

A Report of Communities for a Better Environment

September 2008

Cumulative Impacts in East Oakland:

Findings from a
community-based
mapping study

Summary

East Oakland’s “Hegenberger Corridor” Deserves the Freedom to Breathe Now

Walking around East Oakland’s “Hegenberger Corridor,” one sees diesel trucks, trains, autobody shops and heavy industry, and right next door to these industrial pollution sources, a diverse neighborhoods with homes and schools, senior centers and churches. Environmental Justice (EJ) is rooted in the belief that everyone has the right to a clean and healthy environment where they live, work, go to school, play, and pray regardless of race, gender, or income. Low-income communities and communities of color around the world bear disproportionate burdens, cumulative impacts, exposures, and risk from pollution. This report provides a summary of findings from the mapping of cumulative impacts in the Hegenberger Corridor.

The study highlights major gaps in emissions inventory data that air quality agencies, like the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and the California Air Resources Board, and local land-use decision-makers, like the City of Oakland, rely upon to protect communities from air pollution. This study demonstrates that community participation and local knowledge is critical to ensuring that air pollution control agencies and the City of Oakland take effective steps to addressing the cumulative impacts of multiple pollution sources in vulnerable communities like East Oakland.

Regulators should use this new knowledge to include consideration of cumulative impacts and community health in decision-making to prevent additional pollution burdens on the community. Economic development decisions should be made to achieve equity and protect community and worker health. The impacts from diesel trucks need to be mitigated by retrofitting older, dirtier engines, enforcing the California 5-minute idling law and establishing truck routes that eliminate trucks driving through and parking in residential areas. The concentration of autobody repair shops needs to be reduced in East Oakland through a relocation program.

East Oakland’s “Hegenberger Corridor” is a low-income community of color with a history of pollution

The “Hegenberger Corridor” has a history of industrial pollution. It is a small area roughly, 1.5 miles by 0.8 miles, from north to south, Hegenberger Road to 98th Ave and from west to east, San Leandro Street to International Boulevard, in East Oakland. Today, on top of a heavy pollution burden, the community is impacted by poor schools, inadequate health care and social services, low services for children, and employment opportunities largely limited to low-paying stressful jobs. The Hegenberger Corridor is more than 95% people of color, made up mostly of Latinos and African Americans¹. The household median income is \$23,000-39,999, approximately \$20,000 less per year than the U.S average median family income. Twenty to forty percent of people in East Oakland live below the federal poverty rate².

