

# **Chevron Richmond Community Action Plan**

**A Collaborative Framework for Enhanced Community  
Engagement**

**November 2024**

**This Community Action Plan is required by a settlement agreement with the Bay Area Air  
Quality Management District.**

## Executive Summary

The Richmond Refinery operates under stringent federal, state, and local regulations, including those from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), to protect public health and the environment. As part of a 2024 settlement agreement between Chevron and the BAAQMD, Chevron committed to reducing emissions, enhancing transparency about flaring events, and developing a Community Action Plan (CAP). The CAP, developed with input from community leaders and facilitated by Ceres Policy Research, focuses on meaningful engagement and trust-building, including biannual community meetings to discuss compliance and flaring performance.

A CAP Planning Committee also provided Chevron with helpful suggestions to promote community collaboration. Suggestions include:

- Chevron’s attendance at existing neighborhood council meetings to provide updates, receive concerns from the community and foster improved two-way dialogue.
- Meetings between Chevron and the CAP Planning Committee.
- Methods to build trust around air-quality data and flaring performance.
- Increase accessible reporting tailored to different levels of technical knowledge.
- Improved delivery of updates during flaring and/or other air quality related incidents.
- Providing relevant information in multiple languages and via different media.
- Community health engagements.

Although the settlement does not require these activities, Chevron will engage in a dialogue related to these proposed ideas – as well as other relevant suggestions that are raised during CAP implementation – to better foster community engagement and transparency. Over the next five years, Chevron will adapt the CAP based on community feedback and evolving needs, ensuring sustainable and responsive solutions. This CAP underscores Chevron’s dedication to meaningful community involvement and transparency, aiming to build trust and secure a sustainable future for both the company and Richmond residents through ongoing dialogue and collaboration.

## **Acknowledgements**

The development of this report would not have been possible without the dedication and contributions of the Planning Committee members, whose hard work and insights helped shape this important document. We are deeply grateful for their time, expertise, and commitment to ensuring the voices of Richmond's diverse communities were heard and reflected throughout this process.

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the following individuals:

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- Miriam Wong, Executive Director and Founder, The Latina Center

Your unwavering dedication to environmental justice, community engagement, and equitable representation has been invaluable in the creation of this report. We thank you for your leadership and for the critical role you play in advocating for the well-being of our Richmond and North Richmond communities.

## **1.0 Introduction**

Since the early 1900s, Chevron has been a cornerstone of Richmond’s industrial landscape, significantly contributing to the City’s economic growth while providing Bay Area residents and businesses with reliable energy. Chevron’s Richmond Refinery is subject to extensive federal, state, and local regulations to protect people and the environment, including rules and regulations adopted by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) to protect communities from air pollution. Chevron has achieved substantial air pollution reductions at the Refinery, yet we understand that members of the community continue to have concerns about potential impacts on air quality and environmental health.

In 2015, BAAQMD adopted revisions to one of its rules, Regulation 6 Rule 5 (Rule 6-5), which regulates the emission of certain air pollutants, including from Refinery equipment. Chevron legally challenged the BAAQMD’s Rule 6-5 rulemaking and, in February 2024, reached an agreement with BAAQMD to dismiss the litigation and agree to various terms (hereinafter the “settlement”). As part of the settlement, Chevron committed to reducing air pollutant emissions and improving transparency regarding flaring events<sup>1</sup> at its Richmond Refinery. Chevron also agreed to develop a Community Action Plan (CAP) to promote transparency and collaboration between Chevron and the Richmond community.

As required by the settlement, the CAP must identify opportunities for enhanced community engagement related to Chevron’s compliance with environmental standards and flaring events, including conducting at least two community meetings every year to provide information and answer questions from interested members of the community. Chevron will implement the CAP over the next five years in collaboration with the Richmond community.

## **2.0 Community Action Plan Development**

To develop the CAP, Chevron engaged Ceres Policy Research – an organization committed to facilitating, researching, and educating the community on key policy issues and developing long-standing relationships among various stakeholders in the community. Ceres Policy Research conducted extensive outreach to and facilitated discussions with neighborhood

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<sup>1</sup> Refinery flares are safety devices that burn air pollutants that would otherwise be directly released into the atmosphere. Flaring occurs when there is a significant pressure imbalance in a refinery’s fuel gas system.

council leadership, community-based organization representatives and other individual community members committed to environmental justice and social equity. Ceres Policy Research assisted in the development of the CAP Planning Committee, whose hard work and insights helped shape this important document. This collaborative process placed the community's voices at the heart of conversations about Chevron's environmental performance, creating space for open dialogue and trust-building. Chevron greatly appreciates Ceres Policy Research's and the CAP Planning Committee members' expertise and commitment to ensuring that the voices of Richmond's diverse communities were heard and reflected throughout this process. The CAP incorporates not only the settlement's provisions but also the insights and concerns of the community, learning from their perspectives to improve Chevron's environmental strategy.

The CAP reinforces Chevron's commitments, as outlined in the settlement agreement, to improve community engagement and increase transparency regarding compliance with air quality requirements and flaring practices. These ideas are intended to be explored over the next five years as part of future phases of the plan and are not immediate commitments. In this way, the CAP remains a flexible tool for guiding collaborative solutions that are realistic, sustainable, and responsive to the priorities of Richmond's residents, promoting ongoing collaboration between Chevron and the community.

