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DISTRICT 8

PLANNING (MS 725)

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September 9, 2016

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Ms. Deanna Elliano
Community Development Director
Community Development Department
City of Hemet
445 E. Florida Ave
Hemet, CA 92543

Rancho Diamante Phase II Specific Plan Amendment (SPA 15-001)

Ms. Elliano,

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has completed our review of the Notice of Preparation for the Rancho Diamante Phase II Specific Plan Amendment. The project is located in the City of Hemet south of Marvin Hull Road and a Santa Fe Rail line, east of the San Diego Aqueduct drainage canal, north of Simpson Road, and west of Warren Road. The project proposes a Specific Plan Amendment to reduce dwellings from 744 to 635 single family residential units, which will include 60.63 acres of park and open space area.

As the owner and operator of the State Highway System (SHS), it is our responsibility to coordinate and consult with local jurisdictions when proposed development may impact our facilities. As the responsible agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), it is also our responsibility to make recommendations to offset associated impacts with the proposed project. Although the project is under the jurisdiction of the City of Hemet, due to the project's potential impact to State facilities, it is also subject to the policies and regulations that govern the SHS.

We have the following comments for future stages in the process:

- The applicant shall submit a Traffic Impact Analysis for this project utilizing Highway Capacity Manual 2010 methodology. Include affected intersections along State Routes 74 and 79 in the analysis and ensure that the Level of Service at those intersections is at the transition between C and D in projected peak hour periods. Please provide two hard copies of the Traffic Impact Analysis in addition to two electronic copies of Synchro files used in the analysis.

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- Per SB 743 and Caltrans Deputy Directive 64-R2, the applicant shall include sections in the Traffic Impact Analysis discussing the bicycle, pedestrian and transit network opportunities and propose strategies to increase multi-modal trips. Recommended strategies include:
 - High visibility crosswalks at all pedestrian crossings with strategically-placed bulbouts for traffic calming, and mid-block crossings at proposed open space.
 - We recommend the City include the construction of proposed Class I NEV/Bike Path at project frontage along the AT & SF Railway per Circulation Element Figure 4.3; and proposed Class I Bikeway at project frontage along the San Diego Aqueduct. The NEV/Bike Path along the AT & SF Railway is strongly recommended due to its connectivity to the proposed San Jacinto Branch rail transit stop at the Hemet-Ryan Airport.
 - Class IV Separated Bike Lanes, per Caltrans' Design Information Bulletin 89, on major roads surrounding and within the development, which includes Warren Road and Stetson Avenue. This would require an Amendment to the Circulation Element Figure 4.5, which designates both roads for Class II Bike Lanes. If the facility designation is to remain as Class II Bike Lanes, we recommend the inclusion of buffered bike lanes and green paint in conflict areas to increase bicyclist safety and accessibility.
 - Class II or Class IV Bike Lanes are recommended for internal streets.
 - For the design of all minor roads in the development, we recommend the applicant utilize innovative safety strategies outlined in the National Association of City Transportation Officials' Urban Street Design Guide. Refer to the guidelines provided for the "Neighborhood Street", "Yield Street", "Green Alley", and "Residential Shared Street" designations.
 - We recommend the applicant meet with the Riverside Transit Agency on constructing a bus stop with a shelter along Warren Road to provide transit access to the community. As the area is rapidly developing, RTA should also consider re-routing buses to the area, and reducing headways to 30 or 45 minutes between bus trips.
- Quality neighborhood planning fosters community, aesthetics, and sustainability. We offer the following community planning recommendations:
 - Due to its proximity to proposed rail transit, we recommend the City reconsider the Specific Plan Amendment and increase rather than decrease density. Please consider utilizing rowhouse or terraced house design principles near transit access in order to increase ridership.

Ms. Elliano
September 9, 2016
Page 3

- The placement of street-trees creates an inviting aesthetic appeal, and provides traffic calming benefits, while also reducing the urban heat island affect. Please consider utilizing drought tolerant trees and/or recycled water to provide these livability benefits to residents.
- Please consider including building-integrated solar photovoltaic panels on houses.
- We support the use of roundabouts as a traffic control measure within internal circulation networks.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Rancho Diamante Phase II Specific Plan Amendment. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Dustin Foster at (909) 806-3955 or myself at (909) 383-4557 for assistance.

Sincerely,



MARK ROBERTS
Office Chief
Community and Regional Planning