

## California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 11  
4050 TAYLOR STREET, MS-240  
SAN DIEGO, CA 92110  
(619) 985-1587 | FAX (619) 688-4299 TTY 711  
[www.dot.ca.gov](http://www.dot.ca.gov)



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11-SD-SR-52, SR-67, SR-125

PM VAR

City of Santee Land Use Element Update

NOP/SCH#2025051050

Ms. Madeline Mattson  
Principal Planner  
City of Santee  
10601 Magnolia Avenue  
Santee, CA 92071

Dear Ms. Mattson:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the City of Santee Land Use Element Update, located near State Routes 52, 67 and 125 (SR-52, SR-67, and SR-125) in Santee. The mission of Caltrans is to provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment. The Local Development Review (LDR) Program reviews land use projects and plans to ensure consistency with our mission and state planning priorities.

Safety is one of Caltrans' strategic goals. Caltrans strives to make the year 2050 the first year without a single death or serious injury on California's roads. We are striving for more equitable outcomes for the transportation network's diverse users. To achieve these ambitious goals, we will pursue meaningful collaboration with our partners. We encourage the implementation of new technologies, innovations, and best practices that will enhance the safety on the transportation network. These pursuits are both ambitious and urgent, and their accomplishment involves a focused departure from the status quo as we continue to institutionalize safety in all our work.

Caltrans is committed to prioritizing projects that are equitable and provide meaningful benefits to historically underserved communities, to ultimately improve transportation accessibility and quality of life for people in the communities we serve.

We look forward to working with the City in areas where the City and Caltrans have joint jurisdiction to improve the transportation network and connections between

various modes of travel, with the goal of improving the experience of those who use the transportation system.

Caltrans has the following comments:

### **Traffic Impact Study**

- New developments resulting from the City of Santee Land Use Element Update should provide a Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT) based Traffic Impact Study (TIS) and local mobility analysis should be provided for future projects. Please use the Governor's Office of Planning and Research Guidance to identify VMT related impacts.<sup>1</sup>
- The TIS may also need to identify the proposed project's near-term and long-term safety or operational issues, on or adjacent any existing or proposed State facilities.
- The Draft EIR needs to include a safety review that follows the Caltrans "Local Development Review (LDR) Safety Review Practitioner's Guidance"  
<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/safety-programs/documents/202402-ldr-safety-review-practitioners-guidance-a11y.pdf>.

### **Complete Streets and Mobility Network**

Caltrans views all transportation improvements as opportunities to improve safety, access and mobility for all travelers in California and recognizes bicycle, pedestrian and transit modes as integral elements of the transportation network. Caltrans supports improved transit accommodation through the provision of Park and Ride facilities, improved bicycle and pedestrian access and safety improvements, signal prioritization for transit, bus on shoulders, ramp improvements, or other enhancements that promotes a complete and integrated transportation network. Early coordination with Caltrans, in locations that may affect both Caltrans and the City of Santee is encouraged.

To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and achieve California's Climate Change target, Caltrans is implementing Complete Streets and Climate Change policies into State Highway Operations and Protection Program (SHOPP) projects to meet multi-modal mobility needs. Caltrans looks forward to working with the City to evaluate potential Complete Streets projects.

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<sup>1</sup> California Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) 2018. "Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA." [https://opr.ca.gov/docs/20190122-743\\_Technical\\_Advisory.pdf](https://opr.ca.gov/docs/20190122-743_Technical_Advisory.pdf)

Bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit access during construction is important. Mitigation to maintain bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit access during construction is in accordance with Caltrans' goals and policies.

### **Land Use and Smart Growth**

Caltrans recognizes there is a strong link between transportation and land use. Development can have a significant impact on traffic and congestion on State transportation facilities. In particular, the pattern of land use can affect both local vehicle miles traveled and the number of trips. Caltrans supports collaboration with local agencies to work towards a safe, functional, interconnected, multi-modal transportation network integrated through applicable "smart growth" type land use planning and policies.

The City should continue to coordinate with Caltrans to implement necessary improvements at intersections and interchanges where the agencies have joint jurisdiction.

### **Noise**

The applicant must be informed that in accordance with 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 772, the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is not responsible for existing or future traffic noise impacts associated with the existing configuration of SR-52, SR-67 and SR-125.

