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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Oct 15 2021

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

October 15, 2021

City of Burbank, Community Development Department,
Attn: Senior Planner Leonard Bechet,
150 North Third Street,
Burbank, California 91502

RE: Burbank Downtown Transit Oriented
Development Specific Plan – Recirculated
Notice of Preparation (NOP)
SCH# 2021050436
GTS# 07-LA-2021-03713
Vic. LA-5 PM 29.209

Dear Leonard Bechet,

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced project. The Burbank Downtown Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Specific Plan (Project) proposes to develop up to 5,656 new residential units, approximately 4,042,139 square feet of commercial and industrial development, approximately 871 hotel rooms, introduce improvements to the pedestrian network, and provide transit-supportive design standards within a 965-acre Plan Area. The City has also identified groupings of underutilized sites within the Plan Area as opportunities for infill, intensification, and adaptive reuse.

The nearest State facility to the proposed project is I-5. After reviewing the NOP, Caltrans has the following comments:

Caltrans acknowledges and supports mixed-use, infill development that prioritizes walking, biking, and transit. The Project's goals appear to be in alignment with State-level sustainable transportation policy goals which seek to reduce the number of trips made by driving, reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, and encourage alternative modes of travel. Caltrans' Strategic Management Plan has set targets of tripling trips made by bicycle and doubling trips made by walking and public transit, as well as achieving a reduction in statewide, per capita, vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Similar goals are embedded in the California Transportation Plan 2040, California Transportation Plan 2050, and Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Connect SoCal (2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy). Statewide legislation such as AB 32 and SB 375, as well as Executive Order S-3-05 and N-19-19, echo the need to pursue more sustainable development. Projects, like the one proposed, can help California meet these goals.

Caltrans has the following recommendations for the Specific Plan that should be addressed while developing the Draft Environmental Impact Report:

1. Street Designations and Standards:

Caltrans recommends creating the safest streetscape possible for pedestrians and people on bikes. Wide roadways with numerous travel lanes are associated with higher vehicle speeds and less safe conditions for people walking and biking. Elements should be considered to create the most comfortable environment possible for all the people who will be walking and biking within the specific plan area. The most effective methods to reduce pedestrian and bicyclist exposure to vehicles is through physical design and geometrics. These methods include the construction of physically separated facilities such as Class IV bike lanes, curb extensions or bulb-outs, sidewalks, pedestrian refuge islands, landscaping, street furniture, and reductions in crossing distances through roadway narrowing. Visual indicators such as, pedestrian and bicyclist warning signage, flashing beacons, crosswalks, signage, and striping should be used in addition to physical design improvements to indicate to motorists that they can expect to see and yield to pedestrians and people on bikes.

2. Circulation and Parking Standards:

Caltrans encourages the lead agency to seriously consider eliminating car parking requirements altogether. Research looking at the relationship between land-use, parking, and transportation indicates that the amount of car parking supplied can undermine a project's ability to encourage public transit and active modes of transportation. There is sufficient justification to consider eliminating parking requirements to promote affordability and achieve the project's goals.

Caltrans also recommends that at least one long-term bicycle parking space be provided per residential unit, allowing residents to take advantage of the Specific Plan's central location and choose the bicycle as their mode of travel more easily. Long-term bicycle parking should be located onsite, indoors, on the ground floor, and within 200 feet of primary pedestrian entrances.

While Caltrans does not expect project approval to result in a direct adverse impact to the existing State transportation facilities, the Burbank Downtown Transit Oriented Development Specific Plan area is immediately adjacent to Interstate 5, so an encroachment permit will be required for any project work proposed on or in the vicinity of the Caltrans right-of-way and all environmental concerns must be adequately addressed. Please note that any modifications to State facilities will be subject to additional review by the Office of Permits prior to issuance of the permit.

Caltrans looks forward to the forthcoming Draft Environmental Impact Report to confirm that the Project will result in a net reduction in Vehicle Miles Traveled.

Leonard Bechet
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If you have any questions, please contact project coordinator Anthony Higgins, at anthony.higgins@dot.ca.gov and refer to GTS# 07-LA-2021-03713.

Sincerely,



Miya Edmonson
IGR/CEQA Branch Chief

Cc: State Clearinghouse