

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

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Governor's Office of Planning &amp; Research



*Making Conservation  
a California Way of Life.*

**Mar 16 2021****STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**

March 15, 2021

11-SD-15, 78  
PM VAREscondido Housing and Community Investment Study  
NOP/SCH#2021020263

Mr. Michael Strong  
City of Escondido  
Director of Community Development  
City of Escondido  
201 N. Broadway  
Escondido, CA 92025

Dear Mr. Strong:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Notice of Preparation for the Draft Environmental Impact Report (NOP) for the Escondido Housing and Community Investment Study located near Interstate 15 (I-15) and /State Route 78 (SR-78). The mission of Caltrans is to provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability. The Local Development-Intergovernmental Review (LD-IGR) Program reviews land use projects and plans to ensure consistency with our mission and state planning priorities.

Caltrans has the following comments:

**Traffic Impact Study**

- A Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT) based Traffic Impact Study (TIS) should be provided for this project. Please use the Governor's Office of Planning and Research Guidance to identify VMT related impacts.<sup>i</sup>
- The TIS may also need to identify the proposed project's near-term and long-term safety or operational issues, on or adjacent any existing or proposed State facilities.

<sup>i</sup> California Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) 2018. "Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA." [http://opr.ca.gov/docs/20190122-743\\_Technical\\_Advisory.pdf](http://opr.ca.gov/docs/20190122-743_Technical_Advisory.pdf)

## **Design**

- Caltrans and SANDAG, in partnership with the City of Escondido and other local agencies, are preparing a Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan (CMCP) for the North County San Diego sub-region, which encompasses the City of Escondido. The CMCP and the City's Housing and Community Investment Study efforts should be coordinated.

## **Complete Streets and Mobility Network**

Caltrans views all transportation improvements as opportunities to improve safety, access and mobility for all travelers in California and recognizes bicycle, pedestrian and transit modes as integral elements of the transportation system. Caltrans supports improved transit accommodation through the provision of Park and Ride facilities, improved bicycle and pedestrian access and safety improvements, signal prioritization for transit, bus on shoulders, ramp improvements, or other enhancements that promotes a complete and integrated transportation system. Early coordination with Caltrans, in locations that may affect both Caltrans and the City of Escondido is encouraged.

To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and achieve California's Climate Change target, Caltrans is implementing Complete Streets and Climate Change policies into State Highway Operations and Protection Program (SHOPP) projects to meet multi-modal mobility needs. Caltrans looks forward to working with the City to evaluate potential Complete Streets projects.

## **Land Use and Smart Growth**

Caltrans recognizes there is a strong link between transportation and land use. Development can have a significant impact on traffic and congestion on State transportation facilities. In particular, the pattern of land use can affect both local vehicle miles traveled and the number of trips. Caltrans supports collaboration with local agencies to work towards a safe, functional, interconnected, multi-modal transportation system integrated through applicable "smart growth" type land use planning and policies.

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The City should continue to coordinate with Caltrans to implement necessary improvements at intersections and interchanges where the agencies have joint jurisdiction.

### **Environmental**

Caltrans welcomes the opportunity to be a Responsible Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as we have some discretionary authority of a portion of the project that is in Caltrans' R/W through the form of an encroachment permit process. We look forward to the coordination of our efforts to ensure that Caltrans can adopt the alternative and/or mitigation measure for our R/W. We would appreciate meeting with you to discuss the elements of the EIR that Caltrans will use for our subsequent environmental compliance.

An encroachment permit will be required for any work within the Caltrans' R/W prior to construction. As part of the encroachment permit process, the applicant must provide approved final environmental documents for this project, corresponding technical studies, and necessary regulatory and resource agency permits. Specifically, CEQA determination or exemption. The supporting documents must address all environmental impacts within the Caltrans' R/W and address any impacts from avoidance and/or mitigation measures.

We recommend that this project specifically identifies and assesses potential impacts caused by the project or impacts from mitigation efforts that occur within Caltrans R/W that includes impacts to the natural environment, infrastructure (including but not limited to highways/roadways/on-ramps and off-ramps) and appurtenant features (lighting, drainage, signage, guardrail, slopes, etc). Caltrans is interested in any additional mitigation measures identified for the DEIR.

### **Right-of-Way**

- Per Business and Profession Code 8771, perpetuation of survey monuments by a licensed land surveyor is required, if they are being destroyed by any construction.

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- Any work performed within Caltrans R/W will require discretionary review and approval by Caltrans and an encroachment permit will be required for any work within the Caltrans R/W prior to construction.

Additional information regarding encroachment permits may be obtained by contacting the Caltrans Permits Office at (619) 688-6158 or by visiting the website at <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/ep>. Early coordination with Caltrans is strongly advised for all encroachment permits.

If you have any questions, please contact Kimberly Dodson, of the Caltrans Development Review Branch, at (619) 985-1587 or by e-mail sent to [Kimberly.Dodson@dot.ca.gov](mailto:Kimberly.Dodson@dot.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

**electronically signed by**

MAURICE EATON, Branch Chief  
Local Development and Intergovernmental Review