

# Unincorporated: Waste and Environmental Injustice in South Apopka

## Environmental Justice:

“The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.”<sup>1</sup>



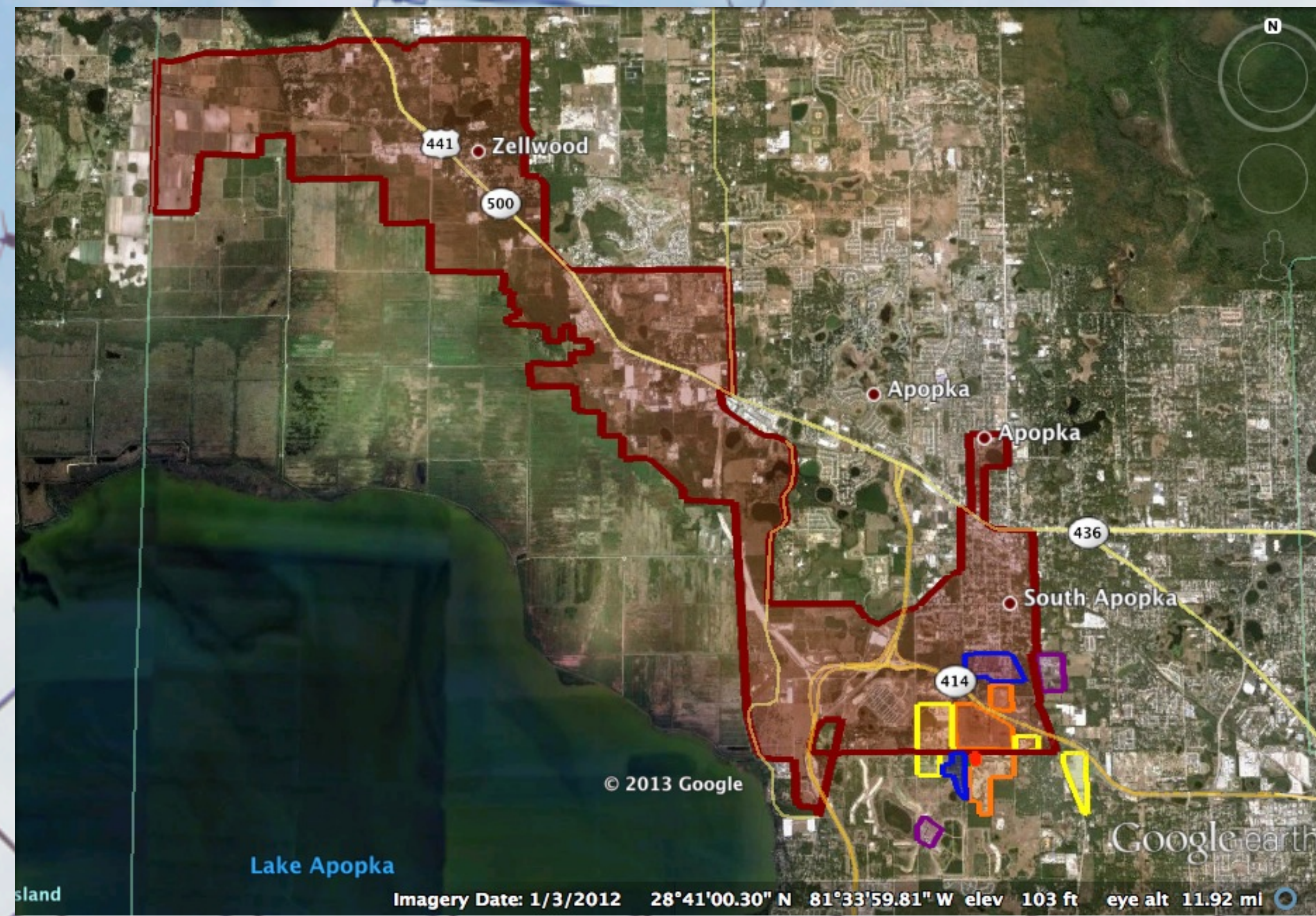
Interviews with the local community revealed a variety of health problems, such as low birth weight, kidney failure, tumors, and learning disabilities. The McQueen Road and Lake Jewel neighborhoods are located outside city limits and right across from landfills.



As part of the deal to build Vista Landfill, Waste Management agreed to build a playground, install street lights on McQueen Road, and pay for county water hookups.<sup>6</sup> They have neglected to take care of the park as promised.



“Stericylce came in like a thief in the night” –Leroy Bell  
Incinerators discharge many toxic emissions including two major neurotoxins, dioxin and mercury, which are even more hazardous to children.<sup>5</sup> The facility, built right next to the playground, was approved in the 1980s, well after many local homes were established.<sup>6</sup> Stericylce is also outside city limits, the boundary being between the incinerator and Vista Landfill.<sup>7</sup>



## Enterprise Zone:

“A specific geographic area targeted for economic revitalizing. Enterprise Zones encourage economic growth and investment in distressed areas by offering tax advantages and incentives to businesses locating within the zone boundaries.”<sup>4</sup>



## Local Story:

A disproportionately large number of waste facilities surround the neighborhoods of South Apopka, described as “a residential island surrounded by a sea of industrialism.”<sup>6</sup> Waste Management is trying to buy out the neighborhood on McQueen Rd. Several of the residents want to make a deal and move out, but most doubt that Waste Management will offer a fair price.

