along a 5.6-mile stretch of Slauson Avenue. The plan would transform an abandoned railroad line into a green corridor and community space that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase transit access and mobility, and provide creative programming to promote resident health and EJ.

SGC also awarded 10 planning grants to EJ communities that could be eligible for future TCC implementation grants or other California Climate Investments programs. CEJA was pleased to see funds awarded to East and West Oakland, Stockton, and the Coachella Valley region. CBE and LCJA were instrumental in supporting the winning East Oakland and Coachella planning grants, respectively.

“Southwest Fresno residents — confronting decades of exclusion from decision-making processes and underinvestment in their neighborhoods — led a process and campaign designed to draw tens of millions of dollars in investments that best fit their community’s needs. This plan includes a community college facility, energy efficiency projects, and quality jobs for their neighbors, amongst other projects. Similarly, the unincorporated communities of the Eastern Coachella will soon be planning their own communities to better prepare and be more competitive for future grants. We’re excited to see both the community’s plan unfold and ensure it stay true to their vision.”

–Grecia Elenes, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability

“I am excited that East Oakland will be leading a community-based planning process with organizations that have been doing this work for years. We have pushed the city of Oakland to acknowledge existing community-made neighborhood plans and the power of a vision for East Oakland made by existing East Oakland residents.”

–Ernesto Arevalo, Communities for a Better Environment

SB 1000: Planning for Healthy Communities

Another Green Zones bill that promotes better planning and protections for EJ communities is SB 1000, the Planning for Healthy Communities Act. CEJA and CCAEJ were co-sponsors of this bill that aimed to address historic inequities in planning due to poor land use decisions, disinvestment, and discrimination. The bill was inspired by both EHC’s advocacy for National City’s Health and EJ element — the very first EJ element in California — and CCAEJ’s work on the city of Jurupa Valley’s EJ element.

SB 1000 requires that all cities and counties create an EJ element, or integrate environmental justice throughout their General Plans, if they contain disadvantaged communities. The law provides the following mandates for including EJ goals, policies, and objectives in their General Plans:

- Reduce the unique and compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities by reducing pollution exposure and improving air quality, while also promoting better public facilities, food access, safe and sanitary homes, and physical activity.
- Promote community engagement in the public decision-making process.
- Prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities.

In 2017, CEJA partnered with PlaceWorks to create and release the SB 1000 Implementation Toolkit. The toolkit lifts up effective environmental justice planning methods and provides resources and guidance for those interested in bringing SB 1000 to their communities. In 2018, CEJA also worked with numerous community-based organizations to lead a series of SB 1000 community workshops for planners, local government, advocates, and residents. The workshops educated participants on the SB 1000 law and the importance of planning for environmental justice.

Both the TCC program and SB 1000 advance Green Zones goals to provide healthy, safe, and thriving neighborhoods for those who have been disproportionately impacted by pollution and poverty. By winning comprehensive and community-led solutions for environmental justice, CEJA has become a leader at the forefront of the movement to advance EJ in state policy.

For more information on the SB 1000 Implementation Toolkit, please see: <http://www.caleja.org/sb1000-toolkit>.

Tracing the Trajectory of CEJA's Green Zones Initiative: AN INTERVIEW WITH CEJA GREEN ZONES CO-FOUNDERS

In 2010, CEJA published our first concept paper on our vision for a Green Zones Initiative. The original team who launched our initiative included Antonio Diaz, executive director at PODER; Diane Takvorian, executive director at the Environmental Health Coalition; Penny Newman, former executive director at the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice; and Amy Vanderwarker, CEJA's first dedicated Green Zones staff person. In this interview, Diaz and Takvorian reflect on the successes, challenges, and work it has taken to launch CEJA's Green Zones Initiative.

What have been key elements to building the Green Zones Initiative, both locally and statewide?

Antonio Diaz: For EHC, PODER, and other CEJA members and partners, engaging community members in community-based planning and decision-making is a core aspect of our work. That means that it's not just people in suits who represent developer interests for the city that are at the table where these planning decisions are taking place. It entails a lot of community capacity building, education, and organizing around what planning is, and knowing how we can intervene. We must ensure that we have community voices in those spaces, so that we can prioritize equitable and community-based development. We need to have deep engagement to have impacts at the neighborhood and city levels. The lessons learned from the neighborhoods that we work in inform our policy work at the state level.

