EST. 2015

MP-SJRC

Marina Pando Social Justice Research Collaborative

East Yard Communities For Environmental Justice

EYCEJ

EYCEJ History

EYCEJ was established in 2001 by residents of the Commerce/East Los Angeles area who were concerned with the increasing environmental health impacts of industrial pollution in their community, as well as several pending expansion projects adjacent to homes, schools and parks. After running into each other at several public meetings and realizing the huge wall they came up against as individuals, these concerned residents made the decision to work in unity and formed a community group that would fight for the lives of their families and neighbors. In 2002, EYCEJ was formally funded as a non-profit organization under the fiscal sponsorship of Social and Environmental Entrepreneurs (SEE). Since its inception, EYCEJ has achieved many important successes, including bring issues of environmental justice and air quality to the forefront for other community, environmental, and governmental entities at both regional and statewide level.

Program Manager Statement

Let's begin by looking at the political context we are currently living in today. Not more than two weeks ago, many of us watched as white men from around the country gathered and descended on the University of Virginia campus while chanting, "You will not replace us." With Tiki torches (which is on its own a mis-appropriation of Indigenous cultures of the Pacific) these men reminded those of us who have lived on the margins—the Black, Brown, Indigenous, Muslim, immigrant, queer, femme, trans, and woman-idenitified—that this country and its institutions were founded on our exclusion. However, for many segments in this country, the rage-filled white supremacy that Donald Trump has represented, encouraged, and allowed is shocking. After believing that Barack Obama had somehow in eight years absolved this country of hundreds of years of violent destruction, some people in this country are genuinely surprised.

I sat and watched this media coverage and the first thing that I remembered was how it felt to be an undergraduate student at a primarily white institution. Not only was the level of violence familiar, so was the chosen location: a university campus. Those of us who have lived on the margins know that educational institutions are not safe. Educational institutions, science, knowledge production are never a neutral process. We only have to look at the case of Henrietta Lacks who had her cells stolen and used to produce vaccines to recognize that our bodily autonomy is constantly sacrificed for the "greater good." Our lives are disposable if it is to the benefit of capitalism or white supremacy.

With MP-SJRC we are attempting to turn that reality on its head. We acknowledge that this program still produces a form of mainstream research couched in the language of methods, research questions, and academic literature. What makes us distinct however is that we operate outside of a university. We do so because if our current moment has shown us anything, it is that we must continue to build opportunities outside of mainstream white institutions. In many ways MP-SJRC is only a beginning. We often rely on University labs and centers to partner in small but meaningful ways, however these partnerships are created with the full understanding that we are a community-based program.

I feel fortunate to have had the pleasure of working with this year's Researchers. Each of these young, first-generation, women of color scholars stretched their capacity to build bridges between what they were learning in their academic classrooms with what they have learned from being active members of the organization. Their work and their very existence reminds me of the creative energy that has always propelled many of our people forward.

So it is especially in this political moment that I, as an Indigenous scholar, yell back to settler white supremacy: We have always been here!

FLORIDALMA BOJ-LOPEZ

Program Manager

Researchers

My name is **Laura Lopez**, I was raised in Bell Gardens and attended schooling within my community. Growing up I took acknowledgment that I was part of a working class community that lacks in resources and equality. Given that I was part of a family that did not obtain a higher education, it spark an interest in furthering my education.With the motivation of my parents and my community I attend Cal Poly Pomona and is majoring in Political Science. When I was attending Bell Gardens High School, I was introduced to Youth In Action and East Yards. Through the organization I was educated more in depth about environmental racism. This has led to the aspiration in advocating for equal quality of air, safety and opportunities.

Karla Perez is a recent graduate from CSULB where she majored in Geography. She also graduated from LBCC with an A.A. in Social Sciences. She hopes to be a part of East Yard for many years to come.

Andrea Luna is a first-generation undergraduate student who transferred to the University of California, Berkeley this fall majoring in Society and the Environment. She began organizing with East Yard Communities in La Cosecha Colectiva in her first year of college. She wants to continue working with nonprofit organizations that are dedicated to environmental justice.

Shireen Dideban is graduating from Cal State Long Beach this year with a bachelor's degree in Environmental Science and Policy. She plans to continue working with East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice and other local organizations to promote community health and social justice. Shireen would like to thank Jan, Taylor, Flori, and everyone at EYCEJ for the opportunity to participate in the Marina Pando Social Justice Research collaborative.

Vanessa was born in Huntington park and grew up in Bell Gardens. She is currently a student at CSULA majoring in Communicative Disorders with an emphasis on Speech Pathology. On her spare time, she volunteers in food drives and gathers various things to donate for individuals in skid row. She loves helping those in need and being involved with social justice in her community.

Frontline Communities and Contamination: Que hay en nuestra tierra?

Karla Perez & Shiren Dideban

Introduction

La Cosecha Colectiva is a community based program that promotes the practice of growing your own food in our own backyards while building a community relationship. This allows people to have access to a healthier way of living. Last month, residential members were able to participate in the construction of five new garden boxes for La Cosecha Colectiva in West Long Beach. Angelo Logan, co-founder of East Yard, was there to teach us how to build the boxes. After one demonstration, everyone understood the process of the construction and began working together to build the remaining boxes. The end result were five garden boxes that will grow vegetables, for the community by the community. La Cosecha Colectiva has showed us how communities can come together to support one another to lead a healthier lifestyle and the importance of having access to clean soil. While working with the East Yard community gardening program, we learned about the concept of food deserts and food apartheid from other East Yard members. According to EYCEJ member, Suzette Aguirre, the term food desert refers to an area where there is a lack of access to healthy foods. Fast-food restaurants are often found in large numbers in low-income communities of color. Also, many of the grocery stores in these communities receive second-hand produce that has previously been sitting on the shelves of other grocery stores for several days or weeks. The fact that low-income communities often have fewer options when it comes to purchasing affordable healthy foods is one of the main reasons that the EYCEJ community gardening program was created. However, one of our concerns has been whether the soil we are growing food in is actually safe given our proximity to multiple sites of pollution. This research focused on the potential contaminants that can be found in soil located in West Long Beach. The local sources that may be responsible for contamination include (but are not limited to): Oil Refineries, the Long Beach incinerator, and diesel trucks passing through because of the Port of Long Beach. In addition, lead paint on the exterior of homes and chemicals used for the care of lawns, for example, are other sources that may contaminate soil. The contaminants that may be present in air and soil can have a significant effect on people's health. Having clean soil is essential for giving people the opportunity to grow their own food and to create a clean environment where they live and work.

