

California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 11
4050 TAYLOR STREET, MS-240
SAN DIEGO, CA 92110
(619) 709-5152 | FAX (619) 688-4299 TTY 711
www.dot.ca.gov



November 14, 2022

11-SD-94
PM 20.967

Jamul Casino Hotel and Event Center Project
TEIR/SCH# 2022050410

Ms. Erica M. Pinto
Chairwoman
Jamul Indian Village of California
PO Box 612
Jamul, CA 91935

Dear Chairwoman Pinto:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Draft Tribal Environmental Impact Report for the Jamul Casino Hotel and Event Center Project located near State Route 94 (SR-94). The mission of Caltrans is to provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment. The Local Development Review (LDR) Program reviews land use projects and plans to ensure consistency with our 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 is committed to prioritizing projects that are equitable and provide meaningful benefits to historically underserved communities, to ultimately improve transportation accessibility and quality of life for people in the communities we serve.

We look forward to working with the Jamul Indian Village (JIV) and the County of San Diego in areas where the JIV, County and Caltrans have joint jurisdiction to improve

the transportation network and connections between various modes of travel, with the goal of improving the experience of those who use the transportation system.

Caltrans has the following comments:

Comments Relating to Traffic Impacts

- It is noted that the Proposed Project consists of remodeling the existing JIV Casino Building to include a new event center to “accommodate an approximately 25,500 square-foot outdoor, covered event venue and associated lounge areas; an approximately 9,250 sf enclosed multi-purpose/bingo hall; and associated back-of-house, restrooms, and circulation”. “The new event venue would result in a net increase of approximately 35,000 sf of enclosed, covered outdoor, and uncovered outdoor areas. No expansion of the gaming floor or increase in the number of slot machines or table games is proposed.”
- It is also noted that there will be a new Hotel and Parking structure building proposed to the west of the existing Casino Building. “The proposed 225-room hotel would consist of 16 stories including 3 levels of back-of-house, a hotel lobby level with restaurant, a spa level with outdoor deck, 10 levels of guest rooms, and a rooftop pool deck”. “The proposed parking garage will have 6 levels and provide 255 parking spaces.
- There are still pending mitigation commitments that have not been completed by the JIV associated with the significant impacts from the original scope of the JIV project and the 2016 certified environmental document.
 - Lyons Valley Road and SR-94 Signalization and improvements have been completed.
 - SR-94 and Maxfield Road roadway improvements are still pending.
 - SR-94 and Steele Canyon Road Intersection widening Improvements are still pending.
 - SR-94/Campo Road and Jamacha Road dual right-turn and other improvements are still pending.
 - SR-94/Campo Road and Jamacha Boulevard dual right-turn improvements are still pending.
 - Improvements to the Melody Road and SR-94 intersection is another unfinished mitigation commitment which is still pending.
- During the initial JIV project’s development and Traffic Study (Prior to 2013), an alternative with Hotel and Event Center was proposed but then was subsequently removed after Caltrans reviewed the study and found the traffic impacts of the added vehicle trips which were associated with the Hotel and Event Center required substantially more mitigation which would have been required throughout the SR-94 corridor. The JIV and its developers removed the

event center and hotel proposal from the development construction since mitigation requirements would have increased the mitigation budget.

- Table 3-20; Current Casino Trip Generation Comparison comments:
 - The “Weekend” section should be renamed “Weekday” per page 3-99 description of Table 3-20.
- Caltrans does not concur with the 70% reduction (page 3-101 to 3-102) and the “reduced trip generation rate of 3 vehicular trips per room”. The casino’s expansion of new and different facilities will bring more trips, not less, as indicated in this report.
- Page 3-106; Table 3-23: Final Tribal Environmental Evaluation Mitigation and Status comments:
 - As noted above, the status of the 2013 mitigation measures as identified in TEIR Table 3-23 are not current. Caltrans’ understanding of the required SR-94 improvements is that they have not been fully implemented.

