

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DISTRICT 7 – Office of Regional Planning
100 S. MAIN STREET, MS 16
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012
PHONE (213) 897-0475
FAX (213) 897-1337
TTY 711
www.dot.ca.gov

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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Sep 08 2020**STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**

September 8, 2020

Edwin J. Norris, P.E.
City of Downey
Planning Department
11111 Brookshire Avenue
Downey, California 90241

RE: Lakewood Boulevard at Florence
Intersection Improvement Project –
Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND)
SCH # 2020080093
GTS # 07-LA-2020-03333
Vic. LA-5/PM: 8.209

Dear Edwin J. Norris:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced MND. The proposed project involves roadway widening, to provide additional left turn lanes in the northbound and southbound directions on Lakewood Boulevard. It also entails pavement reconstruction, traffic signal modification, and utility relocations to the existing Lakewood Boulevard at Florence Avenue intersection within the City of Downey. The project area includes the Lakewood Boulevard at Florence Avenue intersection and approximately 150 feet to 500 feet of all four roadway approaches. Partial right-of-way acquisition will be required on the east side of Lakewood Boulevard and on the south side of Florence Avenue east of Lakewood Boulevard in order to provide the necessary street width for the additional turn lanes. The purpose of the proposed project is to improve traffic circulation and minimize congestion along the Lakewood Boulevard and Florence Avenue corridors. The City of Downey is the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The project is located approximately 4,000 feet away from the Interstate 5 (I-5) and Lakewood Boulevard interchange. It is also located approximately 1.5 miles away from the Interstate 605 (I-605) and I-5 interchange. From reviewing the MND, Caltrans has the following comments:

- Since 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, this project has been reviewed from a VMT perspective.
- 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 (OPR), dated December 2018: http://opr.ca.gov/docs/20190122-743_Technical_Advisory.pdf.
- The City can also refer to Caltrans' updated *Vehicle Miles Traveled-Focused Transportation Impact Study Guide* (TISG), dated May 2020 and released on Caltrans' website in July 2020. Caltrans' new TISG is largely based on the OPR 2018 Technical Advisory: <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/sb-743/2020-05-20-approved-vmt-focused-tisg-a11y.pdf>.

- According to the OPR's Technical Advisory, "A transportation project which leads to additional vehicle travel on the roadway network, commonly referred to as "induced vehicle travel," would need to quantify the amount of additional vehicle travel...." However, the advisory also lists certain projects that "...would not likely lead to a substantial or measurable increase in vehicle travel, and therefore generally should not require an induced travel analysis...." Included in this list is the "Installation, removal, or reconfiguration of traffic lanes that are not for through traffic, such as left, right, and U-turn pockets...."
- Therefore, Caltrans agrees that the VMT impacts of this project will be less than significant, because its capacity increasing elements, including providing dual left-turn lanes in the southbound and northbound directions along Lakewood Boulevard, and providing a dedicated westbound right-turn lane on Florence Avenue, are not for through traffic.

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. Furthermore, Caltrans encourages Lead Agencies to implement Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies that reduce VMT and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. Thus, Caltrans supports the TDM strategies this project has incorporated, such as relocating transit stops with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority to ensure safe and accessible bus facilities within the project area. Additional TDM strategies that the City of Downey may want to consider integrating into this project to further reduce VMT include:

- Confirm that curb, gutter, sidewalk, curb ramp, and driveway reconstructions are ADA compliant.
- Create high visibility, continental crosswalks at all legs of the project intersection.
- Replace removed trees with new shade trees.
- Include pedestrian refuge islands in new medians.

As a reminder, 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. Caltrans supports Mitigation Measure T-3, which is "Truck hauling and construction equipment mobilization and demobilization will occur outside of the peak traffic hours, between 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM." In addition to this mitigation measure, Caltrans also recommends that trucks use less congested ramps when possible, and that truck beds be covered with tarpaulins to prevent debris from blowing out. If construction traffic is expected to cause delays on any State facilities, please submit the Traffic Control Management Plan detailing these delays for Caltrans' review.

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-2020-03333.

Sincerely,



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