

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

**Community Action for a Renewed Environment  
Cooperative Agreement Grantee Final Progress Report**

Grantee: **Pacoima Beautiful**

Project title: **Community Partnership Understanding Toxic Risks**

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*Acknowledgements*

Tim Dagodag, Linda Fidell and John Schillinger, California State University, Northridge; Debrorah Davenport, Olga Vigdorichik, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health; Linda Kite, Healthy Homes Collaborative; Joseph Lyou, California Environmental Rights Alliance; Josh Stehlik, Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County; Brian Condon, Arnold and Porter; Theresa Nitescu and Deborah Rosen, Northeast Valley Health Corporation; Marlene Grossman, Elvia Hernandez, Blanca Nuñez, Patricia Ochoa, Fernando Rejón and Liseth Romero-Martinez, Pacoima Beautiful; Carl Maida, University of California, Los Angeles; Joni Novosel, Valley Care Community Consortium, Gretchen Hardison and Christopher Patton, Los Angeles Environmental Affairs Department; Sarayeh Amir and Gabriel Farkas, Department of Toxic Substance Control; Dale Shimp, California Air Resources Board; Jonathon Bishop, Stephen Caine, Fran Diamond and the California Regional Water Quality Control Board.

We appreciate the support of all our local elected officials: Former Councilmember now State Senator, Alex Padilla; Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Former Assemblymember Cindy Montañez, Former State Senator, now Councilmember, Richard Alarcón; and Congressman Howard Berman. Thank you also to Ackley Padilla and Raul Bocanegra, deputies to Councilmember Padilla, for their ongoing belief in the work.

We are very grateful to the US Environmental Protection Agency staff members, Marva King, Hank Topper, Michael Bandrowski and Richard Grow for their guidance and ongoing support. A special thank you to Project Officer Karen Henry and to technical advisor, Matthew Lakin, who spent many hours guiding the work of the project and providing sound counsel and resources throughout.

The work undertaken through the CARE Level I grant in Pacoima, California arose out of the need by Pacoima Beautiful (PB) and its partners<sup>1</sup> to identify sources of toxic substances and their health risks in the community and prioritize remediation of the sources. . Historically, few research projects have been conducted in Pacoima, with even fewer involving environmental conditions. This changed as partnerships have been formed and resources and expertise from sources such as US EPA have been made available to the community. The CARE Level I grant provided an extremely important opportunity to organize ideas, concepts, reports and community knowledge into a cohesive set of risks, which could then be prioritized for future action

Pacoima Beautiful served as the lead on this project. Pacoima Beautiful is a community-based, resident driven environmental non-profit organization whose mission is to empower the Pacoima community through programs that provide environmental education, advocacy and local leadership opportunities for residents in order to foster a healthy and safe environment. Pacoima Beautiful partners with community-based organizations, university faculty, elected officials, businesses and others to address environmental justice and environmental health issues in Pacoima and the northeast San Fernando Valley.

### *Overview*

Pacoima is a low-income, multicultural, working-class community located in the northeast San Fernando Valley in the City of Los Angeles. It covers six square miles at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains and is encircled by three major freeways: Interstate 5, Highway 118 and the 405 freeway. The community contains a small plane airport, with over 300 flights per day, and is bisected by railroad tracks.

Of the 101,000 Pacoima residents, 85% are Latino and 8% African American. Approximately 33% of the population is children and family size is large for Los Angeles, ranging from estimates of 4 to 5.5 members per family. Thirty-four percent of the population has less than a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education. In 2002 23% of the population earned less than \$25,000 a year and 19% percent of the population lived below the federal poverty level. (Source: US Census 2000)

Of 22,000 housing units, 80% are single- family homes. Approximately 21% of the population lives in garages or rental rooms in single-family homes; many live in extremely overcrowded conditions. In several areas in the community, residences are adjacent to industrial facilities.

The community of Pacoima has long suffered from environmental neglect that can likely be blamed for the high rates of environmental health risks in the community and the

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<sup>1</sup> *Valley Care Community Consortium; California State University, Northridge; Los Angeles County Department of Public Health; University of California, Los Angeles; Northeast Valley Health Corporation; Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County; Healthy Homes Collaborative, local elected officials*

numerous sources of pollution throughout the area. In addition to freeways, the airport, and a railway line, there are more than 300 industrial uses (large and small point sources) that have left contaminants behind or continue to pollute the air, soil and water. Pacoima is home to five US EPA Cerclis/Superfund (toxic release) sites (please see Appendix A), two of which are currently being remediated. Community concerns focus on the cumulative impacts from contaminants, such as lead in paint and in the soil, emissions from freeways, commuter planes, diesel from trucks and equipment, older “gross emitting” cars in the community, landfills, and the widespread use of toxic chemicals throughout the community.

