



# South Coast Air Quality Management District

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SENT VIA E-MAIL:

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**Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Proposed  
436 West Rialto Avenue Warehouse Project (Proposed Project)  
(State Clearinghouse Number: 2023050324)**

South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD) staff appreciates the opportunity to comment on the above-mentioned document. The City of Rialto is the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Lead Agency for the Proposed Project. The following comments recommended revisions to the CEQA regional air quality impacts analysis for cleanup activities during construction, mobile source health risk assessment (HRA) analysis, inconsistent project trip generation, California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) analysis, and South Coast AQMD rules, permits, and responsible agency that the Lead Agency should include in the Final MND.

**South Coast AQMD Staff's Summary of Project Information in the MND**

Based on the information provided in the MND, the Lead Agency proposes the redevelopment of a 13.8-acre property located at 436 West Rialto Avenue to replace an industrial use with a warehouse building containing 299,780 square feet of floor area,<sup>1</sup> including 287,780 square feet of warehouse space and 12,000 square feet of office space.<sup>2</sup> The Proposed Project is expected to have 38 loading docks,<sup>3</sup> resulting in an estimated 208 daily truck trips<sup>4</sup> for warehouse operation. Access to the Proposed Project site for trucks will be through the south driveway on North Lilac Avenue and West Rialto Avenue.<sup>5</sup> Based on the ariel photographs, South Coast AQMD staff identified the nearest sensitive receptors, which include residences approximately 140 feet northwest of the Proposed Project and a daycare facility approximately 150 feet southwest of the Proposed Project. The Proposed Project's construction is expected to span 13 months,<sup>6</sup> starting with demolition in January 2023 and other construction activities between April 2023 and February 2024.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> MND. Page 1-1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Page 3-1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Page 4-65.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* Page 3-1.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* Page 3-4.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* Page 4-12.

South Coast AQMD Staff's Comments on the MND*CEQA Regional Air Quality Impacts Analysis for Cleanup Activities During Construction*

Based on Section 4.9 – Hazards and Hazardous Materials in the MND and Appendix G - Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA), the Proposed Project site was known to contain “three underground storage tanks (USTs), building with concrete staining of potentially hazardous materials, railroad spur which could contain creosote, an electrical transformer which could contain PCBs, aboveground storage tanks (ASTs) to store diesel and motor oils, building materials could contain asbestos-containing materials, and painted surfaces could contain lead-based paint.”<sup>8</sup> The MND discusses mitigation measures (MMs) that require addressing the potential contamination on the site. MM HAZ-2 is to “*remediate contaminated soils and /or soil vapor that may present at the Project site.*”<sup>9</sup> Due to the potential of having contaminated soils, South Coast AQMD staff recommends that the Lead Agency conduct an investigation and estimate the amount of contaminated soil, quantify the emissions associated with the cleanup activities (e.g., hauling trucks, soil remediation, etc.) in addition to the Proposed Project’s regional construction emissions, compare to the South Coast AQMD Air Quality Significance Thresholds<sup>10</sup> to determine the level of significance, and include in the Final MND.

Cleanup activities will likely involve using heavy-duty, diesel-fueled trucks for soil export, resulting in emissions from truck hauling activities and vehicle trips by workers that will be required to conduct cleanup activities. Additionally, cleanup activities will likely require the use of additional equipment that may be different from typical equipment for grading and site preparation for construction. If cleanup activities are reasonably foreseeable at the time the MND was prepared, the Lead Agency should use good faith and best efforts to provide information on the scope, types, and duration of cleanup activities, quantify emissions from cleanup activities, and include those emissions in the Proposed Project’s construction emissions profile to be compared to South Coast AQMD’s air quality CEQA significance thresholds for construction to determine the level of significance in the Final MND. Alternatively, if emissions from cleanup activities are not included in the Final MND, the Lead Agency should include a new air quality mitigation measure in the Air Quality Section of the Final MND to commit to evaluating the potential environmental impacts from cleanup activities through CEQA prior to commencing any cleanup activities. If a new air quality mitigation measure is not included in the Final MND, the Lead Agency should provide reasons supported by substantial evidence in the record to explain why a new air quality mitigation measure is not included.

Based on the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) output files of the Construction Report in Appendix A – Air Quality Impact Analysis, the default one-way truck trip length of 20 miles<sup>11</sup> is used to quantify the Proposed Project’s construction emissions from hauling construction materials and importing or exporting soil. If cleanup activities include removing and disposing of contaminated soil, depending on the type of contamination, contaminated soil may not be accepted at the Proposed Project’s designated landfill. It may need to be disposed of at a

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* Page 4-40.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* Page 4-41.

