A Vision for Transforming Communities in the Inland Valleys of San Bernardino

A Case for Selection of the IE as the third region for Transformational Climate Communities Funding

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Partners in the Emerging Collaborative -

Agencies

City of San Bernardino

Community Partners

Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice

California League of Conservation Voters

Inland Congregations United for Change

TODEC Legal Center (Training Occupational Development Educating Communities)

While many of the organizations/agencies listed have worked together in partnership previously each has their own process to undergo before formally joining the collaboration. Those listed have indicated a willingness – and eagerness – to participate and will pursue their formal process for doing so.
A Vision for Transforming Communities in the Inland Valleys of San Bernardino

This paper represents ideas, plans and visions from various parties in the region. Some are fully developed plans; others are deep in the planning phase, while others are visions that have been fermenting for several years. TCC funding would offer an opportunity to move forward augmenting current plans and developing long needed visions.

The Inland Empire

The Inland Valleys of Riverside and San Bernardino counties is an immense geographic area. Covering more than 27,000 square miles with nearly 4.5 million people, it represents 11 percent of California’s total population and making it the third most populous metropolitan area in the state of California.

It is geographically larger than 11 states of our nation and has more people than 23 states—with twice the population as states like New Mexico, Nebraska, Idaho and Hawaii. While its impact could be significant in the politics of the state, its large geographic area makes it difficult to coordinate and implement a unified, shared message. The region offers vast areas of vacant land with comparatively inexpensive land prices, and a highly developed transport network of highway and railroads making it prime location for the expanding logistics industry. More than 80 percent of the greenhouse gas sources come from transportation in southern California.

Regional Opportunities

Many regional opportunities have presented themselves in recent years. The Ontario International Airport has transferred to local control allowing more flexibility and control. The SBx express bus system is providing the foundation for further green transit opportunities. The region is engaging with the Brookings Institute to outline a more comprehensive, proactive economic approach for the region as a whole. We have five major universities providing graduates for high skilled professions and a recognition of the need to provide career opportunities to keep this asset in the region. We recently won a decision by the Air Resources Board’s research and testing center to relocate from El Monte to Riverside near University of California at Riverside and enabling a collaborative effort with the new School of Medicine and Department of Public Policy at the university.

Each of these provide an opportunity for a new direction and support for advancing more sustainable, healthy and vibrant communities.
San Bernardino County

Nestled in the arms of the San Bernardino Mountain range, the County of San Bernardino has a population of 2,128,133. Demographics for the area include a diverse ethnic population comprised 52.2% Hispanic or Latino as of July 2015; 30.0 white; 9.5% Black or African American and 7.4% Asian.

The City of San Bernardino is home to a population of 213,170 of 44.8% white; 13.8% Black; 63.4% Hispanic/Latino; and 4.5% Asian or Pacific Islander. San Bernardino faces many economic challenges especially during this financial crisis. The median household income is $37,042. The City is recovering from having filed for bankruptcy and anticipates coming out of bankruptcy in February of 2017. From a community perspective, the environment is everything around us—it is where we live, work, learn and play.

The region has some strong environmental assets – its abundance of groundwater, majestic mountains and vast desert landscapes. San Bernardino is known for its sunny hot days and cool coastal breezes and its majestic mountains surrounding the vast heavily populated valleys. The combination of the two also creates unique conditions that are disastrous for residents of the county.

The needs of the region are great and correcting the conditions will take time and resources. TCC funding would allow us to implement comprehensive projects to address the main concerns of the program – reducing greenhouse gases and addressing community and health impacts within the 96-100 percentile communities.
The Need

We believe the best approach is to focus to the metropolitan region in San Bernardino County.

Just in the area identified for this funding opportunity, San Bernardino County has **36 census tracts in the 96-100 percentile**, affecting more than **198,000 people**. All 36 census tracts are along major freeways. It is clear from the CalEnviroScreen that Goods Movement and transportation play a major role in earning this unwanted designation. Transformation of these long-neglected communities poses a herculean task. But we must start now.

