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Making Conservation a California Way of Life.

September 5, 2019

Mr. Steven Jones
County of Los Angeles
Department of Regional Planning
Land Divisions Section
320 West Temple Street, Room 1362
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Sterling Ranch Residential Project – Notice of Preparation (NOP) and Initial Study
SCH # 2019080092
GTS # 07-LA-2019-02735
Vic. LA-126/PM: R2.895
LA-5/PM: R56.401

Dear Mr. Steven Jones:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced NOP and Initial Study. The proposed project is a 113.9-acre residential community consisting of 222 detached single-family residential lots on 57.9 acres, a passive pocket park on 0.2 acres, a passive park with a tot lot, shade structure and tables on 3.4 acres, and 21,000 square feet of commercial uses with 71 parking spaces on 2.5 acres. The project also would include five open space lots on 21 acres, six landscaped/open space homeowner association lots on 0.1 acres, three access strip lots at Trevylon Street, Rainbow Drive, and Lexington Drive on 0.2 acres, three infiltration basins and six debris basins on 8.8 acres, a pump station on 0.1 acres, and streets for the community on 19.7 acres. The County of Los Angeles is considered the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The nearest State facilities to the proposed project are State Route 126 (SR-126) and Interstate 5 (I-5). In the Transportation section of the proposed project's Initial Study checklist, it states that the project would have a potentially significant impact in terms of:

a. Conflicting with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities;

b. Conflicting or being inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b); and

c. Substantially increasing hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)

The Initial Study checklist also states that the project would have a less than significant impact in terms of causing inadequate emergency access.

As stated in the Initial Study, many of the potentially significant impacts require further analysis. Caltrans looks forward to reviewing this analysis in the upcoming Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) and

to provide further comments, if warranted. From reviewing the Initial Study, Caltrans recommends that for the forthcoming transportation impact study (TIS), which will be included in the DEIR, the Tenth Edition of the Institute of Transportation Engineers' Trip Generation Manual be used for determining trip generation forecasts and trip reductions (e.g. pass-by, diverted, and internal capture trips). Local trip generation rates are acceptable if appropriate validation is provided. Also, Caltrans recommends using the Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) method for conducting all operational and conflict analyses on State highway facilities. Specifically, queuing analyses based on the HCM queuing methodology are required for any Caltrans off-ramps that would be potentially significantly impacted by the project. Also, when the State highway facility has saturated flows, it is encouraged that a micro-simulation model be used for the analyses.

If intersections on the state highway are to be modified, a complete Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) study is required. Also, if construction traffic is expected to cause delays on any State facilities, please submit a construction traffic management plan detailing these delays for Caltrans' review. Any transportation of heavy construction equipment and/or materials which requires 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.

As a reminder, Senate Bill 743 (2013) mandates that Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) be used as the primary metric in identifying transportation impacts of all future development projects under CEQA, starting July 1, 2020. For information on 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.

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. Therefore, Caltrans encourages the Lead Agency to integrate transportation and land use in a way that reduces Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, as well as facilitates a high level of non-motorized travel and transit use. We encourage the Lead Agency to evaluate the potential of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies and Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) applications to meet these goals. Potential strategies for this project include:

- Implement buffered bike lanes with green paint on Del Valle Road
- Create a Class I bike trail to provide access to Castaic Middle and Elementary schools
- Incorporate mixed-uses (i.e., commercial and residential) throughout the development to reduce car-dependency and associated vehicle miles traveled (VMT)
- Install canopy trees, bioswales, drought-tolerant native landscaping, and street furniture to create a livable community and reduce storm water run-off, which is a sensitive issue for Los Angeles county and needs to be accounted for during project design
- Build wide, unobstructed, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant sidewalks
- Place utilities underground to reduce fire risk and keep sidewalks unobstructed
- Create high-visibility continental crosswalks at intersections and mid-block crosswalks with flashing beacons
- If gated, ensure pedestrian access to transit and main roads with additional entrance/exit doors
- Provide bus shelters and bulb-outs
- Design a grid pattern with short blocks to increase walkability
- Offer bicycle parking at the park, schools, and commercial centers

If you have any questions about these comments, please contact Emily Gibson, the project coordinator, at Emily.Gibson@dot.ca.gov, and refer to GTS # 07-LA-2019-02735.

Sincerely,

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