



## Land Use & Air Quality Update

*Editor: Joseph J. Hurley, Associate Air Quality Planner/Analyst*

The quarterly newsletter of the Sac Metro Air District's Transportation & Climate Change Division (TCC). This edition includes the TCC statement on Racial Equity and Justice, updates on the Adopted GHG Thresholds, AQMP streamlining, Friant Guidance on health analysis, the Roadside Landscaping Guidance, a summary of recent updates to the CEQA guidance, and the Capital Region Urban Heat Island Report.

[Visit our Website](#)

### Transportation & Climate Change Division Statement on Racial Equity and Justice

We are deeply saddened by the deaths of George Floyd, Tamir Rice, Breonna Taylor, Stephon Clark and many other people of color that have suffered due to systematic and institutionalized racism. We also recognize the need and urgency to resolve the ongoing injustice and oppression in communities of color. Sac Metro Air District staff are examining how the Transportation & Climate Change Division can do more to remedy historic and ongoing injustices, such as redlining and overburdening minority communities with air pollution. We commit to exploring ways to remove barriers for incentive funding programs and integrating racial equity within our tools and decisions.

### Operational GHG Thresholds Adopted

On April 23, 2020, the Sac Metro Air District Board approved new operational greenhouse gas (GHG) thresholds of significance for land use projects. Thresholds are now based on consistency with the State's Scoping Plan through a series of best management practices, with off-site mitigation options for projects unable to demonstrate consistency. The Sac Metro Air District's CEQA guidance has been updated to reflect the updated GHG thresholds and related analysis requirements.



[CEQA Guide](#)

[Thresholds of Significance](#)

## Streamlining the AQMP/GHGRP Process

The Sac Metro Air District created a form to simplify the creation and review of operational air quality mitigation and greenhouse gas reduction plans (AQMP and GHGRP).

The form requires the input of information on topics such as: existing land use designations, public facilities and urban services financing plans, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) assumptions, energy standards assumptions, and mitigation measure enforcement mechanisms.

The Sac Metro Air District anticipates project proponents and consultants will submit this form in lieu of or to summarize a project's AQMP and GHGRP. The form will reduce local jurisdiction review time by ensuring all the necessary information is provided.

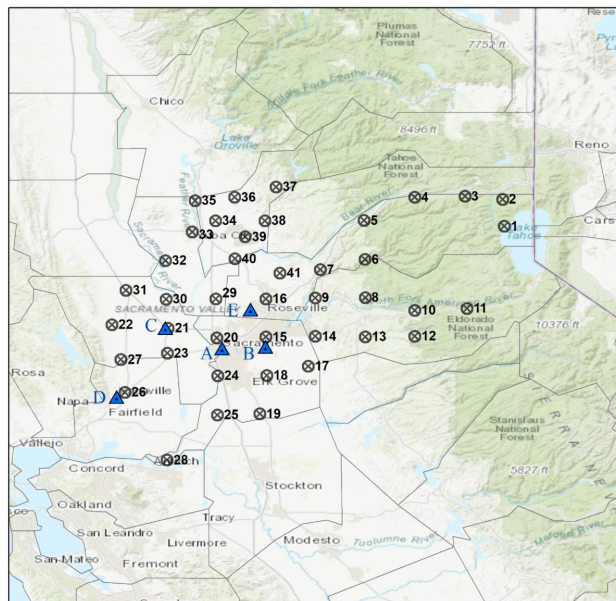


### AQMP/GHGRP Form

## Progress on Friant Health Screening Guidance

In January 2020, the Sac Metro Air District released its draft *Guidance to Address the Friant Ranch Ruling for CEQA Projects in the Sac Metro Air District* and requested comments.

The *Guidance* was intended to provide health effects screening tools for CEQA projects with emissions at the maximum thresholds of significance levels in the 5-air-district region (82 pounds/day) and with emissions exceeding the maximum thresholds (up to 656 pounds/day) in five strategic areas within the region. These tools are the Minor Project Health Effects Tool and the Strategic Area Health Effects Tool, respectively. If a CEQA project does not qualify to use either of the health effects screening tools due to emissions levels or location, project specific modeling guidance is provided. Input files are available by request to assist with project specific modeling related work.