The Collaborative being developed in the Inland Empire has a suite of projects to select from. This paper is outlining some projects CCAEJ feels will produce the most reduction in greenhouse gases, address critical issues in our 5% communities and develop models that can be replicated throughout the region. We plan to focus on Best Practice Models. These Best Practices for reducing greenhouse gases and transforming our heavily burdened communities will be tried out in three projects addressing three aspects: 1) reducing community and health impacts from major facilities; 2) community development that offers employment, retail opportunities with affordable housing in a walkable, safe and attractive environment; and 3) for a green operation
of a logistics facility by converting operations at a warehouse to reduce Greenhouse gases and develop major model projects to demonstrate Best Practices in addressing three key aspects of our needs.

- **Implementation of the Valley Corridor Specific Plan in Bloomington, San Bernardino:** The Valley Specific Plan was developed by the County of San Bernardino. Through a community-driven process it outlines a comprehensive vision for communities at the front line of the warehousing and logistics industries in the region. The investment the County has made is anchored by the County’s Community Plan and features a much needed affordable housing project, improved access to transit, transit passes, relocating a community park currently next to the freeway, the plan also includes a logistic study to address mitigation approaches that arise when warehousing and related logistics businesses are developed in proximity to residential uses.

- **The Westside 4th Street Revitalization and Beautification Project:** The Westside project presents innovative solutions to address critical socio-economic and pollution burdens community residents face on a daily basis. The project will present the State with a unique opportunity to create comprehensive and transformative solutions that reduce pollution exposure, incentivize logistic transition to zero emission technology, bus passes to address unmet transit needs and reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as well as addressing the health needs in one of the region’s most highly burdened communities. The project was community-driven in collaboration with the City of San Bernardino, regulatory agencies (SCAQMD, EPA, DTSC, and Attorney General) and other civic organizations. It’s main feature is the creation of a vegetative barrier along 4th street in front of the BNSF intermodal rail yard that will not only create a natural filter to remove dangerous particle matter from the air, and improve the quality of life for the thousands of residents living in the area. High Performance air filtration units will be installed in homes along with energy efficiency strategies such as weatherization, and installation of solar panels. Bus passes for residents to access fresh food in this food desert as well as access to services. Upgrading the community center to include an indoor gymnasium so that children can get exercise indoors and out of the heavy pollution.

- **Green Warehousing Project.** Our goal in this project is to reduce greenhouse gases and co-pollutants in a way that demonstrates we can have jobs in the logistics industry along with healthy communities. We will work with developers and owners of warehouses in the area, and in consultation with South Coast AQMD, on the best practices to implement the operations of the facility in making it a model for other industrial developers. Electrification of the freight industry is a key to improving the devastating side effects of the Goods Movement industry. Electric plug-ins, installing solar panels on the flat roofs, zero emission trucks and on-site equipment; LEED certified buildings. In addition we will look at linking workers with affordable workforce housing using electric shuttles to transfer workers to the housing units. Housing units will have workforce development centers, ESL classes, and other services on-site to uplift and make advancements easier in the industry.
Logistics – a Driving Economic Force with Severe Side Effects

The region has vast areas of vacant land with comparatively inexpensive land prices, and a highly developed transport network of highway and railroads making it prime location for the expanding logistics industry. More than 80 percent of the greenhouse gas sources come from transportation in southern California. With globalization and the expansion of international trade, corporate and consumer demand for imported goods is continuously increasing. These imports, the majority of which arrive by ship, are transported to millions of destinations all over the country by an expanding logistics industry otherwise known as the goods movement industry. The goods movement industry includes ports, trucking companies, rail yards and rail lines, intermodal facilities, warehouses, and distribution centers—each relying upon diesel fuel to power their operations.

Currently, more than one-third of all cargo imported into the U.S. by ship enters through the Los Angeles and Long Beach Ports, making them the most active load centers in the world and the largest sources of air pollution in Southern California. In 2005, there were more than 47,000 truck trips per day out of the ports of Los Angeles. More than 35,000 trains—many of them longer than a mile and pulled by four, diesel-powered locomotives—course through the region every year. Currently, public policy encourages the expansion of the goods movement industry in Southern California causing these numbers to increase each year.

