

# Environmental Justice in Land Use Planning: lessons for cumulative impacts assessment and participatory research



EPA Region Nine

San Francisco, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2005

# Cumulative Impacts: Types

- Present and future effects add to past effects
- Multiple smaller effects result in a larger collective effect (e.g. wetlands)
- The combination of diverse effects result in a new or worse effect (e.g. asbestos and smoking)

# Cumulative Impacts: Scale

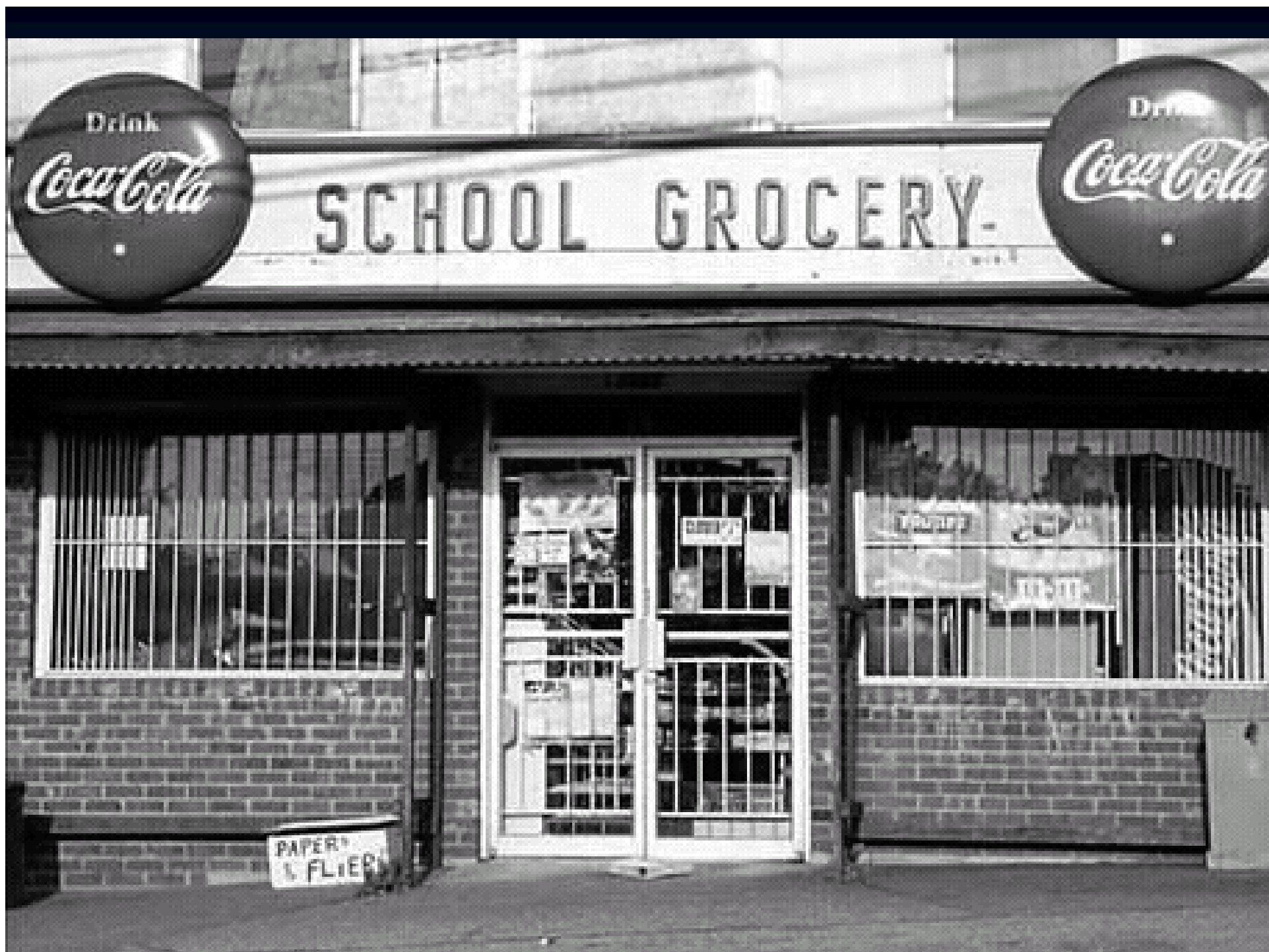
- Exposure
- Body burden
- Physiology and Pathology
- Individual Health
- Community Health
- Ecological Health

The fundamental conditions and resources for health are peace, shelter, education, food, income, a stable ecosystem, sustainable resources, social justice and equity.

