

HEALTHY PORT COMMUNITIES COALITION



HPCC

PORT COMMUNITY SURVEY

By Hillary Corgey, Researcher at Public Citizen

for

Air Alliance Houston

Pleasantville Environmental Coalition

Public Citizen

Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services

Texas Organizing Project

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
BACKGROUND.....	1
SURVEY RESULTS.....	3
HEALTH.....	4
EMPLOYMENT	7
POLLUTION.....	8
COMMUNITY NEEDS	10
RECOMMENDATIONS	11

ABOUT THE HEALTHY PORT COMMUNITIES COALITION

The Healthy Port Communities Coalition (HPCC) is a growing base of well-informed and active local residents who engage public and private stakeholders directly on priority issues including jobs, pollution, health, neighborhood safety, and economic opportunities. The Coalition is a growing collaboration that is currently made up of the following organizations:

- Air Alliance Houston
- Pleasantville Environmental Coalition
- Public Citizen
- Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services
- Texas Organizing Project (TOP)

The Objectives of the coalition include:

- Organize port communities to engage decision-making bodies on port expansions;
- Release studies on reducing pollution and the impacts of current and additional air emissions from new sources of pollution and work on policies to reduce the impacts of those emissions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Portside community residents are concerned about the health and economic impacts of planned expansion at the Port of Houston. For too long, the poor and minority residents of portside communities have borne the burdens of commercial activity at the port without enjoying the benefits. The residents feel shut out of the benefits of growth and the associated jobs while experiencing negative effects of pollution. Residents want pollution problems at the Port of Houston addressed, and they expect the economic benefits of port expansion to support positive changes to their communities and lives.

With the expansion of the Panama Canal, the Port of Houston will have a 20 to 35% increase in inbound container traffic, which will bring more ships and trucks to the area.¹ Although some of the Post-Panamax ships may operate on less polluting fuels, the quantity of ships is expected to increase pollution in port areas.² The larger number of twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) will require more diesel-powered trucks that will tie up Houston roads and increase pollution. The Healthy Port Communities Coalition's survey of our members identified the following health problems:

- 27% of adult respondents in the Ship Channel said they were diagnosed with asthma or another respiratory disease.
- 5.61% of adult respondents in the Ship Channel said they were diagnosed with cancer.
- 6.89% of respondents have a family member in the household other than themselves with cancer.
- 21% of respondents have a family member in the household with asthma.
- 19% of respondents have at least one child with asthma.
- 1.26% of respondents have a child with cancer.
- Many residents used Harris Health System clinics or the emergency room for basic medical care. Some residents even went to Mexico for healthcare.

Port Community Residents health vs. other Texans (prevalence)

Disease	Texas Rate	Ship Channel Rate
Adults with asthma	8.8% (2012)	
Adults with the respiratory disease COPD	3.9% (2013)	
Adults with asthma or another respiratory disease	12.7% (approximation)	27.49%
Adults with cancer	3.69% (2013)	5.61%

Sources: HPCC Survey Respondents, National Cancer Institute, American Lung Association, Texas Department of State Health Services, and *approximation* estimated by author.

¹ http://www.yourhoustonnews.com/news/favorable-trade-winds-ahead-growth-at-port-of-houston-bodes/article_b7863165-4409-51e2-a433-17e6e6b401f6.html

² <http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/120-a470/>

Additional survey results:

- 87% of surveyed residents were concerned about local pollution effects on their health.
- 51% of respondents do not have health insurance—public (Medicaid/Medicare/CHIP) or private insurance.

Portside community residents are concerned about pollution from industries and port operations along the Ship Channel:

- 64% are concerned about train and rail yard pollution.
- 83% are concerned about refinery and chemical plant pollution.
- 76% are concerned about 18-wheeler/truck pollution.

Residents need and seek job opportunities and job training:

- 41% of households have an unemployed resident.
- 79% said there is a need for job training.
- 70% said there is not sufficient work in their area.

Recommendations:

The Healthy Port Communities Coalition (HPCC) is a growing strong base of well-informed active local residents who engage public and private stakeholders directly on priority issues including jobs, pollution, health, neighborhood safety, and economic opportunities. Based on the urgent and, sometimes, neglected needs of the local community, HPCC recommends that the Port of Houston Authority (whose commission is appointed by local governments from around the port) in conjunction with local industry:

- Take a leadership role and set an example for all of its Houston Ship Channel tenants.
- Implement recommendations for pollution reduction given to it by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) listed in TCEQ letters dated February 20, 2013 and November 5, 2012.
- Establish measurable pollution reduction goals and, with the industries that benefit from the port, implement the necessary steps to achieve these goals, e.g., implement a gradual banning of all pre-2010 diesel (tractor-trailer) trucks on PHA property.
- Promote and maximize participation in the Texas Emissions Reduction Plan (TERP) program, which seeks to clean up port areas in nonattainment by providing rebates for shorthaul trucks, diesel engine equipment, and other highly polluting equipment used in ports. This will help reduce pollution from trucks and other diesel powered equipment.
- Promote the establishment of more health care clinics for the uninsured and implement a funding mechanism for these health facilities possibly tied to increased port container traffic.
- Establish more job training programs and promote local hiring policies so port residents can benefit from the port expansion.
- Take a more active role in traffic management and reduction that improves public safety and keeps polluting container and hoteling trucks out of residential communities

BACKGROUND

This is an important time at the Port of Houston. After more than a century of operation, the Port and the Port of Houston Authority (PHA) that controls it are undergoing unprecedented changes. The expansion of the Panama Canal and Houston's thriving economy are bringing more commerce to the Port of Houston than ever before. The PHA recently underwent legislative reform and is striving to become more responsive to the concerns of portside community residents. At this important time, the Healthy Port Communities Coalition (HPCC) is building a strong base of well-informed and active local residents who are engaging public and private stakeholders directly on priority issues.

