



South Coast Air Quality Management District

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Project Environmental Coordinator
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 532711
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**Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report
(Draft EIS/EIR) for the Proposed Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration
Integrated Feasibility Report**

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) 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 NEPA/CEQA document.

In the project description, the lead agency proposes to restore approximately 11 miles of the Los Angeles River from approximately Griffith Park to downtown Los Angeles and to provide recreational opportunities consistent with the restored ecosystem within the 11-mile reach of the river. Construction would begin in July 2016 and end in early 2017.

The lead agency has analyzed four of the 19 original alternatives in the draft NEPA/CEQA document selecting Alternative 13, Arbor Corridor Extension (ACE), as the lead agency's Tentatively Selected Plan. This alternative would restore the river areas by reestablishing the river banks bordering the river along the 11-mile river reach and the freshwater marsh and habitat communities that live on, in or near the project water areas. In addition, the proposed project would reconnect the river to major water sources that join the river and the river's historic flood plain, while still managing for flood control. The proposed project would also connect the river area's habitat zones and provide recreational opportunities within the restored project area. Between the four alternatives, the lead agency estimates that as many as 477 daily truck trips could occur for activities that include excavation, soil movement and debris removal but 338 daily truck trips are specifically projected to be used during Alternative 13. In its analyses, the lead agency has determined that Alternative 13 as well as the other three alternatives substantially exceed the recommended daily regional and localized significance thresholds for NO_x, CO, PM₁₀, PM_{2.5} and ROG emissions. The SCAQMD staff therefore recommends that the lead agency consider additional feasible mitigation measures and incorporate them into the Final EIS/EIR if they are found to be feasible. Details regarding these and other comments are included in the attachment.


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Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21092.5, please provide the SCAQMD staff with written responses to all comments contained herein prior to the adoption of the Final Environmental Impact Report. 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 these comments.

Sincerely,



Ian MacMillan
Program Supervisor, Inter-Governmental Review
Planning, Rule Development & Area Sources

Attachment

IM:GM

LAC130919-06
Control Number

Air Quality Analysis

1. In the air quality analysis in Appendix F (Table 2.2 Construction Data under Equipment Mix for All Alternatives), the lead agency lists the equipment mixture for all alternatives estimating 11 pieces of equipment per day but the number and types of equipment do not agree with the amounts entered in the CalEEMod modeling inputs for Alternative 13 that shows six pieces of off-road equipment. This discrepancy should be clarified and/or revised in the final NEPA/CEQA document and applicable analyses.

Large Operation Notification

2. On page five in Appendix F, the lead agency describes each alternative as a large-scale development project with each size exceeding 500 acres. Should the proposed project fall under the requirements of Rule 403 – Fugitive Dust for large operations according to SCAQMD Rule 403(c)(18), then the lead agency should submit SCAQMD Form 403N (Large Operation Notification Form) to the SCAQMD. Questions concerning Form 403N can be directed to SCAQMD Engineering and Compliance staff at (909) 396-2372.

Mitigation Measures – Construction

3. Since the lead agency has determined in the Draft EIS/EIR air quality analysis that construction air quality impacts exceed the recognized air quality significance levels for CO, NO_x, PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, and ROG, the SCAQMD staff recommends the following additional mitigation measures in the Final EIS/EIR pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4 to reduce the project's significant air quality impacts in addition to the Best Management Practices and Impact Avoidance Measures included in the draft document listed on page 19 in Appendix F. The following measures have been determined to be feasible and applicable to past projects within other jurisdictions.¹
 - Post-January 1, 2015: 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 NO_x and PM emissions requirements.

¹ For example see the Metro Green Construction Policy at:
http://www.metro.net/projects_studies/sustainability/images/Green_Construction_Policy.pdf

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.

Recommended Additions:

Combustion Emissions from Construction Equipment

- Provide temporary traffic controls such as a flag person, during all phases of construction to maintain smooth traffic flow.
- Provide dedicated turn lanes for movement of construction trucks and equipment on-and off-site.
- Reroute construction trucks away from congested streets or sensitive receptor areas.
- Require the use of electricity from power poles rather than temporary diesel or gasoline power generators.
- 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/tao/Implementation/SOONProgram.htm>.

Fugitive Dust

- Appoint a construction relations officer to act as a community liaison concerning on-site construction activity including resolution of issues related to PM10 generation.
- Suspend all excavating and grading operations when wind speeds (as instantaneous gusts) exceed 25 miles per hour
- Require frequent street sweeping surrounding the project site to minimize fugitive dust emissions from track-out. All street sweeping shall use alternatively fueled sweepers that are equivalent to those specified in SCAQMD Rules 1186 and 1186.1.
- Install wheel washers where vehicles enter and exit the construction site onto paved roads or wash off trucks and any equipment leaving the site each trip.
- Apply water three times daily, or non-toxic soil stabilizers according to manufacturers' specifications, to all unpaved parking or staging areas or unpaved road surfaces.
- Replace ground cover in disturbed areas as quickly as possible.
- Apply non-toxic soil stabilizers according to manufacturers' specifications to all inactive construction areas (previously graded areas inactive for ten days or more).

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

www.aqmd.gov/ceqa/handbook/mitigation/MM_intro.html.

NEPA Thresholds and General Conformity

The Draft EIR/EIS includes NEPA thresholds of 50 tons/year for CO, NO_x, ROG, SO₂, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5} to determine significance. SCAQMD staff notes that these thresholds are not equivalent to the General Conformity thresholds.² For example, due to our extreme nonattainment status for ozone, the General Conformity threshold is only 10 tons/year for NO_x. The lead agency should contact SCAQMD staff at (909) 396-3056 to discuss how General Conformity for this project. In addition, the Final EIR/EIS should discuss General Conformity for all pollutants and how the NEPA thresholds correspond to General Conformity thresholds.

Alternative Disposal Methods

A significant fraction of the project's NO_x emissions come from hauling soil away from the site using trucks. With the existing rail lines in the area, the project may be able to utilize this resource to replace truck trips. As an example, a recent project being conducted at Taylor Yard by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control³ is hauling contaminated soils away using a local rail line, thus substantially reducing the number of truck trips. The Final EIR/EIS should evaluate this measure and implement it if found feasible to reduce air quality impacts.

² Available here: <http://www.epa.gov/air/genconform/deminimis.html>

³ http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/profile_report.asp?global_id=19470006