

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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*Making Conservation
a California Way of Life.*

8/17/2020

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

August 17, 2020

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STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

11-SD-15, 52, 163, 805
PM VAR
Stone Creek
DEIR/SCH#2005091120

Ms. Elizabeth Shearer-Nguyen
City of San Diego
1222 1st Avenue, MS 501
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Ms. Shearer-Nguyen:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Stone Creek project located near Interstates 15 (-15), 805 (I-805) and State Routes 52 (SR-52), 163 (SR-163). The mission of Caltrans is to provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability. The Local Development-Intergovernmental Review (LD-IGR) Program reviews land use projects and plans to ensure consistency with our mission and state planning priorities.

Caltrans has the following comments:

Traffic Impact Study

- Senate Bill (SB) 743, signed in 2013 and incorporated into the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines in 2018, better aligned CEQA with the State's climate and air quality goals. It is changing CEQA analysis of transportation impacts associated with both land development and infrastructure projects.
 - For land use projects, starting July 1, 2020 VMT is the metric used within CEQA transportation analysis to identify transportation impacts. It is recommended a VMT-based transportation analysis be used to follow CEQA's requirements.
 - Caltrans' two new guidance documents are posted on their website for use: the VMT-Focused Transportation Impact Study Guidelines, and the Interim Guidance on Local Development-Intergovernmental

Review (LD-IGR) Safety Analysis <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/transportation-planning/office-of-smart-mobility-climate-change/sb-743>.

- Caltrans recommends that a queue analysis be included on all freeway exit ramps so we can verify potential safety impacts to Caltrans facilities.
 - The existing exit ramps PHV queues 95th percentile length will need to be compared to existing plus project scenario. If the “existing plus project” queue length backs-up beyond the gore and into the freeway main lanes, then may be considered a safety related impact.
- The traffic signals on I-805 at Mira Mesa Boulevard are coordinated with the City of San Diego Signals along Mira Mesa Corridor and are using Adaptive Signal Systems. The Adaptive system captures current traffic demand data to adjust traffic signal timing to optimize flow in coordinated traffic signal system. The technology that Caltrans has at this time does not support any bus priority system. The traffic signals on I-805 at Mira Mesa Boulevard and I-15 at Mira Mesa Boulevard would need an upgrade to 2070 controllers for bus priority system to work.

Bus Rapid Transit

- Please provide a confirmation of the suggested Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) fixed guideways as per SANDAG’s letter dated September 6, 2018. In keeping with our Mission Vision and Goals, Caltrans is in support of the MTS and SANDAG recommendations for BRT fixed guideway alignment.
- Caltrans supports the use of Park and Ride lots and encourages promoting both the east (I - 805) and west (I-15) Park and Ride lots on Mira Mesa Boulevard as well as promotion of other Transportation Demand Management tools.
- Caltrans encourages Active Transportation such as bike/ped paths and access.
- Please clarify if the Stone Creek Community bike networks connect to local or regional bike networks.
- Please confirm if bicycle parking will be available on-site.
- Please identify the locations of the transit stations mentioned in the Traffic Impact Analysis.

Complete Streets and Mobility Network

Caltrans views all transportation improvements as opportunities to improve safety, access and mobility for all travelers in California and recognizes bicycle, pedestrian and transit modes as integral elements of the transportation system. Caltrans supports improved transit accommodation through the provision of Park and Ride facilities, improved bicycle and pedestrian access and safety improvements, signal prioritization for transit, bus on shoulders, ramp improvements, or other enhancements that promotes a complete and integrated transportation system. Early coordination with Caltrans, in locations that may affect both Caltrans and the City of San Diego is encouraged.

To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and achieve California's Climate Change target, Caltrans is implementing Complete Streets and Climate Change policies into State Highway Operations and Protection Program (SHOPP) projects to meet multi-modal mobility needs. Caltrans looks forward to working with the City to evaluate potential Complete Streets projects.

The DEIR is basing its bicycle facility mitigation measures (pp. 5.2-55 - 5.2-56) on the San Diego Bicycle Master Plan (December 2013). This is more in the City of San Diego's jurisdiction, but the project should also include mitigation measures for bicycles and pedestrians that align with the forthcoming Mira Mesa Community Plan and the published Community Plan mobility study documents online:

<https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/community/cpu/miramesa/mobility-documents>. The recent City community plans generally capture a more updated and holistic vision of the bicycle and pedestrian facilities in community areas than the San Diego Bicycle Master Plan that is becoming outdated.

Land Use and Smart Growth

Caltrans recognizes there is a strong link between transportation and land use. Development can have a significant impact on traffic and congestion on State transportation facilities. In particular, the pattern of land use can affect both local vehicle miles traveled and the number of trips. Caltrans supports collaboration with local agencies to work towards a safe, functional, interconnected, multi-modal transportation system integrated through applicable "smart growth" type land use planning and policies.

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The City should continue to coordinate with Caltrans to implement necessary improvements at intersections and interchanges where the agencies have joint jurisdiction.

