



Planning Commission Staff Report

Date: February 20, 2008

Item 6. a.

SUBJECT: General Plan Update – Review and consideration of the Draft Air Quality Element

PURPOSE: Review and consider the Draft Air Quality Element; provide comments to staff for any amendments prior to the Draft Element being incorporated into a Public Hearing Draft General Plan

I. BACKGROUND

Air Quality is an optional element not required by state law. However, because air quality has historically been a concern in the Tri-Valley, this topic has been specifically addressed in the Pleasanton General Plan since 1976.

II. OVERVIEW

Changes in the Draft Air Quality Element are a reflection of new information and emerging issues since the 1996 Element. These include: continued improvement in air quality in the Tri-Valley; a more comprehensive discussion of odor issues; and the relationship between air quality, climate change and sustainable development. These are briefly discussed below:

Improvements in Air Quality: Compared to the 1990's air quality in the Tri-Valley has improved, largely because of improvements in pollution control in automobiles. For example, the number of days violating state standards for ozone currently averages seven annually, compared to an annual average of about 15 days in the mid-1990s. In addition, since 1983, there have been no days in which the levels of carbon monoxide violated either State or federal standards. Policies in the Draft Element seek to maintain and improve air quality and to promote sustainable development and planning to minimize air emissions.

Odor Issues: This Draft Element addresses several odor issues raised by members of the community, including the asphalt batch plant located near the Vineyard Avenue corridor and DSRSD's sewage treatment plant located directly west of Val Vista Park. The Draft Element also discusses the distinction between odors that constitute a public nuisance and odors that are bothersome but do not constitute a threat to health. A new policy in the Draft Element seeks to minimize unpleasant odors in residential neighborhoods.

Climate Change and Air Quality: Climate change and its relationship to air quality is a new topic since the 1996 General Plan. Climate change is directly related to the combustion of fossil fuels and the production of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide. The Draft Element discusses the City's membership in the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) which will provide a baseline greenhouse gas emissions inventory and forecast. The City may subsequently choose to adopt an action plan to meet local greenhouse gas reduction targets. Because of the link between transportation, land use, energy use and air quality, there are several references in the Draft Element to policies in the Draft Land Use, Draft Circulation, and Draft Energy Elements, implementation of which would result in less fossil fuel use and improved air quality.

III. CHANGES TO THE AIR QUALITY ELEMENT

Changes from the original 1996 General Plan background text of the Draft Air Quality Element include:

- General editing, updating, and reorganizing of background material from the 1996 General Plan.
- Changing the first section to Background and Purpose and discussing how this is an optional element, that air pollution can lead to environmental degradation that affects human health and economic growth, that the *California Clean Air Act* requires implementation of all feasible control measure, and that by including this optional element, the City shows its commitment to improving air quality.
- In the Local and Regional Meteorological Influence section, adding a discussion of how air quality has improved in Pleasanton, explaining how ozone is formed, discussing wind speeds, updating information about atmospheric inversions, and modifying the discussion on topography and the transport of air pollution.
- Under Air Pollutants and Standards, updating Table 9-1, modifying the discussion of standards, and updating the description of each criteria pollutant and its health effects: ozone, carbon monoxide (CO), Suspended Particulates (PM10 and PM2.5), nitrogen dioxide (NO2), and sulfur dioxide (SO2).
- Updating the discussion under hazardous materials such as the amounts of toxic air contaminants in Alameda County, Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) programs to reduce contaminants, and Pleasanton's hazardous materials regulation.
- Under Air Pollutant Sources, after removing sensitive receptors from the title and adding a new section about sensitive receptors below, updating the discussion of air pollutant sources in Pleasanton.
- Adding a new Odor section that updates information previously located under Air Pollutant Sources. This section now includes additional discussion of odors and how they are regulated by the *California Health and Safety Code*, and discusses how BAAQMD and the Alameda County Environmental Health Department have enforcement authority. The new section also discusses nuisance odors and how an asphalt plant and the sewage treatment plant have been the subjects of odor complaints.

- Updating information in the new Sensitive Receptor Section and including a list and map of sensitive receptors in Pleasanton.
- Under recent Air Quality Conditions, updating the text, including discussion of the *2005 Bay Area Ozone Strategy*, the new PM_{2.5} pollutant, the removal of monitoring at Hacienda Business Park because there are no longer violations of standards of monitored pollutants, and an explanation of how ozone still remains a problem, but not of the previous magnitude. This section also discusses Spare the Air Days with its measures to improve air quality and includes a revised Table 9-3 that shows recent local air quality conditions.
- Adding a new discussion on Climate Changes about greenhouse gases, how they are mainly produced from carbon dioxide (CO₂), how they adversely affect public health, how they threaten to erode air-quality improvements, and how trip-reduction and energy conservation measures help reduce ozone. The section also discusses the City's involvement with the Climate Protection Project and how the City will develop an action plan capable of meeting local greenhouse-gas-reduction targets.
- Updating the discussion under future air quality to include projected growth under the General Plan, to clarify language, to update information on air pollution related to vehicle miles traveled, and to delete the discussion of carbon monoxide as it is no longer expected to be in violation of standards. This section also includes Table 9-4 that projects county-wide vehicular emissions into the future.
- Updating and revising the Purpose of Air Quality Planning Section.
- Under Air Quality Planning, updating the discussion to include Sustainable Development and Planning and how Pleasanton embraces this concept with: housing and job opportunities, neighborhood-serving services, alternative travel modes, retail and services at major employment centers, reducing the need for trips, and concentrating growth within the Urban Growth Boundary. This section also adds a discussion of reducing building-related emission through green building design, and updates the discussion on reducing vehicle trips.
- Changing the outdated discussion of Transportation Systems Management to Transportation Demand Management.
- Adding a discussion of housing Pleasanton workers locally to reduce commute trips and requirements on private development to construct physical improvements that promote alternative transportation.
- Updating and expanding on the relationship of the Air Quality Element to other elements.

Changes to the Goals, Policies, and Programs include:

- Adding Goal 2 to promote sustainable development and planning.
- Adding a new Air Quality Standards heading.
- Editing Policy 1 to adhere to standards, deleting program 1.1, adding programs 1.1 and 1.2 to incorporate measures to meet the standards and to support legislations to improve

air quality, respectively, and referring to the Public Safety Element regarding hazardous materials.

- Adding a new Land Use heading.
- Adding a new Policy 2 to support development that reduces vehicle trips and miles, moving its two programs to the Land Use Section, and referring to the programs from the Land Use Section that relate to this policy.
- Changing former Policy 6 to Policy 3, updating its first program, adding two new programs that would protect sensitive receptors from air pollution, and moving former Program 6.2 to the Land Use Element.
- Adding a new Motor Vehicle Travel heading.
- Adding a new Policy 4 to reduce air pollution from motor vehicles, moving former Programs 4.4, 4.5, and 4.9 to the Circulation Element, moving former Program 4.7 to the Land Use Element, and referring to Transportation Demand Management programs in the Circulation Element and to housing programs in the Housing Element.
- Deleting former Program 2.1, former Policy 2, and former Policy 3 and its programs because they are outdated and no longer necessary.
- Adding a new Development heading.
- Changing former Policy 4 to Policy 5, changing the numbers of two of its programs, and adding new program 5.3 to limit the use of wood-burning stoves.
- Adding a new Energy and Conservation heading.
- Adding new Policy 6 and its program to reduce greenhouse gases, and referring to programs from the Energy, Public Facilities and Community Programs, Water, and Community Character Elements that would all help reduce greenhouse gases.
- Moving Policy 5 and its first three programs to the Safety Element as they discuss development of projects with hazardous materials, and moving its fourth program to the Energy Element as it would switch the types of lighting.
- Adding a new Technology heading.
- Adding new Policy 7 and its programs that would provide leadership to Pleasanton residents by having the City adopt air-pollutant-reduction programs that include purchasing more energy-efficient vehicles and equipment, properly maintaining the vehicle fleet, following Spare the Air Day recommendations, and considering the reduction of engine idling in larger vehicles.
- Adding new section on Odors including new Policy 8 and its programs that would minimize unpleasant odors in residential neighborhoods.
- Adding a new Public Awareness heading.
- Revising Policy 9 (former Policy 7) to include business participation, adding new programs to provide information on the internet, to recognize businesses that reduce air pollution, and to provide Spare the Air Day information; revising two programs to establish a public awareness program and to develop incentives for the public to help reduce pollution; deleting one program; and referring to programs in the Circulation Element to encourage less vehicle use.

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Review and consider the Draft Air Quality Element (Attachment 1 and Attachment 2); provide comments to staff for any amendments prior to the Draft Element being incorporated into a Public Hearing Draft General Plan

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Air Quality Element (clean copy)
2. Draft Air Quality Element (underline and strikeout)

Staff Planner: Janice Stern/Principal Planner/925.931.5606/jstern@ci.pleasanton.ca.us

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