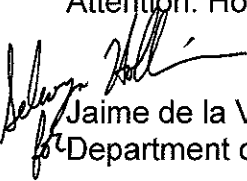


CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 6, 2012

TO: The Honorable City Council, City of Los Angeles
c/o City Clerk, Room 395
Attention: Honorable Bill Rosendahl, Chair, Transportation Committee

FROM:  Jaime de la Vega, General Manager
for Department of Transportation

SUBJECT: **COUNCIL FILE 12-0130, LADOT COMMENT TO – CITY OF SANTA MONICA, BERGAMOT VILLANGE TRANSIT CENTER PROJECT DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT, TRAFFIC IMPACT ANALYSIS**

In response to the release of the City of Santa Monica Bergamot Village Transit Center Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), DOT has reviewed the project traffic impact analysis and has prepared a comment letter to address the various potential City of Los Angeles significant traffic impact issues. In accordance with council file 12-0130, a copy of DOT's comment letter is being provided to the Council for review and approval.

In summary, the proposed project is anticipated to have numerous un-mitigated significant traffic impacts within both the City of Santa Monica and the City of Los Angeles. The City of Santa Monica has identified 9 unmitigated intersections within the City of Los Angeles. Therefore, it is the recommendation of LADOT that the proposed project only be allowed to move forward if a substantive mitigation strategy can be identified to address the unmitigated traffic impacts within the City of Los Angeles. If a substantive mitigation strategy cannot be identified, then the project should be reduced in scale or reconfigured in order to address the project-related traffic impacts within the City of Los Angeles.

RECOMMEDATIONS

1. APPROVE the attached DOT comment letter and AUTHORIZE DOT to transmit the comment letter to the City of Santa Monica.
2. DIRECT the City Attorney's Office to take appropriate actions in the event the City of Santa Monica is unresponsive.

JTV:eg

Attachments

- A) LADOT Comments To The Bergamot Village Transit Center Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) (dated March 6, 2012)
 - B) Council File 2-0130, Transportation Committee Report
- c: Council District Office 11
Attention: Paul Backstrom
Jay Kim, Sean Haeri, DOT
David Weintraub, DCP

Council File 12-0130

City of Santa Monica
Bergamot Village Transit Center Project

LADOT March 6, 2012
Report to Council

Attachment A

LADOT Comment Letter (Dated March 6, 2012) to Project DEIR

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

CALIFORNIA

Jaime de la Vega
GENERAL MANAGER



ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA
MAYOR

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
100 S. Main St., 10th Floor
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012
(213) 972-8470
FAX (213) 972-8410

March 6, 2012

City of Santa Monica
Attention: Jing Yeo
City Planning, Special Projects Manager
1685 Main Street, Room 212
Santa Monica, CA 90401

RE.: LADOT COMMENTS TO - CITY OF SANTA MONICA, BERGAMOT VILLAGE TRANSIT CENTER DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (DEIR), TRAFFIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

Dear Ms. Yeo:

The City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) is providing the commentary contained in this communication in response to the current review deadline that has been established for review of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the proposed Bergamot Transit Village Center project, to be located at 1681 26th Street, in the City of Santa Monica. However, due to the size and magnitude of this project, it is very likely that further comment will need to be expressed beyond this deadline and therefore, LADOT respectfully request the opportunity to provide comment on this matter beyond the specified review period and further request that any additional communication provided be given full and appropriate consideration prior to completing the final review process for this project. In the interim, LADOT's immediate concerns regarding the proposed project are expressed in the following paragraphs.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Unmitigated Impacts

Although addressing a traffic impact at the location where the impact has been identified is the ideal strategy for providing remediation, this is an opportunity that is becoming increasingly difficult to take advantage of because most of these opportunities have already been exhausted or are simply not feasible due to various constraints. However, this lack of opportunity at the local level should not preclude a project from seeking and

providing project traffic impact relief via an alternative mitigation strategy, including at the regional level.

The traffic study scope for the proposed project included a review of 12 intersections that are under the shared jurisdiction of Santa Monica and Los Angeles and 37 intersections located exclusively within the City of Los Angeles. Out of the 49 intersections studied, the project traffic report identified 12 of these intersections as locations likely to be significantly impacted by the project and only offered potential mitigation to 3 of these locations, leaving the remaining 9 intersections as impacts that "cannot be mitigated".

