

Chapter 2: Community Outreach, Community Steering Committee and Public Process

Introduction

Community engagement and a public process were integral parts of the Community Emissions Reduction Plan (CERP) development effort. Key features of the outreach efforts include establishing a Community Steering Committee (CSC), holding monthly meetings, South Coast AQMD and CARB presentations, providing materials via email and a webpage, live-streaming all CSC meetings, and establishing a Technical Advisory Group (TAG). In addition, numerous interactions between CSC members and South Coast AQMD staff occurred in one-on-one discussions or small group teleconference meetings, allowing for in-depth discussions on joint development and creation of the CERP.

Chapter 2 Highlights

- The Community Steering Committee (CSC) and Technical Advisory Group worked with staff to develop the CERP
- Monthly meetings were held in the community to engage the CSC and public
- The Community Liaison served as the point of contact
- Additional one-on-one, small group, and community meetings also played an important part in community engagement
- A Community Webpage was created as an information portal

Community Liaisons



Figure 2-1. South Coast AQMD community liaison Gina Triviso discusses CSC membership with community members Victor Ferrer and Liz Ruiz at the kick-off meeting in Huntington Park on January 9, 2020.

A Community Liaison from the South Coast AQMD was designated for the Southeast Los Angeles (SELA) community. The Community Liaison served as the point of contact to communicate with members of the CSC and members of the public to address any concerns regarding logistics and development of the CERP and Community Air Monitoring Plan (CAMP). The Community Liaison ensured communication throughout the process of developing the CERP and

worked with community members to identify the best ways to make information accessible and user-friendly. The South Coast AQMD Community Liaison for this community is Gina Triviso (gtriviso@aqmd.gov). In addition, Dianne Sanchez (dsanchez@aqmd.gov) serves as the South Coast AQMD point of contact for CERP-related discussions.

Community Steering Committee (CSC)

A steering committee was formed in late January 2020 for the SELA community, and monthly in-person meetings were organized. Briefly, the main role of the CSC is to provide input and guidance as well as to propose actions for the community plans (i.e., CERP and CAMP). The CSC is comprised of stakeholders with community knowledge to help drive community action and develop the CERP and CAMP. The SELA CSC roster consists of 39 CSC members and 9 alternate members (Table 2-2 in Chapter 2 Appendix). Among these CSC members, 21 primary members and 7 alternate members reside within the community (53.8% resident percentage on the CSC). Some residents also represent community organizations or businesses; there are 6 community organizations and 7 businesses represented on the CSC. Additionally, there are 12 CSC members representing agencies, schools/universities, or offices of elected officials who serve this community.¹

During the CERP and CAMP development process, the CSC developed the air quality priorities,



Figure 2-3. Community Steering Committee meeting #1 at Veterans Park in Bell Gardens on February 6, 2020.

strategies and actions, and provided feedback on the draft plans. CSC members were also invited to provide suggestions for agenda items for each meeting.

The CSC will continue to play a prominent role as the CERP is being implemented, and staff will work with the CSC to adjust the outreach approaches as appropriate as we move into the plan implementation phase.

CSC Charter

A charter was developed for the CSC and a draft was presented to members at the first meeting on February 6, 2020. CSC members were invited to comment and provide feedback before the charter was announced as final at the CSC meeting on May 7, 2020. The final charter is provided on the webpage: <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/ab-617-ab-134/steering-committees/southeast-los-angeles/charter-feb-2020.pdf>

Community Meetings

Community meetings were hosted by South Coast AQMD staff on an approximately monthly basis in the community, and then virtually due to COVID-19 restrictions. This included a kick-off

¹ Per discussion with California Air Resources Board staff, members representing agencies, schools, universities, hospitals, and offices of elected officials are not included in the calculation of resident percentage on the CSC.

meeting and a series of CSC meetings. Additionally, staff hosted 2 TAG meetings, a meeting to discuss AB 617 Incentive Strategies, and a CERP Question and Answer session; members of the SELA CSC participated in each of these meetings.

Community Kick-Off Meeting

The SELA Community Kick-Off Meeting was held on Thursday, January 9, 2020 in the community (Figure 2-2). During this meeting, staff presented information about the AB 617 program and the critical role of the CSC in the development and implementation of the



Figure 2-3. SELA community kick-off meeting at Salt Lake Park Recreation Center in Huntington Park on January 9, 2020.

community plans. At the Kick-Off meeting, community members were invited to fill out an Interest Form to express their interest in being a CSC member, and were then notified by email or by phone if they were selected as a member or an alternate.

