

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

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*Making Conservation  
a California Way of Life*

December 12, 2023

Desi Gutierrez  
City of Downey  
11111 Brookshire Ave  
Downey, CA 90241

RE: Downey Space Shuttle Exhibit &  
Education Building Project - Mitigated  
Negative Declaration (MND)  
SCH # 2023100340  
Vic. LA-19, LA-105/16.136  
GTS # 07-LA-2023-04369

Dear Desi Gutierrez:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above-referenced project. The proposed project would develop a space shuttle museum; an event courtyard; a STEM building; a STEM courtyard; a children's outdoor classroom; a pavilion; an event lawn; an entry plaza; an outdoor courtyard; and landscaping within the project site. The City of Downey is the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The closest state facilities are SR-19 and I-105. After reviewing the project's MND, Caltrans has the following comments:

- According to Section 4.11 – Land Use & Planning states that the project site was designed to create a “sense of place” for the visitors, however, the 2021 WalkDowney Active Transportation Plan has indicated that the project site has low pedestrian activity levels. In addition, Section 4.17 - Transportation, the initial study states that it “would not create walking or bicycling linkages.” This site's expansion is projected to create an increase of visitors and has the opportunity to create/improve multimodal improvements on and around the site.
- Caltrans recommends the following multimodal improvements for this project:
  - Improve bicycle infrastructure along the existing bikeways (Columbia Way, Imperial Hwy, Congressman Steve Horn Way, and Rose Ave), 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 bus infrastructure for the stations along Imperial Hwy as well as Lakewood Blvd.
  - Use high-visibility continental crosswalks, curb extensions, count-down signal heads, pedestrian refuge islands, and pedestrian scrambles at the intersections along Columbia Way.
  - 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 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. Caltrans recommends that the project create walking and bicycling linkages and work with the City of Downey 'WalkDowney' Active Transportation Plan to enhance the multimodal connectivity between surrounding neighborhoods and destination zones.
  - 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.

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If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Jaden Oloresisimo, the project coordinator, at [Jaden.Oloresisimo@dot.ca.gov](mailto:Jaden.Oloresisimo@dot.ca.gov) and refer to GTS # 07-LA-2023-04369.

Sincerely,

Frances Duong  
Acting LDR/CEQA Branch Chief

cc: State Clearinghouse