



Measuring What Matters: Neighborhood Research for Economic & Environmental Health and Justice in Richmond, North Richmond & San Pablo

Research Findings from the
forthcoming West County Indicators Project report

Teleconference Agenda

1. Introduction

Nancy Ross, Communications Director, Pacific Institute

2. Report Findings

Eli Moore & Swati Prakash, Pacific Institute

3. Community Action for Environmental & Economic Health & Justice

- Barbara Becnel, Neighborhood House of North Richmond
- Marilyn Langlois, Richmond Progressive Alliance
- Lilia Quinonez, Morada de Mujeres del Milenio
- Dr. Henry Clark, West County Toxics Coalition

4. Question & Answer



Background & Introduction

- The far western communities of Contra Costa County, in Richmond, North Richmond, and San Pablo, are home to 47,000 people, primarily people of color of modest economic means.
- Area with many assets but that struggle with high rates of health problems, crime, chronic underemployment and poverty
- Measuring What Matters is a research report on neighborhood indicators of environmental quality and economic opportunity and resources, and their relationship to community health.
- The project is rooted in the belief that healthy communities require environmental and economic justice.



Methods

- Report grows out of 3-year project in partnership with 7 community-based organizations in West County Costa County.
- Eleven issues, identified through community meetings and narrowed down based on data availability, timeliness, relevance and potential for action.
- Two types of research:
 - Secondary
 - Primary / Participatory





Project Area



The Issues

1. Healthy Homes and Lead Contamination Risk
2. Flaring at the Chevron Refinery
3. Liquor Stores and Community Health
4. Freight Transport (Trucks, Trains and Ships) and Community Health
5. City Park Conditions
6. Access to Shoreline Open Space
7. Employment of Formerly Incarcerated Residents
8. Richmond's Tax Revenue from Chevron
9. Water Contamination of Creeks and Bays
10. Access to Quality Youth Programs
11. Streetlights and Community Safety

Overall findings

- ***Environmental Health Risks:*** There are serious but largely preventable environmental risks faced by all West County communities.
- ***Inequities:*** Low-income neighborhoods and communities of color in West County face disproportionately higher environmental and economic risks, and have fewer assets.
- ***Economic Opportunity and Resources:*** There are persistent obstacles to economic opportunities for West County residents, and inequities between who pays the costs and who enjoys the benefits of industrial economic activity in West County.

Specific Findings: Environmental Health Risks

- Nearly half the homes in West County were built before 1960, putting them at high risk for lead contamination and putting children at risk.
- Of the 16,379 Richmond and North Richmond residents who live within ½ mile of undeveloped shoreline areas, only 28% have easy physical access to shoreline open space.
- Nearly 20% of homes in West County are within 500 and 1,000 feet of freight transport areas.
- All of the creeks and bays in West County are polluted to the point of being impaired.

Specific Findings: Environmental Health Risks

- Between 2004 and 2007, there were 142 days when the Chevron Richmond refinery emissions were above Air District thresholds of concern.
- Almost 60% of West County schools and parks are within 1000 feet of a liquor store.
- There are an average of 7.3 “bad conditions” per park in West County.
- Half of the Lucas Park (Richmond) homes surveyed noticed a decrease in criminal activity since streetlights in that neighborhood were upgraded.

Specific Findings: Economic Opportunity & Resources

- All of Richmond's top ten employers ask job applicants whether they have been convicted of a felony.
- The youth programs serving Richmond, North Richmond, and San Pablo youth aged 15 to 20 have 2,409 spaces, or enough for 22% of youth in this age group.
- The City of Richmond's largest taxpayer, Chevron, paid \$25 million in taxes and fees to the City in 2007, or 10% of the city's total annual revenue.

Specific Findings: Inequities in environmental health risks

- Within our project area, neighborhoods closest to freight transport areas and with the worst park conditions have proportionately more people of color and lower median incomes.
- While Richmond and San Pablo represent less than 14% of Contra Costa County's total population, they have 25% of the county's liquor stores.

Recommendations

Sensible programs, policies, and practices

1. Invest resources in logical solutions to make a transition to healthy neighborhoods.
2. Develop new, sensible policies, and improve enforcement of existing policies, to reduce exposure to environmental risks.
3. Improve public services to provide the resources necessary for a dignified standard of living.
4. Remove definable barriers to access and opportunity – both physical and social – to create a level playing field.

Recommendations

Improved community participation

5. Open doors for more meaningful community participation in policy and program development.
6. Encourage community ownership of information to advocate for specific solutions.

Additional research and better monitoring & reporting

7. Conduct additional research to develop reliable information on community problems and solutions.
8. Base public policy on transparent and relevant information.

Report Release, Community Forum & Additional Resources

Monday June 15th, 2009 * 6 pm

St. Mark's Church

159 Harbour Way, Richmond

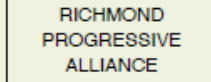
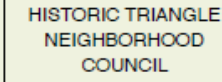
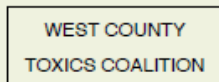
****** Report embargoed until June 15, 2009 ******

**Copy of complete report and PowerPoint with
detailed findings can be found at:**

http://www.pacinst.org/reports/measuring_what_matters/

Project Partners

- Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization (CCISCO)
- Morada de Mujeres del Milenio (MMM)
- Neighborhood House of North Richmond (NHNR)
- North Richmond Shoreline Open Space Alliance (NRSOSA)
- Pacific Institute
- Richmond Progress Alliance (RPA)
- Iron Triangle Neighborhood Council
- West County Toxics Coalition (WCTC)



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