### ***Goals of the CARE Level I Grant***

- Identify all sources of toxic substances in Pacoima that may have negative health or environmental impacts
- Work with community stakeholders (residents, community-based organizations, elected officials and others) to understand the health implications of potential sources of risks
- Assist stakeholders in setting priorities for amelioration of those risks
- Create self-sustaining community-based partnerships that will continue to reduce risks and improve the local environment

Below is how the Pacoima partnership addressed these goals, based upon a logic model (please see Appendix B).

### ***Strategies and Activities***

*1) Build effective collaborative partnerships of all interested parties, including community-based organizations, residents, business owners, governmental agencies, and other appropriate partners.*

For over ten years, PB has successfully served as a resident-driven, community-based center for innovative ideas, data, statistics and expertise focused on environmental issues and hazards affecting the residents of Pacoima. As an integral part of the community, PB has taken the time to build and nurture collaborative partnerships and consensus-building relationships with residents and over 150 organizations, agencies and institutions, inside and outside the community. These relationships served as the basis for the broad-based stakeholders group working together on the CARE Level I project.

The stakeholder group in the CARE Level I project consisted of adult residents who attended workshops facilitated by PB staff at three local elementary schools; local high school students who participated in three month-long learning workshops on toxics; community organizations, regulatory agencies and elected officials or their representatives. Specific stakeholders included: health-related organizations such as the Valley Care Community Consortium and Northeast Valley Health Corporation; legal support from Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County and the Law Firm of Arnold and Porter; elected officials such as State Senator Alex Padilla and former

Assembly member Cindy Montañez; and numerous governmental agencies such as US EPA, LA County Department of Public Health, Los Angeles City Environmental Affairs Department, California EPA Department of Toxics Substance Control, California Regional Water Quality Control Board, California Air Resources Board and faculty and classes from California State University, Northridge (CSUN) and University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

Resident involvement was key in the identification of specific sources of toxics:

- 150 community high school students were involved in three “Environmental Justice Institutes” through which they researched specific environmental issues and concerns, and developed community-wide solutions. Students were invited to see their community in a new light by participating in community-based, participatory action research. Projects that they participated in included: testing and documenting storm water contamination; exploring and documenting toxic sites; and identifying potential toxic risks and their health impacts.
- 150 bilingual and monolingual parents from three schools participated in 60 interactive community environmental education and leadership development workshops entitled *Familias, Comunidad y Salud* (Families, Community and Health). These workshops provided parents with information on how to identify and articulate personal and specific environmental risks and concerns, how to build mutual trust in order to reach consensus in setting priorities for future action.
- 62 residents participated in five *Recorridos de la Comunidad* (Tours of Our Community). Participants were encouraged to “see again, for the first time” those risks that potentially endanger the health of their family, neighborhood, and community. Prior to the tours, residents participated in an assessment process, through which they defined the environmental strengths and weaknesses in their homes and community. The residents then participated in the tour to identify specific risks, photograph and document specific problem locations, and reflect on their experience. Residents came away from the tours with a new understanding of their roles as change agents.

2) *Provide information, tools, and technical assistance to help the community members understand all potential sources of exposure to toxic pollutants.*

From Jan 2006-Feb 2007, with support from the CARE Level I Grant, resources and program staff, several things occurred simultaneously which resulted in an understanding of all potential sources of exposure to toxic pollutants in Pacoima:

- Pacoima Beautiful convened more than 320 community residents, partners, and stakeholders to review data and information on toxic sources that PB and others had gathered over a ten-year period. An intern working with Valley Care Community Consortium and PB (Richard Gasheen) helped to collate much of

this information into a usable format to which new information could be added as it was collected (Please see Appendix C for the Needs Assessment-Environmental Health Initiative and the report prepared by Richard Gasheen).

