

Bay Area Air Quality Management District

2024-2029
Strategic Plan
in Brief



BAY AREA
AIR QUALITY
MANAGEMENT
DISTRICT





Strategic Plan Overview

About the Air District

For nearly seventy years, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District has led the way toward cleaner air for people living in the Bay Area. The Air District is responsible for regulating stationary sources of pollution, including permanent facilities found at ports, oil refineries, and large industrial complexes. Vehicles and other “mobile” sources are not regulated by the Air District.

We have adopted groundbreaking regulations on businesses and industry, funded cleaner cars and trucks, and partnered with local governments to create a healthier environment. These efforts have transformed smog-filled skies into ones that are mostly clean. However, communities located near freeways, busy roadways, distribution centers, and large industrial facilities are exposed to relatively higher levels of air pollution than most everyone else in the Bay Area. These communities are also most often lower-income communities of color, and have not shared equally in air quality improvements.

Strategic Plan Purpose

The *2024-2029 Strategic Plan* is about how we will transform our work to address air quality issues more effectively, with a focus on local communities most overburdened by air pollution. It is also about how we will transform our organization to align more closely with our core values of environmental justice, equity, integrity, partnership, transparency, and trust.

The strategic plan includes these updated core values, a revised mission, a 5-year organizational vision, 4 goals, and 36 strategies.

Why is it important?

The strategic plan will guide the Board of Directors, Committees, Councils, and Air District employees in their work and decision-making, making certain the envisioned transformation happens. It is also a tool for accountability and for the public to track progress and communicate feedback.

Where can I find updates?

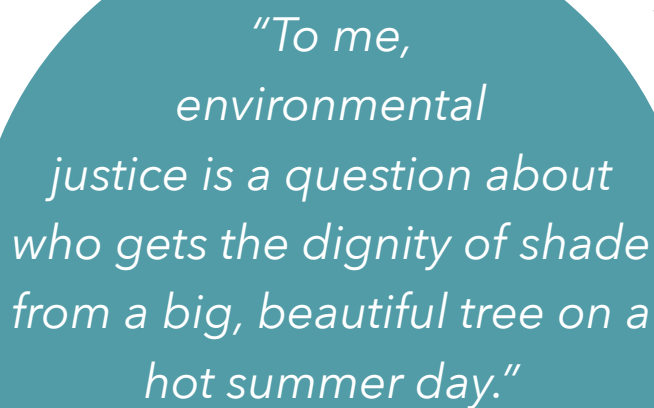
Visit baaqmd.gov/strategicplan

Environmental Justice: A Strategic Focus

Over the last few years, the Air District Community Advisory Council has been advising us on what environmental justice means and what actions we can take to create more equitable outcomes in communities. The council formed an Ad Hoc committee on Environmental Justice Policy in late 2022 to work directly with Air District leadership and employees. The 2024-2029 Strategic Plan reflects this partnership.

More than three quarters of the strategies in the plan link directly to one or more of the Community Advisory Council's Environmental Justice Priorities. For example, we commit to better understanding and reducing disparities in exposure to air pollution. We commit to valuing community voice and knowledge by incorporating both into our decision-making. We will vigorously enforce our permits and regulations. We will return a portion of funds assessed through penalties to the communities in which the violations occurred to support projects that benefit communities and that are selected through

a community-driven process. We will provide information with greater transparency so that communities can engage meaningfully, and we will be accountable to communities for meeting our commitments. We will enhance and implement rules, policies, and enforcement actions that consider environmental justice and equity.



*"To me,
environmental
justice is a question about
who gets the dignity of shade
from a big, beautiful tree on a
hot summer day."*

– **Michael Tubbs**, *Special
Advisor to Governor
Gavin Newsom*

In making environmental justice a central component of our work, we will transform the Air District into a strategic organization with equity at our core. We will use our limited resources to address the air quality problems that need the most attention and to demonstrate leadership in equity centered environmental stewardship.

We will need communities and their allies to continue to walk with us, push us, encourage us, and hold us to account. We need community knowledge, perspectives, and experiences to succeed. Therefore, we invite and appreciate their partnership as we move forward in our environmental justice journey.

