
Chapter 3:

Community Outreach, Community
Steering Committee, Community
Engagement, and Public Process

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Introduction

Community engagement, outreach, and public process were crucial to developing the South Los Angeles (SLA) Community Emission Reduction Plan (CERP). Key features of the outreach efforts include partnering with community co-leads, establishing a Community Steering Committee (CSC), hosting monthly CSC meetings weekly community co-lead meetings, coordinating CSC member testimonials, and developing South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD) presentations. All materials were presented in English and Spanish via e-mail and webpage, and all CSC meetings were live-streamed (with English and Spanish interpretation).

Also, numerous interactions between CSC members, community co-leads, and South Coast AQMD staff occurred in one-on-one and/or small group meetings, allowing for in-depth discussions on joint development and creation of this CERP.

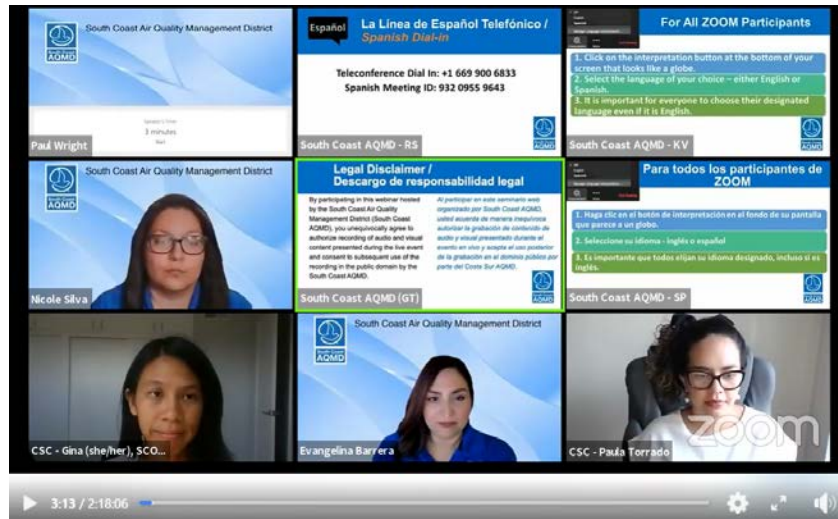
South Coast AQMD Community Liaisons

A South Coast AQMD community liaison served as the point of contact to communicate with members of the CSC and members of the public to address concerns regarding logistics and development of both the CERP and Community Air Monitoring Plan (CAMP) (). The South Coast AQMD community liaison facilitated communications with the CSC and community members throughout the CERP development process and worked with them to identify the best ways to make information accessible and user-friendly. The South Coast AQMD community liaison for SLA is Bernard Tolliver (btolliver@aqmd.gov), formerly, the South Coast AQMD community liaison was Evangelina Barrera. Additionally, Nicole Silva (nsilva@aqmd.gov) serves as the South Coast AQMD point of contact for CERP-related discussions.

Chapter 3 Highlights

- The Community Steering Committee (CSC) and community co-leads worked with South Coast AQMD staff to develop the CERP
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, regularly scheduled CSC meetings used a virtual platform to engage with the CSC and public
- The South Coast AQMD community liaison served as the point of contact
- The CSC Charter was developed by the community co-leads, with input from the CSC and South Coast AQMD
- Additional one-on-one, small group, and community meetings also played an important part in community engagement
- A community webpage was created as an information portal

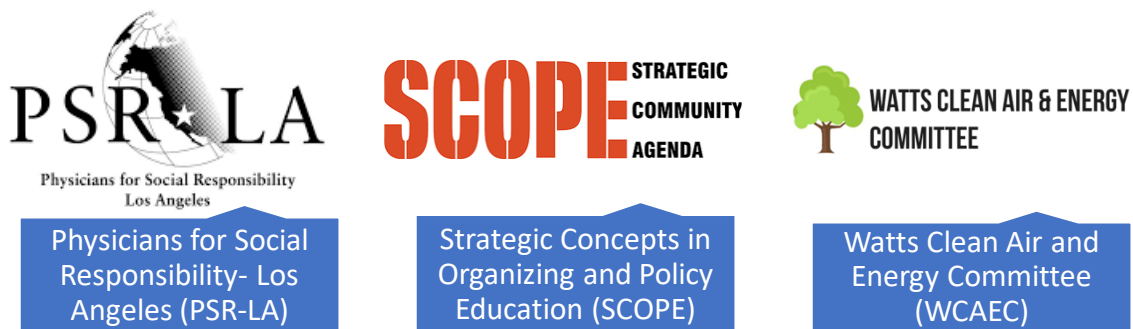
Figure 3-1: South Coast AQMD Staff Assisting CSC Members and the Public via Zoom



Community Co-Leads

South Coast AQMD is partnered with three community organizations serving as community co-leads for the development and implementation of the Assembly Bill 617 (AB 617) Program in the SLA community. SLA is the first South Coast AQMD AB 617 community to use a community co-lead model. The three community co-leads have a contractual agreement with South Coast AQMD (Figure 3-2).