The HPCC conducted a community health and economic impact survey over the last several months in order to gauge the concerns of portside community residents. Residents were asked questions about jobs, their health, and their concerns about pollution. They shared their concerns about the health impacts of the current operations at the port and its expansion. They demanded that increased business at the port lead to improvements in their health and welfare.

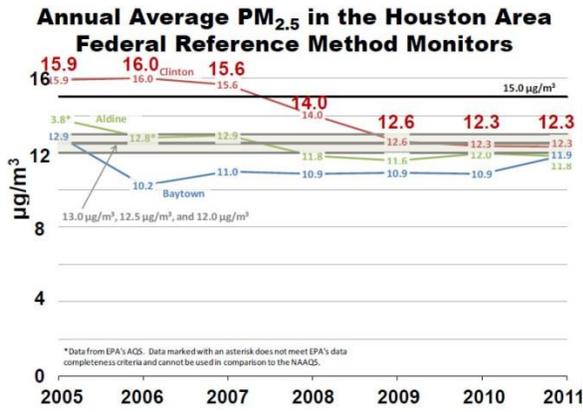
The communities we surveyed, which include Pasadena, Denver Harbor, Fifth Ward, and Manchester, are among the most impoverished areas in Houston. They have been documented to have higher levels of asthma and certain types of cancers. They suffer the negative effects of port business and industry without enjoying its benefits. They have historically been neglected and even ignored by policymakers.

The Port of Houston Authority and the many businesses along the Houston Ship Channel must do more to contribute to the communities immediately around the port. Business leaders enjoy the economic benefit of the Port's expansion. The Port of Houston is one of only ten ports in the United States that will be ready for Post-Panamax ships once the Panama Canal expansion is completed.³ There has been significant investment to dredge the channel and upgrade equipment in anticipation of increased business and the Port estimates additional infrastructure investments of \$3 billion over the next fifteen to twenty years. Meanwhile, there is little to no investment in the health and lives of communities around the Port of Houston.

Pollution from the port complex affects residents in the immediate neighborhoods as well as the entire City of Houston. The twenty-five mile-long complex of public and private terminals includes the largest petrochemical complex in the United States. The pollution produced by this complex contributes to Houston's longstanding ozone problem and to toxic hotspots located along the Ship Channel. The Houston metropolitan area may be designated nonattainment under the new federal fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) standard, and emissions from the Port of Houston contribute to the area's PM problem.⁴ If Houston is designated nonattainment in December 2014, businesses in the Houston area will have to spend hundreds of millions, if not a billion, dollars to install additional air pollution controls.

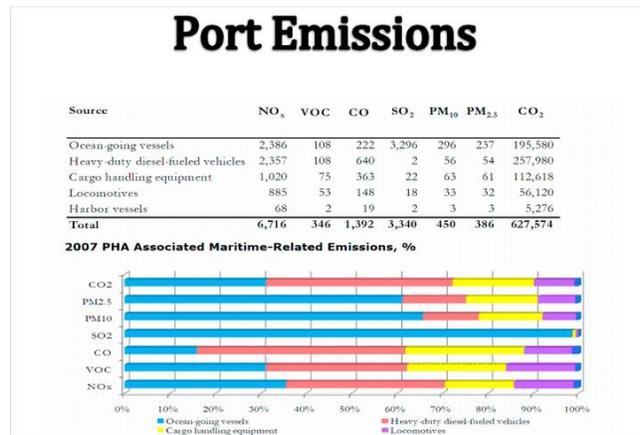
³ <http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2013/06/18/chinas-grand-canal-plan/>

⁴ <http://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/sip/criteria-pollutants/sip-pm>



Source: Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Other ports, such as the Port of Los Angeles and Long Beach, have adopted stringent pollution standards. The Port of Los Angeles implemented a flat \$70 fee for pre-2007 diesel trucks entering the port, reducing the port's diesel emissions by 50%. It also started experimental liquefied natural gas (LNG) programs for trucks and provided incentive programs for ships to switch to cleaner-burning fuel.⁵ The Port of New York and New Jersey voluntarily implemented cleanup for tenants by modernizing cargo-handling equipment, electrifying cranes, and using technology to catch polluting runoff from tenants.⁶



Source: Port of Houston Authority

⁵ <http://articles.latimes.com/2009/feb/23/business/fi-portair23>

⁶ <http://www.panynj.gov/about/port-initiatives.html>

SURVEY RESULTS

In order to document the health and needs of the Ship Channel area, the Healthy Port Communities Coalition did a face-to-face survey of 378 Ship Channel area members over several months. All health data was self-reported. Surveyed areas included Denver Harbor, Pasadena, Fifth Ward, East End, and Manchester.⁷ The families surveyed have lived in the port area for many years – the average length of residence was 12 ½ years. Over 85% of the respondents are African-American or Latino, reflecting the demographics of the neighborhoods around the Port of Houston. Despite having lived in the port area for many years, only about 64% of the respondents knew that the port is expanding. In a similar vein, only 67% of the respondents knew that the port is supported by county property tax dollars. Despite their lack of knowledge about the port's operation, residents are consistently concerned about the health effects of living near the port. They desire investment in their communities commensurate with the funds being expended to improve the port and the Ship Channel.