The specific locations identified as likely to be significantly impacted by the proposed project are as follows:

<u>#</u>	<u>Intersection</u>	<u>Study No.</u>	<u>Jurisdiction</u>
1.	Walgrove Ave & Rose Ave	23	L.A.
2.	Walgrove Ave & Venice Bl	25	L.A.
3.	Centinela Av & Colorado Av / Idaho Av	56	Shared, L.A. and S.M.
4.	Centinela Av (west) & Olympic Bl	58	Shared, L.A. and S.M.
5.	Centinela Av & I-10 WB Ramps	61	Shared, L.A. and S.M.
6.	Bundy Dr & Olympic Bl	71	L.A.
7.	Bundy Dr & Pico Bl	72	L.A.
8.	Bundy Dr & Ocean Park Bl	75	L.A.
9.	Bundy Dr & National Bl	76	L.A.
10.	Barrington Av & Wilshire Bl	82	L.A.
11.	Barrington Av & Santa Monica Bl	83	L.A.
12.	Barrington Av & Olympic Bl	84	L.A.

Inasmuch as all of these locations are currently operating at an intersection level of service that is at or near capacity, it is clear that as development continues to unfold in the area, as has been the case with other recently approved City of Santa Monica projects, the previously approved projects along with additional project approvals in the future will continue to denigrate the nearby intersections in a significant cumulative fashion.

In particular, we are interested in examining the combined cumulative impacts of recently approved projects with unmitigated traffic impacts at City of Los Angeles intersections or intersections that we share jurisdiction with City of Santa Monica. We believe that previously approved projects from City of Santa Monica may have had unmitigated impacts that were only looked at individually in isolation. We believe that if the individual unmitigated traffic impacts of each previously approved project were examined in a cumulative fashion, the combined cumulative traffic impacts to the City of Los Angeles would be much higher than currently stated.

It is also worth noting that under the City's West Los Angeles Transportation Improvement and Mitigation Specific Plan ordinance, which is a City directive designed

to insure reasonable accountability by development to their potential traffic impacts, this project would have been obligated to remand a sizable transportation impact assessment (TIA) fee in addition to addressing the project's identified potential impacts.

Therefore, it is the strong recommendation of LADOT that the project be required to provide additional investigation beyond the impact locations themselves with the expressed intent of identifying a mitigation plan that can reasonably address the projects overall anticipated impacts. In the absence of appropriate redress to the stated probable significant traffic impacts within the City of Los Angeles, the project should be directed to remove these impacts through either a scaled reduction or land-use reconfiguration of the project.

Case examples of the City's efforts to identify mitigation strategies beyond the immediate impact area should be discussed with the appropriate LADOT Planning and Development Review staff.

Model Generated Trip Rates

It is the stated policy of LADOT that the standard land-use trip generation rates published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) be used when conducting traffic impact analysis within the City. The general understanding behind the direction of this policy is that for those land uses, for which a broad spectrum of data has been collected, the application of the calculated average trip rate is the most reasonable and conservative approach toward insuring some form of accountability to the high end of the data spectrum. However, it is understood that there will be, from time to time, instances wherein the use of a standardized trip rate may not be appropriate for a specific land-use and thus the justification for applying a more narrowly defined trip rate, through empirical research and justification, is warranted.

With respect to the traffic impact analysis that was prepared for the Bergamot project, the City of Santa Monica has chosen to conduct this analysis using trip generation rates derived from the city's Travel Demand Forecasting Model. While the City of Los Angeles does not necessarily disagree that model generated trip rates will provide a reasonable estimation of the project's potential traffic impacts, there is a concern that the project is providing little recourse for addressing the potential impacts that are likely to occur should the proposed uses result in trip generation levels above the model developed rates and are closer in-line to the standardized rates.

In cases where the City of Los Angeles has permitted the use of a trip generation rate outside of the standardized ITE rate, the City has still maintained that the analysis should include a review of the project using the standardized trip rate as well. In addition to the expanded traffic impact analysis the City will also require the project to execute a trip cap monitoring program to confirm the actual vehicle traffic activity generated by the project. In this way, the City is assured that a full accountability of potential impacts for the project is maintained and appropriate mitigation is secured.