Research Questions & Literature Review

1)Which heavy metals are present in the soil of homes in West Long Beach, in particular those ?

2) Is the location of the EYCEJ community garden in West Long Beach safe for growing food?

In order to understand why soil contamination in the homes of active gardeners was of particualr concern, we decided to first understand why community gardens were an important activity. Community gardens can be found in all types of neighborhoods, but in low-income neighborhoods these gardens are created so that people can improve their lifestyle by having access to and consuming healthy foods. These types of ecosystem services are essential in these communities to create healthy food options for people who may not have access to healthy food and to help improve the lives of people who face the daily struggles of living in poverty (Clarke, Jenerette, 2014).

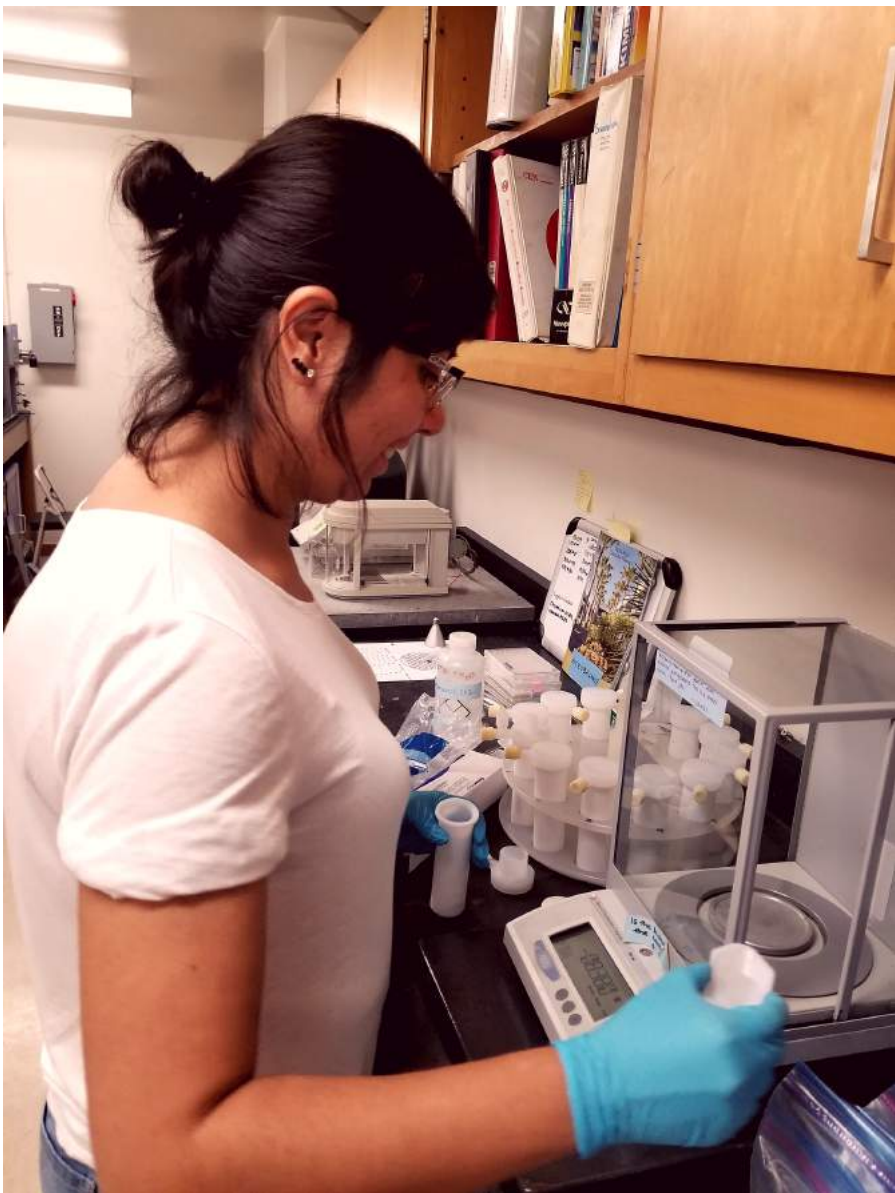
This study focuses mainly on soil contamination in frontline communities such as West Long Beach, because it is a subject that has not been explored enough. It is also important to note that soil and air contamination can come from numerous sources because West Long Beach is also in close proximity to a waste incinerator. The materials being broken down in this facility play as big of a role as refineries in releasing contamination affecting soil. According to a study conducted in Osaka, Japan, where there are about 1,200 waste incinerators, soil surrounding a waste incinerator became highly contaminated through the “atmospheric deposition of dioxins” (Takeda, Takaoka, 2012). These toxins come in the form of PCDD/PCDFs which are organic pollutants that eventually bioaccumulate through the food chain (Colombo et. al, 2011). They are tied to, but not limited to, harming the immune system and causing cancer.

In addition, a study conducted by researchers at the Technical University of Berlin included the testing of vegetables from urban gardens across the capital of Germany. The results of the study explain the potential for vegetables to extract heavy metals from the soils in which they are grown. Some of the vegetables tested were found to have lead concentrations above the levels set by European law as safe for food. Lead accumulates in the body and can lead to developmental disorders and neurological damage, as well as harming other organs (Samuel et al. 2012). Another study conducted in Central Poland between 1984 and 1990 involved testing concentrations of heavy metals in soil and groundwater near an oil refinery in Plock City of Central Poland. Although accumulation of heavy metals was found to be relatively low in the soil, it was very high in the groundwater. The leaves of vegetables growing near the refinery, such as carrots, red beets, and parsley, were found to have excessive amounts of chromium and cadmium. Bioaccumulation of heavy metals in plants can result in the build up of heavy metals in the people and animals who consume them (Mikuła 1997).

The impact from contaminated soil can be difficult to separate from other types of pollution or contaminants that people are exposed to in their daily lives. In order to understand what types of contaminants we may find as a result of nearby polluting industries, we also created a table based on our litaerature review that discuss variosu contaminants, their health impacts, and the most probably source of industry (See Appendix A in full report available online).