<sup>10</sup> South Coast AQMD Air Quality Significance Thresholds. Access at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/ceqa/handbook/scaqmd-air-quality-significance-thresholds.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* Appendix A – Air Quality Impact Analysis. CalEEMod Construction Report. Page 23/32.

permitted hazardous disposal facility with a one-way truck trip length that is likely longer than 20 miles. Therefore, South Coast AQMD staff recommends that the Lead Agency identify the permitted hazardous disposal facility that the Proposed Project could use to dispose of contaminated soil if the cleanup activities involve transport and off-site disposal of contaminated soil and disclose the information in the Final MND. When quantifying emissions from transportation and off-site disposal, the Proposed Project's construction emissions from haul truck trips for transporting and disposing contaminated soil should be recalculated based on the appropriate one-way truck trip length. If the default one-way truck trip length of 20 miles is not re-calculated for quantifying emissions from haul truck trips for transporting contaminated soil, the Lead Agency should provide reasons for not re-calculating it supported by substantial evidence in the record.

### *Mobile Source Health Risk Assessment (HRA) Analysis*

#### Averaging Time Utilized in Construction and Operational HRA Analysis

Based on the construction and operational HRA output files in Appendix B, the averaging time for the analysis is ANNUAL.<sup>12</sup> However, according to the South Coast AQMD Risk Assessment Procedures v8.1<sup>13</sup> and South Coast AQMD Modeling Guidance for AERMOD,<sup>14</sup> the detailed HRA utilizing AERMOD should be run using the averaging time PERIOD and 1-hour. Since the construction and operational HRAs of the Proposed Project using ANNUAL, South Coast AQMD staff recommend that the Lead Agency re-run the construction and operational HRAs utilizing PERIOD and 1-hour averaging time per guidelines to determine the health risk impacts to the sensitive receptors and off-site workers and include the revised results in the Final MND. If the revision is not included in the Final MND, the Lead Agency should provide reasons for not having them supported by substantial evidence in the record.

#### Building Downwash Option and Truck Idling Emissions in Operational HRA

Based on the South Coast AQMD staff review, the HRA modeling file does not include the building downwash option in the operational HRA. The ground-level pollutant concentrations near the building would be underestimated if the downwash effects were absent in the dispersion modeling. Therefore, building downwash should be considered for the Proposed Project operation in order to predict more accurate ground-level concentrations. In addition, the truck idling emissions would need to be estimated separately and included in the dispersion modeling analysis and HRA as point sources. However, the operational HRA modeling file indicates those emissions as line volume source types. Thus, truck idling emissions should be re-modeled as point sources with a building downwash option selected.

Furthermore, it needs to be clarified in the MND if the stationary combustion engines (e.g., diesel firewater pump, diesel emergency generator, etc.) will be used on-site during operation. If any of these will be used when implementing the Proposed Project, they will need to be added as additional sources to the HRA and dispersion modeling files. Therefore, South Coast AQMD staff recommends that the Lead Agency revise the operational HRA modeling by incorporating the

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* Appendix B – Mobile Source Health Risk Assessment. Page 428/3570 and 853/3570.

<sup>13</sup> South Coast AQMD Risk Assessment Procedures v8.1. Access at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/permitting/rule-1401-risk-assessment/riskassessproc-v8-1.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> South Coast AQMD Modeling Guidance for AERMOD. Access at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/air-quality/meteorological-data/modeling-guidance>

above recommendations and including the HRA results in the Final MND. If the HRA modeling is not revised and included in the Final MND, the Lead Agency should provide reasons supported by substantial evidence in the record to explain why the revision is not included.

#### *Inconsistent Project Trip Generation*

During the review of the trip generation information provided in the MND, CalEEMod output files, and Appendix L, South Coast AQMD staff found inconsistencies regarding the number of passengers and trucks generated by the Proposed Project among the documents. Table A below shows the discrepancies found across the different documents.

**Table A**  
**Trip Generation Discrepancies**

<b>Actual Vehicles</b>	<b>MND - Section 4.17 Transportation<sup>15</sup></b>	<b>Appendix A CalEEMod Output Files<sup>16</sup></b>	<b>Appendix L<sup>17</sup> (Table 4)</b>
Passenger	310	310	630
Total Trucks	208	208	422

In the event that the truck numbers from Appendix L are indeed accurate, it is important to note that the truck emissions derived from the CalEEMod analysis would be underestimated due to the significant differences in truck trips in these two documents. Therefore, South Coast AQMD staff recommends that the Lead Agency verify the number of passenger vehicles and trucks, make necessary revisions to the documents to reflect the correct information, and ensure that these revisions are included in the Final MND. If, for any reason, the verification and revision are not included in the Final MND, the Lead Agency should provide reasons for not having them supported by substantial evidence in the record.

