



Community Advisory Panel (CAP) Meeting
Valero East – 610 Industrial Way, Benicia, CA - Drive to the back of the building
Tuesday, October 14th, 2025 - 4:30 PM – 5:30 PM
MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME

Dennis Lowry called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm. The [October 14th Agenda](#) was approved & the June 10th CAP Meeting minutes were approved as written. The following participants attended the meeting:

CAP Members

Dennis Lowry	CAP Chairman & Community at Large Member
Rod Sherry	Benicia Industrial Park Association
Amy Hirsh	Benicia Unified School District, Board Member
Marilyn Bardet	Good Neighbor Steering Committee
Cara Bateman	Community at Large Member
Kristine Passalacqua	Community at Large Member

Valero CAP Representatives

Lauren Bird	VP and General Manager
Paul Adler	Community Relations & Government Affairs Director
Melissa Manke Fimbres	HSE Director

City, County, Federal Representatives

Trey Strickland	Solano County, Environmental Health Manager
Mohammed Umbashi	Field Representative, Assemblywoman Lori Wilson's Office

Valero employees

Cameron Wicklow	Technical Director
Brian Fien	Superintendent Emergency Services
David Johnston	Supervisor Laboratory
Pam Fischer	Executive Administrative Assistant

Additional Attendees

Bob Nickeson	Community Member
David Batchelor	Benicia Community Foundation

Refinery Update

- Lauren Bird, Vice President & General Manager
 - Planning for the April 2026 refinery closure continues. Since the announcement, we have experienced attrition of 10-12%.
 - Lauren had shared his disappointment with the results of accountability drill (a drill to account for every person-employee and contractor that is onsite in the refinery) that took place during the Oil Spill Drill in July. The drill took 2 hours whereas his expectation is within 30 minutes. He is pleased to report that an accountability drill held recently was completed within 25 minutes.
 - The City of Benicia's water main break had an impact to the refinery. The lower quality of the Lake Hermann water makes it difficult for us and it has to have additional treatment at our water treatment facility. It results in a cost of \$35,000/day to Valero. The city did a good job of getting it repaired quickly.
 - Our fenceline monitors experienced 4-5 notifications recently and staff responded with our portable monitoring but could not detect any possible emissions within our fenceline. The odor could have been traced back to the paving that has been taking place in the community.

- United Way Campaign for 2025 is taking place in the refinery. Employees pledge donations and Valero can match a pledging amount. Despite the pending closure, the refinery decided to continue this campaign because it is a part of Valero's culture.
- CAP members asked if a future meeting could include an overview of the shutdown process/timeline. The refinery will explore addressing this request at a future meeting.
- Melissa Manke Fimbres, HSE Director
 - There were two flaring notifications made to the city. Appropriate notifications were made. The report will be provided to the Air District within 2 months of the flaring occurrences.
 - Pipeline safety notifications were sent out to the community and are located on the [CAP website](#).
- Paul Adler, Community Relations & Government Affairs Director
 - A hard copy of the [Guiding Principles Report](#) was distributed to each CAP Member.
 - Paul shared a presentation of Valero's [Community Investments](#) to the City of Benicia. He also shared the City's [Community Impact Survey](#) and [Economic Impact Study report](#).

CAP Member Updates

- Rod Sherry – Last meeting included a presentation on the shipyard. There was no discussion about the refinery.
- Amy Hirsh – On behalf of the Benicia Unified School District, Amy thanked Valero for the \$135,000 donation from the Benefit for Children Golf Tournament. It is important that the schools are able to provide this academic enrichment event. It is one of the most beloved programs at the school. They have been working with Benicia Community Foundation and are hoping the funding past the 2 years Valero's donation provided. She also commented that Chris Calabrese is the new Superintendent and they have been focusing on getting him up to speed.
- Cara Bateman – She continues to educate people regarding the condition of the Valero land. There are regulations and reports that have to be in place. She also was educating and informing people that the recent horrid smell wasn't coming from Valero, but rather a result of the asphalt being replaced by the city.
- Kristine Passalacqua – With the planned closing of Valero, there is concern in the community as to where the funding that Valero has been providing will come from. She has worked on diverting fears and trying to maintain a balance. There is also concern on the impact to contractors.
- Marilyn Bardet – She is concerned that the public will not be involved in the future of the property. Marilyn stated that Valero is a part of the community and the support they have provided will be a tremendous loss.
- Dennis Lowry- Dennis has spent time doing research and reviewing the presentations provided by the city. He is concerned that the minimum impact number is nearly 50% lower than it should be. He also feels they may have not taken the impact of the higher average salaries of the Valero employees in the study. He noted that the city is conducting the public hearing for the Parks, Landscaping & Lighting assessment tonight.

Lauren Bird surfaced that the date of the February 10th meeting will need to be changed. He suggested February 17th. This date revision will be added to the agenda for the December 9th meeting for approval.

The meeting ended at 5:30 pm.

2025 CAP Calendar

- Tuesday, December 9th - 4:30 pm – 5:30 pm @ Valero East
- ~~Tuesday, February 10th—4:30 pm—5:30 pm @ Valero East~~
- (At Lauren Bird's request, February 17th is a proposed new February meeting date. Further discussion will occur at the December 9th meeting)