

# Sacramento Neighborhoods Activating on Air Quality (SNAAQ) Outreach and Community Feedback Summary: Oak Park

## Outreach Overview

Civic Thread (formerly WALKSacramento), in partnership with the SNAAQ Project Team and the Project Advisory Committee (PAC), kicked off community outreach for the SNAAQ project in Oak Park during the winter of 2021 to: (1) introduce the project, (2) assess concerns related to air quality, (3) identify priorities and locations for siting air quality monitors, and (4) begin brainstorming mitigation solutions. The primary outreach efforts included a virtual listening session series and an online survey, which were promoted on social media, at local businesses with physical flyers, and through our collective network of community-based organizations that serve Oak Park.

Beginning in the summer of 2021, the Project Team, PAC, and Neighborhood Coalition members deployed a community education strategy to inform residents about how air quality impacts their health, how to access and understand the air quality monitor data, and how to advocate for their air quality priorities. Community education strategies were primarily led by Breathe California in partnership with Civic Thread, SMUD, Breakthrough Sacramento, and Improve Your Tomorrow and focused on youth leadership development. Efforts to reach the broader community included the development of a three-part video education series and oral histories project, which aimed to center residents as living experts within the air quality conversation.

The community education phase of the project intended to reinforce the foundation for residents to feel empowered discussing and identifying solutions leading into the community-based planning process. Strategies included intimate listening circles led by Neighborhood Coalition members, self-guided Environmental Justice Tours, a Design Innovation Challenge sponsored by SMUD, and a virtual community block party. Solutions identified during the community-based planning process can be found in the Air Quality Action Plan.

The Project Team sought to ensure all education and outreach efforts were as accessible as possible by providing live and written translations in primary languages spoken in both project areas; partnering with trusted community-based organizations; and using the PAC's expertise of their neighborhoods to build a diverse stakeholder contact list. Recognizing technological barriers that many community members face, laptops and WiFi hotspots were provided to those in need to be able to participate in the project's virtual events. Stipends and incentives were also provided to community members who participated throughout the project in an effort to recognize their time and expertise.

Key themes and findings from each of these efforts are summarized below.

## Block Parties

## March 2022

To help celebrate everyone's participation and contribution throughout the air quality education process, our project team held a virtual community block party for each neighborhood, Oak Park and Old North Sacramento/Norwood. Along with a variety of fun activities, participants were asked to vote on the air quality improvement solutions they would like to see incorporated in the air quality action plan. The results are listed below:

Priority Solutions	
1 <sup>st</sup> Solution (6 votes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Incentives</li></ul>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Solution (4 votes each)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Programs</li><li>● Public information and outreach</li></ul>
3 <sup>rd</sup> Solution (3 votes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Walking &amp; rolling infrastructure improvements</li></ul>
4 <sup>th</sup> Solution (2 votes each)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Individual action</li><li>● Individual action</li><li>● Enforcement</li><li>● Public policy (i.e. rules and regulations)</li></ul>

## Environmental Justice Walking Tours

### March 2022

As part of the community based-planning process the project team engaged residents in self-guided walking tours to take a first-hand account of built environment characteristics that could be contributing to air pollution. Residents were encouraged to help improve health and wellbeing in their neighborhood by visiting locations that were featured on an interactive map (including local sensitive receptors, permitted facilities, and air quality monitor) and identifying opportunities for improvement along the way.

