
FORMER ASARCO SMELTER SITE

EL PASO, TEXAS

Final Community Relations Plan



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Prepared for

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Prepared by



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1.0 OVERVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN

The ASARCO Smelter Site (Site) is a former copper smelting facility located in the city of El Paso, Texas. The site is undergoing remedial investigation and remedial action because of various environmental impacts from former smelting operations.

The purpose of this Community Relations Plan (CRP) is to describe the communication between the Site Custodial Trustee (Trustee), the community, and other stakeholders and to assure maximum and meaningful public involvement in remediation of the ASARCO Smelter Site.

The main objective of the CRP is to inform the public regarding activities and decisions related to the remediation of the site. The goals of this plan are to establish and maintain open communications between the general public; local, state and federal officials; and other parties interested in the ASARCO Smelter Site and to disseminate information to residents and other interested parties in a timely manner. This CRP describes the site and its history, summarizes current site activities, and describes the community relations activities planned for the period of remedial activities. The Site Trustee will use the communication tools outlined in this plan to inform the local community, area civic groups, and other officials about on-going site activities.

1.1 Roles and Responsibilities

In November of 2009, the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ) announced the selection of Roberto Puga, of Project Navigator, Ltd., as the Custodial Trustee to manage the remedial activities at the El Paso Smelter Site. Under the settlement agreement approved by the bankruptcy court, ASARCO's El Paso smelter property was placed in an environmental custodial trust and is managed by the custodial trustee. The Site Trustee has hired Malcolm Pirnie (www.pirnie.com/) as the Environmental Engineering Consultant and ERM (www.erm.com/) as the Demolition Consultant. Both TCEQ and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are the regulatory agencies. These agencies will provide oversight of the remedial work and will be approving all work plans and activities.

Below is an organization chart (**Figure 1**) illustrating the lines of communication and roles and responsibilities.

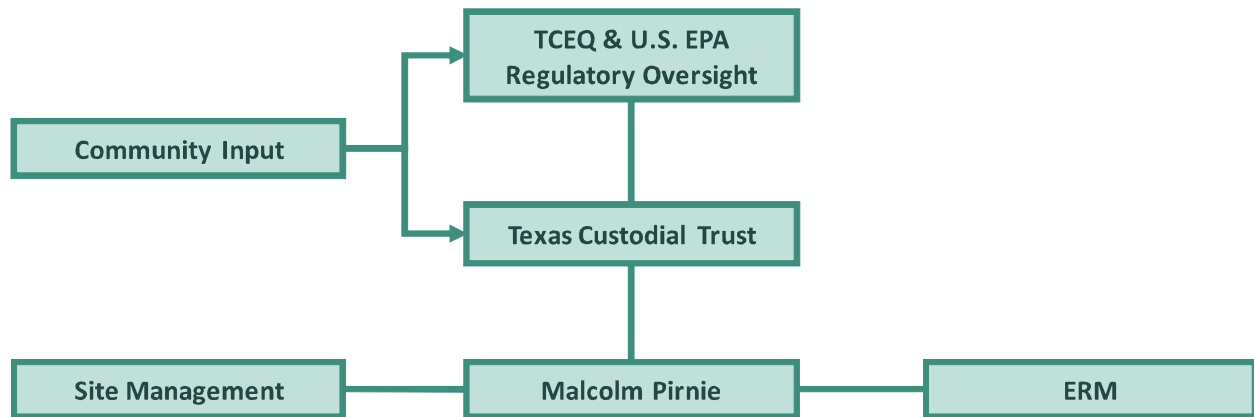


Figure 1: Organization Chart

1.2 Sources of Information for the Community Relations Plan

This Plan was based on information gathered from interviews with federal, state, and El Paso County elected officials and the general public. It is also based on historical records from the project files and demographic information for neighborhoods around the site. Demographic information was provided by the U.S. Census Bureau.