East Oakland’s “Hegenberger Corridor” is burdened from Cumulative Impacts

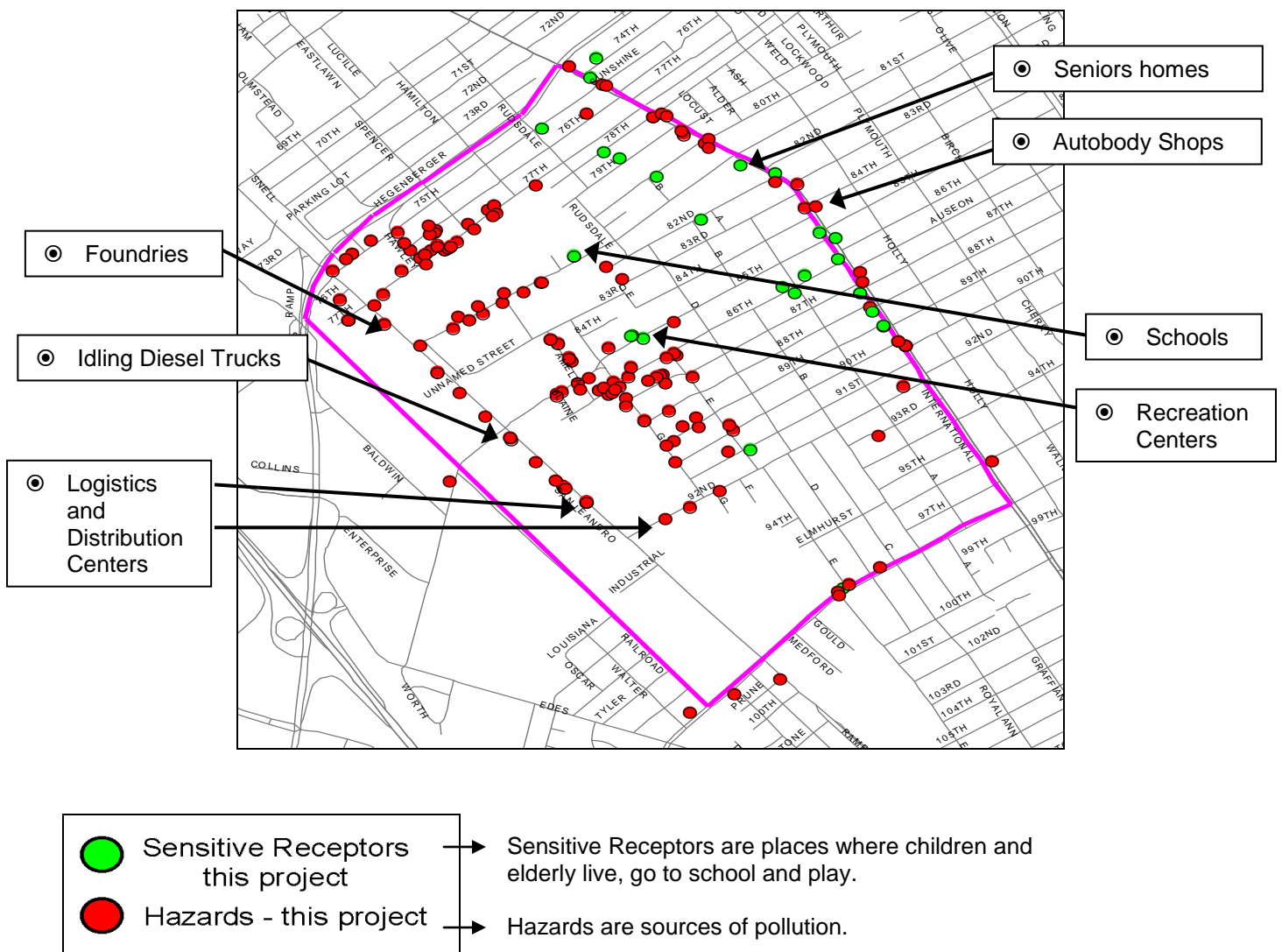
CBE members found that there are 216 stationary and mobile sources of pollution, or hazards, and 49 places where populations particularly susceptible to disease, specifically children and elderly, spend a lot of time such as schools and senior centers, or sensitive receptors, in the Hegenberger Corridor. These hazards were often found nearby to and impacting the health of the residents. This combination of unhealthy environment and social stressors has an adverse effect on people’s health. Cumulative Impacts are the public health and environmental effects from the combined emissions, discharges and exposures in a geographic area, where people live, work, play and learn; this includes pollution from all sources, whether single or multi-media, mobile or stationary, routinely, accidentally or otherwise released. The life expectancy in East Oakland for the years 2000 to 2003 was 72.0

¹ This information was collected for census tracts 4089, 4094 and 4095. According to Census 2000 information, 11,349 people live in the Hegenberger Corridor.

² Alameda County Public Health Department. October 2005. Community Information Book Update: East Oakland.

years, which was 6.9 years lower than Alameda County as a whole³. The top two causes of death for each race/ethnic group in East Oakland were heart disease and cancers⁴.

Mapping of the Hegenberger Corridor reveals Cumulative Impacts



Examples of some of the hazards and sensitive receptors

⊙ Hegenberger Corridor residents are impacted by idling diesel trucks

Diesel fuel is used in most commercial trucks, trains, off-road diesel equipment, and even some personal vehicles. These types of trucks also pass through residential areas in East Oakland and cause vibrations, noise, safety hazards for pedestrians, and are crime magnets. Diesel emissions are a major contributor of toxic air contaminants in the Bay Area. Particulate matter (PM) can be inhaled deep into the lungs and may be absorbed into the bloodstream. PM is linked to asthma and other respiratory diseases, cancer, premature death, heart attacks, and premature birth. It can trigger allergies, asthma.

³ Alameda County Public Health Department. October 2005. Community Information Book Update: East Oakland.

⁴ Alameda County Public Health Department. October 2005. Community Information Book Update: East Oakland.

⊙ **Hegenberger Corridor residents are at greater health risk from distribution centers**

It takes ships, diesel trucks, trains and diesel machinery, all of which use fuel that causes air pollution, to move the “goods” we buy (See Hazard 1). The air pollution from freight transportation has associated health costs such as health care bills, lost work and school days, and premature deaths. The California Air Resources Board estimated health costs from particulate matter and ozone pollution from freight transport to be **\$19.5 billion** in 2005⁵. **Air toxics, including diesel PM, CO, NOx, and SOx** are major air pollutants of concern.

