

Describe the Model Community project overall, including name(s) of entity or entities involved and their role; and, how there was collaboration among the entities and/or stakeholders?

In the fall of 2016, unacceptably high levels of hexavalent chromium were detected near metal-related companies in the City of Paramount. Since then, the City and its staff have worked tirelessly to address the air quality issue by partnering closely with the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD).

SCAQMD had previously investigated odors within the City and reported a successful lowering of emissions from the reported source facility. The agency installed ambient air monitors for that project; years later, these monitors sounded the alarm on a new issue – the elevated hexavalent chromium readings. Paramount and SCAQMD began investigating the new sources and enacting proactive measures to reduce future risks in the community. This project (“Project”) formed organically with the goal of prioritizing resident health and improving air quality.

The key first step of the Project was collaboration and investigation. Paramount and SCAQMD led an unprecedented multi-agency investigation into hexavalent chromium emissions that has included the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LADPH), the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), Los Angeles County Fire Department, US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), California Air Resource Board (CARB), and other environmental protection agencies all dedicating significant resources to improve the issue.

The next Project phase was action and implementation. Following discovery of the emission sources, SCAQMD and the team of regulatory agencies provided a framework of requirements and best practices for the City’s metal-emitting facilities to adhere to. In addition to these guidelines, Paramount began exploring comprehensive reforms to the City’s zoning code through its newly formed Air Quality Sub Committee. The extensive zoning changes will likely be adopted in the summer of 2018; once in effect, the proposed changes and the leading-edge regulations will work in tandem to keep emissions at normal background levels throughout the City.

Describe the program, effort or strategy that improves air quality.

When Paramount learned of the elevated levels of hexavalent chromium detected by SCAQMD, the City and the agency immediately jumped into the Project. The two worked closely to find the sources of emissions as quickly as possible. SCAQMD deployed a network of air samplers throughout the area to continually monitor air quality, while the City Council implemented a temporary moratorium on all metal-related businesses.

In addition to the ambient air monitoring, Paramount and all involved agencies proactively partnered to conduct widespread investigations of the industrial area. The City hosted this effort at its Sheriff’s Station, as well as dedicated three full-time code enforcement officers to the task for nearly a month. The level of cooperation and collaboration was unprecedented; the

SCAQMD Hearing Board quickly issued two stipulated Orders for Abatement as a result of the team successfully collaborating to identify the main sources of high emissions in the City.

Once SCAQMD was regularly monitoring the two facilities and enforcing the Abatement requirements, the City began planning for long-term solutions. The Project's second phase had three primary directives: inform the public, learn more about the science, and take proactive measures to reduce future risks.

The City hosted Town Hall meetings as well as meetings with specific community groups to explain the situation. Additionally, staff regularly distributed articles and news stories articulating the information to the public. This content was published on the City's new environmental website – ParamountEnvironment.org.

Stemming from the close collaboration with SCAQMD, staff initiated a new Business License Review process to enhance air quality compliance. Under the pilot program, specified categories of existing businesses need to show proof that they have been cleared to operate by SCAQMD to receive City approval of their license. The City then delivers renewal applications to SCAQMD for the agency's review and determination if the business needs a new or modified permit. This is unique in that cities (including Paramount) typically seek AQMD approval for new occupancy permits and new business licenses, not for renewal business licenses. Through this program, Paramount took it one step further.

In order to assist SCAQMD's monitoring, Paramount purchased five air quality samplers to test for hexavalent chromium. The five samplers totaled \$43,292.31. SCAQMD advised in this process to ensure that the same monitors used by the agency were bought. Currently, SCAQMD oversees and handles the samplers, having added them to its monitor network. Samples have been taken every three days since May 2017 and then tested in SCAQMD labs.

In response to the elevated levels of hexavalent chromium in the air, and to ease any community concerns, the City began monthly testing of the water supply. Further, the City partnered with LADPH and DTSC to test soil and dust samples in the areas near the two high emitters, including nearby residences. Results of both the water and soil testing indicated no health concerns. The results are featured on the Paramount Environment website.

The City Council quickly formed the Air Quality Sub Committee, giving residents another place to gain information and providing a platform for community members to participate as Sub Committee members. Over months of discussion, research, and presentations, the Sub Committee drafted recommendations for the City's zoning ordinance that would apply to existing metal companies. The changes are currently being reviewed by the Paramount Planning Commission. Once passed, no new sheet metal shops, rolling mills, or forging facilities will be allowed to operate in Paramount. Also, most existing metal-related businesses will experience new oversight by the City that provides an additional layer of environmental protection to community members.

Is the program, effort or strategy complete? Has it been implemented for a minimum of one year?

The City has partnered with SCAQMD and other regulatory agencies on the Project for close to two years. This collaboration has successfully lowered emissions throughout the area. Additionally, the metal-related facilities have successfully complied with each agency's environmental and operating requirements, driven to remediate respective emissions.

The City's work toward improving its environment, however, is not done. The progress toward new laws and lowered emissions since 2016 is only the first step: the air, water, and soil quality within the City will remain at the forefront for the foreseeable future. This commitment builds off the environmentally conscious initiatives that the City has taken over the last two decades and that continue to produce savings and a smaller "carbon footprint" into the future.

Has there been a demonstration of actual air pollution reductions in the community?

In December 2017, SCAQMD released a report that reviews the first year of its efforts to reduce hexavalent chromium emissions in the City of Paramount. The report summarizes the significant progress that has been made by SCAQMD related to monitoring, enforcement, rule development, public outreach, and coordination efforts with other public agencies, including the City of Paramount.

The report states:

"In 2016, an unprecedented, much more intensive effort began that involved extensive monitoring, working with many different agencies, and ensuring the community was involved and informed throughout. The approach was to focus on achieving results, in a collaborative and transparent fashion.

"Hexavalent chromium can cause cancer over years-to-decades of exposure. It can come from metal plating, forging, and heat treating operations as well as other industrial operations. SCAQMD has rules that cover these businesses, but we have discovered previously unknown sources of hexavalent chromium that need to be assessed, and if necessary, controlled—and SCAQMD staff has proposed new rules to reduce these and other air toxics emissions.

"As shown [in the report], readings from air samples over the last year show large reductions in emission levels."

The full report can be viewed here: <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/compliance/Paramount/summary-of-efforts-in-paramount.pdf>

More recently, SCAQMD released an updated monitoring plan for Paramount. The new plan is a necessary result of the reduced ambient levels of hexavalent chromium: "Because Cr6+ levels in the City of Paramount have been declining steadily and are now within the typical levels, the size of this monitoring network can be reduced to focus on other areas that have higher potential for air toxics exposure. Considering the large number of samples that have been

collected and analyzed at each monitoring location and the consistently low Cr6+ levels measured over the past nine months, staff recommends to modify the sampling strategy.”

Can the project or strategy be duplicated in other communities by other groups?

Yes. Although SCAQMD was essential to monitoring and lowering emissions in Paramount, the unparalleled collaboration with regulatory agencies can be accomplished by any city or public agency. The proactive teamwork and approach to lowering the elevated levels has set the bar; this Project is something that can be done throughout the state and should be done throughout the nation in the years to come.

From the beginning, the City of Paramount was driven by the desire to help its community as quickly and comprehensively as possible. City staff was completely transparent and open to sharing information with SCAQMD, LADPH, DTSC, and other agencies in order to facilitate quick solutions to the pertinent issue. If a city or agency adopts the willingness and mindset to share information, a similar effort can be accomplished.