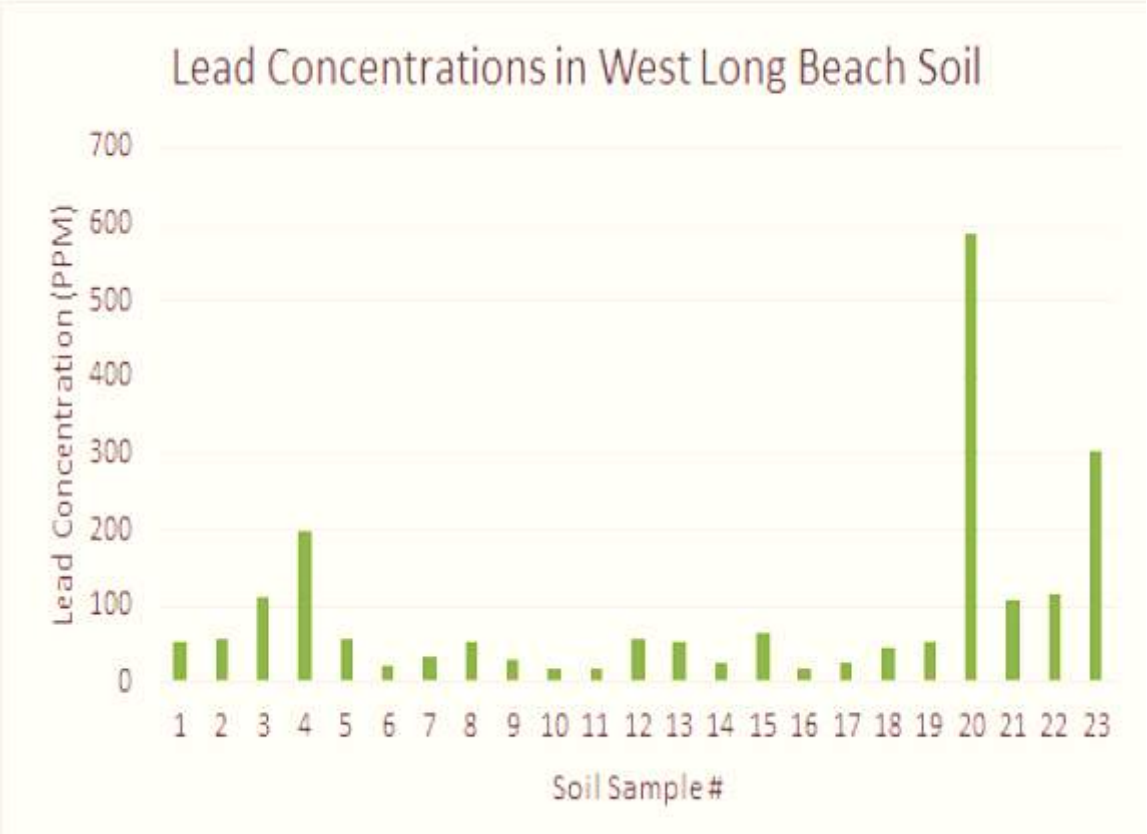
METHODS

For the purpose of this study, the soil in West Long Beach was only tested for heavy metals. This decision was based on two reasons: time constraints and budget restrictions. The methods consisted of collecting and testing soil from different locations within five homes in West Long Beach. The first home was chosen on the basis that it is the location of La Cosecha Colectiva in West Long Beach. The remaining homes were chosen based on their proximity to the refinery and how much interaction the resident had with their soil. It is recommended that in future studies, the soil in West Long Beach be tested for other contaminants such as petroleum hydrocarbons that are found in petroleum. The soil samples were tested for 23 different types of heavy metals. For a more detailed step-by-step description of the soil collecting and lab process refer to Appendix B in full report avilable online. Youc an also find our full results in Appendix C and D in our online report



RESULTS

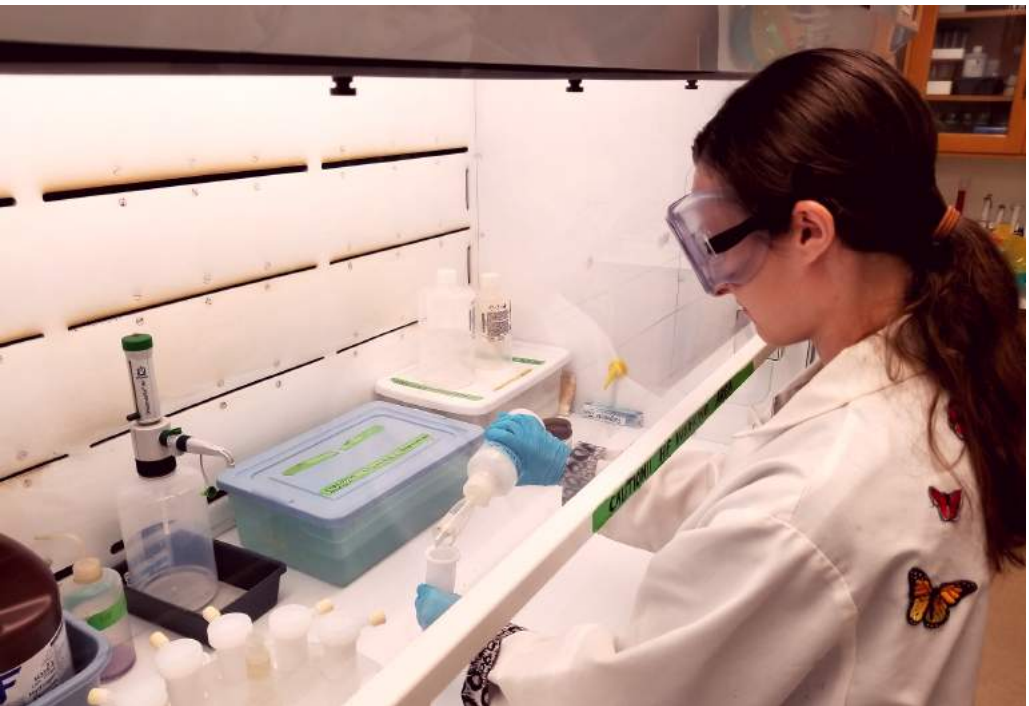
Lead is the main heavy metal found in high concentrations that poses a serious health risk. One soil sample contained 588 parts per million of lead, another contained 303 ppm of lead, and three others contained between 100 and 200 ppm of lead. The federal standard from the Environemntal Protection Agency (EPA) considers 400 ppm of lead in soil to be toxic. This means that one of our samples was far above the level that is considered toxic, while several other samples were found to be near toxic levels. After speaking with residents in the home we believe this was due to the fact that the house was painted with paint that contained lead that is now chipping off. This is a serious health hazard that needs to be addressed because exposure to lead can cause irreversible damage to the nervous system of adults and children. The graph below, “Lead Concentrations in West Long Beach Soil” shows the lead concentrations of the 23 soil samples gathered from five homes in West Long Beach.



