



South Coast Air Quality Management District

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Sustainable Communities Environmental Assessment (SCEA) for the Proposed 1525 Industrial Street; Central City North (ENV-2017-1676) (“Proposed Project”)

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 SCEA.

SCAQMD staff understands that City of Los Angeles (City or Lead Agency) has prepared a SCEA for the proposed project pursuant to the California Public Resources Code Sections 21155 through 21155.4¹ consistent with Senate Bill (SB) 375. SB 375 provides incentives in the form of CEQA streamlining for qualified transit priority projects to support community designs that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. SCAQMD staff also understands that the Lead Agency reviewed the 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy² (2016 RTP/SCS) and the associated Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) prepared by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) and found that the proposed project is consistent with the 2016 RTP/SCS³.

Project Description

The Lead Agency proposes to demolish an existing industrial building, loading dock, and truck storage area and construct a 336,304 square-foot building on 2.59 acres. The proposed project will provide 344 live/work units (299,302 square feet of floor area); 7,458 square feet of leasing/amenity area; 24,044 square feet of creative office uses; and 5,500 square feet of restaurant space. Parking will include one subterranean level and will require approximately 51,000 cubic yards of soil export. The proposed project is surrounded by industrial, manufacturing, and warehousing uses.

Air Quality Analysis

In the Air Quality section, the Lead Agency quantified the proposed project’s construction and operational emissions and compared those emissions to SCAQMD’s regional and localized air quality CEQA significance thresholds to determine the significance of air quality impacts. The Lead Agency found that the proposed project’s construction and operational air impacts would be less than significant⁴.

Health Risk Assessment from Sources of Air Pollution

Notwithstanding the court rulings, 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 the freeways and other sources of air pollution (such as railroad tracks and fuel dispensing station), SCAQMD staff recommends

¹ 2017 CEQA, Chapter 4.2, *Implementation of the Sustainable Communities Strategy*. Page 73.

² Southern California Association of Governments. April 2016. *2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy*. Accessed at: <http://scagrtpscscs.net/Pages/default.aspx>.

³ SCEA. Section I, *Introduction*. Page I-2.

⁴ SCEA. Section V, *Sustainable Communities Environmental Analysis*. Page V-8.

that, prior to approving a project, Lead Agencies consider the impacts of air pollutants on people who will live in a new project and provide mitigation where necessary.

Based on a review of the SCEA, SCAQMD staff found that the proposed project is located within a heavy manufacturing zone (M3-1-RIO)⁵ where there are five SCAQMD permitted facilities within one quarter mile⁶. Additionally, based on a review of aerial photographs, SCAQMD staff found that the proposed project is located within 500 feet from warehouse facilities with loading docks for diesel trucks and less than one mile from railroad tracks to the east of the project site. Diesel particulate matter emitted from diesel powered engines (such as from trucks and trains) has been classified by the state as a toxic air contaminant and a carcinogen. Since people at the proposed project would be exposed to toxic emissions from these nearby sources of air pollution, SCAQMD staff recommends that the Lead Agency conduct a health risk assessment (HRA)⁷ to disclose the potential health risks to the people who will live and work at the proposed project⁸.

While SB 375 offers a new path to CEQA review through streamlining for projects of both local and regional benefits, the review must adhere to the CEQA policies. One of the basic policies of CEQA is to inform decision makers and the public about the potential, significant environmental effects of proposed activities (CEQA Guidelines Section 15002(a)(1)). Based on a review of the 2016 RTP/SCS PEIR, SCAQMD staff found that SCAG conducted a HRA to assess the potential carcinogenic risk to people potentially exposed to harmful diesel exhaust emissions along 16 transportation corridors within the SCAG region⁹. The HRA in the 2016 RTP/SCS PEIR does not evaluate the potential health risks to people at the proposed project from the exposures to diesel particulate matter from industrial sources and trains. Therefore, SCAQMD staff recommends that the Lead Agency should take this opportunity to estimate potential health risks to these residents using its best efforts to find out and a good-faith effort at full disclosure in the Final SCEA.

Guidance Regarding Residences Sited Near Sources of Air Pollution

SCAQMD staff recognizes that there are many factors Lead Agencies must consider when making local planning and land use decisions. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) developed advisory guidance regarding the siting of sensitive receptors near sources of air pollution¹⁰. The advisory guidance recommends avoiding the siting of new sensitive land uses such as residential development within 1,000 feet of a facility that accommodates more than 100 trucks per day or where more than 40 trucks operate daily with transportation refrigeration units (TRUs)¹¹. The advisory guidance also recommends avoiding the siting of new sensitive land uses within 1,000 feet of a major service and maintenance rail yard, or within one mile of a rail yard after considering siting limitations and mitigation approaches¹².

⁵ City of Los Angeles Zoning Tool. June 13, 2017. Accessed at: <http://zimas.lacity.org/>.

⁶ Based on a search of the SCAQMD's Facility Information Detail (FIND) database, SCAQMD staff found that the following SCAQMD permitted facilities were located in the vicinity of the proposed project: Facility IDs 92494, 138323, 138522, 53744, and 140638. The FIND database is available at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/tools/public/find>. This information is to assist the Lead Agency's evaluation of the proposed project's long-term health risks from sources of air pollution.

⁷ South Coast Air Quality Management District. "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>.

⁸ SCAQMD has developed the CEQA significance threshold of 10 in one million for cancer risk. When SCAQMD acts as the Lead Agency, SCAQMD staff conducts a HRA, compares the maximum cancer risk to the threshold of 10 in one million to determine the level of significance for health risk impacts, and identifies mitigation measures if the risk is found to be significant.

⁹ *Ibid.* Appendix D, *Health Risk Assessment*. Accessed at:

http://scagtrtpcs.net/Documents/2016/peir/draft/2016dPEIR_AppendixD_HealthRiskAssessmentTechnicalReport.pdf.

¹⁰ California Air Resources Board. April 2005. *Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective*. Table 1-1 on Page 4. Accessed at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/ceqa/handbook/california-air-resources-board-air-quality-and-land-use-handbook-a-community-health-perspective.pdf>.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

Furthermore, it recommends locating new sensitive land uses away from the main truck entry and exit points to reduce cancer risk and other health impacts¹³.

Conclusion

In closing, SCAQMD staff recognizes the City's efforts in using the CEQA streamlining opportunity under SB 375 for the proposed project. Pursuant to the California Public Resources Code Section 21155.2, the Lead Agency shall consider all comments received prior to acting on the SCEA. SCAQMD staff is available to work with the Lead Agency to address the questions that may arise from this comment letter. Please contact Jack Cheng, Air Quality Specialist, CEQA IGR Section, at (909) 396-2448, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

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¹³ *Ibid.* Page 14.