

California Department of Transportation

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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

July 28 2021

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STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

11-IMP-VAR
County of Imperial Housing Element Update – 2021-2029
GPA# 20-0004
ND/SCH# 2021070374

Ms. Diana Robinson
Planner III
Imperial County Planning and Development Services Dept.
801 Main Street
El Centro, CA 92243

Dear Ms. Robinson:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review of Negative Declaration (ND), State Clearinghouse (SCH) 2021070374 for the County of Imperial General Plan Amendment (GPA) #20-0004 Housing Element Update (2021-2029) located near Interstate 8 (I-8) and State Routes 7, 78, 86, 98, 111, 115 and 186 (SR-7, SR-78, SR-86, SR-98, SR-111, SR-115 and SR-186). The mission of Caltrans is to provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment. The Local Development-Intergovernmental Review (LD-IGR) Program reviews land use projects and plans to ensure consistency with Caltrans' mission and state planning priorities.

Safety is one of Caltrans strategic goals. Caltrans strives to make the year 2050 the first year without a single death or serious injury on California's roads. We are striving for more equitable outcomes for the transportation network's diverse users. To achieve these ambitious goals, we will pursue meaningful collaboration with our partners. We encourage the implementation of new technologies, innovations, and best practices that will enhance the safety on the transportation network. These pursuits are both ambitious and urgent, and their accomplishment involves a focused departure from the status quo as we continue to institutionalize safety in all our work.

Caltrans has the following comments:

Traffic Impact Study

- New developments resulting from the County's Housing Element update should provide a Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT) based Traffic Impact Study (TIS). Please use the Governor's Office of Planning and Research Guidance to identify VMT related impacts.¹
- 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.

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 County of Imperial 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 County 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 network integrated through applicable "smart growth" type land use planning and policies.

¹ 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

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

Noise

The applicant must be informed that in accordance with 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 772, Caltrans is not responsible for existing or future traffic noise impacts associated with the existing configuration of SR-7, SR-78, SR-86, SR-98, SR-111, SR-115 and SR-186.

Environmental

Should future projects based upon the changes enacted from the General Plan have elements and/or mitigation measures that affect Caltrans Right-of-Way (R/W), Caltrans would welcome the opportunity to be a Responsible Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Broadband

Caltrans recognizes that teleworking and remote learning lessen the impacts of traffic on our roadways and surrounding communities. This reduces the amount of VMT and decreases the amount of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and other pollutants. The availability of affordable and reliable, high speed broadband is a key component in supporting travel demand management and reaching the state's transportation and climate action goals.

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.

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.

Ms. Diana Robinson, Planner III
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If you have any questions, please contact Mark McCumsey at (619) 985-4957 or by email at mark.mccumsey@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Maurice A. Eaton

MAURICE EATON
Branch Chief
Local Development and Intergovernmental Review