Legislation can be fashioned to meet the needs of communities and can include community voices. Our greatest strength is in our local-, regional-, and state-level work, so our focus has been on the state. And we've had much success on that, whether it's with the Transformative Climate Communities program or SB 1000. These bills reflect our Green Zones vision around reducing pollution, promoting investments, and creating better land use decisions. We've been successful at making those goals into a reality through the legislative process.

It's been amazing to see all of our new CEJA partners doing Green Zones work. Part of our success has been expanding the group of folks who have prioritized this work. The resources that CEJA has produced — the second Green Zones report in 2015 and the SB 1000 toolkit — are really helpful in thinking about this work and providing tips on implementation. It's great that we're updating the Green Zones report because it's not only about our on-the-ground work, but also our ability to put our best practices down on paper so that they can be useful to other people.



Photo by Carolina Martinez

Strategy session after Green Zones Tour of National City.

Diane Takvorian: Green Zones is a great frame for the work that is happening in our communities. Another important factor in California was CalEnviroScreen, which gave us scientific and objective data to what many of us have been pointing to for a long time. The tool has been able to support our organizing work in communities, by providing a framework to define our issues. It didn't change the work, per se. It just framed it in a different way. It allowed us to see which communities pop on the map. It's not perfect, but it's the beginning of our ability to objectively define these EJ communities. And it doesn't mean that it's the end of the story.

Getting Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) money to finish an affordable housing project was huge for EHC. And it's made such a big difference in the community — it could have sat there without any progress. Part of it was that we were in the right place at the right time. But if we didn't have the Green Zones framing we wouldn't have been ready to step up for that. Having GGRF was critically important, but it was already a part of our Green Zone project. We can now redirect money from cap and trade and money coming through the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) toward our efforts.

What are the biggest challenges to the Green Zones Initiative now?

Antonio Diaz: Issues related to the impacts that investments often have in communities, in terms of displacement and gentrification pressures. We want amenities in our neighborhoods. We want open space and parks and housing. But oftentimes these investments create new neighborhoods on top of old neighborhoods. It's not an easy issue to solve, because our neighborhoods do deserve these amenities. But we need to deal with these displacement pressures.

Diane Takvorian: Displacement is a key issue to address. Is turning our communities green also turning them into a different color of residents? Does it then turn our neighborhoods white? That's the struggle. As we clean stuff up, what goes in our neighborhoods? Who are we cleaning up the community for?

What are the next steps for the Green Zones Initiative?

Antonio Diaz: In terms of investments, there are now pools of funding at the state level due in part to the work that CEJA and other groups have done. I think that we are clear that cap and trade is not the approach that we want; we can change that in the future. However, what does that mean then for having investments in our communities? And what are the potential funding streams that we can create?



Ground breaking a new community garden in San Francisco.

One of the barriers that we've hit is getting into new aspects of this work. When you start building out a community, many levels of expertise are needed. You need to have both groups with expertise and grassroots groups to play a part in these solutions. Grassroots groups need to take leadership, but we also need allies who are developers, etc., who have the expertise but need our shared EJ analysis and community perspective. We have to keep finding those experts, because it's not our expertise or even the kind of expertise that we want to have as EJ groups. Those barriers can make it hard to move forward.

Diane Takvorian: If we are talking about investments, we need way more money. We haven't had a conversation about community ownership in that deep way. It's a scary time to think about this conservation, but we ought to be. Why aren't we proposing community land trusts and community ownership options in GGRF? How can we convene funders to say, we are serious about project-related investment money, and this is how much we really need? We need to look to alternative strategies, because even if people stepped up in foundations, it wouldn't scratch the surface of our funding needs.

What happens after our wins, like SB 1000? Our key strategy around community power building is so important, because as we know, our plan is only as good as the extent to which we advocate for it being implemented. It's key that we continue to have these types of toolkits and opportunities for organizations to share their experiences and best practices — especially when it comes to impacting land use decision-making, and making sure state policy gets implemented so that it's doing right by our communities.

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