

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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*Making Conservation
a California Way of Life.*

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

JUNE 19 2019

June 18, 2019

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Ms. Wendy Starks
City of Rancho Santa Margarita
22112 El Paseo
Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688

File: IGR/CEQA
SCH#: 2018041075
12-ORA-2018-01110
SR 241, PM 14.5-20.21

Dear Ms. Starks:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the review of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Rancho Santa Margarita General Plan Update. The mission of Caltrans is to provide a safe, sustainable, integrated, and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability.

The General Plan Update project is focused on updating five elements: Conservation/Open Space, Economic Development, Land Use, Noise, and Safety. The Circulation and Housing Elements were updated in 2014 and 2013. Freeway access to the project site is provided by State Route (SR) 74 (Ortega Highway) and Interstate 5 (I-5) Freeway. Caltrans is a responsible agency on this project and upon review, we have the following comments:

Transportation Planning

1. Please consider encouraging the addition of bicycle elements such as bicycle parking to areas or land uses that may experience higher volumes of bicyclists. These areas may include shopping plazas, schools, parks, and employment centers.

This will encourage people to utilize alternative modes of transportation to access their destinations and may help increase first/last-mile connectivity.

Environmental Analysis

2. Please review the sections referenced from the CEQA Guidelines for accuracy. Sections referenced from Chapter 6.0 Other CEQA Considerations (particularly Sections 6.2, 6.3, and 7.0) in the Rancho Santa Margarita General Plan Update DEIR do not agree with the 2019 edition of the CEQA Statute and Guidelines.
3. Category XX – Wildfire has been added to the January 17, 2019, edition of the CEQA Environmental Checklist. Please include discussion of the project's impacts to wildfires.

*"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system
to enhance California's economy and livability"*

Encroachment Permit

4. Please be advised that any project work (e.g. storage of materials, street widening, emergency access improvements, sewer connections, sound walls, storm drain construction, street connections, etc.) proposed in the vicinity of the State Highway System (SHS) will require an Encroachment Permit and all environmental concerns must be adequately addressed. If the environmental documentation for the project does not meet Caltrans' requirements, additional documentation would be required before the approval of the Encroachment Permit. For specific details for Encroachment Permits procedure, please refer to the Caltrans' Encroachment Permits Manual. The latest edition of the Manual is available on the web site:
<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops/developserv/permits/>
5. If the environmental documentation for the project does not meet Caltrans, additional documentation such as a Historic Properties Survey Report (HPSR), or a Natural Environment Study (NES) would be required before approval of the Encroachment Permit.
6. All work within the State Right of Way must conform to Caltrans Standard Plans and Standard Specifications for Water Pollution Control, including production of a Water Pollution Control Program (WPCP) or Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) as required. Any runoff draining into Caltrans Right of Way from construction operations, or from the resulting project, cannot be approved by District 12 Environmental Analysis. Measures must be incorporated to contain all vehicle loads and avoid any tracking of materials, which may fall or blow onto Caltrans roadways or facilities.

Please continue to keep us informed of this project and the associated environmental documents. Please also keep us informed of any future developments which could potentially impact the SHS. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Joseph Jamoralin, at (657) 328-6276 or Joseph.Jamoralin@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Scott Shelley
Branch Chief, Regional-IGR-Transit Planning
District 12