

California Department of Transportation

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August 26, 2026

11-IMP-86
PM 21.1

Rio Vista Apartments Annexation
MND/SCH#2026071059

Mr. Cristhian Barajas
Development Services Director
City of Brawley
205 South Imperial Avenue
Brawley, CA 92227

Dear Mr. Barajas:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Rio Vistas Apartments Annexation Project located near State Route 86 (SR-86). 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.

Caltrans has the following comments:

Traffic Engineering and Analysis

Per the Caltrans Local Development Review (LDR) Safety Review Practitioner's Guidance manual, an LDR safety review is required when a development generates project traffic trips by any mode on the State Highway System. Please provide an LDR safety review for the SR-86 Main Street/Rio Vista Avenue (Node 3) and SR-86 Main Street/Western Avenue (Node 6) intersections for review.

- The Rio Vistas Apartments Annexation MND 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-all-y.pdf>.

For all project conditions, provide a peak-hour 95th-percentile queue table showing queue lengths for all movements on all legs of intersections within the Caltrans Right-of-Way (R/W).

Per the Opening Year + Project Traffic Volumes (Figure 2) for the SR-86 Main Street/Rio Vista Avenue intersection (Node 3), the project-generated traffic adds southbound left-turn trips to the existing traffic demand, resulting in a total projected peak-hour

southbound left-turn volume of 115 vehicles. This represents approximately 51 percent of the total 225 peak-hour vehicles on the southbound approach and exceeds the 100-vehicle-per-hour criterion for investigating an exclusive left-turn lane.

FHWA's *Signalized Intersections: An Informational Guide* indicates a probable need to investigate an exclusive left-turn lane when left-turn volume exceeds 100 vehicles during the peak hour. Caltrans HDM Index 405.2 identifies left-turn channelization as a means of controlling turning traffic, increasing intersection capacity, and improving safety. Given the substantial left-turn demand, and the fact that the existing southbound approach provides only one lane, the addition of an exclusive southbound left-turn lane should be considered to improve traffic operations and safety.

Please provide the synchro files used to analyze the project.

Design

The Rio Vista Apartments Project appears to be located several blocks away from the Caltrans EA 11-43209 SHOPP Project (EFIS ID 1124000038). This project is a pavement preservation (CAPM) project, along SR-86 from postmile (PM) 17.998 to PM 31.840 (currently in the PID phase). This project proposes replacement of traffic signals at the following intersections (including ADA accessible pedestrian infrastructure):

1st St / Main St (PM 20.628)
and Main St / Rio Vista Ave (PM 20.997).

EA 11-43209 Project also proposes installation/replacement crosswalks at several locations, and rehabilitation of existing sidewalks. In addition, the project proposes guard rail, bridge rail, and Transition rail upgrades.

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 Brawley (City), 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.

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.

Hauling

Caltrans has discretionary authority with respect to highways under its jurisdiction and may, upon application and if good cause appears, issue a special permit to operate or move a vehicle or combination of vehicles or special mobile equipment of a size or weight of vehicle or load exceeding the maximum limitations specified in the California Vehicle Code. The Caltrans Transportation Permits Issuance Branch is responsible for the issuance of these special transportation permits for oversize/overweight vehicles on the State Highway network. Additional information is provided online at: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/transportation-permits>.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Charlie Lecourtois, LDR Coordinator, at (619) (619) 985-4766 or by e-mail sent to charlie.lecourtois@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Kimberly D. Dodson

KIMBERLY D. DODSON, GISP
Branch Chief
Local Development Review