

California Department of Transportation

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11-SD-5, 76, 78
PM VAR
General Plan Update 2050
NOP/SCH#2024080799

Mr. Michael Ressler
City Planner
City of Vista
200 Civic Center Drive
Vista, CA 92084

Dear Mr. Ressler:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the City of Vista's General Plan Update 2050 located near Interstate 5 (I-5) and State Routes 76, 78 (SR-76, SR-78). The mission of Caltrans is to provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment. The Local Development Review (LDR) Program reviews land use projects and plans to ensure consistency with our mission and state planning priorities.

Safety is one of Caltrans' strategic goals. Caltrans strives to make the year 2050 the first year without a single death or serious injury on California's roads. We are striving for more equitable outcomes for the transportation network's diverse users. To achieve these ambitious goals, we will pursue meaningful collaboration with our partners. We encourage the implementation of new technologies, innovations, and best practices that will enhance the safety on the transportation network. These pursuits are both ambitious and urgent, and their accomplishment involves a focused departure from the status quo as we continue to institutionalize safety in all our work.

Caltrans is committed to prioritizing projects that are equitable and provide meaningful benefits to historically underserved communities, to ultimately improve transportation accessibility and quality of life for people in the communities we serve.

We look forward to working with the City of Vista in areas where the City and Caltrans have joint jurisdiction to improve the transportation network and connections between

various modes of travel, with the goal of improving the experience of those who use the transportation system.

Caltrans has the following comments:

Traffic Engineering and Analysis

- New development resulting from the City of Vista General Plan Update should provide a Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT) based Traffic Impact Study (TIS).
- The Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT) based Traffic Impact Study (TIS) should be provided for new development. Please use the Governor's Office of Planning and Research Guidance to identify VMT related impacts.¹
- The TIS may also need to identify the proposed project's near-term and long-term safety or operational issues, on or adjacent any existing or proposed State facilities.
- When required, future developments will need to provide a VMT analysis, local mobility analysis, and a safety review that follows the *Caltrans Local Development Review (LDR) Safety Review Practitioner's Guidance* (<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/safety-programs/documents/202402-ldr-safety-review-practitioners-guidance-all.pdf>).

North County Design Corridors

The North County Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan (CMCP), completed in June 2023, utilized a multimodal planning process to envision a balanced, equitable transportation system that integrates mobility options such as driving, biking, walking, transit, micro-mobility, and other mobility services to move people and goods within North County and beyond. The CMCP explored significant transportation policy challenges in the North County corridor (along SR-78) through a two-year collaboration between Caltrans, SANDAG, NCTD, County of San Diego, the cities of Oceanside, Carlsbad, Vista, San Marcos, and Escondido, and the public. Key goals included:

- Improve safety and quality of life and promote community vitality.
- Provide sustainable solutions leading to the reduction of vehicle miles traveled.
- Connect North County communities.
- Focus on traveler choices and experience solutions.

¹ California Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) 2018. "Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA." https://opr.ca.gov/docs/20190122-743_Technical_Advisory.pdf

- Foster equitable access to opportunities
- Provide a foundation for the future.

The CMCP promotes providing housing options that promote affordability and home ownership. Jurisdictions in the study area are encouraged to consider the proximity of transit and jobs when identifying proposed housing sites. Housing sites located near transit and jobs can create an opportunity for residents to take more trips by bus, light rail, or train. Jurisdictions should also consider how requirements placed on developers affect affordability.

We encourage the City of Vista to align the General Plan with the goals, objectives, projects, and programs in the North County CMCP.

Planning

As part of the City's General Plan Housing Element update, Caltrans requests that the City include discussions and mapping/graphics that describe the City's existing and future housing inventory per the City's Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA).

Housing-element law requires a quantification of each jurisdiction's share of the regional housing need as established in the RHNA Plan prepared by the jurisdiction's metropolitan planning organization (MPO) or council of governments.

In accordance with California Government Code Sections 65583 and 65584, housing elements shall contain an analysis of population and employment trends and documentation of projections and quantification of the locality's existing and projected housing needs for all income levels. These projected needs shall include the locality's share of the regional housing needs (i.e., RHNA) per Government Code Section 65584.

Complete Streets and Mobility Network

Caltrans views all transportation improvements as opportunities to improve safety, access, and mobility for all travelers in California and recognizes bicycle, pedestrian, and transit modes as integral elements of the transportation network. Caltrans supports improved transit accommodation through the provision of Park and Ride facilities, improved bicycle and pedestrian access and safety improvements, signal prioritization for transit, bus on shoulders, ramp improvements, or other enhancements that promotes a complete and integrated transportation network. Early coordination with Caltrans, in locations that may affect both Caltrans and the City of Vista, is encouraged.

To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and achieve California's Climate Change target, Caltrans is implementing Complete Streets and Climate Change policies into State

Highway Operations and Protection Program (SHOPP) projects to meet multi-modal mobility needs. Caltrans looks forward to working with the City to evaluate potential Complete Streets projects.

Bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit access during construction is important. Mitigation to maintain bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit access during construction is in accordance with Caltrans' goals and policies.

Land Use and Smart Growth

Caltrans recognizes there is a strong link between transportation and land use. Development can have a significant impact on traffic and congestion on State transportation facilities. In particular, the pattern of land use can affect both local vehicle miles traveled and the number of trips. Caltrans supports collaboration with local agencies to work towards a safe, functional, interconnected, multi-modal transportation network integrated through applicable "smart growth" type land use planning and policies.

The City should continue to coordinate with Caltrans to implement necessary improvements at intersections and interchanges where the agencies have joint jurisdiction.

Environmental

Should future projects based upon the changes enacted from the General Plan have elements and/or mitigation measures that affect Caltrans' Right-of-Way, Caltrans would welcome the opportunity to be a Responsible Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Sustainability

Caltrans recommends collaboration between our agency and the City of Vista on the proposed transportation related topics including adaptation strategies to help improve the City's resilience to potential climate change impacts and strategies to reduce VMT, and off-road and on-road greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Caltrans recognizes that transportation is a leading contributor to GHG emissions in the region and is dedicated to reducing and mitigating transportation related emissions. We recommend collaborating with Caltrans on the following measures such as increasing the use of zero emission vehicles, installing electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, identifying right-of-way areas to be used for carbon sequestration, and complete streets.

Broadband

Caltrans recognizes that teleworking and remote learning lessen the impacts of traffic on our roadways and surrounding communities. This reduces the amount of VMT and decreases the amount of GHG emissions and other pollutants. The availability of affordable and reliable, high-speed broadband is a key component in supporting travel demand management and reaching the state's transportation and climate action goals.

Right-of-Way

Per Business and Profession Code 8771, perpetuation of survey monuments by a licensed land surveyor is required, if they are being destroyed by any construction.

Any work performed within Caltrans' R/W will require discretionary review and approval by Caltrans and an encroachment permit will be required for any work within the Caltrans' R/W prior to construction.

Additional information regarding encroachment permits may be obtained by visiting the website at <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/ep>. Projects with the following:

- require a Caltrans Encroachment Permit.
- have completed the Caltrans Local Development Review (LDR) process.
- have an approved environmental document.

need to have documents submitted for Quality Management Assessment Process (QMAP) process via email to D11.QMAP.Permits@dot.ca.gov. Early coordination with Caltrans is strongly advised for all encroachment permits.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Shannon Aston, LDR Coordinator, at (619) 992-0628 or by e-mail sent to shannon.aston@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Kimberly D. Dodson

KIMBERLY D. DODSON, GISP
Branch Chief
Local Development Review