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Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the
3800 Via Oro Project (Proposed Project)
(SCH No: 2026030940)

South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD) staff appreciate the opportunity to review the above-mentioned document. The City of Long Beach is the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Lead Agency for the Proposed Project. To provide context, South Coast AQMD staff have provided a brief summary of the project information and prepared the following comments, which are organized by topic of concern.

Summary of Proposed Project Information in the Draft EIR

Based on the Draft EIR, the Proposed Project consists of demolishing existing on-site structures and developing an approximately 332,090 square feet (sf) industrial building that could be 152,433 sf of manufacturing, 155,657 sf of warehousing, and 24,000 sf of office uses on approximately 13.59 acres at 3800 Via Oro Avenue.[1] The Proposed Project would include 38 dock doors and generate 144 truck trips per day.[2] Based on a review of aerial imagery, the nearest sensitive receptor (e.g., Rancho Dominguez Preparatory School) is approximately 920 feet northwest of the Proposed Project boundary. The construction would last 19 months, with operation beginning as early as 2028.[3]

South Coast AQMD Comments

Potentially Underestimated Construction Emissions

Appendix 11.7 (Air Quality Assessment/Health Risk Assessment) of the Draft EIR indicates that construction-related on-road emissions associated with hauling activities were estimated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod), which applies a default one-way haul-trip distance of 20 miles.[4] However, demolition of existing structures is anticipated to generate approximately 9,900 tons of demolition debris requiring off-site hauling and disposal.[5] Section

[1] Draft EIR. p. 3-5.
[2] *Ibid*. p. 3-7.
[3] *Ibid*. p. 3-13.
[4] Appendix 11.7 - Air Quality Assessment/Health Rish Assessment. CalEEMod Output Files.
[5] Appendix 11.7 p. 2.

5.12 (Utilities and Service Systems) of the Draft EIR identifies landfills serving the City[6] that are located approximately 30 miles to more than 100 miles from the Project site (one-way). Despite these identified disposal locations, the construction emissions analysis relies on CalEEMod's default 20-mile haul-trip distance to estimate emissions associated with hauling activities to and from the Project site. Given the substantial volume of demolition debris and the distances to the identified landfills, the use of the default haul-trip distance may underestimate construction-related on-road emissions to the extent applicable. The Draft EIR does not provide substantial evidence demonstrating that the assumed 20-mile one-way haul-trip distance reasonably represents the anticipated hauling routes and disposal locations for the Proposed Project.

Therefore, the Lead Agency is recommended to provide supporting documentation, including but not limited to the one-way and round-trip distances between the intended waste disposal sites and the Proposed Project site and all other hauling locations to or from the Proposed Project site, to determine if the default 20-mile one-way haul distance is representative of the anticipated construction-related hauling activities and associated vehicle miles traveled (VMT). If project-specific information indicates that the anticipated haul trip distance would exceed 20 miles, the Lead Agency is recommended to revise the construction emissions analysis and recalculate the associated criteria pollutant emissions to reflect the actual haul-trip distances. The revised emissions calculations, assumptions, and supporting documentation should be incorporated into the Final EIR.

Truck Idling Duration and Emissions Modeling

Section 5.8 (Air Quality) of the Draft EIR indicates that the Proposed Project would generate 144 truck trips per day[7] and according to the provided technical files by the Lead Agency, labeled as *HRA_Emissions_Via Oro_Unitized*, the evaluation of truck emissions as diesel particulate matter (DPM) assumes that each truck will idle 15 minutes per day.[8] However, the actual idling times may be much longer because the Proposed Project is anticipated to involve a total of 144 daily truck trips. Moreover, it is reasonable to expect that individual trucks may experience extended periods of idling due to on-site queuing, security checks, staging, loading, and unloading operations, among other factors, particularly during peak hours or in congested circulation areas. As such, a 15-minute idling duration may underestimate the actual on-site idling behavior and, consequently, the resulting DPM emissions, which are a key contributor to localized health risks.

