

## California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 7  
100 SOUTH MAIN STREET, SUITE 100 | LOS ANGELES, CA 90012  
PHONE (213) 897-0362 | FAX (213) 897-0360 TTY 711  
[www.dot.ca.gov](http://www.dot.ca.gov)



April 16, 2026

David DeVries  
Planning Division  
City of South El Monte  
1415 Santa Anita Ave.  
South El Monte, CA 91733

RE: South El Monte Arts District  
SCH # 2026030743  
Vic. LA-605/PM 9.522, LA-164/PM 4.054  
GTS # LA-2026-05043-NOP

Dear David DeVries:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above-referenced NOP. The City of South El Monte (lead agency) is preparing a PEIR for the establishment of the South El Monte Arts District. The project proposes an Overlay Zoning framework to transform the "Industrial West" corridor into a vibrant cultural and economic hub. The project would allow for more flexibility and development potential in the underutilized existing industrial corridor by allowing uses such as housing and hospitality to specific parcels that are currently zoned Manufacturing (M), Single-Family Residential (R-1), and Commercial Manufacturing (C-M). Overlay Zoning would allow housing for artists, veterans, and older adults, and would allow for affordable market-rate housing, providing a built-in customer base for new retail and restaurants. The mixed-use overlay would create a hub where wholesalers, manufacturers, and distributors can thrive with maker spaces, retailers, restaurants, galleries, hotels, and housing. It would also allow for live music, outdoor festivals, and nighttime programming to facilitate placemaking, and allow for artwork throughout the district.

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>

At this time, the specific size and scope of the proposed land use have not been determined. As a result, Caltrans is currently unable to assess the net traffic impact on State facilities, specifically SR-164 and SR-60. Once the Lead Agency identifies the project's land use size, a comprehensive traffic study should be conducted in accordance with Caltrans guidelines and CEQA requirements. As the City plans for future growth in the community, it is important to recognize that increased traffic volumes may present safety concerns on State facilities. The following interchanges and intersections may be affected by the proposed project at full buildout:

- a. SR-60/SR-164 (Rosemead Blvd.)
- b. SR-60/Santa Anita Ave.
- c. SR-164/Rush St.

Please note that the SR-60/SR-164 Interchange Modification Project (EA 37400) is currently in the Project Study Report phase. Any development associated with the South El Monte Arts District should remain informed of proposed interchange improvements and ensure an appropriate fair share contribution toward these enhancements.

There are several complete streets projects and studies along Rosemead Blvd, within the vicinity of the project area. Caltrans has a complete streets improvement project on SR-164 that proposes a bike facility between Rush Street and the Rudell Underpass. The County of Los Angeles has a project to add Class IV separated bikeways on Rosemead Blvd., between Rush Street and Gallatin Road. And the City of Pico Rivera is currently conducting a study to develop a bus rapid transit corridor on Rosemead Blvd. that would stretch between the San Gabriel Valley and Long Beach. The Arts District proposed project should consider opportunities to connect these multimodal projects and to enhance walking, biking, and transit 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.

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-2026-05043-NOP.

Sincerely,

*Frances Duong for*

ANTHONY HIGGINS  
Acting LDR Branch Chief

Cc: State Clearinghouse