In addition to receiving information about AB 617, attendees were invited to visit a variety of booths, which provided information about South Coast AQMD programs, community air measurement efforts, and incentive programs.

CSC Meeting Schedule and Co-Hosts

The CSC meetings were held on an approximately monthly basis (Table 2-1 of Chapter 2 Appendix). All CSC meetings were scheduled to be held in locations within the community, with the first meeting held in February 2020 in Bell Gardens. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting executive orders from the Governor², staff transitioned all CSC meetings to be conducted via video conferencing and by

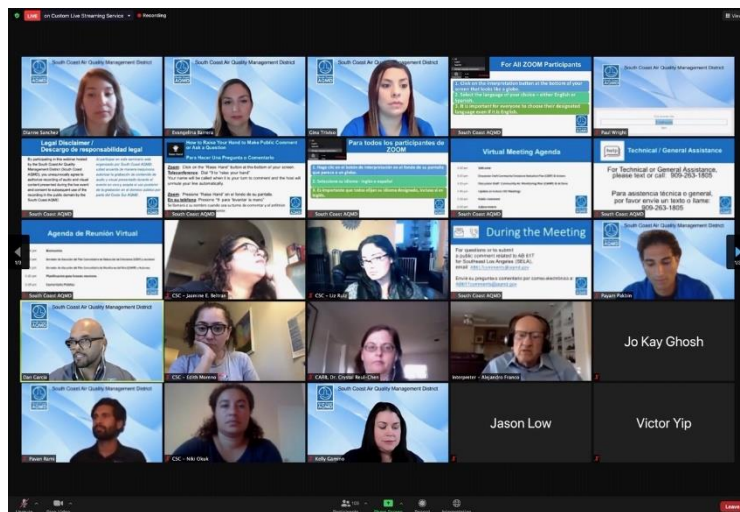


Figure 2-4. CSC meeting # 8 held virtually via zoom on October 29, 2020.

² Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-25-20 on March 12, 2020 and Executive Order N-29-20 on March 17, 2020.

telephone. Because of the additional work needed to manage this transition to virtual formats, two meetings (March and April) were postponed, but CSC meetings resumed in May using the Zoom videoconferencing platform. Each meeting was open to the public, and Spanish interpretation was available at the kick-off meeting and at every CSC meeting. A full list of the meetings and details are provided in Table 2-1 of the Chapter 2 Appendix.

Several CSC meetings were co-hosted by a CSC member, who worked closely with South Coast AQMD staff to provide meeting input and to ensure each meeting ran smoothly. Niki Okuk, Miriam Burbano, Jesus Ortiz, and Jasmine Beltran all served as co-hosts from the SELA community.

Meeting Facilitator

Each CSC meeting was facilitated by either a third-party facilitator or the Community Liaison for the SELA community.

Social Media

All CSC meetings were live-streamed using Facebook Live, and links to the recorded videos were posted on the community webpage. Each video received more than 100 views. A screen shot of the October 8th live-streamed meeting is included in Table 2-4 of the Chapter 2 Appendix.

Community Webpage

A community webpage was created for the SELA community. The webpage includes information about upcoming meetings, meeting materials such as flyers, agendas, presentations, handouts, live stream links, and meeting summaries. Additionally, the SELA community page includes interactive maps, the CSC roster, and the CAMP and CERP documents. All flyers, agendas, social media posts, presentations, and handouts to the CSC were made available in English and Spanish.

Webpage:

<http://www.aqmd.gov/nav/about/initiatives/community-efforts/environmental-justice/ab617-134/southeast-los-angeles>

In addition to being a central access point for meeting materials and documents, the webpage also includes interactive maps that present information about the community. These interactive maps provide data on land use, locations of facilities, schools, hospitals, and daycare centers, and the air quality concerns identified by the CSC and members of the public. This information was provided to help inform air quality priorities for the CERP.

