

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DISTRICT 9

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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

June 07 2021**STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**Making Conservation
a California Way of Life.

June 7, 2021

Ms. Elaine Kabala, Associate Planner
City of Bishop
377 West Line Street
Bishop, CA 93514

File: Iny-395,168-var
NOP DEIR
SCH#: 2021050340

Downtown Bishop Specific Plan & Mixed-Use Overlay - Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)

Dear Ms. Kabala,

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 9 appreciates the opportunity to comment during the NOP phase for the Downtown Specific Plan/Mixed-Use Overlay. We offer the following for your consideration in the draft Plan and Concepts/Alternatives, and for analysis in the DEIR.

- While the draft Plan notes that US 395 (Main Street) and State Route 168 (West Line Street) are State highways, this could be more concisely stated throughout with emphasis that this affects assorted concepts presented. (Such could be considered in the Opportunities and Constraints section on page 46.)
- Since these are State highways, any "conceptual" feature (e.g. pavement striping, awnings, business/wayfinding signage, street scaping, public art, etc.) placed within, including overhead, the State right-of-way (R/W) would need an encroachment permit and to adhere to specific standards and maintenance responsibility. Applicable standards are in the CA Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (parts 2,3,4), the Caltrans Encroachment Permit Manual (section 5), and the Highway Design Manual (Topic 105 for sidewalks, etc.).

Document links:

- [California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices](#)
- [Chapter 500 – Specific Encroachment Permits \(PDF\)](#)
- [Chapter 100 – Caltrans Highway Design Manual](#)

- Please note that the encroachment provision for dining facilities within State R/W is temporary and subject to the current CA Emergency Declaration.
- **Community Survey**, Plan, page 12 - top pie chart total does not equal 100%.
- **Circulation**, Plan, page 38 - Consider a clarification, "there are 2.9 miles of "dedicated" bikeway facilities."
- **Street Conditions**, Plan, page 40 - Vehicular and pedestrian components of US 395 and US 6 were built to current standards. Driver, bicyclist, and pedestrian decisions create safety issues. Consider clarification in this section.
- **Transit**, Plan, page 121 – As noted in the document, more interaction between the City and Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA) is merited. Clarification should be made that the Bishop Creek Shuttle is not a commuter service, but a seasonal service for recreators in the Inyo National Forest. Better park-n-ride opportunities should be considered for those using a commuter services (e.g. Mammoth Express, Lone Pine Express) and for longer-term parking (more than 3 days) for those using inter-regional Reno/ Lancaster Routes and the Bishop Creek Shuttle. Such would also benefit those (e.g. long-term hikers) needing to leave cars so they will not exceed a 3-day parking restriction.
- Parking availability - ensure that further provision of bicycle facilities includes assessment of resultant loss of on-street parking. There are also Caltrans projects, which we/City are interacting on, that have the potential for removing on-street parking.
- **Mobility Improvements**, Concepts/Alternatives, page 55:
 - The photo with caption "Bicyclist riding along Main Street" is an excellent example of an unsafe/illegal bicyclist decision. Relabel this photo accordingly or remove/replace it.
 - Main Street – Creating more transportation options through downtown would be difficult. The through lanes, shoulders and turn lanes cannot be made any narrower without infringing into the sidewalk or businesses. A better focus may be on directing bicycles to a less constrained route such as Warren Street. Then, the Main Street cross section can be used to the best advantage for pedestrians and businesses.
- Since transportation and complete street features (such as lighting, street scape, art, planters, etc.) require maintenance and operational funds - including power and

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irrigation, the City should analyze the formation of assessment districts or other fee mechanisms within its jurisdiction to address such work/costs.

- Although goods movement is a necessity for locals and tourists alike, as noted it is not conducive to a pedestrian “friendly feel” in a main street setting. The City might wish to revisit options described in the 2007 Bishop Area Access and Circulation Feasibility Study, which was initiated by the Inyo County Local Transportation Commission (LTC). The Inyo LTC could research and pursue possible funding options; there is no guarantee that such could successfully compete for any Caltrans funding programs. Jurisdiction of the existing Main Street route and any new highway route would need to be determined. One of them should be under Caltrans jurisdiction and the other under County or City jurisdiction.
- While localized transportation impacts from development projects are assessed and hence, mitigated/conditioned at the project level, more regionally based mitigation options might be merited especially for cumulative impacts and the CEQA metric of vehicle miles traveled (VMT). The City and Inyo Local Transportation Commission could consider and assess mitigation methods (e.g. fee programs for transit, multi-modal travel, etc.) applicable at a regional/geographical level in rural areas for VMT. Such options must also be balanced with the efficient operation of the overall transportation system.

We value our ongoing cooperative working relationship as we together improve the City's multimodal transportation system. We look forward to reviewing the DEIR. For any questions, feel free to contact me at (760) 874-8330 or gayle.rosander@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



GAYLE J. ROSANDER
External Project Liaison

c: State Clearinghouse
Mark Heckman, Caltrans D-9