

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DISTRICT 7
100 S. MAIN STREET, MS 16
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012
PHONE (213) 269-1124
FAX (213) 897-1337
TTY 711
www.dot.ca.gov



*Making Conservation
a California Way of Life*

December 5, 2023

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

December 15 2023

Carey Upton, Chief Operations Officer
Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District
1717 4th Street
Santa Monica, CA 90401

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

RE: Grant Elementary School Campus
Master Plan Project (DEIR)
SCH #2023010229
GTS #07-LA-2023-04359
Vic. LA-10/PM 3.61

Dear Carey Upton,

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced project. The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District proposes renovating and modernizing the existing Grant Elementary School campus. Redevelopment would include the demolition and removal of some existing structures, renovation of structures to remain, construction of two new buildings, new and reconfigured playgrounds, and two new and reconfigured parking lots. The plan will be constructed in three phases on the District-owned campus.

As of now, a visitor and administrative parking lot with 14 parking stalls occupies the northeast corner of campus facing Pearl Street. An L-shaped staff parking lot with 48 parking stalls is at the southeast corner of the campus adjacent to the basketball courts and is accessed from 24th Street. Students who walk or bike to school enter the campus at the northern end. Current student drop-off/pick-up (DOPU) operations occur at two locations:

- Pearl Street. The Pearl Street DOPU area is limited to preschool and TK-K students. Vehicles queue on the south (eastbound) side of Pearl Street between Cloverfield Boulevard and 24th Court during DOPU hours.
- 24th Street. The 24th Street DOPU is utilized by grades 1 through 5 students and is accessed primarily via Ocean Park Boulevard. The two-lane collector street ends at the gated entrance into the southern portion of the campus. On-street parking is allowed on either side of 24th Street. Vehicles enter the campus driveway and

follow the counterclockwise vehicular pattern in the existing staff parking lot and exit back onto 24th Street.

Phase 2 of the Proposed Project would include the removal of the L-shaped surface parking lot in the southeast portion of the campus fronting 24th Court, 24th Street, and residences. The existing L-shaped playfield would be reconfigured to a standard rectangular playfield and centrally located in the southern portion of the campus. Development of two new parking lots would occur at the southeast and southwest corners of the campus along 24th Court and Pearl Place. Each parking lot would contain 40 parking spaces, and the lots would be separated by the improved playfield. The Project would maintain the drop-off and pick-up area at the front of the campus along Pearl Street and include a new arrival court at the southern end of the campus, adjacent to the reconfigured playfield, that would connect the two new parking lots to 24th Street.

After reviewing the DEIR, Caltrans has the following comments:

The Project is designed in a way that would lead to an overall net increase in parking from 62 spaces to 94 spaces, with the Project's addition of 32 new parking spaces to potentially address queuing and/or on-street parking on 24th Street. However, Caltrans recommends adopting the proposed improvements developed in response to the City's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Walk Audit Recommendations for Grant ES, which are listed in Section 5.10 of the DEIR:

- Pearl Street from 23rd to 25th Street: Add enhanced markings to improve visibility of bicycle lane.
- Pearl Street and 24th Street: Evaluate feasibility of curb extensions.
- Pearl Street and 24th Court: Reconstruct sidewalk and apron across 24th Court.
- 24th Street and Ocean Park Place North: Reconstruct sidewalk and apron across Ocean Park Place North.
- Ocean Park Boulevard and 24th Street: Evaluate feasibility of curb extensions, upgrade ramps.
- Pearl Street adjacent to school: Evaluate drop-off and pick-up zones to reduce conflict points.

Caltrans highly encourages adoption of discussed improvements in Table 5.10-1 to facilitate the provision of non-motorized travel options including:

- Installing skateboard and scooter racks for students who currently do not have a place to safely lock them.
- Upgrading all curb ramps, specifically the ramp on Pearl Street, without detectable warning surfaces to meet ADA requirements.
- Re-evaluating transition of bike lane on Pearl Street to sparrow condition and modify as appropriate. Upgrading potential bikeways to Class IV when possible

and unlocking alternative access paths to the school property to prevent vehicle entry and exit from conflicting with bicycle and pedestrian access.

- Reconstructing sidewalks and restriping crosswalks to provide visible, safe, and continuous pathways for pedestrians.
- Installing signage where necessary to reduce vehicle speeding in the school zone on Pearl Street.

In Caltrans' previous comment for the NOP, it was noted that the Project proposed a new off-street lane for drop-off/pick-up which would be constructed adjacent to Pearl Street in front of the campus. The off-street lane would have impacted the safety conditions for interactions between bicyclists commuting from Santa Monica College, drivers, and students during peak arrival and drop-off hours in the morning and afternoon. Upon review of the DEIR, we would like to confirm that the proposed off-street lane has been removed from the project's scope. To support a community's ability to choose active modes of transportation, the plan should consider safety and accessibility options for all impacted by vehicular traffic caused during school hours. Caltrans' targets of tripling trips made by bicycle, doubling trips made by walking and public transit, and a 15% reduction in statewide VMT can be achieved through collaborative improvements to the state-wide transportation network.

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. It is recommended that large size truck trips be limited to off-peak commute periods.

If you have any questions, please contact project coordinator Anthony Higgins, at anthony.higgins@dot.ca.gov and refer to GTS #07-LA-2023-04359.

Sincerely,

Frances Duong

Frances Duong
Acting LDR/CEQA Branch Chief

email: State Clearinghouse