1.3 Organization of this Community Relations Plan

This Plan contains four sections: Overview of the Community Relations Plan, Site Background, Community Background and Concerns, and Community Involvement Activities. Appendices provide supplemental information, including a glossary (**Appendix A**) to aid in understanding technical terms used in this Plan.

2.0 SITE BACKGROUND

This section provides a brief description of the site and a summary of current site activities.

2.1 Site Location and Description

The ASARCO Smelter Site (Site) is located within the city limits of El Paso, Texas. The facility is currently inactive. The plant portion of this Site is located at 2301 West Paisano Drive, El Paso, Texas. (Refer to **Figure 2** Site Location Map). The Plant occupies approximately 128 acres and is bounded by U.S. Interstate Highway 10 to the east and U.S. Highway 85 (Paisano Drive) to the west. The Site is located on the edge of the Rio Grande River near the U.S.-Mexico border.



Figure 2: Site Location Map

The site is located within a mixed commercial/industrial area. Additionally, the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) is located to the east of the Site. (Refer to **Figure 3** Site Features Map).



Figure 3: Site Features Map

2.2 Work in Progress

Since the selection of the Site Trustee in November 2009, the Trustee has been providing personnel, materials and equipment necessary to maintaining the Site. Key essential operations and maintenance activities underway at the Site include:

- Maintaining Site Access Control (Security Patrol Staff)
- Conducting ongoing groundwater well monitoring
- Operating the site storm water collection and control system
- Operation of the diesel recovery system
- Maintenance of utilities including water and electricity
- Hiring of Malcolm Pirnie as the Environmental Engineering Consultant and ERM as the Demolition Consultant

3.0 COMMUNITY BACKGROUND AND CONCERNS

3.1 Demographics

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the following are an overview of key demographics for the City of El Paso, Texas:

- The population of the City of El Paso is ~609,415 people.
- More than 71 percent of this population speaks a language other than English at home.
- The largest population is Latino (76 percent).
- Nearly 70 percent of the population is a high-school graduate.
- The median household income is ~\$35K.

Table 1: Demographics for the City of El Paso, Texas

People QuickFacts	El Paso	Texas
Population, 2006 estimate	609,415	23,507,783
Population, percent change, April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2006	8.1%	12.7%
Population, 2000	563,662	20,851,820
Persons under 5 years old, percent, 2000	8.5%	7.8%
Persons under 18 years old, percent, 2000	31.0%	28.2%
Persons 65 years old and over, percent, 2000	10.7%	9.9%
Female persons, percent, 2000	52.5%	50.4%
White persons, percent, 2000 (a)	73.3%	71.0%
Black persons, percent, 2000 (a)	3.1%	11.5%
American Indian and Alaska Native persons, percent, 2000 (a)	0.8%	0.6%
Asian persons, percent, 2000 (a)	1.1%	2.7%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, percent, 2000 (a)	0.1%	0.1%
Persons reporting two or more races, percent, 2000	3.4%	2.5%
Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, percent, 2000 (b)	76.6%	32.0%
Living in same house in 1995 and 2000, pct 5 yrs old & over	54.1%	49.6%
Foreign born persons, percent, 2000	26.1%	13.9%
Language other than English spoken at home, pct age 5+, 2000	71.3%	31.2%
High school graduates, percent of persons age 25+, 2000	68.6%	75.7%
Bachelor's degree or higher, pct of persons age 25+, 2000	18.3%	23.2%
Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16+, 2000	22.4	25.4
Housing units, 2000	193,663	8,157,575
Homeownership rate, 2000	61.4%	63.8%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2000	\$71,300	\$82,500
Households, 2000	182,063	7,393,354
Persons per household, 2000	3.07	2.74
Median household income, 1999	\$32,124	\$39,927
Per capita money income, 1999	\$14,388	\$19,617
Persons below poverty, percent, 1999	22.2%	15.4%

(a) Includes persons reporting only one race.

(b) Hispanics may be of any race, so also are included in applicable race categories.