Table 3-23: 2013 Final Tribal Environmental Evaluation Mitigations and Status

Facility	Description of Improvement	Status
Existing Plus Project		
SR 94 (Campo Rd) & Jamacha Blvd (intersection)	Restripe NB thru shared left-turn lane to a NB thru shared right-turn lane (Including required traffic signal modifications).	JIV is processing permit for construction
SR 94 (Campo Rd) & Jamacha Rd (intersection)	Add second EB right-turn lane. Extend NB left turn lane pocket.	JIV is processing permit for construction
SR 94 (Campo Rd) & Steele Canyon Rd (intersection)	Add a second EB and WB thru lane.	JIV is in the planning and right-of-way acquisition process
SR 94 (Campo Rd) & Lyons Valley Rd (intersection)	Install Traffic Signal	Completed
SR 94 (Campo Rd) & Melody Rd (intersection)	Install Traffic Signal	JIV is in the planning and right-of-way acquisition process
	Restripe NB shared left/through/right-turn lane to a NB thru shared right-turn lane and add a NB left-turn lane. Restripe SB shared left/through/right-turn lane to a SB thru shared right-turn lane and add a NB left-turn lane.	JIV is in the planning and right-of-way acquisition process
SR 94 (Campo Rd) & Daisy Drive (intersection)	Construct a new access point for the Project	Completed
SR 94 (Campo Rd) & Maxfield Rd (intersection)	Restripe NB and SB approaches along SR 94 to include a two-way left-turn acceleration lane	JIV is processing permit for construction

TEIR: 3.11 Transportation and Traffic

Appendix K: Trip Generation Analysis Memorandum review and comments:

- Caltrans does not concur with the following excerpt and recommends removal of this text and methodology:
 - “Typically, casinos with on-site hotel facilities implement a pricing structure for the rooms that favors casino guests. Therefore, because casino hotels primarily accommodate casino patrons, they are not considered to generate a significant number of new vehicle trips. The used trip rate of 3 vehicular trips per room accounts for this interaction between the hotel and casino.”

This is an unsupported conclusion. It is suggested this conclusion requires substantial evidence, inferences and analysis.

- The 70% reduction from “Cache Creek Hotel Expansion Project Traffic Impact Study, dated July 2016” should not be used for the JIV Casino Hotel and Event Center project. Cache Creek Casino Resort is approximately 50 miles away from Sacramento. JIV Casino is located about 20 minutes from San Diego’s urbanized areas. This makes the JIV Casino Hotel and Event Center project easily accessible and invites more trip generation, unlike Cache Creek Casino Resort’s long commute.
- It is highly recommended that the Jamul Indian Village at least start construction of the incomplete mitigation commitments which are still pending before additional Casino expansion and Hotel development are approved. Another alternative is to condition occupancy or use of the new facilities until the previous mitigation commitments are met.
- A traffic control plan will need to be approved for handling construction-related traffic at the JIV Casino Hotel and Event Center project site. In addition, approved traffic control plans will be required for work on or affecting state routes.

Project Management

Currently Caltrans and JIV are in the process of finalizing agreements for the mitigation commitments which are still pending from the previous Final Environmental Impact Report for the JIV Casino project. These mitigations should be constructed prior to the completion of the proposed JIV Casino Hotel and Event Center project as identified in the current TEIR.

Hydrology and Drainage Studies

In reference to Preliminary Drainage Study provided in Appendix D of the TEIR:

- The header and units on Table 1-1, 3-1 and 3-2 are obscured by shading. Please revise tables so that the header and units are legible.
- Please include Appendices A, B, and C as mentioned in the study.
- Please annotate Caltrans' Right-of-Way (R/W) on all plans and exhibits.
- Early coordination with Caltrans is recommended.
- Caltrans generally does not allow development projects to impact hydraulics within the State's Right-of-Way. Any modification to the existing Caltrans drainage and/or increase in runoff to State facilities will not be permitted.

