

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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February 13, 2025

Jodie Sackett
Subdivisions
Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning
320 W. Temple Street, Fl. 13
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Entrada South and Valencia Commerce
Center Project
SCH # 2000011025
Vic. LA-05/PM R53.48, LA-126/PM R4.88
GTS # LA-2021-04715-DSEIR

Dear Jodie Sackett:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above-referenced environmental document. The Entrada South and Valencia Commerce Center Planning Areas facilitated by the approved RMDP/SCP and analyzed in the State-certified EIR. Proposed development within the Entrada South Planning Area represents a reduction of 151 residential units and an increase of 280,000 square feet of commercial floor area as compared to the 2017 Project. The updated Entrada South Project includes 1,574 dwelling units (including affordable housing units consistent with the County's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance), 730,000 square feet of non-residential development, a neighborhood park and potential school site, a spineflower preserve, trails, roadways, and infrastructure.

The Valencia Commerce Center Planning Area (Vesting Tentative Parcel Map 18108) consists of approximately 321 acres in an undeveloped portion of the partially completed VCC industrial/business park center located west of I-5 and north of Henry Mayo Drive (SR-126). The Project Site is located within the planning boundary of the State-approved RMDP/SCP. The VCC Project provides for continued implementation of the development facilitated by the approved RMDP/SCP within the VCC Planning Area. The VCC Project includes approximately 3.4 million square feet of industrial/business park space, a multi-purpose trail, roadways, and infrastructure.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

We acknowledge that “in the immediate vicinity of the Entrada South Planning Area, Magic Mountain Parkway and The Old Road are fully improved with sidewalks on each side of the roadway. The intersection of The Old Road at Magic Mountain Parkway is also fully improved with sidewalks on all four corners and pedestrian crosswalks controlled by a traffic signal on all four legs”. We also acknowledge that “Near the VCC Planning Area, sidewalks are provided along the west side of both Commerce Center Drive and The Old Road. Pedestrian crosswalks controlled by a traffic signal are provided at the Commerce Center Drive/Hancock Parkway, Commerce Center Drive/Franklin Parkway, and Commerce Center Drive/Harrison Parkway intersections on some but not all legs”. These improvements are creating a pedestrian-friendly environment for the project.

Bicycle

Within Entrada South, the proposed trail system includes community trails, bike lanes, Neighborhood Electric Vehicle (NEV) paths, and recreational trails that would be linked to Newhall Ranch trail system and existing community of Westridge. The Modified Project would expand bicycle facilities in the area. The NEV pathways in Entrada South also serve as bike route. In VCC, a Class I bike route/pedestrian trail would be developed along the south/east bank of Castaic Creek adjacent to the Hancock Parkway Extension. We acknowledge that “The bicycle route improvements in and around the Modified Project Site would connect to an extensive system of continuous bike lanes within Mission Village and other communities to the west, future planned bike lanes along The Old Road to the east, and existing bike routes within the City of Santa Clarita”.

Transit

Santa Clarita Transit (SCT) currently operates six fixed route transit bus lines in the proximity of the Modified Project Site. The routes include numbers 1, 2, 3, 7, 502, and 636. Trail and bike path connect bus stops to mobility hub within Mission Village. We concur that “the Long-range plans include a potential Metrolink extension along the SR-126 corridor and land within Newhall Ranch is set aside of rail right-of-way and a park-and-ride and/or train station. With respect to the Modified Project, Santa Clarita Transit plans to extend existing bus routes into the development area, thereby connecting the Entrada Planning Area to major transit centers such as the Santa Clarita or Newhall Metrolink Stations”. These transit improvements demonstrate the project’s efforts to integrate with the regional transit network, enhance multimodal connectivity and promote sustainable transportation.

VMT

The Modified Project would not generate more than 110 trips per day in comparison to the 2017 Project as analyzed in the State-certified EIR. The VMT significance threshold for the Modified Project was derived based on the County VMT Guidelines target of VMT per service population being 16.8 percent below the baseline VMT. The resulting threshold of significance is 16.6 VMT per service population.

Reference to page 5.9-71 of the Draft SEIR, Table 5.9-10 VMT Summary with and Without Mitigation, the project would result in a combined total VMT of 18.2 per capita, exceeding the County's significance threshold of 16.6 VMT in which the County VMT Guidelines require a 16.8% reduction from the baseline VMT of 19.9. Residential and employment VMT without mitigation are projected at 10.6 and 21.1, respectively. However, with the implementation of a comprehensive Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan, including pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, improved transit access, carpooling programs, and telecommuting incentives, the combined VMT is reduced to 15.5 per capita. This reduction meets with CEQA guidelines and results in a less-than-significant impact.

Roadway Improvements

The proposed state facility on/off-ramp improvements at key interchanges, including I-5 and SR-126, involve extended turn lanes, ramp widening, and additional roadway capacity to accommodate future traffic volumes. For example, the northbound turn lane at The Old Road and Turnberry Lane will be extended by approximately 51 feet to improve operational efficiency. Similarly, the westbound turn lane at Magic Mountain Parkway will be extended by 21 feet. Ensuring these improvements comply with Caltrans encroachment permit requirements, including detailed traffic control plans and emergency access provisions during construction, will be critical. While these upgrades are necessary to mitigate potential congestion, the project's analysis indicates that they will not result in significant impacts under CEQA if constructed as planned. Instead, these improvements will help manage traffic flow and ensure safety for all users.

B&T District-Fair Share Contribution

The Westside Bridge and Major Thoroughfare District (B&T District) was established by Los Angeles County in 2011 to equitably distribute the costs of roadway mitigation improvements among new developments in the Santa Clarita Valley. The district funds major infrastructure projects, including the construction of new roadways like Magic Mountain Parkway and Long Canyon Road, the Commerce Center Drive Bridge over the Santa Clara River, and various intersection and freeway interchange improvements. Developers within the district are required to contribute through an impact fee, which was \$28,390 per factored dwelling unit (FDU) as of July 1, 2022, with annual adjustments. Given that the proposed project falls within this district, the developer is responsible for paying their fair share of these fees to support necessary transportation infrastructure improvements. Coordination with Los Angeles County is required to ensure compliance with this funding obligation. Please update Caltrans to confirm that the developer is in compliance with B&T District funding requirements.

Additional TDM for Consideration

We encourage the Lead Agency to evaluate the potential of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies and Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) applications in order to better manage the transportation network, as well as transit service and bicycle or pedestrian connectivity improvements. For additional TDM options, please refer to the

Federal Highway Administration's *Integrating Demand Management into the Transportation Planning Process: A Desk Reference* (Chapter 8). This reference is available online at:

<http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwahop12035/fhwahop12035.pdf>

Other Comments

Please be reminded that any work performed within the State Right-of-way will require an Encroachment Permit from Caltrans. Any modifications to State facilities must meet all mandatory design standard and specifications.

As a reminder, any transportation of heavy construction equipment and/or materials which require use of oversized transport vehicles on State highways will need a Caltrans transportation permit. We recommend large-size truck trips be limited to off-peak commute periods. Truck drivers should cover construction trucks with tarpaulin to avoid debris spillage onto the State Highway.

Please feel free to contact Mr. Alan Lin the project coordinator at (213) 269-1124 and refer to GTS # LA-2021-04715-DSEIR.

Sincerely,

Anthony Higgins
ANTHONY HIGGINS
Acting LDR Branch Chief

Cc: State Clearinghouse