Conclusion

Since our 23 samples were taken from only five homes in West Long Beach, the results of the soil tests may not reflect the conditions and quality of all soil in West Long Beach. However, based on the results, it is evident that several metals are present in the soil in higher than average concentrations, with one house in particular showing high concentrations of lead. Lead is the most dangerous of the 23 heavy metals that we tested for. We recommend that lead contaminated soil be replaced with store bought soil, if possible. It is important to contact your local health department to find out the best way to get lead-contaminated soil replaced, because the use of hazardous material suits and equipment is needed to safely replace lead-contaminated soil.

The best way to protect the health of people participating in community gardening is to recommend that plants be grown in raised gardens with store-bought soil. La Cosecha Colectiva in West Long Beach has utilized this raised garden bed method in order to avoid growing food in soil that may not be safe. When interacting with the soil, it is best to wear gloves and face masks. Also, not allowing children to ingest the soil, is an important precaution that should be taken to avoid exposure to high amounts of heavy metals. Future research should continue with a focus on testing soil in order to gain a more in-depth understanding of how various contaminants can impact the health of communities. In addition, we recommend being able to test for other possible pollutants that are not heavy metals, but that may accumulate in soil. Most importantly, it is recommended that future researchers provide the results of their study to community members so they may take action to prevent further contamination from entering their communities.



Homegrown: Community Building versus Community Development

Vanessa Piñeda

Southeast Los Angeles has faced drastic changes throughout the years. Marginalized communities have suffered various social, cultural, and financial downfalls due to a capitalistic system. These communities are consistently challenged with displacement in order for new businesses, luxury living spaces, and art galleries to thrive. Although targeted for displacement, art can be a defender of the community. To better understand the reconstruction of our communities I pose the following questions: What role does art play in gentrification and what can a community do to prevent it in the lower portion of the Los Angeles river? How can artists influence the use of public space in an ethical way? In order to conduct hands on research to gather information, my methods include various one on one conversations with local Southeast Los Angeles artists.

Southeast Los Angeles delivers culture rich communities, filled with art, foods, and vibrant scenes. As new jaw dropping shopping centers and restaurants swarm into a community, the vibrant scene attracts outside residents with higher income levels that can often afford to pay higher rents or mortgages which effectively drives up the cost of living. This phenomenon is known as “gentrification”. According to the Centers for Disease Control, “gentrification is the transformation of neighborhoods from low to high value. This can displace long time residents and cause businesses to move from a gentrified area because of higher rents, mortgages, and property taxes” (Pools and Stratton, 15). Gentrification is a questionable process that developers decide to continue. Although upsetting, it is critical to see the loss of homes to create a halt from waves of displacement. The sole purpose of gentrification is to enforce a capitalistic system. This is created on communities affected by, “work instability, unemployment, and stigmatization”. It is a perfect place for developers to feed off a community who cannot financially defend themselves or have higher education for knowledgeable awareness. Policy and Researcher for grassroots organization East Yard, Jessica Prieto, shares that “the demographics of Southeast LA communities are the most likely to be at risk of displacement. . .it has always been the low-income communities of color with high renter ship rates and large immigrant populations. They are definitely the most vulnerable to being displaced” (Personal Communication). It is no accident low income communities of color are targeted for displacement. This movement solely enforces social inequality, segregation, and discrimination against marginalized communities. In the midst of the beauty of Southeast LA it has to offer, the emergence of gentrification is not something new. Cities in southeast Los Angeles are on devalued land in which developers “make improvements to a property that cause market prices and tax assessment to rise, and so drives out the previous lower class residents” (Zukin, 5). Such improvements leave families to deal with higher rents, therefore, displacing community members who simply cannot afford the spiking rents. However, for outside residents who desire a proximity from the new developments, it is a convenient attribute.

Although there is reluctance to face the realities hidden within these large corporations and developers, we can change this ideology by shaping the way we interact with our landowners and community. East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice is a grassroots organization with the vision of having renovation without displacement. Presenting new ideas for renovation, East Yard has a plan to present workshops, which not only shares the well thought out community development plan, but includes members of the community in the process. Their plan on improved developments would be for the community to utilize while fulfilling communal needs. East Yard member Jessica Prieto claims that, “we tend to think of displacement as disconnected from our own lives but measures should be taken to prevent the wave of displacement. Just as developers make a plan on our communities, we have to make a plan to fulfill our own needs” (personal communication). Communities must engage in serious public discussions about alternatives to displacement in workshops such as the ones East Yard offers. This organization would be the first step in awareness for displacement and how communities can avoid the possible wave of gentrification.

Art itself can play either a supporting or challenging role within gentrification in a city. Developing a community’s sense of art as a political tool for affirming community identity and as a form of challenging displacement which can possibly prevent gentrification from occurring. When gentrification occurs, art is typically collaborating with capital. As gentrification scholar Alfredo Huante states, “Art is an ideological weapon because it can influence feelings and attitudes” (Personal communication, Alfredo Huante). Huante proposes that gentrification is a battle of ideas through art. The impact art has on both communities and developers is a constant debate on who is entitled to the space and how it is utilized. Artists can easily pave the way for gentrification as making an area visually pleasing, therefore, attracting outside residents. Another article demonstrating what can occur in Southeast LA, has broadened in Manhattan’s Chinatown, we can see that “In the past eight years, 100 galleries have opened in Chinatown with over 60% of them opening up in the last three years” (Yu, par. 2). Unlike community based art spaces, galleries can have a disconnect from the community and its people. Art in this case, is supporting gentrification by engaging in the capital aspect. Art in the galleries do not engage with the community’s art or express the communities’ needs through art.