Sac Metro Air District considered the comments received on the draft *Guidance* and prepared a revised draft *Guidance*. The most significant update to the revised draft *Guidance* is a new section on disclosing health effects in a CEQA document, which includes a discussion on providing overall health context along with reporting the results of the health screening tools or project specific modeling effort. The health effects screening tools have been revised to include the calculated project related health incidences, the total number of each health incidence in the 5-air-district region, and the percent of background health incidences in the 5-air-district region population rather than the entire modeling domain population. These changes should aid CEQA practitioners in reporting health effects and overall health context for a project.

Comments received on the draft *Guidance* along with Sac Metro Air District responses, a revised draft *Guidance*, and updated health effects screening tools are now available on the Sac Metro Air District's website:

### Draft Guidance

Comments on the revised draft *Guidance* should be sent via email to Paul Philley and Karen Huss by **July 17, 2020**.

Paul Philley, AICP

Karen Huss

Since the *Guidance* is the first effort to correlate health effects with a CEQA project's emissions, and it is still in draft form, lead agencies may continue to use the Sac Metro Air District's *Interim Recommendation for Friant Ranch* to meet the intent of the court's ruling.

Sac Metro Air District Interim Friant Guidance

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## Roadside Landscaping Guidance Updated

First published in 2017, the *Landscaping Guidance for Improving Air Quality Near Roadways* provides information on how to design, plant, and care for a tree and shrub vegetation barrier to reduce particle air pollution from roadways, appropriate to the Sacramento region.

Version 2.0 (May 2020) addresses the critical topics of climate change and allergens. Read the updated guidance to learn about designing a vegetation barrier that is resilient to climate change and does not create an allergen hazard.



The Landscaping Guidance is part of a suite of resources on assessing, disclosing and reducing risk from heavily-traveled roadways and railways. For more information, see the Mobile Sources Air Toxics Protocol web-page.

Updated Landscaping Guidance for Improving Air Quality Near Roadways

Mobile Sources Air Toxics Protocol

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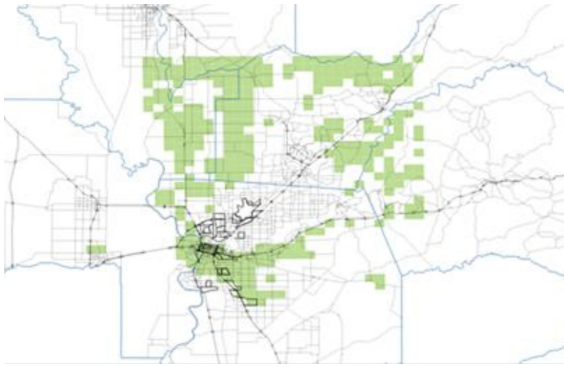
## Other Updates to Sac Metro Air District Guidance Documents

The Sac Metro Air District routinely updates its CEQA and land use related guidance documents to reflect changes in case law, best practices, and regulations. Recent updates to the guidance documents include the following items:

- Expanded the Transportation Management Association (TMA) mitigation measure in the *Recommended Guidance for Land Use Emission Reductions* to better define the expectations for the provision of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) services.
- Various CEQA Guide chapters have had weblink updates, minor wording, and grammatical corrections.
- Chapter 6 of the CEQA Guide has been updated to reflect the new operational land development greenhouse gas thresholds and related implementation guidance.
- Chapter 9 of the CEQA Guide has been updated to include the new operational land development greenhouse gas thresholds, align with the Appendix G checklist, and provide updated technical references to the State General Plan Guidelines and inventory tools.

Sac Metro Air District CEQA Guidance

## Capital Region Urban Heat Island Project



*This map shows the top neighborhood priority by zip code in the Sacramento Region, as reflected in responses to the community priorities survey. The color's light/dark gradient indicates how strongly that priority came out as the top choice in that zip code. More in-depth findings can be found in the Community Priorities Report.*

April marked the culmination of the Capital Region Urban Heat Island Project lead by Shelley Jiang and funded by CalTrans. After nearly two years of modeling and collaborating with local government organizations and communities, the team has advanced the understanding of urban heat and its relationship with the transportation sector in the Sacramento Region employing models and analysis generated by the data scientists of Altostratus, Inc. The transportation sector in the Sacramento Region, mostly comprised of personal vehicle use and the asphalt roads that cater to them, makes significant contributions to urban heat and is itself vulnerable to heat atrophy.