Strategic Plan Framework

MISSION

The Air District improves air quality to protect public health, reduce historical and current environmental inequities, and mitigate climate change and its impacts.

CORE VALUES



5-YEAR VISION

Over the next 5 years, the Air District will transform its workforce, operations, community engagement, and programs to improve air quality, increase public trust, and demonstrate leadership in equity-centered environmental stewardship.

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

5-YEAR GOALS





GOAL 1: ACHIEVE IMPACT

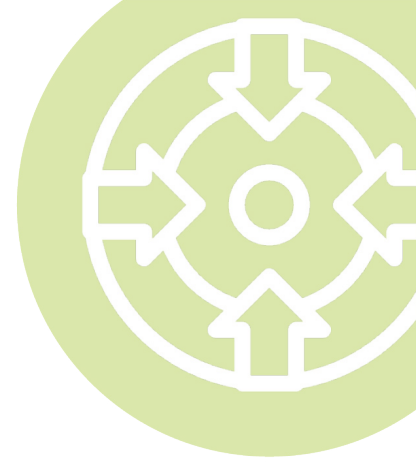
Under Goal 1, we will achieve impact by improving our approach to air quality planning. While we continue to reduce regionwide air pollution, we will ensure we have a complete and accurate picture of local air pollution, one that includes community experience and perspectives of local air pollution.

To achieve impact, we will also strengthen our regulations, permitting and enforcement policies, and improve how we hold industry accountable when our regulations are violated. We will work with communities to reimagine how we distribute state and federal funding for electric vehicles and charging stations to our most vulnerable communities. We will develop innovative regional solutions to climate change. We will better support our local government partners and other agencies in their efforts to mitigate climate change.

Goal 1 Objectives:

- **Reduce Health Impacts of Air Pollution**
- **Hold Violators Accountable**
- **Mitigate Climate Change and Its Impacts**

Goal 1: Achieve Impact



Reduce Health Impacts of Air Pollution

Strategy 1.1 Change Approach to Air Quality:

We will change our approach to reducing air pollution so that we achieve more meaningful improvements to air quality in communities, with a focus on those overburdened by air pollution.

Strategy 1.2 Stronger Regulations:

We will develop stronger regulations, prioritizing those that can improve local air pollution.

Strategy 1.3 Minimize Flaring: We will minimize flaring at oil refineries to lessen the impact flaring has on communities, including air pollution and odors.

Strategy 1.4 Reimagine Funding:

We will reimagine funding programs so that they better benefit communities impacted by air pollution.

Hold Violators Accountable

Strategy 1.5 Enhance Violation Investigations:

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

Strategy 1.6 New Enforcement Policy:

We will collaborate with communities to develop an enforcement policy to better prevent violations of air quality regulations.

Mitigate Climate Change and Its Impacts

Strategy 1.7 New Climate Solutions:

We will develop new regional solutions for climate change and support partners to advance climate change mitigation.

GOAL 2: ADVANCE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



Under Goal 2, we will advance environmental justice by supporting, partnering with, and uplifting communities overburdened by pollution, so that we may work together to identify and reduce disparities in air pollution exposure.

So that communities can collect their own air pollution data, we will help to build their data collection skills and knowledge. We will also provide the tools they need to access and better understand existing air pollution data.

We will improve our air quality complaint process to ensure it is effective and transparent. We will directly engage with communities about compliance and enforcement activities, including recent incidents or other air pollution violations, our enforcement response, the extent of public harm, and legal actions we may take.

We will work with communities to identify air pollution disparities and to develop a more complete understanding of air pollution in their neighborhoods. We will use this information to develop more effective strategies to reduce pollution from the sources that most impact them.

We will develop a community-led process where communities participate in decisions on how to spend money that we collect in penalties from industries that violate our regulations on projects that benefit communities. We will work to change laws that prevent the Air District and others from advancing environmental justice and will advance and prioritize our compliance with civil rights laws, and better address cumulative impacts.

