



South Coast Air Quality Management District

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SENT VIA E-MAIL AND USPS:

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CEQA-comments@lausd.net

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Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Proposed Ascot Avenue Elementary School Comprehensive Modernization Project

South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD) 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 MND.

South Coast AQMD Staff's Summary of Project Description

The Lead Agency proposes to modernize Ascot Avenue Elementary School, demolish 59,836 square feet of existing academic buildings, remodel 45,895 square feet of existing academic buildings, and construct 63,773 square feet of classrooms and administrative buildings on 5.3 acres (Proposed Project). The Proposed Project is located at 1447 East 45th Street on the southwest corner of East Vernon Street and Compton Avenue in the community of Southeast Los Angeles. Upon a review of the MND and aerial photographs, South Coast AQMD staff found that residential units are within 18 feet¹ of the Proposed Project, and students are expected to be on-site during construction². Construction is anticipated to begin in 2021 and will be completed by December 2025 with peak construction expected to occur during summer breaks³. After conducting a Preliminary Environmental Assessment Equivalent, the Lead Agency found that soil at Proposed Project site is impacted with lead. As such, 2,000 cubic yards of impacted soil are expected to be removed when students and staff are not present⁴.

South Coast AQMD Staff's Summary of Air Quality Analyses

In the Air Quality Analysis section, the Lead Agency quantified the Proposed Project's construction and operational emissions and compared those emissions to South Coast AQMD's recommended regional and localized air quality CEQA significance thresholds. Based on the analyses, the Lead Agency found that the Proposed Project's regional and localized construction and operational air quality impacts would be less than significant⁵. Due to the soil remedial activities that will take place, the Lead Agency incorporated a discussion of compliance with South Coast AQMD Rule 1466 – Control of Particulate Emissions from Soils with Toxic Air Contaminants⁶.

South Coast AQMD Staff's General Comments

Upon a review of the MND and Appendix C: Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Background and Modeling Data, South Coast AQMD staff found inconsistencies between the information presented in

¹ MND. Section 2: Environmental Setting "Surrounding Land Use". Page 9.

² MND. Section 3: Project Description "Construction Phasing and Equipment". Page 41.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ MND. Section 3: Project Description "Proposed Project: Preliminary Environmental Assessment Equivalent (PEA-E)". Page 39.

⁵ MND. Section 4: Environmental Checklist and Analysis "Air Quality". Pages 65-72.

⁶ South Coast AQMD Rule 1466 – Control of Particulate Emissions from Soils with Toxic Air Contaminates. Accessed at: <https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/reg-xiv/rule-1466.pdf>.

the main body of the MND and the modeling assumptions used to calculate the Proposed Project's construction emissions. These inconsistencies may have led to an underestimation of the Proposed Project's construction emissions. To ensure that the Proposed Project's construction impacts will not result in adverse impacts to sensitive receptors who will be on-site (e.g., students and teachers) during construction and those who live in close proximity to the Proposed Project, South Coast AQMD staff recommends that the Lead Agency correct these inconsistencies to ensure that the regional and localized emissions from the Proposed Project are accurately accounted for and used to determine the significance levels of the Proposed Project's air quality impacts. Please see the attachment for more information. The attachment also includes a list of recommended mitigation measures as resources to the Lead Agency. South Coast AQMD staff recommends consultation with South Coast AQMD Permitting and Engineering staff before any remedial on-site activities occur.

Conclusion

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15074, prior to approving the Proposed Project, the Lead Agency shall consider the MND for adoption together with any comments received during the public review process. Please provide South Coast AQMD with written responses to all comments contained herein prior to the adoption of the Final MND. When responding to issues raised in the comments, responses should provide sufficient details giving reasons why specific comments and suggestions are not accepted. There should be good faith, reasoned analysis in response. Conclusory statements unsupported by factual information do not facilitate the purpose and goal of CEQA on public disclosure and are not meaningful, informative, or useful to decision makers and the public who are interested in the Proposed Project. Further, if the Lead Agency makes a finding that additional recommended mitigation measures are not feasible, the Lead Agency should describe the specific reasons for rejecting or substituting these mitigation measures in the Final MND (CEQA Guidelines Section 15074.1).

