Appendix L
Traffic Signal Memorandum

FEHR PEERS

Memorandum

Date: May 3, 2023

To: Mike Harden, ESA

From: Tom Gaul and Ribeka Toda, Fehr & Peers

Subject: Harvard-Westlake River Park Project: Traffic Signal at Whitsett Avenue and Valley Spring Lane Intersection

LA19-3093.02

This memorandum documents the implications to the findings of the Draft EIR for the Harvard-Westlake River Park Project (Project) of the City's recent installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Whitsett Avenue and Valley Spring Lane. The intersection of Whitsett Avenue and Valley Spring Lane was unsignalized at the time of publication of the Draft EIR; however, since then, the City has installed a traffic signal at the intersection of Whitsett Avenue and Valley Spring Lane.

This memorandum states the thresholds of significance for analyzing project impacts and outlines how this change in intersection control type (i.e., a two-way stop-controlled intersection to a traffic signal) could affect the findings and conclusions of the transportation assessment in the Draft EIR. As concluded in this memorandum, the change in intersection control from unsignalized to signalized at the intersection of Whitsett Avenue and Valley Spring Lane do not affect the findings and conclusions identified in the Draft EIR (Transportation Section) or the transportation assessment contained in Appendix M of the Draft EIR (Transportation Assessment).

Project Impacts – Threshold of Significance

In accordance with Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines and the transportation impact thresholds in the City's Transportation Assessment Guidelines, a project would have a significant impact related to transportation if it would:

- Threshold (a): Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- Threshold (b): Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b) [vehicle miles traveled (VMT)].

- Threshold (c): Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment).
- Threshold (d): Result in inadequate emergency access.

Effect of a Traffic Signal at the Whitsett Avenue and Valley Spring Lane Intersection

The Draft EIR was completed under the assumption that the intersection of Whitsett Avenue and Valley Spring Lane would remain unsignalized without and with the Project. The transportation impacts for the Project were found to be less than significant in the Draft EIR.

However, in light of a traffic signal recently having been installed at the intersection of Whitsett Avenue and Valley Spring Lane by the City, the effects to the Transportation analysis on the four thresholds analyzed in the Draft EIR, the review for conflicts with Plans, Programs, Ordinances or Policies, the VMT Analysis, the Geometric Design Features or Incompatible Use Hazards, and Emergency Access, are described below:

Review for Conflicts with Plans, Programs, Ordinances or Policies

The Draft EIR found that the Project would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities, which have been adopted to protect the environment and reduce VMT. Therefore, the impacts would be less than significant.

Fehr & Peers reviewed the Plans, Programs, Ordinances, or Policies (PPOP) analysis in the Transportation Section of the Draft EIR, in the Transportation Assessment contained in Appendix M to the Draft EIR, and in Appendix C to the Transportation Assessment. There were no programs, plans, ordinances nor policies reviewed in the analysis with which a change in signal control from unsignalized to signalized at the intersection of Whitsett Avenue and Valley Spring Lane would conflict in the following documents:

- Mobility Plan 2035
- Bicycle Parking Ordinance
- TDM Ordinance
- Vision Zero
- Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles
- Citywide Design Guidelines
- Los Angeles River Design Guidelines
- Sherman Oaks-Studio City-Toluca Lake-Cahuenga Pass Community Plan

Therefore, the change in intersection control from unsignalized to signalized at the intersection of Whitsett Avenue and Valley Spring Lane would not change the less-than-significant impact finding for the review for conflicts with plans, programs, ordinances, or policies.

VMT Analysis

The Draft EIR found that the Project would result in a net decrease in daily VMT, and thus the Project would have a less-than-significant impact on VMT.

The net VMT for the Project was estimated by multiplying the estimated trip generation by the estimated trip length for each group of users on the Project Site (e.g., Harvard-Westlake students, visiting teams, spectators, and employees). The trip generation estimate is a function of the number of participants on the Project Site and the assumed average vehicle occupancy (AVO), neither of which would be affected by the intersection control type. The trip length estimate is a function of where the participants are coming from and going to, which also would not be affected by the intersection control type. Closer to the Project Site, the paths that vehicles take to arrive to and depart from the Project Site are mostly determined by the direction they are going to and coming from, as well as the access restrictions at the Project driveways (i.e., no left-turns in and out of the northern driveway), and would not be affected by a traffic signal at the northeast corner of the Project Site.

Therefore, the change in intersection control from unsignalized to signalized at the intersection of Whitsett Avenue and Valley Spring Lane would not change the less-than-significant impact finding for the VMT analysis.

Geometric Design Features or Incompatible Use Hazards

The Draft EIR found that the Project would not substantially increase geometric hazards due to a design feature or incompatible uses and impacts on local safety and freeway safety would be less than significant.

The change in intersection control from unsignalized to signalized at the intersection of Whitsett Avenue and Valley Spring Lane will not cause the Project to change the alignment of the roadway, the number or location of proposed pedestrian, bicycle, or vehicle accesses to the Project Site, or cause the Project to introduce other hazardous design features.

The traffic signal would not increase the number of Project trips projected to add to the US-101 southbound off-ramp at Coldwater Canyon Avenue during the afternoon peak hour, as it would not alter the trip generation or trip distribution of the Project trips.

Therefore, the change in intersection control from unsignalized to signalized at the intersection of Whitsett Avenue and Valley Spring Lane would not change the less-than-significant impact finding for geometric design features, incompatible use hazards, or freeway off-ramp safety.

Emergency Access

The Draft EIR found that the Project impacts with respect to emergency access would be less than significant. Impacts to emergency access were analyzed for the construction phase and for the operational conditions.

The change in intersection control from unsignalized to signalized at the intersection of Whitsett Avenue and Valley Spring Lane would not affect emergency access for the Project construction phase nor for operational conditions.

Therefore, the change in intersection control from unsignalized to signalized at the intersection of Whitsett Avenue and Valley Spring Lane would not change the less-than-significant impact finding for the emergency access.

Conclusion

Based on the findings above, the transportation impacts for the Project would continue to be less than significant with the change in intersection control from unsignalized to signalized at the intersection of Whitsett Avenue and Valley Spring Lane.