



Item 8

Travis County Commissioners Court Agenda Request

Meeting Date: May 7, 2013

Prepared By: Adele Noel **Phone #:** 854 7211

Division Director/Manager: Jon White/Tom Weber - NREQ

Department Head: Steven M. Manilla, P.E., County Executive-TNR

Sponsoring Court Member: County Judge Samuel T. Biscoe

AGENDA LANGUAGE: Receive briefing on the Austin Metropolitan Statistical Area Ozone Advance Plan efforts.

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

Ozone Advance is a collaborative, voluntary effort between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), states, tribes, and local governments to help areas remain in attainment of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Ozone Advance is the latest in a series of collaborative, voluntary air quality improvement plans the region has undertaken over the past decade. It builds on the successes of previous plans and prepares our region for the challenges of maintaining the ozone NAAQS. Most recently in 2008, Travis County and other elected officials in Central Texas became signatories to an Ozone Flex Plan to address reducing local sources of ozone. Central Texas is very close to being out of attainment of the ozone health standard. Attachment 1 shows the multi-year trend of ozone in our region. If nonattainment happens, we will lose local control of our air quality planning and will be subject to requirements that may not be well-suited to Central Texas. Taking voluntary actions to reduce ozone now will benefit public health while minimizing our regulatory burden. City and county elected officials in Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis, and Williamson counties signed a commitment letter to the EPA to develop an Ozone Advance Plan in May 2012. Included in the Ozone Advance Plan is a list of strategies for the region that will improve air quality.

The EPA guidelines for Ozone Advance requires local elected officials to receive input from the public and affected stakeholders on which strategies the region should pursue to keep the area in attainment of federal ozone standards. Such strategies include whether new measures should be adopted, existing measures should be modified, or whether some measures should be ended. New potential strategies include: procurement policies, fleet management, transportation measures, development measures, outreach and awareness, planning and reporting measures, collecting data, and stationary source reductions.

In order to facilitate input, Travis County will put the Ozone Advance logo on the home webpage with a link to a survey for the public and county employees to complete. Travis County will promote the Ozone Advance Plan through social media and place brochures in publicly-accessible locations in buildings. The brochure is shown in Attachment 2. Travis County employees will be encouraged to complete the survey by e-mail blasts, newsletters, and during an Air Quality Awareness event. Travis County staff will be seeking engagement of civic leaders in outlying cities in the county to assist in the development of the Ozone Advance Plan.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

No action is requested at this time.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

The current NAAQS for ozone is 75 parts per billion (ppb). The design value for Central Texas is currently 74 ppb. This year, the EPA will decide if the standard should be lowered to anywhere between 60-70ppb. Travis County has been proactive in improving air quality and will continue to be a leader.

FISCAL IMPACT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

ATTACHMENTS/EXHIBITS:

- Attachment 1 - Ozone Trend Chart
- Attachment 2 - Ozone Advance Brochure

REQUIRED AUTHORIZATIONS:

Cynthia McDonald	Financial Manager	TNR	854-4239
Steve Manilla	County Executive	TNR	854-9429

CC:

Jon White	Division Director	TNR	854-7212
Tom Weber	Env. Prog. Mgr	TNR	854-4692



What is the plan moving forward?

- February – June 2013: Solicit Stakeholder and Public Input on Emission Reduction Measures
- July – August 2013: Compile Community Input and Make Recommendations
- September – October 2013: Present Recommendations & Develop Overall Plan
- November – December 2013: Finalize & Submit Plan to EPA
- 2014-2019: Implement, Track Plan

Learn more about Ozone Advance:
www.capcog.org/ozoneadvance



Central Texas OZONE Advance



What is Ozone?

In the upper atmosphere, ozone (O3) protects earth from harmful ultraviolet rays but at ground it is the main component of smog. Ozone is not emitted directly into the air but is formed through chemical reactions between natural and man-made emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) and volatile organic compounds (VOC) in the presence of heat and sunlight.

Ozone facts:
Newer cars emit
88% less NOX
than cars manufactured
just 10 years ago

What is Ozone Advance?

Ozone Advance is a collaborative, voluntary effort between U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), states, tribes, and local governments to encourage reductions of NOx and VOC emissions to help areas remain in attainment of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).



Why should we make the effort?

Our region experiences days when ozone levels are unhealthy, and we are very close to being out of attainment of the ozone health standard. If this happens, we will lose local control of our air quality planning and will be subject to requirements that may not be well-suited to Central Texas. Taking voluntary actions to reduce ozone now will benefit public health while minimizing our regulatory burden. Central Texas also has an opportunity to maximize ozone reductions while reaping environmental co-benefits.

Ozone facts:
1 out of every 6
days in September have
unhealthy ozone levels

What are we doing now?

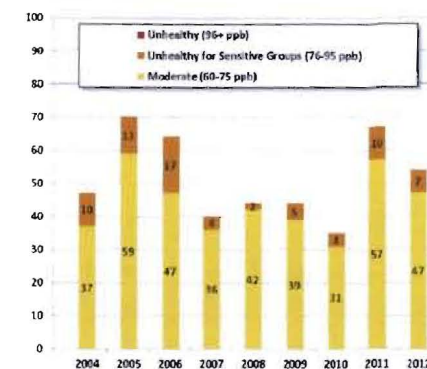
Ozone Advance is the latest in a series of voluntary, collaborative, air quality improvement plans the region has undertaken over the past decade. It builds on the successes of previous plans and prepares our region for the challenges of maintaining the ozone NAAQS. A group of elected officials from local governments throughout Central Texas is reviewing our existing plan (the 8-Hour Ozone Flex) in preparation for selecting the emission measures for Ozone Advance. While there are changes proposed to existing measures in, the two plans are very similar.

What strategies are included in the Ozone Advance Plan?

- Procurement Policies:** Purchasing and contracting decisions that reduce emissions
- Fleet Management:** Managing vehicle and equipment fleets to minimize emissions
- Regulations & Enforcement:** Adopting new or modified emissions regulations and improving enforcement efforts
- Transportation Measures:** Reducing vehicle use or improving roadway performance
- Development Measures:** Adopting measures to encourage low-emissions growth
- Outreach & Awareness:** Improving awareness and encouraging voluntary action to reduce emissions
- Planning & Reporting Measures:** Collecting data to improve understanding of local emissions and track reductions
- Stationary Source Reductions:** Reducing emissions at local power plants, industrial facilities, and other stationary sources



Why is ozone an urgent problem for Central Texas?



As the graph above shows with data gathered by our region's air quality monitors, Central Texas regularly experiences ozone levels which are moderately unhealthy. In addition, We also see a small but persistent number of days with ozone levels that are considered unhealthy for sensitive groups, which includes the elderly; people with asthma and other breathing problems; and children.

Ozone facts:
1 in 10 children
and **1 in 13 adults**
in Central Texas suffer from
asthma

Austin Area Ozone "Design Value" 1999-2012