⊙ **Hegenberger Corridor residents are impacted by autobody shops**

Autobody shops were found to be highly concentrated and very close to residents, sometimes next door to houses. The businesses attract a lot of cars to the neighborhoods. Oil slicks and stains were often seen on sidewalks and gutters around the autobody shops. Community has raised concerns about **odors** coming from autobody shops. **Solvents, odors, and metals, and air toxics, including PM** are major air pollutants of concern.

⊙ **Hegenberger Corridor residents are at greater health risk from foundries**

Community has raised concerns about **odors** coming from foundries and concern for the schools downwind. Foundries are relatively large sources of air-emitting pollution. They also impact the community with the many trucks that serve the businesses. **Odor-causing compounds, volatile organic compounds, particulate matter, and lead** are major pollutants of concern.

⊙ **Schools, playgrounds, and senior homes in the Hegenberger Corridor are at greater health risk due to air pollution**

Children, elderly and people with existing health problems are especially sensitive to air pollution. Adverse effects may be seen in developing fetuses in pregnant women as well. Effects include birth defects, low birth weight, biological disfunctions, or physiological and behavioral deficits that manifest as the child grows. Because their bodies are growing, their immune systems and brains are developing, and they are physically very

What the community members found

☆ Places where children and elderly live, go to school and play (Sensitive Receptors):

- 15 child care facilities;
- 14 churches;
- 7 schools, including head starts;
- 7 parks, recreation, and youth centers;
- 2 senior centers/ housing facilities;
- 1 health care facility; and
- 1 community outreach center.

⊙ Places that are sources of pollution (Hazards):

- 5 sites of illegal diesel engine idling;
- 71 autobody, paint and repair businesses (including washes and sales);
- 27 logistics facilities;
- 1 grocery store with truck movement;
- 50 manufacturing businesses;
- 20 Brownfields;
- 15 construction businesses;
- 12 gas and diesel refueling stations;
- 8 recycling facilities;
- 3 pest control businesses;
- 1 energy generation-related;
- 3 miscellaneous.

⁵ From “Paying with our Health” Source: Adapted from California Air Resources Board. Tables A-1 and A-12b in “Quantification of the Health Impacts and Economic Valuation of Air Pollution From Ports and Goods Movement in California.” Appendix A in Emission Reduction Plan for Ports and Goods Movement. March 21, 2006:A-6 and A-72. http://www.arb.ca.gov/planning/gmerp/march21plan/appendix_a.pdf (accessed August 14, 2006).

active, children are especially susceptible to the effects of air pollution. The closer they are to pollution sources, the higher their health risk. High levels of diesel particulate matter can be found in people's homes near freeways and roads with heavy diesel truck traffic; air pollution could be affecting school children while they are in the classrooms. Studies link proximity to freeways and major roads to allergic asthma attacks and decreased respiratory function. Diesel particulate matter and smog contribute to these health effects. East Oakland has an asthma hospitalization rate 1.5 times the rate of Alameda County.

CBE Recommendations

- ◎ CARB, Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), and City of Oakland should, at a minimum, adopt a Cumulative Impacts policy that includes no net increase in air pollution in East Oakland.
- ◎ CARB and Air Quality Management Districts should conduct community-driven, on-the-ground investigations statewide and dedicate more resources to expanding its databases.
- ◎ The City of Oakland should:
 - Modify the Planning and Zoning Codes to increase and enforce buffers between industrial and residential zones
 - Make a plan to relocate the automobile repair and related facilities
 - Incorporate principles around just and sustainable economic development that considers environmental health and justice
 - Establish a truck route that reduces or eliminates trucks driving through and parking in residential areas.
- ◎ The Port of Oakland should adopt a comprehensive Clean Trucks Program to ensure that it is feasible for independent Port truck drivers to scrap or retrofit older dirty diesel trucks, improve their working conditions, ensure truck routes and parking outside of residential neighborhoods, and minimize diesel engine idling.
- ◎ CARB, BAAQMD, and the City of Oakland's Police Department (OPD) should enforce the California 5-minute idling law.

About CBE

The mission of Communities for a Better Environment is to achieve environmental health and justice by building grassroots power in and with communities of color and working-class communities. Through empowerment, communities who are directly affected by the life threatening levels of pollution, have a chance to address these issues with other community members, and administrators who regulate how the pollution is handled.

For More Information:

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