

USEPA South Prescott Lead CAG Meeting, April 26, 2010

EPA Attendees: Leana Rosetti
Steve Calanog
Luis Garcia

EPA Contractors: Sara Dwight/Ecology&Environment
Facilitator: Marsha Pendergrass
Interpreter: Jack Medina
CAG Members: Angie May
Brian Beveridge
Bruce Beasley
Eric Gerrick
Nicanor Mendoza
Michael Ware
Jolie Coursin
Miguel Rivera
Phoebe Rossitu
Jean Quan
Bradley Angel/Green Action
Nicole Peterson/Green Action
John Schweizer/Technical Assistant

EPA West Oakland Residential Lead Assessment

Introduction of Facilitator

EPA has contracted Marsha Pendergrass to serve as a facilitator during the public meetings.

EPA Presentation/Information

- All presentations, meeting notes, technical documents, etc. are posted on the West Oakland Residential Lead site website: www.epaosc.org/WestOaklandPb
- Hard copies are available upon request. Not all documents are available in Spanish, but translation is available upon request (other languages as well).
- There is also a fan page on Facebook – “U.S. EPA - AMCO Superfund Site” (this page is being used for both projects).

Background Information

- Steve Calanog/EPA provided a brief history of the lead assessment (see “Background” slide of Steve Calanog’s presentation).
 - **2007:** Lead investigation and removal in yards adjacent to the AMCO NPL Site (Center and 3rd Streets).
 - 8 residential yards
 - 400 parts per million (ppm) Pb Action Level
 - Pb not attributed to historic AMCO/DC Metals operations
 - **August 2009:** Congresswoman Barbara Lee’s Office requests EPA to investigate community members concerns of lead levels in the immediate neighborhood.
 - **October 2009:** EPA initiates expanded investigation of lead levels in residential yards.
 - 6 blocks, 150 yards/parcels, 54 yards sampled (96 total sampled collected for lead analysis)
 - Took 5 point samples, which means they sampled five different places around the entire property.
 - Used x-ray fluorescent to test soil.

- Sampling results: 80% of yards were above Preliminary Remediation Goal (PRG) of 400 parts per million (ppm) - 983 ppm average above PRG.
- See the [EPA West Oakland Residential Lead Assessment Area Map](#) at the end of the notes for the area EPA sampled and will clean up.
- Lead levels present a health risk to the community.
- EPA plans to remove this risk to the community.
- **Questions:**
 - A resident asked how the analytical lead results in the South Prescott neighborhood compare to elsewhere in the Bay Area/state. Studies suggest that pre-industrial concentrations in the area would have been 40-80 ppm. Alameda County has elevated lead levels and the South Prescott neighborhood is considered a hot spot within the county.
 - The state action level is lower than the EPA action level of 400 ppm. How will EPA protect families at a lower action level? The state action level has been lowered to 80 ppm. The primary risk from lead is to children from 0-6 years of age who are at risk of developmental problems. EPA plans to remediate to meet the 80 ppm cleanup level.
- Steve Calanog/EPA has received approval to begin the lead contaminated soil clean up.

Project Objectives

- **Minimize and/or eliminate the lead risk to the community, especially to the high-risk age group (children 0-6 years of age)**
- **Implement project with least detrimental impact to community**
 - A project like this will have some impacts, such as nuisance, heavy equipment operation, dust, etc. EPA will try to minimize impacts to the community as much as possible.
- **Develop local resources and capacity so that the community can participate in the cleanup process and so that the process can be self-sustaining**
 - Local resources for gardening, maintenance, etc.
 - Resident input – landscaping, design, etc.
 - Cypress Mandela Jobs Training Center
 - Community non-profit participation

Possible Removal Activities

Removal will focus on lead that is readily available for ingestion/exposure. It will not remove lead that is under the house, under a paved driveway, etc.

1. Phytoremediation/Phytoextraction

- Utilize plants to remove/extract lead from soil.

Phytoremediation can take 5 years before reductions in lead concentrations are seen.

2. Phosphate Immobilization combined with capping

- Till calcium phosphate into top 18" to 24" creating a Pb-compound which is not bioavailable.
- Phosphate mixing detoxifies lead immediately.
- Place a barrier over remediated/contaminated soils
 - Concrete, asphalt, decomposed granite, or sod and compost

This technique would reduce lead exposure immediately.