### **Environmental**

Caltrans welcomes the opportunity to be a Responsible Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as we have some discretionary authority of a portion of the project that is in Caltrans' Right-of-Way (R/W) through the form of an encroachment permit process. We look forward to the coordination of our efforts to ensure that Caltrans can adopt the alternative and/or mitigation measure for our R/W. We would appreciate meeting with you to discuss the elements of the Environmental Document that Caltrans will use for our subsequent environmental compliance.

An encroachment permit will be required for any work within the Caltrans' R/W prior to construction. As part of the encroachment permit process, the applicant must provide approved final environmental documents for this project, corresponding technical studies, and necessary regulatory and resource agency permits. Specifically, CEQA determination or exemption. The supporting documents must address all environmental impacts within the Caltrans' R/W and address any impacts from avoidance and/or mitigation measures.

We recommend that this project specifically identifies and assesses potential impacts caused by the project or impacts from mitigation efforts that occur within Caltrans' R/W that includes impacts to the natural environment, infrastructure including but not limited to highways, roadways, structures, intelligent transportation systems elements, on-ramps and off-ramps, and appurtenant features including but not limited to fencing, lighting, signage, drainage, guardrail, slopes and landscaping. Caltrans is interested in any additional mitigation measures identified for the project's draft Environmental Document.

Should future projects based upon the changes enacted from the General Plan have elements and/or mitigation measures that affect Caltrans' Right-of-Way, Caltrans would welcome the opportunity to be a Responsible Agency under CEQA.

### **Sustainability**

The City of Santee Climate Action Plan (CAP) contains several actions and strategies that align with Caltrans' responsibilities and priorities. Caltrans recommends collaboration between our agency and the City of Santee on the proposed transportation related topics including adaptation strategies to help improve the City's resilience to potential climate change impacts and strategies to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and off-road and on-road greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Caltrans recognizes that transportation is a leading contributor to GHG emissions in the region and is dedicated to reducing and mitigating transportation related emissions. We recommend collaborating with Caltrans on the following measures such as increasing the use of zero emission vehicles, installing electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, identifying R/W areas to be used for carbon sequestration, and complete streets.

The existing climate hazards discussed in this document will have an impact of the transportation system. We recommend working with Caltrans on determining the preventative strategies the Caltrans can take to keep roadways operational and ensure their longevity against climate stressors such as increased temperatures, changes in precipitation patterns, wildfire, and flooding. Caltrans recognizes the central role that transportation planning plays in safety and ensuring that when these natural hazards do occur, citizens have a reliable evacuation route.

### **Broadband**

Caltrans recognizes that teleworking and remote learning lessen the impacts of traffic on our roadways and surrounding communities. This reduces the amount of VMT and decreases the amount of GHG emissions and other pollutants. The availability of affordable and reliable, high-speed broadband is a key component in supporting

travel demand management and reaching the state's transportation and climate action goals.

### **Mitigation**

Caltrans endeavors that any direct and cumulative impacts to the State Highway network be eliminated or reduced to a level of insignificance pursuant to the CEQA and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) standards.

### **Right-of-Way**

Per Business and Profession Code 8771, perpetuation of survey monuments by a licensed land surveyor is required, if they are being destroyed by any construction.

Any work performed within Caltrans' R/W will require discretionary review and approval by Caltrans and an encroachment permit will be required for any work within the Caltrans' R/W prior to construction.

For individual projects that may be included in the Program EIR and have impacts to Caltrans' R/W additional information regarding encroachment permits may be obtained by visiting the website at <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/ep>. Projects with the following:

- require a Caltrans Encroachment Permit
- have completed the Caltrans Local Development Review (LDR) process
- have an approved environmental document

need to have documents submitted for Quality Management Assessment Process (QMAP) process via email to [D11.QMAP.Permits@dot.ca.gov](mailto:D11.QMAP.Permits@dot.ca.gov). Early coordination with Caltrans is strongly advised for all encroachment permits.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Mark McCumsey, LDR Coordinator, at (619) 985-4957 or by e-mail sent to [mark.mccumsey@dot.ca.gov](mailto:mark.mccumsey@dot.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

*Kimberly D. Dodson*

KIMBERLY D. DODSON, GISP  
Branch Chief  
Local Development Review