1986 WHO Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion

# Seeing Place through a lens of health and social equity







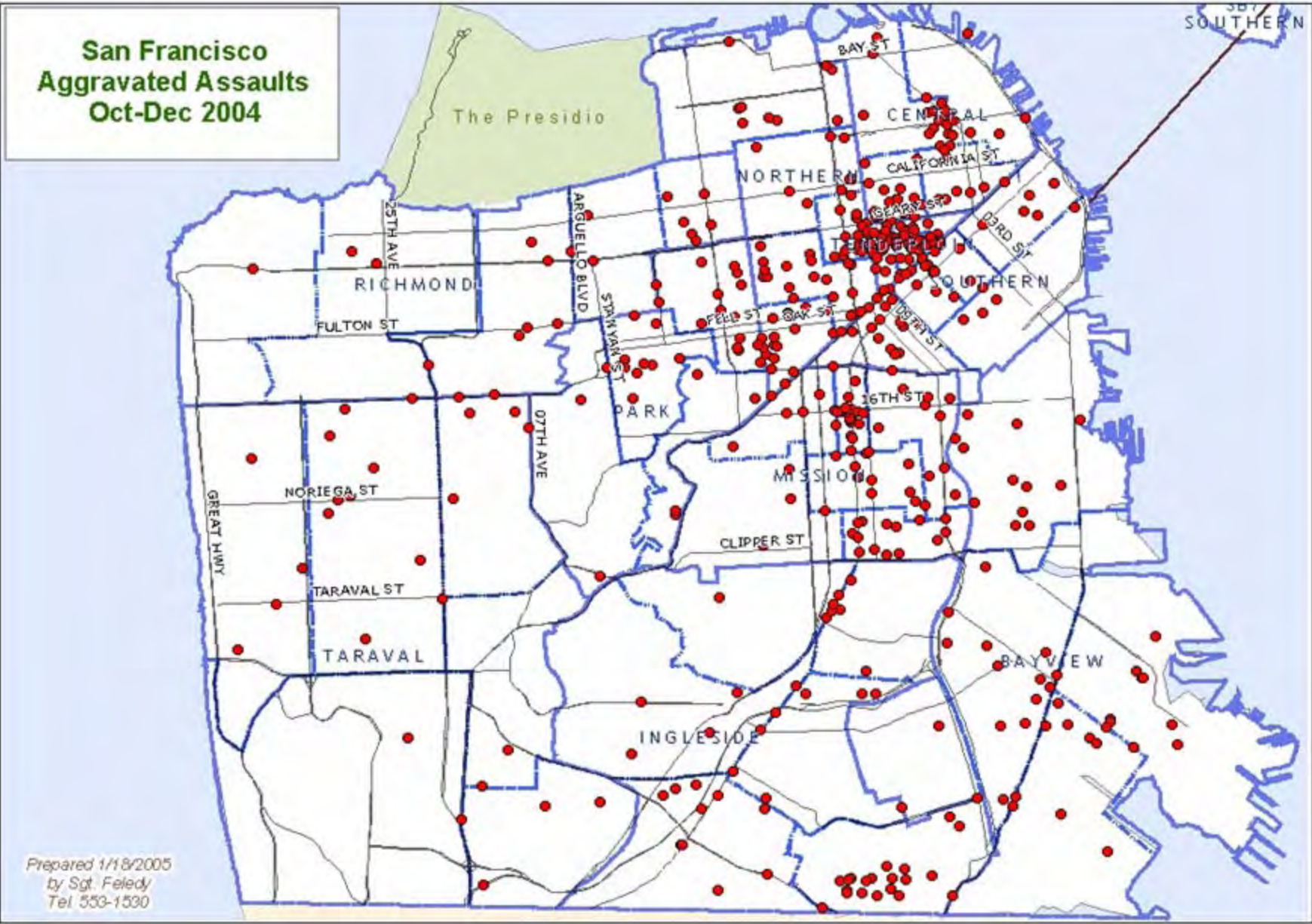




# Health Effects of Segregated Neighborhoods

- Poorer air quality
- Less nutritious food
- Isolation from jobs
- Crime and violence
- Frequent chronic disease hospitalizations
- Poorer mental health
- Barriers to education and learning
- Greater obesity

