

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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*Making Conservation
a California Way of Life*

January 9, 2024

Kyle Cason, Public Works Department
City of Whittier
13230 Penn Street
Whittier, CA 90602

RE: 22-008 Parnell Park Renovation
and Improvements Project– Mitigated
Negative Declaration (MND)
SCH #20244120442
GTS #07-LA-2024-04705
LA-72/PM 1.28

Dear Kyle Cason,

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced project. The Project proposes a renovation of the existing Parnell Park in the City of Whittier. Park improvements would include the construction of new sports fields and an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant playground with a splash pad, updated restrooms, picnic pavilions and lawns, upgraded pedestrian paths, lighting, landscaping and irrigation, and parking/circulation improvements. Lambert Road, Scott Avenue, and Mulberry Drive each provide two driveway access points to the site, and an internal drive aisle connects all perimeter parking along the southern, eastern, and northern boundaries of the project. Currently, there are a total of 191 surface parking stalls, consisting of approximately 174 standard parking stalls and 17 Americans with Disability Act (ADA) stalls provided on-site.

After reviewing the IS/MND, Caltrans has the following comments:

Caltrans concurs with Mitigation Measure TRANS-1 to prepare a detailed construction Traffic Management Plan (TMP). With the implementation of proposed Mitigation Measure TRA-1, the City would be required to implement a temporary TMP to maintain traffic flow and emergency access throughout the construction process. Construction activities associated with the project may temporarily impact bike, pedestrian, and transit facilities as temporary partial lane closures may be required during construction. However, these roadways would remain open to traffic at all times. Transit services in the

project area are provided by Los Angeles County Public Works' Sunshine Shuttle, Route A. The Scott Avenue and Lambert Road bus stop situated along Scott Avenue, adjacent to the project site, would remain in place.

For site access, the Project proposes to utilize the existing northwestern ingress/egress driveway along Lambert Road. The second driveway would be removed and replaced with curb and gutter, parkway landscaping, and parking spaces. The Project proposes a total of 263 parking spaces: 210 standard spaces, 9 ADA-compliant spaces, and 11 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, with an additional 33 parking spaces designated for future EV charging capability. Caltrans acknowledges and supports development that ultimately helps California to meet its climate, transportation, and livability goals. However, reducing the amount of excess parking spaces is recommended whenever possible as research examining 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. Caltrans supports the inclusion of ADA-compliant and EV charging spaces as supportive and accessible infrastructure, and encourages the City to continue exploring the opportunity to promote alternative usage that steers away from building additional standard parking spaces. As proposed in the Initial Study, the drop-off and loading zone adjacent to the picnic plaza would accommodate food truck parking for interchanging dining options. Similar creative activations of unused parking stalls would further advance the General Plan goal and policies of providing equitable access to community-building experiences that encourage active living, health, and wellness for all residents.

Adjacent to the project site are existing Class II and III bikeway facilities along Mulberry Drive and Scott Avenue. The City's Whittier Bicycle Transportation Plan proposes to install a Class II bike lane facility along Lambert Road. Given the roadway's traffic volumes and posted speed limit of 45 miles-per-hour, Caltrans encourages the City to upgrade this planned facility to a Class IV separated bikeway or at least Class II buffered bike lanes. Whenever possible, Caltrans recommends upgrading Class III bike lanes to either Class IV or Class II facilities to provide the highest level of safety for bicyclists. Those upgrades would create a safer path for bicyclists to visit Parnell Park and enhance regional connectivity via the Whittier Greenway Trail. It is advised that the Project consider bolstering short-term bicycle parking facilities to support alternative transportation modes with higher reduction in carbon pollution and congestion than automotive vehicles. Regarding pedestrian improvements, Caltrans recommends that the City upgrade the nearby existing crosswalks at the Lambert Road/Scott Avenue and Scott Avenue/Mulberry Drive intersections with high-visibility continental striping.

Any transportation of heavy construction equipment and/or materials that requires the use of oversized transport vehicles on State Highways will require a Caltrans transportation permit. Caltrans recommends limiting construction traffic to off-peak periods to minimize the potential impact on State facilities. Construction truck loads should be covered with a

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tarpaulin cover. 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. We look forward to the coordination of our efforts to ensure potential impacts to the highway facilities and traveling public are discussed and addressed before work begins.

If you have any questions, please contact project coordinator Frances Duong, at frances.duong@dot.ca.gov and refer to GTS #07-LA-2024-04705.

Sincerely,



Anthony Higgins
Acting LDR/CEQA Branch Chief

Cc: State Clearinghouse