

VI. ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE

ADDENDUM TO THE 98-00 RTP EIR

A Program EIR was prepared and certified for the 1998-00 RTP (State Clearinghouse # 99032077). The EIR included descriptions of all the required elements. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines provide several options for environmental documentation once an EIR has been prepared for a project or program. Where only minor changes occur to the project or program, an addendum to the previously certified EIR may be prepared. While there have been adjustments made to the projects and programs contained in the 2006 RTP Update, there are very limited financial resources to deliver projects. The programmed projects that have been proposed in previous RTPs would be the candidates for any future limited funding. In addition, projects in the RTP cover the same transportation modes as in previous RTPs. Therefore, an addendum is appropriate to meet the guidelines.

COORDINATION WITH NORTH COAST UNIFIED AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Humboldt County is included in the North Coast Air Basin along with Del Norte, Trinity and Mendocino Counties. These counties operate as a unified special district, also called the North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District (NCUAQMD), which manages air resources in this mountainous, predominantly rural region.

Most major air pollutants in Humboldt County-especially for mobile sources-are well below levels that the state considers harmful. Sources of ozone precursor emissions are low enough that ozone smog does not rise to significant levels, even during periods of minimal air movement. The entirety of the North Coast Air Basin has been designated as "attainment" or "unclassified" for all criteria pollutants (carbon monoxide, ozone, sulfur oxides, and nitrogen dioxide) and is subject to "Prevention of Significant Deterioration" (PSD) permit procedures. Except for Redwood National Park, which is designated Class I, all of Humboldt County is designated as a Class II area.

Long term impacts on regional air quality are projected to increase at a slower rate than in the past, due to conversion to more efficient and lower emission vehicles, RTP plan policies and actions encouraging public transit use and conversion of transit vehicles to alternative fuels, and programs and improvements designed to increase bicycle and pedestrian system use.

Consultant staff spoke with Robert Torzynski, Planner at the North Coast Air District regarding the use of Emfac2002 V2.2 as the modeling tool for the calculation of future emissions in Humboldt County. The Emfac modeling tool for Humboldt County was accessed from the California Air Resource Board's (CARB) website. It should be noted that the ARB requires other Metropolitan Planning Organizations within California to use the Emfac model for making air quality conformity determinations. Mr. Torzynski commented that the Vehicle Miles Traveled estimate of 41% was conservative and in line with the small population increase

expected within Humboldt County. In addition, he agreed with the model results of decreased vehicle emission over the next twenty years. Since the Emfac model predicts emissions based on the vehicle fleet over time, it is assumed cleaner vehicles will be on the road in twenty years. For instance, it is expected that fewer polluting vehicles from the 1970's era (10% of the vehicle fleet today) will be on the road.

Particulate Matter

Humboldt County is currently listed as non-attainment for PM₁₀ by the CARB. This status continues to be impacted by the projected growth in region wide vehicle miles of travel (VMT) and population. Table VI-1 shows the expected level of increase in VMT and mobile emission levels if no improvements are made to the existing transportation system.

Table VI-1: Projected Emissions From Mobile Sources

Category	Existing Conditions (2005)	Future Conditions (2020)	Percent Change
Pollutant:	*Tons Per Day	*Tons Per Day	
Total Organic Gasses	8.706	3.915	-55%
Carbon Monoxide	68.253	30.293	-56%
Oxides of Nitrogen	15.308	7.13	-53%
Oxides of Sulfur	0.347	0.303	-13%
Particulate Matter < 10 microns	0.782	0.615	-21%
Particulate Matter < 2.5 microns	0.662	0.493	-26%
*Emissions from natural sources are excluded. Data Compiled From: Air Resources Board, 2006.			

Fine Particulate Matter

There is currently a federal standard for the Fine Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5}) pollutant, but no state standard for California. The North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District has been monitoring for this pollutant since January 1999. The federal EPA (<http://www.epa.gov/oar/primer/timeline.htm>) has provided the following timeline for implementing the PM_{2.5} standards:

- 1998-2000 Monitors for PM_{2.5} put in place nationwide.
- 1998-2000 Collect monitoring data.
- 2002 EPA completes 5-year scientific review of particulate matter standards.
- 2002-2005 EPA designates areas.
- 2005-2008 States submit plans to EPA outlining how they will meet PM_{2.5} standards. States needing reductions begin implementing programs.
- 2012-2017 Following designation, states may have up to twelve years under the Clean Air Act to meet PM_{2.5} standards.

Based on the timeline shown above, it is not known what control measures, if any, will apply to Humboldt County. However, reduced motor vehicle emissions are expected to reduce emissions of fine particulate matter, and thereby support attainment and/or maintenance of the federal PM_{2.5} standard.

Based on the analysis of freeways, arterials and collectors, daily regional VMT is expected to increase 28 percent between 2005 and 2020. This represents an average annual increase of 1.9 percent on the County's state highway system. Although VMT is expected to increase over time, the resulting emissions are predicted to decrease due to cleaner vehicle emissions on the road by the year 2020.

Transportation improvements from projects contained in the Action Element of the RTP will further reduce emissions in the future as well as alleviate congestion in the peak hours at peak locations.