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**Governor's Office of Planning & Research**

**AUG 24 2022**

**STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**

August 24, 2022

City of Simi Valley Planning Division  
2929 Tapo Canyon Road  
Simi Valley, CA 93063-2199  
Attn: Claudia Pedroso, Principal Planner

RE: North Canyon Ranch (NCR) and Required  
Island Annexations (RIA) Project – Notice of  
Preparation (NOP)  
SCH# 2022080297  
GTS# 07-VEN-2022-00508  
Vic. VEN-118 PM Multiple

Dear Claudia Pedroso,

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced project. The Project includes the North Canyon Ranch (NCR) development and a group of Required Island Annexations (RIA).

- North Canyon Ranch. The project's Tentative Tract Map (TT 5658) would subdivide the approximately 160.32-acre site to provide a residential development of 159 single family homes, 50 multi-family units and open space. The project would also complete the planned extension of Falcon Street through the project site to connect to the current northerly terminus of First Street.
- Island Annexations. The proposed Annexation (ANX-077) of the 160.32-acre project site will be processed separately as required by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). Likewise, the County Island areas will also be required to be annexed to the City. Island 1 - 9 encompass 326.06 acres of land and include 444 parcels, comprised of 425 developed single family Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs), 5 undeveloped single-family APNs, and 14 Other APNs (e.g., open space lots, easements, and/or portions of residentially zoned lots). No other changes are proposed at this time in the County Islands, and no foreseeable projects are proposed. Each analysis section of the EIR will evaluate whether the annexations would potentially result in physical impacts to the environment under CEQA.

The nearest State facility to the proposed project is State Route 118. After reviewing the NOP, Caltrans has the following comments:

North Canyon Ranch: Currently the project is designed in a way that induces a high number of vehicle trips per household due to being an exclusively residential, car-oriented development.

The proposed project extends the exurban area and sprawls into the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) as designated by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP), increasing wildfire risks in addition to potentially significant Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) impacts. The Lead Agency is encouraged to integrate transportation and land uses in a way that reduces VMT and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by facilitating the provision of more proximate goods and services to shorten trip lengths and achieve a high level of non-motorized travel and transit use. Caltrans recommends the following to more effectively address the significant VMT that this project may create as currently proposed:

- 1) Provide for a mixture of land use types within the Project's new zoning area to allow for adaptive reuse. This can allow goods, services, and jobs to be created closer to where the project's residents live.
- 2) Reduce the amount of parking whenever possible, as abundant car parking enables and encourages driving. Research looking at the relationship between land-use, parking, and transportation indicates that the amount of car parking supplied can undermine a project's ability to encourage public transit and active modes of transportation. For any project to better promote public transit and reduce vehicle miles traveled, we recommend the implementation of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies as an alternative to building too much parking.
- 3) Improve connections to existing active transportation and transit infrastructure. This can be done with robust signage, wayfinding, safety improvements, and human scale amenities. Additionally, the most effective methods to reduce pedestrian and bicyclist exposure to vehicles is through physical design and geometrics. These methods include the construction of physically separated facilities such as Class IV bike lanes, wide sidewalks, pedestrian refuge islands, landscaping, street furniture, and reductions in crossing distances through roadway narrowing.
- 4) A direct, walkable connection from the project site to the Simi Valley Town Center commercial area would greatly enhance the ability for people to walk and bike to meet some of their needs for goods and services. As currently proposed the trip requires a lengthy trip westward along First street, which unnecessarily encourages driving.

Island Annexations: Please be aware that some of the RIAs are directly adjacent to Caltrans Right-of-Way. If any changes or work occurs on or adjacent to Caltrans Right-of-Way, it will require coordination with the Office of Permits and the Office of Right-of-Way Engineering.

Finally, 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.

Claudia Pedroso  
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Caltrans looks forward to the forthcoming Draft Environmental Impact Report to confirm that the Project will result in a net reduction in Vehicle Miles Traveled.

If you have any questions, please contact project coordinator Anthony Higgins, at [anthony.higgins@dot.ca.gov](mailto:anthony.higgins@dot.ca.gov) and refer to GTS# 07-VEN-2022-00508.

Sincerely,  
  
Miya Edmonson  
LDR Branch Chief  
cc: State Clearinghouse