A very recognized artist in Southeast LA named Xitlalic, has expanded her use of art skills due to sharing them with the community. She stresses the importance of community art being an obligation, especially in Southeast LA where she felt art was available, but extremely limited. Focusing on woodblock printing and poetry identified art, she is part of a Proyecto Vecindad, a Southeast LA grassroots organization. Focusing on educating community members through art, Xitlalic excitedly claims, “everyone has different skills, from silk screening, creative writing, business owners, entrepreneurs, paper good makers, photographers, they all create based on this political climate going on. Xitlalic mentions her concerns with not having an art center or community spaces for them to share their skills with the community. Being easily bombarded by developers’ shopping centers and Walmarts, having even a tiny communal space is an issue. One can see that art produced by local artists supports the local community. Through skill teaching, communal bonding, and creating, gentrification can be fought. Utilizing art as a powerful tool to confront community issues and fight for a cause through community engagement is the overall goal. It enforces community engagement rather than enforcing gentrification. The connection with art and gentrification can also be a powerful tool to defend the communities.

To further understand the issue of gentrification, we must take a step back and analyze the untouched areas not yet gentrified by developers versus already gentrified areas. Although not yet occurring, urban development planning is headed towards the Lower Los Angeles river, which stretches from Vernon to Long Beach. Originally made for controlling “catastrophic floods in 1914, 1934, and 1938 led the creation of a comprehensive regional flood control program” (Gumprecht, 3). Although made purposely for the use of flood control, the LA river continues to be a subject of renovation. Modified beyond recognition since its construction, the LA river is planned to still undergo further urban development. However, developments in the LA river would only contribute to the displacement of long-term low income residents. It is possible that moving forward with reassessing the river would present class transformation.

As extravagant as the developments for greenery sound, it would not be for the usage of the community. According to Wolch, “redressing park- poverty communities of color/ or low income households can, however, create an urban greenspace paradox. As more green space comes on line, it can improve attractiveness and public health, making neighborhoods more desirable” (Wolch, 235). The revitalization of the river not only provides a good use, but it definitely presents an eye pleasing area. From the eyesore the lower LA river currently is, it will be a beautified green area that can possibly recharge the power of gentrification to occur in the surrounding homes. This will only push out families and have them move to an area with the same issues they faced in their previous city.

One of the important ways communities can voice their opposition for the developer’s plan, is through art. Creating a strong connection between art and the developments for the river, all forms of art can play a great role in this situation. As mentioned before, artists have a quiet but powerful voice to speak against displacement from LA river revitalization that assembly member assembly member Anthony Rendon wants to move forward with. Through the guidance and facilitator roles nonprofits such as East Yard, Proyecto Vecindad, Alivio Mic, have to offer, knowledge can be found. Through local artists in Southeast LA, art can be a visually seen, in this case, voicing against gentrification. Both nonprofit organizations and artists can be the bridge in having extensive public input in the way this greenway processes will proceed.

The influx of galleries and luxury condos may beautify a city. However, developers never highlight an importance on “equitable” development. Although cities of Southeast Los Angeles are drastically disinvested in, they are very much deserving of beautification projects. Revitalizing the river is both a hopeful yet fearful aspect to confront soon. It can either further push communities aside from the life they have known, or have them fight for equitable treatment through restorations. The cities in which Southeast LA families have resided in for many years should not be an option of displacement to please developers. As Southeast LA local, Samrina states, “We want to show we have great artists here, we have great ideas too, we have skills, we have a voice” (personal communication).

The full weight of lead: The Health and Social of Exide Lead Poisoning

Andrea Luna

Introduction

Exide was a former battery recycling plant that operated for multiple decades in the city of Vernon, CA, on temporary permits and in that time has continuously emitted harmful pollution into the surrounding communities in Southeast and East Los Angeles. Lead is one pollutant of primary concern due to the various health effects on the development of children. The battery recycling plant was shut down in 2015, however the Department of Toxic Substances Control's (DTSC) inadequate cleanup efforts have left the affected communities to face ongoing exposure. This research aims to assess the potential short and long-term impacts of lead exposure on children, by formulating a correlation between the different exposures of lead, in addition to compiling a policy recommendation. This research is an extension of the research that Suzette Aguirre and I conducted last year on Exide Technologies in identifying the Health and Social Impacts of Exide Technologies' Lead Emissions and Solutions.

Research Questions

In order to expand the conversation around current blood lead levels (BLL) and future corresponding health and social issues on children, the questions I asked are: What does academic literature reveal about the connection between lead in soil and lead in blood, and how can we begin to understand the resulting health and social impacts on children? In addition, what programs can be created to alleviate the health and social impacts community members are facing as a result of lead contamination?

