

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DISTRICT 7

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*Making Conservation
a California Way of Life*

November 19, 2025

Kim Bobic, Senior Project Manager
Judicial Council of California; facilities Services
2860 Gateway Oak Drive, Suite 400
Sacramento, CA 95833-3409

RE: New Santa Clarita Courthouse
SCH # 2025101327
Vic. LA-05/PM R52.45
GTS # LA-2025-04941-NOP

Dear Kim Bobic:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above-referenced NOP. The existing Santa Clarita Courthouse is an approximately 32,000-square-foot County-owned courthouse located in the City. The building is a single-story structure with a partial basement.

The Judicial Council is proposing to construct a new, eight-story (plus basement), 24-courtroom (eight large courtrooms, 15 multipurpose courtrooms, and one arraignment courtroom) courthouse of approximately 278,000 building gross square feet using a design-build delivery method. The new courthouse would contain the following component areas: Public area – Lobby, Security Screening; 24 courtrooms; Judges' chambers and courtroom support; Court operations; Clerk's office; Family Court services; Alternative Dispute Resolution services; Self Help area; Administration and Information Technology offices; Jury services; Sheriff area; Central in-custody holding area, including vehicle and pedestrian Sallyports; and Building Support areas. The new courthouse building would be constructed toward the northwest of the parcel, with parking to the east and south, including up to a 4-level parking garage towards the south of the parcel. The Project would include approximately 298 parking spaces for staff and the public, including jury parking, and a secured parking area of 32 additional parking spaces for judicial officers, executive staff, and law enforcement in the basement of the courthouse building.

The mission of Caltrans is to provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment. Senate Bill 743 (2013) has codified into CEQA law and mandated that CEQA review of transportation impacts of proposed development be modified by using Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as the primary metric in identifying transportation impacts for all future development projects. You may reference the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) for more information:

<https://opr.ca.gov/ceqa/#guidelines-updates>

As a reminder, VMT is the standard transportation analysis metric in CEQA for land use projects after July 1, 2020, which is the statewide implementation date.

Caltrans is aware of the challenges that the region faces in identifying viable solutions to alleviating congestion on State and Local facilities. With limited room to expand vehicular capacity, this development should incorporate multi-modal and complete streets transportation elements that will actively promote alternatives to car use and better manage existing parking assets. Prioritizing and allocating space to efficient modes of travel such as bicycling and public transit can allow streets to transport more people in a fixed amount of right-of-way.

Caltrans supports the implementation of complete streets and pedestrian safety measures such as road diets and other traffic calming measures. Please note the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recognizes the road diet treatment as a proven safety countermeasure, and the cost of a road diet can be significantly reduced if implemented in tandem with routine street resurfacing. Overall, the environmental report should ensure all modes are served well by planning and development activities. This includes reducing single occupancy vehicle trips, ensuring safety, reducing vehicle miles traveled, supporting accessibility, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Also, Caltrans has published the VMT-focused Transportation Impact Study Guide (TISG), dated May 20, 2020 and the Local Development Review (LDR) Safety Review Practitioner's Guidance, prepared in February 2024. You can review the SB 743 Implementation Resource at the following link:

<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/sustainability/sb-743/resources>

Based on the increased size of the project compared to the existing building usage, distance to the State facilities, and potential safety impact from the assigned project trips, the following interchanges could be impacted by the proposed plan/development:

- a. I-5/Valencia Blvd.
- b. I-5/Magic Mountain Pkwy.

For the above State facilities, Caltrans would like to review traffic safety impact analysis (such as queuing analysis) for this development in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review process using Caltrans guidelines on the State facilities so that, through partnerships and collaboration, California can reach zero fatalities and serious injuries by 2050.

A queuing analysis should be conducted to ensure there are no safety-related impacts. This analysis should evaluate off-ramps to confirm that vehicle queues do not extend onto the mainline, which could compromise freeway safety and traffic flow. Additionally, turning pockets at intersections should be assessed to verify that queue lengths do not exceed available storage capacity, preventing potential spillover that could obstruct through traffic. Existing signal timing should be used for the Existing condition.

If the project is expected to generate pedestrian and/or bicycle activity, a multi-modal conflict analysis should be performed. This analysis should evaluate potential conflicts between various transportation modes, including biking, walking, bus, and transit, to ensure safe and efficient integration of all users within the project area.

The project should incorporate Complete Streets elements to enhance accessibility and safety for all users. These improvements should include ADA-compliant curb ramps, continuous sidewalks, dedicated bike lanes, high-visibility crosswalks, Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS), and Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPI) where applicable.

If the project is determined to have significant transportation impacts, appropriate mitigation measures should be implemented. These may include Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips and encourage alternative transportation modes, as well as Transportation System Management (TSM) improvements to optimize traffic flow and enhance the efficiency of existing transportation infrastructure.

Kim Bobic, Senior Project Manager

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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-2025-04941-NOP.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Miya Edmonson". The script is cursive and fluid.

MIYA EDMONSON
LDR/CEQA Branch Chief

Cc: State Clearinghouse