



# **Measuring What Matters: Neighborhood Research for Economic & Environmental Health and Justice**

Research Findings from the  
**West County Indicators Project** report

# What is the West County Indicators Project?



A partnership with community organizations of West Contra Costa County to research, publish, and take action on a set of neighborhood indicators representing residents' visions for thriving, healthy, just communities.



# Who is Involved?

- Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization (CCISCO)
- Iron Triangle Neighborhood Council,
- Morada de Mujeres del Milenio (MMM)
- Neighborhood House of North Richmond (NHNR)
- Healthy Eating Active Living Project (HEAL)
- North Richmond Shoreline Open Space Alliance (NRSOSA)
- Pacific Institute
- Richmond Progressive Alliance (RPA)
- West County Toxics Coalition (WCTC)
- Individual community leaders.

# Stages of the Indicators Project

*We are here*

**Use research findings to take actions to improve neighborhoods.**

Prepare report and fact sheets on research findings.

Build our capacity with workshops and trainings to support community action on indicators.

Collect and analyze data, comparing it with community experiences.

Chose indicators to measure the issues and identify data sources.

Identify priority issues that project will focus on.

# A Vision of Healthy Communities

- A healthy community requires environmental and economic justice.
- With environmental justice, residents live in a healthy and safe community regardless of their race, nationality, or economic status.
- Economic justice ensures that each resident has access to a meaningful livelihood and that each neighborhood has the resources it needs for its residents to thrive.

# West County Neighborhoods

## ***Great Assets:***

Strong social networks, leaders, cultural diversity, broad-based support for the arts, athletic legacies, a gorgeous natural environment, small locally owned businesses, and a rich history.

## ***Significant Challenges:***

Financial hardship, violent crime, underfunded public services, industrial pollution, multiple sources of environmental health hazards.



# The Issues

1. Healthy Homes and Lead Contamination Risk
2. Flaring at the Chevron Refinery
3. Liquor Stores and Community Health
4. Freight Transport (Trucks, Trains and Ships) and Community Health
5. City Park Conditions
6. Access to Shoreline Open Space
7. Employment of Formerly Incarcerated Residents
8. Richmond's Tax Revenue from Chevron
9. Water Contamination of Creeks and Bays
10. Access to Quality Youth Programs
11. Streetlights and Community Safety

# The Research

## *“Secondary Research”*

- Data collection from public agencies

## *“Primary Research”*

- Community Surveys
- Mapping with Geographic Information Systems
- Oral history interviews
- Photovoice

# Overview of Findings

- ***Environmental Health Risks***: There are serious but largely preventable environmental risks faced by all West County communities.
- ***Inequities***: Low-income neighborhoods and communities of color in West County face disproportionately higher environmental and economic risks, and have fewer assets.
- ***Economic Opportunity and Resources***: There are persistent obstacles to economic opportunities for West County residents, and inequities between who pays the costs and who enjoys the benefits of industrial economic activity in West County.

# The Solutions

## ***Sensible programs, policies, and practices***

1. Invest resources in logical solutions to make a transition to healthy neighborhoods.
2. Develop new, sensible policies, and improve enforcement of existing policies, to reduce exposure to environmental risks.
3. Improve public services to provide the resources necessary for a dignified standard of living.
4. Remove definable barriers to access and opportunity – both physical and social – to create a level playing field.

## ***Improved community participation***

5. Open doors for more meaningful community participation in policy and program development.
6. Encourage community ownership of information to advocate for specific solutions.

## ***Additional research and better monitoring & reporting***

7. Conduct additional research to develop reliable information on community problems and solutions.
8. Base public policy on transparent and relevant information.

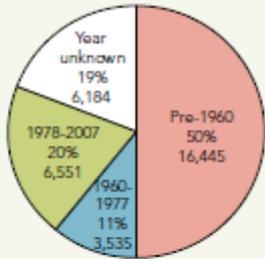
# Healthy Homes & Lead Contamination: Background

- Lead exposure (from paint) is linked to learning disabilities, attention deficit, aggressive & criminal behavior.
- Homes built before 1960 are at highest risk for still having lead paint.
- Childhood lead exposure is one of the most widespread and preventable environmental health risks facing children today.

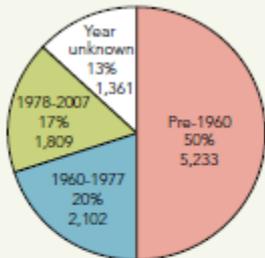


**Figure 2. YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION OF WEST COUNTY HOMES**

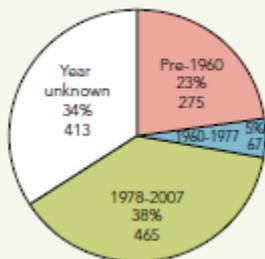
Richmond Homes,  
Year of Original Construction  
Total Homes: 32,715