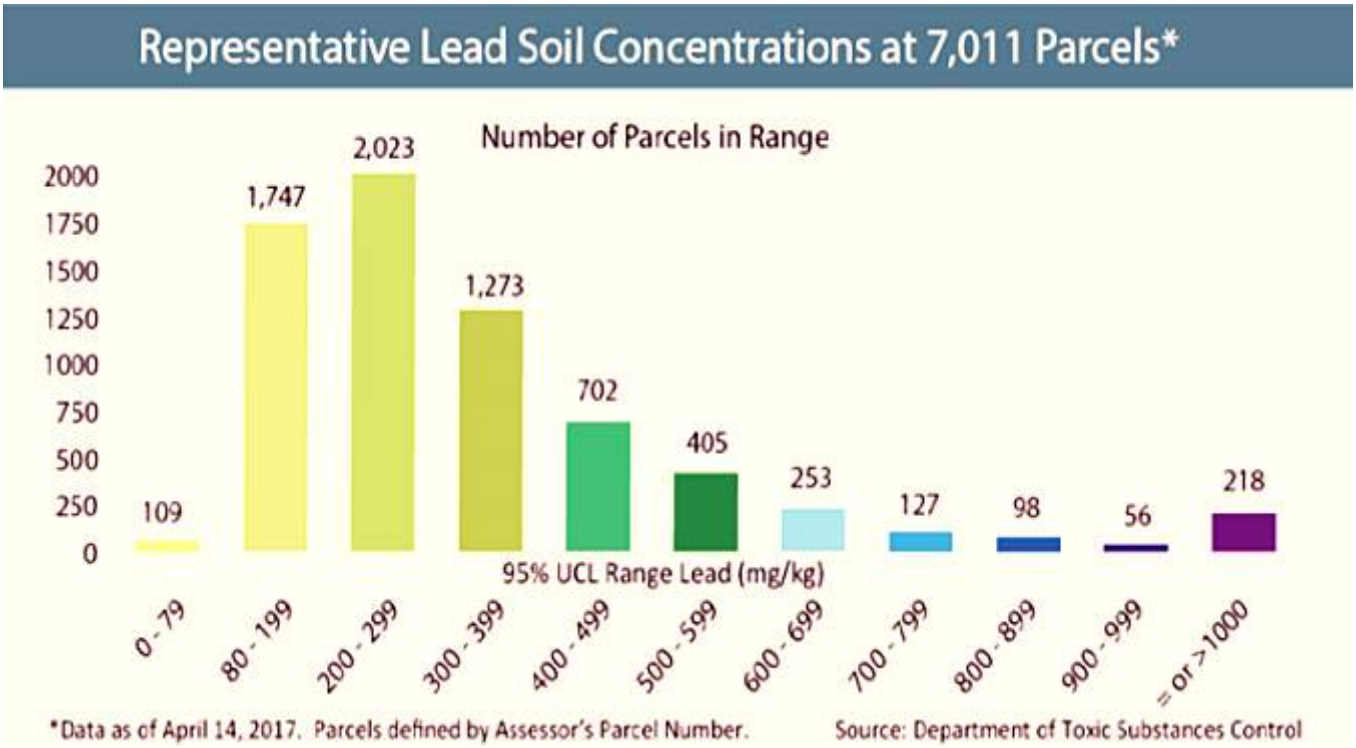
Methods/Literature Review

My methods included a thorough literature review on the correlation between lead in the soil to lead in the blood on children. I specifically sought out research that correlated lead in blood with learning and behavioral concerns for children and related the results to identify the short and long-term social impacts of lead exposure. Connect previous research to expand how we understand the impact of lead present in the South East Los Angeles area as a result of Exide Technologies.

As of the writing of this report, DTSC finalized the Final Removal Action Plan (FRAP), it claims, as of June 30, 2017, approximately 9,000 of sensitive land use properties within the Preliminary Investigation Area (PIA) have been sampled for lead and other heavy metals. FRAP admits, it's initial prioritization for this cleanup phase is based on with a residential property with a representative soil lead concentration of 400ppm.

In figure 1, as of April 14, 2017, DTSC had assessed 7,408 properties within the PIA for lead. Based on the data distribution, it is estimated that more than 98 percent of the properties in the PIA have a representative soil lead concentration that is greater than or equal to DTSC's screening level for lead in residential soils of 80 ppm. (FRAP, p.64). DTSC utilized their Lead Risk Assessment Spreadsheet (LRAS) to infer that 80 ppm, predicts an increase in blood lead of 1 microgram per deciliter (ug/dL), admitting it leads to a subsequent decrease of one IQ point in children (FRAP, p. 54). What we can infer from DTSC data collection and their formula of soil lead exposure is to examine the potential health and social outcomes.

The chart produced below merges research on the social and health impacts of lead with the number and scores of homes tested by DTSC. The first column of the chart displays the number of homes DTSC had tested, the second displays the level of lead in soil each home tested for, and the third column examines the corresponding BLL relating to an increase of blood lead to 1 microgram ug/dL on a child's exposure of 80 ppm of leaded soil. The data of how many children are present in each home was limited. The census did not have data on children available in cities that are located in the PIA. If we can find a numerical figure for the average number of children per parcel, we can begin to understand the scope of how many children have likely suffered from these levels of lead and what the lasting impacts of contamination may be for children.



The health and social impacts are defined as: According to DTSC's LRAS we refer to 1 microgram of BLL is a decrease of one IQ point. In a table done by the National Toxicology Program (NTP), it is stated the BLL under 5 ug/dL corresponds to lower scores in standardized tests, depressive and panic disorder, (Guilarte, T., Susser, E.) and an increase attention and problem related behaviors. Clinically diagnosed hypertension is within 5 ug/dL (Silberg, E.). Intellectual deficits is related to 7.5 ug/dL (Lanphear, B.). A range of 10 ug/dL or more indicates increased blood pressure (in adults) and hypertension, and delayed puberty (NTP). Potential harm is ranged between 30-60 ug/dL and defined as caused serious physiological problems: anemia, damage to the ability of blood to carry oxygen, interference with the nervous system and brain chemistry, kidney and endocrine disruption, and changes in the ability of the liver to detoxify foreign substances, among others. (Merkowitz, G., Rosner, D.)

Number of homes	Level of lead in soil	Likely Blood Lead Level	Social Impacts
109	0-70		
1,747	80-199	1-2.4	<1: Decrease of one 1Q point
2,023	200-299	2.5-3.8	>3: Lower scores in standardized tests, depressive and panic disorder, increase attention and problemrelated behaviors
1,273	300-399	3.7-4.9	
702	400-499	5-6.2	<5: hypertenison
405	500-599	6.2-7.4	
253	600-699	7.5-8.7	<7.5 intellectual deficits
127	700-799	8.7-9.9	<9: Learning disablities
98	800-899	10-11.2	<10:increased blood presure (in adults) and hypertenison, delayed puberty
56	900-999	11.2-12.4	
218	1000	12.5	> Potential harm

The Impacts of Lead Contamination

Children/students of color that are low-income are more likely to experience the adverse effects of lead exposure that can pose a risk to education attainment. A research study examined how low level exposure to lead corresponds to education attainment rate in communities of color, such as in Chicago. Researchers compared BLL to third graders and their standardized test scores, they found that non-Hispanic black students had a mean BLL of 7.7 ug/dL- more than twice that of non-Hispanic white students at 3.7 ug/dL (Evens, A, Hryhorzuck D, Lanphear B, Lewis D, Forst L, Rosenberg D.,). Overall, the study estimated that 13% of reading failure and 14.8% of math failure can be attributed to exposure to blood lead concentrations of 5 to 9 vs. 0 to 4 µg/dL in Chicago school children. Often stereotypes are intertwined with children of color in academia accusing them of ‘not wanting to learn,’ but not conceptualizing other factors that play a major role such as: lack of nutrition (health care), under-resourced schools; but these stereotypes can also play a significant role in criminalizing young boys and girls of color. Another study confirmed the connection between BLL and poor educational outcomes remains true for BLLs as low as 3-4 ug/dL (“Childhood Lead Exposure and Educational Outcomes”). The Individuals with Disabilities Education (IDE) references lead poisoning in one of the disability classifications, “Other Health Impairment,” under which children ages 3 to 21 become eligible for special education services (Evans A, Hryhorczuk D.,). This can assist children with EBLL, however in under-resourced schools children of color are less likely to have access to these programs without adequate funding