3. Dig and Haul

- Remove top 12" to 18" of contaminated soil and replace with clean fill and restore yards.

4. Soil Washing

- Excavate soil and transport to a treatment site.
- Remove Pb by chemical process.
- Return treated soil to yards.

5. Traditional Capping/"Green" Capping

- Place a barrier over remediated/contaminated soils.
 - Concrete, asphalt, decomposed granite, or sod and compost

6. Do Nothing

- EPA cannot force people to have the lead removal work done.

Is there funding to do these projects?

Yes, EPA has secured funding to conduct the work.

Steve Calanog/EPA's Thoughts – Remedy Considerations

- While meeting project objectives I would like to select a remedy that is:
 - Cost effective (for everyone concerned – the larger bay area and other places in the US that have lead contaminated soil issues)
 - A technology that local resources can deploy in other parts of the City and Community
- Steve Calanog/EPA would like to begin setting up pilot studies to test some of the remedy options.

How can you help?

- Provide me feedback on these and other remedies.
- Discuss these ideas with your neighbors.
- Attend community meetings.
- Volunteer in the pilot testing process.

What has happened since the last meeting?

Cleanup Level

- Current Federal Preliminary Remediation Goal/Regional Screening Level for lead in soil is 400 ppm.
- The California cleanup level for lead is 80 ppm, effective Summer 2009.
- The Federal cleanup level will likely also lower to 80 ppm.
- EPA intends to remove lead to these levels.
- This lower cleanup level will likely mean that most yards in West Oakland will need lead removal; this will affect remedy selection.

Resident Questions:

- **Will EPA implement the same remedy for each house?**
 - There will likely be 2-3 remedies and residents can work with EPA to choose the remedy that best fits their needs.
- **How much will this cost property owners?**
 - There will be no cost to property owners. EPA will pay for the lead removal work and maintenance.
- **Is this good for the neighborhood or are we being "picked on?"**
 - Lead-free soil is good.
 - EPA feels this is an opportunity for the community to work with EPA to figure out how to deal with this problem in a collaborative way and benefit by having a healthier environment.
- **What about residents with gardens? Should they plant? Wait?**
 - EPA recognizes this is a very real concern and requests community input on this issue. EPA will discuss this more at subsequent meetings.
- **Can EPA bring some clean soil and stockpile it in the neighborhood for use in gardening/planting?**
 - EPA will have to talk to the city about this.
 - Beware of "free soil" offers – the soil may be contaminated.

Collaboration with New Orleans Project

- A similar project (Fundred and Operation Paydirt) is being conducted on 83,000 yards in New Orleans that contain similar levels of lead contamination as South Prescott.
 - www.fundred.org
 - <http://www.fundred.org/about/operation-paydirt.php>
- EPA hopes to share lessons, experiences, and data.
- Technical assistance is available from the University of Texas.
- Mel (New Orleans community involvement representative) is interested in talking to us about their experiences and community involvement.

Timelines

Pilot Testing

- EPA hopes to conduct pilot testing (try out different remediation techniques in a laboratory) in June/July 2010.
- Pilot tests could include lab bench tests (TCLP, lead speciation, x-ray absorption spectroscopy, in vitro extraction).
- Phytoremediation could be tested by planting in vacant lots.
- Phosphate-induced metal stabilization (PIMS)
 - www.pimsnw.com
 - Leachable lead is the toxic type of lead. PIMS uses fish bones to chemically bind lead into new phosphate minerals that have low solubility.
 - The first family has used this technology to reduce lead concentrations in the White House garden.
 - Is there a risk of mercury or PCB contamination using the fish bones?
 - EPA will research this issue. Probably not, as these contaminants tend to accumulate in fatty tissue, not bone. The fish bones can be analyzed by a laboratory if necessary.
- Volunteers for pilot testing are needed. This would mean allowing soil to be collected from their yard for analysis in the laboratory. Field testing may follow in the future (August/September). EPA isn't taking names tonight.