Source: US Census Bureau State & County QuickFacts -

<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/48/4824000.html>

3.2 Community Involvement & Concerns

The Site has had high visibility with the surrounding community and local officials for a number of years. Community concerns have been determined through public meetings, small neighborhood meetings, and contact with local community organizations and discussions with local and state elected officials. The 'Get the Lead Out' group (www.gettheleadout.net) is a currently active grassroots community organization.

The following sections summarize the community's primary concerns, based on meetings with the Site Trustee, e-mails received from public officials and e-mails and posting to the Site website blog from community members.

Information Needs: Most members of the community said they want to be kept informed of activities and developments on the Site in a clear and prompt manner. Additionally, there has also been disagreement on whether the Site has been adequately characterized and if there are unspecified potential hazards associated with materials remaining on site from past operations.

Health Issues: The primary health concerns were:

- Potential health effects from hazardous substances at the site from the materials left on the Site from past activities
- Contamination of groundwater

Site Remediation Activities: The primary concerns about the remediation were:

- Potential off-site odors and dust potentially generated during remediation
- The time required for cleanup
- Adequacy of the \$52 million dollars in the remediation fund
- Final Site disposition

Future Land Use: The primary concerns about the future land use were:

- Concern over the 2 stacks (will these stay up or be taken down)

4.0 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

The primary goals of the community involvement activities are to 1) keep the community informed of what's going on at the site, and 2) provide opportunities for community involvement throughout the remediation process. This section outlines the actions that the Custodial Trustee will take to ensure a successful two-way communication process.

“Community” means residents, businesses, schools, elected officials, local and state agencies, environmental groups, service organizations, and anyone else who has an interest in or is affected by the site.

4.1 Communication Tools

The Site Trustee is committed to involving the public in the remediation process and a variety of communication tools will be used for public participation. The following is a list of these tools, their purposes, and how they will be used during the site cleanup.

4.1.1 Public Website

The Trust has created a public website (www.RecastingTheSmelter.com) to provide site-related information and current site activities to all stakeholders. This website provides site information such as: historical documents, legal documents including the Trustee Agreement, sampling data and reports. It also provides a forum for the community to post comments and questions. Additionally, this website allows any user to enter an e-mail address and they will be added to the e-mail distribution list and will receive regular updates from the Site Trustee.

4.1.2 Information Repositories

There are two information repositories where the public can access site-related documents. These information repositories are in the main Downtown Public Library (501 N Oregon Street) and at the Armijo Library (620 East 7th Street). These locations are listed in **Appendix B**.

4.1.3 E-mail Mailing List

An initial database of contacts was developed from lists containing individuals, local organizations and from local/state government agencies. This database is updated on an ongoing basis whenever a user enters their contact information online to receive e-mail notifications regarding any updates to the Trust website. **Appendix C** lists some of the key contacts on our e-mail list.

4.1.4 Fact Sheets

The Trust will oversee the preparation and publication of fact sheets to inform the community of technical milestones, public comment periods, and other issues. Fact sheets may be distributed at public meetings, through the e-mail list and also posted on the Site website. They also include a list of contacts and information repositories.

4.1.5 Public Information Meetings

The Trust plans to host public information meetings to provide information, address questions, and solicit input from the public about the site cleanup. All public meetings will be held at a location accessible to all community members. Public notices for these meetings will be posted on the Trust website, in local media sources and through the e-mail list.

The format of the meeting will vary depending on the purpose and on the type of information presented. In some instances, an informal “open house” format may be used to allow the public to drop in at their convenience and talk with the Trustee. Meetings to solicit public comment will be more formal, and will typically include a court reporter to create a transcript of the comments.

4.1.6 Small Group Meetings

The Site Trustee will meet with private citizens, homeowners’ associations, community groups or elected officials at their request to provide updates and address community questions about the ASARCO Smelter Site. These sessions help to maintain contact with the community and provide continual opportunities for public comment. Small group meetings are typically held at the community’s request to discuss a specific issue. The Trustee’s ability to attend these meetings will depend on his availability. These meetings are not announced through the newspaper or mailings as are the regular public meetings, instead there is a section on the website that lists the Trustee’s upcoming and past meetings. This information can be found on the Trust's website, www.RecastingTheSmelter.com.