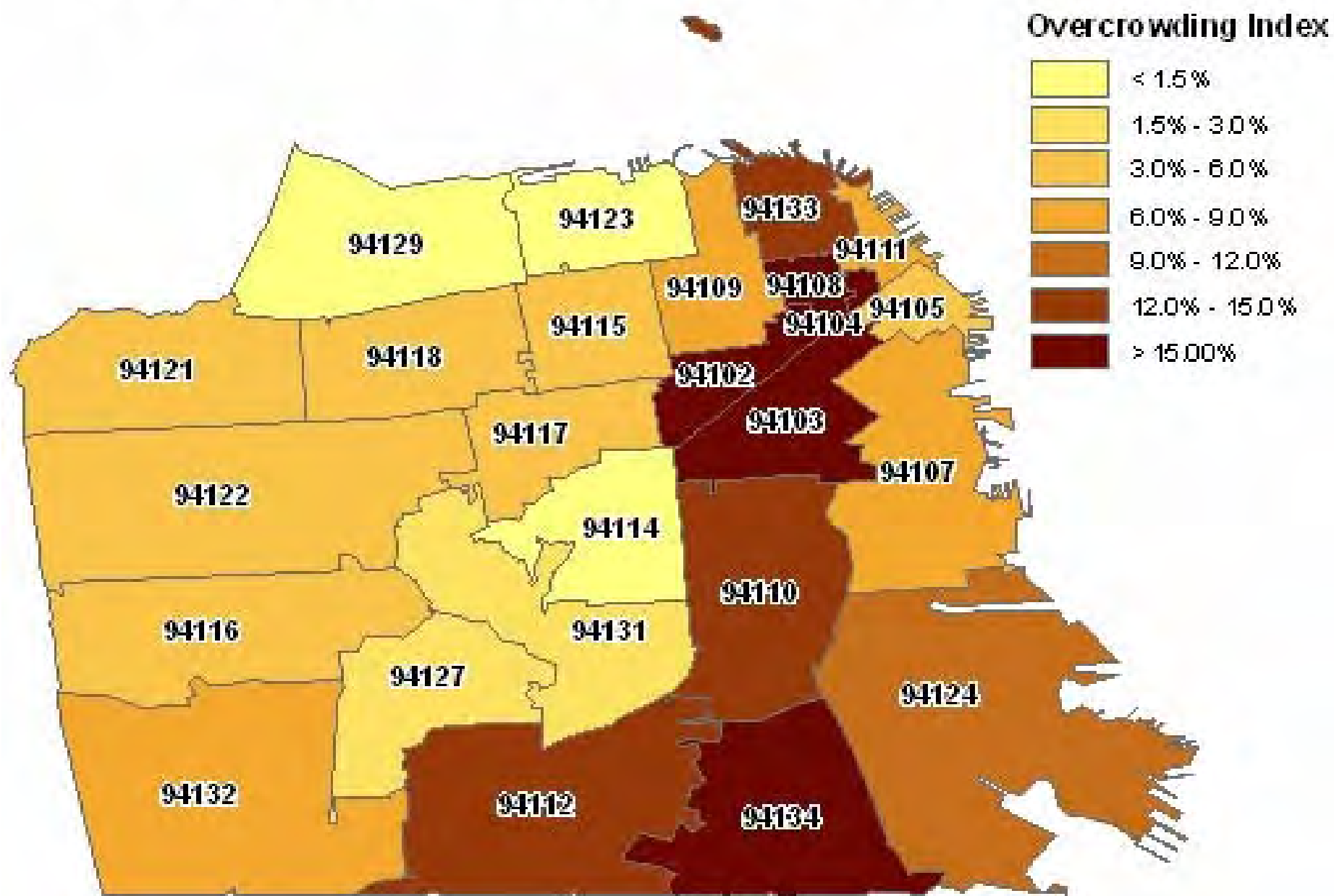
**San Francisco  
Aggravated Assaults  
Oct-Dec 2004**