### **3.0 Community Engagement Framework**

This section of the CAP provides a framework for ongoing collaboration, structured dialogue, inclusive community participation, and transparent initiatives to inform the community of Chevron's efforts to minimize flaring and improve environmental performance, as required by the settlement and informed by the CAP Planning Committee's input. The framework is designed to facilitate a two-way dialogue that enables the community to provide feedback on Chevron's activities and allows Chevron to respond effectively.

Chevron will conduct biannual community meetings to maintain open communication between Chevron and the Richmond community. At these forums, Chevron will provide updates on the Richmond Refinery's compliance with air quality regulations and flaring performance. These meetings will be scheduled for at least two hours, and the meetings will be structured to enable the community to provide public comment and ask questions. In addition, Chevron will provide informational updates on Refinery operations. Importantly, these meetings will give

residents a space to ask questions, express concerns, and contribute to discussions about Chevron's role in the community. Following each meeting, Chevron will prepare a written summary of the public comments received, Chevron's responses, and the discussion points of the meeting. Chevron also will explore the relevant suggestions and report back at the next community meeting.

Further, the CAP Planning Committee provided Chevron with helpful suggestions and experiences to promote community collaboration, which Chevron will explore in future discussions. The CAP Planning Committee's suggestions include:

- Chevron's periodic attendance at existing neighborhood council meetings to provide localized and accessible information related to Refinery operations, hear concerns from the community and foster improved two-way dialogue.
  - While Chevron effectively reports general compliance data, one Planning Committee participant noted the community's strong desire for more localized and accessible information. They want to understand Refinery operations and their effects in ways that feel approachable, rather than 'intimidating and isolating.' Participants shared their perspective that this communication gap may have historically caused frustration, with many residents asking for more meaningful interactions beyond large, formal meetings.
- Meetings between Chevron and the CAP Planning Committee.
  - The CAP Planning Committee envision themselves as a critical body for tracking Chevron's progress on air quality compliance and flare performance. Quarterly meetings between the committee and Chevron were suggested to share progress, and as valuable checkpoints to discuss CAP implementation, potential initiatives, improve feedback mechanisms, and maintain ongoing dialogue.
  - During the planning meetings, there was a discussion about potential formation of a community advisory board as the CAP planning committee evolves to provide further representation and transparency. While community members expressed a desire for more direct involvement in Chevron's operations, it was noted this idea may be more relevant after the CAP has matured over its five-year period. At this stage, the CAP is a guiding framework. Further developments such as a formal advisory board could be considered in future phases.

- Methods to build trust around air-quality data and flaring performance.
  - The planning committee emphasized the importance of Chevron educating the community on how to use tools like richmondairmonitoring.org, so existing systems are understood and effective. Members expressed interest in access to the raw data necessary for monitoring environmental impacts and a simplified "color-coded system" to clearly communicate air quality levels on a website, empowering residents to interpret real-time air quality data.
- Address the interest for more accessible reporting, tailored to different levels of technical knowledge.
  - During planning meetings, participants emphasized the desire for Chevron to make its reporting more transparent and accessible to non-experts. Residents urged the company to provide clear explanations about flare occurrences and ratings. A participant highlighted the need for Chevron to "explain why a flare is rated at the level it is" to help the community better understand the Refinery's operations.
- Improved delivery of updates during flaring and/or other air quality related incidents, including ways to improve incident notification systems
  - Participants voiced dissatisfaction with past responses, recommending the company "connect with key organizations to reach specific subgroups" during emergencies. While a county-based Community Warning System is already in place, participants desired more effective engagement. Participants proposed creating a "dedicated webpage that is easy to access and written in layman's terms" to provide a centralized source of information. Additionally, a "phone-in recorded line" was suggested for those less familiar with digital tools to offer critical updates. For example, during flaring incidents, a hotline could allow people to call in and receive information about what is happening at the Refinery.
- Providing updates and relevant information in multiple languages and via different media (e.g., direct mailing, updates on Chevron's website)
  - Some participants felt current communication mechanisms were insufficient, particularly for less tech-savvy and/or non-English-speaking residents and

emphasized making updates available in multiple languages, including Spanish and Lao, to reach underserved populations and keep all residents informed.

- Community health engagement
  - While the CAP does not focus on community health initiatives, some community members suggested Chevron could explore opportunities to engage in this space, working to educate the community on existing programs or partnerships that address health concerns.

Although the settlement does not require the above activities, Chevron will engage in a dialogue related to these proposed ideas – as well as other relevant suggestions that are raised during CAP implementation –to better foster community engagement and transparency.

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

Chevron is committed to fostering meaningful community involvement and collaboration with the Richmond community. The CAP has been designed to provide a flexible framework for enhanced transparency and collaboration through ongoing community engagement with regular meetings, timely incident reporting, and more transparent data sharing. Through implementing the CAP, Chevron endeavors to better inform the community of issues related to Refinery operations and build trust and foster a more collaborative, transparent relationship with the Richmond community. This will contribute to long-term improvements in environmental health, air quality, and mutual accountability, ensuring a more sustainable future for both Chevron and the residents of Richmond.

The CAP addresses Chevron’s compliance with environmental regulations and responds to the community’s concerns about air quality and flaring. It provides suggestions for Chevron’s improved engagement with the community on issues related to Refinery operation, creating an ongoing dialogue where feedback is considered for future initiatives.

By embracing these community-driven approaches, the process will hopefully rebuild trust and foster a more collaborative, transparent relationship with the Richmond community and Chevron.