- PB staff developed and implemented curriculum, which was shared with community residents to inform them about what was known about the various toxic sources in the community and to solicit their input and concerns. Participating residents came from PB programs conducted at local parent centers at three elementary schools. PB has a long history of reaching out to parents through parent centers. The three schools, Pacoima Charter, Telfair and Vaughn Elementary schools were selected for specific outreach during the grant period because of their location in what the partners in the project refer to as the “Pacoima Toxic Belt.” The toxic belt is a swatch down the middle of the community, which is densely populated with multiple families living in single family residences, residences adjacent to industries, freeways, the railroad, Whiteman Airport and is outlined by two heavy diesel truck traffic corridors (San Fernando Road and Glenoaks Blvd.). Altogether, between January 2006 and February 2007, 64 resident meetings and workshops were held that involved more than 300 residents (150 adults and 150 youth). Based on a generated list of toxic risks, consensus was built. (Please see Appendix D for a detailed discussion of the curriculum).
- Tim Dagodag, Ph.D., Chair of the Urban Planning and Studies Department at CSUN, together with an Urban Studies class and later with a group of students conducting independent research, documented and mapped 200 industries in Pacoima (please see Appendix E). Of these, 200 were determined to be potential problem sites because many are unregulated and/or lack any city permits. In order to address the sites in a systematic way, US EPA helped the partners identify pro bono attorney, Brian Condon of the law firm of Arnold and Porter to create a list of all the permits and regulations that were required for business operation (Please see Appendix F). Of the 200 sites, interns under the supervision of partner John Schillinger, Ph.D., a professor in the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health, CSUN, conducted a site analysis on 10 of these sites. The US EPA Brownfield Division is currently in the process of conducting a Phase I site investigation on 10 to 25 of the sites and the Department of Toxic Substances Control is conducting site analysis on five sites.
- 30 students from San Fernando High School and Discovery Preparatory Academy in Pacoima, working through Pacoima Beautiful Environmental Justice Institutes (month-long workshops), partnered with John Schillinger, to test storm and waste water coming from businesses in an area of Pacoima dominated by auto dismantlers and similar uses. Very high levels of *fecal coliform* bacteria were found in the water (see Appendix F). Further investigation will be conducted on the water looking specifically for heavy metals as well as other contaminants. In addition, students interviewed residents living in the Starlite



- PB gathered together an experienced group of stakeholders and experts to share what was learned from various sources, including residents, on toxic sources and health risks in Pacoima. Ten (10) partners meetings were held (see Appendix H for examples of agendas, sign in sheets and relevant notes). Participants included representatives from US and Cal EPA, other regulatory agencies and partnering community organizations to collect, discuss and collate data and information on toxic risks in the community. In addition, there were also two joint meetings between stakeholders and experts. The first meeting, organized by PB on May 6, 2006, brought together residents, businesses, and staff from regulatory agencies, elected officials and their representatives, to discuss and identify toxic risks in the community. The second meeting, on December 11, 2006, was organized with the assistance of US EPA staff, and included partners, stakeholders and two residents to identify and rank the risks. Another meeting of significance was a meeting held on February 17, 2007 at which 30 residents gathered together with PB staff to learn what had transpired at the previous meetings and to discuss the risk ranking and set community priorities.

*3) Establish consensus on priorities for effective action to reduce risks*

From the various group meetings with parents at the schools, meetings with partners and, ultimately a meeting held with a larger stakeholder group on December 11, 2006, a consensus- building process was put into place, which led to the identification of 18 risk categories in Pacoima. There was much overlap in the process of identifying the risks. Individual stakeholders, university faculty members, elected officials and their representatives, staff from regulatory agencies, community-based organizations and residents, including students, were engaged (as discussed in 2 above) and involved in identifying, documenting and gaining an understanding of the various risks. Under the guidance and skill of EPA scientist, Matthew Lakin, Ph.D., risk categories were consolidated and ranked (Please see notes from the December 11, 2007 meeting in Appendix H).

<u>High</u>	<u>Medium- High</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Medium-Low</u>	<u>Low</u>
Diesel Whiteman Airport Small Point Sources Highway & Major Arterials	Super emitters Lead Second hand Smoke	Indoor - Mold Indoor - Cleaners Stormwater Waste - Bulky Items Landfills	Waste - Hazardous Waste Soil - UST & Brownfields Indoor Environment - Vapor Intrusion	Radon Large point industrial sources (other than landfills) Soil - Sumps

Of these 18 risks, residents consistently selected five as high priorities for action. They are:

- Industries (small-point and large): Of particular concern to residents is the potential future toxic damage from two industrial sites: Price Pfister and Holchem (both presently being remediated). Also, of considerable concern to the residents is how to clean up the small point sources, namely auto dismantlers and wood chip type factories.
- Diesel emissions from community and freeway truck and bus traffic and diesel equipment
- Bulky items/hazardous waste: the problem is getting quite significant in the community.
- Indoor hazards including: lead, indoor mold and pesticides including cleaning solutions.
- Whiteman Airport and the multi-faceted problems associated with it.

