

USEPA AMCO Superfund Site & Lead Cleanup CAG Meeting, January 9, 2012

- EPA Attendees:** Rose Marie Caraway
Leana Rosetti
- EPA Contractors:** Kent Baugh/ITSI
Yash Nyznyk/CDM Smith
Carolyn Moore/CDM Smith
Jack Medina/ Translator
Vic Johnson/Civil & Environmental Consultants
- Other Agencies:** Dale Hagen/ Alameda County Lead Poisoning Prevention Program
- CAG Members:** Brian Beveridge
Judy Johnson
Erica Baires
Jeremy Patterson (GreenAction)
Scott Oliver
Matt Dibble
Ellen Parkinson
Frances Watson
John Schweizer (Technical Adviser)

Purpose of Meeting

- *Update community on AMCO soil characterization and air monitoring activities*
- *Update community on progress of lead cleanup, community outreach plans, and new projects*
- *Hear Technical Adviser's (John Schweizer) comments and community comments*
- *Obtain community input on Technical Adviser's work plan for upcoming year*

Welcome & Introductions

Leana Rosetti, EPA Community Involvement Coordinator (CIC) and EPA Co-Chair and Brian Beveridge, Community Co-Chair

- Mr. Beveridge welcomed everybody.
- Mr. Beveridge identified residents and new attendees.
- Some residents had family members or friends present to represent them.
- Ms. Rosetti introduced Dale Hagen with the Alameda County Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, who was in the audience.

Lead Cleanup Progress Update

EPA CIC and Co-Chair Leana Rosetti

- Ms. Rosetti explained that Steve Calanog, EPA's West Oakland Lead Cleanup OSC, was not available and that she would be presenting the update on the lead cleanup program. Ms. Rosetti said that next month's meeting will focus on the lead cleanup to make up for his absence at this meeting.

- Ms. Rosetti presented information on the lead program. Currently, 36 properties have been treated and 15 properties are undergoing treatment. The EPA anticipates that 40 properties will be completed by the end of the month (January).
- Ms. Rosetti showed an aerial photograph of the South Prescott neighborhood highlighting properties that have been treated, those currently being treated, and those that have not been treated. Ms. Rosetti noted that some properties outlined in the figure will not be remediated because they are fully paved. Ms. Rosetti indicated an updated figure will not include paved properties among the properties remaining to be treated.
- Ms. Rosetti indicated that there are still many community members interested in getting their yards treated.

Lead Paint Programs:

- Ms. Rosetti reminded the CAG that if lead paint remains at a treated property, the soil could be recontaminated over time. Ms. Rosetti indicated that the EPA is working with three organizations, Alameda County, City of Oakland, and the non-profit Rebuilding Together, to assist residents in cleaning up lead paint. Ms. Rosetti encouraged community members to research the different programs and determine which is best suited for them, based on income level and home equity. Each program has slightly different eligibility requirements.
- A community member asked if anyone in the neighborhood has participated in one of the programs yet. Ms. Rosetti replied that one community member did apply for a Rebuilding Together grant but there was not enough interest in the area to move forward with an area-wide program before a grant deadline passed. Ms. Rosetti indicated that the community can try again if there is more interest. Ms. Rosetti noted that Mr. Hagen will be at the upcoming Lead Cleanup Open House and will be able to discuss lead paint cleanup options with community members at that time.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection:

- Ms. Rosetti indicated that the EPA will be setting up a household hazardous waste collection site at the vacant lot at the corner of 5th and Center Streets. The EPA will offer this service so that residents can dispose of hazardous materials from their properties (e.g., paint cans, batteries, and fertilizers) in preparing their yards for the lead treatment.
- A community member asked how long the household hazardous waste drop-off point will be open. Ms. Rosetti responded that the collection point will be open until the end of January. [It has been extended to Saturdays, 8am-4pm for the month of February.] The dates for the household hazardous waste collection will be included in a Lead Program Update Factsheet that the EPA will be distributing shortly.

Easement Strips:

- Ms. Rosetti briefly discussed the easement strips that are located between sidewalks and yards and sidewalks and curbs. Ms. Rosetti indicated that a contractor will be treating those areas over the next month. The contractor will be in touch with the owner of the home adjacent to the easement strip to ensure that the landscaping is consistent with what the homeowner requires/desires.

