Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead

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Acting Director of Planning

June 30, 2009

TO: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chair
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: Jon Sanabria
Acting Director of Planning

SUBJECT: **RESPONSE TO BOARD MOTION REGARDING COORDINATION OF THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE AND EIR WITH OTHER COUNTY CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVES (MAY 12, 2009, ITEM #2)**

On May 12, 2009, the Board instructed the Acting Director of Regional Planning in consultation with the Acting County Counsel and other appropriate Departments to report back on how the Department will develop the General Plan and its companion EIR in a way that will:

a) inventory the County's operational and communitywide contribution to greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with accepted protocols;

b) help to ensure that the County is prepared to adapt to the likely environmental effects of climate change through a combination of policies contained within the General Plan itself, the enumeration of future implementation actions, and/or coordination with the Climate Action Plan; and

c) ensure that the current draft of the General Plan will be modified in response to any new data and policy recommendations that emerge from the plan's EIR, the greenhouse gas emissions inventory, and the climate change adaptation modeling and the Climate Action Plan in a way that will create the clear and measurable, and enforceable package of environmental measures, policies, and future implementation actions necessary to reduce communitywide greenhouse gas emissions in compliance with Board policy, AB 32 Scoping Plan benchmarks, and CEQA mandates.

General Plan Update

The objective of the draft General Plan is to address climate change through three main strategies: 1) policies that encourage infill development, mixed uses, jobs-housing balance and transit-oriented development in appropriate areas; 2) policies that preserve and conserve open space and environmentally sensitive areas; and 3) policies that promote energy-efficient green building and low impact development practices. In the current version of the draft General Plan, the Air Resources Element outlines these strategies, and provides an overview of the County's efforts to develop a Regional Climate Action Plan in conjunction with the Regional Collaborative for Climate Action and Sustainability, which includes the development of a greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory for communitywide and municipal operations, as recommended by AB 32.

Regional Planning staff will revise the draft General Plan to ensure that these climate change strategies are clearly articulated. The revisions will also include relevant updates to the County's participation on other initiatives to reduce GHG emissions, such as the implementation of SB 375. Regional Planning staff will also rework the language to strengthen and add additional policies and implementation programs, and make land use changes, as needed, to address remaining climate change issues. Furthermore, Regional Planning staff will make changes to the draft based on the data and policy recommendations of the EIR, as needed, and tie in any relevant information that emerges through the development of the Regional Climate Action Plan, such as the results of the climate adaptation model.

General Plan EIR

The Air Quality Technical Study for the General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will include an analysis of climate change impacts. The EIR will include an emissions inventory for the following scenarios:

1. Existing Baseline
2. Current General Plan
3. General Plan Update

The GHG emissions inventory used for the General Plan EIR is a communitywide inventory for the unincorporated County. The communitywide GHG emissions inventory includes an analysis of GHG emissions generated by land uses within the unincorporated County. A GHG emissions inventory for the County's municipal operations is not proposed as part of the GHG emissions inventory used for the General Plan EIR.

The emissions inventory will quantify GHG emissions from the following sources within the County for each of the scenarios listed above:

- **Transportation sources:** Based on the EMFAC207 computer model, based on total trips (trip generation) and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) identified in the traffic study.
- **Indirect emissions from energy:**
  - Purchased energy – Based on land use statistics (non-residential square footage, units) and California emission rates from the United States Energy Information Administration (EIA).
  - Water use/transport/treatment – Based on water demand calculated for the unincorporated County in the EIR and estimated embodied energy from the California Energy Commission and California emission rates from the EIA.
- **Non-industrial stationary sources:** Based on the URBEMIS2007 computer model using land use statistics (non-residential square footage, units).
- **Indirect emissions from waste disposal:** Based on waste disposal rates for the unincorporated County from the California Integrated Waste Management Board using the land use statistics (non-residential square footage, units) and emission rates from the United States Environmental Protection Agency's WARM computer model.

In many cases, the GHG emissions inventory used for the General Plan EIR and the Regional Climate Action Plan will require similar information sources (e.g., energy use, water use, vehicle miles traveled, etc.). However, they may differ for Existing Baseline Year and/or Future Year, depending on the approach to the Regional Climate Action Plan.

