

California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 12
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May 25, 2026

Mr. Hayden Beckman
Planning Manager
City of Orange
300 East Chapman Ave.
Orange, CA. 92866

File: LDR/CEQA
SCH: 2000041122
12-ORA-2026-03101
SR-241; PM 33.054
SR-261: PM 5.914

Dear Mr. Beckman,

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the review of the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Refined Orange Heights Project. The Refined Orange Heights Project involves limited modifications to the previously approved Santiago Hills II project. The Project would involve new and amended Vesting Tentative Tract Maps, amended Design Guidelines, and a lot line adjustment that would result in development of 1,058 residential units (a reduction of 122 units); 10.6 acres of park land (an increase of 1.1 acres); approximately 79 acres of open space; an improved trail system; modified lot and street layouts; updated guidelines related to architectural design, home types, and landscape design; minor reduction of the eastern boundary of the Project site adjacent to SR 241/SR-261 primarily associated with removal of improvements within CalTrans right-of-way; and on- and off-site street and utility improvements.

The project site is in the City of Orange, Orange County, California, on approximately 421 acres on a triangular site generally bordered by Irvine Regional Park to the north, Jamboree Road to the west, State Route 241/261 to the east, and bisected by Santiago Canyon Road. State Route 241 and State Route 261 are owned and operated by Caltrans. Therefore, Caltrans is a commenting agency on this project, and has the following comments:

1. 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 network integrated through applicable “smart growth” type land use planning and policies. Additionally, Caltrans supports the City's progress in meeting its Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocation, and we encourage the City to promote the development of housing units for a variety of income levels.


2. Caltrans supports Complete Streets elements that include high-quality pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities that are safe and comfortable for users of all ages and abilities. Improvements may include providing secure bicycle parking, pedestrian-oriented LED lighting, and comfortable connections to nearby active transportation and/or transit facilities. Complete Streets improvements also promote regional connectivity, improve air quality, reduce congestion, promote improved first-/last-mile connections, and increase safety for all modes of transportation.
3. The project is adjacent or close to several existing and planned bicycle facilities. Caltrans therefore recommends the inclusion of secure and functional short-term bike parking. Short-term bike parking at public locations should be placed in visible areas that are close to main destinations and should be installed at least 24” away from walls and other objects (e.g. trash cans, plants, etc.). With the increasing popularity of electric bikes and cargo/utility bikes, bike parking should also be designed to accommodate different styles, sizes, and weights of bikes (e.g. cargo bike, bike with trailer, adult tricycle, etc.).
 - o For additional guidance on bicycle parking best practices, see the “Essentials of Bike Parking” guidance created by the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (link to online PDF: <https://www.apbp.org/Publications>).
4. Please consider the addition of high visibility crosswalks and ADA curb ramps on intersections in or adjacent to the project location that currently lack one or both.
5. Any work performed within Caltrans right-of-way (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. Prior to submitting to Caltrans Permit's branch, applicant should fill out Applicant's Checklist to Determine Applicable Review Process (QMAP List) Form TR-0416 to determine if project oversight/coordination with Caltrans Project Manager is needed. If

coordination is not required, please submit an encroachment permit application package (EPAP) through the Caltrans Encroachment Permit System (CEPS - <https://ceps.dot.ca.gov/>). EPAP should include application, PE signed and stamped site-specific traffic control plan, insurance, letter of authorizations as needed, and any other relevant documents. EPAP should be submitted as early as possible to avoid any delays.

6. Project plans and traffic control plans must be stamped and signed by a licensed engineer. For all plans, including traffic control plans, Caltrans R/W lines should be clearly labeled, which include existing and proposed (if there are any changes to Caltrans R/W), the north arrow, the edge of pavement, and edge of the sidewalk, if applicable. When submitting the application, please include final Environmental Clearance Documentation, relevant design details including design exception approvals and construction and drainage plans, traffic control plans, traffic management plan and traffic impact study if proposed traffic delay of 30 minutes above normal recurring traffic delay is anticipated, any Caltrans R/W certifications if needed, maintenance agreement as needed, shoring plans for any excavation 5-feet or more, ADA certification, and any letter of authorizations.

Caltrans' mission is to improve lives and communities through transportation. Please continue to coordinate with Caltrans for any future developments that could potentially impact State transportation facilities. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Julie Lugaro at Julie.lugaro@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,


[Julie Lugaro \(May 24, 2026 23:50:56 PDT\)](#)

Julie Lugaro for
Scott Shelley
Branch Chief,
LDR-Climate Change-Transit Grants
Caltrans, District 12