Do it Yourself:

- Ms. Rosetti related that the EPA has received inquiries from many other communities about the lead treatment process for soil being implemented in West Oakland. The EPA's goal is to make the treatment process and materials accessible to everyone, including other EPA regions and homeowners as well. EPA is working with outside organizations to provide information on the process and the materials required at a low cost. Ms. Rosetti said that she is currently working with Maurice Cavness of OBUDs, giving him technical specifications and letting him observe the work. Mr. Cavness is trying to develop a class for homeowners that would provide materials and instructions for implementation of the lead treatment for a small fee. The EPA is open to other ideas on how to spread the knowledge gained from the lead cleanup project.
- A community member asked whether the EPA will be retesting the yards after remediation is completed. Ms. Rosetti replied that the EPA will be testing properties after remediation is completed but the timeframe for confirmation testing is uncertain at this point. It takes some time for completion of the chemical reaction in which phosphate locks the lead in place and

the EPA is determining the time frame for the phosphate-lead reaction to be sufficiently complete. The treatment process does not change the total amount of lead in the soil, but rather makes the lead less bio-available. Ms. Rosetti noted that the EPA is evaluating which type of test to use for assessing the bioavailability of the lead. EPA believes that the test protocol that has been used overestimated the amount of bio-available lead. The acid used to simulate stomach acid was too strong, resulting in high bio-available lead from the tests. The results in these tests have been similar to results from total lead analysis.

- Ms. Rosetti also mentioned that the EPA is trying to define a level that is lead-safe” with regard to bio-available lead and that is consistent with Alameda County’s designation of “lead-safe” (use of bio-available lead instead of total lead). The EPA is also working on post-remediation information that informs homeowners how to keep their yards safe in the future after treatment, with information on digging holes and performing other intrusive activities.
- Mr. Beveridge asked about EPA’s official stance on the Lead Cleanup – specifically, whether the process is being designed to be self-implemented by homeowners (i.e., do-it-yourself) or being developed as a program to be rolled out and implemented by the EPA nationwide. Ms. Rosetti explained that, currently, the development of a do-it-yourself program is in response to specific requests by other communities that are interested in performing their own cleanups. The do-it-yourself program is not an official EPA stance or program. Rosemarie Caraway, AMCO Superfund Remedial Project Manager (RPM), commented that each EPA regional office approaches the problem of residential urban lead contamination differently. The EPA Administrator, Lisa Jackson has identified children’s health as a national priority. It is possible that lead cleanup might be addressed when the agency is dealing with issues associated with children’s health.
- Budgeting and cost concerns also impact whether the program is administered by the EPA or developed as a program for homeowners and local agencies to implement themselves. Ms. Rosetti pointed out that it is Mr. Calanog’s hope that if the EPA implements an urban lead cleanup, protocol developed in South Prescott can be used as an example. Ms. Caraway added that it is likely a middle ground will be found. Lead will not be an emergency response or an EPA action in all regions, in all locations, but nationally there are a lot of papers and protocols that can be written as a result of the South Prescott Lead Cleanup Project, and those documents can guide other regions and communities.
- Mr. Beveridge voiced his concern that presenting it as a ‘do-it-yourself’ problem could reduce the perceived level of urgency both within the government and communities. Mr. Beveridge emphasized his belief that lead toxicity is at an epidemic scale in U.S. children and the behavioral and learning implications are significant.
- Ms. Caraway noted that, currently, there is significant scrutiny of budgets and how dollars are spent. She added that this program could also develop as a loan or grant process for communities. Regardless, the resources, knowledge, and protocols will be made available to whomever needs them. Ms. Caraway also pointed out that whether this is implemented on a larger scale depends on the results of this project, what bio-available lead levels are safe and whether the process is able to achieve those safe levels. Urban lead levels in southern and eastern cities are astronomically high so the discussion is not going to go away.

Additional Items:

- Ms. Rosetti also mentioned that Kathy Webster would like to organize a Chester Street block party to celebrate the level of participation and the block being clean. Ms. Rosetti requested that interested residents contact her for more information.

AMCO Superfund Site Update

EPA RPM Rosemarie Caraway

Field Investigations:

- Ms. Caraway introduced herself and briefly described the AMCO Chemical Superfund Site operational history and investigation history. Ms. Caraway related that in 2011 the AMCO site was up for remedy choice but an EPA remedy review board moved the site back to the investigation level and directed the project team to fill in some data gaps and eliminate some

assumptions about the extent and chemical nature of contamination. This action led to the current soil characterization effort which is intended to answer many of those remaining questions.