Figure 3-2: SLA Community Co-Lead Organizations



PSR-LA¹ is an organization that advocates for policies and practices that improve public health, the elimination of environmental and nuclear threats, and seeks to address health inequalities. PSR-LA has over a decade of experience working in the South Central Los Angeles (SCLA) community on toxics, air pollution and climate change, land use and community development, and oil and gas extraction. PSR-LA brings the strength and credibility of health professionals to local organizing efforts and regulatory action and advocacy.

SCOPE² brings over a decade of historical social justice work in SLA addressing issues of poverty, environmental racism, and chronic disinvestment using a bottom-up approach to creating systemic change. SCOPE's model of community organizing is anchored by community residents engaging their neighbors to build a unified voice and advance a community-led agenda. SCOPE builds grassroots power to create social and economic justice for low-income, women and women identifying, immigrant, black, and brown communities in Los Angeles. SCOPE organizes communities, develops leaders, collaborates through strategic alliances, builds capacity through training programs, and educates SLA's residents to have an active role in shaping policies that affect the quality of life in the region. Their core values are justice, respect, responsibility, integrity, and voice.

WCAEC³ empowers the Watts community to achieve environmental justice by improving air quality and helping the community gain access to careers in the growing green energy industry. With daunting data on the rise in the era of competition between public utilities, the three founders knew that the disadvantaged Watts community was in need of active community education and engagement around the larger picture of global warming, including air and energy.

Community Steering Committee (CSC)

The main role of the CSC is to provide input and guidance as well as to propose community driven goals and actions for the community plans (i.e., CERP and CAMP). The CSC is composed of stakeholders with community knowledge to help drive community action and to develop the CERP and CAMP. The CSC creates a way to incorporate community expertise and direction in developing and implementing clean air programs in each community.

Formation of the Community Steering Committee

Beginning in March 2021, South Coast AQMD staff, in collaboration with the community co-leads, conducted outreach to gauge community interest in participating in the CSC. The community co-leads worked with the South Central LA Project to Understand the Sources and Health Impacts

¹ Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles, <https://www.psr-la.org/>

² Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education, <https://scopela.org/>

³ Watts Clean Air and Energy Committee, <http://wattscleanair.com/about/>

of Local Air Pollution (SCLA-PUSH)⁴ project to leverage their existing community relationships to establish the CSC. The CSC was finalized by May 2021.

The CSC has 46 primary members and two alternate members representing active residents, community organizations, and businesses. Twenty-six are primary members who reside within the community (resident percentage on the CSC is 57 percent), three primary members and two alternate members represent agencies, schools/universities, and offices of elected officials who serve this community,⁵ two primary members represent businesses or labor organizations, ten primary members represent community organizations, and five primary members are community co-leads.⁶

CSC Charter

The community co-leads, in collaboration with South Coast AQMD, developed a CSC charter and a draft was presented to members at the first CSC meeting on April 1, 2021. CSC members were invited to comment and provide feedback before the charter was finalized at the July 22, 2021 CSC meeting. The CSC charter identifies committee objectives, roles and responsibilities, meeting frequency, meeting dates, times, and locations. The final charter is available in English⁷ and Spanish.⁸

Community Meetings

California Air Resources Board (CARB) designated the SLA community for the AB 617 program in February 2021. South Coast AQMD staff, in collaboration with the community co-leads, hosted virtual community meetings on a regular basis. The community co-leads helped plan meeting agendas and discussion activities in order to facilitate meaningful engagements with the CSC. Virtual meetings were held due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although there were some perceived disadvantages of virtual meetings, one advantage is that the virtual meeting format allows access to CSC meetings for community members who would otherwise not have been able to attend in-person meetings. This included a kickoff meeting, a series of CSC meetings, subcommittee meetings, and monitoring working team meetings. Subcommittee meetings focused on specific topics, such as Oil and Gas and Mobile Sources, where CSC members participated in breakout room discussions to provide input on potential CERP actions. Spanish interpretation is provided

⁴ SCLA-PUSH Project, <https://www.psr-la.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/SCLA-PUSH-Final-Report-2019-2020.pdf>

⁵ Per discussion with CARB staff, members representing agencies, schools, universities, hospitals, and offices of elected officials are not included in the calculation of resident percentage on the CSC.

