

Green Zones for Economic and Environmental Sustainability

California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA)

Our mission is to strengthen the progressive environmental justice movement to achieve policy change.

Our members:

Asian Pacific Environmental Network

Center for Community Action & Environmental Justice

Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment

Communities for a Better Environment

Environmental Health Coalition

People Organizing to Demand Environmental & Economic Rights

Green Zones: Elevating grassroots EJ work

CEJA brings decades of community-based organizing and advocacy together

- Our member organizations have been working in environmental justice communities for years
- Despite many successes, they have not resulted in the comprehensive change needed in the communities where we work
- Through the Green Zones Initiative we are looking to find new partners, new tools, new resources and a new model to achieve environmental justice.



Green Zones: The Vision

- **Create a holistic framework** for comprehensive change in EJ communities
- Launch a **community-based, place-based effort that identifies and prioritizes** EJ communities
- **Increase access to resources** at the local, state and federal level
- **Promote interagency collaboration and alignment** between agencies and community-based organizations
- **Maximize existing resources** through joint work
- Develop **innovative policy tools** to address cumulative impacts and environmental justice

What is a “Green Zone?”

A Green Zone is an area that faces a combination of public health problems, socioeconomic stressors and environmental degradation (cumulative impacts). Our initiative seeks to identify and transform these overburdened areas into healthy, thriving Green Zones.



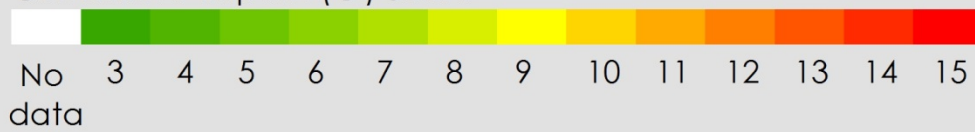
Green Zones model:

- Identify Green Zones using a **cumulative impact screening methodology**
- Implement the model on-the-ground in 7 sites across California, using **4 key strategies**

Identifying Green Zones

- CEJA uses the **Environmental Justice Screening Methodology (EJSM)**, developed by leading researchers (Jim Sadd, Occidental College, Rachel Morello-Frosch, UC Berkeley, Manuel Pastor, U Southern CA)
- The EJSM combines a wide range of indicators on land-use, public health, air quality, and socioeconomic data to create a “cumulative impacts” score for census tracts, which is mapped.
- Includes a community-based ground-truthing component. CEJA has completing ground-truthing in 11 EJ communities throughout CA.

Cumulative Impact (CI) Score



Principal Investigators:

