

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Governor's Office of Planning & Research



Making Conservation
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Mar 16 2021**STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**

March 15, 2021

Megan Taggart, Planning Manager
City of Palmdale
Department of Economic and Community Development
38250 Sierra Highway
Palmdale, CA 93550

RE: Pilot Travel Center Project – Mitigated
Negative Declaration (MND)
SCH # 2021030139
GTS # 07-LA-2020-03512
Vic. LA-138/PM: 51.408

Dear Megan Taggart:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced MND. The project includes subdividing the existing 28-acre parcel into three parcels. The approximately 9-acre western parcel would be developed with the Pilot Travel Center, which would include fueling facilities, travel amenities, restaurants, and parking facilities for passing motorists and commercial truck operators. The other two parcels would remain largely unchanged at this time, with the exception of proposed roadway improvements. These improvements involve widening Pearblossom Highway to its ultimate half-width right-of-way from the proposed Pilot Travel Center site's western property line to its easterly property line. Another proposed improvement is to provide a one-way access point from State Route 138 via a right turn pocket. The City of Palmdale is the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The project is located approximately 1,200 feet away from the intersection of Pearblossom Highway and State Route 138 (SR-138, also known as Fort Tejon Road). Caltrans has reviewed the MND from a Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) perspective rather than a Level of Service perspective because Senate Bill 743 (2013) mandates that VMT be used as the primary metric in identifying transportation impacts of all future development projects under CEQA, starting July 1, 2020. We concur that the VMT impacts of this project will be less than significant. Therefore, the following information is included for your consideration.

The mission of Caltrans is to provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment. Thus, Caltrans encourages Lead Agencies to implement Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies that reduce VMT and Greenhouse Gas emissions. For TDM strategies that the City can consider integrating into this project to further reduce VMT, please see:

- The 2010 *Quantifying Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Measures* report by the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA), available at <http://www.capcoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/CAPCOA-Quantification-Report-9-14-Final.pdf>, or
- *Integrating Demand Management into the Transportation Planning Process: A Desk Reference* (Chapter 8) by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), available at <https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwahop12035/index.htm>.

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Also, 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 recommends that the project limit construction traffic to off-peak periods to minimize the potential impact on State facilities. 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.

Finally, Caltrans appreciates the following statements: "Proposed improvements to Fort Tejon Road/Highway 138 would also require review and approval by Caltrans. The proposed improvements would be required to be designed and constructed in conformance with all applicable City design standards and Caltrans requirements specific to Fort Tejon Road/Highway 138." The proposed improvements on SR-138 might require an encroachment permit, however, the final determination on this will be made by Caltrans' Office of Permits. For more information on encroachment permits, see: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/ep>.

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-2020-03512.

Sincerely,



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