Neighborhood Traffic Management

In order to appropriately address the residential street impact identified at Idaho Avenue east of Centinela Avenue in the traffic study report, the project applicant should be required to contact appropriate LADOT staff, City of Los Angeles Council District 11 staff and affected neighborhood organizations and community groups to fully explore all possible means of remediation and enter into a Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan (NTMP) agreement, as a means to execute the remediation, as needed. The project applicant would be responsible for the implementation of all measures prescribed by the agreement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the project be required to develop a mitigation plan, in coordination with LADOT prior to moving forward to the final environmental review process.
2. That the project be required to implement a comprehensive trip cap monitoring program, the parameters of which should be developed in agreement with LADOT.
3. That the project be required to conduct additional analysis using standardized trip generation rates and applicable trip reduction credits.
4. That the project be required to facilitate the execution of a Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan (NTMP) agreement with appropriate City of Los Angeles staff and community group(s) to appropriately address the residential street impact identified in the project study report.
5. **In the absence of appropriate redress to the stated probable significant traffic impacts within the City of Los Angeles, the project should be directed to remove these impacts through either a scaled reduction or land-use reconfiguration of the project.**

The additional review, analysis, and remediation requested in the above recommendations should be coordinated through the LADOT Planning and Land Use Development, West L.A. / Coastal Division at 7166 W. Manchester Avenue, 90045. If additional discussion is needed regarding any of the issues addressed in this correspondence, I can be reached directly at (310) 642-1625.

Thank you for your earnest consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Edward Guerrero Jr.
Transportation Engineer

c: Council District 11
Attention: Paul Backstrom
Jay Kim, Sean Haeri, LADOT
Michael Patonai, LABOE
David Weintraub, LADCP
Peter Carter, Fehr & Peers

Council File 12-0130

City of Santa Monica
Bergamot Village Transit Center Project

LADOT March 6, 2012
Report to Council

Attachment B

Transportation Committee Report

Your

TRANSPORTATION

Committee

reports as follows:

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT relative to reviewing and preparing comments on the traffic analysis in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Bergamot Transit Village Center project.

Recommendations for Council action, as initiated by Motion (Rosendahl – Koretz):

1. DIRECT the Department of Transportation (DOT):
 - a. In consultation with the Planning Department, to review and prepare comments on the traffic analysis in the DEIR for the Bergamot Transit Village Center project.
 - b. Present the DEIR comments to Council prior to the deadline for submission to the City of Santa Monica.
2. REQUEST that the City of Santa Monica extend the deadline for submitting comments on the DEIR for the Bergamot Transit Village Center project.

Fiscal Impact Statement: None submitted. Neither the City Administrative Officer nor the Chief Legislative Analyst has completed a financial analysis of this report.

Community Impact Statement: None submitted.

SUMMARY

On January 25, 2012, Council considered Motion (Rosendahl – Koretz) relative to the traffic analysis in the DEIR for the Bergamot Transit Village Center project. Motion states that the jobs-housing imbalance in the City of Santa Monica puts tremendous pressure on the City of Los Angeles street network. Commuters clog West Los Angeles streets in the morning to arrive at employment centers in Santa Monica and then cause a similar level of congestion in the evening as they make their way home to destinations outside Santa Monica.

Motion movers go on to state that the DEIR for the proposed Bergamot Transit Village Center project in Santa Monica was recently released. The proposed mixed-use project is located less than three quarters of a mile away from the City of Los Angeles border. The project as proposed would result in the construction of approximately 766,094 square feet of new development with approximately 494,927 of that total square footage dedicated to creative office space and close to 1,800 parking spaces total.

Motion movers believe that potential project impacts do not stop at municipal borders. The City of Los Angeles must protect its residents from project impacts and ensure that transportation infrastructure is not overburdened by the proposed project. Given the size, scope, and proximity to the City of Los Angeles border, Motion movers recommend that DOT conduct a thorough review of the project DEIR. Council referred Motion to the Transportation Committee for consideration.

At its meeting held February 8, 2012, the Transportation Committee discussed this matter with a representative of DOT. The Department representative stated that the mitigation measures contained in the DEIR are inadequate. During the public comment period, residents expressed support for Motion stating that West Los Angeles is already burdened by traffic gridlock. It was suggested that a regional plan be developed to evaluate the impacts of large developments on area communities. The Committee recommended that Council approve the accompanying Motion, as amended to request that the City of Santa Monica extend the deadline for submitting comments relative to the Bergamot Transit Village Center project's DEIR.

Respectfully submitted,

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

- not official until Council acts -

<u>MEMBER</u>	<u>VOTE</u>
ROSENDAHL:	YES
KORETZ:	YES
PARKS:	ABSENT
LABONGE:	ABSENT
HUIZAR:	YES

JAW
CD 11
12-0130 rpt_tran_2-23-12