Rachel Morello-Frosch
UC Berkeley

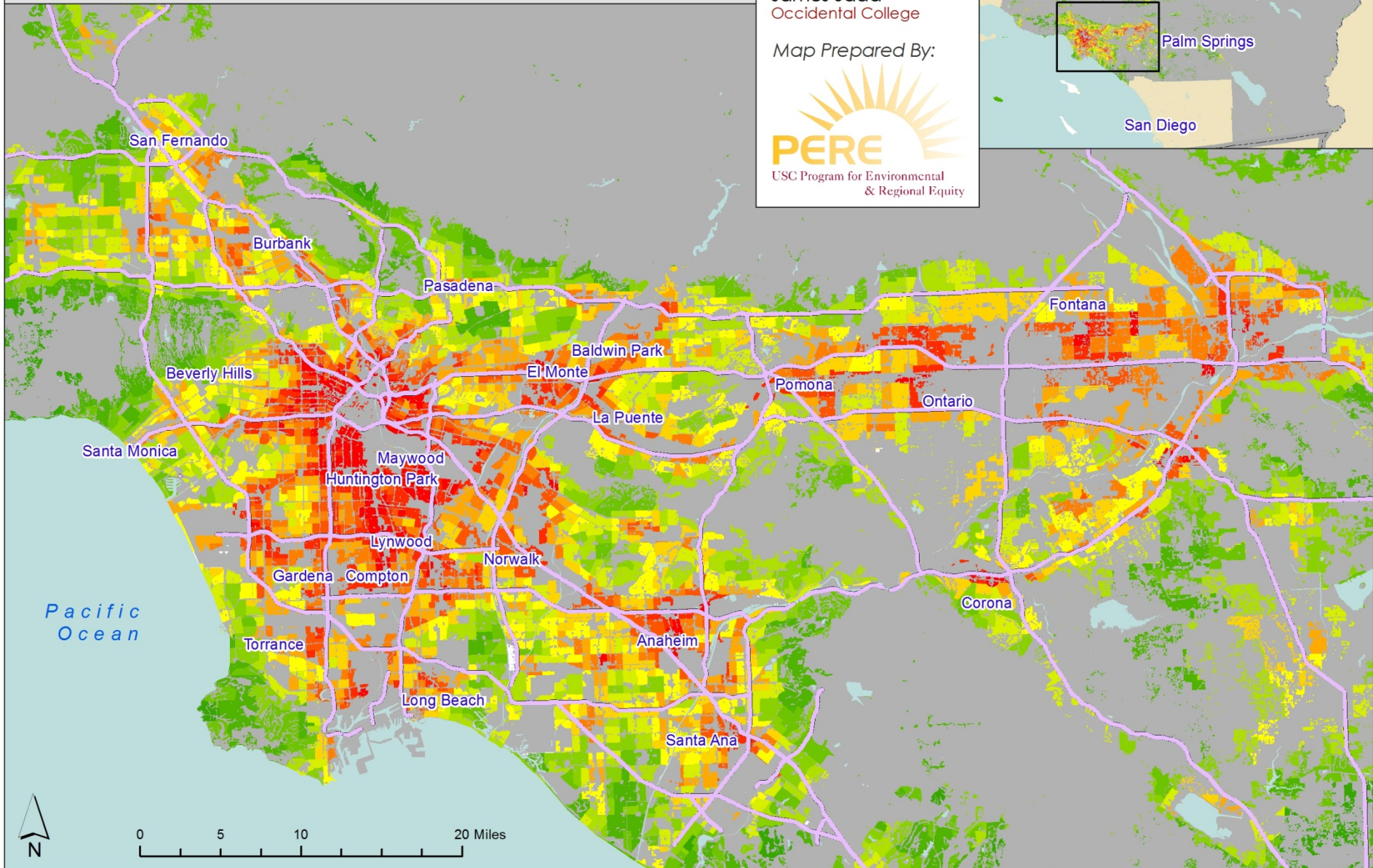
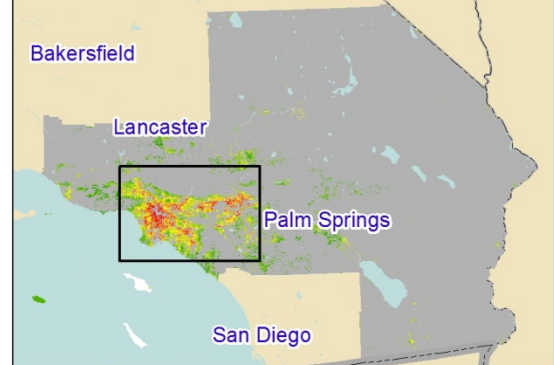
Manuel Pastor
USC

James Sadd
Occidental College

Map Prepared By:



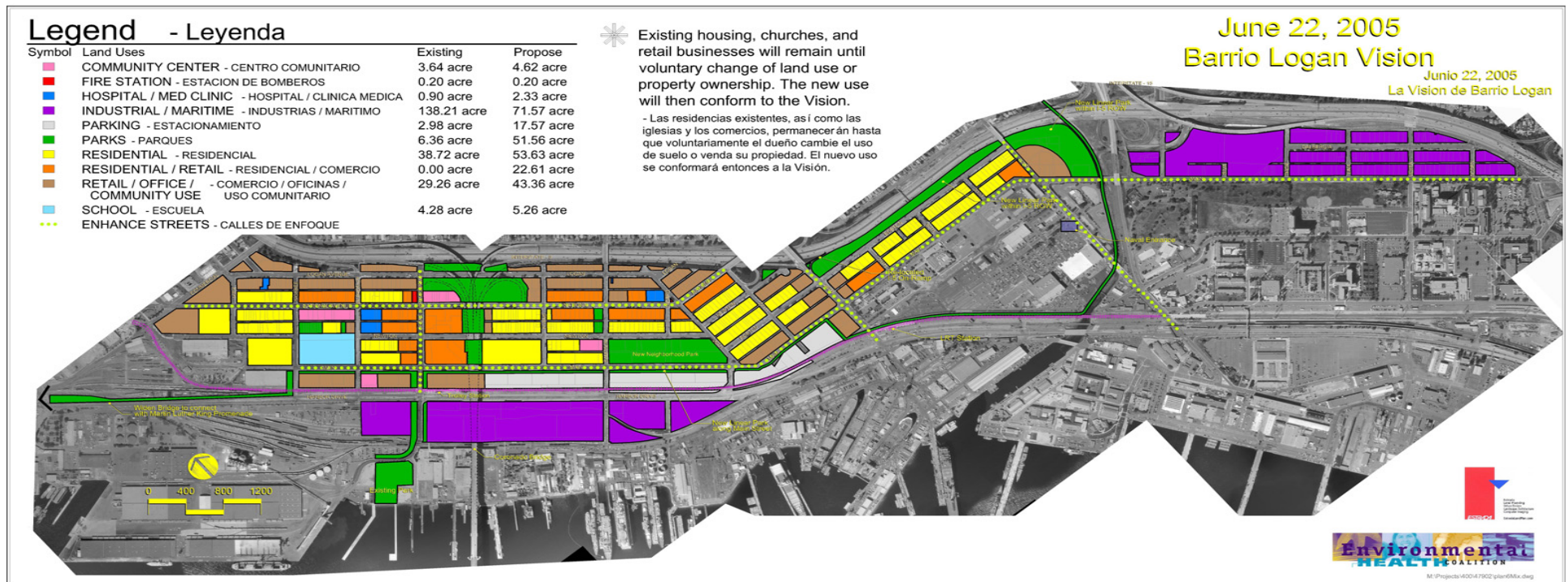
6-County Southern California Area



Strategy #1: Community-based planning to create healthy neighborhoods

Community planning is a key element of the Green Zones model. Our tools:

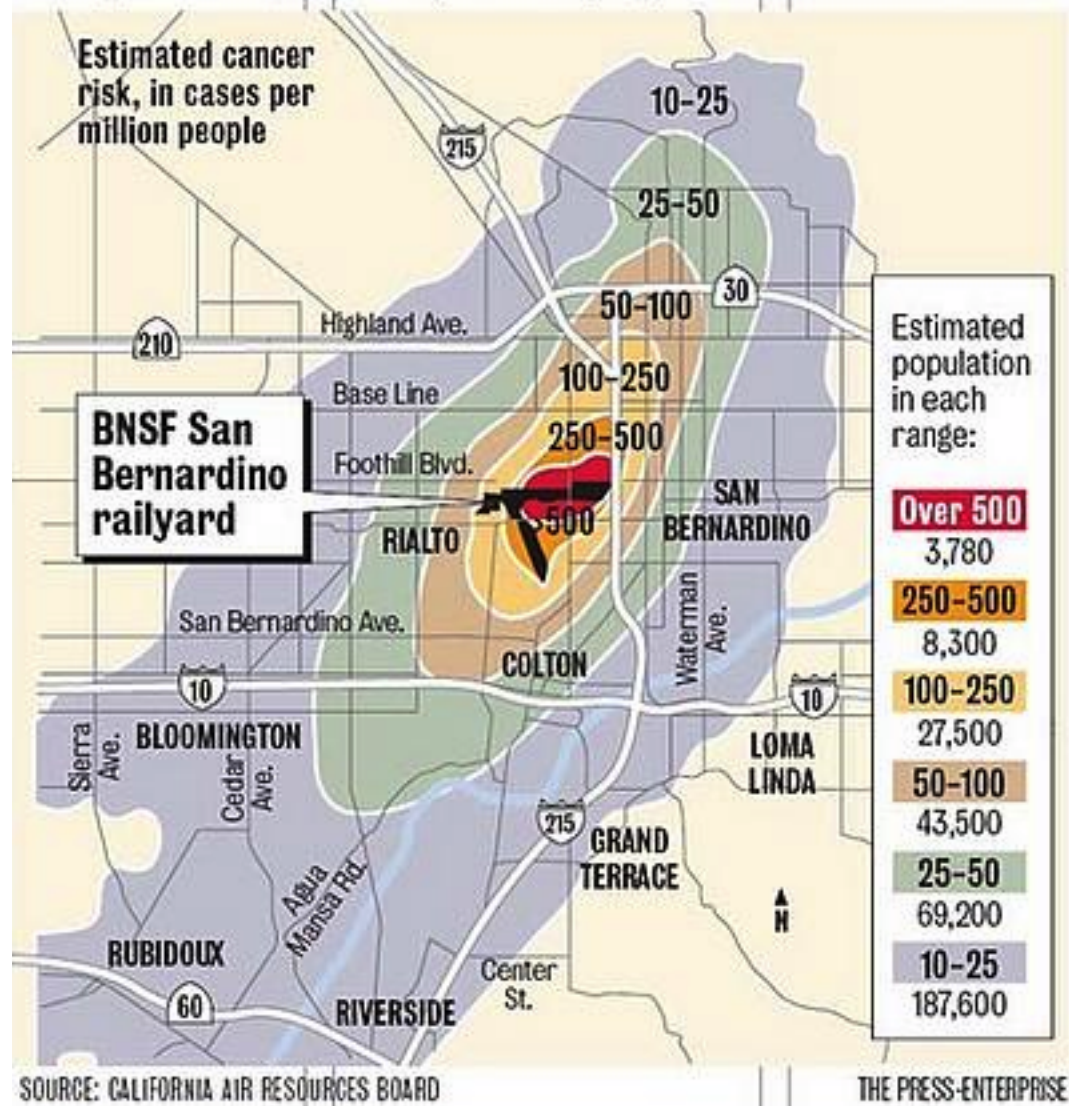
- Creating community plans for land-use
- Environmental Justice elements for General Plan updates
- Community principles of development
- Relocating hazardous facilities away from schools and residential areas
- Organizing residents to participate in transit-oriented development



Strategy #2: Reducing existing environmental burdens

- Cumulative Impact ordinances
- Regional interagency task force to implement mitigation solutions, such as air filters
- Targeted enforcement and compliance efforts

DANGER ZONE: A state study found that people living downwind of the BNSF railyard in San Bernardino face an increased cancer risk of as many as 2,500 cases per million people. The estimated regional cancer risk from all air pollution is 1,000 cases per million people.



Strategy #3: Develop green, community-based economic opportunities

- Renewable energy demonstration projects in low-income communities of color in Richmond and San Diego
- Agricultural co-operative formed by farmworkers in the San Joaquin Valley
- Commercial space for community micro-enterprise in mixed-used developments