Our survey identified the great needs of the community around the port and the lack of connection to and support from the Port of Houston and the corporate users of the Ship Channel. This report explains the results of our questions about health, jobs, and pollution, and the awareness by community members about the likely causes of their health issues. This report also explains where community members believe that the port expansion presents opportunity for improvements in their health and welfare.

⁷ The survey was modeled in part on an earlier survey conducted in Galena Park by an HPCC member organization. Galena Park was not included in this survey for that reason.

HEALTH

Our survey found that portside community residents suffer increased levels of certain illnesses, a lack of health insurance coverage, and access to healthcare options. We recommend addressing these problems by reducing ambient pollution that contributes to illness and expanding access to healthcare by building additional health clinics.

The correlation between Houston’s petrochemical complex and health impacts in East Houston is well documented. Previous studies have identified more air toxics linked to cancer and asthma in East Houston than anywhere else in the metropolitan area. Several East Houston census tracts have extremely high quantities of definite risk pollutants like benzene and diesel particulate matter.⁸ Other studies demonstrate that children living within two miles of the Houston Ship Channel are 56% more likely to contract childhood leukemia than those living elsewhere in Houston.⁹ Refinery pollution in the Houston Ship Channel contributes to higher than average asthma rates.¹⁰

The survey also indicates that Ship Channel residents have significantly higher prevalence of respiratory disease. Out of 378 residents in the survey, 27.49 percent said that they had asthma or another form of respiratory disease. In comparison, 8.8 percent of adult Texans have asthma and 3.9 have developed, COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease), according to 2012 and 2013 American Lung Association statistics.^{11 12} The HPCC survey of rate of 27.49 percent of the broad category “asthma and other respiratory diseases” is not directly analogous to the ALA’s statewide categories of COPD and asthma or even the statewide *approximation* of 12.7% derived by their combination. Still, the breadth of the gap between the HPCC survey and statewide figures indicates that Ship Channel residents suffer with lung ailments far more than average.

Port Community Residents health vs. other Texans (prevalence)

Disease	Texas Rate	Ship Channel Rate
Adults with asthma	8.8% (2012)	
Adults with the respiratory disease COPD	3.9% (2013)	
Adults with asthma or another respiratory disease	12.7% (<i>approximation</i>) ¹³	27.49%
Adults with cancer	3.69% (2013)	5.61%

Sources: HPCC Survey Respondents, National Cancer Institute, American Lung Association, and the Texas State Health Services Department, 12.7% *approximation* estimated by author (a more accurate equivalent rate could be higher or lower).

⁸ <http://www.epa.gov/ttnchie1/conference/ei16/session6/bethel.pdf> 7 and 10

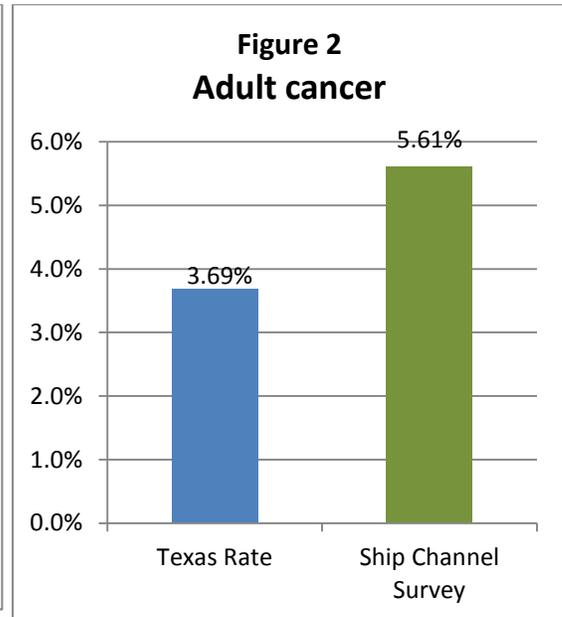
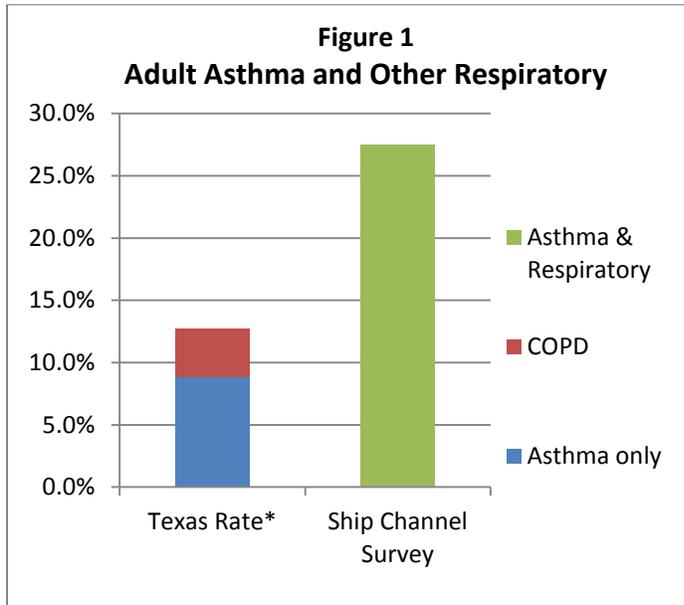
⁹ <http://www.utexas.edu/law/journals/tr/sources/issue%2088.3/Hackney/fn151.walker.pdf> 8

¹⁰ <http://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/article/Houston-asthma-rates-show-rural-areas-suffering-2081457.php>

¹¹ American Lung Association “Trends in Asthma Morbidity and Mortality” (2012)

¹² American Lung Association “Trends in COPD (Chronic Bronchitis and Emphysema) Morbidity and Mortality” (2013).

