

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

AUG 02 2022

Julia Gonzalez, Deputy Director
City of Pico Rivera
6615 Passons Boulevard
Pico Rivera

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

RE: The Mercury Project
SCH # 2022070126
Vic. LA-605/PM R12.06, LA-05/PM 8.32
GTS # LA-2022-03998-MND

Dear Julia Gonzalez:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced environmental document. The proposed project involves development of a three to six-story mixed-use building with a 6.5-level parking structure in the core, 1 level of subterranean parking, ground-floor retail and residential uses, and residential uses in floors two through six on a 2.85-acre site. The building is a wrap-style with parking levels extending all floors interior to the building. The proposed project would develop 255 dwelling units consisting of a mix of studios, junior studios, one-bedrooms, two-bedrooms, and three-bedrooms, with 13 units set aside as affordable housing units. Up to 5,730 square feet of retail space, up to 1,750 square feet of ground-floor lobby/leasing space, up to 17,010 square feet of rooftop pool/community recreation, and up to 190,000 square feet of parking are included as part of the proposed project.

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 this project, 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>

Pedestrians and Bicycles

Public sidewalks and pedestrian facilities are provided on all streets within the project vicinity. The proposed project is designed to encourage pedestrian activity and walking as a transportation mode with a Walkability score for the project site of approximately 81 (Very Walkable) out of 100. Proposed project features would include landscaped pedestrian walkways connecting facilities within the site, as well as connections with the adjacent public sidewalks on the Washington Boulevard project frontage for access to nearby pedestrian and transit facilities. As part of the Specific Plan, street trees and streetscape plantings will be provided along the public frontages in accordance with the City's standards. In addition, project signage will include wayfinding pedestrian signage around the perimeter of the project site, building identification signs, and other sign types.

Wayfinding signs would be located at access points to the on-site amenities and facilities and parking areas.

Bicycle access to the project site will be facilitated by the County's bicycle roadway network. Walk Score calculates a bike score based on the topography, number and proximity of bike lanes, etc., and generates a bike score for the project site of approximately 58 (Bikeable) out of 100. Proposed bicycle facilities (e.g., Class I Bicycle Path, Class II Bicycle Lanes, Class III Bicycle Routes, Proposed Bicycle Routes, Bicycle Boulevards, etc.) identified in the City's Circulation Element¹² will be located within an approximate one-mile radius from the project site. A Class II Bicycle Lane is proposed for Rosemead Boulevard between Gallatin Road and I-5 Freeway. In addition, a Class III Bicycle Route is proposed for Washington Boulevard between Telegraph Road and the San Gabriel River.

Transit

Public transit service in the vicinity of the project is currently provided by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), Montebello Transit and Norwalk Transit. Metro is evaluating an extension of the Metro L (Gold) Line further east from its current terminus in East Los Angeles potentially through the cities of Commerce, Montebello, Pico Rivera, Santa Fe Springs and Whittier. The proposed light rail line would travel south along Atlantic Boulevard underground from the current Metro L (Gold) Line terminus at Pomona Boulevard and Atlantic Boulevard to the Citadel Outlets in the City of Commerce. The route would then proceed east along Washington Boulevard via aerial and/or at-grade (street level) configurations with an above grade station at Rosemead Boulevard and ending at Lambert Road in the City of Whittier.

VMT

The estimated residential VMT per capita for the proposed project is estimated at 14.13 residential VMT per capita which is higher than the residential significance threshold at 12.23 VMT per capita (15% below the existing baseline residential 14.39 VMT per capita). The following TDM strategies have been determined to be applicable as project design features:

- T-1. Increase Residential Density (9.79%)
- T-4: Integrate Affordable and Below Market Rate Housing (1.43%)
- T-15: Limit Residential Parking Supply (3.84%)

The combination of the TDM measures discussed above results in a 14.49 percent (14.49%) reduction in VMT. The residential VMT per capita for the proposed project would subsequently be reduced to 12.08 residential VMT per capita, which is below the calculated City significance threshold of 12.23 residential VMT per capita. Therefore, the TDM measures which have been incorporated into the project design are expected to reduce the project's VMT to a less than significant level. It is concluded that development

of the project is not expected to result in a significant residential (household) VMT impact based on the City's significance thresholds contained herein.

We understand that VMT calculation is based on a VMT model in which the outcome is speculative without validation. However, a post-development VMT analysis with all mitigation measures should be prepared for monitoring purpose and for future project thresholds in the area. A post-development VMT analysis should include actual VMT survey and interview with real drivers. This VMT analysis would produce more accurate outcome in the area for the Lead Agency. Additional mitigation measure should be implemented when the post-development VMT analysis discloses any traffic significant impact.

Other

As a reminder, any transportation of heavy construction equipment and/or materials which requires use of oversized-transport vehicles on State highways will need a Caltrans transportation permit. We recommend large size truck trips be limited to off-peak commute periods.

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-2022-03998-MND.

Sincerely,



MIYA EDMONSON
LDR/CEQA Branch Chief

email: State Clearinghouse