Strategy #4: Build community capacity and power

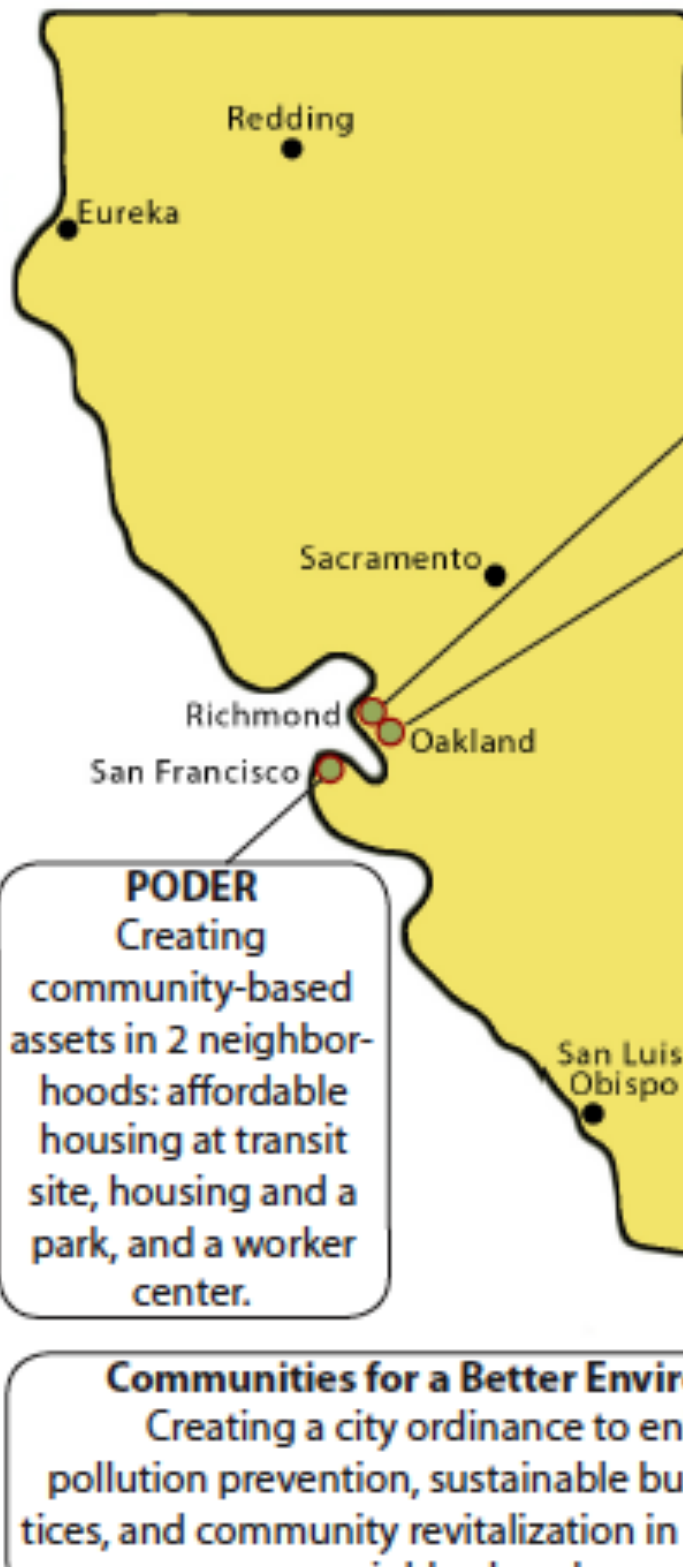
- Community-driven is not only a strategy, it is a core principle of Green Zones.
- A community-led vision for change involves residents from start-to-finish, not just for review, and allows residents to set priorities for implementation.



Tools CEJA uses to ensure authentic community participation:

- Community planning processes to outline visions for neighborhood change.
- Community-generated principles to guide project and land-use development.
- Intensive community outreach and public meetings
- Community-led policy development

California Green Zones Initiative



Communities for a Better Environment

Creating land use policy that protects health, creates job and meets climate targets locally through a transition to renewable energy.

Asian Pacific Environmental Network

Ensuring equitable transit-oriented development for Oakland Chinatown residents.

Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment

Creating farmworker owned agricultural co-operatives in small, unincorporated communities.

Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice

Implementing solutions to high pollution levels and land-use problems from railyards, freeways, and warehousing.

PODER

Creating community-based assets in 2 neighborhoods: affordable housing at transit site, housing and a park, and a worker center.

Communities for a Better Environment

Creating a city ordinance to enhance pollution prevention, sustainable business practices, and community revitalization in 3 designated neighborhoods.

Environmental Health Coalition

Creating community based land use plans that reduce pollution, protect health and the environment in 3 San Diego neighborhoods.

Recommendations for moving towards a Green Zone model

- More **coordination** between existing federal, state and local programs.
- **Leverage** existing funds to bring in more private, public and foundation dollars
- More **clear focus on overburdened areas** within programs
- Local planning agencies, state and federal agencies need to proactively **partner with community-based organizations**
- Set aside **funding to support outreach and organizing** work of community-based organizations
- Invest in **community-based planning**

