

CONTACT: Nancy Ross, nross@pacinst.org or 510.251.1600 x106

NEW BAY AREA STUDY MAPS GROWTH PLANNING TO AVOID PLACING RESIDENTS IN HIGH IMPACT ZONES AT HEALTH RISK FROM DIESEL

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between Priority Development Areas and CARE zones are
San Francisco County (87.9 % - 10,982 acres);
Alameda County (60.3 % - 17,492 acres); and Santa Clara County (40.2 % - 10,860 acres).*

December 14, 2011, Oakland, Calif.: *Would I want to live, work, play, pray, or go to school here?
For a community to be truly sustainable, the answer to that question must be “Yes!”*

Priority Development Areas in the San Francisco Bay region overlap with communities with the highest health risk from toxic air contaminants, including diesel pollution from freight transport, designated as CARE zones by the Air District. But a new study from the Pacific Institute and the Ditching Dirty Diesel Collaboration found that **74% of the land in Priority Development Areas that intersect with CARE communities is far enough away from freight transport hazards to be suitable for sensitive land uses like new housing.** With wise regional planning, decision-makers have the power to develop the region’s economic capacity while protecting the health of vulnerable communities.

The new analysis, [*At a Crossroads in Our Region’s Health: Freight Transport and the Future of Community Health in the San Francisco Bay Area*](#), maps the Priority Development Areas, with 45 detailed local maps of five Bay Area counties. These maps highlight the 26% of the land in CARE communities where it is inadvisable to site sensitive land uses like new housing. Within the significant remaining area, one out of every three acres is zoned as residential or mixed residential/commercial, providing planners great potential for reducing land-use conflicts between residential and freight-transport-related land uses.

Five of the nine counties in the Bay Area have Priority Development Areas that intersect with CARE communities (Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties), including locations in the East Bay, southeast San Francisco, greater Richmond, parts of Concord, Redwood City and East Palo Alto, and San Jose. Bay Area counties with the greatest percentage overlap between Priority Development Areas and CARE zones are San Francisco County (87.9 % - 10,982 acres); Alameda County (60.3 % - 17,492 acres); and Santa Clara County (40.2 % - 10,860 acres).

“The Bay Area stands at the crossroads of potentially conflicting visions for how land next to freight transport hubs and corridors should be developed. But no one should have to choose between living in safe, affordable housing, working at a quality job, being near reliable transit, and being able to breathe clean air,” said Catalina Garzón of the Pacific Institute, co-author of the report. “Our analysis specifically identifies the many places where we can advance healthier growth in communities being targeted for regional development.”

Using mapping and spatial analysis, the new report assesses the current and potential conflicts that exist between freight-transport-related land uses and sensitive land uses such as housing, schools, parks, and health clinics in these areas. To determine which places are most impacted by freight-related land uses,

the researchers generated health-protective buffers around freight-transport-related land uses including freeways, rail yards, seaports, airports, warehouses, and distribution centers. The report identifies how many sensitive land uses – such as schools, parks, and health clinics – are already located within these health-protective distances from freight-related land uses, and identifies the amount of residentially zoned land within these health-protective buffer zones to assess for future land-use conflicts.

“In implementing state climate legislation SB 375 in the Bay Area, regional decision-makers are crafting a Sustainable Communities Strategy that will guide how we invest public dollars to encourage more compact land use and development patterns,” said Margaret Gordon from the Ditching Dirty Diesel Collaborative, a regional coalition of community groups and health organizations that co-authored the report. “Freight transport is a major source of unhealthy pollution that disproportionately affects low-income and communities of color in our region. But this new study shows that suitable places to put new housing, schools, parks, and other sensitive land uses can be found in Bay Area communities that will protect residents from being exposed to sources of harmful pollution.”

The Pacific Institute/Ditching Dirty Diesel report recommends that to minimize potential land use conflicts, **available suitable land located at a health-protective distance from freight-related land uses should be prioritized for new housing and other sensitive land uses.** The remaining land area located in close proximity to freight-related land uses can be prioritized for commercial and light industrial development that creates jobs for local residents while protecting worker health.

“By accounting for health in deciding where and how to place new housing, we can retain the industrial and commercial land we need to accommodate economic growth while proactively reducing anticipated land-use conflicts in residential areas,” said Garzón.

In order to meet housing needs, some communities may still need to consider development opportunities for building new housing and other sensitive land uses near freight-related land uses. The *Crossroads in Our Region’s Health* report also contains a detailed list of measures that can be incorporated into the design of proposed developments near freight-transport-related land uses to reduce exposure to harmful pollution. The report and maps can be downloaded at:

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

“These planning decisions are critical, said Gordon. “Inhaling diesel exhaust contributes to an array of documented health problems, including lung cancer, asthma, heart disease, and premature birth. Local residents must work with local governments to determine how to have a voice in these regional planning processes.”

In the San Francisco Bay Area, communities where freight-related land uses are concentrated contend with some of the highest rates of asthma hospitalizations in the region. Over 80% of all cancer risk from air pollution in the Bay Area comes from diesel particulate matter, with the most elevated levels of cancer risk and other unhealthy conditions occurring in areas near freight transport hubs and corridors.

The **Pacific Institute** is a nonpartisan research institute that works to create a healthier planet and sustainable communities through interdisciplinary research and partnering with stakeholders for solutions that advance environmental protection, economic development, and social equity. www.pacinst.org

The **Ditching Dirty Diesel Collaborative** is a powerful coalition of over fifteen community-based environmental justice, public health, and environmental organizations and agencies working to reduce diesel pollution in low-income communities of color. www.ditchingdirtydiesel.org

