South Coast
Air Quality Management District
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Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) for the Proposed North Central Avenue Apartments Project (SCH No. 2013051031)

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) staff appreciates the opportunity to comment on the above-mentioned document. The following comments are meant as guidance for the Lead Agency and should be incorporated into the Final CEQA document.

In the project description, the lead agency proposes demolition and removal of materials from the existing structures on two separate sites: Site A and Site B. Site A is approximately 3.46-acres in size and includes construction of a 5-story apartment building with 315 units with a parking structure for 456 parking spaces. The approximately 2-acre Site B would include construction of a 5-story apartment building for 192 apartment units and include a 275-space parking structure. Construction is planned to start in June 2014 and be completed in approximately 23 months.

The two proposed sites are located south of the State Route 134 Freeway, which has a daily traffic volume of about 232,000 vehicles passing approximately 330 feet north of the proposed project most northern boundary. The SCAQMD staff is concerned that the proposed sensitive land use site is located in a traditionally incompatible setting with the existing freeway near the project site. Guidance from the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Air Quality and Land Use Handbook[1] recommends avoiding siting new sensitive land uses within 500 feet of a freeway to avoid exposing sensitive receptor populations, such as people who live in homes or apartments, to substantial pollutant concentrations. SCAQMD staff appreciates that the lead agency conducted a health risk assessment (HRA) to determine potential impacts from the freeway, however some of the methods used in the HRA do not conform to SCAQMD guidance. We recommend that the HRA be updated based on the comments in this letter prior to the lead agency determining the significance of this impact. Details are included in the attachment.

[1] (CARB) Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: http://www.aqmd.gov/ceqa/handbook/other_useful_links/ARBhandbook.pdf .

Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21092.5, please provide the SCAQMD with written responses to all comments contained herein prior to the adoption of the Final Environmental Impact Report. The SCAQMD staff is available to work with the Lead Agency to address these issues and any other air quality questions that may arise. Please contact Gordon Mize, Air Quality Specialist – CEQA Section, at (909) 396-3302, if you have any questions regarding these comments.

Sincerely,

Ian MacMillan
Program Supervisor, Intergovernmental Review
Planning, Rule Development & Area Sources

Attachment

IM:GM

LAC130813-03
Control Number

Health Risk Assessment Methodology

1. SCAQMD staff appreciates that the lead agency conducted a health risk assessment (HRA), including an analysis of criteria pollutants, to determine potential impacts to project residents from the nearby SR134 freeway. While we did receive all of the technical calculations and modeling from the HRA, we did not see an actual HRA report with text describing the technical analysis other than the description within chapter 4.2 of the EIR. In our review of the technical materials, we found several calculations that are contrary to SCAQMD guidance. We recommend that the HRA and criteria pollutant dispersion modeling analysis be revised as necessary to correct these inconsistencies prior to making a determination regarding the significance of this impact.

    a. **30-Year Exposure Period -** The analysis uses a 30-year exposure period to determine potential health impacts. While there may be evidence in the record that residents are not expected to live longer than this at the proposed project, there is no limit to residents doing so. In addition, SCAQMD's threshold used to determine significance (e.g., 10 in one million) is based on a presumed 70-year lifetime exposure period. If the lead agency wants to continue to use a 30 year exposure period, then substantial evidence needs to be provided demonstrating that the 10 in one million threshold is still applicable as it does not conform to SCAQMD guidance.

    Further, while some newer guidance from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) includes 30-year exposure periods for residential exposure, a number of other exposure parameters are also updated. If this newer guidance is used to justify the shorter exposure period, then all of the other exposure parameters should also be updated in the HRA. We note that OEHHA has not completed their newer HRA guidance and SCAQMD still recommends using methodologies from the existing guidance, including use of a 70-year exposure period.

    b. **Number of Diesel Trucks -** The emission calculations for both the HRA and the criteria pollutant analysis assume that only 258 diesel cars and trucks per hour (6192 per day) travel along this portion of the SR 134 based on a default LA County vehicle fleet. However, truck counts from Caltrans[2] indicate that more than 9000 trucks per day travel along this portion of the SR 134, approximately one third higher than assumed in the EIR analysis. The HRA and criteria pollutant analyses should be updated with these larger diesel vehicle emissions.

    c. **Non-Regulatory Default Option in AERMOD -** The HRA dispersion modeling analysis used the non-regulatory default option in the AERMOD model. AERMOD should only be run as a regulatory default for this

[2] http://traffic-counts.dot.ca.gov/truck2011final.pdf

application. One of the parameters modified in the non-regulatory default option include the urban roughness length. This value was set to the surface roughness length provided by SCAQMD for the Burbank meteorological data. The urban roughness length is not the same value as the surface roughness length[3], and should not be changed from the default value of 1.0.

d. **Filtration Effectiveness** – The materials provided to SCAQMD staff did not contain an analysis demonstrating that the filter mitigation would effectively reduce pollutant concentrations to a less than significant level for project residents. In particular, it is not clear from materials available that the filtration effectiveness considered:
   - time spent outdoors,
   - time with windows or doors left open,
   - long term maintenance and replacement of these filters (e.g., new filters are generally required approximately every six months),
   - the inability of particulate filters to reduce gaseous concentrations, such as benzene or other toxic air contaminants

Construction Mitigation

2. The EIR demonstrates that construction of the project will result in significant regional impacts for both NOx and ROG. The CalEEMod analysis shows that ROG is exceeded during painting of the building. Mitigation measure 4.2-2 should address some of this impact; however its effectiveness is not quantified in the EIR.

   NOx is generally exceeded due to the amount of off-road construction equipment that will be used onsite, however no mitigation has been suggested to reduce this impact. Offroad equipment with lower NOx emissions is commercially available today to reduce these impacts. The lead agency should consider adopting a schedule similar to what other lead agencies in the region (including Port of Los Angeles, Port of Long Beach, LA County Metro, and City of Los Angeles)[4] require for all on-site construction equipment.

   - Project start, to December 31, 2014: All off-road diesel-powered construction equipment greater than 50 hp shall meet the Tier 3 off-road emission standards. In addition, all construction equipment shall be outfitted with BACT devices certified by CARB. Any emissions control device used by the contractor shall achieve emissions reductions that are no less than what could be achieved by a Level 3 diesel emissions control strategy for a similarly sized engine as defined by CARB regulations.

[3] See the AERMOD Implementation Guide here: http://www.epa.gov/scram001/7thconf/aermod/aermod_implmtn_guide_19March2009.pdf
[4] For example see the Metro Green Construction Policy at: http://www.metro.net/projects_studies/sustainability/images/Green_Construction_Policy.pdf

- Post-January 1, 2015: All off-road diesel-powered construction equipment greater than 50 hp shall meet the Tier 4 emission standards, where available. In addition, all construction equipment shall be outfitted with BACT devices certified by CARB. Any emissions control device used by the contractor shall achieve emissions reductions that are no less than what could be achieved by a Level 3 diesel emissions control strategy for a similarly sized engine as defined by CARB regulations.

- A copy of each unit's certified tier specification, BACT documentation, and CARB or SCAQMD operating permit shall be provided at the time of mobilization of each applicable unit of equipment.

- Encourage construction contractors to apply for SCAQMD "SOON" funds. Incentives could be provided for those construction contractors who apply for SCAQMD "SOON" funds. The "SOON" program provides funds to accelerate clean up of off-road diesel vehicles, such as heavy duty construction equipment. More information on this program can be found at the following website: http://www.aqmd.gov/tao/Implementation/SOONProgram.htm