

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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March 18, 2024

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

March 18 2024

Peter Kann, Planning Manager
City of Artesia, Planning Department
18747 Clarkdale Avenue
Artesia, California 90701

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

RE: Artesia Downtown Specific Plan –
Notice of Preparation (NOP)
SCH #2024020999
GTS #07-LA-2024-04467
Vic. LA 91 PM 18.09
LA 605PM 03.76

Dear Peter Kann,

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the review process for the above referenced project. The Artesia Downtown Specific Plan (proposed project) would implement new land use, zoning, and development standards to guide the scale of future development and growth in Artesia's Downtown district as the city prepares for the planned expansion of a new Metro light rail line (referred to as the Southeast Gateway Line Branch) that would connect southeastern Los Angeles County communities, including Artesia, to Downtown Los Angeles. The new Metro light rail line extension is anticipated to connect to Pioneer Boulevard in 2035. While there are no specific development projects proposed at this time, the Artesia Downtown Plan will establish goals and objectives, development standards, and implementation actions associated with land use, mobility, and infrastructure, and establishes a transit-oriented plan that would provide new opportunities for housing, retail/commercial, and entertainment uses. The proposed project would establish the necessary plans, development standards, regulations, infrastructure requirements, and implementation programs on which subsequent project-related development activities in the Specific Plan area would be based.

After reviewing the NOP, Caltrans has the following comments:

The scope and nature of the Artesia Downtown Specific Plan provides a valuable opportunity to apply proven policies that improve walkability, reduce automobile

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dependence, and provide a path to housing affordability. Caltrans recommends the following:

- Eliminate car parking requirements. Research looking at the relationship between land-use, parking, and transportation indicates that the amount of car parking supplied can undermine a city's ability to encourage public transit and active modes of transportation. The city should instead use this valuable space as an opportunity to build residential, commercial, and office uses in close proximity, thus increasing accessibility and allowing residents to utilize both transit and active modes to meet their everyday transportation needs. To reduce vehicle miles traveled, we recommend eliminating car parking requirements, or even implementing parking maximums, as alternatives to building an unnecessary amount of parking.
- Prepare for adaptive reuse. Consider adopting Form-Based Codes (FBC) as an alternative to separating uses. FBCs allow for a community's vision to be created and maintained through form, mass, and streetscape requirements, while allowing tremendous flexibility for adaptive reuse into the future. This reduces wasteful demolition of single-use developments and improves the public realm for residents and visitors alike.
- Connect to transit infrastructure. As mentioned in the NOP, Artesia's Downtown Plan area will have a forthcoming Metro Southeast Gateway Line station as a high-quality connection to local and regional transit. Investments should be made to connect all areas of the Plan area to this robust existing network of transit stops and stations. Streetscape and transit stop investments can dramatically improve walkability and encourage transit use.
- Protect vulnerable road users. 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 bike lanes, wide sidewalks, pedestrian refuge islands, landscaping, street furniture, and reductions in crossing distances through roadway narrowing.

In addition to the above recommendations, Caltrans looks forward to reviewing the DEIR's Transportation Impact Analysis including, but not limited to, the following:

1. A robust VMT Analysis.
2. Multi-Modal (Pedestrians, Bicyclists, Transit, Trucks, Cars etc) Conflict Analysis at all locations within the general plan that interact with Caltrans ROW, and specifically identify the physically protective infrastructure needed for people walking, riding bikes, and using transit.
3. Mitigation measures that include:
 - a) Reducing car infrastructure and parking.
 - b) Enhancing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.
 - c) Enhancing transit infrastructure.
 - d) Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures.
 - e) Transportation System Management (TSM) investments.

Caltrans looks forward to reviewing the DEIR that should demonstrate how planned development patterns align with adopted VMT policies. Caltrans supports collaboration with local agencies to work towards a safe, functional, interconnected, multi-modal transportation network integrated through efficient and equitable land use planning and policies. If you have any questions, please contact project coordinator Anthony Higgins, at anthony.higgins@dot.ca.gov and refer to GTS #07-LA-2024-04467.

Sincerely,

Miya Edmonson

Miya Edmonson
LDR/CEQA Branch Chief

Cc: State Clearinghouse