Of the five risks consistently selected by residents, partners and experts agreed upon three as being high priorities. These are:

- Industrial facilities/stationary air pollution sources, specifically smaller point sources, such as auto dismantlers;
- Diesel from trucks, buses and equipment; and
- Air transportation hazards (namely, Whiteman Airport), with specific concerns about air toxics emissions including lead, and safety and land uses;

It should be noted that in the CARE Level I grant proposal submitted to US EPA it was stated that the objectives of the partners would be to identify four sources of toxics and establish at least ten priorities to reduce toxic risks. As the partners began to work on the project it became clear that there were many sources of toxics and that we would likely be able to realistically address much fewer than ten priorities. While the partners are planning to specifically address two priorities over the next two years (small point sources and diesel), it is the intent to eventually address all eighteen of the identified risks (the beginning of which can be seen in section 4) below).

Following the EPA CARE roadmap and implementing this consensus-building process resulted in:

- Self-sustaining community-based partnerships;



- A process which is building long-term community capacity to sustain risk reduction efforts;
- Broadening of the partnership base to include businesses;
- Creation of an expert panel (stakeholders group) consisting of university and agency-based scientists (US EPA and California EPA, Los Angeles Environmental Affairs Department) who have agreed to continue to provide resources and share their expertise.

As a part of the consensus building process, PB staff:

- Helped residents build a knowledge base to raise community consciousness regarding their surroundings and environment;
- Served as a bridge between the primarily Spanish-speaking residents and the stakeholders and partners to effectively communicate lessons learned and resources;
- Served as a bridge by facilitating ongoing dialogues and decision-making between residents, partners and stakeholders; and
- Served as the catalyst by allowing the community's voice to be heard and placed at the forefront of environmental change.

*4) Focus on action, mobilize local resources and utilize EPA Voluntary Programs to implement risk reduction activities*

During the course of the CARE Level I project, various opportunities presented themselves which permitted the mobilization of federal and local resources to address identified risks:

- Of the approximately 300 businesses identified in Pacoima, 200 were noted by Tim Dagodag and his CSUN students to be potential problem sites because they were unregulated or met the criteria noted in appendix E. Focusing specifically in the area of the "toxic belt" and more specifically on the area in which a large number of auto dismantlers are located (Branford/ Montague Streets); the partnership contacted the US EPA Brownfield Division. Noemi Emeric from EPA met with the partners on two different occasions to determine which businesses should be investigated as the most problematic sites. The conclusion was to focus around the Starlite Mobile Home Community (on Branford Street between Glenoaks and San Fernando Road). US EPA is presently in the process of conducting a Phase I site investigation intended to collect data on between 10 to 25 of these businesses (depending on the EPA resources)
- Hazardous waste/bulky items, along with graffiti, have been issues of concern in the community for some time. Short-term solutions, such as clean-up days, are effective. However, as the residents have been saying for some time, unless there is some effort to continuously have clean-up days, the problem can grow worse very quickly. PB staff has been seeking a permanent solution to the bulky item problem for a long time. PB helped to start Pacoima Graffiti Busters in 2002;

graffiti removal is now routine. When residents and stakeholders identified the issue of bulky items as one of the risks, PB staff and partners pushed to address this issue. As of April 1, 2007, Pacoima Graffiti Busters (PGB), in partnership with PB and the Pacoima Neighborhood Council (PNC) started an education campaign and item removal project. Pacoima Beautiful and the PNC will prepare flyers to inform the community about the need to report bulky items and the health risks associated with them. PGB will rent a truck and pay for a driver to collect bulky items twice a week. This effort will continue for a minimum of one year, at which point it will be evaluated with the anticipation of expansion.

- A taskforce (at the request of the partnership) has been formed by the local City Councilmember to begin to understand the impact of diesel from trucks, specifically around school sites in residential neighborhoods.

