

Executive Summary

Assembly Bill 617 (AB617), signed into law in 2017 and administered by the California Air Resources Board (CARB), directs local air districts to partner with community to develop emissions reductions plans. These plans focus on improving community health by reducing emissions from and exposure to local air pollution sources in the most impacted neighborhoods. In 2021, the Bay Area Air District (Air District) recommended East Oakland for the development of a Community Emissions Reduction Plan (CERP) due to the high health-burden of residents in East Oakland neighborhoods, who experience disproportionately high exposure to air pollution. Waste facilities, crematories, and small to medium industrial and manufacturing operations are located throughout the area. Along with the Oakland International Airport, large warehouse distribution centers, high-volume freeways and roadways (I-880, I-238, I-580, Highway 92), truck routes, transit buses, industrial equipment, and freight and passenger rail all contribute to the pollution burden of the area.

The Air District began the work of developing the East Oakland Community Emissions Reduction Plan (Plan) by selecting Communities for a Better Environment (CBE), an environmental justice organization, as the co-lead for the project due to the organization's strong community ties and extensive experience building community capacity in air quality planning in East Oakland. The "Co-Leads" (Air District and CBE) then selected the East Oakland Community Steering Committee (CSC) members. The CSC is a diverse group of individuals who live, work, or go to school in the East Oakland community. CSC members represent a wide range of sectors, including faith-based organizations, youth, community-based organizations, local businesses, industry, government, residents, and seniors. Upon the selection of the CSC in 2022, the Co-Leads and the CSC began the process of developing a shared understanding of local air quality issues.

As an early step to understanding air quality issues, Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) and the CSC identified facilities of concern in East Oakland – industrial businesses with repeat violations, visible dust, or odors which may cause impacts on community members. A community mapping project enabled CSC members and community members to visit an online map and add pins and comments to provide further insight into the locations of air pollution concerns, community assets and gathering places important to residents in East Oakland. Additionally, several CSC meetings were dedicated to brainstorming activities to uncover community concerns.

The themes emerging from these activities, particularly the community mapping project, led to the six Plan **focus areas**. Focus areas are the overarching categories of the East Oakland community's pollution concerns that organized Plan strategy development, listed as follows:

1. **Built Environment and Land Use:** Older housing and proximity to polluting sources expose residents – especially sensitive receptors such as children – to harmful air pollutants, triggering asthma and other health problems. Addressing these conditions is vital for ensuring East Oakland residents have the same clean, safe, and healthy living environments as wealthier communities.
2. **Commercial and Industrial Sources:** East Oakland residents are disproportionately exposed to harmful air pollution from nearby commercial and industrial sources due to the historic industrial nature of the area and a legacy of discriminatory zoning. This focus area serves critical health-protective functions by reducing exposure to toxic emissions, fugitive dust, and localized air pollution in East Oakland neighborhoods.

3. **Illegal Dumping, Trash, and Odors:** Illegal dumping is a major concern for East Oakland residents, lowering quality of life, showing signs of institutional neglect and contributing to feeling unsafe in the community. The community is passionate about the importance of this focus area to address widespread trash, odors, and pollution through stronger enforcement and city collaboration.
4. **Public Health and Community Wellness:** East Oakland residents face health disparities – like lower life expectancy and higher rates of asthma, heart disease, and cancer. This focus area aims to improve community health through interagency collaboration.
5. **Transportation and Mobile Sources:** East Oakland residents are heavily impacted by air pollution from cars, trucks, and airport operations due to their proximity to major transit corridors like I-880 and the Oakland International Airport. This focus area will help reduce harmful emissions and noise through cleaner technologies, policy changes, and proactive enforcement.
6. **Urban Greening and Workforce Development:** East Oakland faces a lack of tree cover and poorly maintained green spaces compared to wealthier areas, impacting residents' health, comfort, and access to nature. This focus area aims to advance environmental equity and economic opportunity through urban greening and local green job creation.

In addition to community-identified issues and challenges, the Plan is based on a comprehensive technical assessment. The Air District generated an emissions inventory for East Oakland that analyzed local stationary and mobile sources, included data for nearly 400 permitted facilities, and reported on Criteria Air Pollutants (CAPs) and Toxic Air Contaminants (TACs). These provide critical information about pollution and sources that supported the development of Plan strategies and actions.

The Plan documents the racial, ethnic and socio-economic composition of the area and provides an analysis of the health outcomes of East Oakland residents. East Oakland is predominantly Latinx/Hispanic and Black/African American, and it serves as a significant cultural hub. However, higher rates of illness and premature death persist. Asthma-related emergency visits and hospitalizations are more common among East Oakland residents than in the city or county as a whole, and rates of mortality due to heart disease, lung cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease are higher in East Oakland.

At the core of the Plan are strategies and actions to reduce air pollution and improve health in East Oakland. Community concerns provided the foundation for strategy and action development. The technical analysis provided critical information about pollution and sources that supported the development of strategies and actions. Additionally, research into best practices and an inventory of current programs, policies and initiatives was assembled to create a package of strategies and actions to address East Oakland's unique air quality challenges. Through an iterative process, the Co-Leads presented the draft strategies and actions to CSC members for feedback between fall of 2024 and spring of 2025. The draft strategies and actions were also vetted with technical experts and implementing partners to help ensure alignment with the work of partner agencies such as the Port of Oakland, the City of Oakland, Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD), Caltrans and the California Office of Environmental Health and Hazard Assessment (OEHHA).

The Plan's 32 strategies and 105 actions aim to achieve the following goals:

- Goal #1: Reduce East Oaklanders' exposure to air pollution by decreasing emissions from sources identified by the community as top concerns.
- Goal #2: Prioritize actions that have the opportunity to reduce disproportionately high health impacts associated with air pollution affecting East Oakland residents to achieve improvements in community health.
- Goal #3: Empower East Oakland residents to participate in holding polluters accountable by combining their local knowledge with an understanding of emission sources, health impacts, air pollution regulations and reporting mechanisms.

Collaboration between the Air District and the CSC will continue throughout Plan implementation. Each year the Air District and the CSC will co-create an Implementation Schedule that outlines priority topics for the upcoming year and related strategies and actions. This schedule will be developed in coordination with relevant Air District, government agency, and partner implementors. Annual progress reports will serve as the primary tool for evaluating the implementation of the Plan, including providing an opportunity to update the Plan as needed to reflect progress and evolving priorities. At the fifth-year anniversary of Plan adoption, the Co-Leads, CSC, and selected agency partners will evaluate their work together and determine progress towards achieving the plan goals.