

California Department of Transportation

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October 20, 2022

11-SD-VAR
PM VAR

Mira Mesa Community Plan Update
DEIR/SCH#2022090061

Ms. Elena Pascual
Senior Planner
City of San Diego
9485 Aero Drive
San Diego, CA 92123

Dear Ms. Pascual:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Mira Mesa Community Plan Update located near Interstate 5 (I-5), Interstate 15 (I-15), State Route 52 (SR-52), State Route 56 (SR-56) and Interstate 805 (I-805). 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 City of San Diego in areas where the City 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:

Traffic Impact Study

- Results in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) exceeding thresholds for City of San Diego's compliance with SB 743 statues.
- The following locations are proposed for future pedestrian bridges in Mira Mesa:
 - Across I-15 near the Hillery Drive Bridge: A pedestrian bridge connecting Mira Mesa to Scripps Miramar Ranch across I-15 would provide an essential low-stress east-west connection from high residential redevelopment areas in both communities to schools, transit centers, and recreational facilities from both communities. A feasibility study would need to be performed to determine the best location for a structure across the I-15 freeway. Options would include extending the existing Hillery Drive bridge Direct Access Ramp bridge all the way across the freeway, connecting Scripps Lake Drive to North Campus Drive, connecting South Campus Drive to Scripps Ranch High School, or connecting Gold Coast Drive to Scripps Ranch Court. This will require a possible full capital project funded by the City of San Diego and encroachment permits and maintenance agreements to be filed with and approved by Caltrans.
- The following bicycle facilities are planned for the Mira Mesa community as part of the Proposed Project, City's Bicycle Master Plan, and/or the San Diego Regional Bike Plan, Riding to 2050.
 - Class I Multi Use Path : Mira Mesa Boulevard from Greenford Drive to I-15 (one-way, both sides). There are no current bike lanes striped within Caltrans' Right-of-Way (R/W) and none approaching this intersection. This will require early coordination with Caltrans by the City of San Diego. City will need to obtain an approved encroachment permits and maintenance agreements after early coordination. EB Mira Mesa Boulevard consist of a free dual right turn lanes into the SB I-15 entrance ramp, which makes it difficult to implement a Class 1 path. Caltrans Planning, Design, Traffic Operations, and Multi-Modal branches will need to be involved since early on.
 - Class IV Cycle Track (Two-Way Bikeway): Miramar Road from Commerce Avenue/Milch Road to I-15 (south side). There are no current bike lanes striped within Caltrans R/W and none approaching this intersection. This will require early coordination with Caltrans by the City of San Diego. City will need to obtain an approved encroachment permits and maintenance agreements after early coordination. EB Miramar Road

consist of a free right turn lane into the SB I-15 entrance ramp, which makes it difficult to implement a Class IV Cycle Track. Caltrans Planning, Design, Traffic Operations, and Multi-Modal branches will need to be involved since early on.

- The City of San Diego will have to consult with Caltrans on any proposed improvements that affect Caltrans' R/W, facilities, freeways, and ramp operations & safety.

Planning

- Planning activities: Caltrans District 11 and SANDAG are developing a comprehensive multimodal corridor plan (CMCP) for State Route 56. The scope of this plan may include the Mira Mesa CPU boundaries and will require coordination with the City of San Diego, Caltrans, and SANDAG.
- VMT reduction: Caltrans supports Plan's efforts to bring more housing near transit, expand mobility choices, and enhance multimodal options to reduce VMT. Page 45 (ES-17) identifies employee VMT as significant. For residential and office projects, OPR's Technical Advisory recommends VMT per capita or per employee thresholds 15% below existing city or regional VMT per capita. Please coordinate with Caltrans and SANDAG on future CMCP efforts for potential future mitigation strategies that may further reduce employee generated VMT in the Mira Mesa CPU limits.
- Pedestrian bridge location: Please inform Caltrans of the feasibility study results for the location of the second pedestrian bridge over I-15 connecting Mira Mesa to Scripps Miramar Ranch.
- A feasibility study would need to be performed to determine the best location for a structure across the I-15 freeway.

Hydrology and Drainage Studies

- Draft PEIR, Section 5.7.1:
 - Paragraph 1: the future developments included in the CPU have potential impacts to change runoff characteristics including volume of runoff, rate of runoff, and drainage patterns. Paragraph 3 states that development would not result in alterations in a manner that would result in a flooding on- or off-site. This does not address adverse impacts to Department infrastructure regarding changes to existing drainage patterns, post-development flow rates exceeding pre-development flow rates, and increases in water volumes to Department facilities. Confirm how will these potential adverse impacts be avoided.

- The proposed developments included in the CPU may significantly alter the FEMA defined Floodplain and associated water surface elevations through the project area and have potential adverse impacts to the Caltrans' facilities. Caltrans requests that the City of San Diego, acting as the Local FEMA Administrator, include Caltrans in reviews of all submittals to the City's Development Services Department regarding floodplain administration and allow for Caltrans to comment prior to the Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) application or the Permit issue, to assure that Caltrans' assets are not adversely impacted by any change in the water surface elevation resulting from any proposed developments in this CPU.
- Per 44 CFR §65.12, Caltrans requests that a formal notification be sent to Caltrans when the City of San Diego approves the permit to alter the floodplain and/or when the Developer applies for the Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) and Letter of Map Revision (LOMR).

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 both Caltrans and the City 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 the City 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.

The City should continue to coordinate with Caltrans to implement necessary improvements at intersections and interchanges where the agencies have joint jurisdiction.

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 Routes I-5, I-15, SR-52, SR-56 and I-805.

Environmental

Caltrans welcomes the opportunity to be a Responsible Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as we have some discretionary authority of a portion of the project that is in Caltrans’ R/W through the form of an encroachment permit process. Please indicate our status as a Responsible Agency for the Draft and Final Environmental Document. We look forward to the coordination of our efforts to ensure that Caltrans can adopt the alternative and/or mitigation measure for work within Caltrans’ R/W. We would appreciate meeting with you to discuss the elements of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that Caltrans will use for our subsequent environmental compliance.

An encroachment permit will be required for any work within the Caltrans’ Right-of-Way prior to construction. As part of the encroachment permit process, the applicant must provide approved final environmental documents for this project that include the work in Caltrans’ Right-of-Way, corresponding technical studies, and necessary regulatory and resource agency permits. Specifically, any California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) determinations or exemptions. The supporting documents must address all environmental impacts within the Caltrans’ R/W and address any impacts from avoidance and/or mitigation measures.

We recommend that this project specifically identifies and assesses potential impacts caused by the project or impacts from mitigation efforts that occur within Caltrans’

R/W that includes 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 the analysis for any work identified in Caltrans' R/W and any additional mitigation measures identified for the Draft and Final Environmental Document.

Broadband

Caltrans recognizes that teleworking and remote learning lessen the impacts of traffic on our roadways and surrounding communities. This reduces the amount of VMT and decreases the amount of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and other pollutants. The availability of affordable and reliable, high-speed broadband is a key component in supporting travel demand management and reaching the state's transportation and climate action goals.

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.
- Any work performed within Caltrans' R/W will require discretionary review and approval by Caltrans and an encroachment permit will be required for any work within the Caltrans' R/W prior to construction.
- Any proposed structures in Caltrans' R/W or impact to Caltrans' structures will need to be reviewed by Caltrans Headquarters Structure Maintenance and Investigations prior to Encroachment Permit.

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