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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

December 29, 2021

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STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Grissell Chavez, Director of Public Works
Bell Gardens City Hall
7100 Garfield Avenue
Bell Gardens, CA 90201

RE: The City of Bell Gardens General Plan
Circulation and Transportation Element
Update
SCH # 2021120396
Vic. LA-05, LA-710, Citywide
GTS # LA-2021-03804-MND

Dear Grissell Chavez:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced environmental document. The City of Bell Gardens is proposing an update to its existing Circulation and Transportation Element. The Circulation and Transportation Element provides a blueprint for establishing a convenient, safe, and sustainable transportation network in Bell Gardens, which serves users of all modes including walking, biking, rolling, riding transit, and driving. The purpose of the element is to improve the current infrastructure in Bell Gardens as a foundation for an integrated and comprehensive transportation network, which will reduce reliance on the private automobile and enhance other transportation options. The element sets forth goals, policies, and programs to support connectivity in the context of the land uses set forth in the existing Land Use Element. The proposed Circulation and Transportation Element Update would not modify the City of Bell Gardens General Plan Land Use Map, land use designations, nor intensities/densities identified within the General Plan Land Use Element. Additionally, the proposed Circulation and Transportation Element Update would not result in any new roadways or increase existing roadway capacities.

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.

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 and include those resources in the Bell Gardens General Plan Circulation and Transportation Element Update:

<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 Project proposes an update to a policy document to support State and regional transportation efforts to establish a more sustainable, multi-modal transportation network. The Circulation and Transportation Element Update proposes circulation policies that would support connectivity in the context of the land uses set forth in the existing Land Use Element and does not approve or allow for any new roadways, any increase in existing roadway capacities, or the implementation of any specific circulation system projects or improvements.

Caltrans concurs that “adoption of the Circulation and Transportation Element Update would not result in any physical environmental changes, as defined by CEQA, and would not result in any impact related to transportation. The proposed Circulation and Transportation Element provides a blueprint for establishing a convenient, safe, and sustainable transportation network in Bell Gardens, which serves users of all modes including walking, biking, rolling, riding transit, and driving. The purpose of the element is to hone the current infrastructure in Bell Gardens as a foundation for an integrated and comprehensive transportation network, which would reduce reliance on the private automobile and enhance other transportation options. As an update to the Circulation and Transportation Element, the Project establishes policies and programs to address streets and highways; public transportation; active transportation; and parking management. Therefore, the Project would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities.”

The proposed Update would establish VMT as a performance standard, including a program to update the City's traffic analysis guidelines to incorporate VMT metrics and associated thresholds of significance. We recommend the City to include Caltrans VMT-focused Transportation Impact Study Guide (TISG) in the City's traffic analysis guidelines.

As stated in the environmental report, the Project would not involve specific circulation improvements or involve any changes to existing land uses identified by the General Plan Land Use Element. Thus, the Project would not increase hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible use. Additionally, the Project does not propose any changes to the City's existing roadway system that would result in inadequate emergency access. Any future circulation improvement projects, consistent with the General Plan, would undergo environmental review on a project-by-project basis and would be reviewed for consistency with policies, programs, and the established regulatory framework aimed to reduce potential impacts related to transportation. If necessary, mitigation would be recommended to reduce potential impacts to a less than significant level.

There would be no impact on transportation from the Circulation and Transportation Element Update. Adoption of the proposed Circulation and Transportation Element Update would provide policies and programs to support a multi-modal transportation system with opportunities to increase transit, walking, and cycling within the community and to improve the overall function of the City's transportation network. Therefore, we concur that "no impacts related to transportation would occur as a result of the proposed Project."

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-2021-03804-ND.

Sincerely,



MIYA EDMONSON
IGR/CEQA Branch Chief

email: State Clearinghouse