Traffic Control Plan/Hauling

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has discretionary authority with respect to highways under its jurisdiction and may, upon application and if good cause appears, issue a special permit to operate or move a vehicle or combination of vehicles or special mobile equipment of a size or weight of vehicle or load exceeding the maximum limitations specified in the California Vehicle Code. The Caltrans Transportation Permits Issuance Branch is responsible for the issuance of these special transportation permits for oversize/overweight vehicles on the State Highway System. Additional information is provided online at:

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/trafficops/permits/index.html>

A Traffic Control Plan is to be submitted to Caltrans District 11, including the interchanges at I-15/Carroll Canyon Road and I-15/Mira Mesa Boulevard, at least 30 days prior to the start of any construction. Traffic shall not be unreasonably delayed. The plan shall also outline suggested detours to use during closures, including routes and signage.

Potential impacts to the highway facilities and traveling public from the detour, demolition and other construction activities should be discussed and addressed before work begins.

Environmental

Caltrans welcomes the opportunity to be a Responsible Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as we have some discretionary authority of a portion of the project that is in Caltrans' R/W through the form of an encroachment permit process. We look forward to the coordination of our efforts to ensure that Caltrans can adopt the alternative and/or mitigation measure for our R/W. We would appreciate meeting with you to discuss the elements of the EIR that Caltrans will use for our subsequent environmental compliance.

An encroachment permit will be required for any work within the Caltrans' R/W prior to construction. As part of the encroachment permit process, the applicant must provide approved final environmental documents for this project, corresponding technical studies, and necessary regulatory and resource agency permits. Specifically, CEQA determination or exemption. The supporting documents must address all environmental impacts within the Caltrans' R/W and address any impacts from avoidance and/or mitigation measures.

We recommend that this project specifically identifies and assesses potential impacts caused by the project or impacts from mitigation efforts that occur within Caltrans R/W that includes impacts to the natural environment, infrastructure (highways/roadways/on- and off-ramps) and appurtenant features (lighting/signs/guardrail/slopes). Caltrans is interested in any additional mitigation measures identified for the DEIR.

Mitigation

Caltrans endeavors that any direct and cumulative impacts to the State Highway System be eliminated or reduced to a level of insignificance pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) standards.

Caltrans recommends consideration of "fair share" funds towards future improvements associated with I-15 corridor. Since the Stone Creek Project's cumulative impact is considered significant, feasible mitigation measures to State facilities should be identified in the TIS. Impacts that are significant and unmitigated/unavoidable need to have an alternative mitigation identified in the DEIR TIS. Mitigation identified in the traffic study, subsequent environmental documents, and mitigation monitoring reports, should be coordinated with Caltrans to identify and implement the appropriate mitigation. This includes the actual implementation and collection of any "fair share" monies, as well as the appropriate timing of the mitigation. Mitigation improvements should be compatible with Caltrans concepts.

Mitigation measures for proposed intersection modifications are subject to the Caltrans Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) policy (Traffic Operation Policy Directive 13-02). Alternative intersection design(s) will need to be considered

in accordance with the ICE policy. Please refer to the policy for more information and requirements (<http://www.dot.ca.gov/trafficops/ice.html>).

Mitigation conditioned as part of a local agency's development approval for improvements to State facilities can be implemented either through a Cooperative Agreement between Caltrans and the City of San Diego, or by the project proponent entering into an agreement directly with Caltrans for the mitigation. When that occurs, Caltrans will negotiate and execute a Traffic Mitigation Agreement.

Right-of-Way

- Per Business and Profession Code 8771, perpetuation of survey monuments by a licensed land surveyor is required, if they are being destroyed by any construction.
- Any work performed within Caltrans R/W will require discretionary review and approval by Caltrans and an encroachment permit will be required for any work within the Caltrans R/W prior to construction.

Additional information regarding encroachment permits may be obtained by contacting the Caltrans Permits Office at (619) 688-6158 or by visiting the website at <http://www.dot.ca.gov/trafficops/ep/index.html>. Early coordination with Caltrans is strongly advised for all encroachment permits.

Right-of-Way Utilities

The applicant shall prepare and submit to Caltrans closure plans as part of the encroachment permit application. The plans shall require that closure or partial closure of I-15, SR-52, SR-163, and/or I-805 be limited to times as to create the least possible inconvenience to the traveling public and that signage be posted prior to the closure to alert drivers of the closure in accordance with Caltrans requirements. Traffic shall not be unreasonably delayed. The plan shall also outline suggested detours to use during the closures, traffic, including routes and signage.

The Highway Closure Plan, as part of the encroachment permit, should be submitted to Caltrans at least 30 days prior to initiating installation of

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the crossings. No work shall begin in Caltrans' Right of Way (R/W) until an encroachment permit is approved.

If you have any questions, please contact Kimberly Dodson, of the Caltrans Development Review Branch, at (619) 688-2510 or by e-mail sent to Kimberly.Dodson@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

electronically signed by

MAURICE EATON, Branch Chief
Local Development and Intergovernmental Review