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 network. 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 network. Early coordination with Caltrans, in locations that may affect Caltrans, JIV, and the County of San Diego 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 JIV and the County of San Diego to evaluate potential Complete Streets projects.

Maintaining bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit access during construction is important. Mitigation to maintain bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit access during construction is in accordance with Caltrans' goals and policies.

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.

JIV and the County of San Diego should continue to coordinate with Caltrans to implement necessary improvements at intersections and interchanges where the agencies have joint jurisdiction.

Traffic Control Plan/Hauling

Caltrans has discretionary authority with respect to highways under its jurisdiction and may, upon application and if good cause appears, issue a special permit to operate or move a vehicle or combination of vehicles or special mobile equipment of a size or weight of vehicle or load exceeding the maximum limitations specified in the California Vehicle Code. The Caltrans Transportation Permits Issuance Branch is responsible for the issuance of these special transportation permits for oversize/overweight vehicles on the State Highway network. Additional information is provided online at: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/trafficops/permits/index.html>

A Traffic Control Plan is to be submitted to Caltrans District 11, including the interchanges at SR-94/Campo Road; SR-94/Jamacha Road; SR-94/Jamacha Boulevard; SR-94 Maxfield Road; SR-94/Melody Road; and SR-94/Steele Canyon Road, at least 30 days prior to the start of any construction. Traffic shall not be unreasonably delayed. The plan shall also outline suggested detours to use during closures, including routes and signage.

Potential impacts to the state highway facilities (SR-94) and the traveling public from the detour, demolition and other construction activities should be discussed and addressed before work begins.

Noise

The applicant must be informed that in accordance with 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 772, the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is not responsible for existing or future traffic noise impacts associated with the existing configuration of SR-94.

Glare

The proximity of the project site to SR-94 raises some concerns regarding potential glare that could pose a potential risk to motorists traveling on SR-94. Caltrans would want to ensure that all lighting, including reflected sunlight and

reflected night lighting, within this project should be placed and/or shielded so as not to be hazardous to vehicles traveling on SR-94.

Environmental

Caltrans welcomes the opportunity to be a Responsible Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as we have discretionary approval authority of a portion of the proposed project which is in Caltrans' R/W. Caltrans exercises this discretionary authority through its Encroachment Permit process.

Because the issuance of an encroachment permit will be required prior to construction any work within the Caltrans' R/W the applicant must provide certified final environmental documents for this project, Findings, corresponding technical studies, and necessary regulatory and resource agency permits. Specifically, CEQA determination or exemption and supporting Findings will be required before Caltrans may issue an Encroachment Permit. As such, the supporting documents must address all environmental impacts within the Caltrans' R/W and address any significant impacts from an avoidance and/or mitigation perspective.

Caltrans recommends this project specifically identify and assesses potential significant impacts caused by the project or those impacts caused by mitigation efforts that occur within Caltrans' R/W. The analysis should include impacts to the natural environment, infrastructure including but not limited to highways, roadways, structures, intelligent transportation systems elements, on-ramps and off-ramps, and appurtenant features including but not limited to lighting, signage, drainage, guardrail, slopes and landscaping. Caltrans is interested in any additional mitigation measures identified for the project's draft Environmental Document.

We look forward to the coordination of our efforts to ensure that Caltrans can adopt the alternative and/or mitigation measures relating to our R/W. Because Caltrans generally desires to rely on an Encroachment Permit applicant's analysis, findings and adopted mitigation, we would appreciate meeting with you to discuss the elements of the EIR that Caltrans will use for our subsequent environmental compliance.

Right-of-Way

Caltrans has the following comments relating to 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.

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Additional information regarding encroachment permits may be obtained by contacting the Caltrans Permits Office at (619) 688-6158 or emailing D11.Permits@dot.ca.gov 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.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Kimberly Dodson, LDR Coordinator, at (619) 985-1587 or by e-mail sent to Kimberly.Dodson@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Maurice A. Eaton

MAURICE EATON
Branch Chief
Local Development Review