⁶ SLA AB 617, Community Co-leads Roster, <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/ab-617-ab-134/steering-committees/south-la/roster.pdf>

⁷ SLA AB 617, CSC Charter in English, <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/ab-617-ab-134/steering-committees/south-la/sla-charter.pdf?sfvrsn=8>

⁸ SLA AB 617, CSC Charter in Spanish, <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/ab-617-ab-134/steering-committees/south-la/sla-charter-sp.pdf?sfvrsn=8>

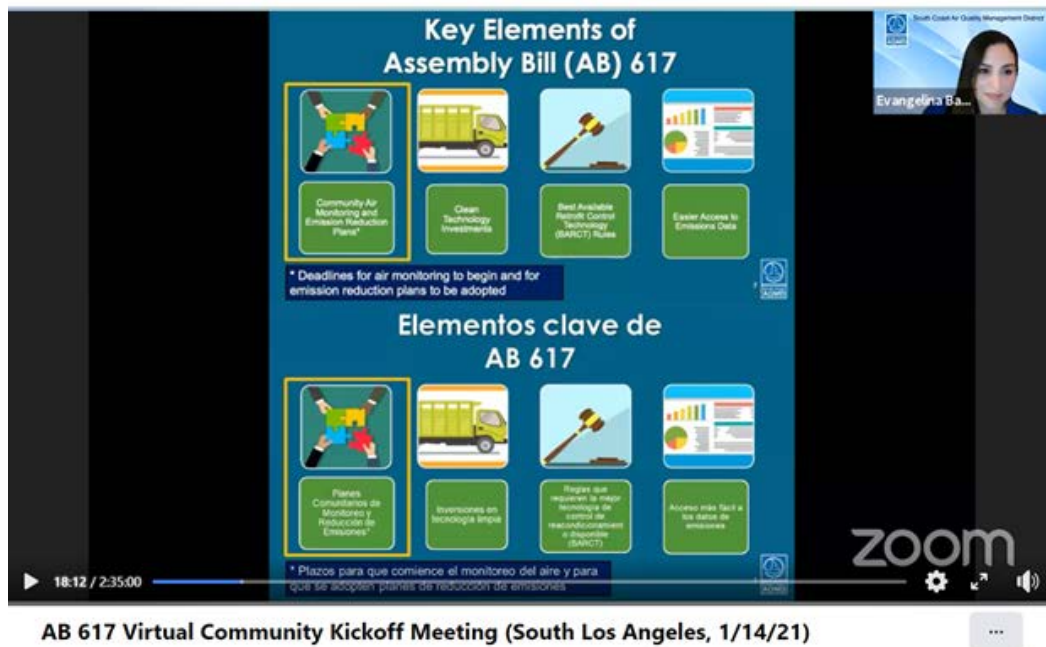
for all meetings, including teleconference capability for both English and Spanish lines. Meeting materials are also provided in both languages.

The SLA AB 617 work was unique compared to previous communities with which the South Coast AQMD staff had worked. SLA was the first community where the South Coast AQMD staff and community co-leads led CSC meetings together. An additional complexity to this community, was that all meetings were held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Connecting and creating relationships was more challenging since in-person meetings were not possible during the pandemic. It is important to recognize the dedication of all of the community co-leads, CSC members, and community representatives to continuously work and collaborate to develop the CERP and CAMP through the challenges of the pandemic.

First Community Meeting (Community Kick-Off Meeting)

The first community meeting for the SLA community was held virtually on January 14, 2021 (Figure 3-3) with approximately 90 people in attendance. During this meeting, South Coast AQMD provided an overview of the agency, South Coast AQMD and CARB presented information about the AB 617 program and explained the critical role of the CSC in the development and implementation of the CERP and CAMP.

