



At a Glance

Catalyst for Improving the Environment

Why We Did This Review

Our review was prompted by a hotline complaint regarding the Atlantic Steel transportation control measure (TCM) in Atlanta, Georgia. In response to the complainant's concerns, we sought to determine whether (1) changes to selected zoning conditions in the Atlantic Steel TCM necessitated a State implementation plan (SIP) revision; and (2) Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 4 oversight of the Atlantic Steel TCM was adequate.

Background

The Atlantic Steel project is a brownfields redevelopment effort that was designated as a TCM in the Georgia SIP, and is also a Project XL effort that allows the use of innovative strategies to achieve environmental goals. The complainant contended that the City of Atlanta changed provisions of the TCM's zoning condition #4 without submitting a SIP revision for EPA approval. Zoning condition #4 is related to limiting cut-through traffic in existing residential neighborhoods around the Atlantic Steel development.

For further information, contact our Office of Congressional and Public Liaison at (202) 566-2391.

To view the full report, click on the following link:

www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2005/20050216-2005-S-00005.pdf

Review of Changes to the Atlantic Steel Transportation Control Measure

What We Found

We did not find evidence that the change to zoning condition #4 would have a negative effect on the ability of Georgia to attain the National Ambient Air Quality Standards of the current SIP. The revised zoning condition replaces vague language related to traffic calming (e.g., speed humps) with specific prescribed actions and timetables, and the change does not result in the SIP being "substantially inadequate" to attain the Standards. The zoning changes include specific measures to limit cut-through traffic and do not, at this time, appear to result in increased air emissions or an undermining of the TCM. Accordingly, we concluded that a revision to the Georgia SIP was not required in this instance.

We found that Region 4's oversight of the changes to zoning condition #4 was generally adequate for the period reviewed. The public was provided the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to zoning condition #4, and Region 4 officials mediated a compromise agreement to the zoning condition language. However, Region 4 officials acknowledged that the annual public meetings required under Project XL had not occurred in over a year. Region 4 officials committed to starting the annual meeting process again in February 2005, and to monitor the City of Atlanta's progress in ensuring that the terms in zoning condition #4 are met. Also, EPA participates in public meetings held by the Atlanta Regional Commission's Air Quality Interagency Consultation group and the State's "Green Light Team" meetings regarding the Atlantic Steel project, but we noted that dates and times are not advertised to sufficiently inform the public as to when the meetings are held, and that EPA could take further measures to increase the opportunity for public involvement in the project.

What We Recommend

We recommend that EPA Region 4 use the annual public meetings required by Project XL to monitor any future negative impacts to certain streets as a result of the zoning condition #4 change, post the dates and times of meetings held by the Atlanta Regional Commission's Air Quality Interagency Consultation group and State's "Green Light Team" on EPA's public web site to increase opportunities for public involvement, and develop a forum on its public web site for the public to post questions and concerns about the Atlantic Steel project and for EPA to post responses to these concerns. In its response to the draft memorandum report, EPA Region 4 agreed with our conclusions and recommendations.