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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Dec 05 2023

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

December 5, 2023

Julie Yom, AICP
Department of Regional Planning
Los Angeles County
320 West Temple Street, 13th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Los Angeles County Westside Area Plan
SCH # 2023110409
Vic. West LA Countywide
GTS # LA-2023-04374-NOP

Dear Julie Yom:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above-referenced NOP. The Westside Area Plan (proposed Project or WSAP) is a community-based plan that focuses on land use and policy issues that are specific to the unique characteristics and needs of the Project area. The Westside Area Plan is a long-range policy document that will guide long-term growth of the unincorporated communities in the Project area through development of goals, policies, and implementation actions. The proposed Project would amend the General Plan to establish both areawide and community-specific goals and policies to address local land use concerns and issues. The WSAP would also implement land use and zoning updates based on recommendations from the recently approved General Plan's 6th Cycle, Housing Element 2021-2029 (Housing Element) as well as new land use and zone changes to facilitate additional housing opportunities and ensure consistency between zoning and land use designations. The Westside Area Plan includes goals and policies that address topics such as the preservation of community character, sustainable growth, and land use development, open spaces and natural resources protection, promotion of economic health and prosperity of local businesses, and equitable and safe mobility options.

The unincorporated communities in the Westside Planning Area encompass vibrant neighborhoods that collectively recognize and celebrate history, people, diversity, and culture. The Westside Area Plan furthers the efforts to promote active, healthy, and safe intergenerational neighborhoods where residents are well connected to great places to live, work, shop, recreate, and gather; to foster economic vitality while serving local needs; to protect and preserve natural resources and open spaces; and to support sustainable mobility options in an enhanced built environment. The WSAP will address

elements such as land use, mobility, conservation and open space, public services and facilities, economic development, and historic preservation.

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>

As a reminder, VMT is the standard transportation analysis metric in CEQA for land use projects after July 1, 2020, which is the statewide implementation date.

Caltrans is aware of the challenges that the region faces in identifying viable solutions to alleviating congestion on State and Local facilities. With limited room to expand vehicular capacity, this development should incorporate multi-modal and complete streets transportation elements that will actively promote alternatives to car use and better manage existing parking assets. Prioritizing and allocating space to efficient modes of travel such as bicycling and public transit can allow streets to transport more people in a fixed amount of right-of-way.

Caltrans supports the implementation of complete streets and pedestrian safety measures such as road diets and other traffic calming measures. Please note the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recognizes the road diet treatment as a proven safety countermeasure, and the cost of a road diet can be significantly reduced if implemented in tandem with routine street resurfacing. Overall, the environmental report should ensure all modes are served well by planning and development activities. This includes reducing single occupancy vehicle trips, ensuring safety, reducing vehicle miles traveled, supporting accessibility, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

We encourage the Lead Agency to evaluate the potential of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies and Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) applications in order to better manage the transportation network, as well as transit service and bicycle or pedestrian connectivity improvements. For additional TDM options, please refer to the Federal Highway Administration's *Integrating Demand Management into the Transportation Planning Process: A Desk Reference* (Chapter 8). This reference is available online at:

<http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwahop12035/fhwahop12035.pdf>

Also, 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 document 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>

Potential environmental effects of the Project should include the Transportation section with VMT analysis in the Draft Environmental Impact Report. To address all future large development traffic safety concerns, for the Lead Agency's consideration, Caltrans recommends the Lead Agency include queuing analysis with actual signal timing for existing traffic conditions plus any proposed project trips at the impacted off-ramps on related freeways. A traffic consultant may contact Caltrans to confirm study locations when a proposed project is presented to the Lead Agency.

Caltrans encourages lead agencies to prepare traffic safety impact analysis for any future sizable projects in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review process using Caltrans guidelines above on the State facilities so that, through partnerships and collaboration, California can reach zero fatalities and serious injuries by 2050.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mr. Alan Lin the project coordinator at (213) 269-1124 and refer to GTS # LA-2023-04374-NOP.

Sincerely,

Frances Duong

FRANCES DUONG
Acting LDR/CEQA Branch Chief

email: State Clearinghouse