

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



August 17, 2023

11-IMP-115

PM 34.60

City of Calipatria Eastside Specific Plan
MND/SCH #2023070424

Ms. Laura Gutierrez
City Manager
City of Calipatria
125 North Park Ave
Calipatria, CA 92233

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Aug 17 2023

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Dear Ms. Gutierrez:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the City of Calipatria Eastside Specific Plan located near State Route 115 (SR-115). 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 Calipatria 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.

Traffic Engineering and Analysis

Caltrans standard practice is to follow the Transportation Research Board's (TRB) *Access Management Manual 2014*. It recommends reducing access points onto Caltrans Highways to improve livability and reduce conflict areas for all users on streets and sidewalks.

Therefore, Caltrans recommends:

- All access from future developments east of the railroad will not be allowed to access the SR-115. All access will need to be through the side streets, S. Brown Ave, Industrial Ave, and Commercial Ave.
- All access from future developments west of the railroad to the SR-115 will need to be reviewed by Caltrans. It will be recommended that access is through S. Imperial Ave unless the parcel is landlocked.

Design

Considering the amount of development planned there will be a much higher traffic volume in the area once all projects are complete. This will impact the level of protection pedestrians will need at crossings, and a change in safety measures for road users may be imminent. Further coordination between the City of Calipatria and Caltrans is recommended moving forward.

Planning

As part of the City's 2022 Housing Element update, Caltrans requests that the City include discussions and mapping/graphics that describe the City's existing and future housing inventory per the City's Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA).

Housing-element law requires a quantification of each jurisdiction's share of the regional housing need as established in the RHNA Plan prepared by the jurisdiction's metropolitan planning organization (MPO) or council of governments.

In accordance with California Government Code Sections 65583 and 65584, housing elements shall contain an analysis of population and employment trends and documentation of projections and quantification of the locality's existing and projected housing needs for all income levels. These projected needs shall include the locality's share of the regional housing needs (ie. RHNA) per Government Code Section 65584.

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 Calipatria, 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.

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.

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 Route 115.

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. We look forward to the coordination of our efforts to ensure that Caltrans can adopt the alternative and/or mitigation measure for our R/W. We would

appreciate meeting with you to discuss the elements of the EIR that Caltrans will use for our subsequent environmental compliance.

An encroachment permit will be required for any work within the Caltrans' R/W prior to construction. As part of the encroachment permit process, the applicant must provide approved final environmental documents for this project, corresponding technical studies, and necessary regulatory and resource agency permits. Specifically, CEQA determination or exemption. 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 fencing, lighting, signage, drainage, guardrail, slopes and landscaping. Caltrans is interested in any additional mitigation measures identified for the project's draft 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. As part of the encroachment permit process, the applicant must provide an approved final environmental document including CEQA determination addressing any environmental impacts with the Caltrans' R/W, and any corresponding technical studies.

Additional information regarding encroachment permits may be obtained by contacting the Caltrans Permits Office at (619) 688-6158 or emailing

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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 Shannon Aston, LDR Coordinator, at (619) 992-0628 or by e-mail sent to shannon.aston@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

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MAURICE A. EATON
Branch Chief
Local Development Review