

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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a California Way of Life*

August 30, 2024

Naren Gunasekera
City of Simi Valley
2929 Tapo Canyon Road
Simi Valley, CA 93063

RE: Envision Simi Valley: MND
GTS # 07-VEN-2024-00609
SCH # 2024070987
Vic. VEN 118 23.822, 27.322

Dear Naren Gunasekera:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above-referenced project. The proposed Specific Plan would regulate the future development of the Los Angeles Avenue Corridor (from Sinaloa Road through Erringer Road) and the Tapo Street Area (from Alamo Street through Los Angeles Avenue, extending towards the Metrolink Station) in the City of Simi Valley. The proposed Specific Plan would replace the current zoning designations with customize zones and design standards to regulate development within the Specific Plan Area. No specific development projects are proposed as part of the Specific Plan at this time; however, all future development plans or agreements, tract or parcel maps, or any land use development approval requiring ministerial or discretionary actions within the Specific Plan Area would be required to be consistent with the proposed Specific Plan. The City of Simi Valley is the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

After reviewing the project's documents, Caltrans has the following comments:

Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Transit Access

It is determined the Project would not result in inconsistencies with applicable plans addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian in the Project vicinity. As noted herein, it is determined that the Project may intensify the use of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities in the Project vicinity, however, such use is not expected to result in a deficient condition caused by the Project.

Caltrans recommends Alternative 2 for Los Angeles Avenue and Tapo Street to enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety and comfort. The project should also include amenities like bicycle racks, bus stop shelters, and benches. During construction, it is imperative to detour bicyclists safely through the project area with robust signage and direction. The Lead Agency is encouraged to apply for a Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant to support bikeway planning and design.

Caltrans is in support of the Project's mobility goals and policies, which align with state priorities for transportation, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction, and/or betterment of the environment and human health.

VMT

The Project is subject to the following City of Simi Valley guidelines where a project will be considered to have an impact if it generates VMT per capita and/or per employee in excess of five percent less than the background VMT for the City of Simi Valley. The existing plus project VMT per service population for the Specific Plan Area is forecast to be 14.5, while the existing citywide VMT per service population is currently 15.5. As such, five percent below existing citywide VMT per service population is 14.7. Therefore, the existing plus project Specific Plan area VMT per service population (14.5) is not forecast to exceed the City's CEQA threshold.

Mitigation Measures: TDM

The following mitigation measure has been identified to reduce the significant and unavoidable impact of the Project:

Goal 7: Accommodate All Transportation Modes: Use complete street approaches for "right-sizing" streets that improve pedestrian safety and balance the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles. Connect to neighboring active transportation assets such as Arroyo Simi and the Simi Valley transit station.

- Introduce standards or programs that result in long-term reductions in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and vehicle miles traveled (VMT).
- Evaluate enhanced bike and pedestrian infrastructure along Los Angeles Avenue and Tapo Street for opportunities to connect to the study areas and adjacent destinations such as the Simi Valley transit station and the Arroyo Simi, including key first/last mile connections to from the adjacent neighborhoods.
- Evaluate impacts of repurposing travel lanes for bike lanes, bus lanes, and/or on-street parking as it relates to truck traffic, local vehicular traffic, and regional vehicular traffic. d. Integrate the use of emerging technologies and micro mobility options which may include on-demand scooters and e-bikes.

Therefore, Caltrans concurs that the proposed Specific Plan would be consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b), and impacts related to VMT would be less than significant.

Others

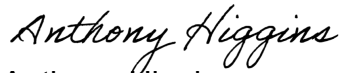
For the projects that are along SR-118 and near SR-118, please ensure that the existing signal and transportation operations at all major intersections can accommodate any travel pattern changes the Project will cause. For any traffic signals and curb ramps requiring upgrades, the Project would be responsible for payment of all applicable fees

and costs, and Caltrans is not responsible for any fair-share contribution to the improvements.

Due to the project's proximity to SR 118, any improvement on Tapo Street within State Right-of-way will need an Encroachment 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.

If you have any questions, please contact Jaden Oloresisimo, the project coordinator, at Jaden.Oloresisimo@dot.ca.gov and refer to GTS # 07-VEN-2024-00609.

Sincerely,



Anthony Higgins
Acting LDR/CEQA Branch Chief

cc: State Clearinghouse