The region east of Los Angeles, known as the Inland Empire, includes the counties of San Bernardino and Riverside. From an economic perspective, the rapid industrial growth, lower property values, and convenient access to freeways, airports, and rail lines have made the Inland Valley an ideal location for manufacturing and industrial facilities, warehouses, rail yards, and distribution centers and has become the home of the nation’s largest distribution hub for giant retailers, like Walmart. Of the millions of ocean freight containers arriving at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, 70% are transported through communities in the Inland Valley to clusters of warehouses and rail yards before being distributed to the rest of the country.
The Inland Valley is home to a combined 52.3% of Southern California’s Primary Freight Network

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Inland Ports

Typically, we connote Goods Movement with sea ports. More and more the industry is looking for more locations to sort, store and process the goods and products imported at the ports as it travels to its final destination. Many of the coastal ports may reach their capacity without additional areas for storage. As more ships arrive at the ports with more containers, they stack up on the docks without a place to go. Though many of the ports are in the process of expansions and major infrastructure improvements, congestion will still present challenges to timely and cost effective throughput of goods to non-coastal retailers, manufacturers and ultimately consumers. The industry solution is to have this inbound cargo transferred directly from an ocean vessel to railcars and then transported to an inland location, away from the more congested port itself, for further processing and distribution. As described by the industry, “These inland locations, or intermodal centers, serve as “inland ports,” with some handling as much cargo volumes as their coastal counterparts.

While this system benefits industry, it does not take into account externalized health and community impact costs caused by the goods movement industry in California. That cost, an estimated $21.5 billion, is paid instead by taxpayers each year. In the South Coast Air Basin, which includes Orange County and parts of Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and Riverside counties, industrial health impacts such as premature death, chronic bronchitis, and hospitalization are estimated to cost $10.2 billion per year. South Coast Air Quality Management District estimates that nearly 6,000 people die prematurely due to the air they breathe – that’s 16 people every
day – creating a public health crisis. The expansion and maintenance of public freeways and roads, on which heavy trucks create the greatest wear and tear, further subsidizes the goods movement industry.

An overall decline in air quality, property values, and quality of life also reduce economic opportunities for communities crowded by the goods movement industry. A study by Jon Haveman of the Public Policy Institute of California categorizes areas near ports, rail yards, warehouses, and distribution centers as “hot spots”—bearing the brunt of negative impacts but not sharing the economic benefits.

As the on shore coastal breezes bring cooled air onto land it blows easterly bringing whatever pollutants it encounters with it. The pollutants created by the industrial operations of refineries, manufacturing and at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach are blown east into the Inland Valleys and are trapped by the mountain ranges—compounding the pollution levels to horrendous levels.

The rapid growth and convenient access to freeways, airports and rail lines make the Inland Valleys prime locations for manufacturing and industrial facilities, warehouse and distribution centers led to unanticipated consequences from warehouses in close proximity to homes, schools and other sensitive receptors. The result is an overall deterioration of the air, water, and quality of life—leading to an increase in health problems.
While there have been significant success in reducing pollution and greenhouse gases recent indications are that the pollution levels are on the rise again. In 2016 the five highest readings for ozone nationwide were from San Bernardino.

Increase in PM 2.5 Basin has been unable to meet Federal standards prompting SCAQMD to declare a State of Emergency and petition EPA to change the basin’s status from a non-attainment area to a “severe” non-attainment area.

Smog increase

Smog season 2016 is shaping up to be one of the worst in the past 10 years as measured by the number of days in Southern California when levels of lung-irritating ozone exceeded the federal health standard.

Number of days through September in Southern California’s air basin that exceeded the federal health standard for ozone pollution.

STAFF GRAPHIC
Westside of San Bernardino

Goal – reduce greenhouse gases and co-pollutant and reduce health impacts from existing pollution.

The Westside of the City of San Bernardino has received dubious distinction after mandated Health Risk Assessments (HRAs) found the San Bernardino BNSF railyard poses a cancer risk of all railyards in the state at more than 3,300-in-a-million—more than 330 times higher than allowed by the Clean Air Act and more than 3 times higher than the next closest ranking railyard in California!

The close proximity of diesel sources and homes, schools and recreation areas increases health impacts.

A Health Study conducted by Loma Linda University in partnership with CCAEJ found some startling statistics:

- 83.90% Hispanic/Latino;
- 60% of families making less than $10,000 annually;
- 60% do not have health insurance and do not use the emergency room.

The Health Study also identified three major cancer clusters:

- Breast cancer (30% Hispanic Females);
- lung/bronchus cancer 78% females closest to railyard); and
- colon/rectal cancer (44% males).