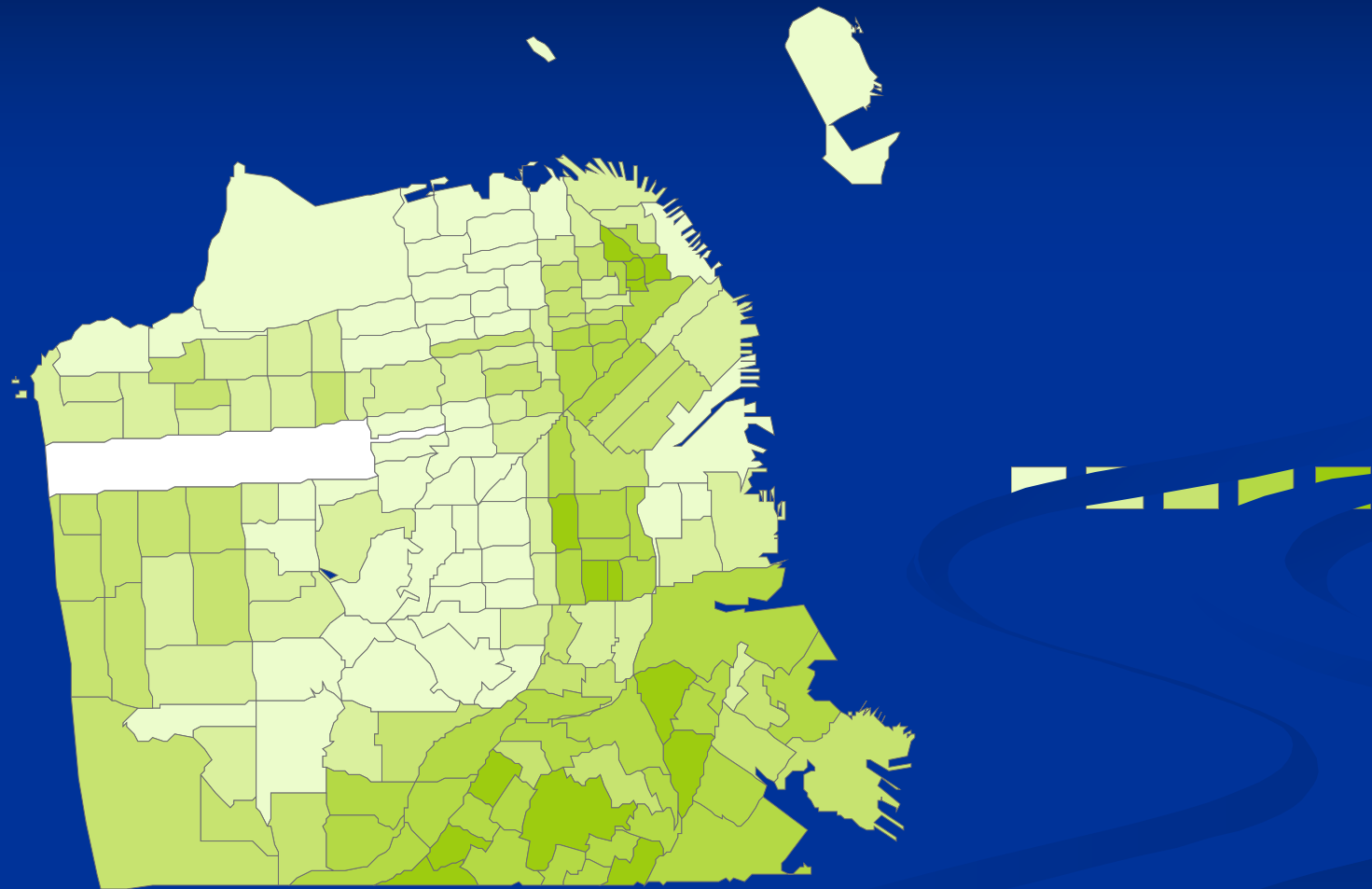
Prepared 1/18/2005  
by Sgt. Feledy  
Tel 553-1530