While the California Air Resources Board (CARB) limits diesel truck idling to five minutes as set forth in the Airborne Toxic Control Measure (ATCM), an exemption from this requirement is allowed for trucks equipped with engines that meet the optional low-NOx idle emission standard, which is typically applicable to model year 2008 and newer trucks. These vehicles, often referred to as "clean idle" certified, are permitted to idle longer than five minutes when situated more than 100 feet from sensitive land uses such as homes and schools.[9] Furthermore, CARB's EMFAC2021 Volume III Technical Document (Table 4.4.2-5) indicates that heavy-duty trucks may idle for up

[6] Draft EIR. p. 5.12-4.
[7] *Ibid*. p. 5.8-23.
[8] Provided technical file labeled as *HRA_Emissions_Via Oro_Unitized.*
[9] CARB, Airborne Toxic Control Measure to Limit Diesel-Fueled Commercial Motor Vehicle Idling was promulgated in Chapter 13 of the California Code of Regulations, Section 2485: Airborne Toxic Control Measure to Limit Diesel-Fueled Commercial Motor Vehicle Idling, available at https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-06/13_CCR_2485_OAL_06222022-2_ADA_06272022_0.pdf

to five hours at a single location under certain conditions.[10] For these aforementioned reasons, as a practical matter, the idling duration for onsite heavy-duty trucks visiting the Proposed Project site could idle for a much longer duration than what was analyzed in the Draft EIR. Thus, the HRA may have substantially underestimated the full extent of operational health risks associated with the DPM emissions from the anticipated onsite heavy-duty truck activities.

Accurate characterization of idling activity is essential to fully assess the potential health risk impacts, particularly for nearby sensitive receptors. Therefore, to ensure the HRA provides an accurate and health-protective estimate of potential exposure, the Lead Agency is recommended to either: 1) revise the operational emissions modeling in the Final EIR to assume a minimum of 30 minutes of idling per truck per day, unless site-specific data or operational constraints justify a different duration; or 2) provide empirical evidence, such as facility-specific queuing and processing time studies, vehicle circulation modeling, or comparable industry data, to support the 15-minute idling assumption as representative of expected operations of the Proposed Project.

Additional Recommended Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases Mitigation Measures and Project Design Considerations

CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation measures that go beyond what is required by law be utilized to minimize or eliminate any significant adverse air quality impacts. To further reduce the Proposed Project's air quality impacts, South Coast AQMD recommends incorporating the following mitigation measures and project design considerations into the Final EIR.

Mobile Sources

1. Require: a) zero-emissions (ZE) or near-zero emission (NZE) on-road haul trucks such as heavy-duty trucks with natural gas engines that meet CARB's adopted optional NOx emissions standard at 0.02 grams per brake horsepower-hour (g/bhp-hr), if and when feasible; and b) a phase-in schedule to incentivize the use of these cleaner operating trucks.

   Given the state's clean truck rules and regulations aiming to accelerate the utilization and market penetration of ZE and NZE trucks such as the Advanced Clean Trucks Rule[11] and the Heavy-Duty Low NOx Omnibus Regulation[12], ZE and NZE trucks will become increasingly more available to use. South Coast AQMD staff is available to discuss the availability of current and upcoming truck technologies and incentive programs with the Lead Agency.

2. Require the use of 2017 model year[13] or newer, cleaner trucks, if ZE or NZE trucks are not feasible. All heavy-duty haul trucks should also meet CARB's lowest optional low-NOx

[10] CARB, EMFAC2021 Volume III Technical Document, Table 4.4.2-5, p. 161., available at https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/emfac2021_volume_3_technical_document.pdf

[11] CARB, June 25, 2020, Advanced Clean Trucks Rule, available at: https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/advanced-clean-trucks.

[12] CARB has recently passed a variety of new regulations that require new, cleaner heavy-duty truck technology to be sold and used in state. For example, on August 27, 2020, CARB approved the Heavy-Duty Low NOx Omnibus Regulation, which will require all trucks to meet the adopted emission standard of 0.05 grams per brake horsepower-hour (g/hp-hr) starting with engine model year 2024. Available at: https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/rulemaking/2020/hdomnibuslownox.

