



Draft Summary

Virtual Meeting on Benicia Community Air Monitoring Site Selection 6:00 – 8:00 PM | June 30, 2021

Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review

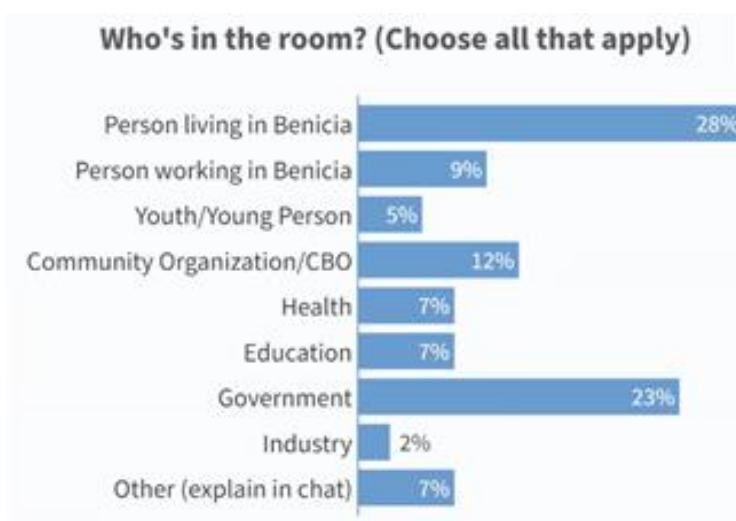
The meeting was held in English with a live Spanish language translation provided by Norma Herrera.

Kristen Law, Community Engagement Manager at the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (the District), welcomed community members before transitioning over to moderator Cici Vu, who provided instructions on virtual meeting logistics. Kristen reviewed virtual participation principles and the meeting agenda before introducing Veronica Eady, Senior Deputy Executive Officer of Policy and Equity at the District, for opening remarks.

Veronica thanked the City of Benicia and noted the attendance of notable community leaders, including Fire Chief Josh Chadwick, Economic Development Manager Mario Giuliani, Economic Development Specialist Teri Davena, and Mayor Steve Young. She also thanked community members Marilyn Bardet and Constance Beutel for their contributions in shaping the workshop. Veronica emphasized the need for expanded long-term air monitoring on a local scale, particularly for communities near refineries, in order to better characterize and quantify the impacts of potential pollutant exposure. She stated that the District is using scientific data as well as community input to inform the siting of air quality monitoring stations in the refinery communities.

Polling Exercise: Who's in the room?

Kristen invited the audience to participate in a polling exercise by indicating their name and affiliation to give other attendees a sense of who else was in the meeting. Results were shared on screen in real-time, indicating that most of the 48 attendees live in Benicia or were government officials (shown below).



Community Perspectives on Monitoring Air Quality in Benicia

Marilyn Bardet, founder of the Good Neighbor Steering Committee (Committee), spoke on behalf of the Committee about air monitoring goals from a community perspective and the role of the Air District. She noted how air quality in Benicia has gradually improved since the 1970s due to community efforts and District programs to address pollutant emissions from stationary and mobile sources, emphasizing how the District has worked to address community concerns about the cumulative effects of chronic exposure to airborne pollutants and their long-term impacts on human health. Marilyn went on to explain how community members have continued to request more information on ambient air quality from all available sources. She outlined how an experimental District air quality monitoring station established adjacent to the Valero refinery in 2008 was able to detect local wildfire smoke when other monitors in Vallejo and Concord could not, and how this demonstrated that a monitoring station inside the city of Benicia was necessary to accurately monitor local air quality on a real-time basis.

Marilyn Bardet continued to speak on the District's work to manage the cumulative climate and health impacts of fossil fuel emissions, and how escalating wildfires have increased the Benicia community's risk of exposure to toxic gases and particulate matter, especially related to PM_{2.5}. Marilyn outlined the District's new rules to reduce PM_{2.5} emission from refineries and other industrial sources, starting with Rule 12-15, a 2016 District policy requiring all Bay Area refineries to install air monitoring systems around perimeter fence lines and report real-time data that can be accessed online. She noted how the implementation of Rule 12-15 has been difficult, and how serious questions remain about the reliability and effectiveness of the fence line monitoring systems installed at Bay Area refineries, including the Valero refinery. She noted that there is currently no fence line monitor functioning for hydrogen sulfide, a known neurotoxin, and that the District policy efforts are working to increase and improve emissions reporting. She concluded by stating that the community-based air monitoring station the District is working to establish will work for the community's benefit, and that funds from the Valero Good Neighbor Steering Agreement have led to the Benicia Community Air Monitoring Program (BCAMP), which is currently working to establish an independent monitoring station alongside Argo Scientific.

