



# A Call to Action

**Charting a New Course Toward Environmental Justice at the Bay Area Air Quality Management District**



*From the Community Advisory Council of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District*

**November 2024**

# Acknowledgements

It is with deep gratitude that we acknowledge the many contributors and the intensive collaboration process that informed the development of *A Call to Action*. While it is not possible to name all of the individuals who were involved, we wanted to be sure to lift up the following groups of key players. The names below are of those who made significant contributions to the content development of *A Call to Action*. In [Appendix C](#), we also acknowledge a longer list of people who attended collaborative meetings with Air District staff and council members and who were instrumental in the thinking that led to the development of the environmental justice strategies and actions highlighted in *A Call to Action*.

## 2024 Members of the Community Advisory Council's Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee

Rio Molina, Ad Hoc Committee Co-Chair

Joy Massey

Latasha Washington, Ad Hoc Committee Co-Chair

Fagamalama Violet Saena

John Kevin Jefferson III

Ken Szutu

## 2022 – 2024 Members of Community Advisory Council

John Kevin Jefferson III, Co-Chair (reelected in May 2024), representing "at large"\*

Cecilia Mejia (appointment ended in September 2023), representing "youth"

Mayra Pelagio, Co-Chair (as of May 2024), representing Santa Clara County

Hana Mendoza (appointment ended in April 2024), representing Alameda County

Ken Szutu, Co-Chair (as of January 2024), representing Solano County\*

Rio Molina, representing "at large" \*

Juan Aguilera, representing San Mateo County

Charles Reed (appointment ended in December 2023), representing Alameda County\*

Fernando Campos, representing Contra Costa County

Jeff Ritterman, representing Contra Costa County

William Goodwin, representing Contra Costa County

Kevin Ruano Hernandez, representing "youth"\*

Ms. Margaret Gordon (former Co-Chair, March 2022 – September 2023), representing Alameda County

Fagamalama Violet Saena, representing Santa Clara County\*

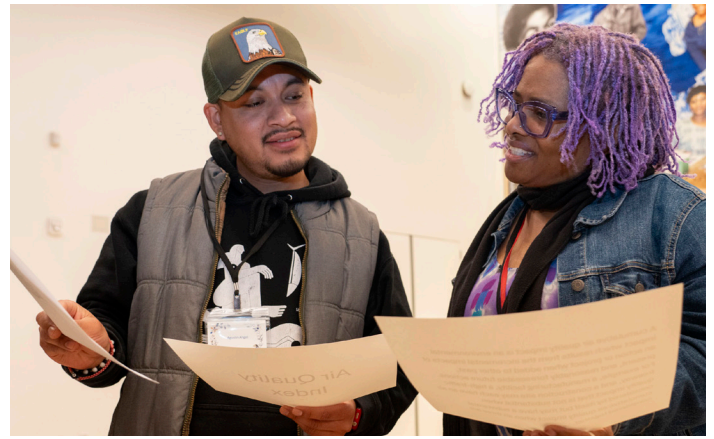
Arieann Harrison, representing San Francisco County\*

Latasha Washington (former Community Advisory Council Co-Chair, March 2022 – 2024), representing Contra Costa County\*

Joy Massey (appointment ended in July 2024), representing Alameda County\*

**\* Indicates Community Advisory Council members who served on the Community Advisory Council's Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee at any point between 2022 – 2024.**





### The Air District’s Environmental Justice Action Planning Project Team

The following members of Air District leadership and staff served on the staff project team for the Environmental Justice Action Planning Process and the development of *A Call to Action*:

Veronica Eady, (former) Deputy Executive Officer of Equity and Community Programs

Marcia Raymond, Assistant Counsel II, Legal Division

Deborah Jordan, Consultant to the Air District’s Executive Office

Diana Ruiz, Manager, Community Engagement

Arsenio Mataka, Deputy Executive Officer of Equity and Community Programs

Amy Smith, Senior Staff Specialist, Community Engagement

Suma Peesapati, Environmental Justice and Community Engagement Officer

Miriam Torres, Senior Advanced Projects Advisor, Executive Office

### Air District Leadership

Davina Hurt, Chair of the Board of Directors

Hyacinth “Hy” Hinojosa, Deputy Executive Officer of Finance and Administration

Philip Fine, Executive Officer/Air Pollution Control Officer

Arsenio Mataka, Deputy Executive Officer of Equity and Community Programs

Meredith Bauer, Deputy Executive Officer of Engineering and Compliance

Greg Nudd, Deputy Executive Officer of Science and Policy

Alexander “Sandy” Crockett, General Counsel

Viet Tran, Deputy Executive Officer of Public Affairs

### Metropolitan Group

Metropolitan Group is a social change agency that seeks to amplify the power of voice of change agents in building a just and sustainable world. The following Metropolitan Group staff members contributed significantly to *A Call to Action*:

Cheryl Little, Executive Vice President

Vernice Miller-Travis, Executive Vice President

Sarah Malpass, Senior Director



# Welcome

On behalf of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Air District), its Community Advisory Council, and the Community Advisory Council's Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee, we are pleased to present *A Call to Action*. The process of developing this Environmental Justice Action Plan began in 2022 when the Community Advisory Council formed the Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee to strengthen relationships and collaboration between the Community Advisory Council, staff, and Board of Directors leadership, and to explore the development of a policy to center environmental justice at the Air District. In 2023, the Air District's Board of Directors and newly appointed Executive Officer, Philip Fine, embarked on the development of a five-year Strategic Plan. The new strategic planning process created an opportunity for the Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee to move its work forward in coordination and alignment with the agency's strategic planning goals, with a strong emphasis on environmental justice.

*A Call to Action* represents the collaborative and co-creative work of the Community Advisory Council and the Air District's leadership and staff over the course of nearly two years. Building off the leadership of the Board of Directors and the Community Equity, Health, and Justice Committee, whose members have spearheaded the elevation of environmental justice at the Air District, the Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee and the Air District's staff leadership and technical staff worked in close collaboration to center the Environmental Justice Priorities in the strategic planning



process. We are grateful for the contributions of the many individuals who gave generously of their time, expertise, and wisdom to this effort, reinforcing our collective commitment to making environmental justice a central focus of the Air District's work.

## This plan reflects a commitment to reinvest in frontline environmental justice communities who have been most affected by pollution...

The extended and regular engagement with members of the community as part of this process has been called audacious—a powerful step toward dismantling the silos between the agency and impacted communities. We hope this offers a blueprint for local agencies seeking to elevate the voices, lived experience, and leadership of environmental justice communities.

This plan reflects a commitment to reinvest in frontline environmental justice communities who have been most affected by pollution, and offers a powerful vision for putting action behind words that reimagines the Air District's relationship with the community going forward.

We thank you for taking the time to read *A Call to Action*, and we invite you to join us in the work of improving air quality and overall environmental justice outcomes for frontline communities who are disproportionately and adversely affected by air pollution.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in white ink on a dark blue background.

John Kevin Jefferson III, Co-Chair of the Community Advisory Council



A handwritten signature in white ink on a dark blue background.

Mayra Pelagio, Co-Chair of the Community Advisory Council



A handwritten signature in white ink on a dark blue background.

Ken Szutu, Co-Chair of the Community Advisory Council



A handwritten signature in white ink on a dark blue background.

Rio Molina, Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee Co-Chair



A handwritten signature in white ink on a dark blue background.

Latasha Washington, Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee Co-Chair

# Acknowledging A Call to Action

With the advice of the Community Advisory Council and all the community members it represents, the Air District Board is leading the nation on several initiatives that directly benefit Bay Area communities most impacted by air pollution.

From the early days of the Community Air Risk Evaluation (CARE) program, which started in 2006, the Air District recognized the need for innovative approaches to air quality management—because let’s face it, the traditional pathways just weren’t cutting it when it came to tackling long-standing environmental injustices and inequities.

To further this commitment, the Air District Board of Directors (Board) established the Community Equity, Health, and Justice Committee of the Board, focusing on environmental justice policies and regulations. Understanding the importance of community involvement beyond traditional public comments, the Board formed the Community Advisory Council to amplify voices from local neighborhoods and offer the Board advice based on lived experiences in communities most impacted. With a strong commitment to environmental justice and support for the body’s independence of thought, the Board allocated the necessary financial resources to support the development of Environmental Justice Priorities and action plans, culminating in the creation of *A Call to Action*.

*“Remember to imagine and craft the worlds you cannot live without, just as you dismantle the worlds you cannot live within.”*

—Ruha Benjamin

I am thrilled to hear the community’s voice captured in the Community Advisory Council’s *Call to Action* and acknowledge its importance to the Board’s implementation planning of the recently adopted **2024 – 2029 Air District Strategic Plan**. The strategies outlined in the Strategic Plan underscore the significance of ongoing partnership with all communities, particularly those represented by the Community Advisory Council, to ensure that affected communities can breathe healthier, cleaner air.

Since I joined the Air District’s Board of Directors for San Mateo County cities in 2019, our approach to community engagement has undergone a remarkable transformation. Back then, we had neither a Community Equity, Health, and Justice Committee nor a Community Advisory Council, and we only had one finalized Community Action Plan, in West Oakland under the **Assembly Bill 617 program**. Fast-forward nearly five years, and we now





have an ambitious Strategic Plan, a Community Equity, Health, and Justice Committee of the Board, a Community Advisory Council, and four active AB 617 Steering Committees, in West Oakland, Richmond–North Richmond–San Pablo, East Oakland, and Bayview–Hunters Point. This progress is not by chance; it is the result of the dedicated efforts of staff, community members, and the Board working collaboratively.

In the past year, I have already witnessed the implementation of changes recommended by the Community Advisory Council. For instance, we commend the Community Advisory Council members for their insightful recommendations regarding the allocation of penalty funds to support local and regional community benefits. The Board approved all of the Community Advisory Council's recommendations for this new penalty policy. To my knowledge, no other air district in the nation has intentionally set aside penalty funding at this level for community benefits. This is groundbreaking—transforming our policies and priorities while actively implementing environmental justice–focused strategies outlined in the Strategic Plan.

I am deeply appreciative of the Community Advisory Council members' selflessness and their genuine dedication to the communities they serve. I am equally inspired by the staff's unwavering commitment to advancing equity and embracing new approaches. Together, we are making strides toward cleaner air and a healthier climate. Collectively, we are crafting a future where everyone can thrive in cleaner air and healthier communities.

Sincerely,



Davina Hurt  
Chair, Board of Directors



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# Executive Summary





*A Call to Action* summarizes the Community Advisory Council's vision and recommendation to advance nine Environmental Justice Priorities and related actions at the Air District.

The Community Advisory Council was established by the Board of Directors in November 2021, representing different environmental justice communities throughout the Bay Area. This group of community leaders and environmental justice advocates assists the Board in developing Air District initiatives that benefit the community and advance environmental justice, while prioritizing engagement and partnership. The Community Advisory Council is a standing advisory council of the Air District that uses environmental justice principles to provide guidance to the Board of Directors and the Executive Officer/Air Pollution Control Officer on programs and policies that impact overburdened communities within the Air District's jurisdiction to ensure the fair treatment of all persons living in those communities. The Community Advisory Council and the Community Advisory Council's Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee served as formal advisors to the **Air District's 2024 – 2029 Strategic Plan**.

## The Challenge

For 70 years, the Air District has been responsible for ensuring that people living in the Bay Area breathe clean air. Although regional air quality has significantly improved, not all communities have benefited equitably. These impacted communities are most often lower-income communities of color. Often these communities have endured decades of exclusionary and discriminatory government policies and practices. These injustices have resulted in communities that experience the effects of environmental racism, including lower air quality, contributing to poorer health outcomes and associated lower life expectancy, and a lower quality of life overall. In response to these challenges, the Air District Board of Directors created the Community Advisory Council to advise on issues affecting these impacted communities and to ensure that their voices are heard in the decision-making process.



# The Call to Action

Since January 2022, the Community Advisory Council has advised the Air District about how it must build trust with communities to better understand community concerns. From December 2022 to December 2024, the Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee has worked with staff, executive leadership, and the Board of Directors to prioritize solutions to achieve environmental justice.

The Community Advisory Council identified nine Environmental Justice Priorities that are intended to guide the agency in better advancing and addressing environmental justice across all aspects of the Air District's operations. These priorities outline the conditions necessary for the Air District to be an effective partner with frontline environmental justice communities, aiming to improve air quality and overall community health and well-being. By focusing on these priorities, the Air District seeks to embed environmental justice in its operations and decision-making processes, ultimately benefiting the communities most affected by environmental disparities.