5) *Build long-term community capacity to continue improving the local environment*

The partnership and the larger group of community stakeholders and residents through the CARE Level I grant were able to address the issue of toxic sources and to consolidate the lessons learned into a set of 18 risks. It was the first time that such an effort had been undertaken in Pacoima. Through the extensive research provided by Matthew Lakin, there are now concrete and specific data to justify the need to address the toxic issues in Pacoima. There are also specific tasks that have been undertaken to continue to improve the local environment:

- A grant was secured from the Hewlett Foundation to address diesel emissions in the community. Several partners will soon be putting together an agenda to reduce the impact of diesel in residential neighborhoods and school zones.
- The bulky item problem is being addressed (see #4 above)
- Lead abatement is the work of PB and several partners, through not only the CARE Level 1 grant but through the Collaborative Problem Solving Grant received through EPA's Environmental Justice Division in 2004.

In addition, the following documents were generated which will benefit the longer-term discussions on toxic risk:

- *Environmental Health Initiative Report*, part of an ongoing historical environmental assessment of Pacoima by PB (with input from several sources), was updated in March 2007. Over 750 copies of this report, and prior ones, have been distributed to students, residents, partners, and elected officials (Please see Appendix C)
- *Risk Data Report* was compiled by Valley Care Community Consortium intern Richard Gasheen. Both printed and electronic copies of the report were distributed to all partners and shared with various stakeholders at all levels. This was the first compilation of data on toxic risks distributed to partners (Please see Appendix C).

- *Resident Workshop and Tour Curriculum Packages*, including lesson plans, maps, data and research, learning and art activities were distributed to all participating residents and students (Please see Appendix D)
- *CSUN Toxic Site Report and Map*: 30 college students produced maps identifying 200 potential and existing toxic sites. The maps were distributed to all partners and stakeholders (Please see Appendix E).

### ***Health Concerns Associated with Toxic Risks in Pacoima***

#### *1) The organizational approach to collecting information regarding different environmental toxic problems in different environmental media in the community*

Since 1997, PB has brought together residents (including high school students), university environmental health scientists, environmental and other organizations, university service-learning classes, and representatives from governmental agencies. The goal has been to generate information and address issues about community environmental health in Pacoima. By teaming scientists with community residents and youth, a network was created that has gathered data in order to understand the effects of environmental hazards on health. The data collection has been coupled with surveys of more than 2,000 residents and merchants. The approach is community-based and community-driven information gathering (community-based participatory action research).

#### *2) Analysis of toxic problems in the community.*

Pacoima, located just north of 30 landfills, surrounded by three major freeways and diesel truck traffic, bisected by a railroad line, and home to small commuter plane airport, is subject to emissions from numerous toxic sources. It is a community of more than 300 industrial uses, 200 of which “are likely to be problem sites due to observed conditions that include emissions, improper storage of chemicals, contaminated runoff and hazardous working conditions. Many of these businesses appear to be operating without business licenses or proper permits or are not regulated in any way,” according to a study conducted by Tim Dagodag (CSUN). Matthew Lakin (US EPA) said “Most of these facilities are small and largely unregulated, which is a concern because their impact is largely unknown and potentially very large.” Matthew Lakin has documented the severity of the following environmental and health problems in Pacoima, with input from others, including John Schillinger (CSUN):

a) Cancer Risks for the San Fernando Valley. The 1999 National Air Toxics Assessment (NATA) reported that a majority of San Fernando Valley residents had a cancer risk between 50-100 in a million, with pockets greater than 200 in a million. The total increased cancer risk for Pacoima was 89 in a million.

b) Respiratory Hazards. The total increased respiratory hazard is 18.5 for both particulate matter (compared to National Ambient Air Quality Standards for particulate matter of

16.4 ug/m<sup>3</sup>) and ozone (1-hour max), which was 0.142 ppm (compared to a standard of 0.120 ppm). The *cancer risk* rankings, based on contributions by category of source, were: 1) on road mobile, 2) background, 3) area, non-road mobile, and 4) major sources. The *respiratory hazard* was ranked accordingly: 1) on road mobile, 2) non-road mobile, 3) background, and 4) major sources. EPA has concluded that Acrylonitrile is a primary cancer risk driver at the Burbank Monitor (the closest to Pacoima): it is a main chemical emitted by Los Angeles County landfills of which there are 30 just to the southeast of Pacoima including one of the two largest in the City of Los Angeles: Bradley Landfill.