# Household Overcrowding in San Francisco



# Relative affordability of housing

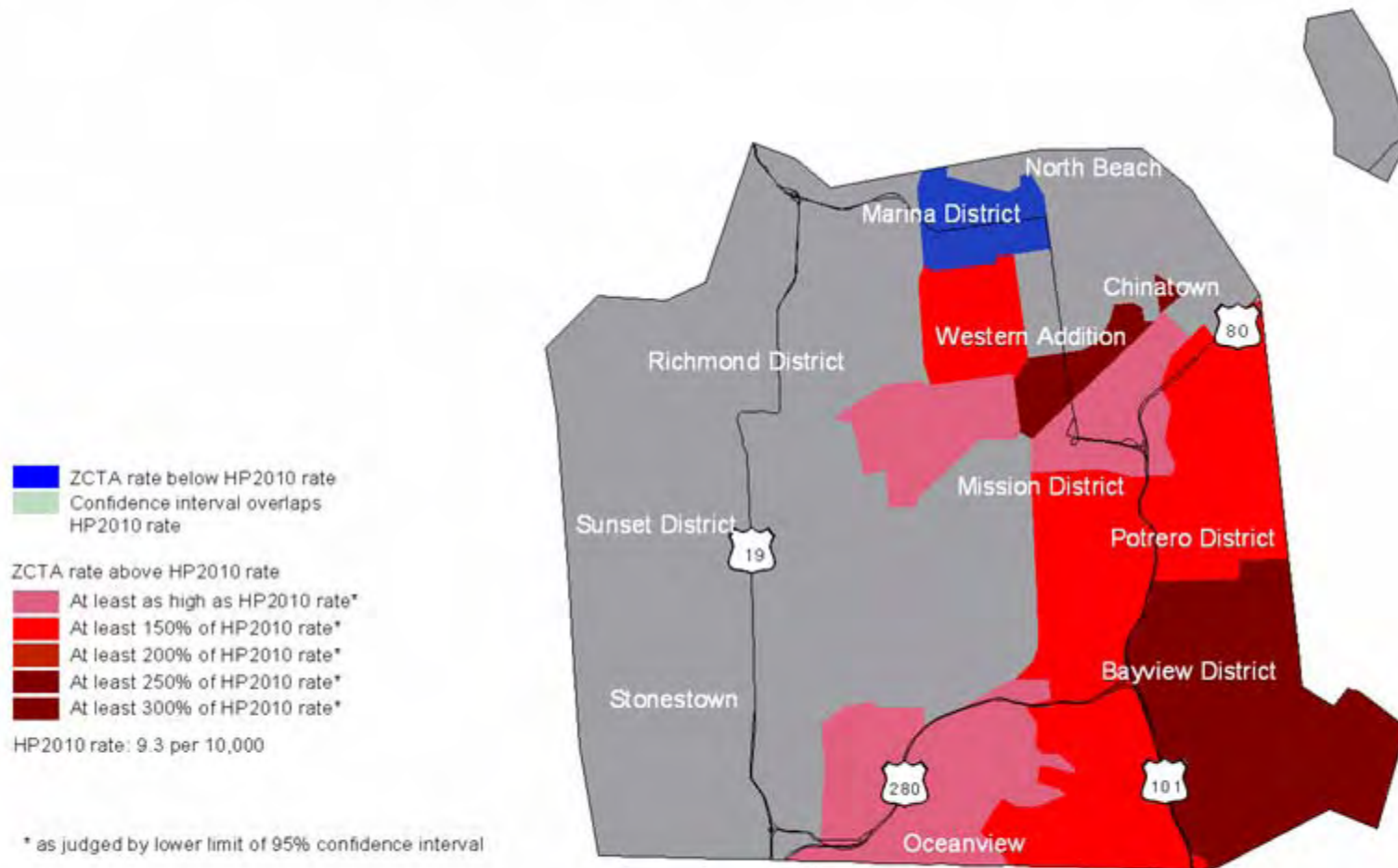




# Health consequences of the housing shortage

- Hunger and other unmet material needs
- Unsafe and substandard conditions
- Crowding
- Separation from friends and neighbors
- Regional air pollution

## San Francisco County: Annual asthma hospitalization rates for all ages by zip code tabulation area (ZCTA) for 1998-2000