¹³ Texas Rate *approximation* was estimated (truly equivalent rate could be higher or lower)



***The actual Texas Rate for “Asthma and other respiratory diseases” may be higher or lower than the combination of the Texas rates for COPD and Asthma only.**

Additionally respondents indicated the following about their family/household health:

- 6.87% of respondents have a family member in the household other than themselves with cancer.
- 21% of respondents have a family member in the household with asthma.
- 19% of respondents have at least one child with asthma.
- 1.26% of respondents have at least a child with cancer.

Health clinics in impoverished areas of the Houston Ship Channel are few and far between. The only publicly-available health clinic for all ages in the area is located in Pasadena: the Strawberry Health Center of the Harris Health System.¹⁴ Although the Southside Health Clinic is located in Galena Park, it only services children and adolescents for acute problems and preventive care.¹⁵ There are some private clinics available to residents of the Houston Ship Channel, although their locations closer to downtown make them inaccessible to those with limited transportation options. These clinics accept insurance like Medicaid, Medicare, and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), but are in general unaffordable for residents without any form of health insurance.

While many of the residents surveyed have had a physical in the last two years, many people told stories about having to wait months to get an appointment at a clinic. Over half of the respondents have no health insurance, and given that they are many low income respondents, many people in these communities will not be eligible for subsidized insurance through the Affordable Care Act and may make too much to qualify for Medicaid.

¹⁴ <https://www.harrishealth.org/en/services/locations/pages/strawberry-health-center.aspx>

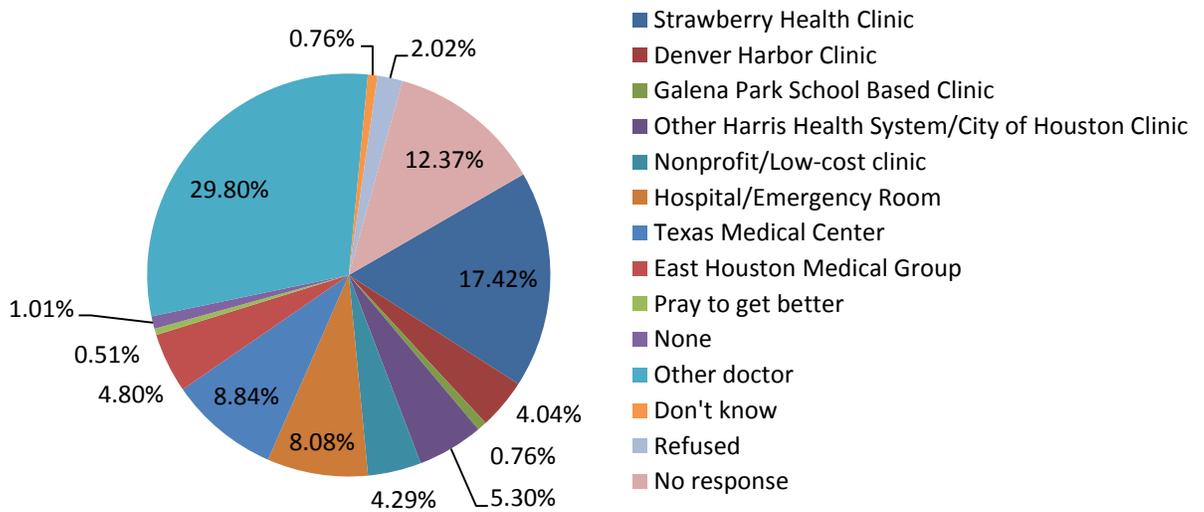
¹⁵ <https://www.harrishealth.org/en/services/locations/pages/southside-health-clinic.aspx>

Figure 3
Healthcare coverage?