## Suggestions for Waste Management:

- Make sure only legal waste is dumped in the Class III landfill.
- Offer fair market value for properties on McQueen Road.

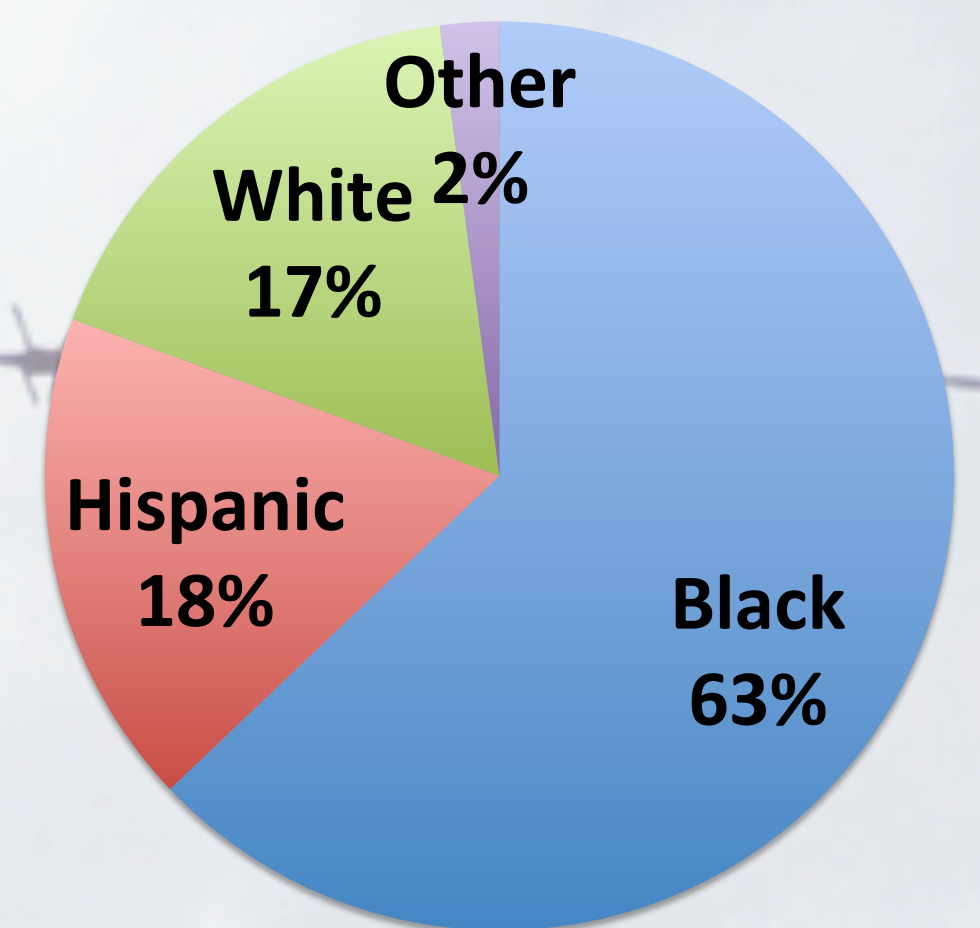
## Suggestions for Stericylce:

- End the burning of mercury, PVC, and other chlorine based waste that produces dioxin.
- Only incinerate waste that is required by law.
- Offer economic incentives to hospitals to reduce and separate waste sent to the incinerator.

## Resources:

1. Environmental Justice <http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/>
2. South Apopka <http://www.city-data.com/city/South-Apopka-Florida.html>
3. Planning and Zoning maps <http://www.apopka.net/departments/community-development/planning-a-zoning/maps>
4. Metro Orlando Economic Development Commission. "Enterprise Zones." (2012)
5. Health Care Without Harm. "Stericycle: Living up to it's Mission?." *Red Bag Solutions*
6. Colarossi, A. (2002, August 4). Waste Next Door Blights Residents' Lives. *Orlando Sentinel*
7. Apopka Comprehensive Plan 2030 <http://www.apopka.net/businesses/compplan>
8. Interviews with the local community

## Demographics of South Apopka<sup>2</sup>



## Key:

- South Apopka Enterprise Zone<sup>3</sup>
- Stericycle Medical Waste Incinerator
- Landfills
- Plant Nurseries
- Playground
- McQueen Rd/Lake Jewel Neighborhoods
- Wastewater Treatment Plants



**Keene Road Landfill**, divided by a toll road, closed in November, 2010. It is currently classified as industrial, although is zoned to become agricultural by 2030.<sup>7</sup> Originally, Waste Management said that this landfill would be turned into a park, complete with softball and soccer fields, picnic areas, and hiking trails.<sup>6</sup>



**Vista Landfill** is officially a Class III landfill, which mainly stores construction waste and is not allowed to accept putrescible household waste. Officials have blamed odor complaints on the county's sewage plant.<sup>6</sup> The side facing Keene Road is classified as office space. The area along McQueen Road and surrounded by barbed wire fencing is labeled as vacant. This landfill is also zoned to become agricultural by 2030.<sup>7</sup>