101 Civic Center  
Golden Gate Br  
ONLY

Downto  
Bay Br

101 Civic Center  
Golden Gate Bridge

80 Bay Bridge  
Oakland

Seventh St  
Downtown  
NEXT RIGHT





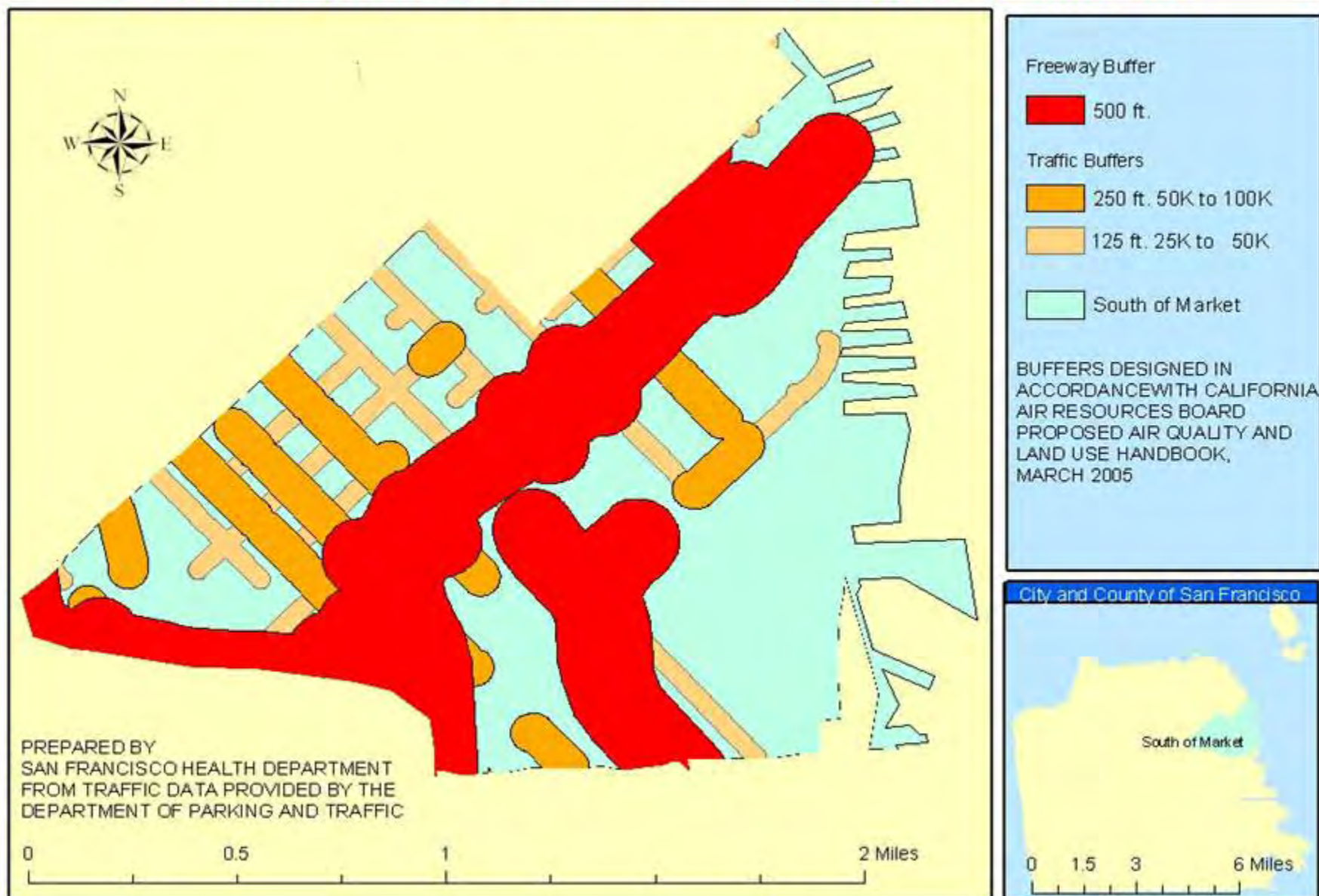




# Health consequences of automobiles

- Preventable injuries
- Higher rates of respiratory diseases rates near roadways
- Adverse effects on sleep and childhood learning due to noise
- Less walking and bicycling due to high traffic volumes and speeds