## The Community Advisory Council's Environmental Justice Priorities

1. Advance Environmental Justice
2. Provide Meaningful Agency Support to Advance Environmental Justice
3. Integrate Environmental Justice Considerations in Core Functions
4. Implement Environmental Justice Best Practices and Innovation
5. Communicate with Clarity, Transparency, and Integrity
6. Grow Capacity of Air District Staff and Board Members to Integrate Environmental Justice
7. Grow Capacity of Environmental Justice Communities and Organizations
8. Seek Appropriate Legal Remedies and Coordinate with Environmental Justice Communities
9. Provide Technical Assistance to Local Governments





# The Air District's Response

In the Air District's most recent Strategic Plan, 80% of the strategies address one or more of the Environmental Justice Priorities.<sup>1</sup> The centrality of environmental justice in the Strategic Plan and the strategies identified to advance environmental justice reflect the Board of Directors' commitment to this issue since 2017. This discussion has evolved over time and was informed by discussions with the Board of Directors in January 2024, as well as by ongoing discussions between Air District staff leadership, technical staff, and the Community Advisory Council's Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee from the fall of 2023 through 2024.

The strategies support a new vision focused on:

- Changing the Air District's primary approach to air quality from a regional focus to using more local information and analyses that support targeted environmental justice outcomes
- Prioritization of environmental justice communities (e.g., through community benefits funds, penalty policy, cumulative health analyses, prioritization of permitting reviews in environmental justice communities, etc.)
- Engaging communities in more meaningful communications and partnerships. This includes community science (e.g., community monitoring and data collection) and public participation (e.g., regular community forums and new community feedback mechanisms) that recognizes communities' existing expertise, strengths, and assets
- Stronger enforcement (e.g., deterrence-based penalties, community-focused injunctive relief, and consideration of repeat violations in determining enforcement response)

- Better response to air quality complaints and incidents with improved coordination, communication, and local data usage
- Continuous improvement on advancing equity and environmental justice actions via collaboration with, and input from, the Community Advisory Council and environmental justice communities

In the fall of 2024, the Community Advisory Council's Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee will provide input to Air District staff and the Board in the implementation of the Strategic Plan, including the development of specific actions, milestones, and metrics for the three priority areas chosen by the Ad Hoc Committee as topics of focus: data collection and usage, permitting, and compliance and enforcement.

The Community Advisory Council's *Call to Action* and the Air District response will broaden the Air District's perspectives about how it can drive positive change by leveraging its existing rules, regulations, and statutory authorities. Advancing environmental justice requires systemic change that is mindful of the many environmental, economic, and social factors affecting impacted communities. Systemic change requires continuous, two-way communication with impacted communities, as well as interdisciplinary, intersectional, and innovative solutions that address root causes of inequity.

As it moves forward, the Air District's investment in strategies that respond to the community's needs, as recommended in the Community Advisory Council's *Call to Action*, will result in a greater capacity for everyone—the Air District, local governments, elected officials, community-based organizations, and community members—to advance environmental justice.

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1 For more information, see [Appendix D](#).



# Introduction





A *Call to Action* presents the Environmental Justice Priorities of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's (Air District's) Community Advisory Council and the Air District's agenda for future action in response. This report contains the following chapters:

**Introduction:** Learn about the origins of the Community Advisory Council's call to action and how the Air District defines communities grappling with environmental injustice.

**Our Environmental Justice Priorities: A Call to Action from the Community Advisory Council:** Read the Community Advisory Council's full call to action to the Air District to achieve nine Environmental Justice Priorities.

**At a Glance: The Air District's Environmental Justice Commitments:** Learn about some of the new paths the Air District will take to advance environmental justice in the Bay Area.

**Charting the Course: Actions the Air District Will Take to Advance Environmental Justice Priorities:** Learn about how the Air District's strategies and actions will advance each of the Community Advisory Council's Environmental Justice Priorities.

**The Journey Ahead: Implementation and Accountability:** Learn how the Air District will be accountable to its commitments, how you can stay up to date on implementation activities, and how you can get involved.

## A Call to Prioritize Environmental Justice

The Air District's Community Advisory Council is a standing advisory body at the Air District that makes recommendations to the Board of Directors and Executive Officer/Air Pollution Control Officer on equity and environmental justice matters to improve air quality in the impacted communities within the surrounding counties in the Bay Area.

At the December 1, 2021, Board of Directors meeting, the Board discussed the historical connection between racial segregation and structural racism, and current-day environmental injustices in the Bay Area and across our nation. At this meeting, the Board also discussed the need for the Air District to engage in environmental justice action planning. In 2023, the Air District's Board of Directors and newly appointed Executive Officer, Philip Fine, embarked on the development of a five-year Strategic Plan. The new strategic planning process created an opportunity for the Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee to move its work forward in coordination and alignment

with the agency's strategic planning goals, with a strong emphasis on environmental justice.

The Community Advisory Council and the Community Advisory Council's Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee served as formal advisors to the Air District on the **2024 – 2029 Strategic Plan**. In September 2023, the Community Advisory Council identified the first iteration of a set of Environmental Justice Priorities for the Air District Board of Directors during the Community Advisory Council's retreat to support the work of the Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee. The nine Environmental Justice Priorities were further developed based on a series of iterative and collaborative discussions, during which the Ad Hoc Committee engaged with each other, the full Community Advisory Council, directors and staff from certain Air District divisions, executive leadership, and the Board of Directors. This collaborative, co-creative development process represents how the Environmental Justice Policy

Ad Hoc Committee would like the Air District to work with environmental justice communities in the future.

These Environmental Justice Priorities serve as a call to action for the Air District, and are detailed in the following chapter. The Environmental Justice Priorities are intended to guide the agency to advance and address environmental justice within all aspects of the agency's operations. They identify the conditions needed for the Air District to be an effective partner with frontline environmental justice communities who are most affected by air pollution to improve air quality and overall environmental justice outcomes.



*“The way in which staff showed up in this planning process showed a level of commitment and gave me a level of assurance that they want to listen. I see that being an outcome that really contributed to where we are right now. One way to rebuild trust is presence, and I think that the mere presence of folks in the meetings has been a success. And as a result, we now have this beautiful working action plan. I can’t discount the way staff interacted, and also the way that the Community Advisory Council has interacted with staff. Because that’s hard to do, right?”*

—Joy Massey



Courtesy of Ken Szutu



# Our Environmental Justice Priorities: A Call to Action from the Community Advisory Council



This chapter shares the Community Advisory Council's call to action to the Air District to achieve environmental justice and equity through nine Environmental Justice Priorities.

# The Community Advisory Council's Environmental Justice Priorities

The Air District's Community Advisory Council developed the following Environmental Justice Priorities, intended to guide the Air District in advancing and addressing environmental justice across all aspects of its operations. They serve as critical recommendations for the Air District to be an effective partner with frontline communities who are most affected by pollution, and to improve air quality and overall environmental justice and equity outcomes central to the Air District's mission.

## **1. Advance Environmental Justice**

To advance environmental justice effectively over the long term, the Air District must practice restorative justice by creating agencywide policies, practices, procedures, and norms that both recognize the trauma and adverse health impacts caused by environmental racism, and honor the emotional work and investment of time that is required for staff and community leaders to work together effectively in advancing environmental justice.

The Air District must value the voices, lived experience, and leadership of environmental justice communities; develop respectful relationships and partnerships with these communities; hire from these communities; view these communities as a resource; provide compensation for their time and expertise; gather their input; use that input to directly inform decision-making; and establish formal participatory processes for addressing and implementing community input and for increasing agency accountability to communities.

The field of environmental justice is inherently intersectional and interdisciplinary. Therefore, the Air District must dismantle internal silos by reorganizing and restructuring to build an agency structure and culture that supports cross-divisional work.

For staff to better enact environmental justice, the Air District must cultivate a culture of innovation, embrace learning by doing, and adopt clear definitions for environmental justice and equity (and related terms) that are grounded in community input.

## **2. Provide Meaningful Agency Support to Advance Environmental Justice**

For staff and community leaders to have the meaningful agency support needed to advance environmental justice, Air District leadership must provide a strong vision and set a clear tone for achieving environmental justice and ensuring that communities of concern breathe clean air; lead the revision of internal policies, practices, and procedures with an equity lens; and lead the revision of mission-related policies, practices, and procedures with an environmental justice lens.

## **3. Integrate Environmental Justice Considerations in Core Functions**

The Air District must prioritize incorporating into its core functions the following environmental justice considerations: community-based science and real-time air monitoring and data collection, public health considerations, cumulative impact analysis, disparate impact analysis and civil rights compliance, and recognition of historical impacts and damages as well as the need for restorative steps.

#### ***4. Implement Environmental Justice Best Practices and Innovation***

The Air District must create and implement a strategy for incorporating environmental justice best practices and innovation into its day-to-day operations and core functions—including data collection and analysis; measurement and monitoring; permitting; environmental analysis; inspections; enforcement; and legal actions including litigation, mitigation, planning, rule making, and incentives funding.

#### ***5. Communicate with Clarity, Transparency, and Integrity***

The Air District must communicate with clarity, transparency, and integrity to environmental justice communities about the agency's role, responsibilities, and limitations, as well as where there is room to grow, improve, and bring about transformational change within the agency's regulatory charge.

#### ***6. Grow the Capacity of Staff and Board Members to Integrate Environmental Justice***

The Air District must invest in growing the capacity of staff and Board members to integrate environmental justice into their day-to-day roles and responsibilities; in developing capacity of communities and middle management on new policies, practices, and procedures; in establishing environmental justice as a core competency for staff; in prioritizing hiring, retention, and promotion of staff with lived experience living in and/or working with frontline environmental justice communities; and in ensuring that staff and leadership at all levels of the agency reflect the diversity of the communities the agency serves.

#### ***7. Grow the Capacity of Environmental Justice Communities and Organizations***

The Air District must invest in growing the capacity of environmental justice communities and organizations to work effectively with the Air District on systemic change, in creating economic benefits and workforce opportunities in these communities, and in enabling these communities to access and manage resources to address disparities.

#### ***8. Seek Appropriate Legal Remedies and Coordinate with Environmental Justice Communities***

The Air District must seek appropriate legal remedies, collaborate and coordinate with environmental justice communities on those remedies, impose high enough penalties, reach deterrence-based outcomes with violators, and ensure that environmental justice communities benefit from and have a say in the use of related funds.

#### ***9. Provide Technical Assistance to Local Governments***

The Air District must provide technical assistance to local governments to enable them to more effectively incorporate environmental justice analysis into their local land use, planning, and zoning decision-making and permitting practices. It must also weigh in on the environmental justice frameworks being developed by cities and counties in the nine Bay Area county jurisdictions as part of their general plans, to integrate environmental justice policy and help establish a plan for implementation and enforcement.

# At a Glance: The Air District's Environmental Justice Commitments





# A Vision for Change: One Air District Working Toward Environmental Justice

For nearly 70 years, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District has been responsible for ensuring that people living in the Bay Area breathe clean air. Although regional air quality has significantly improved, not everyone has benefited equitably. Communities located near freeways, busy roads, and industrial facilities continue to be exposed to higher levels of air pollution than most communities located further away from these sources. Impacted communities are most often lower-income communities of color. This is no accident. Often these communities have endured decades of exclusionary and discriminatory government policies and practices. These injustices have resulted in communities that experience the effects of environmental racism including lower air quality, poorer health outcomes, associated lower life expectancy, and a lower quality of life overall. Many environmental justice communities also face inequities related to the impacts of climate change.<sup>2</sup>

The Air District staff engaged in an extended series of conversations with the Community Advisory Council and its Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee members to better understand air quality from their perspectives as community members. Recognizing that communities are not monolithic, the Air District engaged in deep listening as members recounted the persistence of harms from the past and the accumulation of new harms afflicting their communities. These conversations required time and were sometimes uncomfortable, but they were necessary for building trust and dialogue so that a new vision for how the Air District could manage air quality could emerge.

This new vision increases the Air District's focus on place-based solutions to manage air quality more effectively in impacted communities. This vision also broadens the Air District's perspectives about how it can drive positive change by leveraging its existing rules, regulations, and statutory authorities. Advancing environmental justice requires systemic change that takes into consideration the many environmental, economic, and social factors affecting communities. Systemic change requires continuous, two-way communication with impacted communities and solutions that address root causes of inequity. As a result, the Air District's vision requires interdisciplinary, intersectional, and innovative approaches.

Investment and agreement in this vision will lead to greater capacity for all stakeholders—the Air District, local governments, community-based organizations, and community members—to advance environmental justice.

