

**Chevron Richmond Community Action Plan
A Collaborative Approach for Enhancing Community Engagement
Town Hall Meeting**



Date: October 16, 2024

Time: 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Location: CoBiz Richmond (1503 McDonald Ave, Richmond, CA)



Agenda:

1. **Welcome & Grounding:** 6:00 PM – 6:15 PM
 2. **Chevron's Presentation:** 6:15 PM – 6:35 PM
 3. **Draft CAP Plan Presentation:** 6:35 PM – 6:55 PM
 4. **Community Poll Activity:** 6:55 PM – 7:15 PM
 5. **Public Comments:** 7:15 PM – 8:00 PM
 6. **Closing Remarks:** 8:00 PM
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1. Welcome & Grounding

- **Facilitator:** Dr. Kerby Lynch (She/Her), PhD, Ceres Policy Research
Dr. Lynch opened the meeting by welcoming attendees and grounding the discussion. She emphasized the importance of building trust and improving the communication channels between Chevron and the Richmond community

2. Chevron's Presentation

Chevron Representatives Presenting:

- **Brian Hubinger, Corporate Affairs Manager** – Brian highlighted Chevron's commitment to focusing on collaboration with the Richmond community. His goal was to express the importance of these meetings as a platform for two-way dialogue between Chevron and the community. He acknowledged that the conversations should not be one-off events but part of a continuous process to understand the community's concerns better and improve Chevron's practices accordingly. He thanked the community for participating and emphasized Chevron's willingness to listen and grow through these interactions.
- **Kris Battleson, Health Safety and Environment Manager** – Kris provided an in-depth overview of Chevron's health, safety, and environmental efforts, focusing on regulatory compliance. She explained that Chevron operates under the oversight of 36 different regulatory agencies (federal, state, and local) that set requirements for safe and environmentally responsible operations. She emphasized Chevron's significant efforts in air quality management, noting that the refinery monitors 450,000 emission points and

has almost 100 continuous emission monitors. She also spoke about the improvements achieved in particulate matter reduction, highlighting a 40% reduction due to the Modernization Project.

- **Duy Nguyen, Environmental Specialist** – Duy discussed Chevron's efforts to manage and reduce flare emissions and presented data on flare events between October 2023 and September 2024, highlighting a 40% reduction in the duration of flare events compared to the previous year. He explained that while flaring is sometimes necessary as a safety mechanism, Chevron continuously works to minimize its occurrence. He detailed the use of advanced monitoring systems to track flare performance and highlighted the steps taken to further reduce emissions, such as installing automated systems for better control and optimization.
- **Danny Barbour, Environmental Specialist** – Danny highlighted Chevron's continuous efforts to reduce flare emissions by enhancing monitoring systems and implementing new technologies. He explained the company's investment in an automated flare control system, which optimizes gas flow and combustion to minimize emissions during flare events. He also detailed Chevron's comprehensive review of past flare events to identify root causes. Throughout the presentation, Danny emphasized Chevron's commitment to transparency, regulatory compliance, and improving air quality in the Richmond community.
- **Anna Morgan, Air Quality Manager** – Anna outlined Chevron's five major ongoing efforts to reduce flaring and improve air quality. These initiatives are part of Chevron's long-term strategy to minimize its environmental impact. She explained that Chevron has formed an interdisciplinary team that meets monthly to identify opportunities for reducing flaring. She also emphasized the importance of ongoing emission reduction efforts, where Chevron continuously evaluates equipment and operational procedures to identify areas for improvement. She discussed the company's focus on improving training programs for operators to help reduce flaring.
- **Lily Rahnema, Community Engagement Manager** – Lily detailed Chevron's community engagement efforts, stressing that the company's success is tied to the prosperity of the Richmond community. She described how Chevron has invested almost \$50 million over the past decade in economic development, workforce development, and educational initiatives. She highlighted Chevron's commitment to hiring locally, noting that Chevron Richmond employs around 3,000 people. She also spoke about Chevron's partnerships with local schools and the Regional Occupational Program, offering Richmond residents free operator training. Additionally, she mentioned the Environmental and Community Investment Agreement (ECIA), which has allocated \$90 million for community grants and initiatives such as the Richmond Promise, a scholarship fund for local high school students. She underscored Chevron's long-term commitment to supporting the community and driving local economic growth.

3. Draft Community Action Plan Presentation

Presenter: Dr. Kerby Lynch

- **Overview:**
The Community Action Plan (CAP) is a living document designed to evolve with community input. The goal is to prioritize transparency and collaboration to address community concerns about air quality and public health.
- **Core Principles:**
 - **Transparency:** Regular, accessible reporting to keep the community informed.
 - **Accountability:** Chevron's commitment to engaging with the community and addressing environmental concerns.
 - **Collaboration:** Creating an open, two-way dialogue around flaring, emissions, and community health.

Presenter: Patrice Lewis, Parchester Village Neighborhood Council

- Patrice emphasized the following key points during her presentation as part of a community meeting involving Chevron and the Richmond community:
 - **Key Progress of CAP:** Biannual meetings have been established as part of the CAP, with progress already made through two retreats held between August 18, 2024, and September 13, 2024. The focus areas include community engagement and collaboration, data transparency and monitoring, and improving community health.
 - **Community Involvement and Collaboration:** They highlighted the importance of community involvement in developing the CAP. The CAP will collaborate closely with residents, neighborhood councils, and organizations to address concerns through annual meetings and continuous discussions.
 - **Transparency and Accountability:** A significant part of the CAP focuses on ensuring that Chevron holds itself accountable by maintaining transparency with the community. This includes regular updates and transparent, accessible reporting that involves the community in decision-making processes.
 - **Two-Way Communication:** They stressed the importance of creating mechanisms for two-way communication between Chevron and the Richmond community. The goal is to ensure that the community is informed and can provide feedback on Chevron's operations and any potential environmental or health concerns.

