

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Dec 05 2023**STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**

December 5, 2023

Nancy Lee
City of El Monte
11333 Valley Boulevard
El Monte, CA 91731

RE: Paseo Santa Fe Project - Mitigated
Negative Declaration (MND)
SCH # 2023100298
Vic. LA-10/28.843
GTS # 07-LA-2023-04368

Dear Nancy Lee:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above-referenced project. The project involves the development of 18 three-story, 40-foot tall, multi-family residential buildings, totaling 87 condominium townhome units and associated private driveways on a 4.95-acre site. The condominium townhome units would range from 1,387 gross square feet (sf) and 1,837 gross sf (approximate). The project would have a total building area of approximately 141,887 sf. Additionally, the project would involve the construction of a 0.79-acre city park that would be accessed via Monterey Avenue. A portion of El Monte Avenue would be converted into a pedestrian walkway that is referred to in the project plans as the El Monte Paseo. The El Monte Paseo, at 6,220-sf in area, would provide a pedestrian link from Valley Boulevard to the El Monte Metrolink Station and El Monte Trolley Station. The site also includes Court Adair, King Court, and portions of Monterey Avenue, El Monte Avenue, and Railroad Street. The City of El Monte is the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The closest state facility is SR-10. 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 bicycle infrastructure along Valley Blvd, 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.
 - Provide high-quality street infrastructure for the trolley station along Valley Blvd.
 - Use high-visibility continental crosswalks, curb extensions, count-down signal heads, pedestrian refuge islands, and pedestrian scrambles at the intersections along Valley Blvd.
 - 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 acknowledges and supports infill development that ultimately helps California to meet its climate, transportation, and livability goals. However, due to the amount of parking and lack of mixed land uses, the Paseo Santa Fe Project is designed in a way that induces demand for unnecessary vehicle trips. This demand should be addressed with appropriate design and management principles. Caltrans recommends the following:
 - Provide a mixture of uses. The project's location creates an opportunity to incorporate additional land-use types, as the essential component of sustainable communities is mixed-use zoning. Residential, Commercial, and Office uses should be intertwined to increase accessibility and bring destinations closer to where people live. This allows residents to utilize both transit and active modes to meet their everyday transportation needs.
 - A study following project completion should be done to make sure that proposed mitigation measures are working as intended.
- 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.

Sincerely,

Frances Duong

Frances Duong
Acting LDR/CEQA Branch Chief

cc: State Clearinghouse