[13] CARB adopted the statewide Truck and Bus Regulation in 2010 which requires diesel trucks and buses that operate in California to be upgraded to reduce emissions. Specifically, newer heavier trucks and buses must meet particulate matter filter requirements beginning January 1, 2012 and lighter and older heavier trucks must be replaced starting January 1, 2015. By

standard.[14] Include environmental analyses to evaluate and identify sufficient electricity and supportive infrastructure in the Energy and Utilities and Service Systems Sections in the CEQA document, where appropriate. Include the requirement in applicable bid documents, purchase orders, and contracts. Operators shall maintain records of all trucks associated with project construction to document that each truck used meets these emission standards, and make the records available for inspection. The Lead Agency should conduct regular inspections to the maximum extent feasible to ensure compliance.

3. Require that all applicable Medium-Heavy Duty Truck (MHDT), Heavy-Heavy Duty Truck (HHDT), and other on-road diesel-fueled heavy-duty vehicles subject to CARB Clean Idle requirements be equipped with engines that are certified by CARB to the applicable Clean Idle standard and, where applicable, display the CARB-approved "Certified Clean Idle" label.[15]
4. Limit the daily number of trucks allowed at the Proposed Project to the levels analyzed in the Final CEQA document. If higher daily truck volumes are anticipated to visit the site, the Lead Agency should commit to re-evaluating the Proposed Project through CEQA prior to allowing this higher activity level.
5. Provide electric vehicle (EV) charging stations or, at a minimum, provide electrical infrastructure and appropriately sized electrical panels to support EV charging. Electrical hookups should be provided for truckers to plug in any onboard auxiliary equipment.

Other Area Sources

1. Maximize the use of solar energy by installing solar energy arrays.
2. Use light-colored paving and roofing materials.
3. Utilize only Energy Star heating, cooling, and lighting devices and appliances.

Design Considerations for Reducing Air Quality and Health Risk Impacts

1. Clearly mark truck routes with trailblazer signs so that trucks will not travel next to or near sensitive land uses (e.g., residences, schools, daycare centers, etc.).
2. Design the Proposed Project such that truck entrances and exits are not facing sensitive receptors and trucks will not travel past sensitive land uses to enter or leave the Proposed Project site.
3. Design the Proposed Project such that any truck check-in point is inside the Proposed Project site to ensure no trucks are queuing outside.

January 1, 2023, nearly all trucks and buses will need to have 2010 model year engines or equivalent. More information on the CARB's Truck and Bus Regulation is available at: https://www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/onrdiesel/onrdiesel.htm.

[14] In 2013, CARB adopted optional low-NOx emission standards for on-road heavy-duty engines. CARB encourages engine manufacturers to introduce new technologies to reduce NOx emissions below the current mandatory on-road heavy-duty diesel engine emission standards for model-year 2010 and later. CARB's optional low-NOx emission standard is available at: https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/optionalreduced-nox-standards

[15] CARB Idling Flyer available at: https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-06/Idling_Flyer_EN.pdf

4. Design the Proposed Project to ensure that truck traffic inside the Proposed Project site is as far away as feasible from sensitive receptors.

5. Restrict overnight truck parking in sensitive land uses by providing overnight truck parking inside the Proposed Project site.

Lastly, the South Coast AQMD also suggests that the Lead Agency conduct a review of the following references and incorporate additional mitigation measures as applicable to the Proposed Project in the Final EIR:

1. State of California – Department of Justice: Warehouse Projects: Best Practices and Mitigation Measures to Comply with the California Environmental Quality Act[16]

2. South Coast AQMD 2022 Air Quality Management Plan,[17] specifically:

    a) Appendix IV-A – South Coast AQMD's Stationary and Mobile Source Control Measures

    b) Appendix IV-B – CARB's Strategy for South Coast

    c) Appendix IV-C – SCAG's Regional Transportation Strategy and Control Measures

3. United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA): Mobile Source Pollution - Environmental Justice and Transportation.[18]