*“One of the main benefits of this process is the extended and regular engagement with key leadership at the Air District. It has created an opportunity for us to learn about the institutional culture and how to go about the change we seek. It has forced them to hear a few things. They are starting to see that we are all humans, that we have a lot more in common than we have not in common.”*

—John Kevin Jefferson III

<sup>2</sup> For more information, see:

- Rothstein, R. (2018). *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*. Liveright Publishing Corporation.
- United States Environmental Protection Agency. (2024). "Environmental Justice Research at the EPA." Retrieved from: [www.epa.gov/ej-research](http://www.epa.gov/ej-research).

# Air District Response to the Call to Action

A key role of the Community Advisory Council is to provide advice to the Air District and Board of Directors on programs and policies that impact all communities, including overburdened communities, within the Air District's jurisdiction. The nine Environmental Justice Priorities developed by the Air District's Community Advisory Council help to inform and provide advice to the agency and its staff about how it can advance and address environmental justice within all aspects of the agency's operations. The Community Advisory Council's Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee also identified three focus areas for near-term and sustained actions to advance environmental justice: data collection and usage, permitting, and compliance and enforcement.<sup>3</sup> These three priority areas are highlighted in the following chapter.

The Air District is committed to addressing the Community Advisory Council's Environmental Justice Priorities through its **2024 – 2029 Strategic Plan**. This Strategic Plan represents a significant evolution of the agency's mission and vision from a focus on improving regional air quality to a targeted approach that recognizes and addresses environmental inequities in air quality at the local level.

With input from the Community Advisory Council's Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee, the Air District will develop measurable implementation plans for activities related to advancing environmental justice.

Big picture, there are six major areas where communities can expect to see changes at the Air District to advance environmental justice:

- **Localize Air Quality Approach:** Changing the Air District's primary approach to air quality from a regional focus to using more local information and analyses that support targeted environmental justice outcomes
- **Prioritize Environmental Justice Communities for Equity:** Prioritization of environmental justice communities (e.g., through community benefits funds, penalty policy, cumulative health analyses, prioritization of permitting reviews in environmental justice communities, etc.)
- **Engage Environmental Justice Communities:** Engaging communities in more meaningful communications and partnerships. This includes community science (e.g., community monitoring and data collection) and public participation (e.g., regular community forums and new community feedback mechanisms) that recognizes communities' existing expertise, strengths, and assets
- **Respond Quickly to Air Quality Complaints and Incidents:** Better response to air quality complaints and incidents with improved coordination, communication, and local data usage
- **Strengthen Enforcement Response:** Stronger enforcement (e.g., deterrence-based penalties, community-focused injunctive relief, and consideration of repeat violations in determining enforcement response)
- **Improve Continuously and Collaboratively:** Continuous improvement on advancing equity and environmental justice actions via collaboration with, and input from, the Community Advisory Council and environmental justice communities

These areas of change are represented in the illustration that follows.

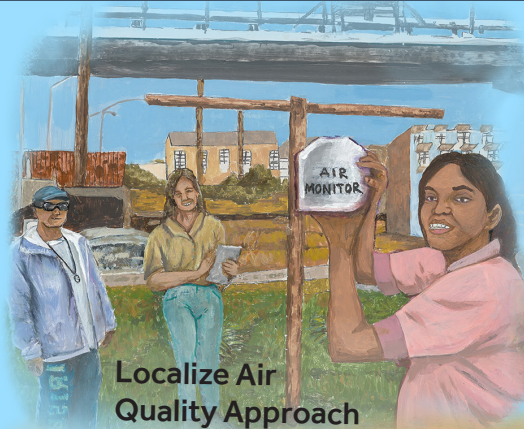
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<sup>3</sup> For more information on the Environmental Justice Action Planning Process and these three near-term implementation focus areas, see [Appendix C](#).





**BAY AREA  
AIR QUALITY  
MANAGEMENT  
DISTRICT**

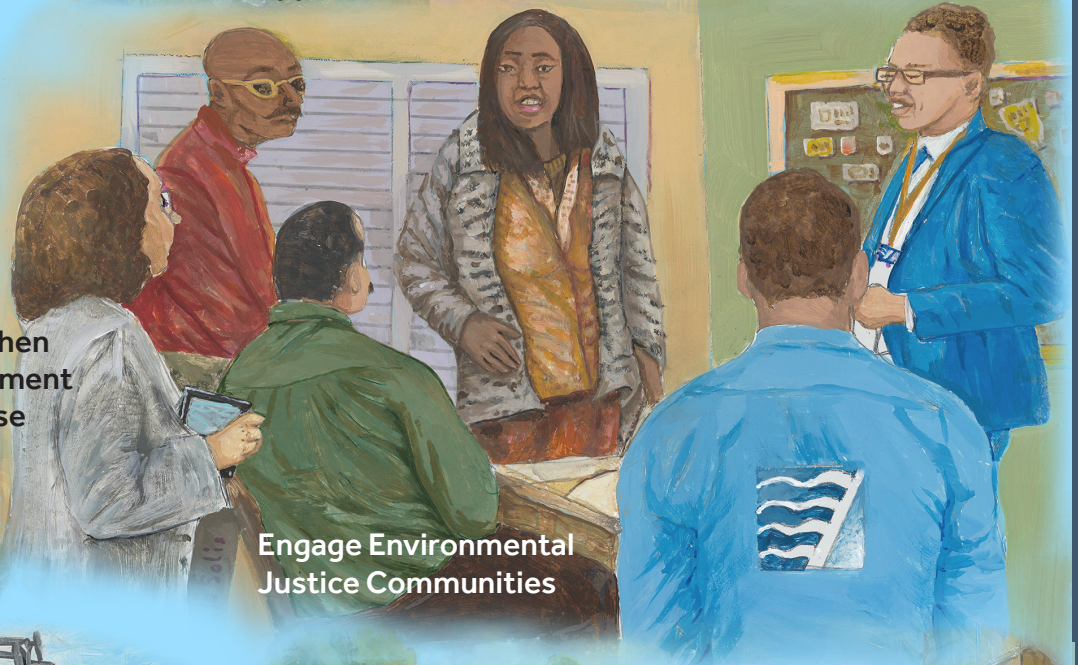


**Localize Air  
Quality Approach**

**Respond Quickly to Air Quality  
Complaints and Incidents**



**Strengthen  
Enforcement  
Response**



**Engage Environmental  
Justice Communities**

**Improve  
Continuously and  
Collaboratively**



**Prioritize Environmental Justice  
Communities for Equity**



## **Our Environmental Justice Commitments**

The Community Advisory Council's advice on what environmental justice means and what the Air District should consider to advance environmental justice helped inform its new strategic direction: 80% of the strategies identified in the 2024 – 2029 Strategic Plan address one or more of the Environmental Justice Priorities.

Building on many discussions between the Air District's staff leadership, technical staff, and the Community Advisory Council's Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee, and with the leadership of the Board of Directors and the Community Equity, Health, and Justice Committee, the Air District will develop measurable implementation plans for actions to advance environmental justice in communities across the Bay Area.



# Charting the Course: Actions the Air District Will Take to Advance Environmental Justice Priorities



This chapter presents how the Air District will advance the Community Advisory Council's nine Environmental Justice Priorities. The strategies are taken from the Air District's Strategic Plan. The strategies are overlapping and many of them advance multiple Environmental Justice Priorities. For brevity, this chapter highlights key strategies for each of the nine Environmental Justice Priorities without repeating throughout the chapter. **Appendix D** shows, in greater detail, how the strategies support multiple Environmental Justice Priorities.

In addition, the chapter presents sample actions the Air District will take for each strategy. In the fall of 2024, the Community Advisory Council's Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee will provide input to Air District staff and the Board of Directors in the implementation of the Strategic Plan, including the development of specific actions, milestones, and metrics for the three priority areas: data collection and usage, permitting, and compliance and enforcement.





## PRIORITY 1:

# Advance Environmental Justice



Reducing disparities in air pollution requires a different approach to air quality management with a shift in focus from the regional to the local. Community members understand air quality issues at the neighborhood level. Community members experience firsthand the odors, smoke, dust, particulates, and other pollution stemming from a variety of commercial, industrial, and mobile sources.

Community members also experience air quality within a system of broader concerns and chronic stressors such as environmental, income, health, housing, job security, and other socioeconomic factors. As a result, air quality and health problems require interdisciplinary and intersectional approaches to arrive at solutions that address the root causes of problems, not just symptoms.

Residents are often the first to become aware of air pollution problems or incidents. Their lived observational experience provides information beyond what is available from the limited air quality monitoring systems and stations. Moving forward, meaningful participation by community members must help shape and inform the Air District's decision-making. Partnering with community members to include local experiences and solutions can make a critical difference in demonstrating the significance of the harm and can lead to more effective permitting, compliance, and enforcement. By valuing community voices, expertise, and leadership, the Air District can cultivate innovative, place-based approaches that meet the critical needs of communities on the ground.

*“The community has to state what their wants and needs are. And then the Air District, on the other end, has to be transparent and actually say what’s realistic.”*

—Latasha Washington





# What Does It Mean to Advance Environmental Justice?

## **Value communities and their expertise:**

- Honor the voices, lived experience, and leadership of environmental justice communities
- Build trust with impacted communities
- Develop respectful relationships and partnerships
- Hire prospective staff from these communities
- View communities as a valued resource
- Provide compensation for community members' time and expertise
- Gather input and use that input to directly inform decision-making
- Establish formal participatory processes for addressing and implementing community input and increasing agency accountability
- Provide environmental justice communities with tools to help them address legal barriers to advancing environmental justice

## **Recognize that environmental justice is an intersectional and interdisciplinary field:**

- Dismantle internal silos by reorganizing and restructuring to build an agency structure and culture that supports and encourages cross-divisional work

## **Cultivate a culture of innovation and action:**

- Embrace learning by doing
- Adopt clear definitions for environmental justice and equity (and related terms) that are grounded in community input

# What the Air District Will Do

## **Change Approach to Air Quality** (Strategy 1.1):

The Air District will change its approach to reducing air pollution to include a targeted local approach so that it achieves meaningful improvements to air quality in communities, with a focus on communities overburdened by air pollution.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- Focus on the sources causing the greatest disparities in air pollution and the most harm to communities at the local level, as well as the sources driving up regional levels of air pollution.
- Use the information from detailed assessments of air quality and community vulnerability to prioritize actions that reduce pollution causing inequitable exposures to air toxics and particulate matter (PM 2.5).
- Prioritize actions such as updating sector-specific regulations and other actions including strengthening enforcement and implementing more targeted incentive programs.

**Community Partnership** (Strategy 2.1): The Air District will develop partnerships with communities so they can directly participate in identifying the solutions to the air quality problems that impact them.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- Work with community leaders to develop and define what partnership looks like from their perspective.
- Partner with communities to better understand their experience with air pollution and the sources that concern them, and to identify and prioritize pollution reduction actions with a focus on inequitable exposure.

## **Understand Local Air Pollution** (Strategy 2.7):

The Air District will work with communities overburdened by air pollution to develop a more complete understanding of air pollution in their neighborhoods.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- Use communities' experience and knowledge to inform where the Air District does additional air monitoring, including mobile monitoring and short-term monitoring studies.
- Run air pollution data, including emissions and monitoring data, through computer modeling programs to get a more complete picture of air pollution within specific neighborhoods.

**Address Legal Barriers** (Strategy 2.9): The Air District will work to change laws that prevent the Air District from advancing environmental justice.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- Support state laws that increase the amount of penalties that the Air District can collect for air pollution violations.
- Talk with state legislators and their staff about the local health impacts of air pollution so they may be better positioned to champion legal changes.
- Share with federal and state representatives how the Air District and communities are partnering together to improve local air quality.



## PRIORITY 2:

# Provide Meaningful Agency Support to Advance Environmental Justice



The Air District can support the health and well-being of communities by re-envisioning its mission through the lens of equity and environmental justice. A strong vision that is actively supported by leadership must focus on achieving fair and equitable outcomes of clean air for everyone, as well as striving to eliminate disproportionate harm caused by current and long-standing legacy pollution.

Effective enforcement of stricter rules is a key area where the Air District can make great strides in advancing environmental justice. Communities especially want more transparency and accountability in how the district holds violators accountable. Communities also want greater transparency in how the district works with other private entities and state and municipal agencies to enforce air quality regulations.

In order to provide meaningful support, the Air District will need to dedicate more resources and funding for air quality management approaches that recognize and reduce disparities in local air pollution. This investment to advance environmental justice will enable the Air District to become a more inclusive, accountable, effective, and community-oriented organization.

The Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee emphasized budget allocations, meaningful community participation, and enhanced enforcement and transparency around the permitting process as some of the critical ways the Air District could provide meaningful agency support.



