

RICHMOND - NORTH
RICHMOND - SAN PABLO
COMMUNITY



Frequently Asked Questions

What is AB-617?

Assembly Bill 617 (Garcia, C., Chapter 136, Statutes of 2017) is a State-mandated program that uses a community-based approach to reduce local air pollution in disproportionately impacted communities. This program aims to improve community health by reducing exposure to local air pollution sources in the most impacted neighborhoods through the development of Community Emissions Reduction Plans (or CERPs).

What is a Community Emissions Reduction Plan (CERP)?

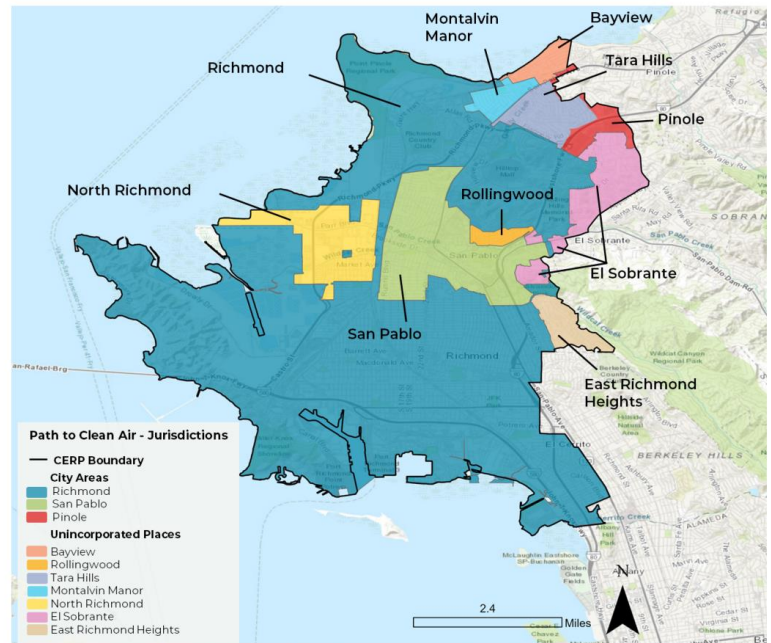
The California Air Resources Board “Blueprint” (2018) summarizes a CERP’s contents as containing “new actions (e.g., regulations, enforcement, incentives, enforceable agreements) that go beyond existing efforts to further reduce air pollution disparities.”¹ The purpose and goal of the Plan is to remedy persistent exposures to air pollution and reduce health risks and inequities associated with poor air quality for people who live in disproportionately impacted communities.

Specifically the Richmond-North Richmond-San Pablo Path to Clean Air CERP (Plan) identifies priority air quality and public health community concerns and offers actionable solutions to address them in partnership with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD).

¹ Community Air Protection Blueprint (2018) page 20 https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2020-03/final_community_air_protection_blueprint_october_2018_acc.pdf

Why was the Path to Clean Air area selected for a community emissions reduction plan?

The cities of Richmond and San Pablo, and several unincorporated areas in Contra Costa County are severely impacted by air pollution. A combination of sources in the area produce emissions that negatively impact public health. The Path to Clean Air area has “trade corridors” in which goods are moved via mobile sources like ships, railroads, and 18-wheeler heavy-duty trucks. Ports, marine terminals, railroads and railyards and congested freeways all contribute to increased concentrations of air pollutants emitted into the air that the community breathes.



Community Emission Reduction Plan Boundary and Jurisdictions

Additionally, stationary sources like the Chevron Refinery, the West Contra Costa County Landfill, Chemtrade, Sims Metal, and other industrial and commercial operations pollute the air. The Chevron Refinery is by far the single largest generator of emissions in the Path to Clean Air area. Those living and working near the refinery have endured many years of environmental injustice as these frontline and fenceline communities have been harmed by historical redlining and disproportionate exposure to toxic and harmful air pollution.

Who is impacted by poor air quality in the Path to Clean Air area?

The majority of the community members living in the Path to Clean Air area (which includes Richmond, North Richmond, and San Pablo) are Latinx, Asian, and Black/African American. Poor air quality is associated with stationary polluting sources such as the Chevron refinery, manufacturing facilities and landfills as well as mobile sources including port related activities, freight traffic on roadways and freeways, and railroads. Community members in the area live within a close proximity of these industrial and hazardous sites.

What are the health impacts of air pollution?

The effects of air pollution are known to cause severe health risks that include asthma, cancer, heart disease and other serious long-term health conditions. Reducing air pollution exposure to protect our community members' health is a primary purpose of our Plan. The Path to Clean Air

community experience high emergency department visits due to asthma.² A 2018 Contra Costa Health Services study shows that asthma rates in the county are higher on average than in the rest of California, and are especially high for children and Black residents.³ Air pollution has also been linked to poor cognitive function and is especially harmful to fetuses and children.⁴

Who is part of the Path to Clean Air?

