



South Coast Air Quality Management District

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Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (Draft PEIR)
for the Proposed Alberhill Villages Specific Plan (AVSP) (SP 2010-02)
(SCH No. 2012061046)

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) 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.

The Lead Agency proposes construction of a master planned, mixed-use community with single- and multi-family homes along with a core commercial center and an entry highway commercial center near the Interstate 15 (I-15) Freeway. The proposed project will occupy a total of approximately 1,400 acres and involve Six Development Villages, with each village containing its own planning areas. The AVSP development will include approximately 8,244 dwelling units and 4,007,000 square feet of civic/institutional, commercial/retail, professional office/medical and schools to serve a total enrollment of approximately 8,050 students. The schools would include a 6,000 student university; two private schools serving a total of approximately 1,200 students; and a public elementary school built for 850 students. The AVSP will also include worship centers, various parks, lakes, trails, green belt areas; streets, public facilities and infrastructure.

The SCAQMD staff has concerns with some of the assumptions in the air quality analysis. Specifically, the analysis should be based on peak daily emission estimates instead of averaging. Further, overlapping construction and operational emission estimates should be included in the Final PEIR and shown throughout the 20-30 year project period. These estimates should then be compared to the SCAQMD operational significance thresholds. Next, the potential localized and health risk impacts to sensitive to sensitive receptors were deferred and not estimated in the Draft PEIR. Because future residents would be exposed to potential localized construction and operational impacts during project development, as well as adverse health affect impacts from both the on-going mining operations and vehicles operating on the I-15 freeway, future potential

localized and health risk impacts should be analyzed according to CEQA Guidelines §15168.

Further, the SCAQMD staff reiterates the CARB Land Use Policy to not site sensitive receptors within 500 feet of a large volume freeway.

In addition, the Lead Agency should include how compliance with SCAQMD Rule 403 – Fugitive Dust for Large Operations Notification will occur in the Final PEIR. Finally, the SCAQMD staff recommends that all feasible mitigation pursuant to Section 15126.4 of the CEQA Guidelines be incorporated into the project description and related air quality analyses in order to reduce significant project impacts. Further details are included in the attachment.

Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21092.5, SCAQMD staff requests that the Lead Agency provide the SCAQMD with written responses to all comments contained herein prior to the adoption of the Final PEIR. 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 the enclosed comments.

Sincerely,



Jillian Wong, Ph.D.
Program Supervisor
Planning, Rule Development & Area Sources

Attachment

JW:HH:GM

RVC151105-02
Control Number

Air Quality Analysis

Peak Daily Emission Estimates

1. In Table 4.8-7, Construction Activity Emissions, construction emissions were estimated for each phase but averaged over each phase's five year period, which lowers the peak daily emission estimates for each criteria pollutant during construction. Because the SCAQMD significance thresholds are based on maximum daily emissions, averaging project emissions likely underestimates project impacts compared with each emission's peak daily significance threshold. Therefore, the air quality analysis should be revised in the Final PEIR using the worst-case peak daily construction emission scenario including any overlapping construction phases. These estimates should then be compared with the SCAQMD operational thresholds of significance (see comment #2) due to the length of construction phases to determine if project impacts are significant. If significant, mitigation measures should be incorporated into the project description and air quality analysis to reduce significant impacts.

Cumulative Overlapping Phase Construction and Operations Estimates

2. In addition, the lead Agency estimated construction and operational impacts¹ separately for each developmental phase covering the thirty-year total development period in the Draft PEIR. These separate estimates were then compared with their respective SCAQMD recommended construction and operational thresholds of significance. As the Lead Agency discussed on page 4.8-30, the length of construction combined with the overlapping operational phases cause the estimated construction emissions to be more like long-term operational impacts for regional purposes. Although the Lead Agency discussed this potential overlapping of construction and operational emissions for regional purposes and further determined that combined construction and operational ROG, NO_x, CO, and PM₁₀ emission impacts were significant and unavoidable, these determinations were not substantiated with actual emission estimates in the Draft PEIR. The Draft PEIR makes a qualitative evaluation² of these combined emissions but does not include actual combined estimates throughout the thirty-year project.

The Final PEIR should therefore be revised to include combined construction and operation emission estimates as each development phase overlaps, e.g., Ph-2 construction emissions with Phase 1 operational emissions; Ph-3 construction emissions with Phases 1 & 2 operational emissions; ...etc., up through Year 2046

¹ Draft PEIR, Table 4.8-7 Construction Activity Emissions and Table 4.8-8 – Project Related Operational Emissions, AQ & GHG Analysis.

² Ibid, AQ & GHG Analysis, Page 4.8-30. The conclusion that ...”regional air quality impacts are identified as significant from the completion of Phase 1 forward, inclusion of 30 years of construction activity emissions will further ‘exacerbate’ the degree of excess emissions.”

project buildout. These overlapping construction and operational emissions should then be compared with the SCAQMD operational thresholds of significance.

Deferring Localized Significance Thresholds & Cancer Risks

3. In the Draft PEIR, building construction and operational activities from the proposed project will occur within proximity of sensitive receptors throughout the project areas during the six phases of development³. The Lead Agency did not analyze localized impacts stating that project specific level (siting) information was not available and that localized analyses would be conducted sometime in the future prior to implementing project approval. Further, sensitive receptors would be exposed to toxic air contaminants from the on-going mining operations and from diesel fueled vehicles operating on the I-15 Freeway. Again, the Lead Agency deferred its analysis of potential cancer risks due to a lack of project specific information concerning the siting of sensitive receptors to the nearby freeway.

