

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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*Making Conservation
a California Way of Life.*

October 3, 2024

Michael Gatheru
City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning
221 North Figueroa Street, Room 1350
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Sunset Las Palmas Studios Enhancement
Plan – NOP
SCH# 2024090167
GTS# 07-LA-2024-04620
Vic. LA 2 PM: 11.022

Dear Michael Gatheru,

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced project. The proposed development includes the construction of 129,783 square feet of entertainment studio uses within five buildings on an approximately 3-acre site, comprised of four sound stages totaling 59,900 square feet and a production support building with 59,883 square feet of floor area, and a maximum building height of 63 feet and two subterranean parking levels for a total of 277 parking spaces. All existing buildings and structures, including 25,367 square feet of production support and office uses and a parking structure, would be removed.

After reviewing the NOP, Caltrans has the following comments:

Caltrans acknowledges and supports infill development that helps California meet its climate, transportation, and livability goals. The Project would develop new entertainment studio uses on an infill location with convenient access to public transit and opportunities for walking and biking, which would result in a reduction of vehicle trips, VMT, and GHG emissions. Specifically, the Project Site is located in a transit-rich neighborhood serviced by Metro and LADOT DASH lines. In addition, the Project Site's proximity to a variety of commercial uses and services would encourage employees of the Project Site to walk, bike and take transit to nearby destinations.

However, there is still room for improvement as the Initial Study suggests VMT impacts from the project may be potentially significant. Caltrans looks forward to reviewing the

"Provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment."

project's transportation impact analysis, and recommends consideration of the following to mitigate potential impacts:

- Reduce the amount of vehicle parking. With the implementation of AB 2097 this project is not required to include car parking, but the proposed design suggests that the Lead Agency should seriously consider adopting parking maximums. This project's location is an excellent candidate for reduced car parking due to it being an infill location within a high-quality transit corridor, while also being adjacent to an existing publicly-accessible 6 story parking structure for essential vehicle travel.

Research looking at the relationship between land-use, parking, and transportation indicates that the amount of car parking supplied can undermine a project's ability to encourage public transit and active modes of transportation. For any project to better promote public transit and reduce vehicle miles traveled, we recommend the implementation of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies as an alternative to building excess parking.

- Reallocation of vehicle parking space towards additional bicycle parking. City of Los Angeles bicycle parking standards suggest 1 short term and 1 long term bicycle parking space per 10,000 square feet of commercial or industrial developments. With the project anticipating over 129,000 square feet of entertainment studio and production support uses, Caltrans advocates for significant increases from the proposed 13 short-term and 26 long-term bicycle parking spaces.
- Improved safety and connections for existing active transportation and transit infrastructure. The project is approximate to multiple segments of the City of LA's High Injury Network, including Las Palmas Ave, Highland Ave and Santa Monica Blvd. The most effective methods to reduce pedestrian and bicyclist exposure to vehicles is through physical design and geometrics. These methods include the construction of curb extensions, wide sidewalks, landscaping, street furniture, and reductions in crossing distances through roadway narrowing. Consider the addition of curb extensions at the following intersections:
 - Romaine St & Las Palmas Ave
 - Romaine St & Seward St
 - Romaine St & McCadden Pl
 - Romaine St & Highland Ave
 - Santa Monica Blvd & Las Palmas Ave
 - Barton Ave & Las Palmas Ave
 - Willoughby Ave & Las Palmas Ave
 - Seward St & Romaine St

Additionally, consider including additional bicycle infrastructure along the following roadways, such as protected Class IV facilities where possible:

- Las Palmas Ave
 - Vine St
 - Willoughby Ave
 - Santa Monica Blvd
- Caltrans encourages the Lead Agency to actively promote alternatives to car use and consider transportation demand management strategies. Such alternatives include incentives for commuters to use transit, discounts on monthly bus and rail passes, shuttle buses, vanpools, etc. These alternatives can be significant to reducing car trips, to the extent that more of the population shifts to transit for some of their inter-regional trips and thus future cumulative transportation impacts to freeways may be satisfactorily mitigated.

Finally, The Project area is located approximately 0.1 miles south of SR 2 (Santa Monica Boulevard). Caltrans has the jurisdiction for review and approval of any work that would affect the freeways and its facilities. Any transportation of heavy construction equipment and/or materials which requires use of oversized-transport vehicles on State highways will require a Caltrans transportation permit. We recommend large size truck trips be limited to off-peak commute periods.

If you have any questions, please contact project coordinator Jan Yonan, at jan.yonan@dot.ca.gov and refer to GTS# 07-LA-2024-04620.

Sincerely,



Anthony Higgins
Acting LDR/CEQA Branch Chief

Cc: State Clearinghouse