

California Department of Transportation

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January 26, 2026

Jocelyn Swain, Senior Planner
Community Development Department
City of Lancaster
44933 Fern Avenue
Lancaster, CA 93534

RE: Parkway Village Specific Plan
SCH # 2024020979
Vic. LA-14/PM R65.676 to R66.743
GTS # LA-2024-04995-FEIR

Dear Jocelyn Swain:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above-referenced environmental document (Response to Comment). Our goal is to continue working cooperatively with the City to ensure that the document fully complies with CEQA and that the State Highway System remains safe for all users.

We have reviewed and have the following comments.

1. Caltrans' comment letter dated November 7, 2025 is the Department's formal position.
2. Caltrans would like to note for record that Caltrans' concerns remain, particularly with respect to regional VMT, SHS impacts, and safety considerations.
3. Caltrans will continue to coordinate with the City to review individual projects as proposed, where project-specific analysis, discretionary approvals, and encroachment permitting will provide appropriate forums to address these issues in more detail.
4. In the Response to Comments, Section A03-2 states that the entire Plan area is located in a low VMT area and is therefore screened out from a detailed VMT analysis. Section A03-3 further mentions that as individual development projects are submitted, additional project-specific traffic studies such as LTA, VMT, and queuing may be required at the discretion of the City's traffic engineer to determine necessary roadway improvements. It is unclear how the City will request a VMT analysis when the entire Plan area has been screened out due to its designation as a low VMT area.

5. Using a "low VMT area" designation to bypass detailed VMT analysis is problematic for a project of this scope, as it overlooks potential significant changes in regional VMT caused by the project itself. The Specific Plan's size suggests future traffic volumes may rise, impacting regional transportation infrastructure and safety. Early detailed VMT assessments are crucial to identify and mitigate potential traffic and safety concerns proactively. This approach ensures the Specific Plan supports sustainable development while maintaining State Highway System safety. Caltrans urges the City to conduct comprehensive VMT analyses to uphold transportation network integrity and public safety.
6. As documented in our March 26, 2024 NOP letter and November 7, 2025 DEIR letter, Caltrans has consistently requested queuing analysis at freeway ramps such as those at I-14 and Avenue K, and I-14 and W Ave L intersections, where the Specific Plan's build-out trips would increase turning movements, change circulation patterns, or add project trips. Our major concern is the risk of rear-end collisions resulting from off-ramp spillback onto the freeway mainline at the build-out year. These requests remain unaddressed in the FEIR. The purpose of a Specific Plan is to clearly disclose the scope and consequences of future development so that decision-makers can make informed choices.
7. Furthermore, the environmental document must transparently evaluate potential safety concerns such as off-ramp queuing to determine whether improvements may be needed. Foreseeable effects include not only changes in traffic volumes but also potential safety impacts, particularly at nearby freeway off-ramps that connect the State Highway System to the local roadway network. This disclosure allows agencies to understand whether future development could create unsafe conditions, ensuring that mitigation measures or infrastructure upgrades can be planned early rather than after safety problems materialize.
8. When the land use is identified in the Specific Plan, such as 4,246 residential units, 130 hotel rooms, 750,000 square feet of commercial/office space, a 200-bed hospital and 500,000 square feet of medical-related uses, 8.7 acres of schools, and 27.8 acres of parks, as well as a potential transit hub serving the site and broader area, trip generation, trip assignment to the State facilities, and queuing analysis can all be prepared. This will ensure that decision-makers can make informed decisions to mitigate future impacts as early as possible.

Caltrans remains fully committed to working collaboratively with the City to identify any reasonable safety risks and to develop feasible solutions where appropriate. Our shared goal is to support the City's long-range planning vision while ensuring that public can travel safely. Proper early disclosure and coordination will help protect the public, reduce future conflicts, and result in a stronger, more resilient Specific Plan.

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If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mr. Alan Lin, the project coordinator, at (213) 269-1124 and refer to GTS # LA-2024-04995-FEIR.

Sincerely,

Anthony Higgins

Anthony Higgins
Acting LDR Branch Chief

email: State Clearinghouse

Attachment #1, NOP Letter
Attachment #2, DPEIR Letter
Attachment #3, FEIR email
Attachment #4, November 19 Meeting Agenda
Attachment #5, November 18 Caltrans Signal Timing email