San Pablo Homes,  
Year of Original Construction  
Total Homes: 10,505



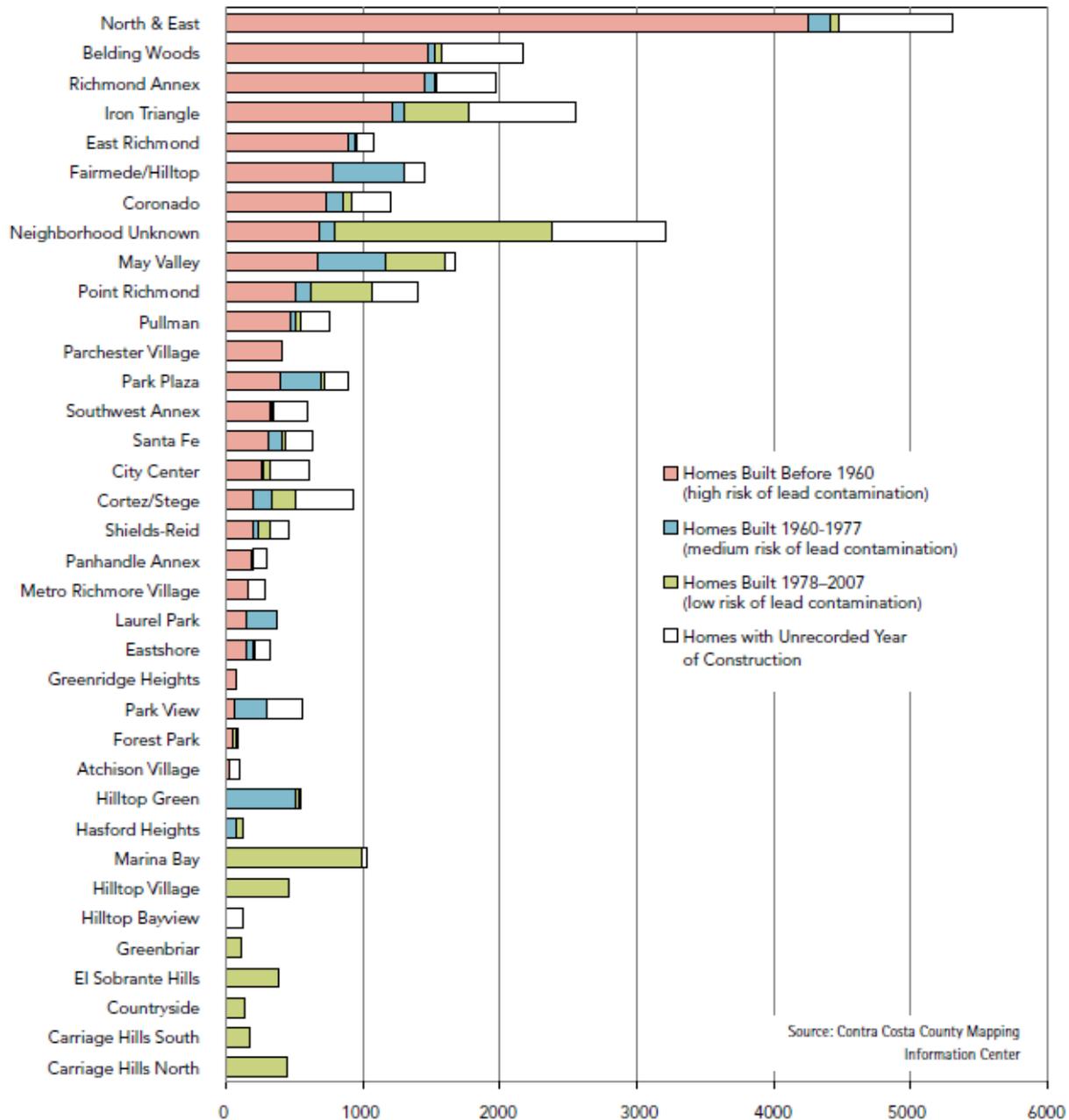
North Richmond Homes,  
Year of Original Construction  
Total Homes: 1,220



# Healthy Homes: Our Findings

- Half the homes (21,953) in the area are at “high risk” for lead contamination (built before 1960).
- An additional 5,700 homes (13%) are at medium risk (built between 1960 and 1978).
- The city does not keep records of private contractors lead remediation work.

**Figure 3. RISK OF LEAD CONTAMINATION IN RICHMOND HOMES, BY NEIGHBORHOOD**



# Healthy Homes Recommended Solutions

- Build awareness and public support including ongoing multilingual efforts targeting high-risk communities.
- Increase access and number of lead screenings in high-risk communities.
- Increase tracking of and resources for remediation to prioritize high-risk areas and help assure safe remediation work.

## Relevant Community Organizations:

- Morada de Mujeres del Milenio
- Neighborhood House of North Richmond

# Refinery Flaring: Background

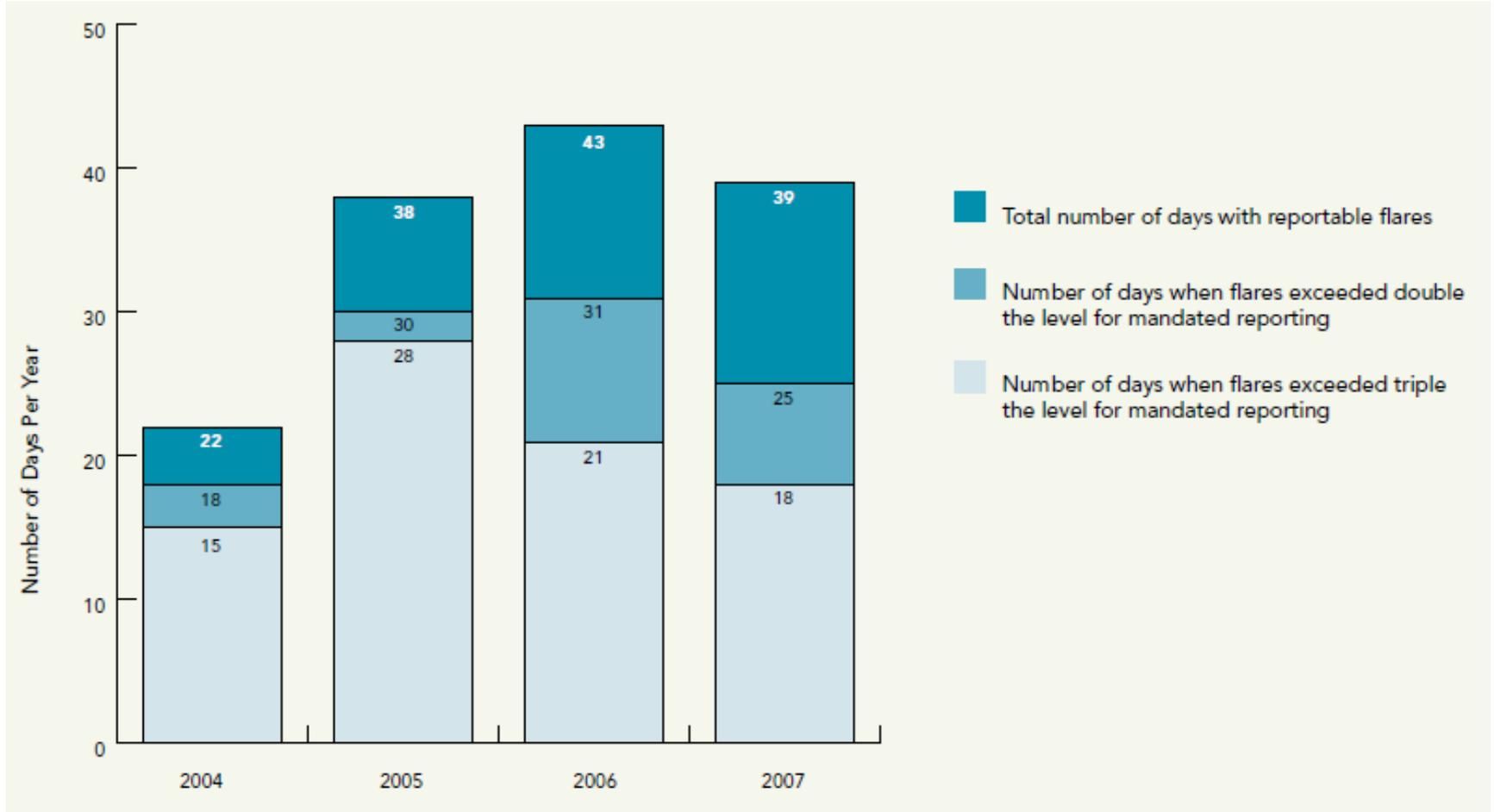
- Long history of short and long term health problems related to air contamination from Chevron refinery flaring.
- Community organizing lead to Air District creating the Flare Monitoring and Flare Reduction rules.
- Flaring has still been a problem for neighborhoods surrounding the refinery.