*“We need to take advantage of the strength of the community ... they are always there. Include them in community-engaged monitoring and community-engaged enforcement.”*

—Ken Szutu

Courtesy of Ken Szutu

# How Can the Air District Support and Advance Environmental Justice?

- Provide a strong vision and set a clear tone of accountability so that impacted communities breathe cleaner air
- Use an equity lens to revise internal policies, practices, and procedures
- Use an environmental justice lens to revise mission-related policies, practices, and procedures

## What the Air District Will Do

**Stronger Regulations** (Strategy 1.2): The District will develop stronger regulations, prioritizing those that can improve local air pollution.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- Ensure regulations are updated and that they reflect the agency's current understanding of the health burdens associated with air pollution and include the latest technological advancements in reducing emissions.
- Update an existing regulation when the agency finds that it does not provide adequate health protection or that it includes inappropriate or outdated exemptions.
- If needed, develop new regulations to ensure the appropriate level of health protection for communities.

**New Enforcement Policy** (Strategy 1.6): The Air District will collaborate with communities to develop an enforcement policy to better prevent violations of air quality regulations.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- Develop an enforcement policy that considers environmental justice principles, community voices, experiences, and perspectives.
- Develop and include principles to guide how the Air District evaluates and applies penalties, as allowed by state law, community-focused legal remedies, and consideration of repeat violations.

**Align Resources** (Strategy 4.11): The Air District will be intentional about ensuring that its resources and annual budgets are well-aligned with organization and community priorities.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- Align spending to achieve real impact by adopting new approaches to air quality management that focus on understanding and reducing disparities in local air pollution exposure.



PRIORITY 3:

# Integrate Environmental Justice Considerations in Core Functions



The Community Advisory Council identified seven areas where the Air District can incorporate environmental justice in its core functions. One area with great potential is building the capacity of community members to collect and interpret data to understand local air pollution, community health, and cumulative impacts. By evaluating disparate impacts and recognizing historic harms, the Air District can strengthen enforcement of existing regulations, seek appropriate permitting, and develop more health-protective actions.

It is vitally important that community members understand air quality in their neighborhoods. However, existing data is challenging to use, especially if it is used to understand and reduce environmental injustice. For example, most health data is available at a census tract, ZIP code, city, or county level, which can complicate assessment between different neighborhoods or parts of a community.

Understanding the connections between air quality and health is made especially difficult by cumulative impacts that occur when various government entities allow polluting activities, such as industry, to make individual facility decisions that, when added together, can cause impacts that accumulate over time and increase environmental exposures in nearby communities. It is important to collaborate with communities to prioritize pollution reduction efforts by considering cumulative impacts and focusing on addressing inequitable exposures. It would also be beneficial for the Air District to work in collaboration with communities to create new enforcement policies and plans to incorporate robust, legally admissible data from communities into enforcement efforts. By incorporating environmental justice in its core functions, the Air District can address these complex factors that affect people's health, well-being, and quality of life.



Courtesy of Ken Szutu

*“I definitely hope in the future that we start looking at health risks with some of our decision-making. Health risk assessments should be a driver of enforcement and regulatory action.”*

—Latasha Washington

# Seven Areas Where the Air District Should Incorporate Environmental Justice

- Community-based science
- Real-time air monitoring and data collection
- Public health considerations
- Cumulative impact analysis
- Disparate impact analysis and civil rights compliance
- Recognition of historical impacts and damages
- Recognition of the need for restorative steps

## What the Air District Will Do

**Collect Community Data** (Strategy 2.2): The Air District will build community capacity to collect air pollution data and utilize this data to reduce the pollution that most harms communities.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- Provide community members with air quality data collection tools.
- Work with communities to collect data (with appropriate quality assurance and quality control) that can help with improved enforcement, more stringent regulations, better targeted or new incentive programs, or other programs and policies to reduce pollution.

**Cumulative Health Impacts** (Strategy 2.11):

The Air District will develop its understanding of the cumulative effects of air pollution and other stressors, and use this information to focus regulatory efforts in areas experiencing the most air pollution and related cumulative impacts.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- Develop a better understanding of where cumulative impacts exist and how they should be considered in Air District and local government decision-making.
- Explore how to further consider cumulative impacts in the Air District's programs, including permitting, regulations, and compliance.



PRIORITY 4:

# Implement Environmental Justice Best Practices and Innovation



The Community Advisory Council identified seven areas where the Air District can incorporate best practices to better serve people living in areas overburdened by air pollution.

Information through enhanced data collection and analysis is key for understanding which sources of pollution are most harmful to community members. For example, flaring is a major concern for people living near refineries, since it can periodically release uncertain, and potentially unsafe, amounts of air pollution. With better information, the Air District can focus its inspection resources where they will have the greatest impact on compliance, and therefore the greatest benefits to community air quality and health.

In September 2017 a new state law, Assembly Bill 617, fundamentally changed how local air districts approach air quality planning. The law requires all major air districts to partner with those communities selected by the state to develop plans to reduce air pollution in their neighborhoods. The Air District already maintains a comprehensive air quality monitoring network that includes over 30 monitoring stations across the Bay Area's nine counties. Upgrading its network will allow for better access to a wider range of data by the public.

Through enhanced monitoring and increased knowledge and adoption of best practices, the Air District can use its inspections, enforcement, permitting, and legal authority to ensure that all industries and businesses in the Bay Area are minimizing air pollution and complying with the law, especially those located in communities overburdened by air pollution.



Courtesy of Ken Szutu

*“The community should be able to read the District’s air monitors at any time. We should be able to install a monitor to share the data we are seeing on the community level in real time, and the data should feed into and speak to the Air District’s system. Not two sets of data, but data that speaks to each other.”*

—John Kevin Jefferson III

# Seven Areas Where the Air District Should Implement Environmental Justice Best Practices

- Data collection and analysis
- Measuring and monitoring
- Permitting
- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis
- Inspections
- Enforcement
- Legal actions, including litigation, mitigation, planning, rulemaking, and incentives funding





# What the Air District Will Do

**Minimize Flaring** (Strategy 1.3): The Air District will minimize flaring at oil refineries to lessen the impact flaring has on nearby communities, including air pollution and odors.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- Increase public engagement on refinery flaring.
- Increase inspections and air pollution monitoring where flaring occurs.

**Consistent Permits** (Strategy 4.3): The Air District will ensure that its regulations and associated air quality permits issued are clear, consistent, and enforceable so that air pollution affecting communities is minimized.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- Ensure permits are written consistently and clearly and that they protect the public's health to the greatest extent that regulations allow.
- Ensure regulations are clear and enforceable when included in a permit.
- Review how the Air District issues permits to ensure that they are consistent with civil rights laws and regulations.

**Improve Air Monitoring** (Strategy 4.4): The Air District will update the design and operations of the air quality monitoring network to improve reliability, efficiency, data quality, and accessibility to better meet monitoring objectives and to support efforts to understand local exposure to air pollution.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- Evaluate the monitoring network for possible changes and improvements, considering community input.
- Consider the placement of monitors relative to the location of communities overburdened by air pollution.

**Improve Compliance Investigations** (Strategy 4.5): The Air District will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of inspection and investigation resources to improve compliance and increase the impact of its enforcement program.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- Target inspections in the areas where they are most needed for determining compliance with permits and regulations.



## PRIORITY 5:

# Communicate with Clarity, Transparency, and Integrity



Communities with a long history of being exposed to pollution understandably do not always trust government agencies. They have little faith that government agencies will protect them from pollution, including air pollution. They want more transparency and information on how the Air District will protect them and hold industries, businesses, and others accountable for polluting their communities.

The complaint system is an important place to improve the Air District’s responsiveness. Community members have become frustrated when the Air District cannot track down the source of the problem or does not follow up sufficiently with the person submitting the complaint to note how it was addressed. Community members would like to see improvements to the complaint confirmation process, including more robust data collection, transparent communication with the complainant, and capacity-building support for how community members can better inform the Air District about complaints. Another area of concern expressed by communities is their ability to remain informed and engaged throughout the permitting process. The criteria for publicly available information about the status of permit applications and approvals are often unclear to the community. Community members need timely information communicated in more accessible ways with transparent, understandable, less technical language.

Through clear and transparent communications, the Air District can build trust. Through the process of deep listening and accountability, the Air District can drive transformative change within its agency and how it carries out its regulatory charge.

*“When the Air District revises its complaint policy, it can’t be internal to the agency—they should invite the Community Advisory Council to engage. How is the plan going to allow for and invite more input in practice?”*

—Rio Molina



Courtesy of Ken Szutu



# How Can the Air District Enhance Clarity, Transparency, and Integrity in Communications?

- Communicate the agency's role, responsibilities, and limitations
- Identify and share with communities where there is room to grow, and create plans for improvement
- Identify how the agency intends to bring about transformational change within the agency's regulatory charge



# What the Air District Will Do

**Make Data Accessible** (Strategy 2.3): The Air District will give communities the tools and data they need to access and understand air pollution data so they can be better informed of any potential air pollution problems.<sup>4</sup>

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- Make air quality data more available, accessible, and understandable.
- Prepare an inventory of available data.
- Work with community members to better describe available data and understand how they want to access it.

**Air Quality Complaints** (Strategy 2.5): The Air District will improve the complaint process to ensure it is effective and transparent.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- Improve the transparency of complaint outcomes and follow up with community members on what the problem was and how it was resolved.
- Ensure responsiveness, including during nights, weekends, and holidays.
- Enhance the air pollution incident response program, in collaboration with community partners, to better respond to and communicate about air quality during emergencies or unpermitted releases.

**Talk with Communities** (Strategy 2.6): The Air District will talk with communities about their air pollution concerns and how the agency is addressing them, and it will be responsive to the concerns community members raise.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- Develop a structured program to meet regularly with community members to talk about air

pollution in their neighborhoods, including: compliance and enforcement activities, recent incidents or other air pollution violations, the Air District's enforcement response, the extent of public harm, and legal actions we may take.

**Customer Service** (Strategy 4.7): The Air District will strengthen its employees' organization-wide knowledge and communication skills, and change its organization as needed, so people experience the highest level of service from the Air District.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- Have employees serve as liaisons to community members, to ensure they receive timely, accurate responses to their concerns and questions.

**Transparent Permit Process** (Strategy 4.2): The Air District will improve its permitting process to be more transparent and accountable to applicants and the public.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- Build trust with the community and with permit applicants by providing more information throughout the process, which will promote more meaningful engagement for everyone.
- Improve how the Air District communicates information about permits and the permitting process to communities and applicants using more understandable, less technical language.

**Civil Rights Laws** (Strategy 2.10): The Air District will advance and prioritize compliance with civil rights laws, including the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related California laws.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- Implement the Air District's Plan for Language Services to Limited English Proficient Populations to ensure compliance with civil rights laws.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The Air District's Notices of Violation (NOV) web tool allows the public to access enforcement information concerning NOV's issued to facilities across the Bay Area. ([www.baaqmd.gov/en/rules-and-compliance/compliance-assistance/notices-of-violations/novs-issued](http://www.baaqmd.gov/en/rules-and-compliance/compliance-assistance/notices-of-violations/novs-issued)).

<sup>5</sup> The Air District's Disability Access Plan, Language Access Plan, and Public Participation Plan can be found at [www.baaqmd.gov/en/contact-us/non-discrimination](http://www.baaqmd.gov/en/contact-us/non-discrimination).



PRIORITY 6:

# Grow the Capacity of Air District Staff and Board Members to Integrate Environmental Justice



The Air District has air pollution expertise, vast amounts of air quality data, and knowledge of how various government agencies at the local, state, and federal levels can help address community problems. However, the agency still needs to improve its understanding of sources that can have air pollution impacts at the local or neighborhood level.

The Air District will need to build its capacity to advance environmental justice, including by focusing more attention at the local level. Environmental justice expertise in the agency is not diffused throughout the agency in a way that best serves communities who are overburdened by air and other pollution.

Capacity building also includes diversifying the Air District’s staff. Having a diverse workforce means that the organization reflects the people and communities it serves. The San Francisco Bay Area is one of the most diverse places in the world. It is important that the Air District prioritizes being just as diverse. Over the years, diversity at the Air District has increased to better reflect our region, including the communities who have been long harmed by air pollution. It will be important that the agency continue to recruit, develop, and welcome people who have firsthand experience of the impacts of air pollution, who know the challenges and are invested in solutions. When people work with government agency staff who are like them and who understand their day-to-day experiences, it instills trust.