South Coast AQMD staff is available to work with the Lead Agency to address any air quality questions that may arise from this comment letter. Please contact Alina Mullins, Assistant Air Quality Specialist, at amullins@aqmd.gov or (909) 396-2402, should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lijin Sun

Lijin Sun, J.D.

Program Supervisor, CEQA IGR

Planning, Rule Development & Area Sources

Attachment
LS:AM
LAC190402-11
Control Number

ATTACHMENT

Air Quality Impacts – Modeling Assumptions

1. Upon a review of the main body of the MND and the CalEEMod output file in Appendix C, South Coast AQMD staff found inconsistencies between the modeling parameters in the MND and what was modeled for construction emissions in CalEEMod. For example, in the main body of the MND the Lead Agency stated that the Proposed Project’s construction activities would include an estimated 15,000 – 18,000 cubic yards of soil import/export to be hauled to and from the site⁷; however, only 450 cubic yards of soil export was modeled in CalEEMod to calculate the emissions⁸. South Coast AQMD staff recommends that the Lead Agency revise the modeling based on 18,000 cubic yards of soil import/export to analyze a worst-case construction impact scenario that is reasonably foreseeable for the Proposed Project, or provide additional information to justify the use of 450 cubic yards of soil export in the Final MND.
2. Table 4, *Anticipated Construction Equipment*, in the main body of the MND provided a project-specific list of anticipated construction equipment and vendor trips that would occur during each phase of the Proposed Project’s construction⁹. However, the information provided in Table 4 did not match what was modeled in CalEEMod (see Table A and Table B for comparison).

Table A: South Coast AQMD Staff’s Copy of Table 4: Anticipated Construction

TABLE 4 ANTICIPATED CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT					
Phase 1 & 2	Schedule	Equipment	Maximum Number/Day		
Demolition/Interim Housing/Modernization (i.e., Building Interiors)	3 months	Excavators w/breaker	1		
		Loader	1		
		Bobcat/Skip	1		
		Crushing Equipment	1		
		Water Truck	1		
		Building Debris haul trips; average 10 CY end-dump trucks	10		
Site Prep/Modernization	3 months	Asphalt/Concrete Debris haul trips; average 10 CY end-dump trucks	10		
		Jack Hammers/Air Compressor	2		
		Excavator	1		
		Compactor	1		
		Loader	1		
		Skip Loader	1		
		Water Truck	1		
		Soil haul trips (soil export); average 14 CY bottom dump trucks	35		
		Vibratory Rollers (for 95% soil compaction)	2		
		Trencher / Excavator	1		
		Concrete Trucks	5		
		Impact Pile Driver, Sonic Pile Driver, Crane-Mounted Auger Drill, or Crane-Suspended Downhole Vibrator	1		
		Concrete Pump	1		
		Crane	1		
Dump Trucks	2				
Building Construction/ Modernization	12 months	Fork Lifts/Gradalls	4		
		Delivery Trucks	12		
		Backhoes	2		
		Air Compressor	1		
		Asphalt Paving and Off-Site Street Work	3 months	Skip Loaders	2
				Roller	1
				Paver	1
				Asphalt Trucks	8
				Water Truck	1

Total Vendor Trips: 28

⁷ MND. Section 3: Project Description “Construction Phasing and Equipment”. Page 41.

⁸ MND. Appendix C: Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Background and Modeling Data “CalEEMod Output” Page 78.

⁹ MND. Section 3: Project Description “Construction Phasing and Equipment”. Page 42-43.

**Table B: South Coast AQMD Staff's Copy of CalEEMod Output File:
Off-road Construction Equipment and Trips and VMT**

Phase Name	Offroad Equipment Type	Amount	Usage Hours	Horse Power	Load Factor
Building Construction	Cranes	1	7.00	231	0.29
Building Construction	Forklifts	3	8.00	89	0.20
Building Construction	Generator Sets	1	8.00	84	0.74
Building Construction	Tractors/Loaders/Backhoes	3	7.00	97	0.37
Building Construction	Welders	1	8.00	46	0.45
Demolition	Concrete/Industrial Saws	1	8.00	81	0.73
Demolition	Excavators	3	8.00	158	0.38
Demolition	Rubber Tired Dozers	2	8.00	247	0.40
Paving	Pavers	2	8.00	130	0.42
Paving	Paving Equipment	2	8.00	132	0.36
Paving	Rollers	2	8.00	80	0.38
Site Preparation	Rubber Tired Dozers	3	8.00	247	0.40
Site Preparation	Tractors/Loaders/Backhoes	4	8.00	97	0.37

