



*Via Email: CEQA.Rulemaking@resources.ca.gov*

November 10, 2009

Christopher Calfee, Special Counsel  
ATTN: CEQA Guidelines  
California Resources Agency  
1017 L Street, #2223  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Comments on proposed changes to Transportation Checklist Questions in CEQA Guidelines Appendix G**

Dear Mr. Calfee,

We appreciate the opportunity to submit comments on the **revised Text of SB 97 CEQA Guidelines Amendments**. We believe the proposed revisions to checklist questions can support CEQA transportation analysis that is more consistent with current environmental and public health goals including increased safety for pedestrians and cyclists and reduced traffic-related air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

We have read the rationale provided by the California Resources Agency for these specific changes to checklist questions related to transportation and generally support the intent and their rationale; however, we believe that the wording of the questions could be more precise. Our specific comments regarding the proposed revisions are primarily in the interest of clarity and consistent interpretability, and are as follows:

1) **In part “a”:** The current text of the proposed change reads:

~~a)-Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?~~ **Exceed the capacity of the existing circulation system, based on an applicable measure of effectiveness (as designated in a general plan policy, ordinance, etc.), Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing a measure of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?**

The criteria or threshold implied in the above revised checklist question relates to conflict with a plan, policy, or ordinance versus actual conflict with a measure of performance effectiveness (e.g. worsening effectiveness). It seems to be implied that the plan, ordinance, policy has not only established a measure but also established thresholds or standards based on that measure, which may well be the case. We would suggest the following revisions, which focus the question on changes in circulation system performance based on established performance indicators.

***Suggested revision:***

a) “Reduce the performance of the circulation system based on a multi-modal performance effectiveness indicator or indicators, established through an applicable plan, ordinance or policy, that take into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit.”

2) **In part “b”:** The current text reads as follows:

~~Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?~~

Similar to our rationale above comments for Part “a”, we would suggest the following revisions, which more directly refer to the standards that will be used for evaluation. We also have suggested specifically deleting specific historical standards (e.g. level of service) offered as examples as the purpose of the changes appear to be to facilitate innovation and the use of multi-modal measures. Examples of specific standards or goals could be offered in parentheses.

***Suggested revision:***

b) “Conflict with qualitative or quantitative goals or standards (e.g. related to access, travel demand, or mobility) in a congestion management program established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways.”

3) **Part “f”:** The current text reads as follows:

gf) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bikeways, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise substantially decrease the performance or safety of such facilities supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)??

We are suggesting the following revisions in the interest of clarity. We also added language in parentheses after pedestrian facilities to refer to both sidewalks and intersections to acknowledge that pedestrians are also roadway users and their safety should be considered in its design. Similarly, we added a reference to all facility users (including pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders,

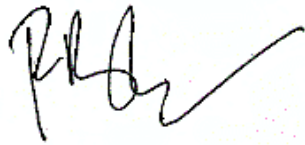
and motorists) to ensure that the checklist question addresses safety for all users, including vehicle-vehicle collisions, which contribute to approximately half of collision fatalities in San Francisco and to an even higher proportion statewide. Similarly, we added a reference to injury risk to this checklist question.

*Suggested revision:*

f) “Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bikeways, or pedestrian facilities (including sidewalks and intersections), or otherwise substantially decrease the capacity, performance or safety (e.g., increased risk of collision or injury) of such facilities for all facility users (including pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and motorists).”

I hope these suggestions are useful. Please feel free to contact me at 415-252-3982 or [rajiv.bhatia@sfdph.org](mailto:rajiv.bhatia@sfdph.org) with any questions regarding our comments. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the revisions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rajiv Bhatia', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rajiv Bhatia, MD, MPH.  
Director, Occupational & Environmental Health,  
San Francisco Department of Public Health  
Assistant Clinical Professor of Medicine, UCSF

CC: Terry Roberts, State Clearinghouse Director, Office of Planning and Research  
([terry.roberts@opr.ca.gov](mailto:terry.roberts@opr.ca.gov))