Courtesy of Ken Szutu

*“Staff should have community-level experience so they can understand the problem better. And in order to create any change, we have to allocate staff time and resources dedicated to this change. Otherwise change is not going to happen.”*

—Ken Szutu

# How Must the Air District Grow the Capacity of Air District Staff and Board?

- Integrate environmental justice in their day-to-day roles and responsibilities
- Develop buy-in at the middle management level
- Establish environmental justice as a core competency
- Prioritize hiring, retention, and promotion of staff with lived experience living in and/or working with frontline communities
- Ensure that staff and leadership reflect the broad ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, and gender diversity of the communities the agency serves





# What the Air District Will Do

**Community Partnership** (Strategy 2.1): The Air District will develop partnerships with communities so they can directly participate in the development of solutions to air quality problems that impact them.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- Partner with communities to prioritize pollution reduction actions with a focus on inequitable exposure.
- Work with communities to develop a new enforcement policy and to talk about compliance and enforcement efforts, air quality data needs, new funding programs, and to reimagine our existing policies and programs.

**A Diverse Workforce** (Strategy 3.1): The Air District will build on its efforts to ensure its workforce is diverse and reflective of the communities it serves to instill community trust and develop better solutions to air quality problems.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- For all levels of the organization, establish recruitment, retention, and advancement policies and practices that promote diversity and inclusion.
- Implement targeted recruitment strategies to attract candidates from diverse backgrounds and life experiences.
- Create professional development programs tailored to the needs of employees from diverse backgrounds.

**Environmental Justice Expertise** (Strategy 3.4): The Air District will increase the capacity and effectiveness of employees, Board members, and advisory bodies to advance environmental justice and to better integrate environmental justice into all aspects of its work.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- Train Board and Advisory Council members, and employees at all levels of the organization on environmental justice principles and issues.
- Include environmental justice training in new employee onboarding and at regular intervals for existing staff.
- Add advancing environmental justice and equity as a core competency in all employees' performance plans and reviews.
- Develop environmental justice teams and have them review compliance with civil rights laws and regulations.





## PRIORITY 7:

# Grow the Capacity of Environmental Justice Communities and Organizations



Community-based organizations and community members require resources in order to consistently be able to provide their expertise about air quality and health issues affecting their neighborhoods. It takes experience, time, and knowledge to engage effectively in participatory processes such as serving on advisory groups, attending public meetings, providing public comments, and engaging in community science. It takes expertise, knowledge, tools, and skills to collect data, make sense of the data, and offer analysis that informs the Air District's decision-making and priorities.

Community members have also expressed that the Air District's funding programs are not directly responsive to their needs or are difficult to access. Additionally, state and federal funding requirements significantly limit who can apply and the kinds of projects that can be funded. Often, the application and reporting requirements are cumbersome and stringent, and not designed for neighborhood-level organizations.

Communities would like more involvement in advising about possible types of neighborhood-focused projects that could be funded by the Air District. They would also like to be directly involved in the implementation of some projects and have greater workforce and skills development opportunities. Many communities nationally have implemented Resilience Hubs as a shared resource to address environmental justice, climate justice, and local quality-of-life priorities.<sup>6</sup>

Public participation and community coordination are especially important in directing funds to advance environmental justice and community benefits. In 2021, the Air District created a Community Benefit Fund of \$3 million for projects that will directly benefit communities. The Community Advisory Council's Community Benefit Fund Ad Hoc Committee is developing a plan for a participatory budgeting process to disseminate these funds with community input from the most impacted communities. In May 2024, the Air District also adopted a new Air District Penalty Policy that will direct a portion of the money generated through penalties back into communities where the violation occurred. By seeking appropriate legal remedies, the Air District can not only protect communities but also provide the funding for much-needed investment.

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<sup>6</sup> For more information on Resilience Hubs, see:

- PSE Healthy Energy. 2024. "Exploring Potential Resilience Hubs in California." Retrieved from: [www.psehealthyenergy.org/work/exploring-potential-resilience-hubs-in-california/](http://www.psehealthyenergy.org/work/exploring-potential-resilience-hubs-in-california/).

- Urban Sustainability Directors Network. 2024. "Resilience Hubs." Retrieved from: [resilience-hub.org](http://resilience-hub.org).

Community members are also interested in mitigation programs that have an immediate impact on improving health outcomes and overall quality of life. For example, the Air District currently distributes air cleaners and replacement filters to schools and community members through partnerships with community-based agencies in the most impacted areas. Through community-directed decisions on how penalty funds are distributed, air filter programs—as well as other immediate impact projects—could be chosen for continuation and expansion.

With greater resources that amplify their existing strengths and expertise, community-based organizations and residents can more effectively partner with the Air District to drive systemic change that can lead to more durable air quality improvements and health benefits for their communities.



Courtesy of Ken Szutu

*“There is such an opportunity to build more intentional partnerships with community and community leaders, especially with those on the ground. The District needs to build trust. This happens in part by investing in communities and deeply listening to community-based organizations and leaders who are doing the work.”*

—Fagamalama Violet Saena

*“The strategic investment of dollars into our communities is so important. And it’s also about providing community members resources to be able to manage those dollars right. So to not only create rebate programs that benefit cleaner air and things like that. But really resourcing communities so that they can benefit, so that they can apply for these funding opportunities that exist within the Air District.”*

—Joy Massey





# How Can the Air District Grow the Capacity of Environmental Justice Communities and Organizations?

Drive systemic change by:

- Creating economic benefits and workforce opportunities in environmental justice communities
- Enabling communities to access and manage resources to address disparities
- Ensuring that environmental justice communities benefit from and have a say in the use of related funds

## What the Air District Will Do

**Reimagine Funding** (Strategy 1.4): The Air District will reimagine funding programs so that they better benefit communities impacted by air pollution.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- Change funding programs to provide greater benefits at community, neighborhood, and household levels, including through input from community members and from what the agency learns about which sources of air pollution cause the most harm to communities.
- Where possible, reduce barriers to applying for funds and develop creative solutions to fund a wider variety of projects that respond to community needs.
- Work with communities to identify and access new, non–Air District funding sources, such as state, federal, or other grants, and consider submitting joint funding proposals.

- Talk with communities about defining new project ideas, and in the funding application process. If possible, partner with communities on project implementation.

**Community-Directed Funds** (Strategy 2.8): The Air District will manage funds to benefit communities in partnership with those communities, including money that the Air District collects in penalties from air pollution violations affecting them.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- In collaboration with the Community Advisory Council and local community-based organizations, develop a community-led process where communities participate in decisions on how to spend the Community Benefit Fund.
- Establish a team within the Air District to administer the portion of penalty funds distributed to affected communities and the broader region, in consultation with the communities and region.

PRIORITY 8:

# Seek Appropriate Legal Remedies and Coordinate with Communities



Communities need stronger compliance with, and enforcement of, regulations that minimize the pollution sources contributing most to local disparities. By working with community partners, the Air District can change its air quality approach to better understand which sources contribute the most to local air pollution and which actions can be most impactful in reducing pollution from those sources.

The Air District also has limited information on the public health consequences of a violation, or potential cost savings to the violators from actions that led to the violations. Such additional information could be useful in building more stringent enforcement actions and related penalty assessments for violations. This, in turn, could better deter industries from violating regulations and improve future compliance.

It is especially important for the Air District to hear from community members on how an air quality violation impacted them. This requires that the agency's public participation practices be inclusive and nondiscriminatory, with access to programs for people with limited English proficiency and for people with disabilities, which are both elements of complying with civil rights laws.



*“The polluters need to know that not only are we trying to understand air pollution in a local context (rather than a regional context), we also want to put them on notice!”*

—Rio Molina

Courtesy of Ken Szutu



# What Are Ways the Agency Must Seek Appropriate Legal Remedies?

- Collaborate and coordinate with environmental justice communities on new policies and other remedies
- Impose high enough penalties to discourage repeated violations
- Reach deterrence-based outcomes with violators

## What the Air District Will Do

### **Enhance Violation Investigations** (Strategy 1.5):

The Air District will enhance its procedures for investigating violations of Air District regulations in communities overburdened by air pollution to better protect community health.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- Develop a way for community members to tell the Air District how the violation affected them.
- Better quantify the extent of emissions that violate regulations in overburdened communities and, where possible, analyze the public health impacts of violations (such as using health risk and health impact assessments).
- Investigate a violator's avoided costs that may have encouraged repeat violations in overburdened communities.

**Community-Directed Funds** (Strategy 2.8): The Air District will manage funds to benefit communities in partnership with those communities, including money that the Air District collects in penalties from air pollution violations affecting them.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- Establish a team within the Air District to administer the portion of penalty funds distributed to affected communities and the broader region, in consultation with the communities and region.

**Civil Rights Laws** (Strategy 2.10): The Air District will advance and prioritize compliance with civil rights laws, including the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related California laws.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- Ensure the agency is complying with federal civil rights laws and regulations, possibly drawing from the United States Environmental Protection Agency's guidance that helps state and local governments comply with civil rights laws in their permitting programs.

PRIORITY 9:

# Provide Technical Assistance to Local Governments



The Air District does not have the sole responsibility to reduce health impacts of air quality and hold violators accountable. The policies and practices of local governments and state laws also drive decision-making and planning impacting air quality and public health in communities. Staff in local governments and legislators also need greater awareness, knowledge, and expertise to advance environmental justice to the fullest extent of their respective authorities.

Most actions the Air District can take to reduce pollution are authorized and/or restricted by state and federal laws. The sources the Air District can regulate, how it issues and enforces permits, and the penalties it can assess are all bound by law and regulation. Some of these laws can act as barriers to advancing environmental justice. For example, state law sets limits on penalties the Air District can collect for air quality violations of its permits and regulations.

Communities also rely on multiple government agencies to respond to air pollution incidents. These agencies include city and county governments, the fire department, the local public health department, hazardous materials response units, and specialized pollution control agencies like the Air District.

There are also decisions that are at the forefront of affecting air quality at the local level, but are outside the Air District's authority. Especially influential are local land use and zoning plans, policies, and permitting decisions. They shape the built environment and can be instrumental in advancing environmental justice, building community resilience, and elevating local climate priorities.

Given the shared responsibility to support air quality and health in communities, the Air District can build relationships with local leadership and use its knowledge and resources to deliver technical assistance to build the capacity of local governments.



Courtesy of Ken Szutu

*“I really feel like people are listening. If we do this properly, this could go everywhere. It is my dream to implement this in the other two big air districts in the state. Together, the three big districts will have the influence to inform the other smaller districts, and the big three can influence each other.”*

—John Kevin Jefferson III



# How Can the Air District Provide Technical Assistance to Local Governments?

- Provide support to incorporate environmental justice analysis in local land use, planning, and zoning decision-making
- Incorporate environmental justice analysis in Air District permitting practices
- Support counties in the development of environmental justice elements in General Plans
- Provide technical assistance to local governments to integrate environmental justice policy, and help establish a plan for implementation and enforcement of environmental regulations
- Build relationships with local leadership and collaborate on addressing air pollution





# What the Air District Will Do

**Community Health Data** (Strategy 2.4): The Air District will provide communities with better health information, so they know the health implications of air pollution and are better able to participate in decision-making.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- Use Health Impact Assessment methodologies that consider input from community members and other agencies, to determine the potential effects of a proposed policy, program, or project on community health.
- Work with health care providers to gain access to better data and with community members to collect neighborhood, block-by-block level data.

**Air Quality Incidents** (Strategy 4.8): The Air District will enhance its incident response program in collaboration with government partners.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

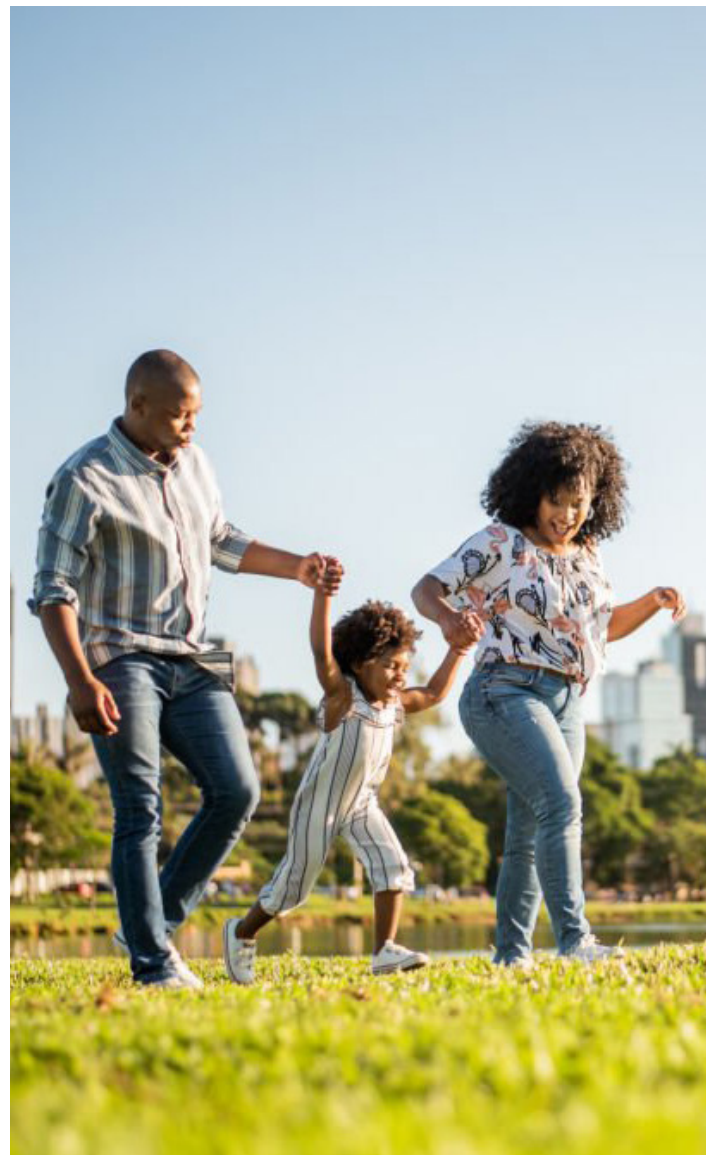
- Work with industry, community, and other local agencies to establish better systems to detect and assess emissions from incidents.
- Deliver short, understandable, actionable alerts during incidents, and more robust and transparent after-incident resolution and investigations.



