



South Coast Air Quality Management District

21865 Copley Drive, Diamond Bar, CA 91765-4178
(909) 396-2000 • www.aqmd.gov

SENT VIA E-MAIL AND USPS:

March 3, 2017

joe.lambert@placentia.org

Joe Lambert, Director of Development Services
City of Placentia
401 E. Chapman Ave.,
Placentia, CA 92870

Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Proposed Packing House District Transit Oriented Development District

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

Project Description

The proposed project creates a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) zone classification and land use designation in the Packing House District. The objective of these new land use designations would allow high density transit oriented development that may consist of mixed use commercial and 752 high density residential dwellings. The proposed area is currently bounded by the railroad right of way to the north, State Highway 57 to the west, and industrial operations to the south and east.

Health Risk Assessment

When specific development is reasonably foreseeable as result of the goals, policies, and guidelines in the proposed project, the Lead Agency should identify any potential adverse health risk impacts using its best efforts to find out and a good-faith effort at full disclosure in the CEQA document. Based on a review of aerial photographs, the SCAQMD staff found that the proposed project would facilitate the siting of future residents approximately 10 feet from State Highway 57, which has an average daily volume of 279,300 vehicles¹ including approximately 17,151 diesel fueled trucks. Because of the close proximity to the existing freeway, residents would be exposed to diesel particulate matter (DPM), which is a toxic air contaminant and a carcinogen. Additionally, the proposed project is located just south of railroad tracks operated by the BNSF. A federal database² indicates that these railroad tracks show daily train activity including approximately 82 trains powered by diesel-fueled locomotive engines. Diesel particulate matter emitted from diesel powered engines (such as trucks and locomotives) has been classified by the state as a toxic air contaminant and a carcinogen. Furthermore, the proposed project is located within a manufacturing zone (M Zone), which includes several SCAQMD permitted facilities within one quarter mile.

Since future residences of the proposed project would be exposed to toxic emissions from the nearby sources of air pollution (e.g., highway, railroads, and industries), the SCAQMD staff recommends that the Lead Agency estimate potential health risks to these future residents from these sources. Otherwise, the Lead Agency has not demonstrated, supported by substantial evidence, that public health will not be significantly impacted by this project. Therefore, the SCAQMD staff recommends that the Lead Agency

¹ Caltrans 2015 annual average daily traffic (Annual ADT) and truck volumes: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/trafficops/census/>.

² <http://safetydata.fra.dot.gov/OfficeofSafety/publicsite/crossing/xingqryloc.aspx>

conduct a health risk assessment (HRA)³ to disclose the potential health risks to the residents from the freeway, railroad, and industrial sources.

Notwithstanding the court rulings, the SCAQMD staff recognizes that the Lead Agencies that approve CEQA documents retain the authority to include any additional information they deem relevant to assessing and mitigating the environmental impacts of a project. Because of SCAQMD's concern about the potential public health impacts of siting sensitive populations within close proximity of freeways, the SCAQMD staff will continue to recommend that, prior to approving the project, Lead Agencies consider the impacts of air pollutants on people who will live in a new project and provide mitigation where necessary.

Guidance Regarding Residences Sited Near a High-Volume Freeway or Other Sources of Air Pollution

The SCAQMD staff recognizes that there are many factors Lead Agencies must consider when making local planning and land use decisions. To facilitate stronger collaboration between Lead Agencies and the SCAQMD to reduce community exposure to source-specific and cumulative air pollution impacts, the SCAQMD adopted the Guidance Document for Addressing Air Quality Issues in General Plans and Local Planning in 2005. This Guidance Document provides suggested policies that local governments can use in their General Plans or through local planning to prevent or reduce potential air pollution impacts and protect public health. The SCAQMD staff recommends that the Lead Agency review this Guidance Document as a tool when making local planning and land use decisions. This Guidance Document is available on SCAQMD's website at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/library/documents-support-material/planning-guidance/guidance-document>. Additional guidance on siting incompatible land uses (such as placing homes near freeways or other polluting sources) can be found in the California Air Resources Board's *Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Perspective*, which can be found at: <http://www.arb.ca.gov/ch/handbook.pdf>.

Numerous health studies have demonstrated potential adverse health effects associated with living near highly travelled roadways. In traffic-related studies, the additional non-cancer health risk attributable to proximity is seen within 1,000 feet and is strongest within 300 feet⁴. California freeway studies show about a 70% drop off in particulate pollution levels at 500 feet⁵. As a result of these studies, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) developed a Land Use Handbook⁶ that recommends avoiding new sensitive land uses (such as housing) within 500 feet of a freeway. Additional research has shown that the near roadway environment also contains elevated levels of many pollutants that adversely affect human health, including some pollutants that are unregulated (e.g., ultrafine particles) and whose potential health effects are still emerging⁷.

Limits to Enhanced Filtration Units

While the health science behind recommending against placing new homes in close proximity to freeways is clear, the SCAQMD staff recognizes that there are many factors Lead Agencies must consider when making local planning and land use decisions such as siting new housing. Further, many mitigation measures have been proposed for other projects to reduce exposure, including building filtration systems, sound walls, vegetation barriers, etc. However, because of the potential adverse health risks involved with siting housing near a freeway, it is essential that any proposed mitigation must be carefully evaluated in order to determine if those health risks would be brought below recognized significance thresholds.

³ "Health Risk Assessment Guidance for Analyzing Cancer Risk from Mobile Source Diesel Idling Emissions for CEQA Air Quality Analysis" accessed at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/regulations/ceqa/air-quality-analysis-handbook/mobile-source-toxics-analysis>.

⁴ California Air Resources Board. April 2005. "Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective." Accessed at: <http://www.arb.ca.gov/ch/landuse.htm>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ See Chapter 9 of the 2012 AQMP for further information. Accessed at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/aqmp/2012aqmp/Final-February2013/Ch9.pdf>.

In the event that enhanced filtration units on housing residents are proposed as a mitigation measure, the Lead Agency should consider the limitations of the enhanced filtration. For example, in a study that SCAQMD conducted to investigate filters⁸, costs were expected to range from \$120 to \$240 per year to replace each filter. In addition, because the filters would not have any effectiveness unless the HVAC system is running, there may be increased energy costs to the resident. It is typically assumed that the filters operate 100 percent of the time while residents are indoors, and it does not account for the times when the residents have their windows or doors open or are in common space areas of the project. These filters also have no ability to filter out any toxic gases from vehicle exhaust. The presumed effectiveness and feasibility of any filtration units, if proposed as a mitigation measure, should therefore be evaluated in more detail prior to assuming that they will sufficiently alleviate near roadway exposures.

SCAQMD staff is available to work with the Lead Agency to address any other air quality and health risk questions that may arise. Please contact Jack Cheng, Air Quality Specialist, CEQA IGR, at (909) 396-2448, if you have any questions regarding these comments.

Sincerely,

Lijin Sun

Lijin Sun, J.D.
Program Supervisor, CEQA IGR
Planning, Rule Development & Area Sources

LS:JC
ORC170207-03
Control Number

⁸ This study evaluated filters rated MERV 13+ while the proposed mitigation calls for less effective MERV 12 or better filters. Accessed at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/ceqa/handbook/aqmdpilotstudyfinalreport.pdf>.