Submissions = 6

Priorities/Concerns	Desired Solutions
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General	<p>More investment into public policy and programs</p> <p>Better community outreach</p> <p>More crosswalks and flashing lights so drivers are aware of pedestrians</p> <p>More focus needed to support individuals who are unhoused. They have no shelter to block them from the air and noise pollution.</p>
Address fumes in neighborhoods closest to freeways 50 and 99	
Dirty streets from litter, abandoned car parts, trash fires, human waste	
Loud noises from freeway	Add a sound wall to absorb some noise pollution
Heavy and fast traffic (on both freeway and roads)	<p>Add guardrail to highway ramps</p> <p>Add speed bumps in high trafficked and fast areas</p>
Bad driver behavior, such as driving the wrong way and driving through double yellow lines	Install traffic barrier on double yellow lines
Personal safety when walking or biking around	
Bicyclists on sidewalk	<p>Protect bike lanes</p> <p>Repaint bike lanes</p> <p>Slower traffic could encourage use of bike lane</p>
Trees have been destroyed from accidents	<p>More landscaping to provide tree canopy and add more green space.</p> <p>Idea: Tree planting campaign</p>
Ongoing commercial construction causing concrete dust, noise, and heavy equipment exhaust	<p>Limit hours of construction</p> <p>Maintain sidewalk detours during construction period</p>
Caltrans equipment yard brings in noise, large trucks, bad odor from welding	Work with Caltrans to encourage more landscaping to absorb pollutants and add more greenspace in their industrialized area of the neighborhood.

## Design Challenge

February 2022

On February 26, 2022, SNAAQ held a successful 4-hour virtual event for residents of North Sacramento and Oak Park to learn about block-by-block air quality conditions and design solutions to improve air quality, with generous support from SMUD. Participants received \$100 stipends for their participation, with residents receiving an additional \$50 for lunch. Attendees selected one of three working sessions on (1) Equipment, (2) Education/Outreach, and (3) Data Analysis to share their priorities for action in each of these areas. Input is informing the development of the Community Air Action Plans for each neighborhood.

Breakout Room #1: Exploring Equipment	
<p>Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Addressing environmental impacts of the unhoused community - fires, garbage, cooking, etc.</li><li>● Transportation and other emissions related to stationary sources/facilities</li><li>● Freeway pollution</li><li>● Impact of delivery truck exhaust on food products</li><li>● Addressing land use policy re: proximity of residential areas to emissions sources</li><li>● Improving health outcomes, including asthma and diabetes</li></ul>	<p>Solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Planting and maintaining more trees in urban spaces; more community gardens and vegetative barriers; partnering with Sacramento Tree Foundation for plantings and Caltrans for maintenance</li><li>● Expanding air monitoring and deploying new technologies, including gas chromatographs to measure toxic air contaminants, black carbon, and odors of concern</li><li>● Reducing speeding by adding more speed bumps</li><li>● Monitor highways as well as major roadways and arterials</li><li>● Monitor emissions from older vehicles, which are significantly dirtier than new vehicles</li></ul>
Breakout Room #2: Education for Action:	

<p>Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensuring that young people can stand up for themselves</li> <li>● Education enables advocacy</li> <li>● Education = awareness</li> </ul>	<p>Solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Community-Based Engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Incentives/stipends</li> <li>○ Block parties</li> <li>○ Churches</li> <li>○ Age-appropriate materials</li> <li>○ In-person and person-to-person contact</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Community Messaging: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Materials translation in multiple languages and culturally competent</li> <li>○ Must be relevant to everyday lives of people</li> <li>○ Targeted education of community leaders and key messengers</li> <li>○ Go where the community is</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Local Government Advocacy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Community support for action</li> <li>○ Relationships with Federal and State governments</li> <li>○ Leverage community and elected leaders</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Community Organizing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Join or form a neighborhood association</li> <li>○ Leverage after-school program to engage youth</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Breakout Room #3. Data Deep Dive</b></p>	
<p>Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Monitoring without source attribution</li> </ul>	<p>Solutions:</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has questionable use</li> <li>Data visualization needs to be a focus</li> <li>Correlation between data and health should be explored</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further exploring an application of the Ramboll SHAIR tool to visualize air quality data from multiple sources in the Sacramento area.</li> <li>The ability to forecast air quality conditions would be extremely valuable</li> </ul>
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## Community-Based Planning Listening Circles

*January-February 2022*

Community based-planning: Utilizing our “Train the Trainer” model, members of our Neighborhood Coalition gathered members of their community such as neighbors and nearby friends to educate them about the impacts and current conditions of air quality in their neighborhood. During these sessions, community members were asked to vote on two key air quality topics. One, what were their key priorities or concerns about the effects of air quality around them, and two, what type of solutions did they want to see to help improve the poor air quality conditions.