Figure 3-3 : First Community Meeting



What's Up With the Air in South LA? An AB 617 Air Quality Virtual Conference⁹

On February 16, 2021, PSR-LA in collaboration with SCOPE and WCAEC, South Coast AQMD, and CARB hosted a conference called “What’s Up With the Air in South LA? An AB 617 Air Quality Virtual Conference”. The conference discussed the community history and cumulative burden, including environmental justice policies, introduced SCLA-PUSH and their work, and community members provided testimonials. Additionally, CARB presented an overview of the AB 617 program and South Coast AQMD discussed its role in the AB 617 program, and options for the CSC structure. The conference ended with panel discussions.

Community Steering Committee Meetings

Appendix 3: Community Outreach, Community Steering Committee, Community Engagement, and Public Process contains details on CSC meetings, including meeting dates and meeting documents and materials.

Monitoring Working Team Meetings

In order to leverage the knowledge and experience of community members most effectively, a Monitoring Working Team (MWT) was created to inform and direct the CAMP and provide guidance throughout its implementation. MWT meetings are a dedicated forum for in depth discussions on air monitoring topics, and the information from MWT meetings are presented and discussed with the CSC to provide updates on CAMP activities. Information regarding the MWT and MWT meetings can be found in the CAMP.

Community Engagement and Input Process

Collaboration Process

The elements and actions described in this CERP were developed during monthly CSC meetings, subcommittee meetings, and workshops. During these meetings, community co-leads, CSC members, members of the public, CARB, and South Coast AQMD worked together to discuss the various air quality concerns within the community boundary and identified opportunities to address them. This was an iterative process and details for this CERP (e.g., community boundary, air quality priorities, goals, and actions, formation of subcommittees and a working team) were adjusted according to discussions at meetings.

Community Engagement Tools

During community meetings, to interact with the CSC and offset perceived disadvantages of virtual meetings, South Coast AQMD and community co-leads interacted with the CSC using new and engaging tools such as file sharing services and Google Suite web-based applications including Google Jamboard and Google Forms.

⁹ PSR-LA, “What's Up With the Air in South LA? An AB617 Air Quality Conference”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpSAvGSqpSY>

Additionally, to increase community engagement, South Coast AQMD and community co-leads used the following tools:

- Language justice,
- Interpretation services,
- Inclusive engagement and participation, and
- Breakout sessions during CSC meetings.

Committee Presenters

A critical aspect of the CERP is development and implementation through collaboration with community co-leads, CSC members and the agencies, organizations, businesses, or other entities that they may represent. During CSC meetings, community co-leads engaged the CSC members by requesting them to present testimonials to describe their efforts in the community or experiences regarding a particular air quality priority. For example, CSC members were invited to share their work that is complementary to the actions being developed in the CERP, such as programs carried out by their organization that help address air quality issues in the community.

Meeting Facilitator

The community co-leads worked in collaboration with South Coast AQMD to select a professional facilitator to support CSC meeting and to promote equity with the South Coast AQMD and the community. The facilitators' role is to moderate the conversation during meetings, keep the agenda on-track, build consensus, ensure everyone has the opportunity to participate, and maintain a positive meeting environment among all participants.

CSC meetings and meetings with the community co-leads are facilitated by La Mikia Castillo and Diana Sarabia-Briseño of Castillo Consulting Partners (CCP). CCP is a community-based consulting firm that is dedicated to empowering diverse leaders to use their voices for systemic change. CPP has a contractual agreement with South Coast AQMD and is compensated for their facilitator services at CSC meetings and meetings with the community co-leads.

CCP attended and facilitated monthly CSC meetings and supported weekly community co-lead meetings. CCP took a community driven approach to enhance ongoing participation and diverse perspectives from CSC members to develop the CERP for South LA. CCP prioritizes facilitating dialogue and shared decision-making between CSC members and agency staff as the group moves through the development process with the approach to ensure accountability of South Coast AQMD and community partners.

Additional Community Engagement

To further engage the community members throughout CERP development, South Coast AQMD participated in one-on-one or small group meetings with members, and attended meetings led by various community organizations. These meetings provide committee members an opportunity to communicate directly with staff and for staff to answer questions and clarify

information requested from CSC members. Staff was able to gain a better understanding of the unique issues faced by each community by attending and participating in meetings led by community organizations.

Broader public engagement is important to the AB 617 program. Every CSC meeting agenda includes an opportunity for community co-leads to collaborate on agenda items for upcoming meetings. Staff reviews comments after each CSC meeting and responds as needed (**Figure 3-4**).