Trips and VMT

Phase Name	Offroad Equipment Count	Worker Trip Number	Vendor Trip Number	Hauling Trip Number	Worker Trip Length	Vendor Trip Length	Hauling Trip Length	Worker Vehicle Class	Vendor Vehicle Class	Hauling Vehicle Class
Building Construction	9	150.00	10.00	12.00	14.70	6.90	20.00	LD_Mix	HDT_Mix	HHDT
Demolition	6	150.00	0.00	20.00	14.70	6.90	20.00	LD_Mix	HDT_Mix	HHDT
Paving	6	150.00	0.00	9.00	14.70	6.90	20.00	LD_Mix	HDT_Mix	HHDT
Site Preparation	7	150.00	0.00	35.00	14.70	6.90	20.00	LD_Mix	HDT_Mix	HHDT

Total Vendor Trips: 10

To illustrate, South Coast AQMD staff has highlighted one of the inconsistencies between construction equipment and the CalEEMod output file. As shown in Table A¹⁰ and Table B¹¹, the Lead Agency estimated 28 vendor trips throughout four construction phases; however, only 10 vendor trips for the building construction phase were modeled to calculate emissions, and no vendor trips for the demolition, site preparation, and paving phases were included to calculate emissions. Additionally, the brackets in Tables A and B point to other areas of inconsistencies, in terms of type and amount of off-road equipment, that South Coast AQMD staff found between Table 4 in the MND, and that in the CalEEMod output files. These inconsistencies may have led to an underestimation of the Proposed Project's regional and localized construction emissions. Therefore, South Coast AQMD staff recommends that the Lead Agency correct the inconsistencies between the main body of the MND and the modeling assumptions to ensure that emissions from the Proposed Project are accurately accounted for and used to determine the levels of significance for the Proposed Project's regional and localized air quality impacts in the Final MND.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ MND. Appendix C: Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Background and Modeling Data "CalEEMod Output" Page 85.

Recommended Mitigation Measures

3. In the event that the Lead Agency finds, after revisions to the Air Quality Analysis based on Comment Nos. 1 and 2, that the Proposed Project's regional and/or localized construction emissions would be significant, identification and implementation of feasible mitigation measures would be required under CEQA. South Coast AQMD staff has compiled a list of recommended mitigation measures as suggested resources and guidance to the Lead Agency to assist the identification of feasible mitigation measures for incorporation in the Final MND. For more information on potential mitigation measures as guidance to the Lead Agency, please visit South Coast AQMD's CEQA Air Quality Handbook website¹².

Mitigation Measures for Construction Air Quality Impacts

- Use off-road diesel-powered construction equipment that meets or exceeds the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Tier 4 off-road emissions standards for equipment rated at 50 horsepower or greater during construction. Such equipment should be outfitted with Best Available Control Technology (BACT) devices including, but not limited to, a CARB certified Level 3 Diesel Particulate Filters (DPF). Level 3 DPFs are capable of achieving at least an 85 percent reduction in particulate matter emissions. A list of CARB verified DPFs are available on the CARB website. Additionally, the Lead Agency should include this requirement in applicable bid documents, and that successful contractor(s) must demonstrate the ability to supply compliant equipment prior to the commencement of any construction activities. A copy of each unit's certified tier specification and CARB or South Coast AQMD operating permit (if applicable) should be available upon request at the time of mobilization of each applicable unit of equipment. Additionally, the Lead Agency should require periodic reporting and provision of written documentation by contractors to ensure compliance, and conduct regular inspections to the maximum extent feasible to ensure compliance. In the event that the Lead Agency finds that Tier 4 construction equipment is not feasible pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15364, the Project representative or contractor must demonstrate through future study with written findings supported by substantial evidence that is reviewed and approved by the Lead Agency before using other technologies/strategies. Alternative applicable strategies may include, but would not be limited to, Tier 3 construction equipment, reduction in the number and/or horsepower rating of construction equipment, limiting the number of daily construction haul truck trips to and from the Proposed Project, and/or limiting the number of individual construction project phases occurring simultaneously, if applicable.
- Maintain equipment maintenance records for the construction portion of the Proposed Project. All construction equipment must be tuned and maintained in compliance with the manufacturer's recommended maintenance schedule and specifications. All maintenance records for each equipment and their construction contractor(s) should be made available for inspection and remain on-site for a period of at least two years from completion of construction.
- Encourage construction contractors to apply for South Coast AQMD "SOON" funds. The "SOON" program provides funds to applicable fleets for the purchase of commercially-available low-emission heavy-duty engines to achieve near-term reduction of NOx emissions from in-use off-road diesel vehicles. More information on this program can be found at South Coast AQMD's website: <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/programs/business/business-detail?title=off-road-diesel-engines>.

