SMAQMD
Project Review Principles
2005

Authority:

SMAQMD is the principal local authority charged with the responsibility for influencing public and private agency actions that could adversely impact air quality within the District.

Overview:

Ground level ozone and particulate matter (PM) are primary air quality health hazards in the Sacramento region. Mobile source emissions account for over 70% of the precursors for ozone and are significant sources of PM.

On-road vehicles are the primary source of mobile source ozone precursors and PM emissions. Off-road equipment (much of it construction equipment) accounts for 14% of the NOx inventory, a precursor of ozone.

New land use projects in Sacramento generate construction emissions from heavy duty off-road construction equipment, and when operational, generate or attract on-road vehicle trips.

Project Review Procedures:

SMAQMD, through its Land Use and Transportation Section has established a Project Review Program through which it reviews local projects. SMAQMD has also developed Land Use and Construction Mitigation Programs.

The Project Review Principles listed below serve as guidelines when reviewing projects to ensure consistency in the comments and recommended mitigation measures where appropriate and applicable to development projects.

SMAQMD staff have developed four guidance documents for use by District and lead agency staff in the analysis of potential air quality impacts and proposed mitigation measures. These documents include: The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Revised Significance Thresholds for Air Quality; The Guide to Air Quality Assessment, dated July 2004; Project Review Principles, 2005 and Construction and Operational Land Use Mitigations Programs. A short explanation of these guidance documents follows.

1. **CEQA Revised Significance Thresholds for Air Quality**

   On March 28, 2002 the Board of Directors of the SMAQMD approved revised significance thresholds for pollutants emitted into the air. These revisions were made based on the latest scientific data available. Ozone precursors include reactive organic compounds (ROG) and nitrogen oxides (NOx). As of the approval date the significance threshold for NOx during the construction

phase of new projects is 85 pounds/day. For the long-term operational phase, the threshold is 65 pounds/day for both ROG and NOx.

2. The Guide to Air Quality Assessment in Sacramento County

This guide provides detailed methodologies for the review of air quality impacts from development projects contemplated within the boundaries of SMAQMD. The primary purpose of the Guide is to provide a means for lead agencies and reviewing agencies to quickly identify proposed projects that may have significant adverse effects on air quality.

3. Project Review Principles

These principles, which are list in detail below, are used by SMAQMD staff as guidelines to evaluate new land use projects. They also serve as the basis for recommended measures to mitigate the negative air quality impacts of projects.

4. Construction and Operational Land Use Mitigation Programs

SMAQMD has established formal programs to identify and mitigate air quality impacts during each major phase of a new project. During the environmental analysis of a project it may be determined that the thresholds of significance will be exceeded. If the exceedance occurs during construction, specific lists are to be prepared to show the kind of equipment that will be used. Clean technology equipment may reduce the impacts below the significance threshold of 85 pounds/day of NOx. If the threshold is still exceeded, mitigation fee are established to offset the negative impacts down to the threshold.

For the operational phase of a project, negative air quality impacts must be reduced by 15%. The means to reduce those impacts must be listed by project proponents in a formal Air Quality Mitigation Plan. SMAQMD staff provides assistance in this process by providing a list of potential measures. These measures embody many of the principles listed in the Project Review Principles. If all feasible measures are employed and a project still exceeds operational thresholds, a mitigation fee can be established to meet the threshold requirements.

SMAQMD staff use these four guidance documents to assist them in analyzing land use projects under (CEQA). These documents are also used by lead agencies to determine potential air quality impacts and to assist in determining appropriate mitigation measures.

Project Review Principles

Purpose:

These principles provide guidelines for District staff in reviewing and commenting on land use projects in Sacramento County. Each project is evaluated based on its own merits. All of these principles will not apply to all projects. These principles will serve as the basis for recommendations made to project proponents and jurisdictions with respect to appropriate air quality mitigation. In addition, these principles will provide the context for testimony by District staff before planning commissions, city councils and the Board of Supervisors in Sacramento County.