### Oak Park

<b>Key Priorities/Concerns</b>	
<i>1<sup>st</sup> Priority (4 votes)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addressing Neighborhood and freeway traffic</li> </ul>
<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Priority (2 votes each)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental sustainability (I.e. climate change adaptation and resilience)</li> <li>Improving Indoor Air Quality</li> <li>“Other”</li> </ul>

<b>Priority Solutions</b>	
<i>1<sup>st</sup> Priority (3 votes)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walking and rolling infrastructure improvement</li> </ul>
<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Priority (2 votes each)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Policy (I.e. rules and regulations)</li> <li>Incentives</li> <li>Public Information and Outreach</li> <li>Individual Action</li> <li>Programs</li> </ul>
<i>3<sup>rd</sup> Priority (1 vote)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other- Plant trees, transit electrification, transit improvements, re-route trucks, bike/ped improvements, work with Caltrans to mitigate negative outcomes and more</li> </ul>


## Youth Education

*March 2021 - December 2021*

SNAAQ began developing the youth education curriculum, "Clean Air for All", in March 2021. Between July 2021 and December 2021, the curriculum reached over 120 middle school students virtually and in-person through Breakthrough Sacramento, Improve Your Tomorrow, and Green Tech Education youth education programs. "Clean Air for All" consists of five lessons and activities focused on different topics of air quality to help increase awareness of air pollution and empower youth to advocate for clean air in their communities. Each lesson ends with the #MyAirMyVoice activity, where students are provided a prompt to reflect on the information they learned in each lesson and upload their responses to Padlet.

"Clean Air for All" consists of the following five lessons:

1. What's in the Air?

Teaches about the gaseous composition of air and how everyday human activities can impact air quality with a focus on the six criteria pollutants monitored by federal and local governments.

2. Our Air, Our Health

Using the CalEnviroScreen mapping tool, students examine different pollution concentrations across neighborhoods of Sacramento to understand environmental justice and the adverse health impacts of air pollution, including asthma.

3. Be Air Aware

Introduces the Air Quality Index and teaches about the benefits of monitoring air. Students monitor the air on their own by creating particulate matter collectors to test concentrations of particulate matter in the air in various locations

4. The Air Inside

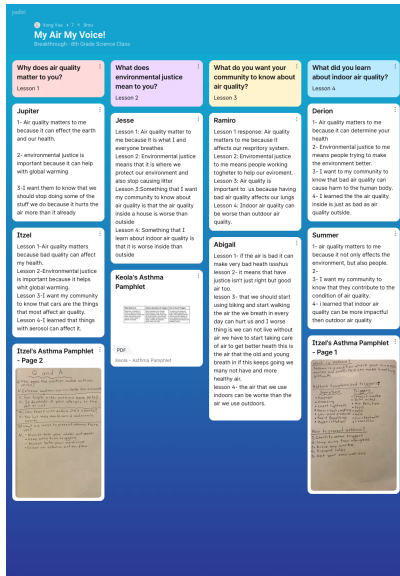
Explores common indoor air pollutants, their sources, and strategies to control indoor air pollution in their homes. Students create air purifiers using box fans and MERV 13 air filters to clean the air at home.

5. Be the Change

Students write a letter to an elected official proposing a clean air solution and explaining why clean air matters to them. Students learn about ways they can continue to learn about and advocate for clean air using the Air Quality Champion Checklist. The checklist consists of actions that are organized into three categories: advocacy, behavioral change, and education.

## Priorities and Solutions

The following responses were collected for the #MyAirMyVoice activity on Padlet from Breakthrough Sacramento's summer program in July 2021.



## Listening Sessions (Winter 2020-2021)

December 2020-February 2021

Four listening sessions were held via Zoom during January 2021, engaging a total of 48 community members (including PAC members).

