

Meeting Highlights*

AB 617 Shafter Community Steering Committee Meeting #29

March 8, 2021 | 5:00pm-7:00pm

Virtual Zoom Meeting

Action items for the Shafter Community Steering Committee (CSC):

- Share suggestions with the District about strong desire to add the option to replace a natural gas furnace with an electrical pump or a cleaner gas furnace
- 4/13/2020: No comments were received in support of this option, and during the meeting several CSC members expressed concerns regarding the high cost of electricity.

Action items for San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (District):

- Follow up with the CSC on January PM10 spikes once data is available.
- Explore opportunities to finance the sidewalk-ready project and asking CARB to release project-related CERP funding
- Coordinate the selection of the sidewalks, bike lanes and other land-use measure projects and grant applications with the Kern County Public Works Department
- Invite the Recreation Center (Phillip Jimenez) representative to present their projects and share the needs to reduce car travel, etc.
- Share or post online any PM2.5 dust measurements and data

Welcome and Introductions

Hanna Stelmakhovych, Facilitator, Institute for Local Government (ILG)

Ryan Hayashi, Deputy Air Pollution Control Officer, District

John Guinn, Community Co-host, Wonderful Real Estate Development

Hanna welcomed the Shafter CSC participants and introduced herself and the ILG team. She gave an overview of Zoom instructions, Spanish translation services and provided an agenda overview.

Community co-host, John Guinn, introduced himself and shared his experience being a long-time Shafter resident and serving Shafter as a city manager in the past. He explained his priority is to build and create economic and other opportunities that allow the community to excel.

Ryan welcomed the participants.

Standing Updates

Community Air Monitoring Update:

Chay Thao, Program Manager, District

Chay gave an update on community air monitoring:

- The District completed the installation of three air monitoring sites - Golden Oak and Sequoia elementary schools and Shafter Labor Center
- The District completed, translated and posted on the website the 2020 fourth-quarter report
- Following up on the high PM10 spike questions that a CSC member asked in January, wind-blowing dust might have caused the high readings. The District will share more information once they have data from additional readings.

Comment: Is PM2.5 radioactive?

District Response: We do not test radioactivity.

School Filtration & Bus Subcommittee:

Brian Dodds, Program Manager, District

Brian provided an update on the School Filtration and Bus Subcommittee and other updates:

- The District had productive discussions with Richland School District on air filtration and buses. The biggest hurdle is electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure
- The PG&E is scheduled to do the site assessment for the Richland School District site to identify cost, challenges and timeframes to install the infrastructure at that location locations
- Richland School District will test MERV-11 filters to identify a difference between the current MERV-10 filters and decide on how to move forward
- The District submitted and shared with the CSC the following program plan: light-duty charging infrastructure, electric vehicles, educational training for EV mechanics, truck replacement programs and yard truck replacement programs
- The District is in the process of finalizing the Burn Cleaner plan before submitting it to CARB. One of the earlier suggestions was to replace natural gas furnaces with electric heating pumps. However, the District heard concerns raised by several of the resident CSC members regarding the high cost of electricity which would prevent them from considering this option. The District asked for CSC feedback on whether the incentive project plan to be submitted to CARB should include the replacement of a natural gas furnace with an electric heatpump. Other than the concerns raised by the resident members of the CSC, the District received no support for keeping the option to replace natural gas furnaces with electric heating pumps.

Comment: The City of Shafter has worked with PG&E and has adequate service capacity and space if the Richland School District is open to alternative sites.

District Response: Thank you. The current site is at the Wall and Atlantic streets.

Comment: If the Richland School District already has MERV-10 filters, can we give them to other places, for example, preschools or senior centers?

District Response: Potentially, the District can revisit these options depending on the outcomes of the existing efforts. The CARB approved program and guidelines is limited to K-12 public schools; however, there is an option to submit a new program plan.

Comment: What is the cost of electric heat pump replacement and usage?

District Response: The cost is up to \$8,000-10,000 to replace a furnace with an electric heat pump. The District covers \$4,000. We do not know how this cost compares with the wood pellet replacement.

Comment: What is the difference in the emission reductions?

District Response: Replacing wood or pellet device with natural gas yields substantial emission reduction. Replacing the natural gas furnace with an electric device yields fairly minimal reductions.

The CSC decided not to include the option to fund conversion from natural gas furnace to electric pumps as an option in the incentive project plan.