Land Use Principles

L- 1. Incorporate design and operational features in projects that exceed the District's established Thresholds of Significance to mitigate ozone operational emissions by at least 15 percent. Proponents of projects that do not exceed the Threshold of Significance are encouraged to further reduce ozone operational emissions by considering suggestions on design and operational features.

L- 2. Encourage strategic land use patterns for projects which reduce the number and length of vehicle trips, and make it easier to walk, bicycle and use transit by:

- using grid street patterns vs. cul-de-sac design.
- using narrower streets with separated sidewalks and distinct bicycle lanes and paths.
- locating projects near transit light rail and major bus routes.
- providing attractive shading and mini-parks.
- designing connectivity to schools, parks and public spaces.

L-3 Encourage compact development that features a mix of uses and locates residences near jobs and services.

L- 4 Promote infill projects with compact development and mixed -use in urban areas as a priority over suburban expansion.

L- 5 Promote pedestrian, bicycle and public transit user access by:

- giving priority to building vehicle parking in the back of commercial and retail projects.
- providing at least one entrance facing the sidewalk.
- constructing safe and attractive lanes between buildings.
- designing easy and safe access to transit stops.
- reducing parking lot size where possible.

L-6 Promote Transit Oriented Development (TOD) projects and encourage the development of higher density housing and employment centers near transit stations. Gain air quality benefits by:

- Increasing use of public transit buses and trains.
- Reducing dependence on motorized vehicles.
- Increasing walking and bicycling trips.

L-7 Encourage increased density of employment centers and housing within 1/4 to 1/2 mile of public transit rail stations and bus corridors to promote increased ridership.

L-8 Promote Environmental Justice principles to protect citizens – regardless of age, culture, ethnicity, gender, race, socioeconomic status, or geographic location – from the health effects of air pollution.

Transportation & Transportation Demand Principles

T- 1 Support the development of Public Facilities Financing Districts and County Service Areas to provide funding for transportation demand management programs with coincidental air quality benefits.

T-2 Encourage the provision of disincentives for single-occupant vehicle trips through parking supply and pricing controls where space is limited and alternative transportation modes are available.

T-3 Encourage the use of the latest technology generators, diesel-powered trucks, buses, and other heavy-duty vehicles during construction and operational phases of projects. Promote programs to reduce idling times of equipment and vehicles..

T-4 Encourage all major developments to participate in or create Transportation Management Associations.

T-5 Encourage employers to provide transit subsidies, bicycle facilities, and alternative work schedules, ridesharing, telecommuting and work-at-home programs, employee education, and preferential parking for carpools/vanpools.

T-6 Promote new roadway designs and redesigns to accommodate all travel modes by:

- Coordinating traffic signals with bicycle and pedestrian traffic.
- Designing roads and streets consistent with regional bikeway and pedestrian master plans.
- Avoiding walled and gated communities when feasible.
- Promoting narrower streets, separated sidewalks & traffic circles.

T-7 Encourage bike storage and shower/locker facilities in design plans of office and employment centers to promote pedestrian and bicycle commute options.

T-8 Encourage use of fiber optics and T1 wiring in homes to encourage teleworking.

Energy Principles

E-1 Encourage energy efficiency and associated emissions reductions by considering:

- use of utility company incentive programs
- use of Energy Star Standards in building designs.
- provisions to exceed California Energy Commission Title 24 Energy Efficiency Standards by at least:
  - 25% for residential projects.
  - 15% for non-residential (commercial) projects.

E-2 Consider shading plans for buildings and streets using low emitting tree species.

E-3 Promote reflective roofing materials and pavements.

E-4 Consider installing roof photovoltaic energy systems.

E-5 Encourage landscape designs that reduce energy demand for cooling.

E-6 Promote use of energy-efficient landscape maintenance equipment.

E-7 Consider orienting buildings to minimize energy required for heating and cooling.

Endorsed By_____
Jeff Starsky, Chair
Board of Directors