**Land Use Impacts** (Strategy 4.9): The Air District will provide tools for local governments to consider environmental justice, air quality, and climate priorities in local land use plans, policies, projects, and permitting decisions.

*A sample of Air District actions:*

- Develop, share, and support the use of data, tools, and best practices to enable local governments to incorporate air quality, climate, and environmental justice analyses and solutions more effectively into local land use planning, policies, and permitting practices. Provide guidance on how to strategically use land use regulations to address and prevent incompatible land uses.





# The Journey Ahead: Implementation and Accountability



As the Air District moves forward, the Community Advisory Council will remain a steadfast advocate for implementation of the Environmental Justice Priorities. It will also remain an active collaborator in cultivating the conditions needed for the Air District to be an effective partner with frontline communities who are most affected by pollution, and to improve air quality and overall environmental justice outcomes in those communities.

## What the Air District Will Do

In the **2024 – 2029 Strategic Plan**, the Air District has committed to accountability through action, including:

### 1. Action Plans and Performance Metrics:

Develop action plans, initiatives, and programs for actions advancing the strategies in the Strategic Plan, including performance timelines, milestones, metrics, and targets.

### 2. Resource Alignment:

Align resources and budget priorities with the goals of the Strategic Plan.

### 3. Progress Reports:

Develop a website where the Air District's commitments and progress against those commitments can be tracked, and provide an annual report on progress.

### 4. Updating the Strategic Plan:

Conduct a full review and update of the Strategic Plan every five years.

Furthermore, Air District staff leadership, technical staff, and the Board of Directors will be in conversation with the Community Advisory Council regarding progress updates on implementation. The Community Advisory Council may also form new Ad Hoc Committees to engage in focused collaborative efforts with Air District staff and leadership on specific plans, initiatives, or programs.

Finally and perhaps most significantly, in response to Environmental Justice Priority 5: Communicate with Clarity, Transparency, and Integrity, the Air District has committed to developing more regular opportunities for direct updates to and dialogue with environmental justice communities and residents.

*“I am hopeful that there will be real change for environmental justice communities, but I also recognize we are still in the strategic planning development process. What would drive my hope up even more is seeing a timeline of prioritization of the actions for each of the Environmental Justice Priorities and understanding who is holding the Air District accountable and to what measures of accountability.”*

—Joy Massey

This will include:

- Development of “a structured program to meet regularly with community members to talk about air pollution in their neighborhoods, including: compliance and enforcement activities, recent incidents or other air pollution violations, the Air District’s enforcement response, the extent of public harm, and legal actions we may take.”
- Having employees serve as liaisons to community members, to ensure they receive timely, accurate responses to their concerns and questions.



# How You Can Stay Up to Date and Get Involved

The success of the Air District's environmental justice efforts is dependent on our ability to effectively partner with frontline communities. We need your support, advocacy, and collaboration!

To stay informed on the latest implementation updates:

1. Check the Air District's Strategic Plan website: [baaqmd.gov/strategicplan](https://baaqmd.gov/strategicplan).
2. **Attend or view recordings** and materials from Board meetings and Community Advisory Council meetings.

For more information on the Community Advisory Council, visit our [Community Advisory Council webpage](#). To explore joining the Community Advisory Council when seats become available, contact the Community Advisory Council staff at [communityadvisorycouncil@baaqmd.gov](mailto:communityadvisorycouncil@baaqmd.gov).

Community Advisory Council seats are on two-year and four-year cycles.





# Appendices





# Appendix A. The Principles of Environmental Justice

The environmental justice movement was galvanized in 1987, when the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice released a study demonstrating that across the country, toxic and hazardous waste facilities were overwhelmingly located in or near Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities. In 1991, delegates to the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit drafted and adopted the *Principles of Environmental Justice*, and it has served as the defining document and set of central organizing principles for the burgeoning environmental justice movement.

- 1. Environmental justice** affirms the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction.
- 2. Environmental justice** demands that public policy be based on mutual respect and justice for all peoples, free from any form of discrimination or bias.
- 3. Environmental justice** mandates the right to ethical, balanced, and responsible uses of land and renewable resources in the interest of a sustainable planet for humans and other living things.
- 4. Environmental justice** calls for universal protection from nuclear testing, extraction, production and disposal of toxic/hazardous wastes and poisons and nuclear testing that threaten the fundamental right to clean air, land, water, and food.
- 5. Environmental justice** affirms the fundamental right to political, economic, cultural, and environmental self-determination of all peoples.
- 6. Environmental justice** demands the cessation of the production of all toxins, hazardous wastes, and radioactive materials, and that all past and current producers be held strictly accountable to the people for detoxification and the containment at the point of production.
- 7. Environmental justice** demands the right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision-making including needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement, and evaluation.
- 8. Environmental justice** affirms the right of all workers to a safe and healthy work environment, without being forced to choose between an unsafe livelihood and unemployment. It also affirms the right of those who work at home to be free from environmental hazards.
- 9. Environmental justice** protects the right of victims of environmental injustice to receive full compensation and reparations for damages as well as quality health care.
- 10. Environmental justice** considers governmental acts of environmental injustice a violation of international law, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and the United Nations Convention on Genocide.
- 11. Environmental justice** must recognize a special legal and natural relationship of Native Peoples to the U.S. government through treaties, agreements, compacts, and covenants affirming sovereignty and self-determination.
- 12. Environmental justice** affirms the need for urban and rural ecological policies to clean up and rebuild our cities and rural areas in balance with nature, honoring the cultural integrity of all our communities, and providing fair access for all to the full range of resources.



**13. Environmental justice** calls for the strict enforcement of principles of informed consent, and a halt to the testing of experimental reproductive and medical procedures and vaccinations on people of color.

**14. Environmental justice** opposes the destructive operations of multi-national corporations.

**15. Environmental justice** opposes military occupation, repression and exploitation of lands, peoples and cultures, and other life forms.

**16. Environmental justice** calls for the education of present and future generations which emphasizes social and environmental issues, based on our experience and an appreciation of our diverse cultural perspectives.

**17. Environmental justice** requires that we, as individuals, make personal and consumer choices to consume as little of Mother Earth's resources and to produce as little waste as possible; and make the conscious decision to challenge and reprioritize our lifestyles to ensure the health of the natural world for present and future generations.





# Appendix B. What is an Environmental Justice Community?

There is no single definition for communities that are disproportionately affected by air pollution. And while the Air District believes that all communities will benefit from cleaner air across the Bay Area, it is still important to understand those communities that are intended to directly benefit from the Community Advisory Council's *Call to Action*.

The Air District uses descriptive terms for these communities such as "environmental justice," "impacted," "frontline," "overburdened," and "AB 617." Some terms are codified in statute, others are defined for the purpose of delivering funding, and others are used for narrower purposes in Air District rules. As a starting point, The **Environmental Justice Chapter (2) of the Air District's CEQA guidelines** contains the following definitions:

- **Overburdened Community:** This term refers to an area located within a census tract identified by the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen) version 4.0 as having an overall CalEnviroScreen score at or above the 70th percentile, or located within 1,000 feet of any such census tract.
- **AB 617 Community:** An Assembly Bill (AB) 617 community is affected by a high cumulative exposure burden for toxic air contaminants and criteria air pollutants, selected by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) governing board, that works with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Air District) to develop and implement community air monitoring plans and emission reduction programs to reduce air pollution and the associated health impacts within the community.

As of summer 2024, the **AB 617 communities** in the Bay Area are West Oakland, Richmond/North Richmond/San Pablo, East Oakland, and BayView Hunters Point. In April 2024, the Path to Clean Air Community Steering Committee of their community representatives and the Air District co-wrote a report, **Path to Clean Air**, which was adopted a month later by the Air District's Board of Directors.

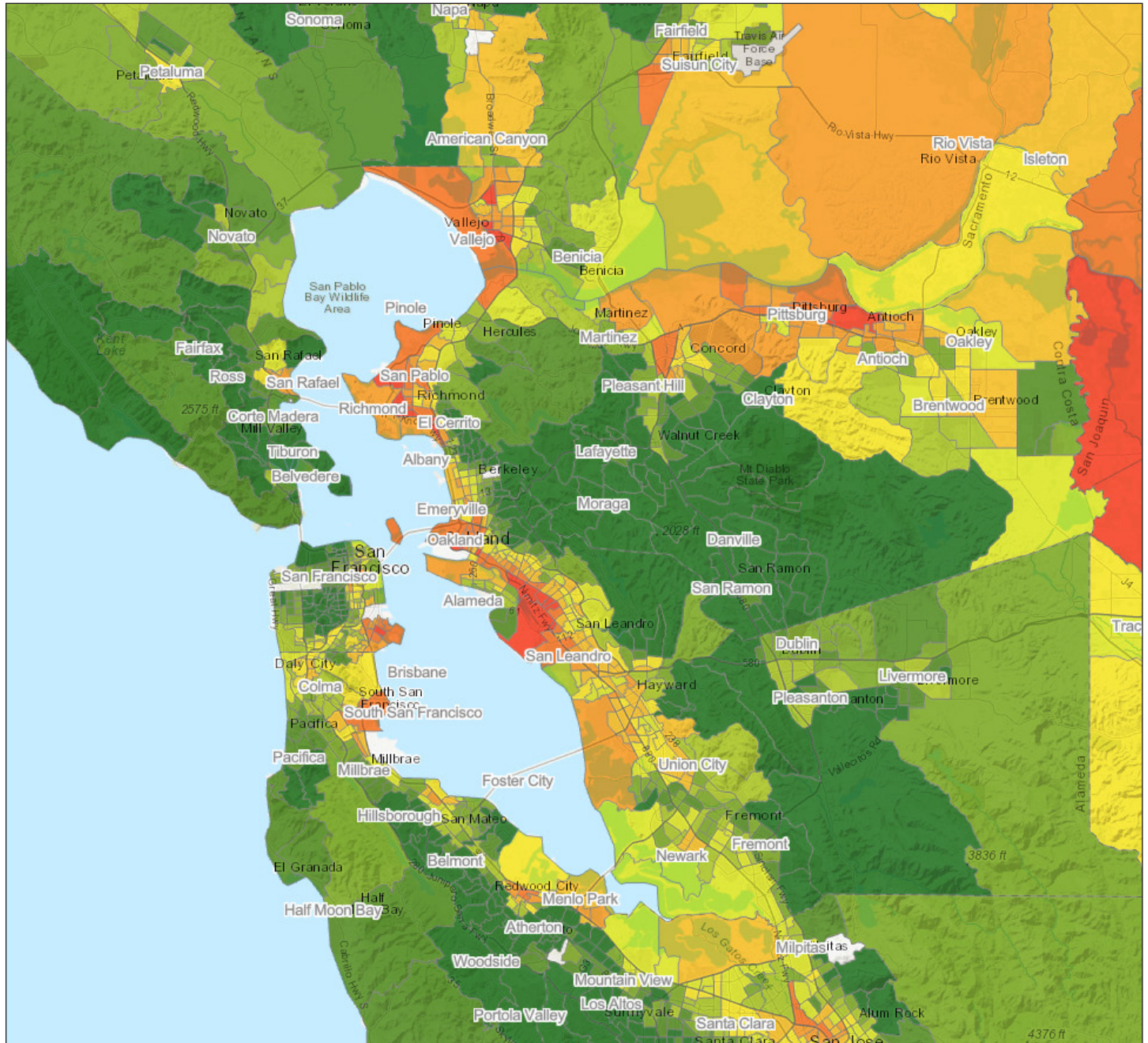
- **Priority Community:** Additionally, the Community Advisory Council's Community Benefits Fund Ad Hoc Committee is working on a definition for "priority communities" that aligns with how the Air District's Investments team disburses funding according to State requirements. The California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) has developed a **Priority Populations 2023 (ca.gov)** map. The map uses **CalEnviroScreen 4.0**, which shows cumulative impacts in California communities by census tract and the American Indian Areas Related National Geodatabase.<sup>7</sup> You can find specific information about priority communities in nine Bay Area counties at **Priority Populations 2023 (ca.gov)**

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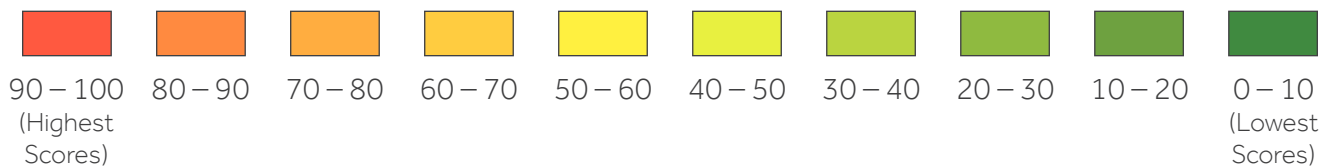
<sup>7</sup> As defined by the state, priority communities include: Low-income communities and households are defined as the census tracts and households, respectively, that are either at or below 80% of the statewide median income, or at or below the threshold designated as low-income by the California Department of Housing and Community Development's Revised 2021 State Income Limits. Disadvantaged community designations per Senate Bill (SB) 535 (De León, Chapter 830, Statutes of 2012). Low-income definitions per Assembly Bill (AB) 1550 (Gomez, Chapter 369, Statutes of 2016).

