

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Dec 02 2020

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

December 2, 2020

Jason McCrea
City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning
221 N. Figueroa Street, Room 1350
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: The Retreat at Benedict Canyon Project –
Notice of Preparation of an Environmental
Impact Report (NOP)
SCH # 2020110171
GTS # 07-LA-2020-03417
Vic. LA-101/PM: 15.086

Dear Jason McCrea:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced NOP. The project proposes the demolition of two existing single-family residences, as well as the construction of a 59-guest room hotel and eight single-family residences on an approximately 33-acre property in Benedict Canyon. The project consists of hotel uses within 19 buildings on the northern 16-acre portion of the site, and eight single-family residences on the southern 17-acre portion of the site. The main five-story hotel building includes up to 18 guest rooms, 7,960 square feet of bar/restaurant uses, 10,900 square feet of spa/fitness uses, outdoor pool and spa amenities, and an additional two floors of subterranean parking. In total, the main hotel building will have a total of 60,860 square feet of building floor area. An additional 15 bungalow-style hotel buildings would be dispersed throughout the hotel portion of the site and would contain the remaining 41 hotel guest rooms, with a total of 54,500 square feet of floor area. Three ancillary hotel buildings containing the main valet and hotel reception area, a rooftop restaurant, screening room, administrative uses, other hotel support services, and parking, would comprise 28,840 square feet of building floor area. Overall, the total floor area for the hotel portion of the site would be 144,650 square feet. The eight single-family residences on the eastern portion of the site would range in size from approximately 12,000 to 48,000 square feet of residential floor area and would have a combined residential floor area of up to 181,000 square feet. The City of Los Angeles is the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The project is located approximately 2.5 miles away from US-101 and Interstate 405 (I-405). From reviewing the NOP, Caltrans has the following comments:

- For information on determining transportation impacts in terms of Vehicle Miles Traveled (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: <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/sb-743/2020-05-20-approved-vmt-focused-tisg-a11y.pdf>. Caltrans' new TISG is largely based on the OPR 2018 Technical Advisory.

- The updated TISG states, “Additional future guidance will include the basis for requesting transportation impact analysis that is not based on VMT. This guidance will include a simplified safety analysis approach that reduces risks to all road users and that focuses on multi-modal conflict analysis as well as access management issues.” Since releasing the TISG, Caltrans has released interim safety analysis guidance, dated July 2020 and found here, for the City’s reference: <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/sb-743/2020-07-01-interim-ldigr-safety-guidance-a11y.pdf>.
- Caltrans looks forward to reviewing the VMT analysis for this project. As discussed in Caltrans’ new TISG, Caltrans strongly recommends undertaking project VMT analysis, significance determination, and potential mitigation in a manner consistent with OPR’s Technical Advisory.

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 providing 36 bicycle parking spaces for the hotel uses. Additional TDM strategies that the City of Los Angeles may want to consider integrating into this project in order to further reduce VMT include:

- Verify that project driveway placements do not directly cause issues related to line of sight of pedestrians or bicyclists.
- Decrease vehicle parking spaces through offering additional bicycle parking or carpool parking spaces.
- Provide electric vehicle charging stations for hotel guests.
- Ensure that new sidewalks and walking paths are ADA compliant and unobstructed by utility poles or electrical cabinets.
- If the project site will be gated, please provide pedestrian and bicyclist access points throughout the gate to promote active transportation to and from the site.

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. If construction traffic is expected to cause delays on any State facilities, please submit a construction traffic control 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-2020-03417.

Sincerely,



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