

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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*Making Conservation
a California Way of Life*

November 20, 2023

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

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City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning
Attn: Christopher Pina
Case Number: ENV-2019-3379-EIR
200 N. Spring Street, Room 667
Los Angeles, CA 90012

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

RE: Harbor LA Community Plan Update -
DEIR (Draft Environmental Impact Report)
GTS #07-LA-2019-04313
SCH #2019080248
Vic. LA Multiple

Dear Cristopher Pina,

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced project. The Proposed Plans include amending General Plan text and Land Use Maps for the Harbor Gateway and Wilmington-Harbor City Community Plans. The Proposed Plans would also adopt several zoning ordinances to implement the updates to the Community Plans, including rezoning all parcels in the CPAs to regulate specific uses and apply development standards (including height of structures, Floor Area Ratios, and site configuration) using the New Zoning Code.

The amendments to the Policy Documents and the General Plan Land Use Maps for the Harbor LA Community Plans are intended to guide development through the year 2040 by establishing the City's broad planning goals, policies, and objectives, the arrangement of land uses and intensities, as well as specific development standards for the Harbor LA CPAs. The Proposed Plans are intended to improve the link between land use and transportation in a manner that is consistent with the City's adopted General Plan Framework Element, Mobility Element, Senate Bill 375 (SB 375) and other state laws. In addition, the Harbor LA Community Plans consider incompatible land use patterns and environmental justice issues, consistent with Senate Bill 1000 (SB 1000).

No new development would be entitled or built as a direct result of the Proposed Plans. Future development projects would require additional discretionary and/or administrative approvals. These development projects are expected to occur over the next several decades. The exact type, place, and intensity of each new development cannot be assured through the adoption of the Proposed Plans, as the level of activity will be determined largely by private investment in the Harbor LA CPAs and the condition of the local economy.

After reviewing the DEIR, Caltrans has the following comments:

The DEIR states that, "*Significant and unavoidable impacts may result from project-specific ramp queuing as growth occurs pursuant to the Proposed Plans. Potential mitigation may include transportation demand management strategies to reduce an individual project's trip generation, investments to active transportation infrastructure, or transit system amenities, and/or operational changes to the ramp terminal such as lane reassignment, traffic signalization, signal phasing or timing modifications, etc. However, without specific information on where safety impacts may occur as a result of freeway off ramp queuing, it is not possible to identify appropriate mitigation measures. Therefore, no feasible mitigation can be identified for the Harbor LA CPAs. It is anticipated that subsequent land use development projects that are seeking approval under the Proposed Plans will be required to study freeway queuing and safety impacts in more detail per the Interim Guidance for Freeway Safety Analysis.*"

For the project's projected Significant Transportation Impacts, we recommend that as more data, factors, and other information are known, further mitigation measures need to be evaluated and implemented. Should a significant impact be identified, mitigation measures to be considered include TDM measures to reduce a project's trip generation, investments in active transportation or transit system amenities, and/or operational changes to the ramp terminal such as lane reassignment, traffic signalization, signal phasing or timing modifications, etc. It is anticipated that some of the subsequent land use development projects that are seeking approval under the Proposed Plans will be required to conduct a freeway safety impact analysis.

Caltrans approves the planning, design, and construction of modifications for all state-controlled facilities, and the associated interchanges. Freeway segments, freeway ramps and intersections associated with freeway on- and off-ramps fall under Caltrans jurisdiction. For projects that may physically affect facilities under its administration, Caltrans requires encroachment permits before any construction work may be undertaken. This work will require additional review and may be subject to additional requirements to ensure current design standards and access management elements are being addressed.

Additionally, Caltrans encourages the Lead Agency to consider potential policies that could best support an integrated network of commercial, office, and new housing that would reduce automobile use, improve equitable access to transit, and employ best practices for environmental sustainability and carbon reduction. With the opportunity to connect residents to key economic corridors and places of education and play, improvements to the pedestrian and bikeway network would close gaps and ensure continuity with existing active transportation and transit infrastructure. The most effective methods to reduce pedestrian and bicyclist exposure to vehicles is through physical design and geometrics. These methods include the construction of physically separated facilities such as Class IV bike lanes, wide sidewalks, pedestrian refuge islands, landscaping, street furniture, and reductions in crossing distances through roadway narrowing.

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These updates can help the City to identify strategies to provide housing that supports existing and projected needs of the community, as well as Caltrans' targets of tripling trips made by bicycle, doubling trips made by walking and public transit, and a 15% reduction in statewide Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). By facilitating residential development with sustainable transit infrastructure, this Plan can engage Californians in shifting towards transit-oriented communities, and help the State meet its policy goals to reduce the number of trips made by driving, Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, and provide for multimodal transport options.

We look forward to reviewing future specific projects under this proposed plan to confirm there will be a net reduction in VMT, and if there are any specific transportation impacts, that the proposed mitigation measures are adequate.

If you have any questions, please contact project coordinator Anthony Higgins, at anthony.higgins@dot.ca.gov and refer to GTS #07-LA-2019-04313.

Sincerely,

Frances Duong

Frances Duong
Acting LDR/CEQA Branch Chief

Cc: State Clearinghouse