## ROADWAYS WITH POTENTIAL AIR QUALITY LAND USE CONFLICTS



# Applying research and evidence

# The Promise of Participatory / Action Research

- Transparent Information
- Public understanding of science
- Community engagement in problem solving
- Practical / policy relevant research
- Applied local knowledge and experience
- Democratic decision-making
- New social theories
- Social and Environmental Equity

# Limits of Institutionally-led PAR

- Advances institutional agendas
- Co-opts community leaders
- Problems framed narrowly
- Results not generalizable
- Ignores conflicts among methods and interests
- Reproduces technocratic culture



# Social and Political Context of Land Use Planning in San Francisco

- De-industrialization
- Growing wealth-gaps
- Extreme housing shortage
- Gentrification and Displacement
- Competition for Scarce Land
- Community land use advocacy (multiple fronts)
- Critiques of the EIR and Planning

# Collective Research Efforts

- Barriers to transparent and accountable decision-making
- Empirical research on Health and the built environment
- Qualitative research on the effects of neighborhood change
- Technical practice of EIR
- Health Impact Assessment

# Health Impact Assessment

- “...a combination of procedures or methods by which a policy, program, or project may be judged as to the effects it may have on the health of a population.”

- *WHO Regional Office for Europe*



# Approaches to Health Impact Assessment

- Integrating health analysis into environmental impact assessment
- Integrating health analysis in social impact assessment
- Conducting health impact assessment as an independent process

# Trinity Apartments Redevelopment

## Health Concerns

- Eviction of current tenants
- Loss of Community ties
- Loss of affordable housing supply

## Outcomes

- EIR acknowledged displacement
- Developer negotiating with tenants





# Rincon Hill Area Plan

## Health Concerns

- Absence of Schools and Family amenities
- Housing not affordable to workforce
- Exclusionary neighborhood

## Outcomes:

- Plans modified to better integrate low-income housing



# Automobile Level of Service (LOS)

## Health Concerns

- Barrier to transit oriented development, higher residential density, transit, bike lanes and pedestrian safety improvements

## Outcomes

- Greater collaboration between groups seeking to change LOS



# Oakland's Central Station

## Health Issues

- Displacement of low-income tenants
- Demolition of historic train station
- Location adjacent to freeway
- No affordable housing

## Outcomes

- City analysis ignores community concerns
- Ongoing struggle



# Early Lessons:

- Planning not comprehensive—
- Institutions working in isolation
- Entrenched values and practices : “LOS”; “Highest use”
- Public concerns minimized or ignored
- Little accountability to policy goals
- Real Estate Development highly politicized and polarized

*Comprehensive Planning  
accounts for all social goals*



# The Eastern Neighborhoods Community Health Impact Assessment



How Can Growth in San Francisco's  
Neighborhoods Protect and Promote  
Human Health?

# Who is ENCHIA?

- Organizations representing diverse issues housing, community services, childcare, schooling, small business, real estate development, sustainable transport, health advocacy, neighborhood advocacy;
- City Agencies
- SFDPH Staff
- Technical Advisory Committee
- Evaluator
- Center for Collaborative Policy



# The ENCHIA Process

- Vision of a Healthy City
- Identification of community health objectives and research questions
- Research on community conditions and improvement strategies
- Recommendations for development policy
- Selection of indicators of progress



# Examples of ENCHIA Products

- Locations for sensitive land uses that minimize air quality or environmental noise conflicts;
- Elements of design standards that increase physical safety, prevent violence, increase physical activity, promote walking and bicycling, and enhance commercial vitality;
- Supportive evidence for city policy, objectives for housing, transit oriented development, parking limits, and congestion management;
- Improved measures for environmental review;
- Indicators and measures to evaluate progress of land use development.

# Potential ENCHIA Impacts

- Pro-active attention to land use—environmental conflicts
- Prevention of chronic disease including asthma, obesity, and diabetes and unintentional and violent injuries
- Improvement of childhood development and learning
- Higher neighborhood quality of life
- Greater public trust in the development process



# Towards a Healthy City



