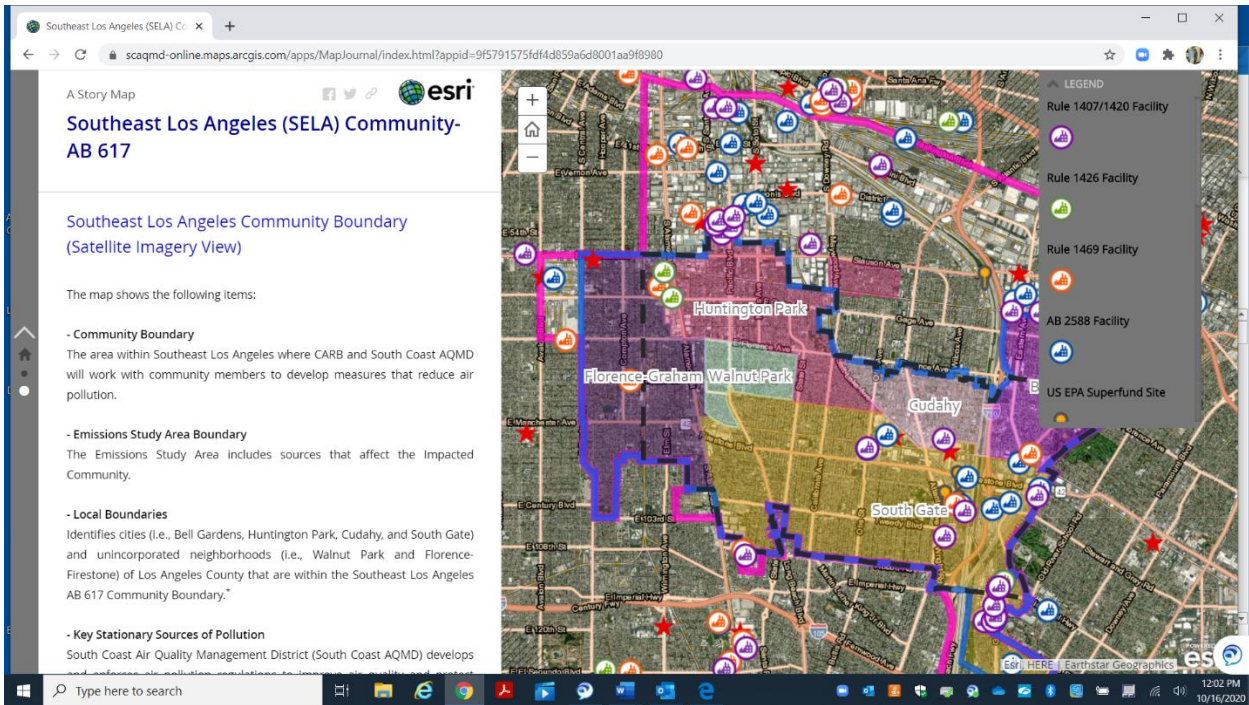


Figure 2-8 is an example of an interactive map that was created for the SELA community.

