

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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December 28, 2021

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Dec 29 2021

Carmen Morales, City Planner
Bell Gardens City Hall
7100 Garfield Avenue
Bell Gardens, CA 90201

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

RE: The City of Bell Gardens 2021-2029
Housing Element
SCH # 2021120351
Vic. LA-05, LA-710, Citywide
GTS # LA-2021-03794-MND

Dear Carmen Morales:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced environmental document. The Housing Element update includes a program to facilitate the development of ADUs. Other opportunities to meet the RHNA allocation exist in the City's R3 (one property) and Mixed Use Overlay (with multiple parcels). The Mixed Use (MU) Overlay allows 30 units per acre with an FAR of 4.0 and up to four stories. The City has not yet amended the Zoning Code to implement the Mixed Use designation but utilizes the R-3 standards for the recent project application. Based on density, the MU sites (20-30 units per acre) can also facilitate lower income housing. The MU sites are assigned to the moderate and above moderate income RHNA categories. The City has also identified two sites for rezone into R-3 residential uses.

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. For the 2021 Housing Element update, the City of Bell Gardens is allocated a Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) of 503 units.

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 future specific projects, 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>

Also, Caltrans has published the VMT-focused Transportation Impact Study Guide (TISG), dated May 20, 2020 and the Caltrans Interim Land Development and Intergovernmental Review (LD-IGR) Safety Review Practitioners Guidance, prepared in On December 18, 2020. You can review these resources at the following links:

<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/sb-743/2020-05-20-approved-vmt-focused-tisg-a11y.pdf>

<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/sb-743/2020-12-22-updated-interim-ldigr-safety-review-guidance-a11y.pdf>

Caltrans encourages lead agencies to prepare traffic safety impact analysis for all developments in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review process so that, through partnerships and collaboration, California can reach zero fatalities and serious injuries by 2050.

The City of Bell Gardens has an established system of streets and roadways. Bell Gardens is currently served by a system of major highways, secondary highways, collector streets, and local streets. The arterial roadways through the City of Bell Gardens extend beyond the city boundaries into neighboring cities. Circulation issues and travel patterns, likewise, extend beyond the Bell Gardens city limits. The land use decisions and traffic patterns in these other jurisdictions have the potential to affect the quality of traffic flow and mobility in the City of Bell Gardens, and conversely, traffic conditions and decisions made by the City of Bell Gardens can affect its neighbors. The City is served for transit by Metro, with bus lines.

The project is the adoption of the City of Bell Gardens Housing Element 2021-2029. The project does not propose any specific development projects as the Housing Element only identifies opportunity sites that are feasible for development. These sites are located on developed lots and would not change the existing street grid if developed. The majority of the sites are located near or on Gage Avenue and Eastern Avenue proximate to transit. These locations would be consistent with SCAG Connect SoCal policies that support increasing residential concentrations in areas served by transit and implementation of smart growth designed to strengthen the integration of land use and transportation. Any future development projects supported by the Housing Element Update would be evaluated at the project proposal stage and subject to the state, regional, and local plans, and the policies therein. Therefore, Caltrans concurs that the impacts would be less than significant.

Carmen Morales, City Planner

December 28, 2021

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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-2021-03794-ND.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Miya Edmonson".

MIYA EDMONSON
IGR/CEQA Branch Chief

email: State Clearinghouse