

## California Department of Transportation

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11-SD-52, 67  
PM VAR  
Santee Town Center Specific Plan Update  
NOP/SCH# 2023090032

Mr. Michael Coyne  
Principal Planner  
City of Santee  
Department of Development Services  
10601 Magnolia Avenue  
Santee, CA 92701

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

**Oct 13 2023**

**STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**

Dear Mr. Coyne:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (Draft PEIR) for the Town Center Specific Plan Update, located near State Routes 52 (SR-52) and 67 (SR-67), in the city of Santee. 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 Caltrans' 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 Santee 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**

- A Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT) based Traffic Impact Study (TIS) should be provided for this project. Please use the Governor's Office of Planning and Research Guidance to identify VMT related impacts.<sup>1</sup>
- The TIS may also need to identify the proposed project's near-term and long-term safety or operational issues, on or adjacent any existing or proposed State facilities.
- The Draft PEIR should include language that any proposed developments will complete a Local Mobility Analysis as required per the City of Santee regulations.

### **State Route Design Corridor**

There are several Caltrans improvements to SR-52 west of the Town Center that are currently in the planning stage:

- Convert the existing two-way bike path on the north side of SR-52 to a 4.3-mile long westbound truck climbing lane from Mast Boulevard to the summit.
- Restripe westbound SR-52 from 2 lanes to 3 lanes from SR-125 to Mast Boulevard.
- Relocate the existing 4.6-mile long two-way bike path on the north side of SR-52 to the south side including one 10-foot wide light weight cantilevered separated bike path on two existing bridges, respectively.
- Restripe eastbound SR-52 from 2 lanes to 3 lanes from Mast Boulevard to east of the San Diego River Bridge, eliminating the lane drop at Mast Boulevard and maintaining three eastbound through lanes to SR-125.
- Widen the westbound on-ramp from Mast Boulevard to SR-52 to a two-lane ramp.

Another feature being considered is to convert the westbound #1 lane to a High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) or managed lane and these alternatives will be further studied.

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<sup>1</sup> California Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) 2018. "Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA." [https://opr.ca.gov/docs/20190122-743\\_Technical\\_Advisory.pdf](https://opr.ca.gov/docs/20190122-743_Technical_Advisory.pdf)

There are several Caltrans improvements to SR-67 east of the Town Center that are currently in the planning stage:

- Modifications to the SR-67 and Riverford Road interchange are necessary to improve local and regional traffic, facilitate transit services, and improve trail, bicycle and pedestrian connectivity.
- The widening of the existing Bradley Avenue bridge from a two-lane structure to six lanes with new shoulders, and sidewalks.
- The SR-67 Highway Improvements Project proposes operational and safety improvements to travel lanes, shoulders, medians, traffic signals, and emergency access lanes in San Diego County through the City of Poway and unincorporated communities from Mapleview Street in Lakeside to Highland Valley/Dye Road in Ramona.

### **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 Santee, is encouraged.

To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and achieve California's Climate Change targets, 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.

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

### **Climate Action**

Caltrans supports the City's efforts to reduce GHG emissions as per SB 32, SB 743, SB 375, SB 379 and various Executive orders. As an environmentally conscious agency, Caltrans strives to work with partner agencies in order to reduce GHG emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change on the state highway system. Caltrans looks forward to reviewing the proposed policies, plans and projects contained in the future Draft PEIR. For additional information regarding Caltrans' policies, plans, guidance and strategies related to climate change impacts please refer to documents such as, but not limited to, Caltrans Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment, Caltrans Climate Change Adaptation Priorities Report, Caltrans Climate Change Adaptation Strategies Report, Caltrans Climate Change Communication Guide and Caltrans GHG Emissions Mitigation Report.

