

# CJP Community Forum: Air Quality Goal

Thursday, November 6, 2025

## Meeting Notes

### **Attendees (in person)**

- Tim Lynch - project staff
- John Wasiutynski - project staff
- Silvia Tanner - Mult Co Sustainability
- Naededge
- Vinh - City of Portland BPS
- Theodora - OPSR
- Nakisha Nathan - NCA
- Oscar - NCA
- Kainalu - NCA
- Noelle Studer-Spevak - ACSI

### **Attendees (online)**

1. Claire Stock - Extinction Rebellion
2. Michaela McCormick - Extinction Rebellion
3. Danny Noonan - Breach Collective
4. Pat Kaczmarek - 350 PDX
5. Cherice Bock - 350 PDX
6. Nsilo Berry - MultCo REACH
7. Denise Lopez - City of Gresham
8. Maleek McKenzie - Sierra Club
9. Derron Coles - Kinjani Collective
10. Amy Rathfelder - NW Natural
11. Arjorie Arberry-Baribeault - Beyond Toxics
12. David Pedersen - Clean air advocate
13. Laurel Viles - OLCV, Tank the Tanks
14. Lynn Handlin
15. Nikita Daryanani - Coalition of Communities of Color
16. Xitlali Torres - Verde
17. Jamie Johnson
18. Erika Mo
19. Sara Moghadasipour
20. Mackenzie Springer
21. Margaret Butler
22. Babs V
23. Destiny - Rooted Homes
24. Michael Loch
25. Meredith
26. Kate Murphy -
27. Patricia Kulberg
28. Bren Brint

### **Outcome Metrics**

Theodora - OPSR - Q re: public health monitoring -

Nadege - Essence data primarily, ED usage data etc., also do some environmental factors, like AQ in the tri-county report, AQ index include various pollutants, primarily PM

Theodora - Concerned that NOx might be undertracked, particularly for indoor, including from combustion

NOx is both a pollutant itself and a precursor to other pollutants

Kate - Q: the metrics being used, is it self reported from industry, and if so, is there anything to account for the changing algorithms for how they are measured? Zenith example, change in the math that doesn't reflect actual levels

John - Data produced for AQI based on real time measurement region. Can give a sense if the air is generally good or bad, but it doesn't not tell us about more acute, localized experiences

EJ report looked at for example, how many AQ permits are there by neighborhood, overlaid with demographic information

Q: With the federal change, is there a local source? Nadege, yes, we can produce that in house

Q: Opportunity for advocacy DEQ AP42 - known to underestimate emissions, self report, 204/325 are used by other states together with fence line measurements. Oregon is behind on the reporting methodologies. May address the issue of changing math mentioned by Kate. Advocacy opportunity for City/County to play.

Patricia - Bootleg version of EPA/EJ index available, link shared, but don't know if it is or will be updated.

Q: EPA - Had designated N/NE PDX as one of 13 urban communities most polluted in the US, what is the plan for beefing up AQ measurement in those neighborhoods. Outside of purple air monitors.

ND - DEQ is responsible for AQ monitoring, have the tools. They look for input on their annual monitoring plans, opportunity for advocacy.

JW - advocacy opportunities

Lynn - Big concern is the monitoring, DEQ is known to not be strong in monitoring. Can the County/City do anything to add to the monitoring, not just what, but who is breathing it in and who are the sources of emissions. Using metrics/data beyond self reported.

Derron: Regarding the lack of monitoring you could advocate for DEQ working with community scientists who are trying to establish a AQ monitoring network. It will mean helping with permits as well. These programs could include monitoring of both indoor and outdoor air. The Change is in the Air program would be delighted to install these monitors, but permitting and costs are major factors.

Brian - Supportive of this work. Pile on about metrics, purple air is limited to PM primarily, proxy for other pollutants but not the same. AQ can vary dramatically across geography, need for better, more dense, more reliable, needed to understand if we are making progress to protect people. Weather is also a strong impact on AQ, not sure how to account. Stagnation for example. One targeted, geo scaled index that we can track over time.

Vinh - PSU had a lot of NOx monitorings, partnership opportunities.

John - Hearing strategy idea of how to avocacte/invest in additional monitoring.

Vinh - GHG/NOx/PM emissions reductions should be part of metrics.

Claire - Emergency response system, scrap metal files for ex, communication alerts only went to one part of the County, need a measure of how effective those system are in reaching folks.

Nadege - Don't have an internal measure of that, but hope that EOC are tracking as part of after action reports. Strategy could be to improve communications for air quality related events.

Claire - Don't even know which FD To connect with, where this information lives.

Jon HD - Public alerts exist, may just need to work to expand, refine.

Theodora - The threshold of zero days over 100 is too high, even lower numbers can be harmful.

Helena B - Understanding is that AQ is based on a 24hour exposure, could call for two different metrics, 24 hour average, and an annual exposure for example

John - CC is driving forest fire changes, PM has negative effects, but can also include toxics from man made structures

Need to include some kind of indoor AQ metrics

John - Do we have any ventilations data, maybe through the City's HEART standards?