c) The Cancer Risk from Diesel Particulate Matter (PM) in the San Fernando Valley, summarized by the 1999 NATA study, using the California toxicity value, reported that a majority of the San Fernando Valley experienced concentrations equivalent to an increased cancer risk of greater than 100 in a million. Most of Pacoima experienced concentrations equivalent to a 500 to 1000 in a million excess cancer risk due to diesel exhaust exposure. No “hard data” was found regarding emissions in Pacoima; however, based on Los Angeles County population estimates in 1999, there would be about 50 tons of *diesel PM* released per year. EPA analysis found that exhaust from diesel trucks and non-road equipment is the largest cancer risk driver for all air pollutants in Pacoima. Particulate matter from diesel engines may lead to several premature deaths, heart attacks, incidents of bronchitis, and asthma attacks each year in Pacoima

d) Near Roadway Health Impact. In a Community Engagement survey of Pacoima residents conducted from 2001-2005, Philliber and Associates found that over 20% of Pacoima residents have asthma and that asthma rates went up from 17% to 20% in five years. Several recent studies, including a University of Southern California Children's Health Study documentary video, entitled “A Breath of Air: What Pollution is Doing to Our Children,” indicated that children living within 300-1,000 feet from a major highway or arterial, suffer from reduced lung function, increased asthma symptoms, hospitalization, and increased medical visits. Three Pacoima elementary schools and one middle school are within 1,000 feet of three freeways impacting over 15,000 students.

e) Whiteman Airport is the largest identified toxic source emitter in Pacoima. It emits toxics almost 20 times higher for carcinogenicity, 70 times higher for chronic non-cancer, and almost 80 times higher for acute non-cancer than the next highest source emitter in the area. It is estimated that as much as 1,000 lbs per year of various air toxics, including butadiene, acrolein, benzene and formaldehyde, may be emitted as a result of ongoing operations at the airport facility.

### 3) *Environmental Health Associated with Toxic Risks*

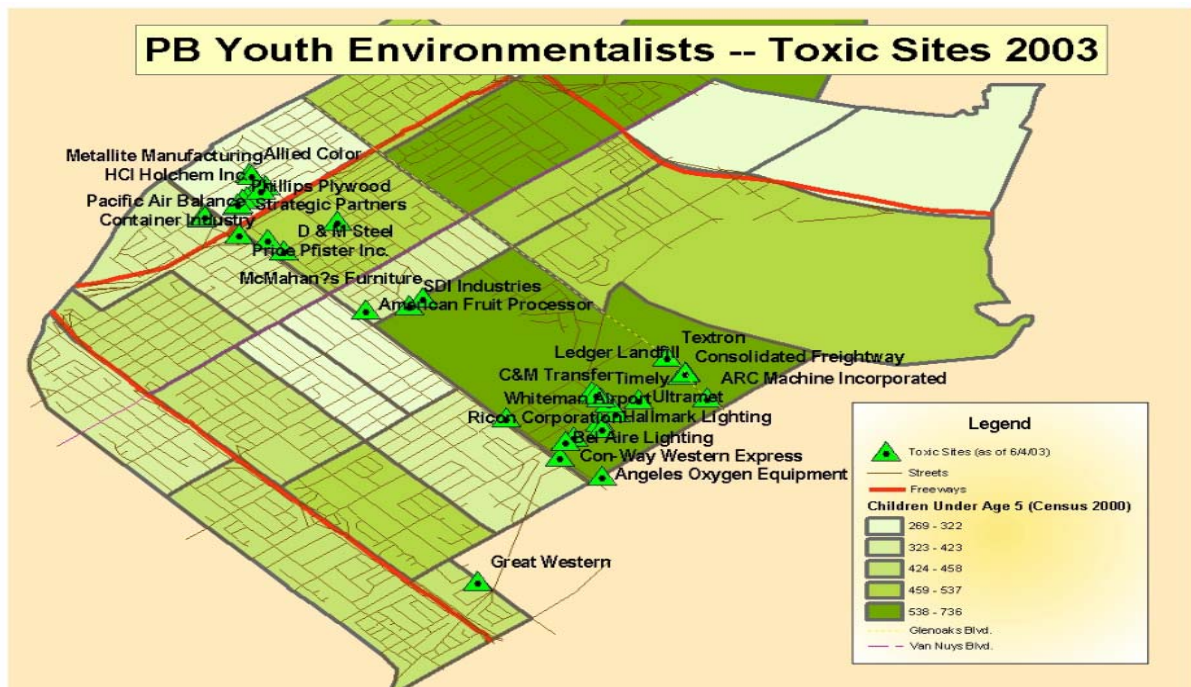
Pacoima’s environment has a direct effect on community health:

- Pacoima is part of the Los Angeles County Service Planning Area 2 (SPA 2), and according to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health issue from



July 2001, the prevalence of asthma in children ages 0-17 for 1999 to 2000, is 5.4%, the third highest for all SPAs (there are 8 total) in Los Angeles County.<sup>2</sup>

- In surveys conducted by PB and its university partners, approximately 20% of the over 1000 residents surveyed in the six-square-mile area of Pacoima, between 1997 and 2000 noted that they suffer from respiratory ailments ranging from frequent colds to asthma. In one specific area where 250 residents were surveyed in 1997 (in the toxic belt) 28% of those surveyed complained of respiratory problems including asthma.
- In a survey funded by Los Angeles Urban Funders in 2001, 850 residents from all parts of Pacoima were surveyed. It was found that 21% of the families surveyed indicated that their children were suffering from asthma, a cough, or a tight chest.<sup>3</sup>
- The area’s natural environment, particularly the brush and grass-covered foothills to the north and east, block and modify winds. They “capture” Los Angeles basin smog and other air pollutants during most of the spring, summer and early autumn. In the late autumn and winter months, the winds reverse, blowing dust, plant particulate, and manmade pollutants off of the hills and onto the neighborhoods below.
- The San Fernando Road and Glenoaks Boulevard exits off of the 118 Freeway enter into Pacoima and are major sites for semi-trailer trucks going to and from landfills and businesses located within the community.



In 2003, Pacoima Beautiful Youth Environmentalists (PBYES) conducted a community assessment of industries located in the community. This preliminary research was the basis for the identification of the “Pacoima Toxic Belt” and the identification of high environmental impact zones in the community.

<sup>2</sup> [http://lapublichealth.org/ha/reports/habriefs/v3i6\\_asthma/asthm.pdf](http://lapublichealth.org/ha/reports/habriefs/v3i6_asthma/asthm.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Los Angeles Urban Funders Survey, 2001 in partnership with CSUN and Pacoima Beautiful.

### Highlights of the health findings:

- At least 20% of the population suffers from respiratory ailments ranging from frequent colds to asthma.<sup>4</sup>
- At least 5,000 of the children in the community of 32,210 children have the potential to have elevated lead levels in their blood due to the age and state of the housing and number of children living in the community.
- Overcrowded housing is among the worst in the County of Los Angeles
- Five Cal EPA identified toxic release sites are adjacent to residential housing.
- Of the approximately 300 industrial uses in Pacoima, 200 are likely to pose health risks to residents due to work practices. Many of the small point sources have been found to be unregulated.<sup>5</sup>
- Diesel emissions are a main environmental health risk in Pacoima. Exhaust from diesel trucks and non-road equipment is the largest cancer risk driver for all air pollutants in Pacoima. Particulate matter from diesel engines may lead to several premature deaths, heart attacks, incidents of bronchitis, and asthma attacks each year in Pacoima<sup>6</sup>.
- Whiteman Airport poses strong environmental health risks to Pacoima. The 300 takeoffs and landings per day produce large quantities of toxic pollutants, such as lead, benzene, acrolein, 1, 3-butadiene, and formaldehyde. Using a toxicity-ranking method, emissions from Whiteman airport are 20 times worse for cancer and 180 times worse for respiratory impacts than the largest stationary source (the DWP generating station) in Pacoima<sup>7</sup>
- The vast majority of residents are unaware of the health hazards associated with illegal dumping or the problems associated with lead in the dust, soil or in paint or the cumulative impacts associated with all of the risks.

*The Northeast San Fernando Valley Redevelopment Project: Final Program Environmental Impact Report October 1999* stated, “Since the existing community plans and zoning will continue to allow a mix of non-residential and residential land uses in most of the commercial/industrial corridors within the proposed project area, there is a potential to extend and increase the severity of existing conflicts if no mitigation remedies are undertaken.”

### **Outcomes**

#### *1. Building partnerships*

Community-based partnerships, key to the work of PB, were also key to the success of the CARE Level I grant. The broad-based partnership has worked together for a number

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<sup>4</sup> Philliber and Associates, Pacoima Community Engagement Surveys conducted from more than 800 families per year, 2001-2005.