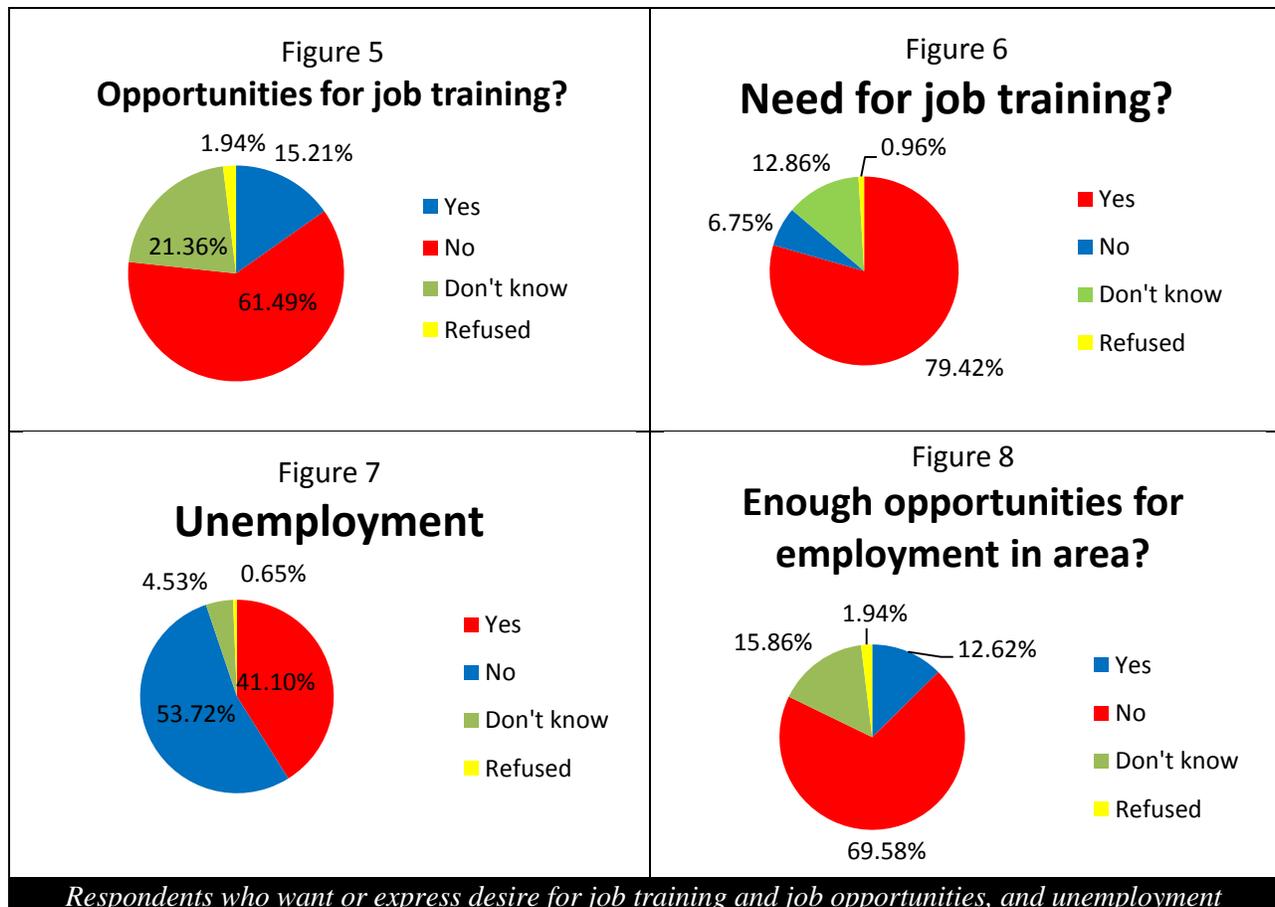
Figure 4 (below) details where residents of the Ship Channel go when they need medical attention or advice. The most popular sources of healthcare were the Harris Health System and City of Houston health clinics. Over 27% of respondents use these services to obtain medical coverage, with the majority going to the Strawberry Health Clinic. Another 4% go to clinics that are nonprofit or low-cost. One respondent traveled to a low-cost clinic in East Aldine, which would be a very long drive for most of the respondents in the survey. 8% of respondents go to the emergency room or a hospital when they need medical care. Other sources of healthcare included Harris Health System, indigent care facilities such as Ben Taub and LBJ Hospitals, and other local area hospitals.

Figure 4
Sources of Healthcare
Where respondents go for their health needs



EMPLOYMENT

The high level of unemployment in ship channel communities is a likely explanation of the popularity of free health clinics. The average family income in the seven ZIP codes of the Houston Ship Channel within Houston city limits is \$31,115, and the average poverty rate is 30.1%.¹⁶ This compares to an average family income in Houston of \$42,877 and a poverty rate of 23.8%. The April 2013 unemployment rate in Houston was 6.1% according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics – in contrast 41% of the households in our survey have an unemployed resident. Historically, jobs in the Houston Ship Channel were available to anyone with a high school diploma and provided a way into the middle class. Modern Ship Channel jobs require advanced degrees and experience that many who live nearby do not have.¹⁷ More than three fourths of survey respondents expressed a need for more job training in their area. We recommend more job training and education programs to expand employment opportunities to more Ship Channel area workers.