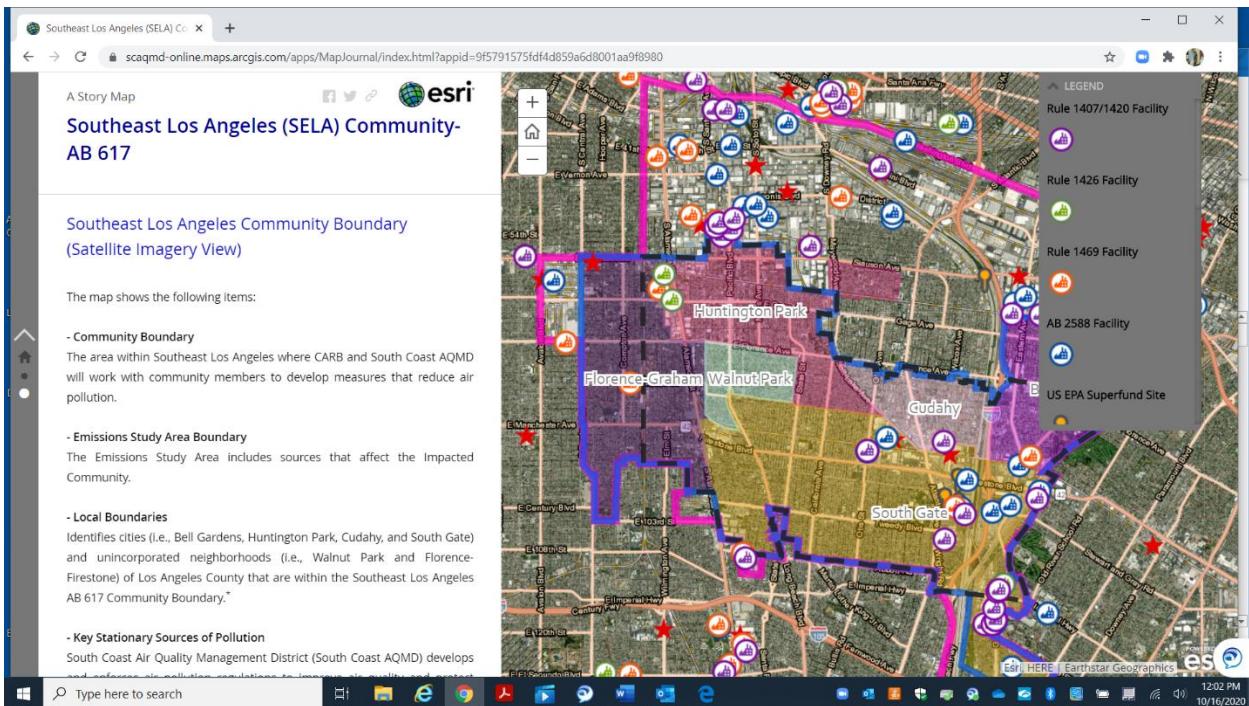


Figure 2-8. Interactive story map showing land use in the SELA community

Community Bus Tour and Committee Presenters

A critical part of the CERP development and implementation is collaboration with CSC members and the agencies, organizations, businesses, or other entities that they represent. In early 2020, a Community Bus Tour was being organized by members of the CSC in collaboration with South

Coast AQMD staff. However, due to the Governor’s executive orders related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the community bus tour was put on hold until it is deemed safe to hold such an event.

Committee members were invited to give presentations during CSC meetings to share information about the work they are doing in the community that is complementary to the actions being developed in the CERP, such as programs implemented by their organization that address air quality issues in the community. At the August 27, 2020 CSC meeting, CSC member Tahirah Farris (Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning) gave a presentation on LA County’s “Green Zones Program.” The goal of this program is to develop land use strategies to improve public health and quality of life for residents in environmental justice communities, including updating the land use ordinances to address incompatible land uses.

Technical Advisory Group

In February 2019, the AB 617 Technical Advisory Group (TAG) was established to provide a forum to discuss technical details related to the development and implementation of the CAMPs and CERPs.³ In 2020, the TAG met twice to discuss technical details related to the CERP and CAMP development for the two 2019-designated communities (SELA and Eastern Coachella Valley). Topics discussed included monitoring equipment and laboratory capabilities, methodology and data sources for developing an air toxics emissions inventory at a community scale, methodology for forecasting emissions in future years, and methodology for modeling air toxics levels across geographical areas. All meetings were open to the public, webcast on the www.aqmd.gov webpage, and included an email option to send questions to be answered during the meeting.

Many of these technical considerations apply to all five AB 617 designated communities, thus the TAG includes up to 3 members from each CSC, and additional technical experts from academia, research institutes, and governmental agencies. The SELA CSC members who served as TAG members in 2020 are Laura Cortez and Rudy Morales. Additional information about the TAG and the 2020 TAG meeting schedule are provided in the Chapter 2 Appendix.

Additional Community Engagement

In addition to the regularly scheduled CSC meetings, South Coast AQMD staff have had more than 40 one-on-one or small group meetings with members to discuss the CSC process and seek input on the CERP actions (Table 2-8 of Chapter 2 Appendix). These meetings gave CSC members an opportunity to provide input in the CERP development process and address concerns directly with staff. Additionally, these meetings give staff an opportunity to provide information as requested by CSC members.

³ The webpage for the TAG: <http://www.aqmd.gov/nav/about/initiatives/environmental-justice/ab617-134/technical-advisory-group>

In addition, staff attended meetings hosted by community organizations and local government agencies to discuss SELA CERP development and gain a better understanding of the unique issues in the community (Table 2-9 of Chapter 2 Appendix). South Coast AQMD staff will continue to work with the CSC to implement the CERP actions and provide regular updates on the progress of implementing the plan. Community engagement is essential to the success of the CERP as well as the AB 617 program as a whole, and all parties are committed to build and improve upon existing outreach efforts in the coming months and years.