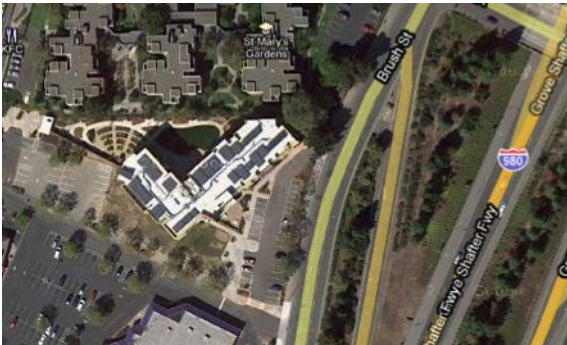


Jack London Gateway: Healthier housing for low-income seniors in West Oakland



The Problem

West Oakland is a community plagued by poor air quality from diesel trucks heading to and from the Port of Oakland, as well as from nearby freeways. Residents suffer from high rates of cancer, heart disease, and asthma. When the West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project and other community activists heard about plans for new, low-income senior housing right next to the freeway, they were concerned.

What We Did

In 2006, HIP worked with the West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project, West Oakland residents, and the non-profit developer East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation to maximize positive health impacts and minimize negative



health impacts of the housing development. This Health Impact Assessment (HIA) addressed community concerns about air quality, noise, safety, and access to retail.

What We Found

We found that without mitigation, future residents of the new senior housing were likely to experience relatively higher rates of respiratory illnesses compared to people living further from the site, as well as high blood pressure and sleep loss caused by very high noise levels, and stress due to safety concerns.

“Our work proved that there are solutions to health disparities, and you can have a balance between transportation and housing that doesn’t harm community health.”
– Margaret Gordon, Co-Director, West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project

“The way that they designed this building, it’s for your health. We can open up the air purifiers to get fresh air. I’m even on the side facing the freeway but the building is soundproof, so you can barely hear the traffic. It’s so peaceful. Before I lived here, I had to have shots for asthma and go to the hospital for oxygen to get my breathing down to the right level. Since I’ve lived here, I haven’t had to do that once. I love it.”

– Current Jack London Gateway resident



Impact

The developers installed a central ventilation system with air filters inside housing units and common spaces, and modified residential building design to orient the main entryway through a noise-buffered courtyard rather than near a freeway, making the building more accessible by foot. The HIA helped our partners become more conscious and explicit about health-focused solutions to their work, and has increased the conversation around health and planning among the community and in local government. This HIA also sparked additional HIA work in West Oakland.

Visit our website to learn more about this project and access report materials:

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