¹² South Coast Air Quality Management District. Accessed at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/regulations/ceqa/air-quality-analysis-handbook>.

- Require the use of zero-emissions or near-zero emission on-road haul trucks (e.g., material delivery trucks and soil import/export) such as heavy-duty trucks with natural gas engines that meet the CARB's adopted optional NOx emissions standard at 0.02 grams per brake horsepower-hour (g/bhp-hr). At a minimum, require that construction vendors, contractors, and/or haul truck operators commit to using 2010 model year or newer engines that meet CARB's 2010 engine emissions standards at 0.01 g/bhp-hr of particulate matter (PM) and 0.20 g/bhp-hr of NOx emissions or newer, cleaner trucks. Include analyses to evaluate and identify sufficient power available for zero emission trucks and supportive infrastructures in the Energy and Utilities and Service Systems Sections of the Final MND, where appropriate. Require that operators maintain records of all trucks associated with the Proposed Project's construction and make these records available to the Lead Agency upon request. The records will serve as evidence to prove that each truck called to the Proposed Project meets the minimum 2010 model year engine emission standards. The Lead Agency should conduct regular inspections of the records to the maximum extent feasible and practicable to ensure compliance with this mitigation measure.
- Restrict non-essential diesel engine idle time, to not more than five consecutive minutes or another time-frame as allowed by the California Code of Regulations, Title 13 section 2485 - CARB's Airborne Toxic Control Measure to Limit Diesel-Fueled Commercial Motor Vehicle Idling. For any vehicle delivery that is expected to take longer than five minutes, each project applicant, project sponsor, or public agency will require the vehicle's operator to shut off the engine. Notify the vendors of these idling requirements at the time that the purchase order is issued and again when vehicles enter the gates of the facility. To further ensure that drivers and operators understand the idling requirement, post signs at the entry of the construction site and throughout the Proposed Project site stating that idling longer than five minutes is not permitted.

Compliance with South Coast AQMD Rules & Permits

4. If on-site soil remediation or any on-site activity would involve equipment or operations that either emits or controls air pollution, South Coast AQMD Engineering and Permitting staff should be consulted in advance to determine whether or not any permits or plans are required to be filed and approved by South Coast AQMD prior to the start of any remedial activities or operations. In the event that implementation of the Proposed Project requires a permit from South Coast AQMD, the Lead Agency should identify South Coast AQMD as a Responsible Agency for the Proposed Project in the Final MND. Emissions from permitted equipment should be quantified and added to the Proposed Project's construction and operational emissions, where applicable, to determine the level of significance in the Final MND. Any assumptions in the Air Quality Analysis in the Final MND will be used as the basis for permit conditions and limits. If there is any information in the permitting process and/or during implementation of remediation activities suggesting that the Proposed Project would result in significant adverse air quality impacts not analyzed in the Final MND or substantially more severe air quality impacts than those analyzed in the Final MND, the Lead Agency should commit to reevaluating the Proposed Project's air quality impacts through a CEQA process (CEQA Guidelines Section 15162). For more information on permits, please visit South Coast AQMD's webpage at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/permits>. Questions on permits can be directed to South Coast AQMD's Engineering and Permitting staff at (909) 396-3385.