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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

July 09 2021

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

July 9, 2021

City of Downey
11111 Brookshire Avenue
Downey, California 90241
Attention: Guillermo Arreola

RE: Ranchos Los Amigos South Campus
Specific Plan (RLASCSP) – Draft
Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)
SCH# 2019029057
GTS# 07-LA-2019-03614
Vic. LA-105 PM 14.565
Vic. LA-710 PM 16.393

Dear Guillermo Arreola,

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced project. The Draft Rancho Los Amigos South Campus Specific Plan (RLASCSP or Specific Plan) has been prepared to promote future development of the southern portion of the Rancho Los Amigos Campus. The RLASCSP is a City-initiated Specific Plan located completely on land that is owned by the County of Los Angeles.

The Specific Plan also prioritizes creating more livable communities with access to regional transit and promotes alternative transit opportunities. Over one-half (approximately 63 percent or 109 acres) of the approximately 172-acre RLASCSP area, will either remain unchanged, or is committed to other projects being planned and studied by the County and the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro). Potential environmental impacts associated with the County and Metro projects are analyzed under separate environmental documents. The remainder of the Specific Plan area (approximately 37percent or 62.5 acres) comprises the Project site, referred in this PEIR as the Focus Area. The Focus Area is planned and programmed for a mix of transit-oriented residential, retail, and office uses. The overall RLASCSP area has four geographical districts: Flex Tech/Bio Medical (FTBM), Regional Public Facilities (RPF), Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), and Community Serving (CS). The Focus Area includes three of the four districts: RPF, TOD, and CS; no FTBM land is located within the Focus Area. Within the Focus Area, the RLASCSP would allow a maximum development of 700 dwelling units (DUs) and approximately 1,130,000 square feet (SF) of new, non-residential (commercial, retail, office, public facilities, etc.) land uses.

The nearest State facilities to the proposed project are I-710 and I-105. After reviewing the DEIR, Caltrans has the following comments:

Caltrans acknowledges and supports mixed-use, infill development that prioritizes walking, biking, and transit. The Project's goals appear to be in alignment with State-level sustainable transportation policy goals which seek to reduce the number of trips made by driving, reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, and encourage alternative modes of travel. Caltrans' Strategic Management Plan has set targets of tripling trips made by bicycle and doubling trips made by walking and public transit, as well as achieving a reduction in statewide, per capita, vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Similar goals are embedded in the California Transportation Plan 2040, California Transportation Plan 2050, and Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Connect SoCal (2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy). Statewide legislation such as AB 32 and SB 375, as well as Executive Order S-3-05 and N-19-19, echo the need to pursue more sustainable development. Projects, like the one proposed, can help California meet these goals.

Caltrans has the following recommendations for the Specific Plan:

Street Design:

1. Caltrans recommends creating the safest streetscape possible for pedestrians and people on bikes. Wide roadways with numerous travel lanes are associated with higher vehicle speeds and less safe conditions for people walking and biking. Elements should be considered to create the most comfortable environment possible for all the people who will be walking and biking within the specific plan area. The most effective methods to reduce pedestrian and bicyclist exposure to vehicles is through physical design and geometrics. These methods include the construction of physically separated facilities such as Class IV bike lanes, curb extensions or bulb-outs, sidewalks, pedestrian refuge islands, landscaping, street furniture, and reductions in crossing distances through roadway narrowing. Visual indicators such as, pedestrian and bicyclist warning signage, flashing beacons, crosswalks, signage, and striping should be used in addition to physical design improvements to indicate to motorists that they can expect to see and yield to pedestrians and people on bikes.
2. Use these tools to improve connections to existing active transportation and transit infrastructure, such as taking advantage of this project's proximity to the future Metro Gardendale Station.

Parking:

1. Reduce the amount of parking whenever possible, as abundant car parking enables and encourages driving. 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 too much parking.

If the car parking must be built, it should:

- a. Be unbundled from the cost to rent or buy any residential unit to reduce car dependency and lower Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT).
 - b. Be designed in a way that is conducive to adaptive reuse. They should contain flat floors with ramps on the exterior edge, so that they can be more easily converted to beneficial uses in the future.
2. Caltrans recommends that long-term bicycle parking spaces be provided in addition to any short-term spaces, allowing residents to take advantage of the Project's central location and choose the bicycle as their preferred mode of travel more easily. Long-term bicycle parking should be located onsite, indoors, on the ground floor, and within 200 feet of primary pedestrian entrances.

If you have any questions, please contact project coordinator Anthony Higgins, at anthony.higgins@dot.ca.gov and refer to GTS# 07-LA-2019-03614.

Sincerely,

Emily Gibson

Emily Gibson
Acting IGR/CEQA Branch Chief

Cc: State Clearinghouse