Goal 2 Objectives:

- **Build Partnerships and Community Capacity**
- **Identify Disparities**
- **Reduce Disparities**

Goal 2: Advance Environmental Justice



Build Partnerships and Community Capacity

Strategy 2.1 Community Partnership:

We will develop partnerships with communities so they can directly participate in the solutions to the air quality problems that impact them.

Strategy 2.2 Collect Community Data:

We will build community capacity to collect air pollution data and ensure the Air District better utilizes those data to reduce the pollution that harms communities most.

Strategy 2.3: Make Data Accessible:

We 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.

Strategy 2.4 Community Health Data:

We will provide communities with better health information, so they know the potential health implications of air pollution and are better able to participate in decision-making.

Strategy 2.5 Air Quality Complaints:

We will improve the complaint process to ensure it is effective and transparent.

Strategy 2.6: Talk with Communities:

We will meet with communities about air pollution problems in their neighborhoods, their concerns, how we are addressing them, and what more they need from us, so we are more responsive to communities.

Identify Disparities

Strategy 2.7 Understand Local Air Pollution:

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

Reduce Disparities

Strategy 2.8 Community-Directed Funds:

We will manage funds to benefit communities in partnership with those communities, including the money that the Air District collects in penalties from air pollution violations that affect communities.

Strategy 2.9 Address Legal Barriers:

We will strive to change laws that prevent the Air District from advancing environmental justice.

Strategy 2.10 Civil Rights Laws:

We will advance and prioritize compliance with civil rights laws, including the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related California laws.

Strategy 2.11 Cumulative Health Impacts:

We will develop our understanding of the cumulative effects of air pollution and other stressors, and use this information to focus regulatory efforts in areas experiencing the most serious air pollution and related cumulative impacts.



GOAL 3: FOSTER COHESION AND INCLUSION

Under Goal 3, we will foster cohesion and inclusion by striving to make the Air District's workforce more diverse and reflective of the communities we serve. To increase organizational cohesion, we will make sure everyone in the organization understands and respects the value of a diverse workforce, one that welcomes and includes everyone.

We will become One Air District, where employees have a sense of belonging and understand and value how diverse backgrounds and expertise come together in support of the organization's mission and vision. We will also be more united in our goal to advance environmental justice by increasing the capacity and effectiveness of employees, Board members and advisory bodies to integrate environmental justice into all aspects of our work. We will broaden all employees' internal knowledge of the Air District and create more opportunities for relationship building among employees.

To increase morale and overall organizational effectiveness, we will better recognize employees' contributions. We will expand professional development opportunities to foster success, boost morale, and enhance workforce retention.

Goal 3 Objectives:

- **Embody Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging**
- **Become One Air District**

Goal 3: Foster Cohesion and Inclusion



Embody Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Strategy 3.1 A Diverse Workforce:

We will build on our efforts to ensure the Air District's workforce is diverse and reflective of the communities we serve to instill community trust and develop better solutions to air quality problems.

Strategy 3.2 Be Welcoming and Inclusive:

We will make sure everyone in the organization understands and respects the value of a diverse workforce, one that welcomes and includes everyone to increase organizational cohesion.

Become One Air District

Strategy 3.3 One Air District Community:

We will broaden internal knowledge of Air District activities and create more opportunities for relationship building to increase understanding of how different roles and perspectives come together in support of the organization's mission and vision.

Strategy 3.4 Environmental Justice

Expertise: We 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 our work.

Strategy 3.5 Recognize Employees:

We will better recognize employees' contributions to increase morale and overall organizational effectiveness.

Strategy 3.6 Support Employee Success:

We will expand professional development opportunities to foster success and diversity, boost morale, enhance workforce retention, and improve overall organizational effectiveness.

GOAL 4: BE EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE, AND CUSTOMER-ORIENTED



Under Goal 4, we will maintain an effective, accountable, and customer-oriented organization, delivering exemplary services with transparency and efficiency. We will improve our permitting, monitoring, and enforcement processes. We will improve the timeliness of permitting decisions and improve the process to be more transparent to applicants and the public. We will ensure Air District rules and associated air quality permits that we issue are clear, consistent, and enforceable to minimize air pollution.