Figure 3-4: Community Members are Invited to Share Community Information on Air Pollution Concerns



Throughout the development of the CERP, South Coast AQMD community liaisons and various staff met with community members, environmental justice and local organizations, industry, city and county governments, and other stakeholders to provide assistance and prompt response to concerns raised about the CSC process and to promote participation in the development and implementation of the CERP. Staff attended meetings hosted by other entities in this community to give presentations on AB 617 CERP development and had more than 35 phone and virtual meetings with committee members to discuss the CSC process and seek input on CERP actions. South Coast AQMD staff will continue to work with the community co-leads and CSC to implement the CERP actions, provide periodic community updates, and adjust the outreach approaches to be more effective. Community engagement is essential to the success of the CERP and the AB 617 program as a whole, and all parties are committed to building and improving upon existing outreach efforts.

Community co-leads engaged in additional community outreach activities to ensure community members were informed of the AB 617 process. PSR-LA through the SCLA-PUSH project hosted several trainings, informational webinars, and conducted periodic phone banking and outreach to ensure community members and CSC members were equipped with tools to actively participate in CSC meetings. Additionally, PSR-LA leveraged their existing relationships with community-based organizations to keep community members informed.

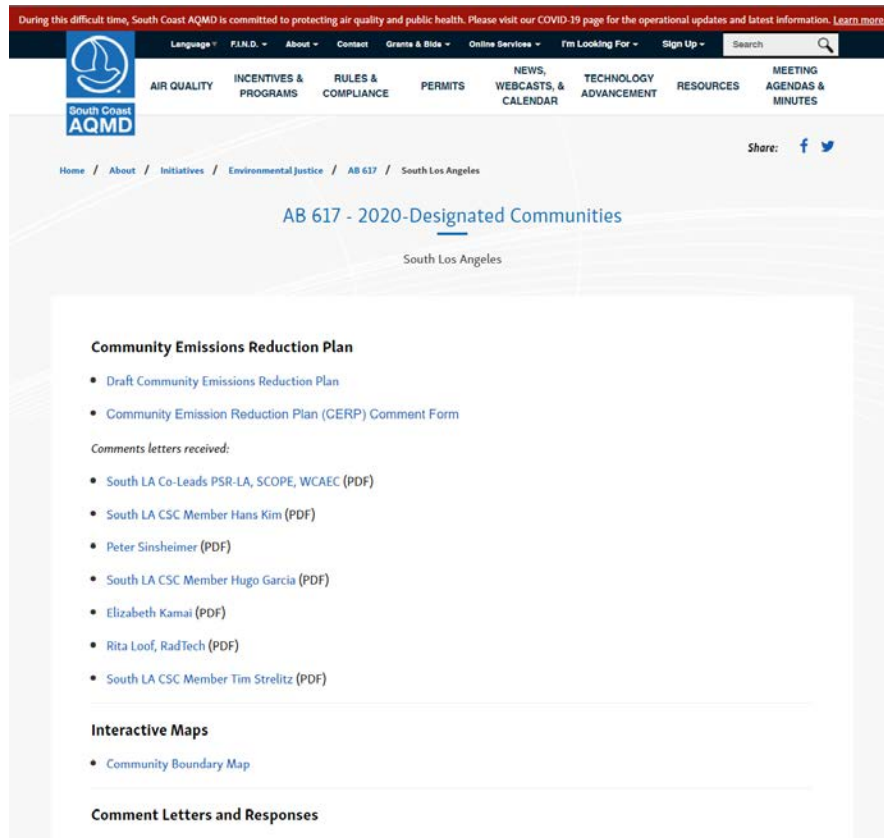
WCAEC, through the SCLA-PUSH project, presented educational and interactive engagements to a wide cross section of stakeholders (e.g., residents; community groups; clergy and congregations; city, county, state, and federal agencies; schools). Additionally, WCAEC used multifaceted communications to facilitate awareness, support, and to survey for input.

