

California Department of Transportation

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March 5, 2026

Alfonso Hernandez, City Planner
Planning Division
City of Bell Gardens
7100 Garfield Avenue
Bell Gardens, CA 90201

RE: The City of Bell Gardens Transit Oriented
Communities (TOC) Specific Plan
SCH # 2026020229
Vic. LA-710 & LA-5 Citywide
GTS # LA-2026-05014-MND

Dear Alfonso Hernandez:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above-referenced project. The proposed TOC Specific Plan is a City initiative to promote affordable, transit-oriented, and safe neighborhoods. It aims to improve connectivity between disadvantaged communities and key destinations such as transit centers, schools, parks, and commercial areas, while enhancing safety for residents and active transportation users. The Plan identifies five opportunity districts for new housing (up to 406 units), commercial spaces, parks, and public realm improvements, strengthening connections to neighboring cities and expanding the active transportation network. It sets goals, infrastructure upgrades, and zoning changes to guide future development within the Specific Plan Area.

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.

The Project Site is located approximately 0.6 miles from I-710, offering vehicular access to Alhambra and Long Beach via Florence Avenue. The site is within a transit priority area, defined as within half a mile of a high-quality transit corridor or major transit stop per PRC Section 21155. LA Metro Bus Route 111 provides east-west public transit service with multiple stops in the City along Florence Avenue. The future Southeast Gateway Line will further enhance regional connectivity, with the Florence/Salt Lake Station planned 2.8 miles west of the site by 2035. Recreational amenities along the Los Angeles, Rio Hondo, and San Gabriel Rivers provide multi-use trails for non-motorized connections.

Existing pedestrian infrastructure is present along Florence Avenue, Garfield Avenue, and Florence Place. The Project will not impair current sidewalks or transit services and will introduce pedestrian enhancements, including street trees, lighting, improved signal timing, crosswalks, and pedestrian walkways. The Project is consistent with adopted policies, plans, and programs regarding alternative transportation and does not conflict with the General Plan.

The Project is located within a transit priority area, defined as within one half-mile of a high-quality transit corridor or major transit stop per PRC Section 21155. The City has not adopted VMT standards; therefore, the Los Angeles County Transportation Impact Analysis Guidelines are applied. LA Metro Bus Route 111 operates along Florence Avenue, providing frequent service with approximately 10-minute headways during weekday peak periods. Based on the County's transit screening criteria and the

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Project's location, the Project is screened out from further VMT analysis and is presumed to have a less than significant transportation impact under CEQA.

The Project proposes integrated transit, pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular improvements along Florence Avenue, Florence Place, and Garfield Avenue, establishing a safe, multi-modal transportation network. These conceptual enhancements will be refined during future development and will complement existing and planned circulation systems. All future developments will adhere to City requirements and permitting processes to maintain traffic flow and access. The Project avoids design features that could create traffic safety hazards or incompatible land uses. Therefore, potential impacts related to design hazards are considered less than significant and do not require mitigation.

Any transportation of heavy construction equipment and/or materials that require the use of oversized transport vehicles on State highways will need a Caltrans transportation permit. Any large-size truck trips should be limited to off-peak commute periods for the construction phase and operation phase. Construction truck loads should be covered with a tarpaulin cover.

Storm water run-off is a sensitive issue for Los Angeles County. Please be mindful that projects should be designed to discharge clean run-off water.

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-2026-05014-MND.

Sincerely,



Anthony Higgins
Acting LDR Branch Chief

email: State Clearinghouse