- Oak Park (English/Spanish)
- Combined neighborhoods (English/Vietnamese)
- Combined neighborhoods (English/Hmong)

### Oak Park

#### Air Quality Concerns

Participants were primarily concerned with their personal mental and physical health (particularly asthma) and that of their loved ones. Many people also expressed concern over the health of the environment and sustainability. Overall, poor air quality was seen as a barrier to leading healthy, active lifestyles due to chronic health issues resulting from air pollution and forced time spent indoors during poor air quality days (especially during wildfire season).

### Notable Sources and Priority Locations for Air Quality Monitors



Participants rated residential areas and schools as their top two priorities for siting the air quality monitors. Specific areas of concern in terms of pollution sources included:

- Major corridors
  - Alhambra Corridor between R Street and Broadway; including adjacent Freeway Entrance and exits
  - MLK Boulevard
  - Franklin Boulevard
- Major avenues
  - 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue
  - 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Highways
  - Highway 99
  - Highway 50

***Other general areas of concern included major truck routes, current/former gas stations, unsmogged cars, homeless encampments, and industrial facilities.***

## **Solutions**

Participants had many ideas for strategies to mitigate air pollution in Oak Park, such as:

- Improve cyclist and pedestrian infrastructure to make walking, biking, and rolling safer and more accessible
- Improve public transportation service and amenities (i.e. bus stops)
- Electrify bus fleets and provide charging stations for personal electric vehicles
- Plant trees
- Re-route trucks

## **Survey (Winter-Spring 2021)**

*February 2021-March 2021*

An online survey was distributed in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Hmong between February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The survey sought to supplement feedback received during the listening session series and gauge interest in the neighborhood coalitions. In total, there were 118 respondents

(91 of which were residents of the two project neighborhoods). Of the 118 total surveys, 123 were completed in English, 5 in Hmong, 2 in Spanish, and 0 in Vietnamese.

### **Oak Park Air Quality Concerns**

Given the concentration of freeways and urban arterials in Oak Park, many residents were concerned about the short- and long-term health implications of living in close proximity to high traffic volumes. In addition to car exhaust, several respondents mentioned dust and particulate matter pollution from construction sites as a concern. Due to the poor outdoor air quality, several respondents cited concerns about indoor air quality as well. Respondents were not only concerned about public health, but also environmental health and climate change.

The lack of urban greenspaces and canopy do not help to mitigate air pollution in Oak Park and one respondent had noticed a decline in air quality over the years. Several residents brought up the need for more data and air quality monitors to better understand air quality (including pollution sources) at a hyper-local level. Residents also expressed the need for data to highlight the inequities in air quality within the Greater Sacramento Region as Oak Park has a higher concentration of low-income community members of color.

### **Notable Sources and Priority Locations for Air Quality Monitors**

Several residents wanted to see air quality monitors at Sacramento City College and at local elementary schools. Specific areas of concern in terms of pollution sources included:

- Major corridors
  - Broadway
  - MLK Boulevard
  - Stockton Boulevard
  - Fruitridge Road
  - Alhambra Corridor
  - Franklin Boulevard
  - 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Within 3 blocks of all freeways
- Industrial facilities
- Construction sites

### **Solutions**

Survey respondents had many ideas for strategies to mitigate air pollution in Oak Park, such as:

- Increase urban greenspace and canopy
- Launch education campaigns to raise awareness about air pollution, including its associated health effects and actions people can take to reduce their emissions
- Improve and incentivize public transportation
- Electrify bus fleets and provide electric vehicle (EV) charging stations
- Improve traffic light timing to reduce car idling
- Improve cyclist and pedestrian infrastructure to make walking, biking, and rolling safer, and more accessible
- Provide incentives for low-income families to purchase electric vehicles
- Require new development to include walking and biking paths
- Provide indoor air filters for residents in vulnerable areas
- Address the homeless crisis
- Work with Caltrans to mitigate poor air quality impacts

## Priority Locations for Air Quality Monitors

*Spring- Summer 2021*

What are your top 3 locations for air quality monitors in Oak Park or Old North Sacramento/Norwood?

