

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**DISTRICT 7**

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May 15, 2025

Alejandrina Baldwin, Principal Planner
LA County Planning, Subdivision Section
320 West Temple Street, 13th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Bouquet Canyon Residential Project
– Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft
Environmental Impact Report
SCH# 2025040338
GTS #07-LA-2025-04786

Dear Alejandrina Baldwin,

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the review process for the above referenced project. The Project proposes to create 323 lots, including 281 residential lots, 33 Homeowner Association ("HOA") lots, four water quality basin lots, three L.A. County Flood Control lots, one water tank lot, and one Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency lot, on 328.7 gross acres. The development is organized into three areas as follows:

Area 1 has 75 residential lots and is located west of Bouquet Canyon Road.

Area 2 has 48 residential lots and is located north of Vasquez Canyon Road.

Area 3 has 158 residential lots and is located south of Vasquez Canyon Road.

The Project Site is accessible via Bouquet Canyon Road and Vasquez Canyon Road, which are both Limited Secondary Highways on the County Master Plan of Highways. Vasquez Canyon Road is currently 60-feet-wide and will be widened to 80-feet. Bouquet Canyon Road is currently 40-feet-wide and will be widened to 80-feet. Area 1 will be accessed from Bouquet Canyon Road through Riley Street which will be renamed and widened to 60-feet and will connect to various interior 60-feet-wide public streets. Area 2 and 3 will both be accessed from Vasquez Canyon Road, through two new interior 60-foot-wide streets that connect to various interior 60-foot-wide public streets.

The Project includes the following entitlements: an Administrative Housing Permit for the maintenance of 15 affordable set-aside units provided at a maximum affordability of 135% Area Median Income or less and in compliance with the Inclusionary Housing

"Provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment."

Ordinance; a Conditional Use Permit for development within a Hillside Management Area, density-controlled development, and grading over 100,000 cubic yards ("cy") of earthwork; and an oak tree permit for the encroachment into the protected zone of two oak trees.

After reviewing the NOP, Caltrans has the following comments:

Currently, the project is designed in a way that induces a high number of vehicle trips per household due to being a low density, exclusively residential, car-oriented development. The proposed project extends the exurban area and sprawls into the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) as designated by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP), increasing wildfire risks in addition to the significant Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) impacts. The Lead Agency is encouraged to integrate transportation and land uses in a way that reduces VMT and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by facilitating the provision of more proximate goods and services to shorten trip lengths and achieve a high level of non-motorized travel and transit use. Building and zoning for a better balance between housing and employment opportunities can help mitigate commuting distances and create compact, walkable communities. Caltrans recommends the following to more effectively address the significant VMT impact that this project will create as currently proposed:

- Provide for a mixture of land use types within the Project's new zoning area to allow for adaptive reuse in the future. This can allow goods, services, and jobs to be created closer to where the project's residents live.
- Increase density, both vertically and horizontally. Land use developments, like the one proposed, should not sprawl across huge areas of land. By bringing the built environment closer together, and building up instead of out, it becomes possible to greatly reduce energy use, improve walkability, allow for adaptive reuse, and generate real value for the community.
- Reduce the amount of car parking whenever possible, as abundant car parking enables and encourages driving. Research looking at the relationship between land-use, parking, and transportation indicates that the amount of car parking supplied can undermine a project's ability to encourage public transit and active modes of transportation. For any project to better promote public transit and reduce vehicle miles traveled, we recommend the implementation of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies as an alternative to building too much parking.

- Rates of car ownership and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) are significantly less for lower-income households. Seeing as this project includes affordable housing, there is sufficient justification to reduce the amount of car parking provided even further. This can help the project promote greater affordability and help achieve regional housing and transportation goals.
- There should be no more than one car parking space per unit, and at least one long-term bicycle parking space per unit.
- Provide multiple on-site transportation hubs and work with local transit operators to provide high quality service to nearby destinations and the Metrolink Antelope Valley Line stations (Santa Clarita and/or Via Princessa).
- Ensure robust Wi-Fi availability to all units to encourage teleworking.
- Gated developments divide communities, limit transportation choices, and increase VMT. For these reasons they should be avoided. If walls are still to be allowed, numerous gates and access points should be provided for people walking or riding bicycles to be able to reach their homes and other destinations easily.
- Due to the potential for a significant VMT impact, a contribution could be made to the Lead Agency's VMT Mitigation Fund (if established) with the purpose of funding safer infrastructure for people walking, riding bikes, and taking transit throughout the Project area. The most effective methods to reduce pedestrian and bicyclist exposure to cars and trucks 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.
- Additional alternative mitigation measures should be considered and implemented to reduce the impact on VMT, as reducing the project's potential impacts are critical to developing infrastructure that is both environmentally and economically sustainable. Following construction, a study should be conducted to confirm that the design and proposed mitigation measures are sufficiently offsetting the Project's generated VMT. If not, new and/or additional mitigation measures need to be implemented.

By implementing these recommendations, the Bouquet Canyon Residential Project can enhance regional connectivity, improve safety for all users, reduce VMT, and support sustainable transportation choices.

Additionally, construction of the proposed project would involve deliveries of materials, components, and supplies to the various sites, and will involve oversized trucks. As a result, prior to issuance of building or grading permits for the project site, the applicant shall prepare a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) for review and approval by Lead Agency staff to reduce any impacts to less than significant levels. The CTMP needs to specify the duration of construction period and provide construction analysis on significant impacts due to increase in construction truck traffic on highways not designated as truck routes. It should also specify any work that would affect the freeways and its facilities, and that Caltrans has the jurisdiction for review and approval. Transportation of heavy construction equipment and/or materials, which requires the use of oversized-transport vehicles on State highways, will require a transportation permit from Caltrans.

If you have any questions, please contact project coordinator Anthony Higgins, at anthony.higgins@dot.ca.gov and refer to GTS #07-LA-2025-04786.

Sincerely,



Miya Edmonson
LDR Branch Chief

Cc: State Clearinghouse