# Refinery Flaring: Our Findings

- Between 2004 and 2007, there were 142 days when Chevron refinery flare emissions exceeded Air District thresholds.
- Seventy percent of these flare days had flares more than double the thresholds and over half of the days had flares with more than triple these levels.
- In 2007, Communities for a Better Environment found Chevron could reduce flaring by 65% by implementing measures already being used at another Bay Area refinery.

# Refinery Flaring: Our Findings



**Number of days with significant flaring, Jan 2004 to Dec 2007**

# Refinery Flaring: Recommended Solutions

- Community use of public info on flares
- Compel Air District to use full authority to get refineries to prevent flaring
- Cap the quality of oil processed at the refinery to reduce the rates of flaring
- Accurately measure the impacts of flaring

## Relevant Community Organizations:

- West County Toxics Coalition
- Communities for a Better Environment

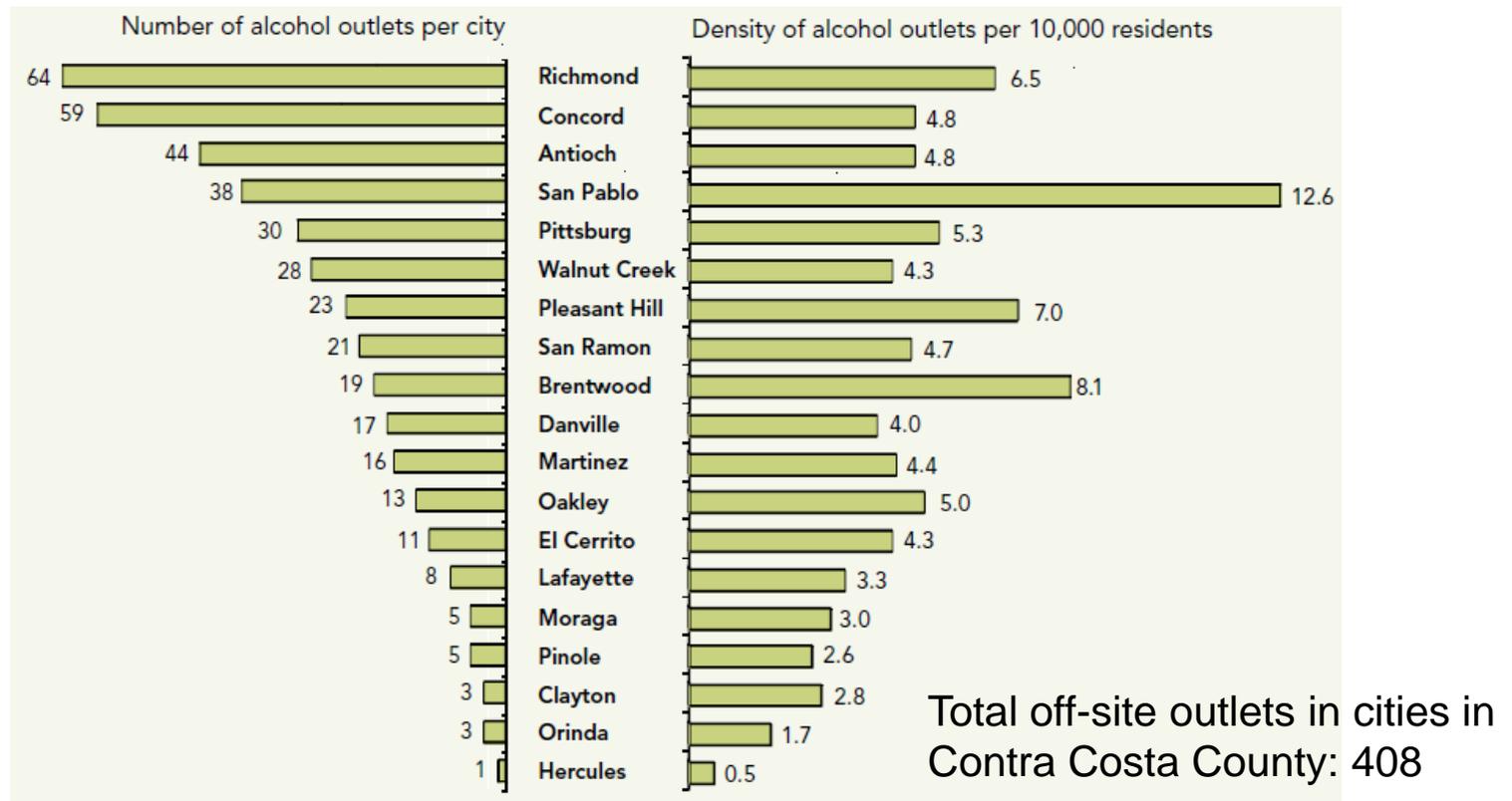
# Liquor Stores: Background

- Youth and adults notice a concentration of liquor stores and lack of safety around the stores.
- Research in other local communities, and across California, confirm that high concentrations of liquor stores contributes to public health and safety problems.
  - Accidents, violence, and injuries
- Children and youth are especially vulnerable