They also identified a 47% rate for asthma in children at the local school.
Logistics as a prime source of greenhouse gases and co-pollutants as well as the key component in creating these 5% neighborhoods.

For several years CCAEJ has worked with communities in these top 5% areas. Many of the residents simply didn’t believe anything would ever change. It took several years to gain their trust and achieve victories and help them find their voice as advocates – but they are vocal and involved. The residents spent time identifying issues of concern, prioritizing those concerns and developing solutions upon which they could advocate.

The residents from this heavily burdened community developed a Community Platform on how they want to move forward for their community. It is from this community-driven process that the Westside plan arises.

Westside Community Platform

Reduce pollution at the San Bernardino BNSF railyard by 50%-

- Convert trucks to alternative fuel
- Convert railyard equipment to alternative fuels
- Install advanced railyard technology
- Implement railyard rulemaking

Reduce exposure from railyard pollution by residents of the neighborhood-

- Create buffer zones
- Establish truck routes
- Move entry gate
- Plant trees Vegetative Barriers
- Install air filters and retrofit homes and schools

Health Issues will be addressed through at least 3 intervention methods – i.e.

- Schedule Breath Mobile
- Conduct Health Studies
- Conduct Health Monitoring
- Establish Health Clinic
The Westside Revitalization and Beautification project will highlight Best Practices in reducing pollution exposure and addressing health needs in a highly burdened neighborhood in San Bernardino. This comprehensive plans recognizes the ongoing pollution burden and takes steps to intervene in reducing pollution exposure and augment efforts to revitalize the community.

- Installation of high performance air filters on homes in the high impact area;
- Greening and vegetative pollution barrier on the 4th Street Traffic Landscape and vegetative pollution barrier and greening project;
- establishing an indoor gym and recreational facility that allows children to exercise without subjecting them to high levels of pollution;
- Working with Omnitrans to provide bus passes to area residents to access services and fresh food in this food desert.
- Weatherization of homes and installation of solar panels. We have already worked with Grid Alternatives in other 5% communities to install solar panels on homes and provide workforce training.

Installing High Performance Filtration Project- Installation of filters reduces diesel particulates by 90%
**4th Street Vegetative Barrier Project** – specific trees and shrubs have been found to absorb and reduce particulate matter reducing exposure to nearby residents.
Energy Efficiency Program - Weatherization Program and Installation of Solar Panels

Partnering with Grid Alternatives we installed solar panels on the homes that received air filters

Revitalizing the Ruben Campos Community Center and Recreation Facility

The Ruben Campos Community Center and Nunez Park is a vibrant focus for the community’s social and recreational needs. With its meeting rooms, Zumba exercise, dance classes, game rooms coupled with its swimming pool, soccer fields, and handball courts – it is the only facility for the entire westside community. It is also located adjacent to the BNSF railyard, next to the gate where thousands of truck enter day and night.

While CCAEJ, partnering with the City of San Bernardino, California Air Resources Board, South Coast AQMD and IQ Air have successfully installed high performance air filtration on the Community Center, it does not protect the children and families while swimming or exercising in soccer games. Our vision includes enclosing these areas for indoor exercise. Reducing the pollution from the railyard will take time while families are breathing the dirty air now.
The Valley Corridor Specific Plan in unincorporated Bloomington which will create a community development that offers employment, retail opportunities with affordable housing in a walkable, safe and attractive environment.

The Specific Plan was developed by the County of San Bernardino. Through a community-driven process it outlines a comprehensive vision for communities at the front line of the warehousing and logistics industries in the region. The investment the County has made is anchored by the County’s Community Plan and features a much needed affordable housing project, improved access to transit, transit passes, relocating a community park currently next to the freeway, the plan also includes a logistic study to address mitigation approaches that arise when warehousing and related logistics businesses are developed in proximity to residential uses.
Comprehensive Green Warehousing Project. Our goal in this project is to reduce greenhouse gases and co-pollutants in a way that demonstrates we can have jobs in the logistics industry along with healthy communities. We will work with developers and owners of warehouses in the area, and in consultation with South Coast AQMD, on the best practices to implement the operations of the facility in making it a model for other industrial developers. Electrification of the freight industry is a key to improving the devastating side effects of the Goods Movement industry.