<sup>5</sup> Source, Tim Dagodag, California State University Urban Studies and Planning Department, 2007

<sup>6</sup> Matthew Lakin, US EPA, 2007

<sup>7</sup> Matthew Lakin, US EPA, 2007



of years and will continue to work together because of their commitment to improving the environment in Pacoima. Most of the partners listed below came together, not specifically because of the CARE Level I grant, but because the relationships were in place which permitted the partners to take advantage of the opportunities available through the CARE Level I grant. The CARE Level I grant did, however, provide the opportunity to strengthen and broaden the stakeholder group, and to gather and compile health risk data through a systematic method that joined residents and environmental experts to work toward solutions.

The partnerships consisted of adult residents who attended workshops facilitated by PB staff at three local elementary schools; local high school students participating in three-month-long learning workshops on toxics; community organizations; university faculty; staff from regulatory agencies and elected officials (or their representatives). Specific partners included: health-related organizations, Valley Care Community Consortium and Northeast Valley Health Corporation; experts from universities: Linda Fidell, Tim Dagodag and John Schillinger, California State University, Northridge and Carl Maida, University of California, Los Angeles; legal support from Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County and the Law Firm of Arnold and Porter; State Senator Alex Padilla and former Assembly member Cindy Montanez; various resources from US EPA, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Los Angeles City Environmental Affairs Department, California EPA Department of Toxics Substance Control, California Regional Water Quality Control Board, and California Air Resources Board.

## *2. Challenge*

The one sector that we found very difficult to engage was the business sector. Involving businesses in the Pacoima community in any activities is challenging, but engaging them in discussions on toxic risks and priority setting was almost impossible. Fifty businesses were contacted and only one agreed to participate in a meeting and then did not come to the meeting. The challenge of involving businesses was finally met toward the end of the grant when three business champions came forth and agreed to participate in the discussions: Isaac Luna, a local business owner of Luna's Radiator and Muffler's and staff from two local non-profit organizations, Valley Economic Development Center (VEDC) and Initiating Change in Our Neighborhood (ICON), both of which provide support to small businesses in Pacoima. Another partner has verbally committed to be involved and attended meetings to discuss the reduction of toxics in the community, namely the Wells Fargo Bank branch office in Pacoima. As the work moves forward, partners from the business sector are now in place to implement risk reduction strategies.

## **Next Steps**

1. Continue to work with the existing partners and broaden the base of partners to include all who need to be in place to address risk reduction.
2. Continue to educate and support residents and work with them to move toward action.
3. Create a Pacoima Community Health Initiative which will include residents of all ages to address the environmental concerns in terms of health.

4. Work toward helping Pacoima to become part of the Environmental Justice Improvement Zone
5. The proposed CARE Level II project will help to gather together the resources needed to implement toxic reductions in two of the three risk areas: 1) small-point sources, and 2) diesel emissions from trucks and buses. These were selected because partners concluded that significant reductions can be made in two years, while reductions in the third risk area, the airport, will take much longer.

### **Conclusion**

Pacoima Beautiful will continue to research, inform and organize with residents and partners to develop solutions to address environmental issues. Over the past two years, under the CARE Level I grant, Pacoima Beautiful and its partners have made significant progress in identifying the sources of toxics and major health risks in the community. The CARE Level I process allowed for the expansion of the partner base and knowledge base to move toward action. PB will continue to build grassroots community capacity to address community health issues and be the bridge to resources that will help to create a clean, safe and healthy community of Pacoima.

## List of Appendices

**Appendix A:** Map provided by Air Resources Board: Pacoima Area-Air, Water, Waste Sites-Preliminary Data Assessment

**Appendix B:** Logic Model for Care Level I Grant – Community Partnership Understanding Toxic Risks

**Appendix C:** Needs Assessment-Environmental Health Initiative and the report prepared by Richard Gasheen

**Appendix D:** Curriculum presented to residents at the three Pacoima schools.

**Appendix E:** Map and report of industrial sites produced by students and faculty (Tim Dagodag, Ph.D.) of the Urban Planning and Studies Department at CSUN

**Appendix F:** List of pertinent governmental permits and regulations for small business in Pacoima; Brian Condon of the law firm of Arnold and Porter

**Appendix G:** Levels of fecal coliform found by 30 students from San Fernando High School and Discovery Preparatory Academy in Pacoima, working through Pacoima Beautiful Environmental Justice Institutes, partnered with John Schillinger, Ph.D. in an area dominated by auto dismantlers and similar uses.

**Appendix H:** Samples of agendas, sign in sheets and relevant notes from meetings