

Notes – Mission Bay Pollution Monitoring Group (MBPMG)
October 20, 2009 – 4PM
325 Berry Street

1. Introductions of Attendees with comments
Toby Levine – Chair...commented on recent increase in diesel noise and dust
Judy and Don Langley, 325 Berry – commented on black dust
Angela – 325 Berry – concerned about high speed rail and electrification
Todd McIntyre – Caltrain
D. Travis Clark – UCSF Environmental Division
Melanie Sugarboard – Arterra
Jim Smith – BAAQMD
Corinne Woods – Houseboats
Lee Bender – Houseboats
Barbara Cohen-Schweitzer

2. Caltrain Report – Todd McIntyre
 - a. Horn noise from Engines. Caltrain has found a way to restore the horns back to the bottom of the engines and have them operate in compliance with federal regulations. The project is a high priority for Caltrain and is more than halfway complete. Should be finished by end of November, 2009.
Toby noted that the engineers are very individualistic in horn blowing; some making many blows, others just two. Blowing needs to be regularized. Todd noted that the trains are run by AMTRAK and that they do not always listened to Caltrain. It was also noted that the horn's pitch is 98 decibels (before the effort to tone down). (98 decibels is equivalent to a snowmobile, chain saw, pneumatic drill. Decibel levels above 80 are considered hazardous. Efforts to tone the horns down is warranted – editor's note)
Melanie Sugarboard noted that safety is also a critical issue.
 - b. Opening of the 7th St. Crossing The group indicated that we are appreciative of the opening of the intersection. The opening makes life very much easier for the residents. Todd reiterated the many hazards of the crossing including The fact that there are 3 tracks and trains can be coming from both directions at the same time. It takes a mile for the train to make an emergency stop. The horn starts ¼ of a mile from the crossing. If your car gets stuck on the crossing, get out and run diagonally in the direction of the train in order to avoid flying debris. If you notice anyone or any thing dangerous along the tracks call 1-877-723-7245
 - c. Idling Trains There are varying perceptions regarding the

the extent of idling and therefore, dangerous emissions being blown into the air. Some feel, the Chair included, that for a period of time, air quality improved, but more recently, the amount of diesel dust in the air has grown worse and that our buildings have become dirtier. Todd states that his office has rechecked with the Caltrain and Amtrak staff, and typically, the trains are only idling at the station for about 40 minutes to an hour, which is the typical layover time during the peak travel periods. During the midday and night times, the engines layover for longer periods and are shut down, unless the engines are being refueled.

- d. Electrification continues to be of great interest in terms of noise reduction and the reduction of pollutants, which will diminish by 90% of current level once electrification occurs. Caltrain continues to expect to complete the project by 2015. The number of daily trips will climb to 130 from the current 90. Electric trains are lighter, quieter and faster. The final EIR for the electrification should be approved in November, 2009. This is a very significant step.

The issue of the electrified Muni crossing the electrified Caltrain at 16th Street was raised. This is a complicated problem and will be difficult to solve.

BAAMQD Report – Jim Smith

Air Quality in the Bay Area is the cleanest in the U.S., and possibly in the world. The air quality has improved over the years as shown by the reduction in the number of “spare the air days” from 57 a few year ago to 13.

However, the Eastern part of the City is a part of the Care program (Community Air Risk Evaluation) due to the diesel pollution (trucks, trains, construction equipment, buses) as well as other forms of pollution coming from the power plant, industrial activities and automobile traffic. (Financial District to BVHP)

BAAMQD does not keep records of sub areas, though they do have two mobile monitoring stations, which are very popular and hard to obtain and can provide more discreet information. The MBPMG would like to have the monitor stationed here for one week in order to have a better understanding of our problem.

BAAMQD has been providing grants to reduce diesel dust, particularly particulate matter 2.5, which is carcinogenic, in this part of the City (\$6.million). The focus is on diesel trucks. It is hoped that by 2015-2020 that the present level of pollution will be reduced by 90%. An important study by BAAMQD will be issued in 2010 and it will indicate the future decline in diesel emissions and particulate matter. This is in part due to the California Air Resources Board's constant tightening of emission standards.

Our group was advised to work with the City to reduce automobile traffic and other forms of air pollution in the neighborhood, particularly in the light recent regulations by the Health Department requiring mitigation of air pollution in new residential dwellings near roadways.

UCSF – D. Travis Clark, Environmental Coordinator

UCSF at Mission Bay is only 40% built. The completion of the new hospital will add 800,000 square feet. Diesel particulate matter is a particular problem for UCSF at Mission Bay. Parents at the Child Care Center complain constantly. Steps UCSF has taken:

1. Carefully covering dirt piles.
2. Making certain that all diesel emitters have filters.
3. Installing green filter canvas along all cyclone fencing
4. Controlling the idling of buses in their territory.
5. Making certain that UCSF buildings are designed to minimize pollution issues.

UCSF takes very seriously their environmental stewardship and all their work is fully permitted.

PUC – Mission Creek and Berry Street Odors

Very little time was available to discuss these issues. A few points were made. A chemical additive to the sewer pipe under Berry has been applied and this should reduce the odors. The results, so far have been mixed.

Mission Creek monitoring will begin in 2010. Procedures will be set up. This is required under the current SE Water Treatment permit. When there is a heavy rainfall, the Treatment plant overflows with raw sewerage. This is not

healthy and must be worked on, particularly in light of the contact with the Creek by dogs and people.

The group indicated that it was interested in pursuing traffic issues in the future particularly King and Berry.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:30PM. Next meeting will be January 19, 2010.