Reduction of greenhouse gases and co-pollutant in operation of facility:

Items to be considered include the following:

- Utilize DC Fast-Charge Electric Vehicle Charging (aka DC Quick Charge) units and Level 2 Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment (EVSE) charging units to charge trucks and other vehicles. EV charging stations will be open to the public at no cost.
- A pilot program of a limited fleet of electric Heavy-Duty Trucks will be utilized to demonstrate reliability and identify challenges. Trucks with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) greater than 16,000 lbs. that visit the Project site or are owned or operated by a Project tenant meet or exceed 2010 model year emissions equivalent engine standards.
- Infrastructure necessary to support electrical charging stations for charging on-site electrical forklifts or similar on-site equipment, as well as yard maintenance/landscaping equipment.
- Landscaping will utilize plants and trees demonstrated to absorb fine particles.
- Concrete Paving will be used instead of asphalt in the parking lot. Concrete will have an initial solar reflectance value of at least .30 as determined in accordance with American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) Standards E 1980 or E1918.
- Install roof-top solar on warehouse flat roofs that accommodate maximally sized photovoltaic solar arrays. PV system on the roof of the buildings to provide 90kW AC Electrical power.
- Pilot a program of a small number of zero emission electric trucks to demonstrate reliability
- Buildings will achieve the equivalent of a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) “Silver” rating under the U.S. Green Building Council’s v.4 Core and Shell Development standards.
- All hot water heaters installed will be powered either through solar PV cells or by solar water heating.
- Anti-idling enforcement.
- Establishment of truck routes to facility away from residential, schools and other sensitive receptors.
Improve worker environment and conditions.

Currently the working condition and wages within the warehouse/distribution facilities are poor.

- To advance the area’s workforce and community development goals and reduce unemployment, we will promote to hire individuals who are residents of the local area to comprise not less than 25% of employees of contractors and subcontractors for Project construction; and 25% of employees hired for permanent jobs in Project operation. In addition we will hire individuals who are residents of the area to comprise not less than 50% of employees of contractors and subcontractors for Project construction; and 50% of employees hired for permanent jobs in Project operation.

- **Living Wage.** The facility will follow provisions during Project operation to ensure employees at the site are paid a living wage:
  a. The facility will employ at least 75% of its workforce at the Project by direct hire. The percentage of direct hire jobs will be calculated from the total number of on-site jobs annually.
  b. Direct-hire employees, will be provided at least twelve (12) compensated days off per year for sick leave, vacation, or personal necessity at the employee’s request. Developer shall also permit employees to take at least an additional ten (10) days a year of uncompensated time to be used for sick leave for the illness of the employee or a member of his or her immediate family where the employee has exhausted his or her compensated days off for that year.

- **Housing and transit.** The approval of warehousing brings low wage workers into the area and places a demand on affordable workforce housing. To provide adequate affordable housing and reduce vehicle miles driven a model program for linking workers/housing/transit will be piloted linking workers with affordable workforce housing using electric shuttles to transfer workers to the housing units. Housing units will have workforce development centers, ESL classes, and other services on-site to uplift and make advancements easier in the industry.
Sustaining the vision for the Future

To ensure mistakes of the past which have created the 5% communities aren’t repeated we will work with San Bernardino county and other local agencies to implement the Environmental Justice Element in General Plans. San Bernardino County is preparing to review its General Plan (Community Plan) and the City of San Bernardino is set to come out of bankruptcy in February of 2017 and has a measure on the ballot for Charter changes - so the timing is optimal for moving forward.

TCC funding provides an opportunity for formal collaboration on transforming the San Bernardino metropolitan region into a healthier, sustainable, vibrant and thriving area. We welcome your participation.

This report is submitted by the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice, a 39 year old environmental health and justice organization serving Riverside and San Bernardino County residents.

We wish to thank several partners whom without their ideas and assistance this would not have happened.

Michele Hasson, Policy Advocate, Center for Community Action & Environmental Justice
Josh Candelaria, Director of Governmental and Legislative Affairs for the San Bernardino County.
Virginia Marquez, Council member, Ward 1, City of San Bernardino
Matt Abularach-Macias, CA Voices Program Coordinator, California League of Conservation Voters
Phil Fine, South Coast Air Quality Management District
Anna Jaiswal, Development Planning Manager for OmniTrans
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