Evidence indicates there is a “lead-crime hypothesis” claiming that lead exposure at young ages leave children with problems like learning disabilities, ADHD,and impulse control problems and those problems cause them to commit crime as adults (Doleac, Jennifer., L.). Children of color are more likely to live in polluted neighborhoods exposing them to toxicn, such as lead, they are also more than likely to live near by roads and freeways that are contaminated as a result of gasoline exhaust (Milberg et al, 1980). For instance, Crime in Chicago has a high number of cases regarding violent crime, in an article referencing more than 4,000 people were shot last year alone (Diamond, J.), and 60% of murder victims are under the age of 22 are black. A recent study this year indicates another factor that plays a role in the lead-crime hypothesis, which is disciplinary infraction which also integrates education attainment. Roughly 20% of children in the sample were suspended compared to 24% who ever had any sort of disciplinary infraction suggesting that most students who ran afoul of school authorities were eventually suspended (Aizer, Anna. p.13). In addition, children who have been suspended are ten times more likely to be involved in criminal activity. The study also highlighted how boys are more likely to be involved with disciplinary infractions than girls.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, I was able to find a correlation between lead in soil to lead in blood resulting in the health and social impacts on children, by expanding the conversation on how children of color are more likely to be affected. There are not that many programs in place that can alleviate the health and social impacts community members are facing; IDE is a program already in place for education but more awareness and advertising of the qualifications needs to be address to people when enrolling their children in school. As for governmental agencies, I recommend consistent monitoring for BLL in children in the 4.5 mile radius to update data. I also recommend reevaluating how low level lead exposure affect children and pregnant women that are in the 4.5 given that Exide is one of the main source of lead, but there are other exposures.. DTSC used Upper Confidence level to average soil samples in residential homes; however community members have noted that this tactic removes some residential properties off

Bell Garbage to Bell Gardens: Community Centered Visioning for Brownfield Remediation

Introduction

Brownfields are a product of social inequality and these empty lots are seen as dirty, empty, and worthless pieces of land. These perceptions of brownfields are then seen as representative of the local community. These communities that are burdened with pollution and limited in resources can benefit from the empty lots if they are integrated within the community. The contamination that is with in the area has influence the image of the individuals that are within these residents. As a result, industrial competition, technological advancement, downsizing, and shutdowns of industries have led to these abandoned industrial sites. Brownfields are defined as, “hazardous sites that are no longer operational but remain unremediated” (Alberini, 2005). However, these sites are also potential sites for community building grounded in the ideas and visions for potential projects. Within the City of Commerce there is currently a brownfield on the northeast corner of Garfield Ave. and Gage Ave. The site is near various industries, train tracks, and a “hot spot” of heavy diesel truck traffic. These contributing factors should be taken into consideration when developing a project at this location. A thorough community-driven engagement and planning process should be implemented in order to determine the best use of space for this property and transform it from a pollution hot spot into a community resource.

Research Questions

What are the resources and challenges that surround this brownfield? What do residents who provided input through a brownfield survey, want to see at the brownfield on Gage and Garfield? How do these survey participants want to use this public space?

Methods

I studied previous MPSJRC research projects, which researched food accessibility in the cities of Commerce and Bell Gardens. Another method used was to identify if there are sufficient assets to the two communities where the brownfield is located. This would lead to the numerous sources of pollution that led to his vacant lot becoming a brownfield. The history of the development of the property, ownership, sales, an estimate of the property value, and other characteristics of the property were obtained.2 Then demographics were gathered from the 2010 census, in order to identify the individuals that represent the community that is connected to the brownfield. The demographics are from the cities of Commerce and Bell Gardens, which are the zip codes of 90201, 90040, and 90091. The demographics gathered show population, age, sex, education, employment, language, and income. These factors will be connected to the pollution burden that affects the communities.

Location of the Brownfield

The cities of Bell Gardens and Commerce are located in SouthEast Los Angeles, California. The Garfield and Gage brownfield is divided into three parcels.

The property that was built on the land was constructed between the years of 1970 to 1989. It is demonstrated that the three parcels have different types of classification for the use of the land, in which this element should be taken in consideration for the redevelopment of the brownfield. There are two parcels that obtain a significant value for the land, this can be a factor to the linkage of the slow moving process of redevelopment.

AIN:	6357001951	6357001952	6357001953
Owner	Montebello Unified School District	Montebello Unified School District	Unknown
Location	6360 Garfield Ave Bell Gardens, CA 90201	6451 E Gage Ave Commerce CA 90040	East Laguna lot
Property Value	$41,932	$2.370, 536	unknown
Classification of Land	Unknown	Industrial and commercial	vacant land
Size	15,275 sq. ft.	524,353 sq. ft.	unknown
Tax Rate	1.1426%	1.1426%	unknown

Figure 1. The table was made by the use of the information given by Property Shark.

Community Involvement and Brownfields

These sites are a product of socioeconomic, racial and class divisions. In the article, Community Participation is Key to Environmental Justice in Brownfields published by the Byrne, John. The article discusses the requirement of the community participation for the order of a brownfield revitalization. It is also discussed that the decisions of the brownfield plans should ensure environmental and economic benefits from the cleanup of the brownfield. In 1977, the University of Delaware's Center for Energy and Environmental Policy (CEEP) worked with Urban Environmental Center on a study that focused on environmental justice and community participation in brownfields through the country. In the study they used EPA National Brownfields Pilot Projects, there were sixty-four national pilots and only thirty pilots contained community involvement. From the 30 pilots, ten sites were chosen to be studied more in depth, in which they were analyzed by key factors. The conclusion from the study was that those pilots with the least community participation contained businesses and government involvement towards the decision making of the brownfields. The results showed that in order for the residents surrounding the brownfield to benefit from the revitalization of the brownfield, there is a need of input for social needs from them.

There is also the idea of denying revitalization if it involves unacceptable environmental procedures. There is a recognition of collaborating with public programs that ensure community understanding of the process of transforming the brownfield into a resource. There is also a demand for the protection for culture and identity of the community. There should be a continuing protection for the health of the public as well. “Cleanup standards shall not only protect public health in the short run, but they shall enhance communities' flexibility for future changes in land use” (Byrne, 2001). The cleanup of a brownfield should be viewed as an activity towards the minimization of impact from pollution. Brownfield revitalization programs should advocate for the planning of a cleanup for the brownfield that serves purpose towards the neighborhood that is affected by it.

