



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Marc A. Ott, City Manager
Robert Goode, P.E., Assistant City Manager

FROM: Robert Spillar, P.E., Director, Austin Transportation Department
Lucia Athens, Chief Sustainability Officer
Carl Smart, Director, Code Compliance Department

DATE: January 30, 2013

SUBJECT: **Comprehensive Air Quality Program Resolution**
City Council Resolution No. 20120524-077, CIUR 780

The following is a DRAFT summary of the recommendations prepared in response to CUIR 780. The final report will be available after it is review by Environmental Board and Urban Transportation Commission. A formal council briefing is scheduled for March 7, 2013.

Process Summary

Council Resolution No. 20120524-077 directs staff to evaluate and provide recommendations for a comprehensive air quality program that is consistent with Chapter 382 of the Texas Health and Safety Code. Specifically, the resolution directs staff to work with stakeholder groups and analyze best practices for enforcement, education, planning, analysis, and technical assistance mechanisms and report on the cost impacts of expanding the City's current air quality program.

Three stakeholder groups were assembled from City staff, regional air quality professionals, and the community. Staff implemented a thorough effort to reach all interested parties and solicit input on a comprehensive air quality program. Participants were able to comment online; at public and virtual online meetings; and at focused stakeholder meetings. Press releases, radio announcements, community calendars, and email blasts advertised the process. Over 300 individual comments were received and consolidated along with staff's regional and national air quality program best practices research into the following recommendations.

Recommendations

Outreach and Education

1. Staff recommends commissioning the development of a new high-impact marketing campaign that includes various strategies for educating the public about air quality issues and how voluntary action can reduce harmful air pollution and avoid stiffer federal oversight. This plan should incorporate:

- Air quality Incentives
- Radio, TV, and social media
- Warning signs in high traffic areas
- Partnerships with schools
- Apps and interactive websites
- Local artists, musicians and athletes
- The health benefits of clean air

Enforcement and Administration

Staff recommends the following air quality enforcement strategies:

2. Requiring by ordinance employee trip reduction plans for companies with 100 or more employees within the City of Austin.
3. Requiring large special events within the City of Austin to have and implement air quality mitigation plans, and seeking regional support for similar ordinances in allied jurisdictions.

Technical Assistance

4. Staff recommends incorporating a business technical analysis component into the current air quality program that includes:
 - A service to assist with the interpretation of environmental regulations,
 - Helping companies properly complete required reporting and recordkeeping commitments to maintain compliance,
 - Provide a source for companies to get answers to technical questions, and
 - Sharing best practice strategies that reduce pollution.

Planning and Analysis

Staff recommends the following as crucial to the air quality program:

5. Supporting CAPCOG and the Clean Air Coalition in taking on the role of regional coordination for air quality programs to reduce duplication of efforts and focus regional funding into a single and effective governing body for planning, analysis and implementation. The City of Austin recognizes CAC as the leading air quality policy making body for the Central Texas region. This organization currently exists without a budget to implement reduction strategies. Regional air quality improvement funding previously provided to the Clean Air Force will be redirected to the CAC.
6. Re-emphasizing air quality as a focus of the environmental board to provide advice, oversight, and recommendations to Austin city Council on issues concerning air quality.
7. Supporting the efforts of other near non-attainment areas in encouraging the Texas legislature to distribute air quality funds collected from the fuel tax and I&M program back to local areas based on population.

Reporting, Data Collection, and Monitoring

Staff recommends the following actions be taken to ensure the City's access to reliable emission data:

8. Providing financial support for the Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG) whose air quality staff operates air monitoring stations and estimate and model emissions.
9. Staff recommends the City construct an inventory of off-road pollution sources created at construction sites to determine the impact of this industry on air quality in the Central Texas region.

Justifications and Conclusions

Each of the preceding recommendations is the result of a combination of stakeholder comments and best practice air quality program research. These nine recommendations were selected because they represent the best practices among air quality programs in Central Texas. Moving forward the new programs would add to and enhance the current programs effectiveness. During the evaluation process for the selection of these recommendations, careful consideration was given to cost effectiveness and capacity for emission reductions. The select measures have both the potential to substantially affect the amount of emissions reduction this program can influence, acceptable program costs, and reasonable staff requirements. Our region sits on the edge of non-attainment, therefore implementation timeframes also weighted heavily in the decision to recommend these options. In conclusion staff believes that by adding these additional efforts in the areas of Outreach/Education, Enforcement, Technical Assistance, Planning/Analysis, and Reporting/Data collection would enhance the existing air quality program and create a more comprehensive program, a program better equip to meet the growing air quality challenges in our region.

The full report, consolidated list of public stakeholder comments, staff's air quality program best practices research, and the recommendations impact chart will be available prior to the March 7th Council Briefing. Please let us know if you have any questions about these items. We are excited to work together and chart a course for cleaner air in Central Texas which directly supports the vision of being the most livable city in the nation.