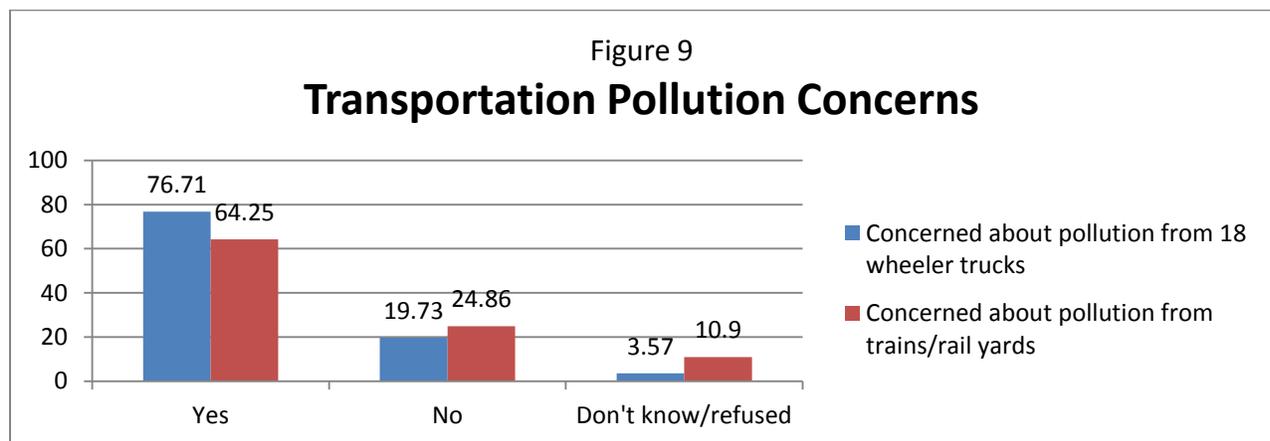
¹⁶ Data are compiled from the Census Bureau American Community Survey.

¹⁷ <http://orwfd.com/2011/11/06/baytown-residents-poverty-level-and-unemployment-up/>

POLLUTION

Ship Channel residents are concerned about pollution where they live and its effect on their health. Pollution comes from both transportation and industrial sources. Transportation-related sources include rail and trucks. There are seven major rail yards in East Houston that can service several thousand rail cars at a time.¹⁸ Rail primarily runs on diesel, which produces exhaust that can exacerbate asthma. Studies have investigated the link between diesel exhaust and several types of cancers including laryngeal cancer, esophageal cancer, stomach cancer, bladder cancer, and blood system cancers like leukemia and lymphomas.^{19, 20} According to some studies, rail pollution costs \$23.2 billion in health impacts and causes 57,000 exacerbations in asthma annually nationwide.²¹ Truck traffic is also a problem in the Ship Channel area, as the large number of trucks entering and leaving the port ties up roads. Idling on residential roads leads to more traffic, more diesel pollution around homes, and more damage to area roads.

Houston is ranked sixth among cities for premature deaths from diesel exhaust. Diesel exhaust causes hundreds of premature deaths from cancer or heart attacks per year in Houston.²² In Harris County alone, the cost of potentially preventable hospitalizations for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma, and congestive heart failure—three conditions that can be exacerbated by pollution and diesel exposure²³—is over \$3 billion dollars.²⁴ Diesel pollutant also causes chromosome mutations, which is linked to cancer. Diesel particles under 2.5 microns enter the lungs and embed themselves, which may cause lung cancer.²⁵



The survey identified concerns with two specific sources of industrial pollution: pipe salvage yards and refineries/chemical plants. Issues with pipe yards—especially pipe salvage yards—are underreported in the Ship Channel. Even new pipes can produce significant air emissions from cutting or coating the pipe. Pipe salvage yards are a significant problem as well, as cleaning and

¹⁸ <http://www.pta.com/index.php/about-us/pta-yards.html>

¹⁹ http://www.edf.org/sites/default/files/5736_SmokestacksOnRails.pdf pg vi

²⁰ <http://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancercauses/othercarcinogens/pollution/diesel-exhaust>

²¹ http://www.edf.org/sites/default/files/5736_SmokestacksOnRails.pdf 9

²² http://www.catf.us/resources/publications/files/Diesel_Health_in_America.pdf pg 7

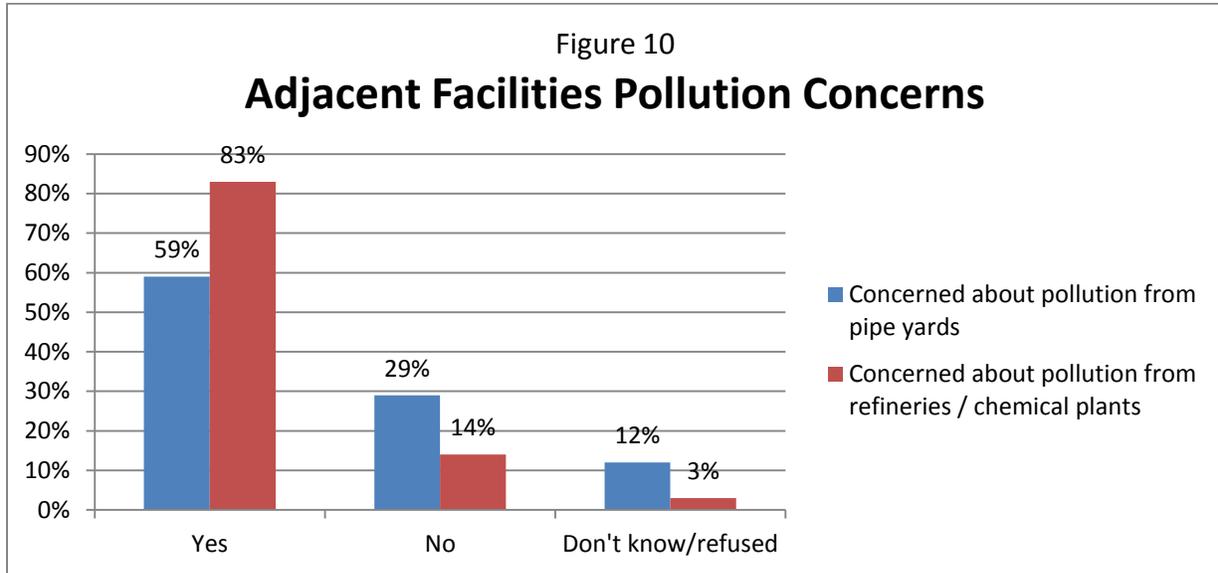
²³ <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18236234>

²⁴ Harris County Potentially Preventable Hospitalizations, 2006-2011. Department of State Health Services.