# CalEnviroScreen Map of the Bay Area

The map below shows cumulative impact data from different levels of pollution and socioeconomic factors affecting Bay Area communities. The higher percentiles (in red) represent a higher burden of pollution from air, water, and land contaminants as well as poorer health outcomes, economic burdens, and other social inequities. Various indicator maps by census tract like this are available through [CalEnviroScreen](#).



**Overall Percentile** — CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Results





# Appendix C. The Environmental Justice Action Planning Process

As the Community Advisory Council called the Air District to action on environmental justice, the Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee of the council was tasked with shaping a community-focused Environmental Justice Action Planning Process supported by the Board of Directors and in collaboration with Air District staff.

This appendix summarizes the Environmental Justice Action Planning Process, including how the Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee informed the Air District's strategic planning efforts. While the Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee's discussions with Air District leaders and staff were wide-ranging and influenced the full breadth of strategies selected for the Strategic Plan, the Committee chose to prioritize three focus areas for deeper conversation and environmental justice action development:

- Data collection and usage
- Permitting
- Compliance and enforcement

The environmental justice actions developed through these conversations form the majority of the actions described in the chapter "Charting the Course: Actions the Air District Will Take to Advance Environmental Justice Priorities" in *A Call to Action*.

*"This has been monumental. I think this has been a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. And not even once in a lifetime, because I hope that this happens again. What's happening in this process is change, right? It's innovation. And this should be happening in other spaces. So how do we continue to foster this and replicate this?"*

*I want the process documented. So not only do I want the action plan and its outcomes documented, but also what was the process to get us to this point. There's so much learning from our process to get to the environmental justice action plan that should be told. Like the conversation around trust-building and what was done there with staff. And what it took to even get those nine Environmental Justice Priorities. You know, just documenting the process because there's so much learning in that.*

*Sometimes folks are quick to tear down the process. But if people really knew what the process has been for the environmental justice action plan, there ain't much to tear down, in my opinion, if any at all."*

—Joy Massey

# Environmental Justice Action Planning: Dialogue, Collaboration in the Air District’s Strategic Plan Process, and Co-Creation of Environmental Justice Actions

Over the course of the last two years, the Community Advisory Council’s Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee has been meeting regularly with several of the Air District’s senior leaders and their staff to discuss in more detail what the environmental justice challenges are, gain a better understanding of the tools available to meet those challenges, identify priority areas of concern, and discuss different approaches to begin to solve many long-standing issues.

These conversations occurred in parallel with the Air District’s Strategic Plan process, which took place between September 2023 and the fall of 2024. Figure 1 demonstrates the timeline of parallel activities in the Strategic Plan and Environmental Justice Action Plan processes. As described in more detail below the figure, the work of the

Environmental Justice Action Planning Process directly informed the outcomes of the Strategic Plan and its environmental justice–focused strategies.

To help drive and focus Environmental Justice Action Planning conversations as strategic planning progressed, the Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee members identified three focus areas where they felt that early and consistent implementation from the Air District could have a significant impact for environmental justice communities.

Via multiple conversations in Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee meetings between January and April 2024, the committee members, senior leaders from the Air District, and Air District staff delved deeper into these three focus areas, learning from each other about existing conditions,

## Working Timelines for Development of EJ Action Plan and Strategic Plan

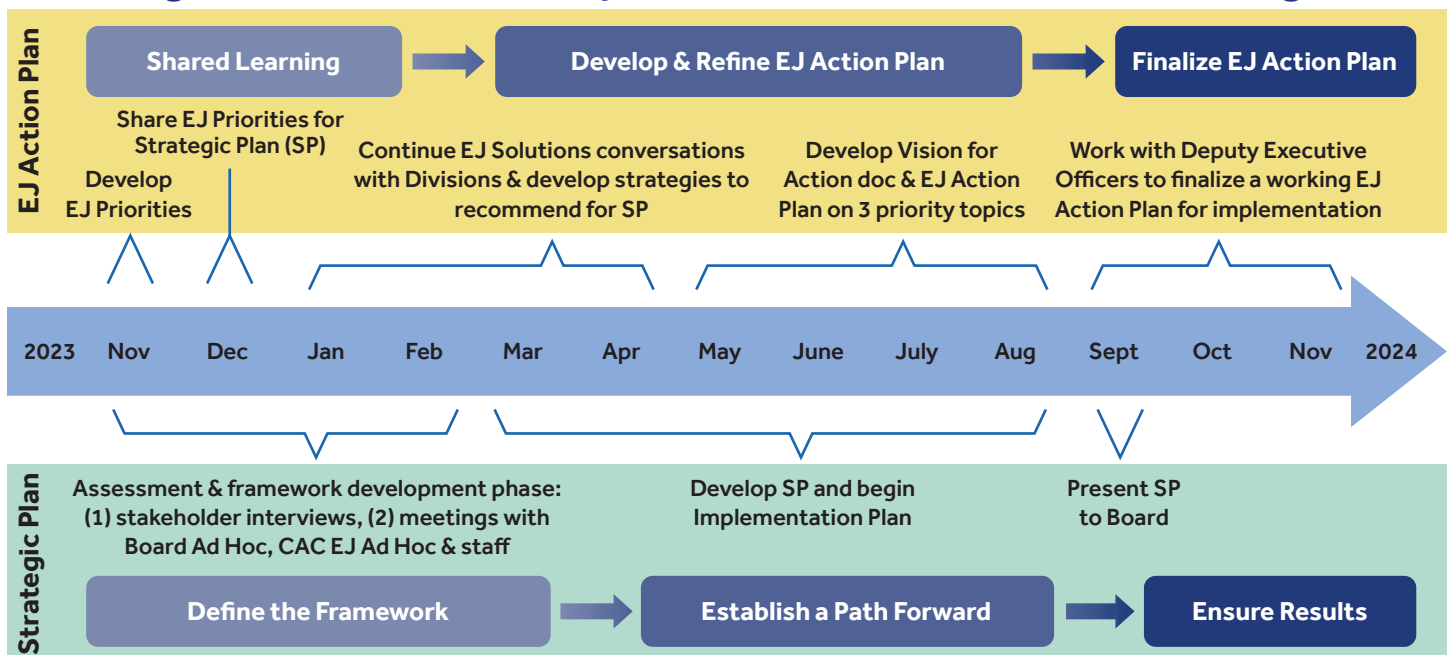


Figure 1. Working timelines for development of the Environmental Justice Action Plan and Strategic Plan



problem areas from the committee members' perspectives, and constraints and opportunities from the Air District's perspective. The collaborative and learning-oriented spirit of these conversations naturally surfaced a large number of "Environmental Justice Solution Ideas"—a mix of potential strategies and actions for the Air District to evaluate.

As a result of these intensive conversations, the Air District's senior leaders—who were also engaged in the Air District's strategic planning process—proactively considered how the environmental justice actions under discussion in the Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee meetings could drive strategies in the Strategic Plan, and which actions could be prioritized for near-term implementation.

In May 2024, the Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee, several of the Air District's senior leaders, and other staff met in a full-day working session to hear and discuss various approaches that the Air District's leadership had identified to address the environmental justice concerns that the Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee had prioritized. Senior leadership gave presentations describing (1) the shift in the Air District's thinking from a regional air quality approach to a localized approach that addresses environmental injustice, and (2) potential actions the Air District could take under the Strategic Plan to address the Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee's three priority environmental justice concerns. Robust conversation, dialogue, and collaboration ensued between meeting participants. The insights resulted in further refinement of the environmental justice actions proposed by the Air District.

Between June and November 2024, participants worked on developing two primary deliverables to capture the outcomes of this process:

**1. A Call to Action:** A public-facing report (this document) intended to share the major shifts in the Air District's approach to advancing environmental justice, and actions the Air District will take in support of each of the nine Environmental Justice Priorities

**2. Implementation Plans:** Internal planning documents intended to capture specific next steps for implementation of the environmental justice actions and facilitate ongoing dialogue and reporting between Air District leaders responsible for implementation, Air District staff engaged in implementation, the Community Advisory Council, and the Board of Directors

For the most up-to-date information on implementation and outcomes, see the web links provided in the chapter "The Journey Ahead: Implementation and Accountability" in *A Call to Action*.

### **Additional Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank the following additional consultants and Air District staff who attended collaborative meetings between staff and council members and who were instrumental in the program logistics and the thinking behind the development of the environmental justice strategies and actions in the Air District's **2024 – 2029 Strategic Plan** that are highlighted in *A Call to Action*.

#### **Air District Staff Who Attended Collaborative Meetings**

- Carol Allen, Manager, Engineering
- Song Bai, Director, Assessment, Inventory and Modeling
- Jerry Bovee, Manager, Meteorology and Measurement
- Jonathan Bower, Manager, Meteorology and Measurement
- Brian Butler, Senior Air Quality Engineer, Community Engagement
- Ranyee Chiang, Director, Meteorology and Measurement
- Simrun Dhoot, Supervising Air Quality Engineer, Engineering
- Lisa Flores, Staff Specialist II, Community Engagement
- Nina Garde, Staff Specialist I, Community Engagement

- Wendy Goodfriend, Director, Planning and Climate Protection
- Jeffrey Gove, Director, Compliance and Enforcement
- Katherine "Kate" Hoag, Assistant Manager, Meteorology and Measurement
- David Holstius, Senior Advanced Projects Advisor, Assessment, Inventory and Modeling
- David Joe, Manager, Rules and Strategic Policy
- Alexandra Kamel, Senior Assistant Counsel, Legal Division
- Tracy Lee, Manager, Compliance and Enforcement
- Pamela "Pam" Leong, Director, Engineering
- Stephen "Steve" Reid, Senior Advanced Projects Advisor, Assessment, Inventory and Modeling
- LaKeisha Shurn, Administrative Assistant II, Community Engagement
- Almira Van, Supervising Air Quality Specialist, Compliance and Enforcement
- Idania Zamora, Assistant Manager, Planning and Climate Protection

### **The Air District's Strategic Planning Project Team**

- Leonid Bak, Senior Advanced Projects Advisor, Finance
- Deborah Jordan, Consultant to the Air District's Executive Office
- Christy Riviere, Principal Environmental Planner, Executive Office
- Sonam Shah-Paul, Manager, Board Operations
- Idania Zamora, Assistant Manager, Planning and Climate Protection

### **Metropolitan Group**

The following additional Metropolitan Group staff members served on the consultant project team for the Environmental Justice Action Planning Process:

- Kristin Gimbel, Executive Vice President
- Carlos Paz, Project Manager
- Thomas Price Lang, Project Manager

### **Air District's Board of Directors**

#### *Alameda County*

- Juan González III
- David Haubert
- Nate Miley
- Mark Salinas

#### *Contra Costa County*

- Ken Carlson
- John Gioia
- Gabe Quinto
- Mark Ross

#### *Marin County*

- Katie Rice

#### *Napa County*

- Joelle Gallagher

#### *San Francisco City and County*

- Tyrone Jue (Mayor's Appointee)
- Shamann Walton

#### *San Mateo County*

- Noelia Corzo
- Davina Hurt, Chair
- Ray Mueller

#### *Santa Clara County*

- Margaret Abe-Koga
- Otto Lee
- Sergio Lopez
- Vicki Veenker

#### *Solano County*

- Erin Hannigan
- Steve Young

#### *Sonoma County*

- Brian Barnacle
- Lynda Hopkins, Vice Chair



# Appendix D. Crosswalk of Strategies from the Air District's 2024 – 2029 Strategic Plan with the Environmental Justice Priorities and Focus Areas for Early Implementation

The Air District is committed to addressing environmental injustices and ensuring clean air for all. The Community Advisory Council's Environmental Justice Priorities are aligned with the new Strategic Plan. A *Call to Action* highlights a set of near-term actions that the Air District should take, with a focus on early initiatives related to data collection and usage, permitting, and compliance and enforcement. While not all necessary actions can be included in this call to action, the Air District's commitment extends beyond these three areas. Additional information on how the Air District plans to advance environmental justice can be found in the Air District's **2024 – 2029 Strategic Plan** and associated implementation plans designed to advance the strategies in the Plan. The four tables in this appendix provide a crosswalk of both the Community Advisory Council's Environmental Justice Priorities and the Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee's focus areas with all of the strategies from the Strategic Plan. These tables demonstrate that 80% of the strategies identified in the Air District's Strategic Plan address one or more Environmental Justice Priorities.