### **System Planning**

The Coast, Canyons, and Trails Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan (CMCP) should be reviewed and incorporated in the development of the Santee Town Center Specific Plan Update. The final document and appendices are located here: [SANDAG - SR 52 Coast, Canyons, and Trails](#). Particular attention should be given to the transportation solution strategies listed in Appendix D. There are numerous strategies listed in the document, including:

- Mobility hub enhancements at Santee Town Center
  - Microtransit (Strategy ID TM06)
  - EV charging stations (MH16)
  - Lockers for safe retail deliveries (MH32)
  - Multilingual wayfinding, real-time information, and interactive kiosks (MH39)
  - Parking for shared rideables (MH47)
  - Pedestrian enhancements within ½ mile of a major mobility hub node: complete missing sidewalks and signalized intersection crossing enhancements such as continental crosswalks, advance stop bars, pedestrian countdown signal heads, LPIs, and signage (MH56)

- Flexible fleet enhancements at Santee Transit Center
  - Rideshare services (FF18)
  - Mobile retail services (FF19)
  - Micromobility shared rideables (FF20)
  
- Bus route improvements
  - Route 832 – Santee Town Center to North Santee (TR24)
  - Route 834 – Santee Town Center to West Santee (TR25)
  
- New rapid bus routes
  - Rapid 870 – El Cajon to Torrey Pines via Santee (TR15, TR16, TR17)
  - Rapid 880 – El Cajon to UC San Diego via Santee (TR18, TR19)
  - Rapid 890 – El Cajon to Sorrento Mesa via Santee (TR20, TR21, TR22)
  
- Active transportation
  - Class I bike paths along the San Diego River (CC122), Fanita Pkwy (CC134), and portions of Mission Gorge Rd (CC123) and Mast Blvd (CC135)
  - San Diego River Trail Grade Separated (Class I) Crossing (CC136)
  - Class II bike lanes along arterials such as Cottonwood Ave. (CC132), Magnolia Ave (CC124), and portions of Prospect Ave. (CC131)
  - Class III bike route along Mission Greens Road (CC133)
  - Pedestrian hybrid beacons at the San Diego River and Cuyamaca St (CC158), Forester Creek Trail and Mission Gorge Road (CC159), and Forester Creek Trail and Prospect Ave. (CC160)
  
- Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) improvements
  - Mission Gorge Road and Cuyamaca Street - Convert general purpose lanes or shoulder/parking to flex lanes to be dynamically reserved for transit, shuttles, rideshare, carshare, and/or electric vehicles to relieve congestion and improve travel times (CC19, NO37, CC20, NO38)
  - Mast Blvd, Mission Gorge Road, and Magnolia Avenue - Install smart intersection technology to give priority to transit, freight, and emergency vehicles and reduce intersection conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists, improving safety for vulnerable road users (NO05, NO06, NO17)
  - Physical signage and ITS infrastructure in Santee should be implemented to support flexible curb usage and accommodate for changing demand (NO25)

The San Vicente CMCP study area includes a portion of the City of Santee, but the CMCP document does not feature any projects relevant to the Santee Town Center Specific Plan. The final document and appendices are located here: [SANDAG - SR 67 San Vicente](#).

The SANDAG 2021 Regional Plan (available here: [SANDAG - Final 2021 Regional Plan](#)) recommends the following projects near Santee Town Center:

- San Diego River Trail - Mast Park to Lakeside baseball park (Project ID AT061)
- Complete Corridors Regional Arterials on Mast Blvd and Magnolia Ave
- Rapid 870 – El Cajon to UTC via Santee, SR 52, I-805 (TL50)
- Rapid 890 – El Cajon to Sorrento Mesa via Santee, SR 52, I-805 (TL51)
- LRT 530 – Green Line Santee to Downtown; double/third tracking and grade separations (TL16, TL17)

## **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' Right-of-Way (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 Environmental Document 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.

Should future projects based upon the changes enacted from the General Plan have elements and/or mitigation measures that affect Caltrans' R/W, Caltrans would welcome the opportunity to be a Responsible Agency under CEQA.

### **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.

If you have any questions, please contact Mark McCumsey at (619) 985-4957 or by email at [mark.mccumsey@dot.ca.gov](mailto:mark.mccumsey@dot.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

*Maurice A. Eaton*

MAURICE EATON  
Branch Chief  
Local Development and Intergovernmental Review