Previous EYCEJ Research

There are two other reports conducted by EYCEJ that would be relevant to thinking about how the Borwnfields may be transformed. Both reports are available at East Yard's website and are based on surveys of local residents primarily in Bell Gardens, Commerce, and East Los Angeles. Research conducted by Suzette Aguirre, entitled "Food Justice: Perceptions of Food Apartheid in Commerce," focuses on the correlation between "health-related disparities based on race, ethnicity, and income" and "limited access to fresh food." Within the City of Commerce there is a lack of food markets. The community of Commerce has access to one El Super, one Costco Business Center and five small super markets. Food apartheid and food dessert are some of the contributing problems the community suffers from. There was also a survey that conducted dissatisfaction of quality, quantity, and variety of produce that was available in the limited food markets. Accompanying these questions, individuals were also asked about their grocery shopping sites. This led to the understanding of food accessibility in the community.

From February to July of 2015, East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice collected a survey called, "Useful Spots not Empty Lots." This survey was collected at Bell Gardens High School, Esteban Torres High School and through an online survey. A total of 462 surveys were collected. One of the most acknowledged brownfields from the respondents was the location of Gage and Garfield. When asked "why the lot was empty," the majority said it was an "abandoned building", then the 2nd most popular response was "contaminated building." Most described the site as "dirty" with a response of 295 individuals. When asked, "How would you transform an empty lot into something useful for your community and how would this be useful for the community?" The responses from the survey indicated the most recommendation was "Community Garden." The second most popular response was "Farmer's Market." The responses were generated into a general idea that the respondents want to make the neighborhood nicer but also have accessibility to fresh produce.

Garfield and Gage Brown Field [Responses: 168]

Dirty	**124**	**Trash**	**7**
Wild Plants	**108**	**Graffiti**	**29**
Concrete	**36**	**Demolished building**	**42**
Fence	**103**	**Abandoned building**	**84**
Open Space	**7**	**Contaminated land**	**64**
Dead Plants	**9**	**Other**	**13**

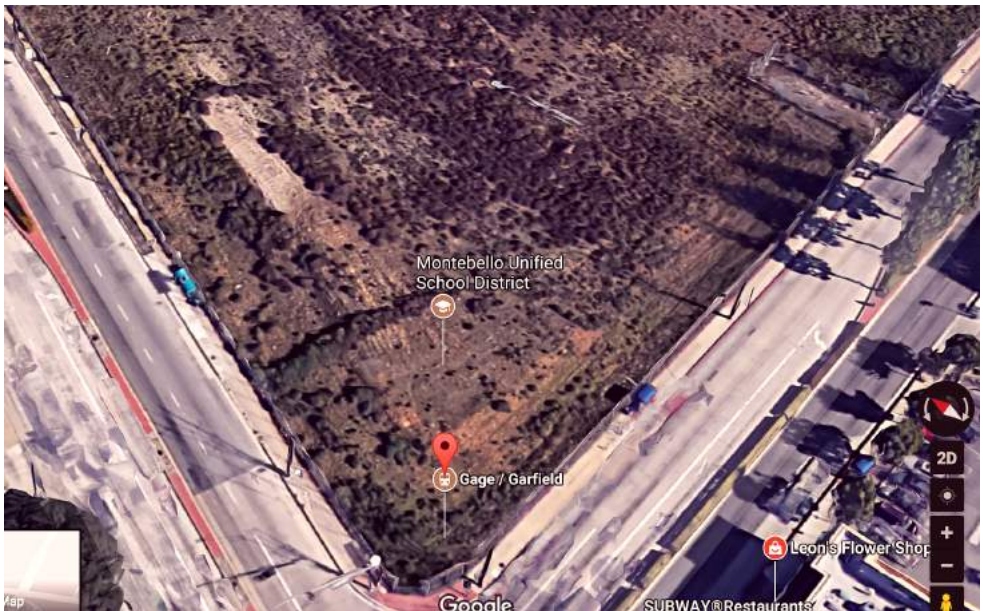
Figure 6. The data that is demonstrated in the table was gathered by analyzing the responses that correspond to the Garfield and Gage brownfield specifically.

The survey included the questions of: “Please describe an empty lot in your community, Why do you think this lot is empty, What Street is the Empty Lot located in, What kind of negative and positive impacts do empty lots have in your community, How would you transform an empty lot in your community, How would this be useful for your community?” Other ways respondents described the lot were mentions in it being an empty lot with cats, an abandoned school, unwelcoming to the sight, and useless. With these responses, it can be concluded that the individuals have a daily interactions with the site. They view this brownfield as a useless empty lot due to the image it portrays. With the use of the input of the community’s opinion for the redevelopment of the brownfield it demonstrates what the community is in need of.

The survey demonstrates that the respondents gave a higher response to the development of a community garden followed by a farmer’s market. Again this connects to the idea the site is located within an area of food apartheid. As shown in the research conducted by Suzette Aguirre, there is a lack of access towards food grocers; there is only a limited of food markets within the city of Commerce. Since there is a limited access to food grocers, there is a further investigation needed in how this can affect the health of the community.

Conclusion

There are various visions for the transformation of the Garfield and Gage brownfield which demonstrate what the community's needs are. The communities are continuously impacted by social and economic injustices that affect the quality of living. Based on EYCEJ's collected survey data on the Gage & Garfield the brownfield can help alleviate the issue of food apartheid within the surrounding community. There is a sense that the community is in need of more food accessibility. It is also indicated that there is a limited number of food grocers within the cities. In addition to limited resources, there is a lack of infrastructure that protects and promotes the public's health and wellbeing. From the gathered information that was given by East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice and Urban Health Strategies that involve the use of public transportation and safer routes, there are a significant amount of individuals that use public transportation as their daily commute in the Southeast however there is a process of planning that appeals to the needs of the community. This process involves relieving the need for more food access and the possibility of building a garden. There was also an identification of a high pollution burden within the cities of Commerce and Bell Gardens. The pollution burden is a contributing element to the health hazards these local communities are greatly affected by. In order for change to be implemented, there are factors such as: community and agency cooperation that need to occur in order to access sufficient resources for change. There is also the promotion of educating those who are not aware of the pollution burden they are affected by. Environmental justice is interpreted as a source that can lead to the implementation of change within neighborhoods.



East Yard Communities For Environmental Justice

2317 S. Atlantic Blvd.
Commerce, CA 90040
(323)263-2113
info@eycej.org

Thank You//Gracias