



Memorandum

To: Board of Directors

From: Virginia Murillo, Transportation Planner
Grant Leonard, Transportation Planner

Subject: 2017 Advanced California Environmental Quality Act Training

On February 24th, we attended the 2017 Advanced California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Workshop at the Santa Clara Valley Water District in San Jose. The workshop was hosted by the Association for Environmental Professionals, which is an association of public and private sector environmental planning professionals. Transportation projects implemented by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County, as well as partner agencies' non-transportation land use developments reviewed by the Transportation Agency frequently require compliance with CEQA. The workshop improved our understanding about the CEQA process and current trends in CEQA, which will assist us with document review and project development.

A panel of CEQA experts, which included environmental planners and environmental attorneys, taught the workshop sessions. The workshop began with a review of 2016 CEQA legal decisions, a session on expected environmental legislations, and session on development of updated CEQA guidelines. The afternoon workshops provided a discussion of CEQA streamlining efforts, and energy impact analysis. The workshop concluded with a discussion on greenhouse gas analysis.

Several sessions of the workshop proved to be of specific interest to the work TAMC does. In particular:

- The continued discussion of implementing SB 743, which changes the way that public agencies evaluate the impacts of projects under CEQA by using Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as a measure of a project's environmental impact rather than the Level of Service measure, which measures delay at intersections; and
- Clarification on environmental document tiering and CEQA streamlining, which is particularly relevant to projects that are included in a programmatic Environmental Impact Review and is particularly relevant to defining the level of environmental review that projects in the Regional Transportation Plan should undergo; and
- Updates to the state's CEQA guidelines to incorporate recent legislation and court findings.

As Agency staff reviews CEQA documents for new projects in Monterey County, staff will need to be cognizant of recent court rulings and state legislation to ensure that project sponsors are adhering to current CEQA practices.

The CEQA workshop was well attended by professionals from the private and public sector from around the Monterey Bay Area. We also were able to meet professionals from the Bay Area that may be useful contacts in the future. More importantly, the CEQA workshop provided us with more technical project management skills that will be of use in future Transportation Agency projects.