- Ms. Caraway described the subsurface investigation that is currently underway. Borings are located on a grid, spaced 20 feet apart. Ms. Caraway related that the investigation is behind because the first driller hired was not able to meet some of the contract requirements, so the EPA had to hire a second drilling company. Sampling locations shown in yellow (on the figure in the handout) were completed before the holidays and last week.
- Ms. Caraway indicated that the borings have been loosely grouped based on areas where volatile organic contamination is expected to be encountered and areas where contaminations is not expected to be encountered, or volatile organic concentrations will be less. An area where contamination is low or not expected to be encountered is being addressed first so the drillers can establish their drilling procedures.
- Ms. Caraway said that when the drillers encounter muds and sands in the borings completed so far it slows down the drillers. Bay mud (the aquitard or confining layer) has not been found where it was projected to be. [**Clarification:** To a depth of 20 to 30 feet, the subsurface soil is predominantly silty sand, with the sand being fine-grained. Below this to the top of the Bay Mud, the soil is predominantly sands. Bay Mud has been encountered at around a depth of 60 feet. The top 3-5 feet of the Bay Mud is hard clay, below which lenses of sand have been observed.] Significant amounts of homogeneous, heaving (or flowing) sands have been encountered at other locations, complicating drilling procedures. Ms. Caraway indicated that the EPA is logging the borings and for some sampling locations, saving whole soil cores so the soil layers can be examined again at a later date, in context with what is encountered throughout the rest of the site.
- Ms. Caraway indicated that the drillers will be onsite until April. There will be 73 borings on the AMCO property and approximately ten on each of the adjacent vacant lots. [**Clarification:** 84 borings are planned for the AMCO property, 3 borings for the Parking Lot located at 1448 3rd Street, 3 borings for the Small Vacant Lot on Center Street, and 36 borings on an approximate 20 ft. grid for the Large Vacant Lot on Center Street.] Historical records show that AMCO used the vacant lots for storage from time to time. [**Clarification:** Only the Large Vacant Lot was possibly used by AMCO.] The EPA is looking at storing some of the samples, rather than analyzing them immediately, and then choosing whether to analyze them based on adjacent results in order to save funds. [**Clarification:** Analytical quality control guidelines limit the time frame that environmental samples such as the soil from the soil characterization can be held before sampling. Samples will be held to the extent they are compliant with these quality control guidelines. [Additionally, analytical results from the early soil samples may be used to refine the sampling and analytical regimen.]
- Ms. Caraway informed the CAG that during the course of the work residents may hear some drilling noise. Ms. Caraway noted that in response to community concerns about possible volatile emissions during drilling, the EPA has developed an air monitoring program with input from the Technical Adviser, Mr. Schweizer. During drilling, air emissions will be monitored at the borehole and in the worker's breathing space; additionally, there will continuous real time monitoring at points around the property, both upwind and downwind. Ms. Caraway related that to date there have been no VOC detections in the worker breathing zone or the air monitoring locations adjacent to residents while drilling. Ms. Caraway emphasized that the first purpose of the air monitoring program is to ensure the safety of the workers, who are closest to the activity. The air monitoring is also intended to be able to document that there were not any exposures to the community.
- A community member asked whether the borings will give the EPA information about the extent of the groundwater plume. Ms. Caraway responded yes, in conjunction with the groundwater wells that are being installed. [**Clarification:** The soil characterization will define the lateral and vertical extent of contamination in soil at the AMCO property and adjacent lots. Additional groundwater monitoring wells are being installed in January, and subsequent sampling and analysis from these new wells is designed to establish the extent (lateral and vertical) of the groundwater plume.] Ms. Caraway described the investigation program. At each sampling location the boring will go down about 60 to 70 feet below the ground surface.

Samples will be collected at various intervals, with about 13 samples collected from each boring. Multiple analyses will be performed on each sample, including VOCs, metals and other chemicals that were released at the AMCO property. The investigation will yield an understanding of the extent of each contaminant (both laterally and at depth). Ms. Caraway said that with that information the EPA will be able to be more precise with calculations associated with treatment options for the contamination and remediation costs. In addition, Ms. Caraway mentioned, the EPA is using the soil from the borings within the source area to conduct a treatability study.

- Ms. Caraway went on to describe the results from the geophysical study. The geophysical probes were only able to detect items within the first two to three feet below the concrete surface within the warehouse. The warehouse floor consists of a 6-inch, reinforced concrete slab, that overlies 3 to 4 feet of concrete and other debris. The investigation found a vault within the warehouse and found a possible drum burial area [shown in red on figure, projected on wall]. **[Clarification:** The concrete vault was located a short distance north of the warehouse.] Blue areas are possible former building foundations. The EPA will investigate those areas during the current subsurface investigation.
- Ms. Caraway discussed the sandy layers that have been encountered during the investigation. Currently, the project team believes that the sand layers are fingers of sand from historic tidal channels. The sand is very fine and homogeneous, like beach sand. Ms. Caraway has jars of the sand that she will bring to the next CAG meeting. **[Clarification:** Under the warehouse and some other borings, Younger Bay Mud characterized by dark clays with organic material has been observed at shallow depths (less than 10 feet), below which silty sands are present. The Younger Bay Muds were reported in the RI Report in some investigation areas and were attributed to the fringes of the historic tidal channels.]
- Ms. Caraway expressed her confidence that current investigations will result in a more complete understanding of soil and groundwater contamination conditions at the site, and will therefore helpful in obtaining funds for the future remediation.
- A community member asked about site reuse and how that impacts cleanup levels. Ms. Caraway responded that the EPA is discussing the matter with the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). The state prefers cleanup to industrial cleanup levels and the City of Oakland recommends cleanup to mixed use. Ms. Caraway said that her personal recommendation is that the reuse be residential or mixed use, possibly mixed use with parking on the first floor with any potential residential development aboveground. This is because the EPA will need to continue to access the property and monitor the groundwater. Historically, it has been standard for the EPA to pursue residential cleanup levels at Superfund Sites, so the record of decision (ROD) cleanup levels will probably be residential cleanup levels. Many community members indicated that they felt the EPA had been promising them residential cleanup from the start of the project and added that the zoning for the area was changed to mixed use, deliberately, in order to move the area away from industrial development. The development trend for the area is away from industrial. Ms. Caraway assured the CAG that she is representing the community and making sure their preferences are heard during discussions of cleanup levels.
- A community member asked what would happen when Ms. Caraway takes her medical leave. Ms. Caraway responded that during her two-month leave, another remedial project manager from the same EPA office will oversee the project. Responsibilities during the two-month leave will be to ensure that the investigation work plan is implemented successfully.

Technical Adviser's Comments on Air Monitoring and Soil Sampling – John Schweizer

- Mr. Schweizer presented on his comments on the air monitoring program and work plan for the soil characterization currently underway. Mr. Schweizer related that at the October CAG meeting many community members raised concerns about air monitoring during the soil characterization project. Mr. Schweizer indicated he reviewed the air monitoring plan and published his comments on the community website. EPA subsequently revised the air monitoring plan. Mr. Schweizer indicated that he's satisfied with the changes and also said that he has been observing operations during the drilling. Mr. Schweizer said he will post the revised air monitoring plan to the community website. Mr. Schweizer said that his main

comments concerned real time monitoring for VOCs and the location of perimeter monitoring points. Those concerns were addressed in the revised plan.

- Mr. Schweizer added that the community requested that he review the soil characterization work plan and that he had a number of comments. Mr. Schweizer's main comment was that a majority of soil samples are being collected in the saturated zone, and he is concerned that the concentrations in the saturated zone soils will be lower than the groundwater concentration; therefore, he suggested, not giving an accurate representation of the contaminant concentration. Yash Nyznyk (CDM Smith) and Kent Baugh (ITSI), EPA contractors, clarified that the primary objective of the soil characterization effort is to determine the concentrations of contaminants in the soil itself, even if the soil is in the saturated zone. Mr. Nyznyk noted that there are many contaminants which adsorb onto soil particles, and this is important to measure. Any contaminants left behind in the soil matrix could serve as a future source of contaminants to the groundwater. Mr. Schweizer reiterated that he considers the groundwater plume the main environmental concern at the site.