Lead Removal Work

- EPA wants to start in Fall 2010.
- Anticipated timeline is 20-24 months to do 150 yards.
- Can do 1 yard in 1-1.5 weeks; 3-5 yards can be done at a time.
- All work will have dust suppression and dust monitoring, as lead can be found in dust
 - Can EPA re-locate families with children during removal work?
Yes, it is possible.

Resident Concerns/Questions

- The lead removal work will be a hard sell to some of the neighbors.
 - Some will want to do nothing.
 - Some will be worried about the repercussions of doing nothing vs. doing something – will participating in the cleanup process and knowing about the lead contamination on the property result in decreased property values?
 - Alternately, will doing nothing result in decreased property values?
- EPA acknowledges that it will be difficult to get everyone to buy-in to having the work done. However there are the incentives that property value should go up as a result of the cleanup, as well as having a yard safe for children.
- Results of the sampling will be subject to FOIA (Freedom of Information Act), so it will be public record that lead contamination is present in the neighborhood.
- Community needs a legal/real estate advisor to assist them.
 - Talk to city representatives, realtors for advice.

- There will likely be community members who “don’t want to know” about the lead contamination so that they don’t have to disclose it and their property values won’t be affected.
- The Community Association needs to know what to tell people regarding the contamination, clean up, and their property values.
- How much of the community knows about the EPA lead cleanup?
 - 100% of the people in the South Prescott neighborhood have had some form of contact (letters, mailings, door-to-door conversations, phone calls) from EPA.
 - EPA sampled approximately 1/3 of the residences.
- What is EPA protocol regarding the placement of notices/deed restrictions/etc. on properties for similar cleanups? What happens if a property owner does not accept EPA’s offer for remediation of contamination?
 - EPA is still looking into what their lawyers would require.
 - Property owners need to know the legal implications of taking action vs. no action.
- Residents request EPA convene a meeting to address these legal issues related to property value and clean up/no clean up. Invite:
 - Real estate lawyer experienced with toxic issues on residential properties
 - Community Advisory Group can contact the California BAR association and request pro-bono help (Bradley Angel and Brian to follow up)
 - Councilwoman Nancy Nadel?
 - Representative from City/County Planning and Zoning – when property is sold, it triggers a process whereby institutional controls, etc. are reviewed by someone in that department
 - Local real estate agent (can help determine if property will lose value if remediation is not done)
 - Attempt to address these issues in June 14 2010 meeting. Meetings are held the second Monday of every month.
- What is the vision for the property owner when work has been completed?
 - When EPA leaves, the yard will be as it was before or a mutually acceptable agreement.
 - Will be addressed on a property by property basis.
- How will EPA deal with yards that are extensively landscaped vs. not at all (full of weeds, etc)?
 - Ideally EPA will spend similar amounts on remediation and restoration for all yards, but this will be evaluated on an individual basis.
 - EPA won’t leave yards with less than they had.
 - EPA will deal with these yards on a property by property basis.
 - The remedy has not been selected yet, so this doesn’t factor into the yard restoration cost yet.
- When will the 2-3 remedy options be selected?
 - By the end of summer 2010.
- Typically how deep does aerially deposited lead go?
 - Approximately 4-6 inches.
 - South Prescott may also be built upon contaminated fill, so this estimate doesn’t necessarily apply here.
- How can we get additional community members involved?
 - Offer translation services and additional languages besides Spanish.
 - This is available upon request.
 - Until there are clear answers, many residents will be afraid to be involved.
- Chemical treatment methods don’t *remove* lead to 80 ppm. They make lead less bioavailable so that it is less toxic; the goal would be to reduce the bioavailability to the equivalent of 80 ppm and provide a cap that has less than 80 ppm of lead. The cap would be approximately 6 inches thick.
- Any reduction in lead concentrations is better than the status quo.

- To truly reduce lead concentrations to 80 ppm, dig and haul might be the only solution.
- The properties will never be lead-free. The lead removal will target only exposed surface soils to a depth of approximately 12-18 inches.
- Community gardens (City Slickers and Wow Garden) should be involved with these meetings.

Upcoming meetings:

- AMCO Superfund Site CAG Meeting: May 10 6:30 – 8:30 PM
Mandela Gateway Apartments Community Room located at 1350 7th Street, Oakland.

EPA West Oakland Residential Lead Assessment Area Map