# Liquor Stores: Our Findings

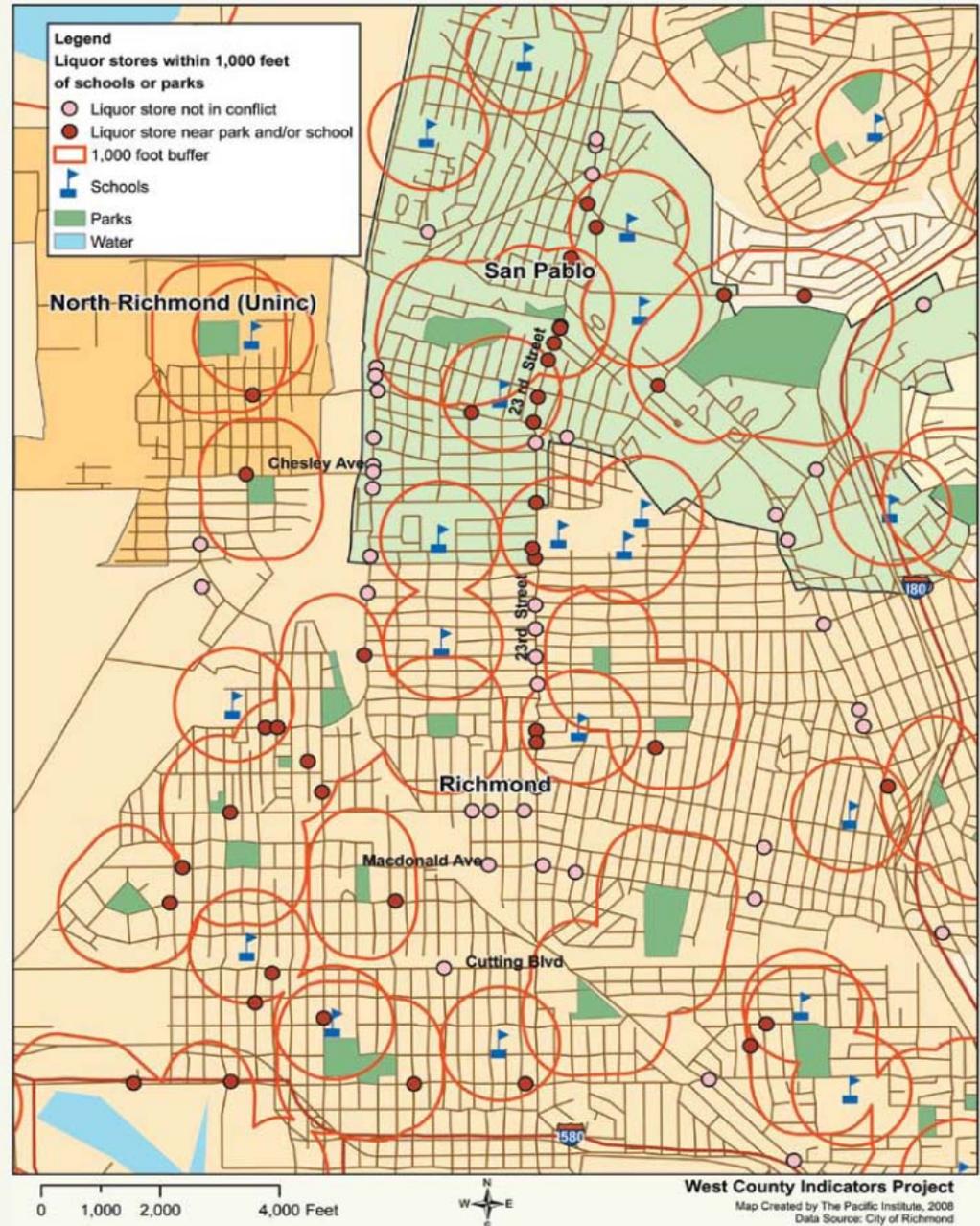
## Number and Density of Alcohol Outlets per City, Contra Costa County



Richmond and San Pablo have 25% of Contra Costa County's liquor stores, but represent less than 14% of its population

# Proximity of Liquor Stores to Schools or Parks in West County Neighborhoods

- Almost 60% of West County schools and parks are within 1,000 feet of a liquor store.
- Roughly 30% of parks and schools in West County are within 1,000 feet of two or more liquor stores.



# Liquor Stores: Recommended Solutions

- Enforce design & maintenance guidelines at liquor stores
- Assist with conversion of liquor stores to healthier business
- Enforce laws on nuisance around stores

## Relevant Community Organizations:

- Iron Triangle Neighborhood Council
- West County Alcohol Network

# Freight Transport and Community Health: Background

- Diesel exhaust contributes to cancer, asthma, heart disease, premature birth, and other
- 81% of all cancer risk from air pollution in the SF Bay Area comes from diesel particulate matter
- Community is concerned about noise, pedestrian safety, train idling, damage to streets, problems at RR crossings, and others.
- The volume of goods entering and moving through West County is expected to increase significantly, which means potential increases in the environmental and health impacts.