If the General Plan and EIR are prepared on a different timeline with the Regional Climate Action Plan, the following items will be detailed in the EIR Mitigation Measures associated with the County's cumulative contribution to climate change impacts:

- Timeline for the development and adoption of the Regional Climate Action Plan;
- Interim measures required for new development between the time of adoption of the General Plan Update and adoption of the Regional Climate Action Plan;
- Series of goals for the GHG emissions reduction strategy;
- "Business as usual" GHG emissions inventory (GHG inventory without GHG reduction strategies); and
- GHG emissions inventory with incorporation of strategies to reduce GHG emissions.

Next Steps

The Department is requesting an additional 60 days to report back on the specific timeline and work plan for completing General Plan Update and EIR. During this time, we would like to collaborate with the Board offices, County Counsel and the CEO to coordinate concurrent and complementary County efforts to address climate change, and set a course for completing the General Plan Update.

This memo was prepared in consultation with County Counsel staff and The Planning Center, which is the County's General Plan EIR consultant. For more detailed information, please refer to the attached memo prepared by The Planning Center.

JS:RCH:CC

c: Chief Executive Officer
Acting County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

Attachment: Memo from The Planning Center

Memorandum

DATE	May 27, 2009
TO	County of Los Angeles - Department of Regional Planning
CONTACT	Connie Chung
FROM	Konnie Dobreva
SUBJECT	Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory for the General Plan Environmental Impact Report
PROJECT NO.	COLA-03.0E

AB 32 - Global Warming Solutions Act

Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32), the Global Warming Solutions Act, was passed by the California State legislature on August 31, 2006, to place the State on a course toward reducing its contribution of GHG emissions. AB 32 follows the emissions reduction targets established in Executive Order S-3-05, signed on June 1, 2005, which requires the State's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to be reduced to 1990 levels by 2020, and by 80 percent of 1990 levels by 2050. Projected GHG emissions in California are estimated at 596 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_{2e})[1] emissions by 2020. In December 2007, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) approved a 2020 emissions limit of 427 million metric tons (471 million tons) of CO_{2e} for the State. The 2020 target requires emissions reductions of 169 million metric tons, approximately 30 percent of the projected emissions, compared to business as usual in 2020.

On December 11, 2008, CARB adopted the *Climate Change Scoping Plan*, which identifies the Statewide strategy to achieve the emissions reductions prescribed in AB 32. In recognition of the critical role that local governments will play in the successful implementation of AB 32, CARB is recommending GHG emissions reduction goals of 15 percent of today's levels by 2020 to ensure that municipal and communitywide emissions match the State's reduction target.

[1] CO_2-equivalence is used to show the relative potential that different GHG have to retain infrared radiation in the atmosphere and contribute to the greenhouse effect. This potential, the global warming potential of a GHG, is also dependent on the lifetime, or persistence, of the gas molecule in the atmosphere.

SB 375 - Regional GHG Emissions Targets

In 2008, Senate Bill 375 (SB 375) was adopted to connect the GHG emissions reduction targets established in the Scoping Plan for the transportation sector to local land use decisions that affect travel behavior. Its intent is to reduce GHG emissions from passenger vehicles (light-duty trucks and automobiles) (excludes emissions associated with goods movement) by aligning regional long-range transportation plans, investments, and housing allocations to local land use planning to reduce vehicle miles traveled and vehicle trips. Specifically, SB 375 requires CARB to establish a GHG emissions reduction target for each of the 17 regions in California managed by a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is the MPO for the Southern California region, which includes the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, Ventura, and Riverside.

The GHG emissions reduction targets from passenger vehicles for each region are required to be established no later than September 30, 2010. Once the GHG emissions reduction target for each region has been established, SB 375 requires the MPOs to prepare a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) in their Regional Transportation Plan. While there is no deadline for the adoption of the SCS, it is anticipated that the first plans will not be released until 2011, at the earliest. The SCS sets forth a development pattern for the region, which, when integrated with the transportation network and other transportation measures and policies, would reduce GHG emissions from transportation (excluding goods movement). The SCS is meant to provide individual local jurisdictions with growth strategies that together achieve the regional GHG emissions reduction target. The SCS does not require that local General Plans, Specific Plans, or zoning be consistent with the SCS, but provides incentives for consistency for local governments and developers. If the SCS is unable to achieve the regional GHG emissions reduction target, then the MPO is required to prepare an Alternative Planning Strategy that shows how the GHG emissions reduction target could be achieved through alternative development patterns, infrastructure, and/or transportation measures.