²⁵ <http://www.nrdc.org/air/transportation/ebd/chap2.asp>

storage can produce toxic air emissions and stormwater pollution.²⁶ Coating pipes can release heavy metals such as lead or mercury into the air, and some salvaged pipe used in oil drilling is even radioactive.²⁷ Investigations in Brazoria County have found several pipe yards that were out of compliance with the Clean Air Act and dumping statutes.²⁸

Emissions from refineries release a toxic brew of chemicals, compounds, and greenhouse gases that harm human health and the environment. Such substances include particulate matter (which affects cardiovascular and respiratory systems); benzene (affects the neurological, circulatory, and respiratory systems); polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (depresses the immune system and linked to cancer, damages the respiratory tract); and greenhouse gases like methane and carbon dioxide (increase global temperatures and ground-level ozone and harm the ecosystem and sensitive populations).²⁹



²⁶ Metal recyclers were considered a problem by some HPCC survey respondents, but a question addressing metal recyclers was not a part of the survey.

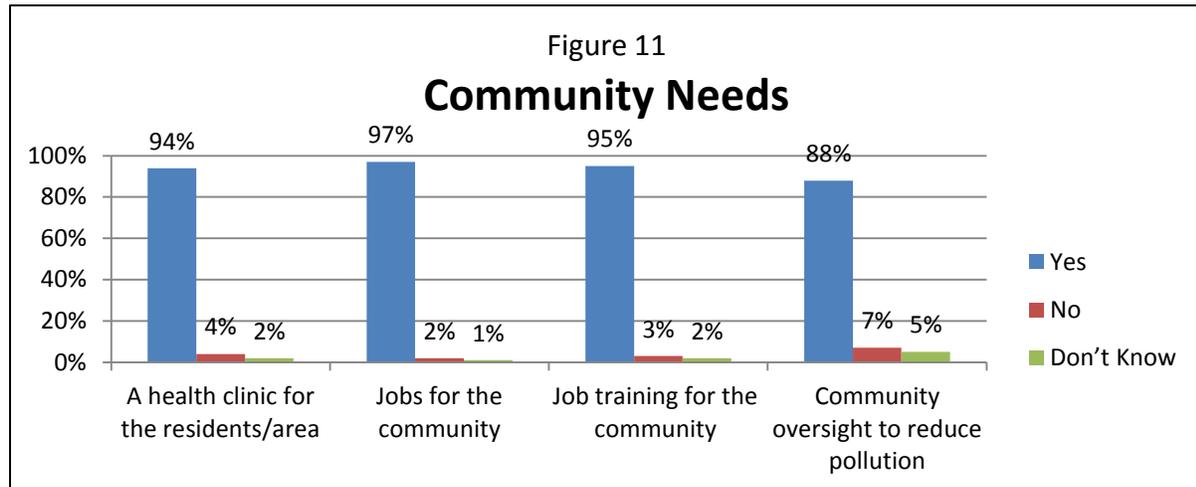
²⁷ <http://www.rrc.state.tx.us/environmental/publications/norm.php>

²⁸ http://www.h-gac.com/community/waste/enforcement/leer/documents/leer_11-13-08_pipe_salvage_yard_investigations.pdf

²⁹ <http://www.epa.gov/air/tribal/pdfs/presentationpetroleumrefineries14Dec11.pdf>

COMMUNITY NEEDS

When asked, residents were hopeful that the expansion of the Port complex and the growing traffic in the Houston Ship Channel would bring benefits to the residents who live around the port. Almost 80% of the residents said that the port expansion should be coordinated to provide direct benefit to them and their communities. The survey also found overwhelming support for specific community improvements.³⁰



Respondents indicated desire for the above from the port expansion and associated taxes.

³⁰ These questions were not asked of Manchester residents; there were 318 total respondents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Healthy Port Communities Coalition has several recommendations for the Port of Houston:

The Port of Houston Authority (PHA) should serve as a leader and set an example for all of its Houston Ship Channel tenants.

We have often heard the PHA explain that it is a small part of the Houston Ship Channel, and that it only controls 10 to 15% of commerce at the Port of Houston. PHA often makes this argument when discussing pollution and traffic. The fact is the PHA is the largest single tenant of the Houston Ship Channel. It is also landlord to many other Ship Channel residents. The PHA can and should take a leadership role at the Port of Houston. If the PHA insists on reforms such as cleaner, newer diesel trucks, others will follow. This strategy has been effectively employed by other Port Authorities across the nation.

The Port of Houston Authority should implement recommendations for pollution reduction given to it by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) is regularly asked by the PHA and the Army Corps of Engineers for a “Conformity Determination Concurrence,” in which the TCEQ certifies that projects at the Port will not contribute to air quality violations in the Houston region. When the TCEQ issues such a concurrent, it makes a series of recommendations about operations at the Port of Houston. These recommendations have been delivered recently in letters dated February 20, 2013 and November 5, 2012.