4.1.7 Public Comment Periods

The Trustee will announce all public comment periods for document submittals on the Site website, with a public notice in the newspaper and a fact sheet sent to those on the e-mail list. The comment periods will be at least three weeks, and up to six weeks based on the volume of the submittals under review.

4.1.8 Response to Comments

The Trustee will respond in writing to comments received during a public comment period, in a document called a Response to Comments. This document will be posted on the Trust's website, www.RecastingTheSmelter.com, and will be placed in the information repositories.

4.1.9 Public Notices

Public notices, which are display ads in newspapers, will be used to announce community meetings. Newspapers that serve this community are the following: *The El Paso Times*, *El Paso, Inc.* and *El Diario*. Additional media may be used, such as radio and TV. Copies of public notices may also be sent to the e-mail list in addition to being placed in the newspapers.

4.1.10 Briefings for Elected Officials

The Site Trustee will hold briefings with elected officials when there are significant developments or events related to the site. Additionally, the Trustee will continue to participate in the City of El Paso's charrette process, which is a collaborative program designed to consider various development proposals and options for the Site.

4.2 Project Contacts

The Site Trustee welcomes any community inquiries throughout the Site remediation process and is available Monday through Friday. Voice mail and e-mail messages can be left after hours and on weekends. Questions and comments will be forwarded to the appropriate person for a response.

Roberto Puga, ASARCO Custodial Trustee

Project Navigator, Ltd.
One Pointe Drive, Suite 320
Brea, California 92821
T 714.388.1802
F 714.388.1839
rpuga@projectnavigator.com

Elizabeth Schell, Project Manager

Project Navigator, Ltd.
T 917.653.7570
F 917.677.8804
eschell@projectnavigator.com

APPENDIX A

Glossary of Terms

Community Relations Plan (CRP) – A document that is designed to determine a community's informational needs and to provide a plan for public involvement during site investigation and cleanup activities.

Fact Sheet – A brief (typically two to six pages) document written for the public to inform them of various site activities, project status, comment periods, etc.

Hazardous Waste – Waste substances that can pose a substantial or potential hazard to human health or the environment when improperly managed. Hazardous waste possesses at least one of these four characteristics (or appears on special U.S. Environmental Protection Agency lists): ignitability, corrosivity, reactivity, or toxicity.

Information Repository – A file containing information, technical reports, and reference documents. The information repository is usually located in a public building, such as a public library, that is convenient for local residents.

Public Comment Period – A specified time period (usually 30 to 60 days for remedial projects) to receive oral and written comments and questions from the public.

Remedial Action – Implementation of the approved remedy.

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) – The leading environmental agency for the state. TCEQ is charged with the responsibility of overseeing the investigation and cleanup of sites contaminated with hazardous substances.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – The leading environmental agency for the country. EPA is also charged with the responsibility of overseeing the investigation and cleanup of sites contaminated with hazardous substances. EPA assists TCEQ to oversee the remediation at the ASARCO site.

APPENDIX B

Information Repositories

Information repositories have been established to provide the public with access to site-related information, such as reports, fact sheets, work plans, and other project documents. The locations of the information repositories are:

El Paso Main (Downtown) Library

501 North Oregon Street
El Paso, TX 79901-1195
(915) 543-5401

Hours of Operation

Mon-Thurs: 9am – 8pm
Friday: 11am – 6pm
Saturday: 9am – 6pm
Sunday: 1pm – 5pm

Armijo Library

620 East 7th Street
El Paso, TX 79901-1195
(915) 533-1333

Hours of Operation

Monday: CLOSED
Tuesday: 10am – 7pm
Wed-Thurs: 9am – 6pm
Friday: 1pm – 6pm
Saturday: 10am – 6pm
Sunday: CLOSED