SB 97 - Climate Change and CEQA

In addition to the requirements under AB 32, to address GHG emissions and global climate change in General Plans and CEQA documents, Senate Bill 97 (Chapter 185, 2007) requires the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to develop CEQA guidelines on how to address global warming emissions, and mitigate project-generated GHG emissions. As interim guidance, OPR

released the Technical Advisory for addressing climate change through CEQA review in June 2008. On April 13, 2009, OPR transmitted the proposed changes to the CEQA guidelines that address climate change analyses to the California Natural Resources Agency. The California Natural Resource Agency has until January 1, 2010 to adopt the proposed changes to the CEQA guidelines.

GHG INVENTORY FOR THE GENERAL PLAN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The California Attorney General (AG) has filed numerous comment letters to agencies whose analyses under CEQA failed to properly analyze or mitigate a project's potential significant environmental impacts. Consequently, it is critical that the EIR include a thorough evaluation of the potential impacts associated with the buildout of the General Plan Update. The AG's office has prepared a factsheet entitled *Straightfoward Answers to Some Frequently Asked Questions* in order to clarify what the AG's office is looking for in the CEQA analysis for a General Plan. The proposal for the General Plan EIR include an Air Quality Technical Study. As detailed in the scope of work dated February 28, 2008, the Air Quality Technical Study will include an analysis of climate change impacts. Consistent with the recommendations in the AG's *Frequently Asked Questions*, the EIR will include an emissions inventory for the following scenarios:

1. Existing Baseline
2. Current General Plan
3. General Plan Update

The emissions inventory will quantify GHG emissions from the following sources within the County for each of the scenarios listed above:

- Transportation sources – Based on the EMFAC207 computer model, based on total trips (trip generation) and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) identified in the traffic study.
- Indirect emissions from energy
  - Purchased energy – Based on land use statistics (non-residential square footage, units) and California emission rates from the United States Energy Information Administration (EIA).
  - Water use/transport/treatment – Based on water demand calculated for the unincorporated County in the EIR and estimated embodied energy from the

California Energy Commission and California emission rates from the Energy Information Administration.

- Non-industrial stationary sources – Based on the URBEMIS2007 computer model using land use statistics (non-residential square footage, units).
- Indirect emissions from waste disposal – Based on waste disposal rates for the unincorporated County of Los Angeles from the California Integrated Waste Management Board using the land use statistics (non-residential square footage, units) and emission rates from the United States Environmental Protection Agency's WARM computer model.

The GHG emissions inventory used for the General Plan EIR is a communitywide inventory for the unincorporated County. The communitywide GHG emissions inventory includes an analysis of GHG emissions generated by land uses within the unincorporated County of Los Angeles. While the inventory will include County-owned buildings as part of the land use inventory, a GHG emissions inventory for the County's municipal operations is not proposed as part of the GHG emissions inventory used for the General Plan EIR. The municipal operations GHG emissions inventory is a separate inventory that details the GHG emissions from emissions sources specifically under the County's control, such as county-owned buildings, municipal vehicle fleet, county-owned water treatment facilities, etc. CARB has established protocols for local government operations. However, CARB is in the process of developing protocols for the communitywide emissions inventory.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE GHG INVENTORY FOR THE GENERAL PLAN EIR AND THE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

In many cases, the emissions inventory for the General Plan EIR and the Climate Action Plan will require similar information sources (e.g., energy use, water use, vehicle miles traveled, etc.). However, the GHG emissions inventory for the Climate Action Plan and the GHG emissions inventory General Plan EIR may differ for the Existing Baseline Year and/or Future Year, depending on the County's approach to the Climate Action Plan.

