South Coast
Air Quality Management District
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Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) for the Proposed II Villaggio Toscano Project (SCH No. 2004111068)

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) 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 CEQA document.

The proposed project includes the construction of up to 500 multi-family residential units and approximately 55,000 square feet of commercial uses in a series of six-story buildings built over a parking structure. The combined gross floor area for both residential and commercial uses would be approximately 708,659 square feet on a 5.1 acre site. The proposed project would also provide a total of 1,470 parking spaces and would include approximately 165,000 cubic yards of grading and soil export. Also, according to Figure II-2 on page II-3, the proposed project area is located less than 500 feet from the Ventura Freeway (US-101)/San Diego Freeway (I-405) interchange to the northwest. Sensitive land uses (i.e., residential uses) are located east of the project site.

Recent research has revealed that pollutants found in close proximity to roadways are associated with a variety of adverse health effects, independent of regional air quality impacts[1]. These can include reduced lung capacity and growth[2]; cardiopulmonary disease[3]; increased incidence of low birth weight, premature birth, and birth defects[4]; and exacerbation of asthma[5]. In order to address air quality issues such as these that are related to incompatible land uses, the California Air Resources Board published its Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Perspective (CARB Land Use Handbook)[6]. The CARB Land Use Handbook recommends avoiding siting sensitive land uses within 500 feet of high traffic roads.

1 "Special Report 17. Traffic-related air pollution: A critical review of the literature on emissions, exposure, and health effects". Health Effects Institute, May 2009; 394 p.
2 "Effect of exposure to traffic on lung development from 10 to 18 years of age: a cohort study". Gauderman WJ et al., Lancet, February 2007; 369 (9561): 571-7.
3 "Exposure to traffic and the onset of myocardial infarction". Peters A et al., The New England Journal of Medicine, 351(17):1721-1730
4 Ritz B, et al. 2002 Ambient air pollution and risk of birth defects in Southern California. Am J Epidemiology, 155:17-25
5 McConnell R, et al. 2006. Traffic, susceptibility, and childhood asthma. Environ Health Perspectives 114(5):766-72
6 http://www.arb.ca.gov/ch/handbook.pdf

The AQMD staff is concerned that project residents will be exposed to the substantial amounts of traffic resulting in a variety of adverse health effects. Despite its detail, the HRA and proposed mitigation appears to take an unrealistic view of potential health effects of the project. Given the preponderance of data now available regarding health effects from living near freeways, the AQMD staff strongly encourages the lead agency to reconsider placing new housing immediately adjacent to one of the busiest freeway intersections in southern California. Detailed comments regarding the HRA are attached to this letter.

Finally, AQMD staff is concerned that all feasible mitigation measures have not been considered to reduce the significant emissions associated with the construction and extensive grading activities for this project. In addition to the mitigation measures listed by the lead agency starting on page IV.B-74, AQMD staff recommends that additional mitigation measures be considered that might reduce these emissions further. These additional measures are described in the detailed comments attached to this letter.

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

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Health Risk Assessment

AQMD staff is concerned that the HRA underestimates the impacts to the residents that will be living in the proposed project. The 405-101 interchange is one of the busiest freeway intersections in southern California, with well over half a million cars passing through it each day. By placing the residential project immediately adjacent to this interchange, the lead agency is ignoring the abundant health science data that has come out over the past decade that demonstrates serious health consequences for those living near a freeway. Although the lead agency has made an attempt to quantify these impacts, the HRA does not mention any recent health studies that have been published since the regulatory guidance was published upon which the HRA is based. Further, several factors within the HRA analysis are inconsistent with AQMD recommended methodologies, and yield an underestimation of risk.

1. The modeling domain only includes emissions from the freeway within 500 feet of the project site. The analysis does not take into account the cumulative impact of the 405 and 101 freeways within ¼ mile of the project site, including the bulk of the interchange. AQMD staff recommends that if the lead agency chooses to continue pursuing this project, it revise the HRA to include impacts from the freeway out to ¼ mile.
2. The one in one million carcinogenic risk significance threshold utilized by the lead agency is based on the AQMD CEQA significance thresholds, however the HRA only uses a 30 year exposure period. The AQMD threshold is based on a standard 70 year residential threshold. As the lead agency has not specified a mitigation measure that will limit residential duration to 30 years or less, the HRA underestimates project impacts by a factor of 2.33 (70/30=2.33). This change would increase the baseline risk from 69 in one million to 128 in one million. The proposed mitigation (filters) would not mitigate this risk.
3. The HRA assumes that project residents would not be exposed to pollutants while spending time outdoors onsite. The proposed mitigation (filters in the HVAC system) has no effect when people spend time outdoors. However the exposure calculations in the HRA assume that people spend 100% of their time indoors. Additional mitigation measures would be required to ensure this occurs, including removing all areas where outdoor activities could occur, and ensuring that no windows are operable. In addition, a long term maintenance plan needs to be in place to ensure that high efficiency filters are replaced regularly for the life of the building.
4. The proposed 90% efficiency of the filters would not reduce the PM10 levels to less than significant levels (see table). The most recent data available from AQMD studies of filters indicates that even high efficiency filters rated at 90-99% efficiency only achieve approximately 85-90% efficiency in practice. This appears to result in an unreported significant health risk for residents living at the proposed project site.

Averaging Period	PM10 Baseline from HRA	PM10 after 90% filtration	PM10 significance threshold
24 hour	33.82	3.38	2.5
Annual	15.09	1.51	1.0

5. The acute toxics analysis presented in the HRA does not use worst case emission factors. For example, the Total Organic Gas emission factor is 0.086 grams per mile for the 1 hour acute analysis; however this corresponds to vehicle speeds of 64 mph. Emission factors for congested conditions, for example 5 mph, are 4.5 times higher at 0.387 grams per mile. As congested conditions occur daily at this interchange, the acute analysis should be revisited if the lead agency continues to pursue this project. The vehicle volume should also be revisited for acute conditions as long term rates may underestimate short term rates. AQMD staff notes that the proposed filter mitigation is ineffective at reducing the acute risk impacts from volatile organic compounds, even indoors.
6. The NO2 analysis presented in the HRA uses a NOx to NO2 conversion factor that may not be valid for this project site. As dispersion modeling was performed for the NO2 analysis, the NOx to NO2 conversion approaches recommended by the US EPA for use in AERMOD should be used to determine NO2 impacts if the lead agency chooses to continue with this project.

Construction Mitigation Measures

7. Because the lead agency has determined that construction phase emissions for oxides of nitrogen (NOx) and particulate matter (PM10) fugitive dust exceed the established significance thresholds, the SCAQMD recommends the following modifications and additions to the mitigation measures listed on page IV.B-74 to further to reduce NOx and PM10 emissions, if applicable and feasible. Additional construction mitigation measure suggestions can also be found at http://www.aqmd.gov/ceqa/handbook/mitigation/MM_intro.html:

Recommended Changes:

MM B-2 Streets shall be swept as needed during construction (recommend water sweepers with reclaimed water), but not more frequently than hourly, if visible soil material has been carried onto adjacent public paved roads.

MM B-4 General contractors shall maintain and operate construction equipment so as to minimize exhaust emissions. During construction, all trucks and vehicles ~~in loading and unloading queues~~ will have their engines turned off when not in use or idling will be limited to five (5) minutes or less, to reduce vehicle emissions. Ensure that all off-road equipment is compliant with the California Air Resources Board's (CARB) in-use off-road diesel vehicle regulation and SCAQMD Rule 2449. Construction activities should be phased and scheduled to avoid emissions peaks and discontinued during second-stage smog alerts.

MM B-6 ~~On-site mobile equipment shall be powered by alternative fuel sources (i.e., methanol, natural gas, propane pr butane) as feasible.~~

Require all on-site construction equipment to meet EPA Tier 2 or higher emissions standards according to the following:

- April 1, 2010, to December 31, 2011: All off-road diesel-powered construction equipment greater than 50 hp shall meet Tier 2 off-road emissions standards. In addition, all construction equipment shall be outfitted with the 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 2 or Level 3 diesel emissions control strategy for a similarly sized engine as defined by CARB regulations.

- January 1, 2012, to December 31, 2014: All off-road diesel-powered construction equipment greater than 50 hp shall meet Tier 3 off-road emissions standards. 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.

- 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.

A copy of each unit's certified tier specification, BACT documentation, and CARB or AQMD operating permit shall be provided at the time of mobilization of each applicable unit of equipment.

For additional measures to reduce off-road construction equipment and other construction related emissions, the following mitigation measure tables are located at the following website: www.aqmd.gov/ceqa/handbook/mitigation/MM_intro.html.

Recommended additions:

NOx

- Configure construction parking to minimize traffic interference;
- 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; and
- Reroute construction trucks away from congested streets or sensitive receptor areas.

PM10/PM2.5

- Install wheel washers where vehicles enter and exit the construction site onto paved roads or wash off trucks or any equipment leaving the site each trip;
- All trucks hauling dirt, sand, soil, or other loose materials are to be covered;
- Replace ground cover in disturbed areas as quickly as possible;
- Pave road and road shoulders;
- Traffic speeds on all unpaved roads to be reduced to 15 mph or less;
- Suspend all excavating and grading operations when wind speeds (as instantaneous gusts) exceed 25 mph; and
- Appoint a construction relations officer to act as a community liaison concerning on-site construction activity including resolution of issues related to PM10 generation.