APPENDIX C

List of Contacts and Interested Parties

FEDERALLY ELECTED OFFICIALS

Congressman Silvestre Reyes

310 North Mesa, Suite 400
El Paso, TX 79901
(915) 534-4400

Washington, D.C. Office
2433 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-4831

STATE ELECTED OFFICIALS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

State Representative Joseph Moody

6600 N. Mesa Suite 603
El Paso, TX 79912
(915) 532-1391
joseph.moody@house.state.tx.us

State Representative Marisa Marquez

P.O. Box 2910
Austin, TX 78768
(512) 463-0638
Marisa.marquz@house.state.tx.us

CITY MAYOR and CITY MANAGER

Mayor John Cook

City of El Paso
2 Civic Center Plaza
El Paso, Texas 79901
(915) 541-4000

City Manager Joyce Wilson

2 Civic Center Plaza
El Paso, Texas 79901
(915) 541-4844
wilsonja@elpasotexas.gov

CITY REPRESENTATIVES

City Representative Ann Morgan Lilly

District 1

City of El Paso
2 Civic Center Plaza
El Paso, Texas 79901
(915) 541-4151
district#1@elpasotexas.gov

City Representative Susie Byrd

District 2

City of El Paso
2 Civic Center Plaza
El Paso, Texas 79901
(915) 541-4416
district#2@elpasotexas.gov

City Representative Emma Acosta

District 3

City of El Paso
2 Civic Center Plaza
El Paso, Texas 79901
(915) 541-4572
district#3@elpasotexas.gov

City Representative Carl Robinson

District 4

City of El Paso
2 Civic Center Plaza
El Paso, Texas 79901
(915) 541-4140
district#4@elpasotexas.gov

City Representative Rachel Quintana

District 5

City of El Paso

2 Civic Center Plaza
El Paso, Texas 79901
(915) 541-4701
district#5@elpasotexas.gov

City Representative Eddie Holguin, Jr.

District 6

City of El Paso
2 Civic Center Plaza
El Paso, Texas 79901
(915) 541-4182
district#6@elpasotexas.gov

City Representative Steve Ortega

District 7

City of El Paso
2 Civic Center Plaza
El Paso, Texas 79901
(915) 541-4108
district#7@elpasotexas.gov

City Representative Beto O'Rourke

District 8

City of El Paso
2 Civic Center Plaza
El Paso, Texas 79901
(915) 541-4123
district#8@elpasotexas.gov

U.S. EPA REGION OFFICIALS

Carlos Sanchez

US EPA Region VI, Chief, AR/TX Section
1445 Ross Ave, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202
(214) 665-8507
sanchez.carlos@epa.gov

Charles Barnes

US EPA Region VI (6EN-HC), Enforcement Officer
1445 Ross Ave, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202
(214) 665-6535

Barnes.Chuck@epamail.epa.gov

Carlos Rincon

US EPA Region VI, El Paso Border Office Director
4050 Rio Bravo, Suite #100
El Paso, TX 79902
(915) 533-7273
rincon.carlos@epa.gov

William Luthans

US EPA Region VI, Deputy Director
1445 Ross Ave, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202
(214) 665-8154
Luthans.William@epamail.epa.gov

STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES

Lorinda Gardner

TCEQ, Regional Director
401 E Franklin Ave
El Paso, TX 79901-1206
(915) 834-4949
lgardmer@tceq.state.tx.us

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS AND CITIZENS GROUPS

Get the Lead Out Coalition - <http://gettheleadout.net/>

NEWS MEDIA

El Paso Times - www.elpasotimes.com

Chris Roberts
(915) 546-6136
chrisr@elpasotimes.com

El Paso, Inc. - www.elpasoinc.com

Timothy Roberts
(915) 534-4422 ext. 146
tim.roberts@elpasoinc.com

El Diario - www.diario.com.mx/secciones/El_Paso.html