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Governor's Office of Planning &amp; Research

**APR 30 2020****STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**

*Making Conservation  
a California Way of Life.*

April 30, 2020

11-SD-15, 52, 163, 805  
PM VAR

Kearny Mesa Community Plan Update  
DEIR/SCH#2018111024

Ms. Rebecca Malone  
City of San Diego  
9488 Aero Drive  
San Diego, CA 92123

Dear Ms. Malone:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Kearny Mesa Community Plan Update located near Interstate 15 (I-15), State Route 52 (SR-52), State Route 163 (SR-163), and Interstate 805 (I-805). The mission of Caltrans is to provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability. The Local Development-Intergovernmental Review (LD-IGR) Program reviews land use projects and plans to ensure consistency with our mission and state planning priorities.

Caltrans has the following comments:

**Traffic Impact Study**

- Caltrans references the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) Senate Bill 743 based *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA* (December 2018) for guidance on the development of VMT based Transportation Impact Studies. Caltrans recommends use of OPR's significance thresholds for determination of transportation impacts from land use projects. OPR's *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA* is available online at <http://opr.ca.gov/ceqa/updates/sb-743/>.
- The State agrees with the conversion of Balboa Ave and Clairemont Mesa Blvd from a 6-Lane Major Arterials to SMART Corridors – Mentioned under Section 4 "Roadway Facilities" and figure 4-4. The added Class IV cycle

track is an excellent idea as well. Major geometry changes would have to take place at the northbound (NB) Interstate 805 (I-805)/Clairemont Mesa Blvd intersections, the NB I-805/Balboa Ave intersections, the State Route 163 (SR-163)/Balboa Ave interchange, and possibly the southbound (SB) Interstate 15 (I-15)/Balboa Ave intersections to accommodate the modification.

- Any modification to the existing intersection geometry and/or signal will have to comply with the Traffic Operations Policy Directive 13-02 Intersection Control Evaluation.
- The mentioned "Freeway Improvements" are not funded and should not be included for the VMT analysis. Remove these improvements and re-analyze the VMT for the community.
- Mitigation Measure MM-TR-1 should be able to be implemented by the City of San Diego since the community is within the City. The City is the decision-making body and it can ensure the ordinance to occur. Include the ordinance in the Programmatic Environmental Impact Report to ensure mitigation.
- Please explain why the North Park area is being used for the VMT analysis Appendix E 'Statistical Results in Graphical Format'.
- After Appendix E, several sheets repeat Appendices (B, C, & D) It is confusing, revise the order if needed.
- Assumptions based on current RTP for Transit may not still be accurate. Though the planning assumptions were correct at the beginning of the study, actual transportation impacts and transit service may differ.
- Service and transitions end within plan area, they do not fully service travel corridors that extend out of Kearney Mesa.
- Two Corridor plans are currently under way for I-805 and SR-52, continued coordination on these efforts and impacts on Kearney Mesa is recommended.
- Caltrans would like to review the Facilities Finance and/or fee program associated with mitigation in this area.

## **Design**

- Any proposed changes to the signal phasing at these intersections should be reviewed and concurred by Caltrans Signal Operations.
- The proposed Class IV Cycle Track on Clairemont Mesa Blvd and Balboa Ave overcrossing Route 163, within Caltrans Right of Way (R/W), should

follow HDM standards and guidance. Any proposed non-standard features will require Design Standard Decision Document and subject to Caltrans review that may or may not be approved. Any additional loads resulting from vertical elements/barriers on these two overcrossings due to proposed Class IV Cycle Track will need to be reviewed and approved by Caltrans Structure Division.

- Currently, at the interchange of Balboa Ave and SR-163, there are free-right entrance ramps. The proposed Class IV Cycle Track will cause conflicts at these free-right turn movement. It is recommended that the interchange needs to be modified to “T” up at the entrance ramps, similar to the interchange at Clairemont Mesa Blvd and SR-163.

### **Active Transportation, Complete Streets and Mobility Network**

*Figure 4-1: Pedestrian Route Types - Proposed Project Conditions:* The proposed pedestrian network shows pedestrian facilities that will cross through Caltrans right-of-way over, under, and along the state highway system (SHS). The proposed class I multi-use path shown in Figure 4-2 is not included in Figure 4-1; however, class I paths also serve as pedestrian routes. The existing Murphy Canyon Trail (southeast corner of study area) is also not included in Figure 4-1. Consider including these multi-use paths in *Figure 4-1 Pedestrian Route Types – Proposed Project Conditions* map.

*Figure 4-2: Bicycle Network - Proposed Project Conditions:* The proposed bicycle network shows planned Class I, Class II, and Class IV bicycle facilities that will cross through Caltrans right-of-way other, under, and along the state highway system (SHS).

The City should plan to coordinate early in the project development process with Caltrans District 11 Planning to navigate the Caltrans encroachment permit process for the pedestrian and bicycle network projects. Furthermore, the following Caltrans documents should be utilized to design pedestrian and bicycle facilities through Caltrans right-of-way.