We believe that it is common sense for the Port of Houston Authority to adopt recommendations made to it by the TCEQ. We join the TCEQ in making the following recommendations for pollution reduction at the Port of Houston:

- Encourage construction contractors to apply for Texas Emission Reduction Plan grants;
- Establish bidding conditions that give preference to clean contractors;
- Direct construction contractors to exercise air quality best management practices;
- Direct contracts that will use tugboats during construction to use clean fuels;
- Direct operators of the assist tugboats used in maneuvering dredge vessels to use clean fuels;
- Select assist tugs based on lowest nitrogen oxides (NOx) emissions instead of lowest price; and/or
- Purchase and permanently retire surplus NOx offsets prior to commencement of operations.³¹

³¹ Letter from David Brymer, Director of Air Quality Division, TCEQ, to Ms. Dana Blume, Environmental Manager, Port of Houston Authority, “Re: Department of the Army Permit Application SWG-2011-on83; General Conformity Concurrence” November 5, 2012.

The PHA and local industry should establish measurable pollution reduction goals and implement steps to improve air quality and overall environmental quality.

The Port of Houston is one of the most polluted areas in the United States. Pollution must be reduced to secure the health of port residents and the well-being of all Houstonians. All industry facilities on or adjacent to port property should be required to:

- Have fence-line monitors to ensure that they are not exceeding federal air quality standards for air toxics and particulate matter;
- Have electric cranes, other electric equipment, and hookups so that ships run on electricity instead of diesel while docked to reduce diesel emissions;
- Within the next 5 years, the port should implement the gradual banning of all pre-2010 diesel trucks and allow only newer cleaner trucks on PHA property;
- Ships should be required to use the lowest speeds possible in order to reduce pollution from engines;
- Port tenants that are severe violators of air quality standards should be compelled to reduce pollution.

The PHA should promote and help arrange the financing to establish more health care clinics for the port community.

A large portion of respondents to the HPCC survey relied on Harris Health System or City of Houston health clinics for their health needs, with the majority going to the Harris County-run Strawberry Health Clinic. Patients who go to the county's twenty-two primary care centers must sometimes wait months for essential care.³² The Strawberry Health Clinic is often the only clinic available to indigent patients, who may or may not have transportation to seek healthcare elsewhere. The HPCC recommends that the port and the industries around the port provide funding for at least one additional clinic in the area, possibly via a nominal fee on container traffic in addition to the safety fee already in place.

The PHA should establish more job training programs and promote local hiring policies.

The port generates billions in economic impacts, with little to none of that money going back to the community. The port should be a good neighbor to the community and help the local residents that have been on the receiving end of pollution. A series of steps should be taken to ensure that portside residents enjoy the economic benefits of the port expansion. We recommend:

- More job training programs for local residents including pre-apprenticeship programs.
- A job bank made available to residents free of charge and used by all local employers.
- Hiring policies that prioritize local residents over the open market.
- A point system for hiring that gives preference to local residents and veterans.

The Port should take a more active role in traffic management and reduction.

The port area can be one of the most congested parts of Houston, especially when 18 wheelers turn over on major thoroughfares like I-610 and SH-225. There are also portions of the port area where local traffic is regularly impeded by trains and trucks.

- The port should work with the city and county governments to widen lanes, build bridges over congested rail tracks in residential neighborhoods, and work with the City of Houston to expand bus access to residents.

³² <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2012/06/21/153331/in-houston-high-rates-of-uninsured.html#.UkNsGavETIY>

- The port should consider adding dedicated truck routes to get excessive truck traffic off portside community roads.
- The port should work with the City of Houston to expand idling restrictions and prevent truck hoteling in neighborhoods.

The Port should promote participation in the Texas Emissions Reduction Plan (TERP) program.

Diesel emissions are extremely unhealthy and linked to cancer, asthma, and even autism spectrum disorders. Nationwide, diesel emissions increase cancer risk and are linked to 350 deaths per million people. This is hundreds of times greater than the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) acceptable rate of risk.³³ The port should work with local industry to implement the Texas Emissions Reduction Plan (TERP) program to reduce the number of dirty diesel engines on and off road. TERP provides rebates for replacement of older diesel vehicles, forklifts, yard tugs, and conveyors, which would improve air quality in the area. This is especially important considering the number of TEUs on each Post-Panamax ship, which will be as much as 12,600 containers. The increased number of trucks may push the Houston area further into nonattainment, making the use of the TERP program more important.

The Port should address chemical safety issues that affect port residents.

In an effort to avoid the tragedies of the disaster in West, Texas, the port residents seek assurance that accidents from chemical facilities and terrorist attacks are addressed. The port communities are on the front lines of many chemical facilities that may have a systems failure or be the target of terrorists, which can result in thousands of lives at risk. We look to the port to actively participate in the federal effort to address chemical safety and support the Chemical Safety and Facility Act.

³³ http://www.catf.us/resources/publications/files/Diesel_Health_in_America.pdf

HEALTHY PORT COMMUNITIES COALITION

**Released by Air Alliance Houston
2409 Commerce Street, Ste A
Houston, TX 77003**

For media inquiries contact Hillary Corgey
c/o Public Citizen
1303 San Antonio Street
Austin, TX 78701
512-477-1155