

California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 12

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June 4, 2025

Jerry C. Guevara
City of Santa Ana Planning Division
20 Civic Center Drive
Santa Ana, CA 92708

File: LDR/CEQA
SCH#: 2020029087
LDR LOG #2023-02796
I-405, SR-55

Dear Mr. Guevara,

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the review of the Supplemental Environmental Impact Report for The Village Santa Ana Specific Plan Project. The Village Santa Ana Specific Plan Project would provide for redevelopment of the approximately 17.2-acre site with mixed-use commercial and residential, residential only, and commercial only buildings. A central commercial area would include a variety of commercial uses, such as restaurants, a market, and retail uses, with additional commercial uses extending through the ground floor of adjacent residential buildings. Stand-alone residential and mixed-use buildings would provide housing opportunities for residents in the City's South Bristol Street Focus Area. In total, The Village would include up to 1,583 residential units (encompassing approximately 1,850,000 square feet of building space), 80,000 square feet of retail space, 300,000 square feet of office space, and approximately 7.5 acres of publicly accessible open space and common areas. The Specific Plan includes a maximum height of 25 stories with a minimum of 1 story for commercial/office only buildings and no minimum height for residential or mixed-use buildings. Parking would be provided in tower and podium buildings and underground building levels with up to four levels below grade. At full buildout, the project is anticipated to provide a combined 13.8 acres of public and private outdoor and recreation space including approximately 7.5 acres of publicly accessible open space and common areas and 6.3 acres of private outdoor and amenity spaces. Public open spaces at The Village would consist of active spaces, outdoor seating, garden paseos, a fitness loop, and a recreational lawn. Private open space amenities include outdoor balconies and patios, pools and spas, outdoor kitchens, and communal gathering spaces. The proposed project would also include roadway and streetscape modifications and improvements along Sunflower Avenue, Bear Street, and South Plaza Drive in addition to new access points throughout the project site and a bicycle network which includes a new Class IV cycle track along

Sunflower Avenue, and a new Class I bike path along Bear Street. Construction of the proposed project is anticipated to begin January 2026 and could take up to 20 years to complete. Construction of the proposed project would be implemented in a series of five phases to reflect anticipated market conditions and to ensure that access, public facilities, and infrastructure connections are appropriately installed to serve the project. Demolition of the entire project site would occur during the first phase of the construction period. Subsequently, the construction period for each phase would generally include excavation, grading, trenching, pile driving, installation of utilities, building construction, architectural coating, paving activities, and installation of landscaping and hardscape elements for the respective phase. The maximum excavation would reach approximately 52 feet below grade where up to four levels of subterranean parking are proposed. Approximately 420,000 cubic yards of total material would be excavated and likely hauled away from the project site. The nearest state facility to the project site is Interstate 405 (I-405).

The mission of Caltrans is Improving lives and communities through transportation. Caltrans is a reviewing agency on this project and has the following comments:

1. Caltrans supports the design of Complete Streets 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, wayfinding signage, 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. Continue to incorporate Complete Streets in project development.
2. Caltrans supports the inclusion of bicycle storage facilities pursuant to CALGreen code. Caltrans also recommends following bicycle parking best practices described in the "Essentials of Bike Parking" guide created by the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (link to online PDF: <https://www.apbp.org/Publications>). Bike parking should be installed a minimum of 24" away from walls and other objects (e.g., trash cans, plants, etc.). With the growing popularity of electric bikes and cargo/utility bikes (which tend to be bigger and heavier), Caltrans also recommends that bicycle storage facilities be designed to accommodate a range of bicycle styles, sizes, and weights.

3. Truck Parking and Staging Facilities

- The Specific Plan should clarify whether any dedicated off-street truck parking or staging areas will be provided to support commercial and loading functions within The Village.
- Given the project's scale and potential delivery traffic, it is important to ensure on-site truck parking is available and designed with restrooms, lighting, trash facilities, and electric charging stations as encouraged by Caltrans freight guidance.
- Without designated facilities, there is a risk of illegal truck parking in nearby residential or retail areas, which may raise safety and nuisance concerns

4. Freight Loading and Access Infrastructure

The Plan includes multiple loading zones to separate goods movement from pedestrian flows. However, it is recommended that the design ensure:

- Adequate truck turning radii for internal circulation.
- Visibility at loading docks and driveways.
- Clear signage to direct truck drivers and minimize conflicts with pedestrians and cyclists.
- Dedicated loading ramps and dock lengths that do not encroach on pedestrian paths or bicycle lanes.

5. Freight-Related Air Quality and Emissions Measures

- While the SEIR proposes mitigation for construction-phase emissions (e.g., limiting idling, Tier 3/4 equipment), additional operational-phase freight measures should be considered. Specifically, for any anticipated refrigerated vehicles or delivery fleets, the project should ensure availability of electric plug-ins at loading docks to reduce idling.
- The Plan could go further by supporting ZEV (zero-emission vehicle) infrastructure not only for passenger EVs but also for commercial/freight vehicles, consistent with Executive Order B-55-18 and CFMP 2020 goals.

6. Conflict Avoidance with Sensitive Uses and Environmental Justice Communities

- Given the proximity to residential uses and likely high pedestrian volumes, ensure the Specific Plan applies freight-compatible design principles near sensitive receptors (e.g., avoiding truck loading near residential frontages, shielding emissions, and incorporating vegetative buffers).

- Confirm that the project's air quality risk assessments have considered diesel PM impacts from truck activity near AB 617-designated environmental justice communities, as highlighted in Caltrans guidance.

7. Delivery and Package Logistics

- Given the project includes over 1,500 residential units and extensive commercial uses, shared package locker areas or centralized delivery locations should be considered. These reduce VMT from last-mile delivery trucks and support efficient goods movement.

8. Regional Coordination and Truck Route Access

- Clarify if designated STAA truck access routes are available and compatible with project access points. If not, the City should evaluate alternative routing or infrastructure to avoid truck conflicts with smaller local streets or sensitive corridors.
- Encourage coordination with Caltrans District 12 if Bear Street or Sunflower Avenue involves state highway interface, given implications for truck movements and design compatibility.

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 Maryam Molavi, at Maryam.Molavi@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Scott Shelley (Jun 4, 2025 13:27 PDT)

Scott Shelley

Branch Chief – Local Development Review/Climate Change/Transit Grants
District 12