Public Information Portals

Community Webpage

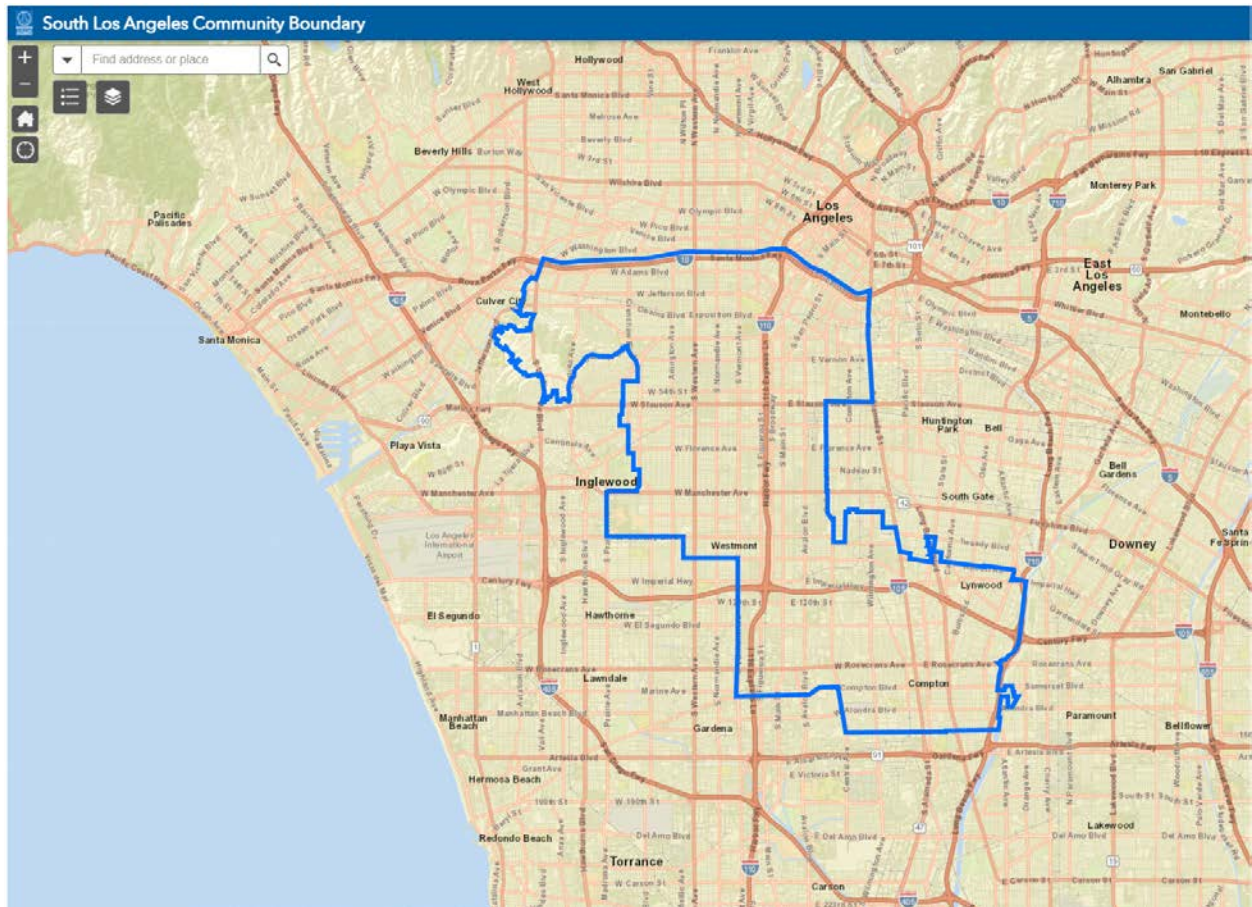
A community webpage (**Figure 3-5**) was created for the SLA community. The webpage includes information about upcoming meetings, meeting materials (flyers, agendas, presentations, handouts, live stream links, and meeting summaries). Additionally, the SLA community page includes an interactive map, the CSC roster, and the CERP and CAMP documents. All flyers, agendas, social media posts, presentations, and handouts to the CSC were made available in English and Spanish.¹⁰

¹⁰ South Coast AQMD, AB 617 – 2020-Designated Communities, SLA,
<http://www.aqmd.gov/nav/about/initiatives/environmental-justice/ab617-134/south-la>

Figure 3-5: Community Webpage for the SLA Community

The interactive map on the webpage presents data about the community (**Figure 3-6**). These interactive maps provide data on land use, locations of facilities, schools, hospitals, daycare centers, and the air quality concerns identified by the CSC and members of the public. This information was provided to help inform air quality priorities for the CERP for SLA.

Figure 3-6: Map Showing the SLA Community Boundary



Social Media

All CSC meetings were live-streamed using Facebook Live (**Figure 3-7**). The links to the live-stream recording were also posted on the South Coast AQMD community webpage¹⁰ so that members who could not attend or view the meeting live could view the recorded video. All CSC meetings are publicized on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, and are available in English and Spanish.

Figure 3-7: Screenshot of Facebook Live Recording of an SLA CSC Meeting

