

## **AGENDA ITEM #4**

**MEETING:** Community Health, Environment, & Culture Committee

**DATE:** November 9, 2021

**POSTING LANGUAGE:** A briefing by the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District on air quality and ground-level Ozone [Erik Walsh, City Manager; Claude A. Jacob, Director, Health]

**DEPARTMENT:** Health

**DEPARTMENT HEAD:** Claude A. Jacob

**COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED:** City Wide

**SUBJECT:** A briefing by the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District on air quality and ground-level Ozone.

### **SUMMARY:**

The San Antonio Metropolitan Health District will provide a presentation on air quality and ground-level Ozone attainment status in Bexar County.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The Clean Air Act requires the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to set the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for pollutants considered harmful to public health and the environment. Air quality is a priority for the City of San Antonio as it has an impact on the community's public health, environment, and economy.

The Clean Air Act identifies standards to provide public health protection, including protecting the health of "sensitive" populations such as asthmatics, children, and the elderly.

To monitor the status of local air quality, Metro Health operates and maintains 34 monitors at 20 different sites in Bexar, Wilson, and Karnes Counties. The air monitors measure nitrous oxides, ground-level Ozone and other Ozone precursors as well as meteorological parameters. In addition, Metro Health's Air Pollution Control Program identifies businesses within the City of San Antonio that emit air pollution and works with them on possible steps to lower emissions and improve air quality. This program requires registration and provides educational consultations to large and small businesses to help reduce overall Ozone levels and other air pollutants in the San Antonio community.

In 2015, the EPA lowered the Ozone standard from 75 parts per billion (ppb) to 70 ppb based on extensive scientific evidence about Ozone's effects on public health and welfare. On September 24, 2018, the EPA officially designated Bexar County in Marginal Nonattainment of federal Ozone

standards. Marginal Nonattainment areas are those closest to meeting the standard and have fewer mandatory planning and control requirements at the local level.

In response to the EPA designation, the San Antonio City Council approved an Ozone Attainment Master Plan on June 13, 2019. The plan included stakeholder input and was designed around six crucial areas: (1) Communications and Marketing (2) Volkswagen (VW) Beneficiary Mitigation (3) Ozone Best Practices (4) Identification of Point Sources and Mitigation (5) Business Community (6) Policy, Advocacy and Funding. The Ozone Attainment Master Plan was voluntary and local businesses were supportive. The plan focused on outreach and educating the public and stakeholders on strategies to reduce Ozone.

Bexar County was given the deadline of September 24, 2021 to achieve attainment. Attainment would be determined by the three-year period ending in 2020 (also known as the attainment year). Bexar County did not achieve Ozone attainment. The EPA will most likely designate Bexar County in Moderate Nonattainment in early 2022 and could include road construction project delays and additional permitting related to air pollution mitigation requirements.

Once a Moderate Nonattainment designation is made, TCEQ will need to prepare an Attainment Demonstration (AD) and Reasonable Further Progress (RFP)-State Implementation Plan (SIP) revision one year after the EPA designation. TCEQ will also have four years to implement a Vehicle Emissions Inspection and Maintenance program in Bexar County. TCEQ would work in conjunction with the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) to implement the program. Bexar County will be required to attain the ozone standard by September 24, 2024 with a 2023 attainment year.

Metro Health will continue to lead the Ozone Technical Committee to help engage and educate businesses and the community on any new requirements. Metro Health will also implement a gas cap replacement initiative.

**ISSUE:**

Metro Health would like the opportunity to provide a presentation to the Community Health, Environment & Culture Committee on air quality and Ozone attainment status in Bexar County.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

This item is for briefing purposes only.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this item. This memo is for briefing purposes only.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

This item is for briefing purposes only.