# Freight Transport and Community Health: Our Findings

- A total of 8,469 (18%) households housing some 24,308 residents live within 500 or 1000 feet of freight transportation infrastructure in West County.
- Concentrations are especially high in neighborhoods with lower income, more people of color, and more people under 18.



# Freight Transport: Recommended Solutions

- Reduce impact of FT land uses
- Separate FT from residential land uses
- Encourage development of green business next to FT land uses
- Provide public process for community input on projects with FT impacts

## Relevant Community Organizations:

- Neighborhood House of North Richmond
- West County Toxics Coalition
- Contra Costa County Asthma Coalition

# City Park Conditions: Background

- Parks are the first resource for physical activity in a community like West County.
- The quality of a park, even more than the size or proximity, is associated with the use of a park by children and parents.
- Lack of safety, broken facilities, missing bathrooms, trash, and other problems were identified by the community.

# City Park Conditions: Our Findings



- The youth team surveyed and photographed 52 parks in Richmond, North Richmond and San Pablo.
- 40 of the 52 parks surveyed did not have a public restroom.
- 31 out of 52 had sports fields in poor condition.
- Only 5 parks have signs posted in languages other than English.
- None of the parks had an established soccer field.

# Neighborhood Park Condition Comparison

Neighborhoods with parks in worse conditions are concentrated in neighborhoods with lower income, more people of color, and more people under 18

Neighborhood*	Median Household Income	Percent People of Color	Percent People Under Age 18	Number of Parks	Bad Conditions per Park**
Country Club Vista	\$ 48,660	73%	20%	2	3
Parchester Village	\$ 28,974	84%	20%	1	4
Shields-Reid	\$ 23,313	98%	38%	1	4
Marina Bay	\$ 74,798	52%	12%	6	4.3
Richmond Annex	\$ 47,530	51%	17%	2	4.5
El Sobrante Hills	\$ 79,914	53%	23%	1	5
North Richmond	\$ 24,131	95%	35%	1	5
Park View	\$ 30,750	95%	35%	2	5
Point Richmond	\$ 73,125	16%	9%	3	5
Metro Richmore Village	\$ 39,955	89%	33%	1	6
Southwest Annex	\$ 33,250	75%	24%	1	6
Atchison Village	\$ 29,107	80%	32%	1	7
Greenbriar	\$ 79,914	53%	23%	1	7
Hilltop Green	\$ 57,012	64%	25%	1	7
East Richmond	\$ 57,563	52%	21%	4	7
May Valley	\$ 60,348	47%	24%	2	8
Belding Woods	\$ 36,100	91%	35%	1	9
Coronado	\$ 32,978	93%	28%	1	9
Hilltop Bayview	\$ 46,766	71%	16%	1	9
Santa Fe	\$ 28,768	97%	38%	1	9
San Pablo	\$ 37,184	84%	32%	2	9
Fairmede/Hilltop	\$ 50,443	87%	26%	2	9.5
North & East	\$ 45,147	76%	27%	5	10
Park Plaza	\$ 40,295	98%	29%	1	11
Cortez/Stege	\$ 26,373	98%	37%	2	11
Laurel Park	\$ 60,536	96%	30%	2	11
Iron Triangle	\$ 26,011	97%	36%	4	12
				<b>TOTAL: 52</b>	<b>AVERAGE: 7.3</b>

# City Park Conditions: Recommended Solutions

- Raise park fee for developers
- Involve diverse residents in designing recreational programs
- Hire residents to look after parks
- Create program for youth to raise community awareness about park use

## Relevant Community Organizations:

- Healthy Eating and Active Living Project,  
Neighborhood House of North Richmond

# Access to the Shoreline: Background

- Richmond is blessed with a shoreline that remains undeveloped in many areas, and preserved as open space in some areas.
- Open space benefits the health, wellbeing, and property values in local neighborhoods.
- Lack of access to shoreline open spaces prevents many residents from benefiting from this local treasure.





**Public access points to shoreline open space**

# Access to Shoreline by Neighborhood

Neighborhood	Median Household Income*	Percent Residents of Color*	Residents who could potentially have shoreline access	Residents who currently have easy physical access to the shoreline	Percent of residents with potential access who currently have access
CORONADO	\$ 32,978	93%	221	-	0%
CORTEZ/STEGE	\$ 26,373	98%	75	-	0%
PARK VIEW	\$ 30,750	95%	476	-	0%
RICHMOND ANNEX	\$ 47,530	51%	2,313	-	0%
SHIELDS-REID	\$ 23,313	98%	244	-	0%
PANHANDLE ANNEX	\$ 30,750	95%	545	3	1%
SOUTHWEST ANNEX	\$ 33,250	75%	852	11	1%
PARCHESTER VILLAGE	\$ 28,974	84%	1,174	103	9%
Richmond (no neighborhood)	\$ 48,660	73%	2,023	227	11%
POINT RICHMOND	\$ 73,125	16%	3,323	654	20%
MARINA BAY	\$ 74,798	52%	3,008	2,970	99%
<b>Richmond Total</b>	\$ 44,210	79%	14,255	3,969	28%
<b>North Richmond Total</b>	\$ 24,131	95%	2,124	545	26%

# Access to the Shoreline: Our Findings

- Significant inequity in current shoreline access exists between neighborhoods.
- Inequity in access falls along lines of differences in median household income and percent people of color.
- 14% of Richmond residents could potentially have easy physical access to shoreline open space, while only 4% currently do have access.

