

Pittsburg Railroad Avenue Health Impact Assessment: *Promoting affordable housing and clean air in a suburban transit village*



The Problem

A proposed BART station in Pittsburg, California represented an opportunity to redevelop the downtown of this diverse, working-class city around a 'transit village.' But initial plans failed to meet the city's acute need for affordable housing. As planned, the project would also worsen air pollution in a community whose residents already suffer from poorer health than in neighboring areas.



What We Did

In 2008, HIP partnered with TransForm, a transportation advocacy group, and Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Communities Organizing (CCISCO) to conduct a Health Impact Assessment that looked at the effect of the proposal on housing, air quality, noise, retail services, and jobs.

What We Found

Pittsburg is rapidly changing from an industrial hub to a commuter suburb, but most of the housing being built is too expensive for lower-income residents. Construction of more than 1,500 units of housing, with almost all to be sold or rented at market rates, would displace existing residents and businesses. Location of new housing near a heavily trafficked freeway would expose residents to harmful levels of air pollution.

The single greatest housing need in Pittsburg is that of very low income families.
– The Center for Community Initiatives

Impact

The city and advocates used the HIA to save affordable housing sites near the BART station that were facing opposition. In addition, the city required air quality and noise control measures and improved pedestrian and bicycling facilities. The HIA was a successful political tool, as it secured funding for housing and infrastructure improvements and improved relationships between the community and planners.

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