

California Department of Transportation

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April 9, 2026

City of Downey
Swati Meshram, Deputy Community Development Director-Planning
11111 Brookshire Avenue
Downey, CA, 90241

RE: Downey 2045 General Plan Update and Zoning
Text and Map Amendments
SCH # 2026030591
GTS # 07-LA-2026-05042

Dear Swati Meshram:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above-referenced environmental document. The Project proposes a comprehensive General Plan Update and associated Zoning Map and Zoning Text Amendments. The 2045 planning horizon for the Planning Area is estimated to result in increases of approximately 10,350 dwelling units and 2.4 million square feet of non-residential space. An estimated increase of approximately 31,483 residents and 6,097 jobs is projected for the 2045 horizon year.

The mission of Caltrans is to provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment. Caltrans is a commenting agency on this project and has the following comments:

The project should conduct a transportation analysis to determine whether significant transportation impacts would occur. If impacts are identified, potential mitigation measures may include Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies (e.g. increased transit access, rideshare programs, and improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities), investments in active transportation or transit amenities, lane reassignment, and traffic signal installations, signal phasing or timing modifications to mitigate impacts from project trips.

For the Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) and for future developments, please submit a VMT-based Transportation Impact Study. Please follow the Governor's Office of Planning and Research Guidance to identify VMT related impacts and include any potential mitigation

measures necessary. With the enactment of Senate Bill 743 (SB 743), Caltrans is focused on maximizing efficient development patterns, innovative travel demand reduction strategies, and multimodal improvements. For more information on how Caltrans assesses VMT analysis for land use projects, please review Caltrans' Transportation Impact Study Guide to ensure a complete VMT-based Traffic Impact Study is prepared.

<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/sb-743/2020-05-20-approved-vmt-focused-tisg-a11y.pdf>

If the project will generate pedestrian and bicyclist traffic, consider performing Multi Modal (biking, walking, transit, etc.) access/conflict analysis at the following locations: I-5/Lakewood Blvd, I-605/Florence Ave, and I-105/Lakewood Blvd. Provide Complete Street Access (ADA curb ramps, sidewalks, bike lane, high visibility crosswalks, APS, LPI, etc.).

Consider eliminating car parking requirements as excessive parking supply can lead to induced car trips. Please consider incorporating TDM strategies alongside parking reforms, shared parking arrangements, pricing strategies, and improved first-and last-mile connections.

The proposed General Plan update will set strategies to address greenhouse gas reduction, climate change, and climate planning. With the potential for an increase of an estimated 10,350 dwelling units, 31,483 residents, and 6,649 jobs there will be a need to safely and efficiently move people within and through the City of Downey.

Caltrans encourages the City of Downey to include guidelines that encourage the development of Complete Streets that provide residents and visitors with a range of transportation options, and that further enhance walking, biking, and transit use. Complete Streets improvements also promote regional connectivity, improve air quality, reduce congestion, promote improved first-/last-mile connections, and increase safety for all modes of transportation.

Bike infrastructure should be consistent with or go above the recommendations in the City's existing Bicycle Master Plan (2015) in terms of providing the highest levels of protection for bicyclists. For instance, Class IV separated bikeways with physical barriers provide physical separation from moving vehicles, whereas Class II bike lanes and Class III shared lanes only utilize painted markings on the roadway.

Safe and easy access to river trails such as the Los Angeles River Trail, San Gabriel Trail, and Rio Hondo Bike Path are also important as these trails provide connectivity to the greater Los Angeles County region. The General Plan should also be consistent with the updated Los Angeles County Bicycle Master Plan that is expected to be finalized in 2026. Caltrans encourages the General Plan update to include strategies to connect to the future Southeast

Gateway Line through enhanced transit, walking, and biking networks, as well as through transit-oriented development around the future Gardendale Station.

Caltrans supports and strives to make rail and transit modes of transportation a viable option for all. The Department supports transportation projects that bring all modes of transportation together to increase connectivity, expand the use of public transportation, and advance equity and livability in all communities. Please consider including a discussion on identifying strategies to meet mobility needs such as multimodal strategies on transit connectivity and opportunities to connect bus services to include nearby train stations for regional connectivity. As the population increases, it is important to clarify how the growth will impact the services such as Downey LINK, LA Metro, and Metrolink. Aligning the City's future conditions with these services can result in a more accessible and equitable city.

The PEIR should propose improved mobility strategies, improved zoning codes, and improved regulations and policies. This should include a discussion on the impact of SB 79 Abundant and Affordable Homes Near Transit Act which promotes multi-family housing near transit stops by making it legal for more homes to be built within these said areas. Caltrans encourages the City to incorporate SB 79 implementation considerations into its environmental analysis and transportation modeling to ensure alignment with state housing, climate, and mobility objectives.

The PEIR recommendations should include mitigations that will enhance the sustainability of economic growth factors for population growth, employment services, mobility, and housing needs within the city. The DEIR should emphasize positive environmental impacts, identify reasonable project alternatives to minimize significant impacts, and propose mitigation measures to reduce potential effects.

Please ensure that the Downey 2045 General Plan Update and Text and Map Amendments analyze the challenges in goods movement that are unique to the City. The Plan should also address how the City works to achieve an inter-regional network for longer distance travel and freight movement. Connecting towns, cities, and regions to each other, business centers to major intermodal freight transfer points, and commuters to Downey and Los Angeles County in general in a sustainable and efficient manner, should be an important objective. Discussion of designated areas/parking for freight delivery, package, and transportation network company's pickup and drop-off is also beneficial. Please consider leveraging strategic investments to maintain and modernize a multimodal freight transportation system with innovative approaches, including advanced technology to optimize integrated network efficiency, improve travel time reliability, and achieve sustainable congestion reduction.

The Department firmly embraces racial equity, inclusion, and diversity. These values are foundational to achieving our vision of a cleaner, safer, and more accessible and more

connected transportation system. Caltrans recognizes the shared responsibility to assist communities of color and underserved communities by removing barriers to provide a more equitable transportation system for all.

We acknowledge and support the City of Downey's efforts to meet its Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocation per the California Department of Housing & Community Development (HCD).

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mr. Joseph Jamoralin, the project coordinator, at (805) 732-8047 and refer to GTS # 07-LA-2026-05042.

Sincerely,


Anthony Higgins
Acting LDR Branch Chief

Cc: State Clearinghouse