There are four tables, which align with the four goals of the Strategic Plan. Tips for reading these tables include:

- The Strategies for each Goal from the Strategic Plan are listed in the first column.
- The Community Advisory Council's Environmental Justice Priorities and the Environmental Justice Policy Ad Hoc Committee's focus areas are listed across the top row.
  - A dot (●) indicates that a particular strategy addresses the corresponding Environmental Justice Priority or focus area.

For more details about particular strategies, see Chapter 3 of the Air District's **2024 – 2029 Strategic Plan**. Strategies are organized there in numerical order by Goal.

# Goal 1: Achieve Impact

Strategies from Strategic Plan	Community Advisory Council's Environmental Justice Priorities									EJ Policy Ad Hoc Committee's Focus Areas		
	1. Advance Environmental Justice	2. Provide Meaningful Agency Support	3. Integrate EJ Considerations in Core Functions	4. Implement EJ Best Practices and Innovation	5. Communicate with Clarity, Transparency, and Integrity	6. Grow Capacity of Air District Staff and Board Members to Integrate EJ	7. Grow Capacity of EJ Communities and Organizations	8. Seek Appropriate Legal Remedies and Coordinate with EJ Communities	9. Provide Technical Assistance to Local Governments	Data Collection and Usage	Permitting	Compliance and Enforcement
<b>Objective: Reduce Health Impacts of Air Pollution</b>												
Strategy 1.1 Change Approach to Air Quality	●	●	●	●	●	●				●		
Strategy 1.2 Stronger Regulations		●	●	●	●						●	
Strategy 1.3 Minimize Flaring	●	●	●	●	●			●	●			●
Strategy 1.4 Reimagine Funding	●			●	●	●	●			●		
<b>Objective: Hold Violators Accountable</b>												
Strategy 1.5 Enhance Violation Investigations	●			●	●			●		●		●
Strategy 1.6 New Enforcement Policy	●	●	●	●	●			●				●
<b>Objective: Mitigate Climate Change and Its Impacts</b>												
Strategy 1.7 New Climate Solutions			●		●				●			



## Goal 2: Advance Environmental Justice

Strategies from Strategic Plan	Community Advisory Council's Environmental Justice Priorities									EJ Policy Ad Hoc Committee's Focus Areas		
	1. Advance Environmental Justice	2. Provide Meaningful Agency Support	3. Integrate EJ Considerations in Core Functions	4. Implement EJ Best Practices and Innovation	5. Communicate with Clarity, Transparency, and Integrity	6. Grow Capacity of Air District Staff and Board Members to Integrate EJ	7. Grow Capacity of EJ Communities and Organizations	8. Seek Appropriate Legal Remedies and Coordinate with EJ Communities	9. Provide Technical Assistance to Local Governments	Data Collection and Usage	Permitting	Compliance and Enforcement
<b>Objective: Build Partnerships and Community Capacity</b>												
Strategy 2.1 Community Partnership	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●		●
Strategy 2.2 Collect Community Data		●	●	●			●			●		●
Strategy 2.3 Make Data Accessible	●		●	●	●					●		
Strategy 2.4 Community Health Data		●	●				●		●	●		
Strategy 2.5 Air Quality Complaints			●	●	●							●
Strategy 2.6 Talk with Communities		●	●	●	●			●				●
<b>Objective: Identify Disparities</b>												
Strategy 2.7 Understand Local Air Pollution	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●		
<b>Objective: Reduce Disparities</b>												
Strategy 2.8 Community-Directed Funds		●					●	●				●
Strategy 2.9 Address Legal Barriers	●	●										●
Strategy 2.10 Civil Rights Laws			●	●	●			●			●	
Strategy 2.11 Cumulative Health Impacts	●		●	●	●				●		●	

# Goal 3: Foster Cohesion and Inclusion

Strategies from Strategic Plan	Community Advisory Council's Environmental Justice Priorities									EJ Policy Ad Hoc Committee's Focus Areas		
	1. Advance Environmental Justice	2. Provide Meaningful Agency Support	3. Integrate EJ Considerations in Core Functions	4. Implement EJ Best Practices and Innovation	5. Communicate with Clarity, Transparency, and Integrity	6. Grow Capacity of Air District Staff and Board Members to Integrate EJ	7. Grow Capacity of EJ Communities and Organizations	8. Seek Appropriate Legal Remedies and Coordinate with EJ Communities	9. Provide Technical Assistance to Local Governments	Data Collection and Usage	Permitting	Compliance and Enforcement
<b>Objective: Embody Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging</b>												
Strategy 3.1 A Diverse Workforce	●					●						
Strategy 3.2 Be Welcoming and Inclusive	●					●						
<b>Objective: Become One Air District</b>												
Strategy 3.3 One Air District Community	●	●				●						
Strategy 3.4 Environmental Justice Expertise	●	●				●						
Strategy 3.5 Recognize Employees												
Strategy 3.6 Support Employee Success												

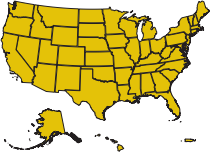







# Goal 4: Be Effective, Accountable, and Customer-Oriented

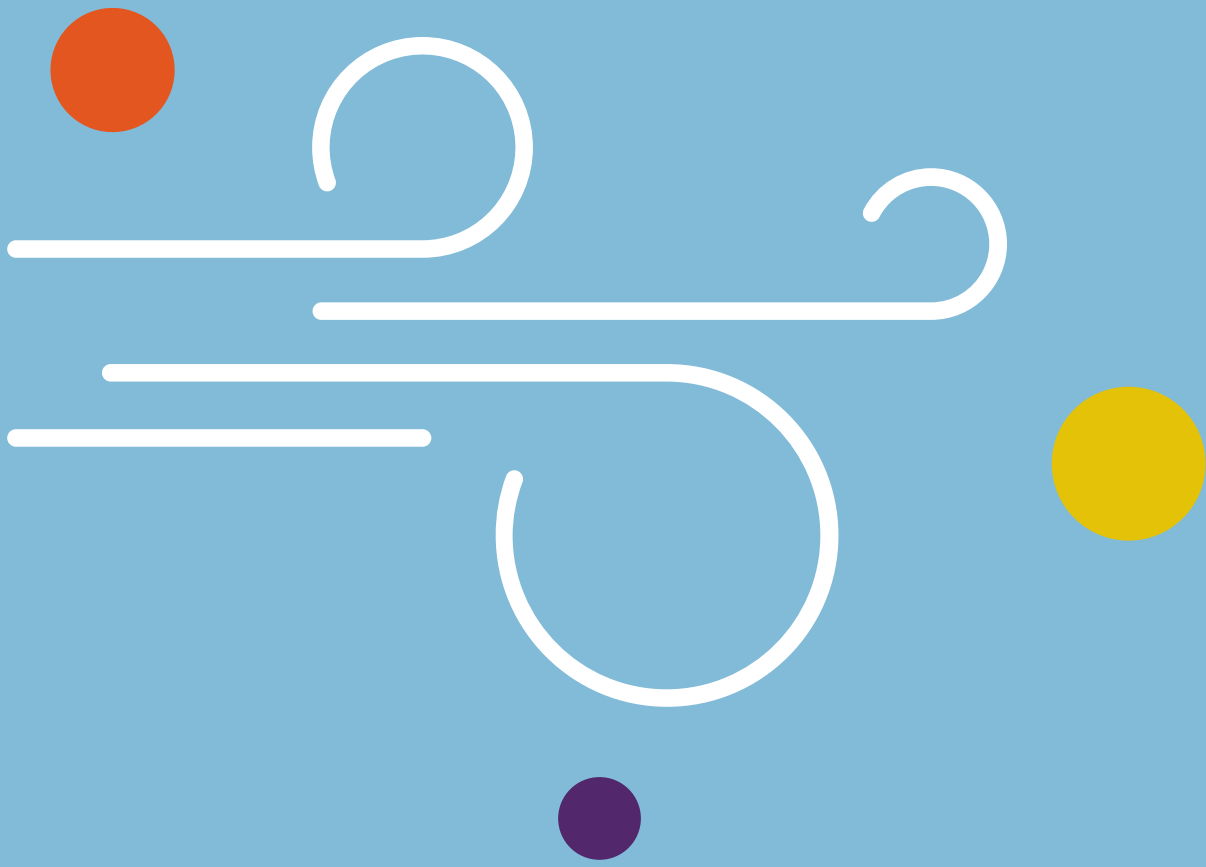
Strategies from Strategic Plan	Community Advisory Council's Environmental Justice Priorities									EJ Policy Ad Hoc Committee's Focus Areas		
	1. Advance Environmental Justice	2. Provide Meaningful Agency Support	3. Integrate EJ Considerations in Core Functions	4. Implement EJ Best Practices and Innovation	5. Communicate with Clarity, Transparency, and Integrity	6. Grow Capacity of Air District Staff and Board Members to Integrate EJ	7. Grow Capacity of EJ Communities and Organizations	8. Seek Appropriate Legal Remedies and Coordinate with EJ Communities	9. Provide Technical Assistance to Local Governments	Data Collection and Usage	Permitting	Compliance and Enforcement
<b>Objective: Improve Permitting, Monitoring, and Enforcement</b>												
Strategy 4.1 Timely Permits					●						●	
Strategy 4.2 Transparent Permit Process			●	●	●						●	
Strategy 4.3 Consistent Permits			●	●	●						●	
Strategy 4.4 Improve Air Monitoring			●	●	●					●		
Strategy 4.5 Improve Compliance Investigations			●	●				●				●
<b>Objective: Build Relationships and Enhance Communication</b>												
Strategy 4.6 Inspire Action					●		●					
Strategy 4.7 Customer Service	●	●	●	●	●	●						
Strategy 4.8 Air Quality Incidents			●	●	●					●		●
Strategy 4.9 Land Use Impacts	●		●	●					●			
<b>Objective: Be Accountable</b>												
Strategy 4.10 Ensure Success												
Strategy 4.11 Align Resources	●	●			●							
Strategy 4.12 Report Progress	●				●							

# Appendix E. Federal, State, and Regional Air Quality Responsibilities

The following diagram illustrates the responsibilities of various federal, state, and regional agencies with regard to air quality.

Level	<b>Federal</b> (USA) 	<b>State</b> (California) 	<b>Regional</b> (Bay Area) 
Agency	<b>US Environmental Protection Agency</b> (est. 1970) 	<b>California Air Resources Board</b> (est. 1967) 	<b>Bay Area Air Quality Management District</b> (est. 1955) 
Key Powers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• declare pollutants</li> <li>• set air quality standards</li> <li>• regulate stationary sources</li> <li>• regulate trains, aircraft, ships</li> <li>• write national plans and guidance</li> <li>• oversee state plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• declare pollutants</li> <li>• set air quality standards</li> <li>• regulate cars, trucks, cargo handling</li> <li>• regulate emitting consumer products</li> <li>• write statewide plans and guidance</li> <li>• oversee regional plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• regulate stationary sources</li> <li>• issue operating permits</li> <li>• write regional plans and guidance</li> <li>• work with local governments</li> </ul>
Key Law(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• US Clean Air Act (1970)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• California Clean Air Act (1988)</li> <li>• Global Warming Solutions Act (2006)</li> </ul>	





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