- Caltrans Highway Design Manual (HDM):  
<http://www.dot.ca.gov/design/manuals/hdm.html>
- California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA MUTCD):  
<http://www.dot.ca.gov/trafficops/camutcd/camutcd2014rev3.html>

- Caltrans Design Information Bulletin (DIB) 82-06 Pedestrian Accessibility Guidance for Highway Projects  
<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/design/documents/dib82-06-all.pdf>
- Caltrans Design Information Bulletin (DIB) 89-01 Class IV Bikeway Guidance:  
<http://www.dot.ca.gov/design/stp/dib/dib89-01.pdf>

Caltrans views all transportation improvements as opportunities to improve safety, access and mobility for all travelers in California and recognizes bicycle, pedestrian and transit modes as integral elements of the transportation system. Caltrans supports improved transit accommodation through the provision of Park and Ride facilities, improved bicycle and pedestrian access and safety improvements, signal prioritization for transit, bus on shoulders, ramp improvements, or other enhancements that promotes a complete and integrated transportation system. Early coordination with Caltrans, in locations that may affect both Caltrans and the City of San Diego is encouraged.

To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and achieve California's Climate Change target, Caltrans is implementing Complete Streets and Climate Change policies into State Highway Operations and Protection Program (SHOPP) projects to meet multi-modal mobility needs. Caltrans looks forward to working with the City to evaluate potential Complete Streets projects.

### **Land Use and Smart Growth**

Caltrans recognizes there is a strong link between transportation and land use. Development can have a significant impact on traffic and congestion on State transportation facilities. In particular, the pattern of land use can affect both local vehicle miles traveled and the number of trips. Caltrans supports collaboration with local agencies to work towards a safe, functional, interconnected, multi-modal transportation system integrated through applicable "smart growth" type land use planning and policies.

The City should continue to coordinate with Caltrans to implement necessary improvements at intersections and interchanges where the agencies have joint jurisdiction, as well as coordinate with Caltrans as development proceeds and funds become available.

## **Noise**

The applicant must be informed that in accordance with 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 772, the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is not responsible for existing or future traffic noise impacts associated with the existing configuration of I-15, SR-52, SR-163 or I-805.

## **Environmental**

Caltrans welcomes the opportunity to be a Responsible Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as we have some discretionary authority of a portion of the project that is in Caltrans' R/W through the form of an encroachment permit process. We look forward to the coordination of our efforts to ensure that Caltrans can adopt the alternative and/or mitigation measure for our R/W. We would appreciate meeting with you to discuss the elements of the EIR that Caltrans will use for our subsequent environmental compliance.

An encroachment permit will be required for any work within the Caltrans' R/W prior to construction. As part of the encroachment permit process, the applicant must provide approved final environmental documents for this project, corresponding technical studies, and necessary regulatory and resource agency permits. Specifically, CEQA determinations or exemptions. The supporting documents must address all environmental impacts within the Caltrans' R/W and address any impacts from avoidance and/or mitigation measures.

We recommend that this project specifically identifies and assesses potential impacts caused by the project or impacts from mitigation efforts that occur within Caltrans R/W that includes impacts to the natural environment, infrastructure (highways/roadways/on-ramps and off-ramps) and appurtenant features (including but not limited to lighting/signs/guardrail/slopes). Caltrans is interested in any additional mitigation measures identified for the DEIR.

## **Mitigation**

Caltrans endeavors that any direct and cumulative impacts to the State Highway System be eliminated or reduced to a level of insignificance pursuant

to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) standards.

Mitigation improvements should be compatible with Caltrans concepts. Mitigation measures for proposed intersection modifications are subject to the Caltrans Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) policy (Traffic Operation Policy Directive 13-02). Alternative intersection design(s) will need to be considered in accordance with the ICE policy. Please refer to the policy for more information and requirements (<http://www.dot.ca.gov/trafficops/ice.html>).

Mitigation conditioned as part of a local agency's development approval for improvements to State facilities can be implemented either through a Cooperative Agreement between Caltrans and the lead agency, or by the project proponent entering into an agreement directly with Caltrans for the mitigation. When that occurs, Caltrans will negotiate and execute a Traffic Mitigation Agreement.

### **Right-of-Way**

- Right-of-Way and access rights seem to be depicted correctly. Per Business and Profession Code 8771, perpetuation of survey monuments by a licensed land surveyor is required, if they are being destroyed by any construction.
- Any work performed within Caltrans R/W will require discretionary review and approval by Caltrans and an encroachment permit will be required for any work within the Caltrans R/W prior to construction.

Additional information regarding encroachment permits may be obtained by contacting the Caltrans Permits Office at (619) 688-6158 or by visiting the website at <http://www.dot.ca.gov/trafficops/ep/index.html>. Early coordination with Caltrans is strongly advised for all encroachment permits.

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If you have any questions, please contact Kimberly Dodson, of the Caltrans Development Review Branch, at (619) 688-2510 or by e-mail sent to Kimberly.Dodson@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

electronically signed by

MAURICE EATON, Branch Chief  
Local Development and Intergovernmental Review