

California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 7
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March 23, 2026

City of Burbank, Community Development Department
Attn: Amanda Landry, Principal Planner
150 North Third Street,
Burbank, CA 91510

RE: Burbank Media District Specific Plan Update –
Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)
SCH # 2023110017
GTS # 07-LA-2023-05017
Vic. LA 134 PM: 1.807
LA 134 PM: 2.151
LA 134 PM: 2.926

Dear Amanda Landry:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above-referenced environmental document. The proposed Project aims to develop implementing policies and programs to remove barriers to housing production, streamline the permitting process, and introduce objective design standards for new development within the Specific Plan Area. Approximately 9,702 residential units, 3,986,207 square feet of commercial and general business development, and 400 hotels rooms are projected under the proposed Project.

The Specific Plan Area is located at the southwestern portion of the City and is approximately 544 acres bounded by the Magnolia Park neighborhood to the north, South Keystone Street east, the Los Angeles River to the south, and the Toluca Lake and Toluca woods neighborhoods to the west. The Specific Plan Area is bisected by State Route 134 (SR 134) and the Metrolink Commuter Rail.

The City identified groupings of underutilized sites within the Specific Plan Area as opportunities for infill and adaptive reuse. These sites are referred to as opportunity sites and would assist in meeting the City's goals of introducing affordable housing, promoting infill development, and catalyzing economic development in proximity to existing employment centers and envisioned transit centers and corridors. Under the proposed project, 125 percent of allowed density could be applied to future development projects that qualify as transit-oriented development or

exceptional project based on City eligible criteria and process, including opportunity sites and 100 percent of allowed non-residential intensity could be applied to all opportunity sites. These allowances could also aid in streamlining the full range of non-residential development options without the need for additional density bonuses as allowed by State laws.

Approximately 212-acres within the Specific Plan Area are zoned as Planned Development with several multi-media studios and are subject to private development agreements. For informational purposes, the number of potential residential units within these areas has been assessed under the "Planned Development" designation. However, these units are not included in the overall development potential under the proposed Project as these properties are regulated through individual development agreements and are not subject to the provisions of the proposed Project update.

The intent of the proposed Project is to guide development in the Specific Plan Area in a way that is appropriate with pre-existing land uses, neighborhoods and infrastructure, and enhance the built environment through well designed buildings. To reflect that the Specific Plan should be a distinct and unified community with a clear vision, the Burbank2035 General Plan Land Use Map would be amended under the proposed Project to reflect just one land use designation for the Specific Plan Area, Media District Land Use. The proposed Project would also include a zone text amendment to Title 10 of the Burbank Municipal Code to incorporate by reference the objective development and design standards established in the proposed Project for zones within the Specific Plan Area.

After reviewing the DEIR, Caltrans has the following comments:

Caltrans aims to provide a safe, reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment. As stated in the DEIR, the proposed project will result in a significant and unavoidable transportation impact due to exceeding Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) impact thresholds. Caltrans concurs that the proposed project creates a significant VMT impact but does not concur that it is unavoidable. An example of this would be how the DEIR discusses pedestrian and bicycle networks. Section 4.15.3 b states that there are no planned bike lanes anywhere within the Specific Plan area. Then, in section 4.15.3 d, after describing the significant VMT impacts, lists "improved bicycle networks" as a proven method to reduce VMT. The reason given for this mitigation measure being unfeasible is that it can only be applied at the project specific level. Implementing an entire network of transportation infrastructure at the project specific level would inevitably face challenges of rough proportionality. The ideal time to establish a multi-modal transportation network is during the adoption of broader area planning efforts, such as a specific plan covering a large area, and including a system of impact fees so that forthcoming development projects can help fund the new infrastructure based on their share of the impact.

The scope and nature of this Specific Plan provides a valuable opportunity to apply proven policies that improve walkability, reduce automobile dependence, and provide a path to housing affordability. In addition to the example and recommendation above, Caltrans recommends the following to more effectively address the significant VMT impact that this project will create as currently proposed:

- Eliminate car parking requirements. Research looking at the relationship between land-use, parking, and transportation indicates that the amount of car parking supplied can undermine a city's ability to encourage public transit and active modes of transportation. The city should instead use this valuable space as an opportunity to build residential, commercial, and office uses in close proximity, thus increasing accessibility and allowing residents to utilize both transit and active modes to meet their everyday transportation needs. To reduce vehicle miles traveled, we recommend eliminating car parking requirements, or even implementing parking maximums, as alternatives to building an unnecessary amount of parking.
- Connect to transit infrastructure. Streetscape and transit stop investments can dramatically improve walkability and encourage transit use.
- Protect vulnerable road users. The most effective methods to reduce pedestrian and bicyclist exposure to vehicles is through physical design and geometrics. These methods include the construction of physically separated facilities such as Class IV bike lanes, wide sidewalks, pedestrian refuge islands, landscaping, street furniture, and reductions in crossing distances through roadway narrowing.
- Prepare for adaptive reuse. This reduces wasteful demolition of single-use developments and improves the public realm for residents and visitors alike.
- Provide bicycle parking at employee locations throughout the Specific Plan Area.
- Provide car parking cash-out programs at employee locations throughout the Specific Plan Area.
- Provide car-sharing, bike-sharing, ride-sharing programs, and transit passes to employees at employer locations throughout the Specific Plan Area.
- Improve or increase transit accessibility and service to employer locations throughout the Specific Plan Area.
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle networks throughout the Specific Plan Area.
- Provide traffic calming features on City roadways throughout the Specific Plan Area.
- Clear identification of features when addressing bicycle infrastructure. Several of the policies use "attractive" as the first descriptor of a complete street or an ideal non-vehicular facility. While aesthetics can play a role in community buy in, this wording gives the impression that pedestrian features will be implemented secondary to beautification.
- Provide acceptable on-site bicycle parking for at least one bicycle per dwelling unit. This project location is very near to several connections to the LA river as well as potential new bicycle facilities along Forest Lawn.
- Please consider well lit, off-roadway entry points for cyclists to approach retail facilities. A

dedicated entrance via wide sidewalk or multi-use area may reduce potential conflict points.

- Wayfinding signage throughout the Plan area to better direct potential traffic to and from the nearest entry point of the LA River and other bike/pedestrian infrastructure.
- Explain how the Burbank media district will interact with and utilize bus rapid transit and mobility hub efforts proposed by Metro through this region.
- Griffith Park was mentioned in relation to its visual aesthetic, wildfire risk and slope erosion. It may also be beneficial to highlight any trail connectivity this project adds. Including any proposed connectivity near Pollywog Park.

If any future project submittal includes an updated transportation impact study, geometric analysis, operational evaluation, or safety data related to freeway facilities, please ensure the following Key Safety Concerns are fully addressed and included:

- Access Management & Conflict Points: Review driveway spacing, intersection spacing, merge/weave zones, and potential conflict points at State Highway System (SHS) access points.
- Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety: Include TPAR/TBAR compliance, safe crossings, ADA accommodations, and VRU (vulnerable road users) connectivity near SHS facilities.
- Speed Management & Lane Reconfigurations: Confirm that any lane configuration changes or speed limit reductions are consistent with Caltrans safety standards and mitigate crash risk.
- Freeway Ramp Queuing: Evaluate potential queue spillback onto freeway mainline and conduct a queuing analysis per Appendix B of the LDR Safety Review Guidance.
- Mitigation Consistency: Ensure proposed mitigations prioritize VRU safety, incorporate FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures, and are consistent with SHSP challenge areas noted in the LDR Safety Review Practitioner's Guidance.

Caltrans planners and engineers are available to partner on implementing design elements that improve safety and mobility for people walking, riding bikes, or taking transit throughout the project area.

Caltrans District 7 Office of Complete Streets contact information:

Central Responsibility Area - Nick Carmona
Phone: (213) 808-4826 | Email: nick.carmona@dot.ca.gov

Please be aware that Caltrans encroachment permits will be required at all locations where Project work interacts with State ROW. This includes any grading, topography, or equipment work that will change the pattern or direction of water runoff in a way that will impact State facilities or ROW.

A condition of approval for issued entitlements shall include a requirement to work with Caltrans' Office of Permits to obtain the appropriate encroachment permits. Final design requirements

for any proposed changes to infrastructure within or along Caltrans Right-of-way will be determined by the Office of Permits. At the time of permit application there will be rounds of review and corrections to ensure all design, Right-of-way, access management, water runoff, environmental, and statutory requirements are being addressed.

Caltrans District 7 Office of Permits contact information:

Mailing Address: 100 S Main Street, Ste 100 Los Angeles, CA 90012

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday

Phone: 213-897-3631 | Fax: 213-897-0420 | E-mail: D7.Permits@dot.ca.gov

If you have any questions, please contact project coordinator Anthony Higgins, at anthony.higgins@dot.ca.gov and refer to GTS# 07-LA-2023-05017.

Sincerely,

Anthony Higgins

Anthony Higgins

Acting LDR Branch Chief

Cc: State Clearinghouse