

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DISTRICT 7

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*Making Conservation
a California Way of Life*

December 11, 2023

Michael Otavka
William S. Hart Union High School District
21380 Centre Point Parkway
Santa Clarita, CA 91350-2948

RE: Field Lighting Improvements at Five
District Playing Fields - Mitigated
Negative Declaration (MND)
SCH # 2023100280
Vic. LA-1/29.66, LA-5
/R50.311/R52.463/R59.512
GTS # 07-LA-2023-04364

Dear Michael Otavka:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above-referenced project. The District is proposing to install practice field lighting at the existing high schools in response to recent changes in state law. The High School Field Lighting Project (proposed Project) will provide additional exterior lighting and safely allow the use of outdoor school programs before and after school hours. The proposed Project consists of the addition of new field lighting for five of the District's high schools: Golden Valley High School, West Ranch High School, Saugus High School, Castaic High School, and Hart High School. The City of El Monte is the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The closest state facilities are SR-1 and I-5. After reviewing the project's MND, Caltrans has the following comments:

- Caltrans encourages the Lead Agency to consider any reduction in vehicle speeds to benefit pedestrian and bicyclist safety, as there is a direct link between impact speeds and the likelihood of fatality or serious injury. 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 bikeways, wide sidewalks, curb extensions, pedestrian refuge islands, landscaping, street furniture, and reductions in crossing distances through roadway narrowing. Visual indicators such as, pedestrian and bicyclist warning signage, flashing beacons, crosswalks, signage, and striping should be used in addition to physical design improvements to indicate to motorists that they can expect to see and yield to people walking or riding bikes.

- Caltrans recommends the following multimodal improvements for this project:
 - Develop stronger bicycle infrastructure for the five high schools, such as protected Class IV bikeways, to improve safety and comfort for all road users.
 - Be sure to include canopy trees, bioswales, bicycle parking facilities, and street furniture to provide a comfortable and sustainable environment to encourage active transportation modes and improve community health.
 - In addition to bioswales, incorporate permeable paving surfaces wherever possible to manage stormwater, replenish groundwater, and prevent pollution runoff.
 - Improve bus service frequency for the surrounding areas.
 - Use high-visibility continental crosswalks, curb extensions, count-down signal heads, pedestrian refuge islands, and pedestrian scrambles at the high traffic intersections.
 - Leading pedestrian intervals can give pedestrians a 7-second head start in crosswalks; this provides additional crossing time and reduces the amount of time that pedestrians are exposed to high-speed vehicle traffic.

- Caltrans recommends the following during the construction stage:
 - Work with Caltrans Office of Permits, Multi-Modal Unit, for a designated truck route for construction trucks to transport construction equipment to and from the construction sites.
 - Construction vehicles/equipment should use alternative routes to avoid congested state facilities, especially during peak hours.
 - Cover construction trucks with tarpaulin to avoid debris spillage onto State facilities.

As a reminder, any transportation of heavy construction equipment and/or materials that requires the use of oversized transport vehicles on State Highways will need a Caltrans transportation permit. Caltrans recommends that the Project limit construction traffic to off-peak periods to minimize the potential impact on State facilities. If construction traffic is expected to cause issues on any State facilities, please submit a construction traffic control plan detailing these issues for Caltrans' review.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Jaden Oloresisimo, the project coordinator, at Jaden.Oloresisimo@dot.ca.gov and refer to GTS # 07-LA-2023-04368.

Michael Otavka
December 11, 2023
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Sincerely,

Frances Duong

Frances Duong
Acting LDR/CEQA Branch Chief

cc: State Clearinghouse