

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

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6/29/2020

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

**Jun 26 2020**

June 25, 2020

Thuy Hua, AICP  
County of Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning **STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**  
320 W. Temple Street, 13th Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan  
and Community Standards District Update –  
Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)  
SCH # 2018071065  
GTS # 07-LA-2018-03258  
Vic. LA-101/PM: 33.018

Dear Thuy Hua:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced DEIR. The Santa Monica Mountains North Area (North Area) Plan and Community Standards District (CSD) Update would revise the existing North Area Plan and CSD to strengthen existing environmental resource policies; identify policies and standards that will support the surrounding communities' current rural and semi-rural lifestyle; and align with the policies and development standards in the 2014 Santa Monica Mountains Local Coastal Program. The CSD intends to implement the goals and policies of the North Area Plan. The project does not include any physical development, but identifies policies and standards for future development projects proposed in the North Area. The County of Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning is the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

According to the Notice of Availability, the US-101 is "the major transportation corridor that provides regional access to the North Area." In addition to the US-101, State Route 23 (SR-23) and State Route 27 (SR-27) are also located near the plan area.

From reviewing the DEIR, Caltrans has the following comments:

- We appreciate the inclusion of Policy CI-14 in the North Area Plan: "Support Caltrans efforts to improve traffic flow and safety on Pacific Coast Highway, the 101 Freeway, the 405 Freeway, and on other State routes." Caltrans looks forward to working with the County of Los Angeles on implementing this policy.
- Caltrans supports the following statement: "For future projects, the County would require compliance with updated policies and standards and would evaluate a project's effect on the traffic circulation system and vehicle miles travelled (VMT) during application review."
- Caltrans recommends that for future development projects that have a significant impact on the US-101, the County of Los Angeles obtain funding for the transportation system management improvements proposed in Policy CI-5 through fair share agreements with project applicants.

The following information is included for your consideration.

The mission of Caltrans is to provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability. Thus, Caltrans encourages Lead Agencies to adopt policies and standards that reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions.

As such, Caltrans supports policies such as CI-1 and CI-5, which seek to optimize the capacity and operational efficiency of highways through methods such as implementing transportation system management technology, as opposed to widening roadways. Research has shown that the latter method induces travel and VMT, which does not align with the goals of Senate Bill (SB) 743. As the County of Los Angeles is aware, SB 743 (2013) mandates that VMT be used as the primary metric in identifying transportation impacts of all future development projects under CEQA, starting July 1, 2020. The intent of SB 743 is to reduce VMT, so that the State can meet its air quality and climate change goals. For more information on SB 743 and determining transportation impacts in terms of VMT on the State Highway System, see the Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA by the California Governor's Office of Planning and Research, dated December 2018:  
[http://opr.ca.gov/docs/20190122-743\\_Technical\\_Advisory.pdf](http://opr.ca.gov/docs/20190122-743_Technical_Advisory.pdf).

In addition, Caltrans also supports policies CI-23 through CI-31, which would promote the use of alternative modes of transportation and reduce VMT. To strengthen these policies, the County of Los Angeles may want to consider making them more detailed, by identifying specific pedestrian, bicycle, and transit improvements that support the policies.

If you have any questions about these comments, please contact Emily Gibson, the project coordinator, at [Emily.Gibson@dot.ca.gov](mailto:Emily.Gibson@dot.ca.gov), and refer to GTS # 07-LA-2018-03258.

Sincerely,



MIYA EDMONSON  
IGR/CEQA Branch Chief  
cc: Scott Morgan, State Clearinghouse