# Access to Shoreline: Recommended Solutions

- Designate undeveloped shoreline areas as open space
- Invest in solutions that resolve barriers to local access

## Relevant Community Organization:

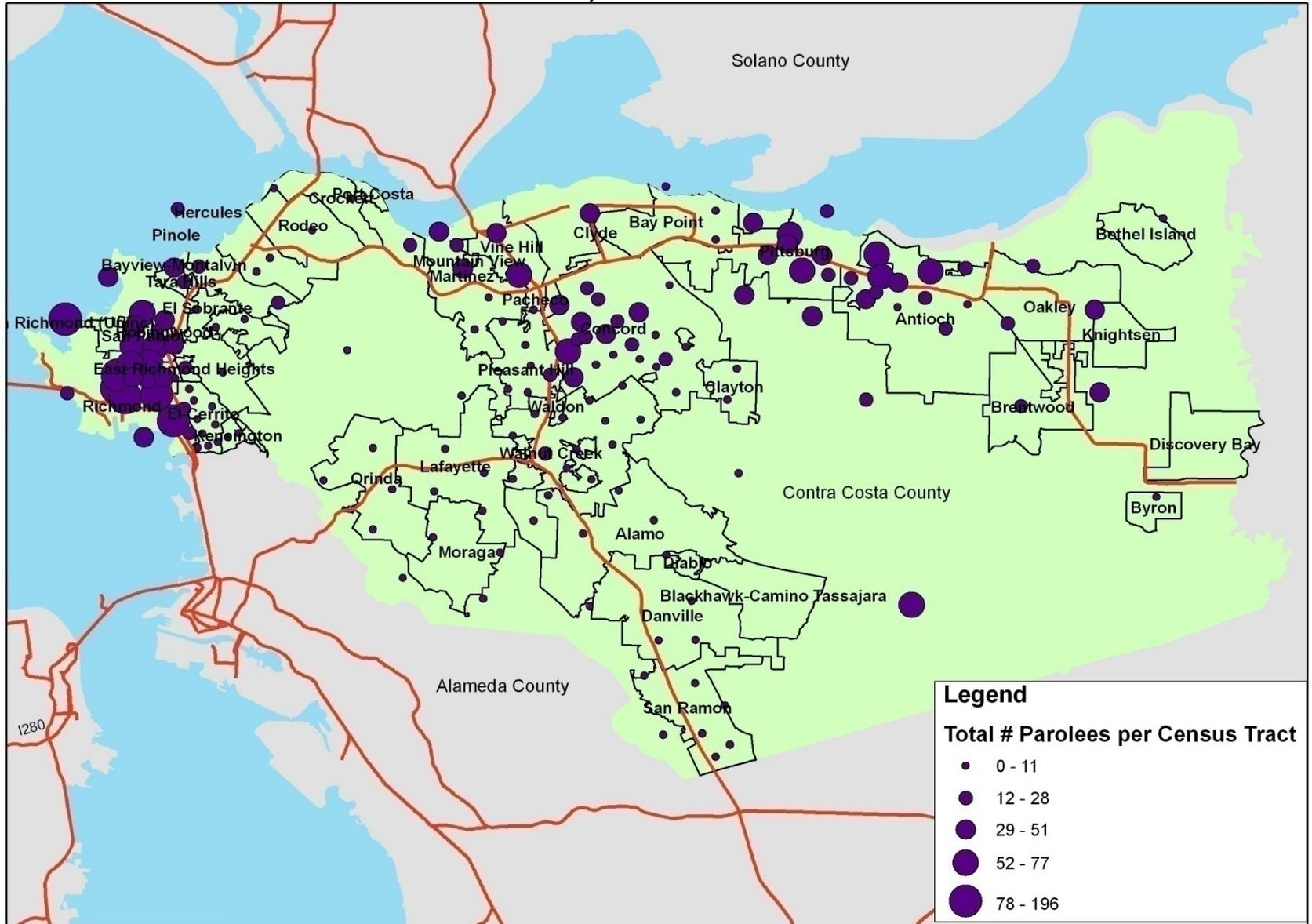
- North Richmond Shoreline Open Space Alliance

# Employment of Formerly Incarcerated Residents: Background

- Community sees a revolving door of people getting arrested, released, and returning to crime.
- Need for services and employment opportunities for formerly incarcerated residents.
- Studies show that employment is the one of the most important factors in reducing a person's likelihood of being re-arrested.



# Number of Parolees Per Census Tract, 2005



# Employment of Formerly Incarcerated Residents: Our Findings

- All of the top ten employers in Richmond ask new applicants whether they have a past conviction.
- This accounts for 15,273 or 29% of the jobs in Richmond.



# Employment of Formerly Incarcerated Residents: Recommended Solutions

- Eliminate the question about past convictions from city & county applications
- Require city vendors to eliminate the question from applications
- Increase funding to provide missing services for formerly incarcerated

