

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

January 20, 2021

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Mr. Patrick Leclair  
Planning Division  
City of Santa Clarita  
23920 Valencia Blvd., Suite 302  
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

**STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**

RE: Sand Canyon Resort Project  
Vic. LA-14 PM 33.42  
SCH # 2018101039  
Ref. GTS # LA-2018-02033/02407-NOP  
GTS # LA-2020-03437AL-DEIR

Dear Mr. Leclair:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced project. The proposed project would result in the replacement of existing open space that was formerly the Robinson Ranch Golf Course with a new resort and spa consisting of a Main Hotel (three-story building with 250 rooms totaling approx. 155,800 sf); Wedding Hotel (two-three story buildings with 72 rooms totaling approx. 50,620 sf) with an outdoor wedding venue; View Villas (15 two story villas with 60 rooms totaling approx. 91,100 sf); Oak Villas (10 one-story villas with 10 rooms totaling approx. 32,900 sf); Function Wing of the hotel with a grand ballroom (8,600 sf), junior ballroom (2,600 sf), meeting rooms (total of 2,400 sf), three restaurants (total of 8,400 sf); spa (approx. 31,380 sf); outdoor recreation including two pools, one tennis court, six pickle ball courts, a nine-hole miniature golf course, and three miles of trails; and 375 parking stalls.

The mission of Caltrans is to provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability. Senate Bill 743 (2013) has been codified into CEQA law. It mandates that CEQA review of transportation impacts of proposed developments be modified by using Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as the primary metric in identifying transportation impacts. As a reminder, Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) is the standard transportation analysis metric in CEQA for land use projects after the July 1, 2020 statewide implementation date. You may reference The Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) website for more information.

<http://opr.ca.gov/ceqa/updates/guidelines/>

This development should incorporate multi-modal and complete streets transportation elements that will actively promote alternatives to car use and better manage existing parking assets. Prioritizing and allocating space to efficient modes of travel such as bicycling and public transit can allow streets to transport more people in a fixed amount of right-of-way.

Caltrans supports the implementation of complete streets and pedestrian safety measures such as road diets and other traffic calming measures. Please note the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recognizes the road diet treatment as a proven safety countermeasure, and the cost of a road diet can be significantly reduced if implemented in tandem with routine street resurfacing.

Also, Caltrans has published the VMT-focused Transportation Impact Study Guide (TISG), dated May 20, 2020 and Caltrans Interim Land Development and Intergovernmental Review (LD-IGR) Safety Review Practitioners Guidance, prepared on December 18, 2020.

<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/transportation-planning/office-of-smart-mobility-climate-change/sb-743>

Overall, a complete environmental report should include a Transportation Impact Study (TIS) to ensure all modes are well served by planning and development activities. This includes reducing single occupancy vehicle trips, ensuring safety, reducing vehicle miles traveled, supporting accessibility, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

### **Public Transportation**

The City of Santa Clarita Transit (SCT) Route 6 is the closest service route to the project. The closest bus stop is approximately 2 miles from the project. SCT Routes 6 travels along Soledad Canyon Road and provides services between the east side of the City and Stevenson Ranch with stops at the Santa Clarita and Newhall Metrolink stations, as well as at the McBean Regional Transit Center. Additional routes are accessible from this route, which provides service to the greater Santa Clarita Valley area.

### **Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities**

The City of Santa Clarita Non-Motorized Transportation Plan Update (City of Santa Clarita 2014) focuses on the City's bicycle and pedestrian network, planning and policies related to bicycling and walking, nonmotorized connections to transit, safe routes to schools, and complete streets. This plan update also provides direction for future investments in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Currently, there are no bike lanes serving the project site. There is a proposed Class III Bike Path along Sand Canyon Road. The proposed Class III Bike Path along Sand Canyon Road would connect to the existing Class II Bike Lane along Soledad Canyon Road. Figure 4.15-4

illustrates the existing and planned future bicycle facilities in the study area. The existing multipurpose pedestrian pathway along Sand Canyon Road would be extended from Road Runner Road to the southern boundary of the City. There are limited pedestrian facilities along roadways adjacent to the project due to the rural nature of the study area.

The proposed resort includes 387 guest rooms consisting of a hotel and separate villas and a banquet facility, and the project will generate 921 average daily trips, 125/161 AM/PM peak hour trips on the local streets. Based on the VMT analysis for the project's employees, the project's impact would be potentially significant.

The project design features and mitigation measures includes

- Provide ride-sharing programs
- Implement subsidized or discounted transit program for employees
- Encourage telecommuting and alternative work schedules
- Implement commute trip reduction marketing
- Provide employer-sponsored vanpool/shuttle

The following Transportation Demand Management (TDM) facilities and services are recommended be provided by the resort, as required by the City of Santa Clarita.

1. An employee common area space such as a lunch room or coffee area would be used to provide rideshare information like the current bus and train routes and schedules, and other public transit resources. The building management should assign an Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) among staff to implement and promote TDM strategies. A commuter information kiosk would be installed to provide transit and rideshare information, with access to local transportation agency websites including Santa Clarita Transit, Metrolink, and Rideshare service at [www.commutessmart.info](http://www.commutessmart.info).
2. Provide designated at least five parking spaces for carpool vehicles. Implement a carpool permit system administered by the ETC. At least two motorcycle parking spaces should be provided by converting a regular car parking space in the designated employee parking area.
3. Rideshare vehicle loading areas should be provided at the curb in front of the employee entrances to the building, preferably with a bench.
4. Secure bicycle storage racks would be provided for at least 10 bicycles located adjacent to the employee entrances of the buildings.
5. Shower facilities would be provided, with at least two shower stalls; these can be unisex if separate dressing areas enclosed with internal doors are provided for each shower stall and they have a shared wash basin and mirror area.

6. A central lunch area or outside eating area would be provided to allow employees to have a place for lunch to minimize the need for additional travel. Information on catering/delivery of food would also be provided to reduce vehicle trips for lunch.

7. The resort management would offer financial incentives to encourage employees to commute by other modes of transportation. Under the Commuter Choice Program, employers can pay their employees up to \$100 per month (\$1,200 per year) in tax-free benefits to commute to work by transit or eligible vanpools. It offers a significant tax savings to both employers and employees.

8. Detailed design of the TDM facilities in the parking lot would be completed by the project civil engineers, and facilities such as the central lunch area and shower facilities would be designed by the project architects.

With implementation of the mitigation measures and TDM, the proposed project's significant impact cannot be fully mitigated. Caltrans concurs that the proposed project would be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b), and impacts would be significant and unavoidable.

For this project as a reminder, transportation of heavy construction equipment and/or materials, which requires the use of oversized-transport vehicles on State highways, will require a transportation permit from Caltrans. It is recommended that large size construction/operation truck trips be limited to off-peak commute periods and idle time not to exceed 10 minutes.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mr. Alan Lin the project coordinator at (213) 897-8391 and refer to GTS # LA-2018-03437AL-DEIR.

Sincerely,



MIYA EDMONSON  
IGR/CEQA Branch Chief

email: State Clearinghouse