

May 20, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Mia Bolton, Mia@gomixte.com, 301-395-4145

Study Analyzing Feasibility of Green Industrial Auto Body Park in National City Presented to City Council, Staff Directed to Develop Next Step

Environmental Health Coalition says “small business incubator” a creative solution for healthy neighborhoods

NATIONAL CITY, May 20, 2015—Yesterday evening the City Council of National City, Environmental Health Coalition (EHC), U.S Environmental Protection Agency and development consultants Estolano LeSar Perez Advisors presented a study analyzing the feasibility for a Green Industrial Auto Park in National City. The collaborative “small business incubator” showcases an innovative solution to Old Town National City’s incompatible mix of industrial uses surrounding homes and schools. After the presentation, Council directed City staff to return with recommendations for funding and next steps. The community celebrates National City Council for taking another step toward the vision of healthy neighborhoods.

The yearlong study of the Green Industrial Auto Park demonstrates how National City could develop an incubator for local auto body shops, gradually moving them from close proximity to homes and schools while remaining in National City. The study focused on the possibilities for transforming a 1.7-acre brownfield property, proving the site could accommodate six to seven auto businesses while incorporating sustainable features such as reduced water and energy use, recycled waste products and reduced air pollution. The study also proposes options for funding, rent to own structure, and private, public financing structure to consider after tonight’s meeting.

“Auto body shops are important to the local economy, but right now they’re too close to our homes and schools,” says EHC Policy Advocate Carolina Martinez. “This study shows we can group auto shops together in an environmentally conscious park to reduce harmful health impacts on residents. It shows National City can lead with bold solutions for both community health and local economic growth. It’s a creative win-win for everyone.”

Old Town National City has struggled with pollution resulting from incompatible land uses and the neighboring mixture of industrial and residential. Children’s emergency room visits for asthma have become disproportionately high in the community, nearly doubling the county average in 2012. Industrial facilities in the area release approximately 32,000 pounds of toxic air contaminants per year -- auto body shops contributing at least 6,000 pounds.

For the past year, EHC, a local organization fighting toxic pollution, collected feedback from community members and businesses to develop the strategy while upholding the community’s needs for healthy neighborhoods. The resourceful solutions presented in the study reflect the vision identified in Old Town National City’s Westside Specific Plan, which the community worked with the City to develop and adopt in 2010.

“It was an honor to work with Old Town National City residents who are committed to making their community a healthier place to live and are all continuously guiding and expanding the solution toolbox so we have a National City that works for all,” EHC wrote in the study acknowledgements.

For more information on Environmental Health Coalition and its efforts to reduce toxic pollution in the San Diego/Tijuana region, visit www.environmentalhealth.org.

###

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH COALITION: Founded in 1980, Environmental Health Coalition (EHC) builds grassroots campaigns to confront the unjust consequences of toxic pollution, discriminatory land use and unsustainable energy policies. Visit us online at <http://www.environmentalhealth.org>.