Vinh - Don't have that data, draft city code requires an inventory of home ventilation but we don't have that data yet.

Samantha - PSU / HD study of indoor air quality of gas stoves vs. induction cook tops. That data could serve as a future metric.

Derron - From a community stand point, want to have trust and belief in the plan, then we need community metrics, qualitative/experience data, like health journals. Data directly from community members.

John - Qual data is a priority, but it is a challenge around collection trying to solve.

Vinh - Asthma rates, and the experiences of having asthma during these events, could serve as good proxy.

ND - Asthma data is tricky, believe it to be underreported in the ESSENCE data. People often have a way to respond that isn't seeking health care. Particularly challenging with childhood data.

John - Geotagged inhalers have been used elsewhere to track when they've been used.

Triggers are often going to be combustion related.

Alicia - Q: wonder if we plan to use purple air data at all, even given its limitations. It gets dismissed because of sensory accuracy, but it is robust in terms of the number of sensors available.

Derron: There are culturally specific coalitions, like the Kijani Collective, that do studies on community health. It would take partnering with these groups and supporting their work to reach the frontline folks we want to hear from regarding changes in their behavior, health, infrastructure, etc. I think it would be challenging to get robust qualitative data without using community resources.

Patricia: Portland Clean Air raised funds to purchase a small, mobile and high quality accurate VOC monitor that they hope to use to map patterns of air pollution in N and NE Portland. They also have a small mobile PM2.5 monitor. They can use these monitors to produce maps of air pollution plumes passing through neighborhoods.

Brian - Might not be expensive to set up a network of County owned measurement devices, and if this can happen, then consider a benchmark on the number of days reduced between 50-100, which is the range that most likely reflects local air pollution. Wildfires for example (pollution sources outside of the County) are going to push it much higher.

ND - AQI is set based on federal benchmarks, should be cautious about using that model and/or consider complimentary data.

Lynn - In terms of IAQ for larger multifamily, are there any requirements on those owners? Correlating those with use of indoor combustion appliances.

John - In general, we know that IAQ is most of the time worse than OAQ because of the limited mixing of fresh air. Can be as varied as type of cleaners, dust, scented candles, combustion appliance, carpet, use of induction cooktop. Monitoring is complicated generally, but particularly with indoor because of the number of variables.

Lynn - related to, we know the impacts of methane appliances, so should there be some kind of reporting requirements for

Xitlali - I know the County already has information about indoor air quality, but it would be great to have increased education for it as one of the strategies, particularly in partnership with CBOs.

Jon HD - HD does offer air quality presentations to residents, monitoring could be complex and difficult, might be easier to require air sealing and ventilation of housing.

Policy is cheap compared to programs, County need to put on its health hat and require external ventilation and required education about the risks of combustion. Can also consider maximum heat standards. For example, that there is a cooling space access for all multifamily. County need to flex its regulatory muscles.

Jon HD - Much of the regulation of housing is through building codes, which is state led with city implementation.

Derron: There are not requirements, but the CAP program did a workshop out in Rockwood Village, where the tenants were VERY interested in participating in indoor AQ monitoring. Again, another reason to partner with folks with pre-existing relationships with the community to recruit folks for initiatives.

## **Strategies**

Set the stage - programs/funding, policy and law (recognizing that there are different layers/precedent). The plan is not just for the County, also for the community.

Kate - Also came up in the public health forum, looking into the way to get medical practitioners to proscribe interventions to meet basic needs, air filters/ACs for example. Look to untraditional resource and SDOH for resources/alignment.

Michaela - Comments re: breadth of County's action, re: monitoring and permitting regime. Goes beyond policy confines of the County, put energy into Leg advocacy: 1) phase out diesel fuels for

transp 2) req EJ impact analysis for land use decision funding for enforcement 3) geothermal systems, particularly through methane distributions (currently on the state docket carried over from the last session, and geo solutions in place of methane.

Kaineloop (NCA) - ethnic and racial disparities report, anything more recent than 2019? What's the timing for a future report.

2019 was for a community justice program, last disparity report was 2011. The EJ snapshot was 2023.

John - data timing/availability is important, reporting cadence, trying to understand what the right intervals are.

Alicia - appreciate that wood ovens in restaurants are called out. Wood smoke is the leading cause of air pollution in Multico. Also a climate forcer. It has been a blind spot, due to greenwashing from the biomass industry. Company trying to build a pellet fuel factory in the PNW.

Consider change the language around AQ driven by fossil fuel combustion to just combustion to reflect biomass impact. Rewarding folks who cook with wood that switch to other fuel types. A wood fire restaurant seriously harmed the neighborhood. Agrees with banning all gas, but considered that ban . Solana Beach example. Address the 90% homes, water, but not stoves because it will face opposition. And if gas bans push people to burn wood for cooking, which is much worse for communities.

