



AGENDA REPORT


TO: Jestin D. Johnson
City Administrator

FROM: William Gilchrist
Planning and Building
Director

SUBJECT: Informational Agenda Report on
Progress to Date on the Creation of
Oakland Pollution Reduction
Interagency Working Group

DATE: July 8, 2024

City Administrator Approval


Jestin Johnson (Jul 11, 2024 20:04 PDT)

Date: Jul 11, 2024

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Receive An Informational Report On The City Administrator’s Efforts to Create An Interagency Working Group Focused On Implementation Of the Air Quality Policies And Actions In Oakland’s Environmental Justice Element.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September 2023, as part of the adoption of the City of Oakland (City) Environmental Justice (EJ) Element of the General Plan, the City Council directed the City Administrator to organize and develop an interagency working group, including the Port of Oakland, to implement the air quality actions outlined in the EJ Element. This Oakland Pollution Reduction Interagency Working Group (Working Group) will convene members of local and regional agencies whose work, expertise, and advice are key to achieving the air quality policies and actions outlined in the EJ Element.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

On September 26, 2023, the Oakland City Council adopted the City’s first EJ Element. The EJ Element serves as the foundation for achieving equity and environmental justice when planning for future growth and development in the City and builds upon Oakland’s current regulatory setting for equity and environmental justice. The EJ Element was adopted as part of Phase 1 of the General Plan Update.

The air quality policies and action in Oakland’s EJ Element are guided by Goal 1: “Reduce Pollution, Mitigate the Impacts of Pollution on Existing Sensitive Land Uses, and Eliminate Associated Public Health Disparities.” There are 19 policies and 14 actions which require the coordination of various City departments and outside agencies (see **Attachment A: EJ Element Goal 1 Policies and Actions**).

As part of [Resolution No. 89907 CMS](#), the City Council directed the City Administrator to: organize and develop an interagency working group to assist with the implementation of these policies and actions.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Work Conducted to Date

In partnership with the City Administrator's Office, City staff have developed a draft proposal for the structure and operating procedures of the Working Group (see **Attachment B**: Draft Operating Procedures).

The Working Group is proposed to consist of members from appropriate City departments, relevant outside agencies, and community organizations who have been involved in the development of the EJ Element and whose work relates to the air quality actions and policies in the EJ Element. The identified community organizations represent communities most impacted by air pollution, such as Chinatown, East Oakland, and West Oakland.

The group will meet quarterly via virtual meetings and agendas will be set by City staff, in collaboration with Working Group Co-Chairs. The Working Group members will elect three co-chairs at the first meeting – a representative from the City, an outside agency, and a community partner. City staff have begun reaching out to the proposed members of the Working Group to gain their commitment to participation.

Advancement of Citywide Priorities

The Working Group will help advance the implementation of air quality actions and policies in the EJ Element, which in turn advances the following Citywide priorities:

Vibrant, Sustainable Infrastructure: The EJ Element addresses community-identified environmental justice issues related to reducing pollution exposure and improving air quality and prioritizing improvements and programs that meet the needs of Environmental Justice Communities (EJ Communities). Policies and actions in the EJ Element integrate environmental justice considerations into the planning process and address historic disenfranchisement of and disinvestment in EJ Communities.

Responsive, Trustworthy Government: Through the Interagency Working Group, City staff will be able to work collaboratively with staff across departments and with outside agencies to ensure delivery on complex local and regional issues related to improving air quality and reducing air pollution exposure for the City's most impacted communities.

FISCAL IMPACT

If adopted by the City Council, there will be no costs to the City. Implementation of the Working Group will be a part of staff's workplan to implement the EJ Element.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

In Phase 1 of the General Plan Update, City staff undertook a robust and multi-pronged community engagement strategy, in partnership with community-based organizations, which included: workshops, discussion groups, pop-up outreach, cultural events, youth engagement, online engagement methods, decision-maker meetings, and more. The GPU process places particular emphasis on engaging communities historically underrepresented and excluded from traditional planning processes and often most negatively impacted by City policies.

The direction to create this interagency working group focused on air quality was, in part, spurred by community advocacy during the public hearings for adoption of the EJ Element.

COORDINATION

The development of the EJ Element was a multi-department effort with the Planning and Building Department collaborating closely with key City partners – Office of the City Administrator (Sustainability and Resilience Division), Department of Race and Equity, Office of the City Attorney, Department of Transportation, Emergency Management Services Division - Fire Department, Public Works Department, Department of Violence Prevention, Police Department, Economic & Workforce Development Department, Housing and Community Development Department, Public Library, and Parks, Recreation and Youth Development. Implementation of the Interagency Working Group will ensure continued coordination between key departments.

This report has been reviewed by the Office of the City Attorney and the Budget Bureau.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: The EJ Element creates a framework for improved access to economic opportunities through 1) promoting safe and healthy homes and public facilities and 2) reducing economic burden from healthcare expenses by addressing the unique or compounded health risks due to prolonged pollution exposure in Oakland's most vulnerable communities.

Environmental: The EJ Element ensures that environmental justice considerations are integrated into the planning elements and that the City works to address historic disenfranchisement of and disinvestment in EJ Communities.

Race & Equity: The EJ Element was accompanied by a [Race and Equity Assessment Impact Analysis \(REIA\)](#) to ensure that both Elements prioritize policies to reduce the risks and harmful impacts the City's most vulnerable and frontline communities face, such as daily exposure to air pollution.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

Consideration of an informational report on the Oakland Interagency Pollution Working Group does not constitute a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff Recommends That The City Council Receive An Informational Report On The City Administrator's Efforts to Create An Interagency Working Group Focused On Implementation Of the Air Quality Policies And Actions In Oakland's Environmental Justice Element.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Khalilha Haynes, PLANNER III, at 510-406-4802.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachments:

- 1) **Attachment A:** EJ Element Goal 1 Policies and Actions
- 2) **Attachment B:** Draft Operating Procedures for Working Group