

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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a California Way of Life*

December 5, 2023

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Jocelyn Swain, Senior Planner
Community Development Department
City of Lancaster
44933 Fern Avenue
Lancaster, CA 93534

Dec 05 2023

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

RE: Tentative Tract Map No. 66680-215 SFL
SCH # 2023110234
Vic. LA-14, PM R65.68
GTS # LA-2023-04366-MND

Dear Jocelyn Swain:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above-referenced environmental document. The applicant proposes to subdivide approximately 72 acres into 219 lots: 215 single-family residential lots and 4 lots for drainage basins. Access to the subdivision would be from Avenue K-8 and 55th Street West. The parcels are currently undeveloped.

If this area is growing in population, then the Lead Agency should plan to comply with SB 743 in advance. The mission of Caltrans is to provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment. Senate Bill 743 (2013) has codified into CEQA law and mandated that CEQA review of transportation impacts of proposed development be modified by using Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as the primary metric in identifying transportation impacts for all future development projects. You may reference the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) for more information:

<https://opr.ca.gov/ceqa/#guidelines-updates>

On page 46 of the Initial Study, "Additionally, roadway improvements have been identified as conditions of approval to ensure the smooth operation of the transportation network." We would like the Lead Agency to elaborate on the roadway improvements including the State facilities.

"The project site is located within a low VMT area which is at least 15% below the established baseline. As such, the project screens out of a detailed VMT analysis and no

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

impacts would occur.” The low VMT should be disclosed in this environmental document along with its source. It is unclear to Caltrans whether the Lead Agency’s decision to screen out all VMT analysis for the large proposed residential project in the City of Lancaster. If this low VMT area is growing, then Caltrans requests further clarification as to the criteria used to screen out this large project for purposes of VMT analysis. For example, does the Lead Agency employ any size/unit thresholds to determine whether the low-VMT-area screening justifications are appropriate?

Since there is no VMT analysis for the proposed project, the Lead Agency should consider performing a post-development VMT analysis to validate the assumption that the proposed project will have a less-than-significant net increase in VMT. In the event that such an analysis results in any increases in VMT, the Lead Agency can implement appropriate minimization or mitigation measures at that time. Please consult Caltrans for further assistance.

As a reminder, Caltrans Project EA 32890 on/off-ramp improvements are located at Route 14 and Avenue L. We are not certain if this development or any future projects within the foreseeable years in the project area can be accommodated by Caltrans improvement projects. Therefore, we recommend the Lead Agency include a traffic study to identify any traffic impact and fair share contribution by this development. We would like to request a meeting to discuss how to work with the Lead Agency on this matter.

As a reminder, Caltrans has published the VMT-focused Transportation Impact Study Guide (TISG), dated May 20, 2020, and the Caltrans Interim Land Development and Intergovernmental Review (LD-IGR) Safety Review Practitioners Guidance, prepared in On December 18, 2020. You can review those documents at the following link:

<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/sb-743/2020-05-20-approved-vmt-focused-tisg-a11y.pdf>

<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/sb-743/2020-12-22-updated-interim-ldigr-safety-review-guidance-a11y.pdf>

Our recommendation is for the Lead Agency to incorporate this project and the aforementioned Caltrans improvement into the environmental disclosure process to address any potential traffic impacts effectively.

Any transportation of heavy construction equipment and/or materials that require the use of oversized transport vehicles on State highways will need a Caltrans transportation permit. Any large-size truck trips be limited to off-peak commute periods for the construction phase and operation phase.

Jocelyn Swain, Senior Planner
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Please feel free to contact Mr. Alan Lin the project coordinator at (213) 269-1124 and refer to GTS # LA-2023-04366-MND for further assistance.

Sincerely,

Frances Duong

FRANCES DUONG
Acting LDR/CEQA Branch Chief

email: State Clearinghouse