## Relevant Community Organizations:

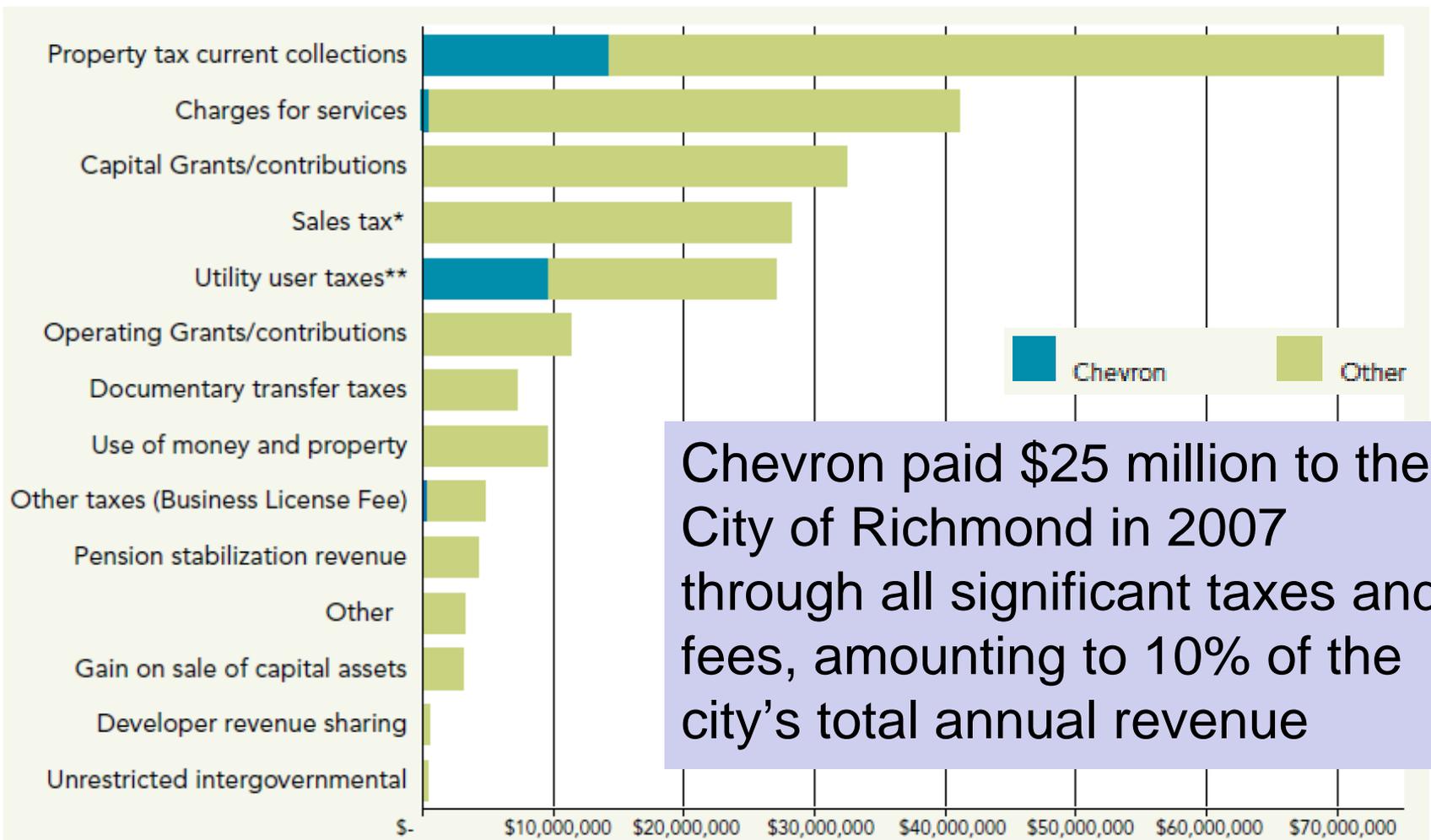
- Office of Neighborhood Safety
- All of Us or None

# Richmond's Tax Revenue from Chevron: Background

- Local revenue goes to street maintenance, public safety services, sewers, housing and redevelopment, parks, streetlights, and community centers
- Chevron has most land, employees, profits of any industry in Richmond
- Chevron taking action to reduce its contributions to local revenue

# Richmond's Tax Revenue from Chevron: Our Findings

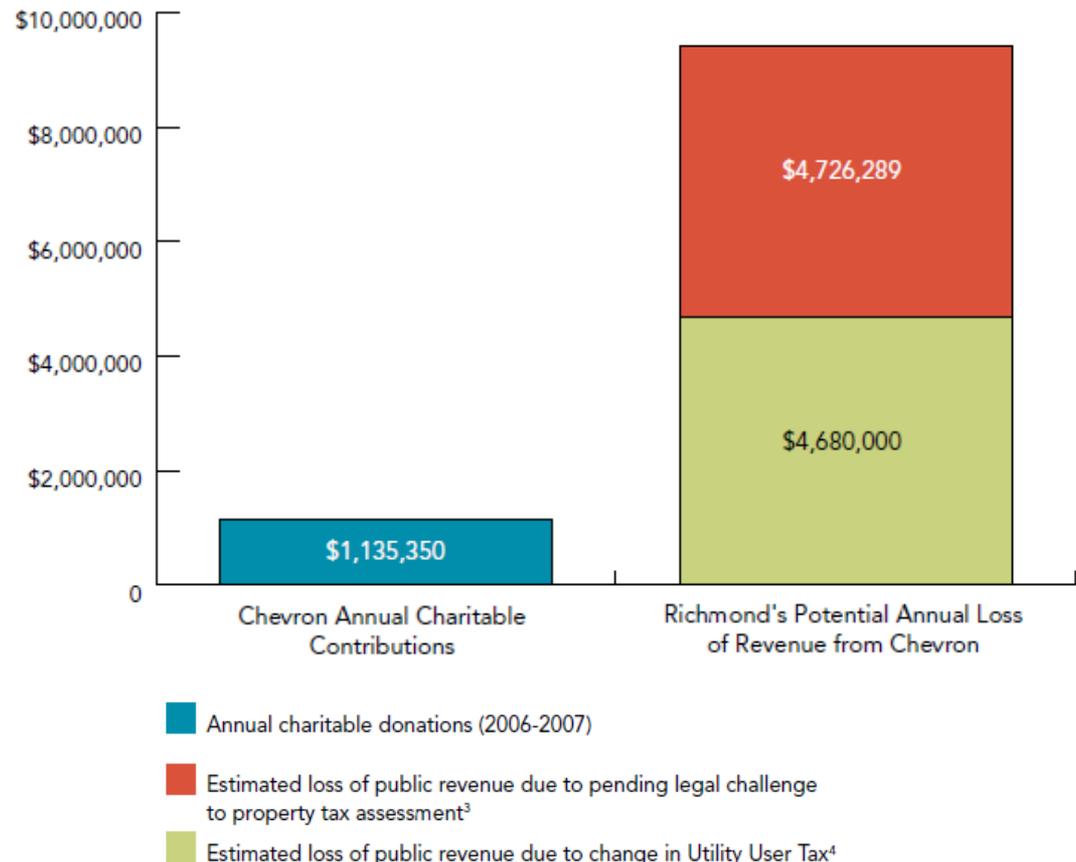
## Sources of City of Richmond Revenue, Fiscal year 2006-2007



# Richmond's Tax Revenue from Chevron: Our Findings

## Chevron's Annual Charitable Donations vs. Estimated Annual Loss in Public Revenue from Chevron Tax/Fee Payment Reductions

- During 2006-2007 Chevron donated an annual average of \$1.1 million in charitable contributions
- In these two years the company also took action to reduce its annual contributions to city revenue by an estimated \$9.4 million.