Based on CEQA Guidelines §15168, further analysis through CEQA should be conducted prior to subsequent project approvals. Analyses for potential localized significance threshold impacts and health risks should be included in a subsequent CEQA document when project specific information is available to ensure that nearby sensitive receptors are not adversely affected by activities that are occurring in close proximity, e.g., by construction and operation activities, toxic air contaminants from the mining operations occurring within the project areas, or from vehicles operating nearby on the I-15 Freeway.

CARB Land Use Guidance for Sensitive Receptors Located Near Freeways

4. The Lead Agency mentions the 500 foot buffer recommended by the California Air Resources Board's (CARB) Land Use and Air Quality Handbook (CARB Handbook) that offers guidance for siting sensitive receptors near sources of air toxics. Although this recommended guidance is discussed, the Draft PEIR shows that potential sensitive receptor land uses including age-restricted housing, student housing, live/work lofts and residential condominiums would tentatively be sited within the recommended 500-foot buffer⁴.

The Lead Agency notes in the Draft PEIR that the proposed residences will be sited near the I-15 Freeway that has an average daily traffic volume of 120,000 vehicles including approximately 12,600 of these vehicles that will be diesel trucks. As a result, future residents will be exposed to a significant source of toxic emissions. The SCAQMD staff therefore reiterates (see also comment #3) that prior to subsequent project approvals, a Health Risk Assessment should be prepared to determine cancer risks to future sensitive receptors from potential toxic air contaminant emissions from the freeway as well as any applicable mining activities in close proximity. Numerous past health studies have demonstrated the potential adverse health effects of living

³ Draft PEIR, Section 4.8 AQ & GHG Analysis, Pages 4.8-31 and 4.8-32.

⁴Ibid, Project Description, Page 2.0-12.

near a freeway or highly travelled roads. Since the time of that study, additional research has continued to build the case 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 emerging.

While the health science behind recommendations against placing new homes close to freeways is clear, SCAQMD staff recognizes the many factors lead agencies must consider when 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 potential adverse health risks might be involved, it is critical that any proposed mitigation must be carefully evaluated prior to determining if those health risks would be brought below recognized significance thresholds.

SCAQMD Rule 403 Large Operation Notification

5. On page 4.8-20 in the Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Analysis, the Lead Agency describes compliance with SCAQMD Rule 403 – Fugitive Dust based on soil disturbance activities that would include approximately 11,969,000 cubic yards of fill. Should project soil disturbance activities meet the requirements of Rule 403 – Fugitive Dust for Large Operations, the Lead Agency should submit to the SCAQMD Form 403N (Large Operation Notification Form) and revise the FPEIR to include this approval requirement in Table 2.0-1 (Permit Approvals). Questions concerning compliance with Rule 403 Large Operation should be directed to SCAQMD Engineering & Compliance staff at (909) 396-2372.

Construction Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measures for Construction Air Quality Impacts

6. Based on a review of the Draft PEIR, the Lead Agency determined that the proposed project will result in substantially significant air quality impacts during construction. Specifically, the air quality analysis demonstrated that the proposed project will exceed the SCAQMD's regional construction significance thresholds for CO, NO_x, ROG, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} (see also comments #1-2). Therefore, the SCAQMD staff recommends the following additional measures be incorporated into the proposed project and Final PEIR to reduce significant project impacts in addition to the measures included in the Draft PEIR starting on page 4.8-36.

Recommended Additions:

- Consistent with measures that other lead agencies in the region (including Port of Los Angeles, Port of Long Beach, Metro and City of Los Angeles)⁵

⁵ For example see the Metro Green Construction Policy at:
http://www.metro.net/projects_studies/sustainability/images/Green_Construction_Policy.pdf

have enacted, require all on-site construction equipment to meet EPA Tier 3 or higher emissions standards according to the following:

- 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.
- Require the use of 2010 and newer diesel haul trucks (e.g., material delivery trucks and soil import/export) and if the lead agency determines that 2010 model year or newer diesel trucks cannot be obtained the lead agency shall use trucks that meet EPA 2007 model year NOx emissions requirements.
- 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/home/programs/business/business-detail?title=vehicle-engine-upgrades>

For additional measures to reduce off-road construction equipment, refer to the mitigation measure tables located at the following website:

<http://www.aqmd.gov/home/regulations/ceqa/air-quality-analysis-handbook/mitigation-measures-and-control-efficiencies> .

Operation Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measures for Operational Air Quality Impacts (Other)

7. In addition to the mobile source mitigation measures identified above, the SCAQMD staff recommends the following on-site area source mitigation measures below to reduce the project's regional air quality impacts from ROG, CO, NOx, PM10 and PM2.5 emissions during operation. These mitigation measure should be incorporated pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15126.4.
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- Maximize use of solar energy including solar panels; installing the maximum possible number of solar energy arrays on the building roofs and/or on the Project site to generate solar energy for the facility, as applicable.
- Use light colored paving and roofing materials.
- Utilize only Energy Star heating, cooling, and lighting devices, and appliances.
- Install light colored “cool” roofs and cool pavements.
- Limit the use of outdoor lighting to only that needed for safety and security purposes.
- Require use of electric or alternatively fueled sweepers with HEPA filters.
- Use of water-based or low VOC cleaning products.

Transportation

- Make a commitment to install electric car charging stations (not just wiring infrastructure) for both non-residential and residential uses at the project site.
- Create local “light vehicle” networks, such as neighborhood electric vehicle (NEV) systems.

Energy

- Make a commitment that the project site will include a solar photovoltaic or an alternate system with means of generating renewable electricity.

Other

- Provide outlets for electric and propane barbecues in residential areas.