By intimately understanding where hot spots are located and how different cooling strategies affect them, local government organizations now have the tools to address extreme heat in each community. Key findings:

- Time of day can dictate which cooling strategies is most effective. Trees, for example, are the best at mitigating heat in the morning, while cool pavements and roofs provide the most cooling at 3:00 pm
- Cooling strategies can completely offset UHIs, particularly when neighboring jurisdictions work together to adopt strategies
- The areas with the largest UHIs include northeast Sacramento, Folsom, El Dorado Hills, Roseville, Rocklin, Lincoln, central parts of Yuba City / Marysville, and a portion of Auburn
- As 2050 approaches, the UHI effect will likely become more drastic
- Heat pollution is significant. Implementing cooling measures in the hottest parts of the City (North and East Sacramento) reduces temperatures throughout the region.
- Collective adoption of a combination of strategies is the way to target extreme heat
- The reach explores solar PV shading, EVs, and infill can also help to reduce UHIs

To further encourage heat resilience, the team developed a guide for organizations interested in implementing transportation-related heat mitigation projects. The report emphasizes the co-benefits associated with UHI adaptation and considers the different programs, mandates and policies that can be used by local jurisdictions to actualize heat mitigation strategies.

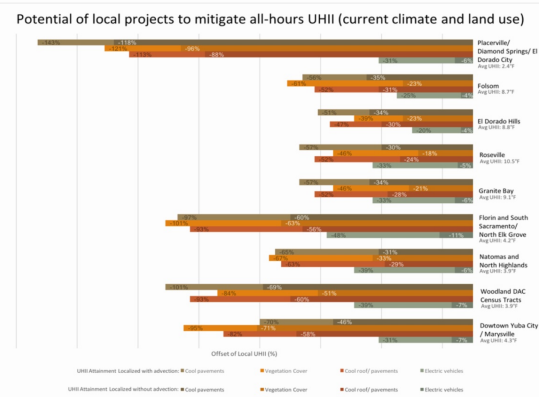
The team has several [other reports to share with communities and jurisdictions](#). If you are interested in teaching your community about urban heat mitigation, a 'Cool Ambassadors' program is in development. To access the reports, download the data, become a Cool Ambassador, or learn more about UHI [check out the project website](#).

Understanding the Urban Heat Island Effect

Keeping Cool in the Capital Region

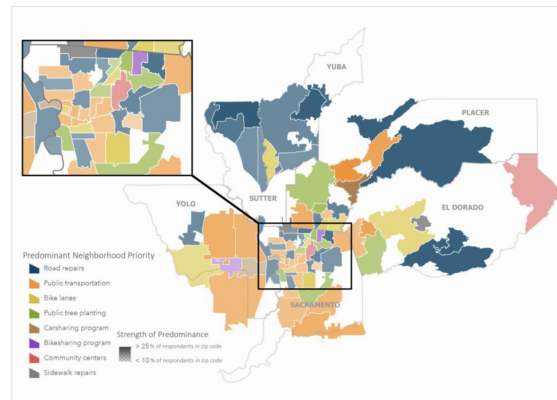
*This graph shows the potential of local projects in mitigating the all-hours UHI in current climate and land use for different locations. The lower bar shows the percent reduction in UHI if the community implemented that measure alone (without advection), and the complete bar shows the percent reduction in UHI if the community and*





its upwind neighboring communities all implemented the same measure (with advection).

Areas in need of UHI mitigation were ranked using UHI models. Only climate was considered for this ranking, costs and socio-economic factors are omitted. The utmost priority area is located outside of Sacramento County, it includes small areas from Roseville, Lincoln, and Auburn.



## Current updates on regional Air Quality



### Check out Spare The Air

Check out the best source for Air Quality Information in the Sacramento Region:

[www.sparetheair.com](http://www.sparetheair.com)