Community leader Constance Beutel provided an overview of [Air Watch Bay Area](#) and expressed Air Watch Bay Area's support for the placement and installation of an Air District monitoring station in the City of Benicia. Constance stated that Air Watch curates and archives real-time, publicly accessible data from monitors, and provides residents the opportunity to add to that data with real-time reporting via the [Smell MyCity](#) app. She explained how Air Watch Bay Area consists of collaborating community activists representing the refinery communities of Crockett, Rodeo, Richmond, Vallejo and Benicia, The Fair Tech Lab, and the CREATE lab. Constance noted how new systems will be added to current data collection in Benicia, including District and BCAMP monitoring systems, allowing the community to have comprehensive air quality data that monitors other pollutants in addition to PM_{2.5}.

Constance continued by stating that data reporting and collection is only useful if it can be used to alert and protect communities, and can be used by citizens, public officials, and researchers to understand ongoing trends and their public health and safety implications. She expressed the need for refinery and Air District reporting in a user-friendly format, and that data producing sites need to provide an API (Application Programming Interface) to allow for the easy collection and analysis of data. Air Watch Bay Area currently takes information from various monitoring sources, so an API would benefit the community by making that reporting easier. Constance concluded by expressing her support for an expedited air monitoring station implementation process in Benicia and encouraged all participants to visit airwatchbayarea.org for more information.

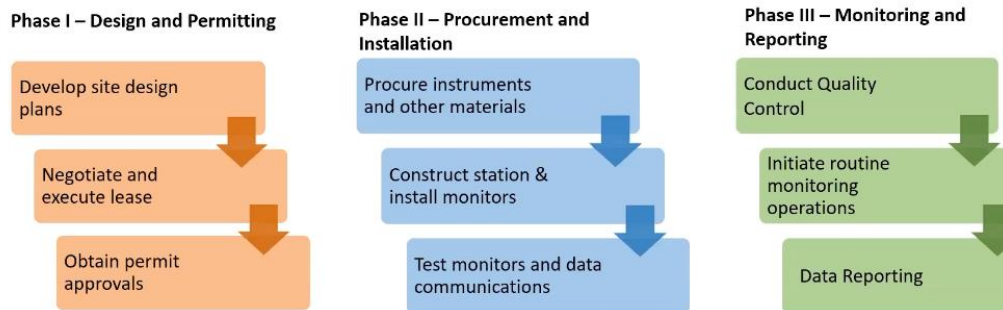
Overview of Monitoring Siting Process and Potential Sites

During the Air District presentation, Ila Perkins, Manager of Air Monitoring Operations, provided a general overview of air quality monitoring and provided background information about air quality monitoring in Benicia. Ila explained the District effort to implement community monitoring sites and provided details on the candidate sites being considered by the District. The three candidate sites under consideration are located at:

- Duncan Graham Park (10 Linda Vista Avenue)
- Benicia Fire Museum (900 East Second Street), and
- Benicia Public Library (150 East L Street)

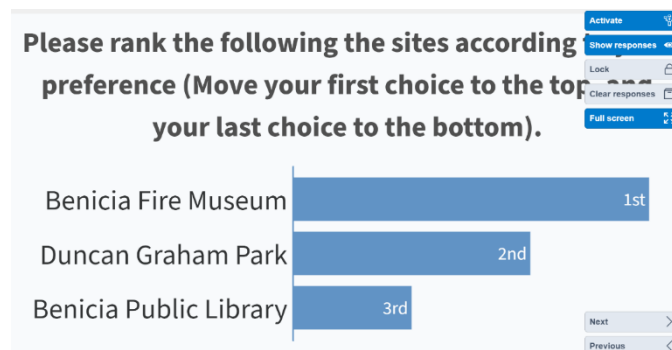
After Ila Perkins outlined the next steps in the monitoring station development process (shown below), she noted that community feedback received from engagement efforts thus far have mainly focused on safety, aesthetics, and the accessibility of community data. Ila stated that the Air District strives to create monitoring sites that are safe for the community and District staff while also being inclusive by providing community data for public review.

Next steps in community station development



Community Interests and Preferences for Monitoring Site

Kristen asked participants to rank their preference among the three potential air quality monitoring sites being considered by the District. Twenty-two attendees (not Air District staff) responded to the poll and the results were shared on screen in real-time. Among those who responded, most preferred the site at the Benicia Fire Museum, followed by the Duncan Graham Park site and the Benicia Public Library site (see below).



Workshop Comments, Questions, and Responses

During the workshop, stakeholders asked clarifying questions and raised comments for the panel of presenters to consider. The Air District also accepted comments and questions from any member of the public for two weeks following the meeting. The Air District's responses to all of these comments and questions will be provided in a separate document and posted on the website.

Next Steps

Kristen encouraged attendees to complete a [Workshop Evaluation Survey](#) where community members can raise further comments on the project.

Ila Perkins noted that materials are available at www.baaqmd.gov/news-and-events/workshops. She directed attendees to contact District staff by July 14, 2021 with any follow-up questions, noting that question responses will be posted to the District website. Finally, Ila encouraged everyone to sign up for the Refinery Stakeholders contact list (<https://www.baaqmd.gov/contact-us/sign-up-for-information>) to receive ongoing updates about the project. Ila thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting.