

USEPA AMCO Superfund Site CAG Meeting, August 9, 2010

- EPA Attendees:** Leana Rosetti
Rose Marie Caraway
- EPA Contractors:** Kent Baugh/ITSI
Yash Nyznyk/CDM
Carolyn Moore/CDM
Marsha Pindergrass/Meeting Facilitator
- CAG Members:** Adam Navarro/Resident
Brian Beveridge/Resident and representative of the West Oakland
Environmental Indicators Project
Ellen Parkinson/Resident
John Schweizer/Technical Assistant
David Roach
Monsa Ntoto
Harlan Smith
Eric Gerrick
Eric Maundu
Frances Watson
Angie May
Nicanor Mendoza
Miguel Avalos
Ashea Fuller
Kerri Atwood
Dixie Ward
Tanya Williams
Jabari J. Herbert

Purpose of Meeting

- *Collaborate on community interim use ideas*
- *Update on AMCO Cleanup Proposed Plan*
- *Discuss relocation*
- *Announce Open House in October.*

Kijiji Grows Project and Interim Use Proposal

Kijiji Presentation – Eric Maundu

- Presentation of ideas for AMCO property reuse during or following the Interim Action [Please note: EPA does not control use of the land. This presentation is for community awareness of the idea.]
- Wants to change West Oakland so it's an area to be proud about
- Has a proposal for incorporation of an Aquaponics project
- Problems with West Oakland
 - Low income
 - Higher rates of asthma, diabetes and other diseases
 - One-third of population is food insecure because the community has been marginalized
 - Problems with gangs and drugs

- Advantages of West Oakland
 - With the local availability of freeway access and mass transit (BART and AC Transit), West Oakland has unique access to all the nearby cities; within 10 minutes you can get to many of the cities in the Bay Area.
 - Large amount of available land
 - Own unique culture
- Aquaponics
 - Combination of aquaculture and hydroponics
 - Use Aquaponics to grow plants in gravel
 - Use waste from fish as a fertilizer for plants; bacteria in gravel then break down the waste and purify the water which can be fed back to the fish
 - Boxes are made of wood and elevated off the ground
- Advantages of Aquaponics
 - Food is secure because you grow it yourself
 - Uses very little water
 - Produces a lot of food (especially on a per area basis)
 - No weeds or soil pests
 - Natural and healthy, no chemicals
- Advantages of Aquaponics at the AMCO property
 - The elevated boxes will not use/come in contact with the contaminated soil
 - Very small footprint; a one acre site is able to produce an amount of food equivalent to 10 acres of conventional agricultural farm land.
 - Able to produce vegetables and fish for consumption and has potential to change food consumption in Oakland, thereby increasing health and wellness.
 - Opportunity to change the contaminated AMCO Site to a positive in the neighborhood.
 - Create jobs in the community and foster hope and reduce crime.
- Description of Aquaponics for the AMCO site
 - Each box elevated about 3 feet above the ground surface
 - Spaced and constructed to enable accessible by wheelchairs
 - 150 gallon tank
 - Have bamboo urban forests in between adjacent surface streets and the Aquaponics boxes
 - There is a lot of unused land in West Oakland that are not connected, and a “cloud farming” approach could connect it.
- Aquaponics AMCO site projected yield
 - 10,000 pounds of vegetables per year
 - 100,000 gallon fish farm
 - Numerous jobs, raising vegetables, marketing, transportation of goods.
 - Kids on bikes could deliver to local farmers markets and restaurants.
 - Create a lot of jobs, including full time, part-time, and volunteer.
- Other Kijiji Grows projects
 - Red Yeast Aquaponics
 - Mosswood
 - West Oakland Aquaponics
- Kijiji Grows is part of WOSA – West Oakland Sustainable Alliance
 - Looking for people that can contribute
 - Relying on the strengths of the community

Community Comments

- Could fish be grown in the large shipping containers? And could we sell those in the community?

- How are we going to get rid of the chemicals in the soil? How long is that going to take? Is this proposal something that could happen immediately? Also, are conditions too toxic even for these tanks to be located above the ground? When do you anticipate making the interim remedial actions happen?
 - EPA to discuss the timeline for the remediation later during today's meeting.
 - The process is very complicated.
 - The Record of Decision (ROD) will address the remedy, which will influence the interim reuse alternatives. The ROD is not anticipated until next year. Not until then can these questions be answered.
- Jobs are important to the community. The last discussion addressed the potential for contaminants to be locked in the soil and the site being accessible.
 - EPA pointed out that there are two different projects being discussed. As part of the Lead Cleanup Project, lead-impacted soils within the community will be remediated and a method being evaluated is chemically altering the lead so that the lead is not bioavailable (locked in the soil). The AMCO Chemical Superfund site, on the other hand, consists of soil and groundwater impacted by a number of chemicals. Remediation of the AMCO Site will be a much more complicated process. The EPA anticipates that it will be a year or two before the remedial action at the AMCO Superfund Site is implemented.
- Will the farms operate for 12 months a year?
 - Kijiji Grows - Yes they can be. Small localized greenhouses can be used.
- Is production 10 times greater based on 10 times as many harvests per year or based on 10 times greater production for each harvest?
 - Kijiji Grows - With the Aquaponics system, roots do not spread laterally, but grow more vertically. Therefore, plants can be placed closer together and you can farm more intensively, using 10 times less land.
- Do you foresee an air pollution problem because of the proximity of the freeways?
 - Kijiji Grows - If that becomes a problem we can change the product to nonedible plants such as flowers.

Technical Advisor (TA) Comments on Bench-scale Tests (related to the lead removal project)

(Refer to handout of slides for more information.)

- EPA is looking at remedial technologies that bind or lock-up the lead in the soil so that the lead is not in a form which is bioavailable, which means if lead is ingested it passes through the body and does not collect in the body and cause toxic health effects.
- Bench scale testing is being conducted by the EPA.
 - Bench scale testing is exactly that, testing being done in the laboratory on laboratory "benches" to see if the process works with actual soil collected from the yards in the neighborhood.
 - That is why Steve Calanog has asked for volunteers from the neighborhood to have additional soil collected from their yards.
- TA reviewed the Work Plan for the bench scale testing and provided comments. Comments focused on ways to avoid problems during scale up from bench scale to pilot scale and full scale by the use of ASTM standard tests to determine soil properties in the laboratory and in the field, and ASTM practices for soil amendment.
- TA also recommended that confirmation testing, testing of soil for bioavailable lead after full scale implementation, be part of the Remedial Action Plan.

Community Questions and Comments

- Will EPA do speciation of the lead as Steve Calanog mentioned in an earlier meeting?
 - TA - TA – Speciation of the lead is included in the Bench Scale Testing. EPA might do it on the pilot scale as well.

- What does toxicity mean?
 - The EPA is testing whether the lead is available to a biological-system.
- Will the testing be performed using samples from the neighborhood?
 - Yes, testing will be performed on the samples collected from this community.
- An interesting and exciting thing about this project is that this is one of the first applications of this technology in a residential setting. People from New Orleans are very interested in the outcome of this project for applicability in their neighborhoods.
- If we're making history here, then it is very important that the community be a part of this pilot project.
 - The idea for this approach was being promoted in New Orleans; however, the local EPA region had not bought into this approach. EPA Region 9 (the local EPA region) is interested in evaluating this approach.
- The community sees opportunities for green jobs, jobs for sample collection and for sample analysis at local laboratories. Use of a local laboratory could provide continuous employment for community members in the future.
 - That's a great opportunity for the future but in the meantime we have toxic soil that needs to be dealt with.
 - Training is an important consideration in determining whether there can be jobs for the community associated with the project. As an example, work on the Site requires 40-hour hazardous waste operations training, which can be obtained locally.

Indoor Air Sampling Data

EPA Presentation

Refer to EPA's handouts of bar graphs showing air samples for more information.

- EPA provided a summary of the air sampling data during the June meeting.
- In response to discussions during the June meeting, EPA provided a modified data presentation.
- Data from 1414 3rd street:
 - EPA sampled crawlspace air and outdoor air
 - Sample results indicated high levels of trichloroethene (TCE), tetrachloroethene (PCE), and 1,2,4-trimethylbenzene (1,2,4-TMB). The charts highlighted chemicals that are the greatest contribution to human health risk.
 - On the charts, numbers on the bottom are screening levels and the number at the top is the concentration in the sample.
 - Cancer risk is also shown on the chart. EPA explained basis of increased cancer risk due to exposure. These numbers show the risk posed only by concentrations of the chemicals of concern (those that are present in the site contamination) but may also be coming from other sources, such as outdoor air pollution.
 - 1×10^{-6} indicates a risk of one additional case of cancer per million people.
 - 1×10^{-5} indicates a risk of one additional case of cancer per 100,000 people.
 - 1×10^{-4} indicates a risk of one additional case of cancer per 10,000 people.
 - The goal with the AMCO site cleanup is to bring the risk from site contaminants (evaluated by themselves) back within the range of 1×10^{-6} , which is the acceptable range for residential land use.

Community Comments

- The charts seem more understandable than those presented during the June meeting.
- How many people live in south Prescott? Do these numbers need to be checked against the population?
 - Risk targets are applied throughout the country and need to be in large scale measurements (one in a million, 100,000) in order to be consistent.
- What is the risk to the community?
 - The charts present the relative risk at each address.
- If the risk is 3 in 10,000 then how many people per million is that?
 - 300
 - Although the EPA acceptable risk range is between 1×10^{-4} and 1×10^{-6} , The EPA toxicologist analyzed all the other environmental factors, including proximity to the port and the freeways and recommended that the goal for risk from the AMCO site be set at the most protective 1×10^{-6} level because there are so many other environmental factors affecting the local population.
- Does the EPA ever clean above that level?
 - The most conservative level is set at 1×10^{-6} (one in a million). [When evaluating cancer risk, EPA assumes that there are no exposures that can have "zero risk."]
 - Sometimes when EPA is managing the cleanup of a site they remove all the contaminants which effectively removes all the risk.
 - This is the 'added' risk, which means that EPA will not allow more than one in a million additional cases of cancer *due to conditions at this site*.
- On the chart why do only two columns have risk analyses and the others do not?
 - The EPA does not have enough data points to calculate risk from indoor air exposure.
 - We will be collecting more data from indoor air in order to characterize risk.

- All of the information presented is for residences on 3rd Street and Center Street. Is that the only area of concern?
 - The EPA is looking at risk due to contaminated groundwater and the plume extends only beneath 3rd and maybe a portion of Center Street.
- TA comment: There's a compelling issue here. The levels in soil gas and indoor air are very different from each other, indicating that the soil gas contaminants are not migrating to the indoor air. Currently, the chemicals that were detected in indoor air are consistent with modern urban living exposure.
- EPA Response to comment above: However, EPA has stated that chemicals detected in the crawlspace air and soil gas indicate that vapor intrusion is occurring, which is why the Agency installed the mitigation system on the 3rd Street homes and the one location on Center Street. The comment is not true for the 1414 and 1428 addresses.
- Our community groups need to educate people about how human health may be impacted by what products are found within their houses. Environmental factors are not the only source of risk to human health.

EPA Presentation

- Representatives from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) who specialize in relocation were present at the meeting, including Willie Patterson, Michael Grove, and Donovan McKnight. USACE was at the meeting to explain the temporary and permanent relocation process. Green booklets regarding relocation policy were distributed.
- One of the components of the remedy being considered by the EPA is excavation to a certain depth. The secondary part of the remedy is for the deeper soil to be treated in another way, bioremediation or thermal treatment.
- The USACE representatives briefly discussed acquisition and relocation.
 - USACE intends to involve a local appraiser to understand and obtain value estimates on every property on 3rd Street and a few homes on Center Street.
 - Appraisal visits will start in a week or two.
- EPA needs these numbers now to get an estimate for each of these properties in order to complete the Focused Feasibility Study (FS).
- Timeline: USACE will complete appraisals and reports in 90-120 days. EPA will use the information from those appraisals in the Focused FS. The costs need to be incorporated in the remedial alternative descriptions. When the remedy is selected an appraiser will return and perform additional appraisals as soon as the ROD is signed, as they are only good for 6 months. EPA wants to be able to implement the remedy as soon as possible.

Community Comments

- The booklets that were handed out were published in 2005; is that out of date?
 - Very little has changed regarding the relocation process since 2005; so these pamphlets are current.
- Will the appraisal be conducted and then action taken in 2 years? Prices go up and down.
 - USACE - Appraisals are only good for 6 months. New appraisals will be conducted when the remedial action is implemented.
- Will the toxic elements be taken into account in the property value?
 - USACE – No. The appraisal will take into account recent comparable sales in the area.
- How do you handle the difference in home values (for example, if the new house that a person moves into is worth more than the old house)?
 - USACE - That's covered in the green book. The process is the same though the book might be old. The appraiser will give an appraised value of your home, based on amenities, bedrooms, etc. The law says that USACE must find a comparable home and buy that house and cover closing fees. If the homeowner

- There should be some additional effort because this is a model community. Also, does the homeowner get to agree to the appraised value?
- Need to make sure that people do not go into debt and lose their homes if they are moved to a property with a higher value and take out loans in order to move. You're talking about relocating people and people have lost their jobs and cannot cover or take out loans to cover the difference.
- You need to allow the community members to agree with you so they can get what they say is a reasonable price for their house. People don't want to go through all this and get locked into debt.
 - USACE – We need to agree on what is comparable. We will work with you to make sure that we can agree. If you, the homeowner, find something that is far superior to what you had, we cannot cover that difference. There is no reason you should have a mortgage if you didn't have a mortgage before.
- What will happen to people that bought a house when the market was really high?
 - USACE - It's called being 'upside down'. We'll deal with that as part of negotiations with each homeowner.
- There will be differences regarding "perceived value" and EPA needs to be sensitive to that.
 - USACE and EPA are aware of the California housing market and the recent fluctuations. EPA has instructed USACE to be especially sensitive to these issues.
- Can we use the cost method to determine residential property value?
 - USACE - No we don't typically do that. We use cost when there are no comparable facilities – such as when appraising a hospital, cemeteries. With residences, there typically are available comparable locations.
 - You can use cost method to determine residential property value if there is no data to provide a baseline for the market.
- This is a California housing market so you have foreclosed value that is selling below the value, so we need to look at replacement costs.
 - USACE - Appraiser does not use short sales, stress sales, foreclosures in determining appraised value. If there is no standard sale data available then the appraiser might have to use cost-pricing.
 - USACE – There still needs to be someone that can take ownership of the property after the property has been purchased (e.g., state or local government). So the cost to rebuild on that property after the remedial action will be taken into consideration.
- Set the market with a velvet glove and allow for agreement of the resident, not with an iron fist.
 - USACE and EPA are very flexible. USACE indicated that they are trying to do right by the taxpayers and the community residents.
- Are you going to perform appraisals on any other homes on Center Street besides those on 3rd Street?
 - USACE - We are going to just to have the numbers as a backup in case the relocation area needs to be expanded. We will be doing a different type of appraisal for those properties. Additionally, USACE is trying to look for areas where people could live if temporary relocation is necessary.
- What happens to the homes that people move away from? Abandoned houses will not make West Oakland beautiful.
 - Some houses will be torn down and the land will be used during the remedial action.
 - In these cases, the properties may transfer to the city or the state. EPA can't answer the question of reuse at this time because the reuse discussions are to

be addressed several years from now (i.e., after implementation of the remedial action).

- EPA's responsibility is to clean up the AMCO property, not to redevelop it.
- The City of Oakland has expressed interest in the AMCO property.

Next Meeting

- AMCO Superfund Site CAG Meeting: September 13, 6:30 – 8:30 PM at the Mandela Gateway Apartments Community Room located at 1350 7th Street, Oakland.
- Over the next few weeks, CDM & ITSI will be at the AMCO Site collecting groundwater samples.
- EPA indicated that if the next stage of fieldwork is started before the September 13th meeting, an email will be sent out to the CAG e-mail list explaining the fieldwork.

Planning for the Tent Meeting

- The EPA will host a community meeting (anticipated for February 2011) to discuss the feasibility study and Proposed Plan (which, after comments, becomes the Record of Decision or ROD) for the AMCO Site. This meeting will take place at the senior center where there is more space unless there are any other suggestions.
- Every year the EPA hosts an Open House. The Open House is scheduled for October 14, 2010. The October Open House will address the lead cleanup as well as activities at the AMCO Site.
- The draft Focused FS will be distributed as soon as it is available. Subsequent documents will be based upon the feasibility study so the EPA would like to incorporate community comments from the very beginning.
- The EPA indicated that because of the Open House, there will not be a CAG meeting in October.
- The EPA requested ideas from the community for topics to address during the Open House.
 - Residents suggested posters that outline the ROD process-- pictures more than text.
 - Residents suggested that efforts should be made to try to increase attendance.
 - Residents suggested Kijiji Grows could demonstrate the aquaponics system at the Open House.

Community Comments

- We need to figure out the interim and final reuse of the land.
 - EPA's primary concern is to clean up the land to the highest standard and as quickly as possible, but will work to accommodate interim uses as much as possible so long as safety or the cleanup are not compromised. However the interim and final use of the land is up to the owners of the land, not EPA.
- How close will you be to being done with the Focused FS by the October meeting?
 - The EPA will have the alternatives but not a draft document.
- Is the timing of the interim action (i.e., excavation) funding dependent?
 - EPA put in a request for funding for the 2010/2011 to start implementation of the remedy.
 - EPA will address John Schweitzer's comments in more detail at the September meeting.
- Can we host the Open House somewhere else (e.g., Near where Kijiji Grows)?
 - The Open House has been held at South Prescott Park in the past because it is close and accessible and was favored by the community members. EPA is open to a different location if the community prefers it.
 - EPA feels that a constant and consistent location is a benefit. Also, residents walking by see the tent and drop by.
 - EPA has been given permission to use the park by the City of Oakland.

- Anything else you want to talk about next month?
 - Does the community want TA to arrange for a lawyer with local expertise on property liability to come discuss why one should participate in the lead program and how the lead cleanup might affect property value?
- Do we have a website for updates aside from the email?
 - Yes we do. www.epa.gov/region09/amco
 - There is also a Facebook page: www.facebook.com/epa.amco