Technical Assistance Services for Community (TASC) Update

Technical Adviser, John Schweizer

- Mr. Schweizer discussed the community website. Currently the website has a community calendar filled with upcoming events relating to both AMCO and the lead cleanup. There is also a way to email Mr. Schweizer directly as well as community discussion forums. There are many photographs in the photograph section, including photographs of yards that have finished the lead cleanup process. Mr. Schweizer encouraged everyone to take a look at the website and participate.
- Mr. Schweizer discussed upcoming TASC tasks. In the next month, there will be a report on the bench-scale testing of soil that had been treated for lead. Mr. Schweizer related that he did review the raw data and apparently the acid used in testing for bioavailable lead, intended to approximate stomach acid, was too strong and yielded results similar to total lead analytical results. Mr. Schweizer said that he expects the report in February. Mr. Schweizer added that he has requested to review the annual groundwater monitoring report and that report should also come out in the next month.
- A community member asked how Mr. Schweizer and the EPA are reaching out to community members that don't access the internet. Mr. Schweizer replied that he attends community events and presents at CAG meetings. Mr. Schweizer also indicated he was available for direct questions. Ms. Rosetti added that the EPA regularly mails fact sheets out to the community that contains summaries of activities in the neighborhood and includes Mr. Schweizer's contact information; there is also a repository at the Oakland Central Library. Ms. Caraway said that the EPA is continuously trying to determine the best way to contact community members and keep them engaged. Ms. Caraway emphasized that suggestions from the community regarding best ways to communicate are welcome. Ms. Caraway pointed out that the legal requirement for community notices is to place a notice in the newspaper.
- A community member asked whether the soil samples will be tested for additional contaminants beyond VOCs. Mr. Baugh responded that the EPA has authorized testing for a full suite of analytes including VOCs, semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs), metals and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Ms. Caraway added that the EPA is having the analytical laboratory flag unidentified peaks/detections.
- Ms. Caraway reminded the community that this will not be an easy remedy due to the number of contaminants present and the concentrations present. A technology to treat one contaminant might not be adequate for another. The presence of heaving sand in the subsurface complicates sampling and might complicate treatment. Ms. Caraway said that there is a strong possibility that the remedy may involve bringing soil up to the surface and treating it onsite. Ms. Caraway acknowledged that the surface treatment remedy is not favored by the community due to concerns about exposure, but that approach might have to be reevaluated. Ms. Caraway assured the CAG that CDM Smith has a very talented remedial design engineer, Tamzen Macbeth, working on the design of the treatability study.

- A community member asked how many more years the cleanup will take. Ms. Caraway responded that the releases occurred over a period of many years, and the EPA will need several years to clean it up.

Technical Assistance Services for Community (TASC) Update

EPA Co-Chair, Leana Rosetti and Community Co-Chair Brian Beveridge

- Ms. Rosetti presented on the planned activities for Mr. Schweizer in 2012. Ms. Rosetti related that in the past the agenda has been worked out between her and Mr. Beveridge but they decided to seek the community's input for 2012. The planned activities for 2012 include:
 - Maintain community website
 - Observe investigation fieldwork
 - Attend open houses and CAG meetings
 - Review the lead treatability study and provide comments
 - Review Ground Penetrating Radar (subsurface) study and provide comments
 - Review annual groundwater monitoring report and provide comments
- Mr. Beveridge emphasized that Mr. Schweizer is the community's technical representative. Mr. Schweizer has to estimate hours and budget needed and get authorization for funding. He is independent from the EPA even though the funding comes from the federal government. Ms. Rosetti added they are seeking input on prioritizing the current task list. If a new technical issue comes up and one item needs to be removed, which should be removed. Ms. Rosetti presented the hours and budget breakdown from the past 6 months and the projected budget for January through April in 2012. Mr. Schweizer added that the projected budget has been approved.
- Community members replied, generally in consensus that they prefer that John Schweizer use his best judgment when prioritizing technical issues, in consultation with Ms. Rosetti and Mr. Beveridge. Ms. Rosetti indicated she will send out an email notifying the community if priorities change.

Next Meeting

- The next CAG meeting will be February 13, 2012. Ms. Caraway indicated she will still be available and AMCO issues will be discussed.
- Mr. Beveridge asked the community for suggestions for agenda items.
 - A community member requested that the amount of work required to prepare a yard for the lead cleanup be discussed during the next meeting. The community member related that he found that preparation expectations weren't communicated clearly and varied from resident to resident with some residents receiving more assistance from the contractor than others. The community member also indicated the importance of communicating that the preparation should not be a reason to not take part in the lead cleanup.
 - Another community member requested that issues regarding fences and fence replacement be addressed, as well as possible issues with absentee owners and renters.
 - A community member requested discussion of drainage issues in completed yards. He indicated that after the cleanup, a survey team took measurements but he never received the results. He indicated he would like to know where the information is going and the outcome of the drainage survey.