# Richmond's Tax Revenue from Chevron: Recommended Solutions

- Increase transparency and reporting of Chevron's utility use to City and residents
- Adopt residence driven ballot initiatives
- Pursue other solutions such as impact mitigation fees paid by developers or fiscal impact studies of new policies and projects.

## Relevant Community Organizations:

- Richmond Progressive Alliance

# Water Contamination in Creeks & Bays: Background

- Creeks and bays provide opportunities for recreation, relaxation, and a local food source for subsistence fishers.
- Waterways are habitat for wildlife like birds, fish, and plants.
- West County is blessed with many creeks and bay shorelines, but contamination can prevent residents and wildlife from benefiting.



# Water Contamination of Creeks & Bays: Our Findings

- All of the bodies of water in Richmond, San Pablo, and North Richmond are considered “impaired” by the Regional Water Quality Board.
- Most of the contamination is from urban run-off, and part of it is from industrial releases.
- Since 2005, industrial facilities in the area have violated water quality regulations 204 times, an average of 4.5 times per month.

# Water Contamination of Creeks & Bays: Recommended Solutions

- Community limit its contributions to water contamination
- Help restore local water bodies through creek clean-up and restoration projects
- Support policy to limit water pollution



## Relevant Community Organizations:

- North Richmond Shoreline Open Space Alliance

# Access to Quality Youth Programs: Background

- Youth participating in programs are less likely to have committed a violent crime and to have reported having used or ever sold drugs.
- The positive contributions of youth programs also greatly depend on the quality, not just availability, of programs.
- An overwhelming 79% of Richmond youth in an earlier survey indicated that they would attend recreation centers if their input was solicited in program development.



**Table 1: AVAILABILITY OF YOUTH PROGRAMS FOR WEST COUNTY YOUTH (RICHMOND, SAN PABLO, AND NORTH RICHMOND)**

Number of youth aged 15-20 living in West County	10,994
Number of spaces available for West County youth aged 15-20 in surveyed programs	2,409
Percentage of West County youth potentially served by surveyed programs	22%
Number of low-income youth aged 15-20 living in West County <sup>19</sup>	3,710
Number of spaces available for low-income West County youth aged 15-20 in surveyed programs	1,613
Percentage of low-income West County youth potentially served by surveyed programs	43%

**Table 2: KEY ASPECTS OF YOUTH PROGRAM QUALITY**

In planning your program, do you have a formal process for getting youth input on what the program should include?	Yes 25%	No 75%
During the program, is there a specific time when youth are asked to set goals for themselves?	Yes 45%	No 55%
Besides English, what other languages does your staff speak?	Spanish – 75% Other – 25% None – 20%	

# Access to Quality Youth Programs: Recommended Solutions

- Work with youth leaders to engage their peers and ensure that all programming is designed with the active input of youth.
- Create a central directory of youth programs available to this age group.
- Provide funding for program staff and evaluation resources.

## Relevant Community Organizations:

- Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization (CCISCO)

# Streetlights and Community Safety: Background

- Lighting improves sense of safety, absence of violent crime, and quality of life.
- Missing lights and dim lighting lead residents to demand improvements.
- PG&E pilot project: 30 lights replaced in Iron Triangle



# Streetlights and Community Safety: Our Findings

- 200 door-to-door surveys were completed
- 62% noticed the new lights
- 83% feel safer with brighter lights
- 47% noticed a decrease in criminal activity

**Table 1. STREETLIGHTS SURVEY RESPONSES**

Have you noticed the new lights?	Yes	62%
	No	38%
Have you walked down your street in the last three months? (at night)	Yes	39%
	No	61%
Do you feel safer with brighter lights?	Yes	83%
	No	17%
Have you seen or felt any change in your neighborhood since the new lights were put in?	Yes	51%
	No	49%
Have you noticed a decrease in criminal activity since the lights were upgraded?	Yes	47%
	No	53%

# Streetlights and Community Safety: Recommended Solutions

- Include community input in Richmond's draft lighting ordinance
- Learn from other cities that have developed lighting ordinances
- Consider any environmental and health impacts of new lighting design and technology

## Relevant Community Organizations:

- Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization (CCISCO)

# Indicators Project Next Steps

## **Community Forum & Report Release**

- Monday, June 15th, 6-7:30pm at St Marks Church

## **Community actions and campaigns**

- City park conditions
- Access to youth programs
- Healthy Homes
- Resources for formerly incarcerated

# Project Partner Contact Info

- CCISCO – 925.313.0206 - [www.ccisco.org](http://www.ccisco.org)
- MMM – 510.231.0489 - [www.moradamm.com](http://www.moradamm.com)
- NHNR – 510.235.9780 - [www.nhnr.org](http://www.nhnr.org)
- NRSOSA – 510.367.5379 - [www.northrichmondshoreline.org](http://www.northrichmondshoreline.org)
- Pacific Institute – 510.251.1600 – [www.pacinst.org](http://www.pacinst.org)
- RPA – 510.595.4661 - [www.richmondprogressivealliance.net](http://www.richmondprogressivealliance.net)
- Triangle Neighborhood Council – 510.232.5858
- WCTC – 510.232.3427 - [www.westcountytoxicscoalition.org](http://www.westcountytoxicscoalition.org)

WEST COUNTY  
TOXICS COALITION

HISTORIC TRIANGLE  
NEIGHBORHOOD  
COUNCIL

RICHMOND  
PROGRESSIVE  
ALLIANCE

NORTH RICHMOND  
SHORELINE  
  
OPEN SPACE  
ALLIANCE



NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE  
  
OF NORTH RICHMOND



WEST COUNTY  
**HEAL**  
HEALTHY LIVING ACTIVE LIVING

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- Firedoll Foundation

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