South Coast AQMD Air Permits, Role as a Responsible Agency

If implementation of the Proposed Project would require the use of new stationary and portable sources, including but not limited to emergency generators, fire water pumps, boilers, etc., air permits from South Coast AQMD will be required. The Final EIR should include a discussion about the potentially applicable South Coast AQMD rules that may be applicable to the Proposed Project. Those rules may include, for example, Rule 201 – Permit to Construct,[19] Rule 203 – Permit to Operate,[20] Rule 401 – Visible Emissions,[21] Rule 402 – Nuisance,[22] Rule 403 – Fugitive Dust,[23] Rule 1110.2 – Emissions from Gaseous and Liquid Fueled Engines,[24] Rule 1113 – Architectural Coatings,[25] Rule 1166 – Volatile Organic Compound Emissions from Decontamination of Soil, Regulation XIII – New Source Review,[26] Rule 1401 – New Source Review of Toxic Air

[16] State of California – Department of Justice, Warehouse Projects: Best Practices and Mitigation Measures to Comply with the California Environmental Quality Act. Available at: https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/warehouse-best-practices.pdf
[17] South Coast AQMD, 2022 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP). Available at: http://www.aqmd.gov/home/air-quality/clean-air-plans/air-quality-mgt-plan
[18] United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), Mobile Source Pollution - Environmental Justice and Transportation. Available at: https://www.epa.gov/mobile-source-pollution.
[19] South Coast AQMD, Rule 201 is available at: https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/reg-ii/rule-201.pdf
[20] South Coast AQMD, Rule 203 is available at: https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/reg-ii/rule-203.pdf
[21] South Coast AQMD, Rule 401 is available at: https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/rule-iv/rule-401.pdf
[22] South Coast AQMD, Rule 402 is available at: https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/rule-iv/rule-402.pdf
[23] South Coast AQMD, Rule 403 is available at: https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/rule-iv/rule-403
[24] South Coast AQMD, Rule 1110.2 is available at: https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/reg-xi/r1110_2.pdf
[25] South Coast AQMD, Rule 1113 is available at https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/reg-xi/r1113.pdf
[26] South Coast AQMD, Regulation XIII is available at: https://www.aqmd.gov/home/rules-compliance/rules/scaqmd-rule-book/regulation-xiii

Contaminants,[27] Rule 1466 – Control of Particulate Emissions from Soils with Toxic Air Contaminants, Rule 1470 – Requirements for Stationary Diesel-Fueled Internal Combustion and Other Compression Ignition Engines,[28] and etc. Since air permits from South Coast AQMD will be required for the Proposed Project, the role of South Coast AQMD has changed from a Commenting Agency to a Responsible Agency under CEQA. In addition, the Lead Agency is required to consult with South Coast AQMD as a Responsible Agency per CEQA Guidelines Section 15086.

Thus, as set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15096, South Coast AQMD should be identified in the CEQA document as a Responsible Agency for the Proposed Project. Given the certainty that discretionary air permits will be required, early consultation is necessary to ensure that the CEQA document is sufficient for South Coast AQMD's use as a Responsible Agency and to avoid future procedural or legal barriers to permit issuance.

Conclusion

As set forth in Public Resources Code Section 21092.5(a) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15088(a) and (b), the Lead Agency shall evaluate comments from public agencies on environmental issues and prepare a written response at least 10 days prior to certifying the Final EIR. As such, please provide South Coast AQMD written responses to all comments contained herein at least 10 days prior to the certification of the Final EIR. In addition, as provided by CEQA Guidelines Section 15088(c), if the Lead Agency's position is at variance with recommendations provided in this comment letter, detailed reasons supported by substantial evidence in the record to explain why specific comments and suggestions are not accepted must be provided.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. South Coast AQMD staff are available to work with the Lead Agency to address any air quality questions that may arise from this comment letter. Please contact Danica Nguyen, Air Quality Specialist, at dnguyen1@aqmd.gov or me at swang1@aqmd.gov should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Sam Wang

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[27] South Coast AQMD, Rule 1401 is available at: https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/reg-xiv/rule-1401.pdf
[28] South Coast AQMD, Rule 1470 is available at: https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/reg-xiv/rule-1470.pdf