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Making Conservation a California Way of Life

August 4, 2025

Carlos Rojas, Senior Planner
Community Development, Room 12
City of Norwalk
12700 Norwalk Boulevard
Norwalk, CA 90650

RE: Heart of Norwalk Specific Plan
SCH # 2024040140
Vic. LA-5/PM 3.972, LA-105/PM R18.04, LA-605/PM R7.88
GTS # LA-2024-04840-DPEIR

Dear Carlos Rojas:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above-referenced environmental document. The Proposed Plan includes the adoption and implementation of the Heart of Norwalk Specific Plan, including proposed zone changes and *General Plan* amendments. Buildout of the Proposed Plan by 2051 will result in 3,087 residential units and a net increase of 2,285,418 square feet of residential development, 275,747 square feet reduction in commercial uses,18,310 square feet reduction in industrial uses, and 53,011 square feet reduction in institutional uses. The Plan does assume 173,250 square feet of new commercial development will be constructed over the course of the planning horizon. There would be a net reduction in nonresidential square footage as the existing commercial, industrial and institutional uses are replaced with new uses.

The Proposed Plan includes changes to the General Plan, zoning, and street types to support new mixed-use development and improve how people travel in and around the area. From Caltrans' perspective, the Plan introduces a mix of roads—from freeways to local streets—that are designed to support driving, biking, walking, and public transit. Key areas like the Front Street Historic District, Town Square, and Triangle District include features like wider sidewalks, bike lanes, traffic calming, and better connections to buses, trains, and trails. The area is part of a High-Quality Transit Corridor and a regional planning area that focuses on linking housing and transportation. Based on our review, the Proposed Plan does not appear to conflict with existing transportation plans or policies and generally supports safer, more connected, and more sustainable travel options. We

encourage the City to work closely with LA Metro and other transportation agencies for roads and transit services that they manage.

The transportation impacts of the Proposed Plan have been carefully reviewed using the latest state and county guidelines. Since the City of Norwalk has not adopted its own Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) thresholds, the analysis followed Los Angeles County standards. The results show that the Proposed Plan would actually reduce VMT compared to current conditions and future projections. Specifically, the existing countywide VMT per service population is 17.2, and the Plan Area with the Proposed Plan is forecasted at 13.7—about 20% lower. For the year 2040, the VMT is expected to drop even further to 12.1. This means people are expected to travel fewer miles by car, partly because the Plan supports walking, biking, and transit use. Features like affordable housing, bike lanes, and reduced parking near transit help support this trend. Based on this data, the Plan meets the CEQA threshold of significance (14.3), and the VMT impact is considered less than significant, so we concur that no mitigation is needed if the City is able to achieve expected VMT.

The Circulation Element of the General Plan outlines goals, objectives, and policies guiding the development and operation of the City's circulation system. Of particular relevance to the Proposed Plan is Goal 3, which seeks to establish a circulation system that maximizes efficiency through the application of transportation system management (TSM) and transportation demand management (TDM) strategies. In support of this goal, Policy 3.4 encourages the implementation of employer-based TDM measures, consistent with the City's adopted TDM ordinance and the Southern California Air Quality Management District's Regulation 15 Program.

As noted in Caltrans' comment letter dated May 3, 2024, safety and multi-modal conflict analyses were requested for several key intersections near State facilities. However, based on the environmental documents provided to date, it appears that detailed safety evaluations—such as queuing analyses—have not been performed for the intersections listed in the letter. These include:

- I-5/Imperial Highway
- I-5/San Antonio Drive
- I-5/Rosecrans Avenue
- I-105/Studebaker Road
- I-605/Firestone Boulevard
- I-605/Imperial Highway
- I-605/Rosecrans Avenue

Given the scale of the Heart of Norwalk Specific Plan and its potential impacts on circulation and land use, Caltrans recommends a safety analysis such as queuing analysis with existing signal timing be prepared at above intersections providing access to the State Highway System. These locations may see increased volumes and turning movements under buildout conditions, raising the risk of spillback onto freeway off-ramps. When impacts are identified, this analysis would determine mitigation measures such as signal timing adjustments, intersection modifications, Transportation System Management (TSM), or additional TDM strategies consistent with Caltrans' *Transportation Demand Management Toolbox*:

https://transportationplanning.onramp.dot.ca.gov/downloads/transportationplanning/files/regionalplanning/Final%20Draft%202023%20LDR%20TDM%20Toolbox%20071923.pdf

Please be reminded that any work performed within the State Right-of-way will require an Encroachment Permit from Caltrans. Any modifications to State facilities must meet all mandatory design standard and specifications.

Oversized vehicle transport on State highways requires a Caltrans transportation permit. Large truck trips should be limited to off-peak hours during construction and operation. All construction loads must be tarped. A truck and construction traffic management plan may be required for projects near I-5 on/off-ramps, and any lane closures or detours impacting freeway access must be coordinated with Caltrans.

Stormwater runoff is a sensitive issue in Los Angeles County. Projects must ensure clean runoff discharge and are prohibited from discharging stormwater onto State highway facilities without an approved management plan.

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-2024-04840-DPEIR.

Sincerely,

Miya Edmonson

MIYA EDMONSON
LDR/CEQA Branch Chief

email: State Clearinghouse