



BAY AREA
AIR QUALITY
MANAGEMENT
DISTRICT

BAAQMD CEQA Guidelines Update

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BAAQMD CEQA Guidelines

- Why the need for local CEQA air quality guidelines?
- How might the guidelines affect the next RTP/SCS EIR?
- How would the guidelines affect local agency development plans and projects?
- Next Steps



BAAQMD CEQA Guidelines Background

- Provide guidance to local lead agencies conducting air quality analyses in environmental documents
- Include thresholds of significance, analytical tools, mitigation measures
- Last published 1999, update needed
 - More stringent AQ standards
 - Local impacts of air toxics and fine PM
 - Greenhouse gases



Greenhouse Gas Thresholds

- Address critical void
 - No guidance on GHGs in CEQA currently exists
 - Legal scrutiny by Attorney General, others
- Based on AB 32 and Scoping Plan
- Thresholds options – land use projects
 - Plan based – consistency with local climate action plan
 - “Bright line” – 1,100 metric tons/yr
 - Efficiency based – 4.6 tons/service population/year (residents & employees)
- Take credit for lower vehicle use/efficiencies of infill, mixed use projects
- Interim thresholds – revisit if/when State guidance available



Importance of GHG Thresholds

- Consistent with and implements recent State Office of Planning and Research CEQA Guidelines
 - OPR encourages addressing GHG in CEQA docs, but doesn't recommend threshold
 - Significance determination must still be made even without significance thresholds
 - State CEQA Guidelines “encourage lead agencies to rely on thresholds established by local air quality management districts”
- Currently ad hoc approach to evaluating GHG impacts
- Guidelines provide certainty in determining significance of impacts and consistency in mitigation
 - Provide legally defensible approach to analyzing GHG impacts
 - Provide level playing field throughout Bay Area
 - Supported by Attorney General and major environmental groups



Local Community Risks and Hazards

- CARE program identifies 6 priority communities in Bay Area
 - Concord, East S.F., W. Ala. Co, E. Palo Alto, Richmond, San Jose
 - High emissions, concentrations of toxics, PM
 - Vulnerable populations
- Seek to reduce impacts from land use, transportation decisions
- Promote infill, while protecting residents
- Address new sources of pollution *and* new receptors near existing sources (eg, freeways)
- Thresholds address:
 - Cancer risk
 - Fine particulate concentrations
 - Cumulative impacts
- Encourage community risk reduction plans



Community Risk Reduction Plans (CRRPs)

- Supports community wide planning approach to reduce cumulative impacts
- Collaborative effort between local governments and Air District
- Plan Elements:
 1. Defined CRRP Planning Area
 2. Goal or Reduction Target, e.g.,
 - a) No Net Increase/Net Reduction
 - b) Percent Reduction from Baseline Conditions
 - c) Equivalent to Regional Average Risk
 3. Emission Inventories
 4. Risk Modeling
 5. Emission Reduction Measures
 6. Monitoring and Updating Mechanism
 7. Public Involvement Process



Developing CRRPs

- District staff to work closely with local government staff
 - District to provide technical elements
 - Emissions inventory & Modeling
 - Identify sources & areas of concern
 - Assist with mitigation
 - Local government
 - Planning/policy framework
 - Public outreach
 - Assist with mitigation
- District developing CRRP criteria
- District retaining consultant to develop more detailed criteria
- RFP for consultants to develop emission inventories
- Initiate pilot projects
 - San Jose, San Francisco underway



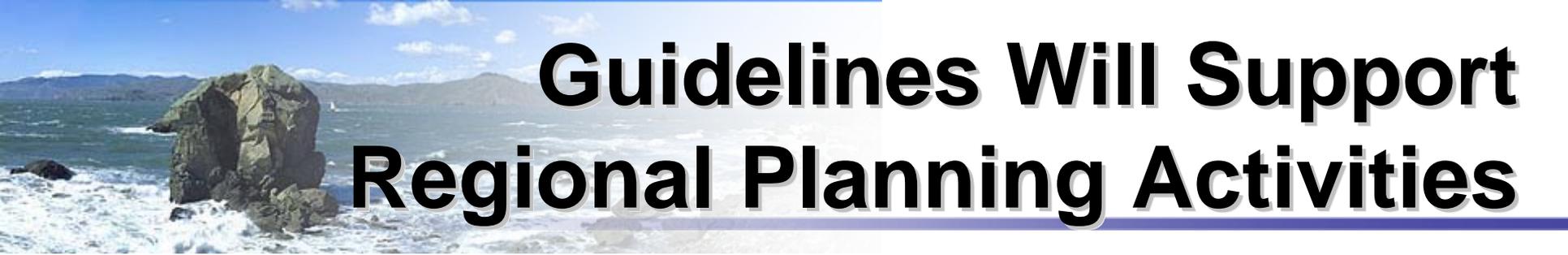
CRRPs Support and Coordinate With Local Planning Activities

- Integration with Local Planning
 - Support FOCUS, PDAs, infill
 - Help implement CEQA Guidelines
 - Link with local planning activities
 - Goal: coordinate CRRPs with general plan updates, specific plans, PDA station area plans, etc.
- Support and Assist Local Planning
 - District budget funds for local government assistance
 - CRRP planning
 - Mitigation measures/risk reduction
 - District provide technical resources
 - District retain consultants to assist with CRRP development



Local Agency/Public Comments on Guidelines

- Increased CEQA burden for local governments/loss of infill exemption
- GHG threshold is too aggressive for TOD/infill projects
- Local risk and hazard thresholds could impede infill/PDAs
- GHG threshold not stringent enough
- Local risk and hazards thresholds not stringent enough
- Provide more information on criteria for “qualified” Community Risk Reduction Plans and Climate Action Plans
- Compliance with SCS should not determine significance
- More information needed on effectiveness of mitigation measures
- Attorney General, major environmental groups support GHG thresholds



Guidelines Will Support Regional Planning Activities

- Transit Oriented Development/PDAs
 - Encourage infill, mixed use development
 - Reductions in VMT and vehicle trips per unit/sq ft.
 - Credits projects for locating near a mix of uses, transit
 - Provides level playing field in CEQA review
- Regional Transportation Plan
 - Air District staff working with MTC staff for RTP specific threshold
 - Could encourage VMT reducing projects in RTP
 - Assist in transportation conformity determinations
- Sustainable Communities Strategy
 - Provides incentives for identifying, implementing PDAs
 - Accounts for reductions in vehicle trips and VMT
 - Prepares region for meeting SB375 GHG reduction targets



Next Steps

- Work with MTC staff to clarify how guidelines are applicable to RTP/SCS
- County Informational Workshops with planning departments
- Additional meetings with local officials, staff, interested stakeholders
- Provide technical resources and training to local staff
- Seek Air District Board approval of guidelines in June 2010