

California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 12
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September 25, 2024

Ms. Rose Rivera
Senior Planner
City of Aliso Viejo
12 Journey STE 100
Aliso Viejo, CA 92656

File: LDR/CEQA
SCH: 2024080959
12-ORA-2024-02639
SR 73, PM 14.49

Dear Ms. Rivera,

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the review of the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Avalon Aliso Viejo Project for the City of Aliso Viejo. The mission of Caltrans is to provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment.

The project proposes the removal of an existing parking lot to construct a 6-story mixed-use building consisting of 343 residential units and an 8-level parking garage among additional modifications. Regional access to the site is provided by State Route 73 (SR 73). Caltrans is a commenting agency on this project, and has the following comments:

1. Please conduct an Intersection Analysis on neighboring intersections including impacts on ramps. Analyzing the traffic flow, signal timing, delays, and sight distances helps identify potential safety concerns and reduce collision risks. The data collected can also reveal inefficiencies in signal timing or phasing.
2. Please provide existing traffic volume (vehicle counts, turning movements), speeds and congestion levels.
3. Traffic Operations Southeast recommends the city use Safe System Approach (SSA) to use any of 28 proven safety countermeasures for speed, ped/bike, roadway departure, intersections, and crosscutting. For more information, please review the following link: <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures>

4. New residential development offers an opportunity to encourage multimodal transportation options. Caltrans encourages the design of Complete Streets that include high-quality pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities that are safe and comfortable for users of all ages and abilities. Improvements may include providing secure bicycle parking, pedestrian-oriented LED lighting, and comfortable connections to nearby active transportation and/or transit facilities. Complete Streets improvements also promote regional connectivity, improve air quality, reduce congestion, promote improved first-/last-mile connections, and increase safety for all modes of transportation.
5. Please consider encouraging the use of transit among future visitors, and workers of the development. Increasing multimodal transportation may lead to a reduction to congestion, Vehicle Miles Traveled and improve air quality.
6. On Page 157 of the IS/MND Public Draft document, under Transit Facilities, the City's existing transit services were discussed. Caltrans recommends the city continue coordination efforts with OCTA should there be a need for improvements and opportunities to accommodate additional demand on transit services as a result of the proposed project.
7. Where applicable, consider adding ADA compliant directional curb ramps with truncated domes and high visibility crosswalks at the intersections of Enterprise and Town Center on the southern end of the project, as well as on the east side of the project along Aliso Creek Road.
8. Consider relocating utility poles and boxes on the southern end of the project to allow room for wheelchairs, strollers, and other kinds of pedestrians to traverse the pedestrian walkway. If there is enough space, and/or utility poles and boxes cannot be moved, consider expanding the width of the pedestrian walkway instead.
9. The proposed project is not adjacent to any existing bicycle facilities, but it does include the construction of "bicycle parking spaces," specifically "storage for 50 bicycles onsite." The project is also next to Aliso Creek Road, which is the site for a proposed Class II bicycle facility by OCTA.
 - o Bike parking should be installed a minimum of 24" away from walls and other objects (e.g., trash cans, plants, etc.). With the growing popularity of electric bikes and cargo/utility bikes (which tend to be bigger and heavier), Caltrans also recommends that bicycle storage facilities be designed to accommodate a range of bicycle styles, sizes, and weights.

- For additional guidance on bicycle parking best practices, see the “Essentials of Bike Parking” guidance created by the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (link to online PDF: <https://www.apbp.org/Publications>).

10. Consider installing pedestrian scale lighting along the project area. Please also provide ADA compliant directional curb ramps with truncated domes, and a high visibility crosswalk at the intersection of Island Way and Dana Point Harbor Drive at the western end of the project.

11. Please consider including a discussion on incorporating designated areas/parking for freight delivery, package, and transportation network company’s pickup and drop-off.

In addition, establish freight pick up and drop off times that do not coincide with peak commute hours to reduce passenger vehicle conflicts and congestion for freight.

12. Caltrans encourages commercial and high-density residential developments to offer pick-up point services or automated parcel systems (e.g. Amazon Lockers) so that deliveries can be made with one truck stop instead of multiple stops to individual residences.

13. Any project work proposed in the vicinity of the State Right-of-Way (ROW) would require an encroachment permit and all environmental concerns must be adequately addressed. If the environmental documentation for the project does not meet Caltrans’s requirements for work done within State ROW, additional documentation would be required before approval of the encroachment permit. Please coordinate with Caltrans to meet requirements for any work within or near State ROW. For specific details for Encroachment Permits procedure, please refer to the Caltrans’s Encroachment Permits Manual at: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops/developserv/permits/>

Caltrans’ mission is to provide a safe, sustainable, equitable, integrated, and efficient transportation system to enhance California’s economy and livability. Please continue to coordinate with Caltrans for any future developments that could potentially impact State transportation facilities. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Joseph Jamoralin at Joseph.Jamoralin@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

City of Aliso Viejo
September 25, 2024
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott Shelley'.

Scott Shelley
Branch Chief, Regional-LDR-Transit Planning
Caltrans, District 12