Pesticide Monitoring Update:

Nan Singhasemanon, Assistant Director, Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR)

Nan gave an update on pesticide monitoring and notification:

- DPR is working on the response to a letter received from Kern County in January
- DPR has reached out to stakeholders to identify what local notification might look like in Shafter
- DPR has been developing a statewide notification framework. The statewide notification regulations are on the DPR's rulemaking calendar. There will be community listening sessions sometime in summer
- This week, the DPR team is in Denair for the monitoring to inform future rules and regulations around 1, 3-Dichloropropene (1, 3-D)

Comment: What are the next feasible steps for setting up and testing a working pilot notification system in Shafter that addresses concerns of all stakeholders, including CSC and residents? The preference is for these conversions to occur internally and not outside of the CSC.

DPR Response: DPR continues to pursue a local notification system in addition to the statewide notification. DPR did have productive conversations with Kern County outside of the CSC group. The correspondence is ongoing.

Kern County Response: Kern County is willing to review suggestions about workable notifications from all stakeholders in addition to working with the state on the statewide notification.

Comment: Is Kern County open to the notification suggestions outlined in the December DPR letter to Kern County?

Kern County Response: Kern County is not in favor of what was proposed in the letter.

DPR Response: The conversations between our two parties can still continue, and DPR is working on a response letter that can be discussed once that letter is finalized and sent.

CARB Update:

Skott Wall, Office of Community Air Protection, California Air Resources Board (CARB)

Skott informed the CSC about an upcoming CARB Locomotive Regulation workshop and encouraged attendance.

Update on Land Use Strategies

Yolanda Alcantar, Kern County Public Works Manager

Yolanda shared an update from the Kern County Public Works Department (PW) regarding its effort to support the land-use measures in the CERP in coordination with the CSC and the City of Shafter. Presentation highlights included:

- The Kern County is responsible for maintaining four types of county roads and bridges
- The 1974 development standards did not require drainage systems, sidewalks or street lights. The improvement and/or installation of the storm drain system contributes to the high cost of building the sidewalks (\$1- \$2.5 million/miles). The property owners need to grant an easement over their property first
- With a drainage sump, drain inlets and curb and gutters, the Mexican Colony is sidewalk ready. The estimate is \$1,300,000
- Smith's Corner is not sidewalk ready. There is the potential to coordinate with the future sewer project to improve Shafter Ave. and Orange St. sidewalks
- There are additional options to build bike lanes and additional potential projects to build sidewalks on Fresno Ave and Popular Road with a total cost of \$5,650,000. While the Shafter CERP provides match funding, the County would have to apply for highly competitive grants.

Comment: CSC members from Mexican Colony have been advocating for sidewalks. Is the County open to match the funding for the area if a grant is secured?

PW Response: Sidewalks need to be 100% grant funded. The County already provides a match to design and scope a project. The County does not have funds to fund the construction.

Comment: Do sidewalks or a sewer project come in first?

PW Response: Because the unpredictable construction timing for the sewer project creates additional coordination challenges, the County recommends constructing the sidewalks on Shafter Ave and Orange St after the sewer project.

Question: Can CARB release \$2+ million of CERP finding for the sidewalk-ready projects since the PW cannot finance the construction?

District Response: The District team can look into that. The District can also provide a letter of support for grants application submitted by Kern County and coordinate project selections.

Open Floor Discussion of CERP Strategy Progress

Hanna Stelmakhovych, Facilitator

Using the latest status updates included in the CERP tracker, Hanna invited the CSC members to share thoughts about any other CERP measures that the CSC has not discussed.

Comment: What is the status update on the Urban Greening Program plan and the match-funding numbers?

District Response: Thank you for helping to fine-tune the Urban Greening Program plan and better understand the cost. After CARB approves the plan, the District will open up the call for projects and seek CSC consent on projects to fund. The District will match up to 20% (up to \$50,000).

Comment: What is the update on the low-dust harvesting, solar and EV programs?

District Response: Following the outreach, the District got a lot of interest in low-dust harvesting. The District has not rolled out the solar or EV programs as these programs are still in development. The District will convene a subcommittee to assist with implementation.

Public Comment

Comment: Where can one find data for the PM2.5 dust measured by the District?

District Response: The results are in the quarterly report. The District can also post it online and send it out.

Wrap Up/Next Steps

Hanna Stelmakhovych, Facilitator, ILG

Hanna thanked everyone for participating in the meeting and thanked John for co-hosting.

Reminders

The next CSC meeting is April 12 via Zoom. All the presentations, meetings highlights, transcripts and the Zoom meeting recording will be posted online.

**Refer to meeting audio to review the full details and comments from the meeting.*