Existing Baseline Year – Climate Action Plan vs CEQA Baseline

The Existing Baseline year for the General Plan EIR GHG emissions inventory must be consistent with the Existing Baseline year used throughout the EIR. Pursuant to Section 15125 of the CEQA Guidelines, the baseline environmental setting is the physical environmental conditions as they exist at the time the Notice of Preparation (NOP) is published, or if no NOP, at the time

environmental analysis is commenced. The Environmental Baseline for the General Plan is likely to be 2009 or 2010. However, a Climate Action Plan is not restricted from choosing an alternative baseline model year. For example, many local jurisdictions choose to model 2006 because CARB has compiled the Statewide GHG emissions inventory for 2000–2006[2]. In addition, some local jurisdictions choose to also model 1990 because AB 32 directed the State to reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. However, it should be noted that 1990 is not a baseline inventory year for the Statewide emissions reduction strategy. The purpose of identifying 1990 GHG emissions, pursuant to AB 32, was to identify the emissions reductions necessary to achieve the 2020 Statewide emissions reduction target. Based on the 1990 Statewide GHG emissions inventory, CARB identified a 30 percent reduction from 2020 is necessary to achieve the 2020 goal outlined in AB 32. While 1990 can be used as the GHG emissions reduction goal for local jurisdictions, similar to that identified in AB 32, CARB's Scoping Plan recommends a GHG emissions reduction goal for local governments of 15 percent below today's levels by 2020 to ensure that their municipal and communitywide emissions match the State's reduction target.

Future Year – Climate Action Plan vs CEQA General Plan Buildout

The primary difference between the GHG emissions inventory used for the General Plan EIR and the Climate Action Plan will be the future emissions inventories scenario modeled. The GHG emissions inventory used for the General Plan EIR is based on the communitywide inventory of future GHG emissions at full buildout of the General Plan. General Plan buildout, for the purpose of the EIR, is not tied to any specific development timeline. While the Climate Action Plan also would need to include a communitywide emissions inventory, the emissions inventory is tied to regional buildout projections.

The GHG emissions inventory used for the General Plan EIR must be consistent with the traffic study. The traffic study model year is based on the latest regional traffic model forecast year available, which is currently 2035. Consequently, the General Plan traffic analysis and therefore the GHG emissions inventory used for the General Plan EIR will assume that all land uses in the unincorporated County are built out by 2035. However, it is unlikely that all land uses in the County will be developed/redeveloped by 2035. Therefore, the GHG emissions inventory used for

[2] California Air Resources Board. Greenhouse Gas Inventory Data – 2000 to 2006. http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/inventory/data/data.htm

the General Plan EIR is really projecting a long-term, post-2035 GHG emissions scenario rather than a GHG emissions inventory for 2035.

In contrast, a Climate Action Plan needs to identify realistic GHG emissions reduction targets that the County can achieve. Therefore, the GHG emissions inventory in the Climate Action Plan needs to be based on a forecast of development conditions (market analysis) or projected changes in demographics (population, employment, housing units) over time in order to establish a timetable for emissions reductions and the future GHG emissions inventory. Because CARB identified a goal of 15 percent from existing levels by 2020 for local jurisdictions, many local jurisdictions are choosing to model the 2020 scenario as part of the Climate Action Plan emissions inventory. As a result, the GHG emissions inventory used for the General Plan EIR can be seen as a long-term emissions inventory, whereas the Climate Action Plan provides a more immediate GHG emissions inventory in order to establish short-term and long-term GHG emissions reduction goals.

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN – ACCEPTABLE MITIGATION FOR THE GENERAL PLAN EIR?

The California AG's *Frequently Asked Questions* specifically states that they consider a Climate Action Plan reasonable mitigation for a General Plan-level CEQA analysis. Although they recommend that a Climate Action Plan be prepared at the same time as the General Plan Update and EIR, this is not required. However, if a Climate Action Plan is not prepared at the same time, then the following items should be detailed in the Mitigation Measures for the Climate Action Plan associated with the County's cumulative contribution to climate change impacts:

- Timeline for the development and adoption of the Climate Action Plan;
- Interim measures required for new development between the time of adoption of the General Plan Update and adoption of the Climate Action Plan;
- Series of goals for the GHG emissions reduction strategy;
- "Business as usual" GHG emissions inventory (GHG inventory without GHG reduction strategies); and
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