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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

January 14, 2020

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STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Lisette Sanchez-Mendoza
Covina, City of
125 East College Street
Covina, CA 91723

RE: 1000 North Azusa Avenue Mixed Use
Development – Notice of Preparation (NOP)
SCH# 2019120104
GTS# 07-LA-2019-02948
Vic. LA-210/PM 39.645 & LA-10/PM 36.571

Dear Lisette Sanchez-Mendoza:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced project. The proposed project a retail shop and three drive through/fast food service businesses on the western 2.92 acres along the Azusa Avenue frontage and 61 single-family detached homes on the eastern and southern 4.99 acres. The retail component of the proposed project would consist of four buildings, totaling 14,000 square feet of floor area, arranged in three distinct building sites. Two sites would contain fast food restaurants with drive-thru service, while the third would contain a fast food restaurant and general retail space. Vehicular access to these commercial uses would be from three drive approaches along the Azusa Avenue frontage, and from an existing driveway along Cypress Street that serves existing fast food businesses on adjacent properties. A total of 158 surface parking spaces would be provided within the three commercial sites. The residential component would consist of 61 single family homes with 122 attached garage parking spaces, 12 driveway spaces, 23 "head-in" spaces along internal driveways, and 7 parallel spaces along the entrance drive. Vehicular access to the 61 homes would be from Cypress Avenue, via a private, gated driveway located between Los Angeles County Fire Station 152 and an existing restaurant site.

The nearest State facility to the proposed project is I-210 and I-10. After reviewing the NOP, Caltrans has the following comments:

Caltrans acknowledges and supports development that ultimately helps California to meet its climate, transportation, and livability goals. However, due to the amount of parking, number of drive throughs, and vehicle-centric site plan, the 1000 North Azusa Avenue Mixed Use Development Project is designed in a way that potentially induces demand for additional vehicle trips. For California to achieve its goals, this demand should be addressed with appropriate design and management principles. Caltrans recommends the following:

- Reducing the amount of parking whenever possible, as research on parking suggests that 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 (VMT), we recommend the implementation of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies as an alternative to building an unnecessary amount of parking.

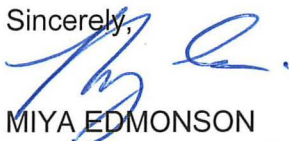
- If surface parking must be built, it is recommended that it not face the street directly. By shifting the parking to the rear or interior of the project site, a more inviting streetscape can be created. A more active frontage, against the sidewalk, can encourage both recreational and transportation walking. These urban design principles can affect mode choice and help the State of California achieve its goals to improve health and reduce Green House Gas (GHG) emissions.
- While the project will contain multiple uses when completed, the lack of connectivity between them means that the goal of "mixing uses" is not achieved. The commercial and residential portions of the project are separated by a six-foot-tall wrought iron fence. It is recommended that a pedestrian pathway be included to connect the residential homes to the goods and services located on the commercial portion of the project site.

When the traffic study is conducted, please include the Azusa Avenue on- and off-ramps to both the I-210 and I-10. The study should include an analysis of potential impacts to existing State transportation facilities, if any. Additionally, Caltrans is replacing Level of Service (LOS) with Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) when evaluating traffic impacts. By July 1, 2020, VMT will be the standard transportation metric for land use projects and new Transportation Impact Study guidelines will be used to analyze and address transportation impacts on the State Transportation System. For any future project we encourage the Lead Agency to integrate transportation and land use in a way that reduces VMT and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by facilitating the provision of more proximate goods and services to shorten trip lengths and achieve a high level of non-motorized travel and transit use. As required by SB 743, Caltrans recommends the Lead Agency develop a verifiable performance-based VMT criteria.

Any transportation of heavy construction equipment and/or materials which requires use of oversized-transport vehicles on State highways will need a Caltrans transportation permit. We recommend large size truck trips be limited to off-peak commute periods.

If you have any questions, please contact project coordinator Anthony Higgins, at anthony.higgins@dot.ca.gov and refer to GTS# 07-LA-2019-02948.

Sincerely,



MIYA EDMONSON

IGR/CEQA Branch Chief

cc: Scott Morgan, State Clearinghouse