Maleek - Still learning counties full legal authority, but encourages to look at gas stations, sign polluters, set backs has been insufficient, sign NOx exposure, within 26 feet people will be overexposed. Eventually going to have to figure out what o do with them as we switch fuel types. Strategy - disincentivize new stations, and give relief to communities already exposed.

John - Noted that this strategy is included under the fossil fuel goal.

Xitlali - DEQ is working on new guidance around vapor intrusion.[Department of Environmental Quality : Vapor Intrusion Guidance : Environmental Cleanup : State of Oregon](#)

Noelle - echoing Xitlali's call to do outreach, information to parents is totally insufficient, low birth weight from exposure is a real thing, people need to know when they are putting themselves and their children in danger. American Health Association may have grants to support this engagement.

Diana - Following up on Maleek's comments - City's Economic Opportunity Analysis, talking about residential set back with industrial sites, means it will be really important to monitor freight and other high impact industries. How do we put more separation between where people live and industries that harm health

Samantha - Important to use resources that exist, access to resource through medicaid funding - leverage CCOs to share information

Ann (OPSR) - National asthma guidelines, almost nothing around what kind of cooking energy do you use. Education is inexpensive and very important. Q: Indirect source rule, came up before the EQC in 2019, didn't make it through, understanding is that new law is not required, just need the EQC to instructs DEQ to implement it. County can have a strong influence.

John - EQC often will look at legislative sessions about new action, but point out that it is not necessary in law, but may be necessary politically.

Economic Opportunity Analysis at City may also be a pathway to push for use of indirect source rule locally. Indirect sources are concentrated in terms of localized impact

Maleek - knowledge gap about the impacts of things that we have around us, like stoves. Opportunity for Multnomah County to proactively reach out to families who struggle with asthma, really important for both education and interventions. Personally, has experienced asthma so severe, near fatal. Need to be able to provide tools to parents and children, ensure that there is somewhere in the community where people can go.

Helena - outreach on the homes of gas stoves is great, but also need to recognize that renters in particular can't easily address, help them navigate those limitations. For example, it is legal to not have to have a gas account if they choose to use an induction plate instead. Need to both mitigate asthma episodes, but also need to do things to prevent folks developing asthma overall.

Vinh - Adding policy about air filter distribution, can add an induction cook top strategy to that as well.

Nakisha - Strategy to distribute asthma inhalers with tracking, look at a pilot perhaps. Concerned about data about emissions in living spaces are not presenting a risk for family stability, e.g. data about exposure liability

Derron - I would advocate for anonymous indoor air quality studies for this reason.

Ann - Why not look at data at the County level instead of relying on the state/state level. Also, want the County to support geothermal networks, geothermal is the only type of energy that is not opposed by the current administration.

Helena - Differentiate from shallow TEN vs deep well power generation for geothermal, need to clarify which incentives are still available. Deep hot water vs. shallow hot air. Could the planning commission require the use of geothermal for new developments?

Vinh - Last time this was looked at, that he recalled, was around Moda Center, and it was difficult to make it work financially. A decade ago, may need another look. Challenge of first mover. Should be an opportunity.

Danny - from AQ and justice standpoint, TENs can be good options for pruning gas system or green fields, but if they are following european models, often generated by biomass or other sources that can have negative AQ impacts.

Vinh - NOx emissions standards action, City/County authority to regulate at the building level, ref: CA BAQMD / SCAQMD - likely the only legal pathway for new moving towards electrification and addressing outdoor NOx pollution.

John - BAAQMD - phases in with replacement over time - at the appliance level. SCAQMD - boiler requirements to replace with non-emitting, has not passed for smaller appliances.

Kate - decommissioning tanks at CEI - American Petroleum Institute tends to write a lot of the regulatory language, not currently a policy of decommissioning tanks based on age and potential to create hazardous AQ beyond. Harm reduction, address HAP in tanks that are older than the useful life of the materials they were constructed with.

Derron - If the community, rather than county owns the data, these safety measures can be done without concern for things like freedom of information. The community scientists could control (a) who can access the raw or summarized data, (b) how data is shared publicly, (c) what format it takes (e.g., dashboards, reports, maps), and (d) other safeguards that protect participants.

Lynn - Recognition that biobased solutions for GHG emissions can have negative AQ impacts

Maleek - Expand air filter strategy to include face masks, protective for families with respiratory illness, some economic relief from having to buy these

Alicia - Consider banning appliances that use natural gas: a ban that targets the gas appliances that use the largest volume of natural gas: water heaters, furnaces, clothes dryers. But not banning all natural gas to prevent increases in wood burning.

Michaela - Advocate for geo-thermal systems to be developed by energy companies, especially those selling natural gas (methane), initially through pilot programs currently being considered in the state legislature (SB 1143A), and for including geo-thermal systems in a broader transition plan, particularly to replace natural gas as a heating/cooling and cooking fuel.

- Advocate for legislation requiring environmental justice impact analysis of land use decisions, plus funding for implementation and enforcement.
- Advocate for phasing out diesel fuels for all kinds of transport and other equipment.