Chevron's Commitments:

- Investments to reduce flaring.
- Collaboration with the community to refine the CAP and continue to advance a better two-way dialogue.

Committee Feedback

- **Kim Jones** (Richmond resident for 60 years): Praised the collaboration between Chevron and the community. Initially skeptical, Jones shared that he had never set foot on Chevron's property until August 2024 but was now optimistic that the partnership would improve through ongoing feedback.

- **Vernon Whitmore** (President Santa Fe Neighborhood Council): Acknowledged the strong collaboration with Chevron and thanked the company for its efforts.
 - **Willie Robinson** (President of the Richmond NAACP): Focused on advocacy for those most harmed in the community, specifically related to air quality. Despite historical issues, he emphasized his long-standing involvement with Chevron and hoped to continue building a positive relationship moving forward.
 - **Kathleen Sullivan** (Regional Nonprofit Director): Expressed skepticism but acknowledged the necessity of involvement in the process. She emphasized the need for accountability and solutions, advocating for continued dialogue between Chevron and the community.
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4. Public Comments

During the public comment period, attendees voiced several concerns about Chevron's operations and the CAP.

Public Comments and Chevron's Responses:

1. **Comment:** Commenter raised concerns about the long-term air quality issues in Richmond. They described leaving a car outside for 2 months and seeing a buildup of pollution that was difficult to clean, indicating the visible environmental impact in the area from diesel ships. They urged the action plan to focus not only on flaring but also on addressing overall emissions from Chevron's operations.
Chevron's Response: Chevron stressed that reducing emissions across the facility and working to minimize operational incidents that lead to flaring remains a top priority, supported by ongoing technological improvements. Chevron also noted that the California Air Resources Board has passed regulations specifically requiring the reduction of emissions from ships at berth.
2. **Comment:** Commenter asked whether community organizations like APEN and CBE being brought to the table. They stressed the need for a more inclusive engagement process to ensure that multiple voices from impacted communities were represented in these discussions.
Ceres's Response: Ceres Policy Research confirmed that APEN and CBE had been invited to join the steering committee and had declined.
Chevron's Response: Chevron affirmed its commitment to engaging with community organizations and inviting diverse community voices into discussions.
3. **Comment:** Commenter alleged that during a flaring event in November, a large black plume of smoke was visible for seven hours, yet no alarm was triggered to warn the community. They questioned why the warning system, which is tested monthly, failed during a significant event, expressing frustration and concern for the safety of residents. They called for a more responsive and reliable alert system that better protects the community.
Chevron's Response: Chevron clarified that the community warning system sirens, managed by the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department, are only activated when a

"shelter-in-place" order for the general public is necessary. In the case of the November flaring incident, despite the visible smoke, Contra Costa County Hazardous Materials Program determined, based on air monitoring and weather conditions, the event did not require such an order, which is why no alarm was triggered. Chevron also noted that Contra Costa County is revising its notification policies and the warning levels and reaffirmed its commitment to improving transparency and communication related to notable flaring events.

4. **Comment:** Commenter brought up the absence of a local community advisory panel, noting that other regional refineries, such as Phillips 66 and Marathon, have such panels in place. They questioned whether Chevron planned to reinstate a panel to allow for more structured and ongoing dialogue between the company and the community, stressing that this could be a vital tool for maintaining transparency and accountability.

Chevron's Response: Chevron is open to community input on this topic and will be continuing to engage the Community Action Plan Steering Committee in a capacity similar to a community advisory panel.

5. **Comment:** A member of Idle No More SF Bay shared their experience organizing refinery corridor walks from 2014 to 2017. These walks involved communities affected by multiple refineries and were led by Indigenous leaders. They expressed frustration that this history of grassroots community engagement had not been acknowledged. The speaker also pointed out that the upcoming October 31st deadline for public comments on the Chevron plan was only two weeks away, and many in the community, including themselves, were unaware of it. They questioned how Chevron expected meaningful participation when so few had been informed about the process, and they asked if the community would have to take on the burden of outreach.

Ceres's Response: Ceres Policy Research reiterated that this is the first community meeting and the beginning of this type of community engagement. The Steering Committee has been meeting since August, so the initial plan was created with input from community members. Chevron will be holding community meetings every six months for at least five years. The CAP is an evolving document that will be informed by the ongoing engagement.

Chevron's Response: Chevron is committed to improving outreach and ensuring broader engagement through multiple channels such as social media, direct mail, and partnerships with local organizations.

6. **Comment:** They voiced concerns about the health impacts of particulate matter (PM 2.5) emissions, specifically how the tiny particles emitted by Chevron's operations affect the respiratory health of children in North Richmond, who have twice the rate of asthma as the state average. They underscored the need for Chevron to address these emissions more aggressively, as these particles are small enough to be easily inhaled and can cause long-term health damage, particularly in vulnerable populations like children.

Chevron's Response: Chevron reiterated its commitment to ongoing emissions reductions and air monitoring.