The Path to Clean Air effort and the development of our Plan is directed by a community led steering committee. The make-up of the community steering committee represents the diverse population of the Richmond-North Richmond-San Pablo area and brings together an inclusive group with a range of knowledge and expertise. All members represent individuals who work, live or grew up in the Path to Clean Air area. BAAQMD staff provide technical and logistical support to the community steering committee.

The committee has met monthly since 2021 to discuss sources of pollution, impacts from pollution, ways to reduce pollution, and community priorities to improve air quality and public health. The result of this effort is the forthcoming draft Plan.

What does the Path to Clean Air Plan address?

The Plan is focused on five community concerns and includes strategies centered on these priority sources: Mobile, Public Health, Marine and Rail, Commercial and Industrial, and Fuel Refining. The plan also includes strategies to address one or more community concern sources in the Path to Clean Air area. These “cross-cutting” strategies include Land Use, Urban Greening and Compliance and Enforcement.

The table below provides example actions to address the five priority community concerns.

Community Concern	Example Plan Actions
Mobile (freight trucks, cars)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Heavy-duty truck management (such as designating truck routes and installing design deterrents to prevent trucks from using residential streets) ● Invest in zero emission bus fleets ● Street sweeping (to limit road dust)
Public Health and Reducing Exposures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduce vulnerabilities to air pollution by expanding health care ● Reduce exposure in homes by upgrading windows and installing air filtration systems ● Explore forms of guaranteed investment programs in the PTCA

² Draft Path to Clean Air Community Description, Figure 31 <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Gycml1b2k4zQbR-DzW56pd5TKQTMyaWu/edit?usp=sharing&oid=109524786324763675173&rtpof=true&sd=true>

³ Asthma in Contra Costa County Presentation for the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors Ad Hoc Committee on Sustainability September 24, 2018 [Asthma in Contra Costa County](#)

⁴ Draft Path to Clean Air Community Description, Page 24 <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Gycml1b2k4zQbR-DzW56pd5TKQTMyaWu/edit?usp=sharing&oid=109524786324763675173&rtpof=true&sd=true>

Community Concern	Example Plan Actions
	area
Marine and Rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement state rules for ocean going vessels (container and bulk cargo ships) to improve control technology ● Implement locomotive regulations to regulate emissions from freight rail operations, prioritizing zero emission technology ● Advocate for the State to establish more stringent rules to require zero emission cargo handling equipment at ports and railyards
Commercial and Industrial Near Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use best practices to control dust at commercial and industrial businesses ● Require more stringent review of industrial businesses proposed to be located near residential uses ● Address permitted facilities through education and outreach; continued and enhanced collaboration; reviews of emissions; and potential amendments to Permitting Rules
Fuel Refining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Update rules to reduce emissions and exposure from all fuel refining sources feasible (including via best available control technologies) and thoroughly engage the public and the community steering committee in the process ● Reduce toxics-based risk from major existing facilities including Chevron and Chemtrade. Evaluate risk reduction approaches for particulate matter health impacts as well ● Hold fuel refining industry accountable via enhanced compliance and enforcement, legal approaches and penalties, permitting, monitoring and measurements ● Reduce flaring activity and better respond to and inform the public about major incidents
Land Use and Urban Greening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plant trees in priority neighborhoods (near freeways and within the “fenceline” of industrial facilities) ● Update regulations to buffer residents from sources of pollution such as freeways and industrial uses (by requiring developers to install air filtration systems and locate windows, balconies and plazas away from pollution sources).
Compliance & Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop an education and outreach campaign to inform the community about the Air District Complaints System ● Investigate targeted facilities of concern ● Update the community on enforcement activities

What is the timeline for this work?

As of September 2023, the community steering committee is finishing up co-writing the Plan with BAAQMD staff. It is anticipated that the BAAQMD Community Equity Health and Justice Committee (of the Board of Directors) will hear a progress report on the CERP development on [October 18, 2023](#). The formal public review period will likely begin in the winter with adoption anticipated in early 2024.

What agencies support this work?

BAAQMD has the primary responsibility for completing, adopting and implementing the Plan. The California Air Resources Board is the State agency responsible for implementing AB 617 and provides support for this work. As the Plan is implemented many additional agencies will be called upon such as the Cities of Richmond and San Pablo, Contra Costa County, public health departments and others.

How can local residents and interested parties get involved?

The success of the plan depends on continued participation and activism of the Richmond, North Richmond and San Pablo community.

- Register to receive regular electronic email updates by visiting the [project webpage](#) (and scroll to the bottom of the page)
- Attend the public (virtual) Community Steering Committee meetings; visit the [calendar of meetings webpage](#) and look for the “Path to Clean Air Community Emissions Reduction Plan Steering Committee”
- Look out for calls to action by visiting the [project webpage](#) on the District’s website