

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DISTRICT 12

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a California Way of Life.

April 29, 2024

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City of Irvine
1 Civic Center Plaza
Irvine, CA 92606

File: LDR/CEQA
SCH#: 2023070463
12-ORA-2023-02516

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Apr 30 2024**STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**

Dear Ms. Matheus,

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the review of the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Irvine 2045 General Plan Update (Plan) in the City of Irvine (City). The mission of Caltrans is to provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment.

The plan will serve as the long-range vision for the City for the next 20 to 25 years. The City is required to update the appropriate Elements of the General Plan to accommodate the residential site inventory from the 2021-2029 Housing Element. Regional access to the project area is provided by State Route 261 (SR 261), State Route 241 (SR 241), State Route 133 (SR 133), State Route 55 (SR 55), State Route 73 (SR 73), Interstate 405 (I-405), Interstate 5 (I-5), and State Route 55 (SR 55). Caltrans is a commenting agency for this project and upon review, we have the following comments:

Active Transportation

1. In the *Policies Section in Goal 11, Objective EPCA-11 (Page 4.2-13)*, consider adding a discussion on first-last mile connections.
2. In *Goal 3, Objective C-3 (Page 4.13-16)*, this objective highlights enhancing pedestrian connectivity to major destinations and various land uses. Please ensure pedestrian improvements that are inclusive for all types of pedestrians with differing needs, such as those who walk more slowly, need more crossing time, have visual impairments, wheelchairs, strollers, etc.
- 3.
4. Caltrans supports and strives to make rail and transit modes of transportation a viable option for all. The Department supports transportation projects that bring all modes of transportation together to increase connectivity, expand the use of public transportation, and advance equity and livability in all communities.

Please consider including a discussion on identifying strategies to meet mobility needs such as multimodal strategies on transit connectivity and opportunities to connect bus services to include nearby train stations for regional connectivity.

"Provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment"

Providing improved multimodal connections to housing will improve public health and can encourage Irvine residents, future visitors, and workers to utilize alternative transportation options, thus minimizing single occupant vehicle trips, reducing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, congestion, and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT).

5. Increased density can increase traffic impacts. Consider opportunities to encourage multimodal transportation and mode shifts through the planning and implementation of high-quality Complete Streets that are safe and accessible for people of all ages and abilities.

Caltrans supports the design of Complete Streets that include high-quality pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities that are safe and comfortable for users of all ages and abilities. Improvements may include providing secure bicycle parking, pedestrian-oriented LED lighting, wayfinding signage, transit stop amenities, and comfortable connections to nearby active transportation and/or transit facilities. Complete Streets improvements also promote regional connectivity, improve air quality, reduce congestion, promote improved first-/last-mile connections, and increase safety for all modes of transportation. Continue to incorporate Complete Streets in future projects.

Transit

6. In *Section 4.13.1.2 Public Transit System (Page 4.13-3)*, provide further information about existing bus route services to include any intracounty, intercounty, and regional including connectivity to rail services from the nearest train stations in all proposed project locations provided by Metrolink and Amtrak Pacific Surfliner.
7. Identify transit services that provide access to and from John Wayne Airport.

Traffic Operations

8. In *Section 4.13.5.1 Impact Analysis (Page 4.13-21)*, it is concluded that increased demand for the future development of 57,656 residential units would require improvements and expansion to the existing system. However, 4.13.5.2 Significance of Impacts Section says impacts would be less than significant and therefore per 4.13.5.3 no mitigation would be advised. This may be contradictory to the conclusions.
9. For future developments, please submit a VMT-based Traffic Impact Study. Please follow the Governor's Office of Planning and Research Guidance to identify VMT related impacts that includes any potential mitigation measures necessary.

With the enactment of Senate Bill 743 (SB 743), Caltrans is focused on maximizing efficient development patterns, innovative travel demand reduction strategies, and multimodal improvements. For more information on how Caltrans assess VMT analysis for land use projects, please review Caltrans' Transportation Impact Study Guide to ensure a complete VMT-based Traffic Impact Study is prepared.

<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/sb-743/2020-05-20-approved-vmt-focused-tisg-all.pdf>

Freight

10. Please ensure that the General Plan Update analyzes the challenges in goods movement that are unique to the City. The Plan should also address how the City works to achieve an inter-regional network for longer distance travel and freight movement. Connecting towns, cities, and regions to each other, business centers to major intermodal freight transfer points, and commuters to Irvine and Orange County in general in a sustainable and efficient manner, should be an important objective.
11. Please consider leveraging strategic investments to maintain and modernize a multimodal freight transportation system with innovative approaches, including advanced technology to optimize integrated network efficiency, improve travel time reliability, and achieve sustainable congestion reduction.
12. Consider including a discussion on incorporating designated areas/parking for freight delivery, package, and transportation network company's pickup and drop-off.
13. In the Environmental Justice Element, consider including a discussion identifying potential conflict areas with environmental justice communities.

Safety

14. Safety is one of Caltrans' strategic goals. 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.

Climate Change

15. Caltrans acknowledges that one of the most serious threats and disruption to the wellbeing of the SCAG region is Climate Change. Full coordination from all levels and agents of decision making is required to ensure the protection and safety of the region's people, built-, and natural environment. Please coordinate with Caltrans and local partners on strategies which support a sustainable transportation network.

Equity

16. Caltrans recognizes our responsibility to assist communities of color and underserved communities by removing barriers to provide a more equitable transportation system for all.

The Department firmly embraces racial equity, inclusion, and diversity. These values are foundational to achieving our vision of a cleaner, safer, and more accessible and more connected transportation system.

We acknowledge and support the City of Irvine's efforts to meet its Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocation per the California Department of Housing & Community Development (HCD).

Please continue to keep us informed of this project and any future developments that could potentially impact State transportation facilities. If you have any questions or need to contact us, please do not hesitate to contact Joseph Jamoralin at (805) 732-8047 or Joseph.Jamoralin@dot.ca.gov

Sincerely,

Cole Awamasa on behalf of

SCOTT SHELLEY
Branch Chief, Local Development Review-Climate Change-Transit Planning
District 12