We will improve air monitoring and associated data management systems. We will improve reliability, efficiency, data quality and accessibility, especially to support our efforts to understand local exposure to air pollution. We will also increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our inspection and investigation resources to improve compliance rates and increase the impact of our enforcement programs.

We will expand our public communication to inspire the public to support efforts to reduce air pollution and to mitigate climate change. We will strengthen our communication skills and organization-wide knowledge. We will also enhance our incident response program, in collaboration with government partners.

To make sure we keep the promises we make, we will align the Air District's resources and annual budgets with organization and community priorities, as identified in the *2024-2029 Strategic Plan*, and report on our progress.

Goal 4 Objectives:

- **Improve Permitting, Monitoring, and Enforcement**
- **Build Relationships and Enhance Communications**
- **Be Accountable**



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

Improve Permitting, Monitoring, and Enforcement

Strategy 4.1 Timely Permits: We will improve the timeliness of permitting decisions.

Strategy 4.2 Transparent Permit Process: We will improve our permitting process to be more transparent and accountable to applicants and the public.

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

Strategy 4.4 Improve Air Monitoring: We 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.

Strategy 4.5 Improve Compliance Investigations: We will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of inspection and investigation resources to improve compliance and increase the impact of our enforcement program.

Build Relationships and Enhance Communication

Strategy 4.6 Inspire Action: We will expand our public communication to inspire the public to support efforts to reduce air pollution and to mitigate climate change.

Strategy 4.7 Customer Service:

We will strengthen employees' organization-wide knowledge and communication skills, and change our organization as needed, so people experience the highest level of service from the Air District.

Strategy 4.8 Air Quality Incidents: We will enhance our incident response program in collaboration with government partners.

Strategy 4.9 Land Use Impacts: We 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.

Be Accountable

Strategy 4.10 Ensure Success: We will ensure we have the resources and capacity to meet both Board and community expectations and honor our commitments, thereby building trust in the Air District's capacity to succeed.

Strategy 4.11 Align Resources: We will be intentional about ensuring the Air District's resources and annual budgets are well-aligned with organization and community priorities, as identified in the *2024-2029 Strategic Plan*.

Strategy 4.12 Report Progress: We will transparently report on progress in meeting the *2024-2029 Strategic Plan* goals and strategies to be accountable for our commitments and meeting expectations.



Accountability Through Action

The Air District has prepared the *2024-2029 Strategic Plan* to guide our work, and more importantly to hold ourselves accountable. The plan allows communities, the Board of Directors, and Air District employees to clearly see and understand all our five-year priorities and commitments. It also allows us to assess whether our actions are in alignment with these commitments and the needs of the communities we serve.

To ensure accountability, we will create action plans, develop performance metrics, track progress, and report on what we accomplish over the year. We will also align our budget process and resources to support plan implementation.

Action Plans

We have begun developing action plans, initiatives, and programs to advance the strategies in the *2024-2029 Strategic Plan*. All strategies in the strategic plan reflect our priorities over the next five years. Some work can begin immediately, or has already begun, while other strategies and commitments may take longer to address, especially if dependent on other actions. Much of the work we have begun is described in Chapter 4.

Over the next several months, we will continue our efforts to develop action plans and begin implementation. We will work with our Board of Directors, the Community

Advisory Council, our AB 617 communities, and partners to ensure our action plans reflect their immediate priorities.

Progress Reports

Each year, we will report progress on our efforts to implement the *2024-2029 Strategic Plan*. In the annual progress report, we will include a summary of all actions we have completed, along with associated performance metrics. We will describe actions not taken and why. Progress reports will be used to determine whether we need to revise our action plans to be more effective.

Our strategic plan website is an opportunity to showcase progress more frequently and to allow communities to see our progress throughout the year. On the website, you will find details on individual commitments and milestones, along with progress dashboards.

Updating the Strategic Plan

Every five years we will perform a comprehensive strategic plan update. The five-year update will be an opportunity to reassess our priorities, considering current conditions and resources. As with the development of the *2024-2029 Strategic Plan*, we will consult with communities, employees, our partners, and the Board of Directors in the plan update.





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