

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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January 5, 2024

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Jan 04 2024

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Mandy Huffman
Los Angeles County Sanitation District
1955 Workman Mill Road
Whittier, CA 90601

RE: Valencia Water Reclamation Plant
Middle Section Retaining Wall Retaining
Wall Ground Improvement – Notice of
Preparation of an EIR (NOP)
SCH # 2023110644
Vic. I-5/54.278, LA-126/5.5115
GTS # 07-LA-2023-04387

Dear Mandy Huffman:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above-referenced project. Santa Clarita Valley Sanitation District (SCVSD) has determined through previous studies that under a Capital Storm event, the Valencia Water Reclamation Plant (VWRP) has the potential to be exposed to erosion along approximately 1,000 feet of the middle section of the existing retaining wall and along the VWRP boundary after flooding due to scour. If the wall is undermined by scour or damaged by a significant earthquake event, VWRP facilities may be damaged or destroyed. The proposed project includes a new ground retaining wall structure to fortify the middle section of the wall and protect the VWRP during a flood scour event and design-level earthquake. In addition, the proposed project would include updates to two existing outfall structures. Temporary construction work would occur along the VWRP boundary as well as an existing Significant Ecological Area (SEA) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife easement west of the VWRP. An operations and maintenance area would be cleared around the existing SCVSD outfall easements for continued use during long-term maintenance of the outfall structures. The County of Los Angeles Sanitation District is the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The closest state facilities are I-5 and SR-126. After reviewing the project's NOP, Caltrans has the following comments:

- According to the LA County Bikeways Map, the VWRP site is marked as a beginning/end point of an existing bike path. 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. To access the LA County Bikeways Map, please see the link below.

<https://dpw.lacounty.gov/bike/map.cfm>

- Caltrans recommends that the project takes the following improvements into consideration:
 - Develop bicycle infrastructure along the Old Rd., 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.
 - Use high-visibility continental crosswalks, curb extensions, count-down signal heads, pedestrian refuge islands, and pedestrian scrambles at the intersections along the Old Rd.
 - 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.

Caltrans looks forward to reviewing the forthcoming draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). 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-2023-04387.

Sincerely,

Frances Duong

Frances Duong
Acting LDR/CEQA Branch Chief

cc: State Clearinghouse