5.0

AIR QUALITY ELEMENT

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Introduction

The Air Quality Element is intended to protect the public's health and welfare by implementing measures that allow the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to attain Federal and State air quality standards that will move toward a sustainable level of air quality. To achieve this goal, the Element sets forth a number of policies and standards to reduce current pollution emissions and to require new development to include measures to comply with air quality standards. In addition, this Element contains provisions to address new air quality requirements.

California Government Code Section 65303 enables a county or city to adopt "any other elements or address any other subjects, which, in the judgment of the legislative body, relate to the physical development of the county or city." The City of Avenal has adopted the Air Quality Element to help the community meet ambient air quality standards established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the California Air Resources Board.

Purpose of the Air Quality Element

The purpose of the Air Quality Element is to identify air quality problem areas and implement policies and standards to address those problem areas. Without the implementation and maintenance of appropriate air quality standards, threats to public health and a declining quality of life may result. The Air Quality Element, although not mandated by state planning law, has been included in Avenal's General Plan to ensure a healthy environment through the management of our air resources.

Scope and Content of the Air Quality Element

The Air Quality Element includes goals, objectives and policies and standards for minimizing the number and length of vehicle trips, transportation alternatives, and for requiring area and stationary source projects that generate significant amounts of air pollutants to incorporate air quality mitigation in their design.

Goal

To protect the health and welfare of Avenal residents by promoting development that is compatible with air quality standards.

Objectives

A. Develop consistent and accurate procedures for evaluating the air quality impacts of new projects.

B. As part of the development review process, develop mitigation measures to minimize stationary and area source emissions.

C. Develop transportation systems that minimize vehicle delay and air pollution.

D. Develop consistent and accurate procedures for mitigating transportation emissions from new and existing projects.

E. Encourage alternative modes of transportation including pedestrian, bicycle, and transit usage.

F. Conserve energy and reduce air emissions by encouraging energy efficient building designs and transportation systems.

Policies and Standards

1. Coordinate with other local and regional jurisdictions, including the SJVAPCD and the California Air Resources Board (ARB), in the development of regional and county clean air plans and incorporate the relevant provisions of those plans into City planning and project review procedures. Also cooperate with the SJVAPCD and ARB in:

    - Enforcing the provisions of the California and Federal Clean Air Acts, state and regional policies, and established standards for air quality.

    - Economy clean fuel for city vehicle fleets, when feasible.

    - Developing consistent procedures for evaluating project-specific and cumulative air quality impacts of projects.

2. Require area and stationary source projects that generate significant amounts of air pollutants to incorporate air quality mitigation in their design, including:

- The use of best available and economically feasible control technology for stationary industrial sources;

- The use of EPA Phase II certified wood burning heater or pellet stoves in new residential units;

- The use of new and replacement fuel storage tanks at refueling stations that are clean fuel compatible, if technically and economically feasible; and

- The promotion of energy efficient designs, including provisions for solar access, building siting to maximize natural heating and cooling, and landscaping to aid passive cooling and to protect from winter winds.

3. Develop strategies to minimize the number and length of vehicle trips, which may include:

   - Promoting commercial/industrial project proponent sponsorship of van pools or club buses;

   - Encouraging commercial/industrial project day care and employee services at the employment site;

   - Encouraging the provision of transit, especially for employment-intensive uses of 200 or more employees; and

   - Providing expansion and improvement of public transportation services and facilities in conjunction with KART.

4. Encourage transportation alternatives to motor vehicles by developing infrastructure amenable to such alternatives by doing the following:

   - Consider right-of-way requirements for bike usage in the planning of new arterial and collector streets and in street improvement projects;

   - Require that new development be designed to promote pedestrian and bicycle access and circulation; and

   - Provide safe and secure bicycle parking facilities at major activity centers, such as public facilities, employment sites, and shopping and office centers.

5. Encourage land use development to be located and designed to conserve air quality and minimize direct and indirect emissions of air contaminants by doing the following:

   - Locate air pollution point sources, such as manufacturing and extracting facilities in areas designated for industrial development and separated from residential areas and sensitive receptors (e.g., homes, schools, and hospitals);

- Establish buffer zones (e.g., setbacks, landscaping) within residential and other sensitive receptor site plans to separate those uses from highways, arterials, hazardous material locations and other sources of air pollution or odor;

- Consider the jobs/housing/balance relationship (i.e., the proximity of industrial and commercial uses to major residential areas) when making land use decisions;

- Provide for mixed-use development through land use and zoning to reduce the length and frequency of vehicle trips;

- Accommodate a portion of the projected population and economic growth of the City in areas having the potential for revitalization;

- Locate public facilities (libraries, parks, schools, community centers, etc.) with consideration of transit and other transportation opportunities;

- Encourage small neighborhood-serving commercial uses within or adjacent to residential neighborhoods when such areas are aesthetically compatible with adjacent areas; do not create conflicts with neighborhoods schools; minimize traffic, noise, and lighting impacts; encourage and accommodate pedestrian and bicycle access; and, are occupied by commercial uses that have a neighborhood-scale market area rather than a community-wide market area; and

- Encourage a development pattern that is contiguous with existing developed areas of the City.