#### *California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) Analysis*

The Proposed Project utilizes CalEEMod version 2022.1 to calculate the Proposed project's emissions from construction and operational activities and includes the CalEEMod output files in Appendix A. South Coast AQMD staff has the following concerns regarding the CalEEMod output files and recommends that the Lead Agency review and revise the CalEEMod analysis and include the revision in the Final MND.

#### User-Defined Industrial Land Use Subtype

In the operational CalEEMod output files, besides the “unrefrigerated warehouse-no rail” land use subtypes, “user-defined industrial” is added.<sup>18</sup> According to the CalEEMod User Guide, the “user-defined” may be selected to characterize project land use subtypes that are not included in CalEEMod. If selected, all land-use screen data will need to be input manually.<sup>19</sup> However, the

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* Page 4-65.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* Appendix A. CalEEMod Output Files - Operation Report. Page 24/33.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* Appendix L – Traffic Analysis. Page 1.1-8.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* Appendix A. CalEEMod Output Files – Operation Report. Page 6/33.

<sup>19</sup> California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) Version 2022.1 User Guide. Access at: [https://www.caleemod.com/documents/user-guide/CalEEMod\\_User\\_Guide\\_v2022.1.pdf](https://www.caleemod.com/documents/user-guide/CalEEMod_User_Guide_v2022.1.pdf)

size metric, lot acreage, and the floor square area use are all set to zero under the “user-defined industrial” land use subtype. Therefore, South Coast AQMD staff recommends that the Lead Agency explain why the land use is separated in the CalEEMod analysis. If the explanation is not included in the Final MND, the Lead Agency should provide reasons for not having them supported by substantial evidence in the record.

#### Vehicle Trips under Land Use Types

Based on Section 4.17 – Transportation in the MND, the passengers and truck trips generated from the Proposed Project are 310 and 208 trips per day, respectively.<sup>20</sup> However, according to the CalEEMod output files – Operation Report, the number of truck trips is input under the “user-defined industrial” and not the “unrefrigerated warehouse-no rail” land use subtype. This possibly leads to underestimating the heavy-duty truck emissions for warehouse activities since no data is filled under this “user-defined industrial” land use subtype. Thus, South Coast AQMD staff recommends that the Lead Agency explain why the truck trips are not analyzed under the “unrefrigerated warehouse-no rail” land use subtype and include the explanation in the Final MND. If the explanation is not included in the Final MND, the Lead Agency should provide reasons for not having them supported by substantial evidence in the record.

#### *South Coast AQMD Rules, Permits, and Responsible Agency*

In the event that contaminated soil is identified with the presence of VOCs in soil, requirements of South Coast AQMD Rule 1166 – Volatile Organic Compound Emissions from Decontamination of Soil<sup>21</sup> will apply and should be discussed in the Final MND. If any activities involve using equipment that either emits or controls air pollution, the Lead Agency should consult with South Coast AQMD staff to determine whether or not permits or plans are required and approved by South Coast AQMD prior to the operation and to identify if any other South Coast AQMD Rules, such as Rule 431.2 – Sulfur Content of Liquid Fuels<sup>22</sup> and Rule 1110.2 – Emissions from Gaseous and Liquid-Fueled Engines,<sup>23</sup> will be applicable and discussed in the Final MND. Please contact South Coast AQMD’s Engineering and Permitting staff at (909) 396-3385 or visit South Coast AQMD’s web page for more general information on permits: <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/permits>.

#### Conclusion

Pursuant to California Public Resources Code Section 21092.5(b) 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, detailed reasons supported by substantial evidence in the record to explain why specific comments and suggestions are not accepted must be provided. We appreciate the opportunity to review the Proposed Project.

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* Page 4-65.

<sup>21</sup> South Coast AQMD. Rule 1166 – Volatile Organic Compound Emissions from Decontamination of Soil. Accessed at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/reg-xi/rule-1166.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> South Coast AQMD. Rule 431.2 – Sulfur Content of Liquid Fuels. Accessed at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/rule-iv/rule-431-2.pdf>.

<sup>23</sup> South Coast AQMD. Rule 1110.2 – Emissions from Gaseous- and Liquid-Fueled Engines. Accessed at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/reg-xi/rule-1110-2.pdf>.

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June 13, 2023

Thank you for considering these comments. 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 Danica Nguyen, Air Quality Specialist, at [dnguyen1@aqmd.gov](mailto:dnguyen1@aqmd.gov) should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

*Sam Wang*

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