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*Making Conservation
a California Way of Life*

March 9, 2022

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RE: Long Beach River Park Residential Project
SCH # 2021020492
Vic. LA-710/PM 9.052, LA-405/PM 7.302
GTS # LA-2021-03829-DEIR

Amy Harbin:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced environmental document. The proposed Project would convert 20 acres of vacant land into a residential neighborhood with open space in the neighborhood of Wrigley Heights in the City of Long Beach. The gated residential development will include 226 single-family detached and attached homes, with 11 affordable housing units. The residential project will include a mix of single-family detached homes, carriage townhouses, row townhouses, streets, parking areas, and open space with built in trails. Three quarters of the site will be used for residential development at approximately 15 acres, and 5 acres of the site will be used for open space with recreational facilities. There will be 510 parking spaces for both residents and guests. The site will be remediated prior to construction according to a Remediation Action Plan approved by RWQCB.

The mission of Caltrans is to provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment. Senate Bill 743 (2013) has codified into CEQA law and mandated that CEQA review of transportation impacts of proposed development be modified by using Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as the primary metric in identifying transportation impacts for all future development projects. You may reference the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) for more information:

<http://opr.ca.gov/ceqa/updates/guidelines/>

As a reminder, VMT is the standard transportation analysis metric in CEQA for land use projects after July 1, 2020, which is the statewide implementation date.

Caltrans is aware of challenges that the region faces in identifying viable solutions to alleviating congestion on State and Local facilities. With limited room to expand vehicular capacity, all future developments should incorporate multi-modal and complete streets transportation elements that will actively promote alternatives to car use and better manage existing parking assets. Prioritizing and allocating space to efficient modes of travel such as bicycling and public transit can allow streets to transport more people in a fixed amount of right-of-way.

Caltrans supports the implementation of complete streets and pedestrian safety measures such as road diets and other traffic calming measures. Please note the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recognizes the road diet treatment as a proven safety countermeasure, and the cost of a road diet can be significantly reduced if implemented in tandem with routine street resurfacing. Overall, the environmental report should ensure all modes are served well by planning and development activities. This includes reducing single occupancy vehicle trips, ensuring safety, reducing vehicle miles traveled, supporting accessibility, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

For this project, we encourage the Lead Agency to evaluate the potential of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies and Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) applications in order to better manage the transportation network, as well as transit service and bicycle or pedestrian connectivity improvements. For additional TDM options, please refer to the Federal Highway Administration's *Integrating Demand Management into the Transportation Planning Process: A Desk Reference* (Chapter 8). This reference is available online at:

<http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwahop12035/fhwahop12035.pdf>

You can also refer to the 2010 *Quantifying Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Measures* report by the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA), which is available online at:

<http://www.capcoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/CAPCOA-Quantification-Report-9-14-Final.pdf>

Since the Project VMT metric (10.2) is less than the significance threshold (11.8), the Project is presumed to create a less than significant VMT impact and no further VMT analysis is required. The Project has the following characteristics that make it perform well from a VMT impact analysis perspective:

1. The proposed residential land use matches the surrounding land uses of single-family and multifamily housing;
2. The Project's proximity to the Wardlow Metro light-rail station;
3. The inclusion of affordable housing units; &
4. The traffic analysis zone is already a borderline low-VMT area based on the City's VMT mapping.

Given the above finding of less than significant Project VMT impact, the identification of mitigation measures is not required at this time. However, a post-development VMT analysis with all mitigation measures should be prepared for monitoring purpose and for future project thresholds in the area. Additional mitigation measure should be implemented when the post-development VMT analysis discloses any traffic significant impact.

Caltrans concurs that "the Project features, location, and design generally support multimodal transportation options and would be consistent with policies, plans, and programs that support alternative transportation, including the *Mobility Element 2035*, the *Housing Element* and the *Safe Streets Action Plan*. The Project features are intended to minimize impacts to the public right-of-way and enhance the user experience by integrating multimodal transportation options, including on-site pedestrian infrastructure and trails to the 4.81 acres of dedicated open space north of the developed site area. The Project would encourage bicycle use to and from the Project Site by providing bicycle parking in accordance with the City requirements and in proximity to existing bicycle facilities along Wardlow Road, as well as future planned bicycle facilities within the vicinity of the Project, including along Magnolia Avenue south of Wardlow Road. The Project would encourage pedestrian and bicyclist activity because it concentrates the development near public transit, which provides residences and visitors access to the site that can be conveniently accessed by walking, biking, or taking transit. The Project would also accommodate pedestrian activity with its access locations and open space, which would be designed to City standards to provide adequate sight distance and pedestrian movement controls that would meet the City's requirements to protect pedestrian safety. The Project design and features would not substantially increase hazards, conflicts, or preclude City action to fulfill or implement projects associated with these networks and will contribute to overall walkability through enhancements to the Project Site and streetscape."

California statutes do not legally entitle owners of property who are building adjacent to or near freeways to any noise mitigation program funded by the State. Any necessary improvements to with new soundwalls are the sole responsibility of the property owner. The property owner is not entitled to any State sponsored soundwalls mitigation funding programs. We request that developers and prospective owners/occupants be made aware of this, and that the City exercise its powers and responsibility to minimize the impacts of freeway vehicle noise.

Therefore, residential construction next to freeways is an incompatible land use and local jurisdictions need to require soundwalls tall enough to reduce traffic noise. To ensure compliance with established noise standards and guidelines, and to protect future occupants from potential adverse effects associated with traffic noise levels exceeding these standards, soundwalls need to be implemented in the zoning, architectural design, and construction of units. Otherwise, future traffic noise controversy can be expected.

Since the project site is next to I-405 and I-710, please be reminded that any work performed within the State Right-of-way will require an Encroachment Permit from Caltrans. Any modifications to State facilities must meet all mandatory design standard and specifications.

Storm water run-off is a sensitive issue for Los Angeles and Ventura counties. Please be mindful that projects should be designed to discharge clean run-off water. Additionally, discharge of storm water run-off is not permitted onto State highway facilities without any storm water management plan.

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. We recommend large size truck trips be limited to off-peak commute periods.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mr. Alan Lin the project coordinator at (213) 269-1124 and refer to GTS # LA-2021-03829-DEIR.

Sincerely,



MIYA EDMONSON
LDR Branch Chief

email: State Clearinghouse