

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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May 29, 2024

Kendall Brekke, Planner
City of Lancaster
44933 Fern Ave
Lancaster, CA 93534

RE: Site Plan Review No. 23-002 –
Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND)
SCH #2024050082
GTS #07-LA-2024-04522
LA-14/R 67.57

Dear Kendall Brekke,

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced project. The City of Lancaster proposes the construction of an industrial warehouse building and associated improvements, such as loading docks, tractor-trailer stalls, passenger vehicle parking spaces, stormwater detention basins, and landscape area. Additionally, the Project would include off-site improvements along 35th Street West and Avenue H, including frontage landscaping, pedestrian, and street lighting improvements. In total, the project would provide approximately 173 passenger vehicle parking spaces and six bicycle parking spaces.

After reviewing the MND, Caltrans has the following comments:

Project-level Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) analysis is required as the project is expected to generate more than 110 vehicle trips on a given day, is an industrial project that would not be considered a locally serving retail use, and does not include affordable housing. Analysis finds that the Project exceeds 15% below Antelope Valley Planning Area baseline VMT for home-based work VMT per employee. To reduce the project's potential VMT impact, the HBW VMT per employee would need to be reduced by 737 VMT, equal to a reduction of 41%. On January 24, 2023, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 23-08 which would allow new residential and nonresidential development to mitigate their

project specific VMT impacts by making a “fair share” payment to cover the cost of the identified transportation demand management strategies and VMT-reducing projects within the City. The proposed project would be able to pay the fee per VMT to reduce the project’s total VMT to a level that is less than significant with mitigation. Caltrans concurs that the Project adopts Mitigation Measure 25 of the Initial Study which states that, in accordance with the City’s Vehicle Miles Traveled Impact Fee Mitigation Program, the applicant shall pay \$110,500 to reduce vehicle miles traveled impacts prior to the issuance of construction-related permits.

As a reminder, Senate Bill 743 (2013) has codified into CEQA law and mandated that CEQA review of transportation impacts of proposed development be modified by using VMT as the primary metric in identifying transportation impacts for all future development projects. Caltrans’ targets of tripling trips made by bicycle, doubling trips made by walking and public transit, and a 15% reduction in statewide VMT can be achieved through collaborative improvements to the state-wide transportation network.

The project is evaluated to have a less than significant impact with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system which includes bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The City of Lancaster General Plan for Physical Mobility highlights the City’s goals for promoting a safe, efficient, and multimodal roadway network. The Fox Field Industrial Corridor Specific Plan outlines an objective to establish landscaped corridors that enhance the City’s image and move goods and people throughout the area. Caltrans recommends including a brief overview of the Master Plan of Complete Streets in Section 1.17 of the Initial Study as that is the main document addressing bicycle and pedestrian accessibility for the City and should be treated as the guideline for new projects to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian features.

Regarding active transportation, Avenue H has a speed limit of 55 mph with an existing Class II unbuffered bike lane. With Avenue H serving as a collector road, the bike lanes should be upgraded to a Class IV for improved safety and mobility. Caltrans recommends the City continue to apply concepts from its Master Plan of Complete Streets when planning for the implementation of Avenue H to promote a safe environment for all road users.

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 advises 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

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issues on any State facilities, please submit a construction traffic control plan detailing these issues for Caltrans' review.

If you have any questions, please contact project coordinator Frances Duong, at frances.duong@dot.ca.gov and refer to GTS #07-LA-2024-04522.

Sincerely,

Anthony Higgins for
Miya Edmonson
LDR/CEQA Branch Chief

Cc: State Clearinghouse