



TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

Date: August 30, 2013

To: Kris Markarian, City of Santa Clarita

From: John Gard – Fehr & Peers

Subject: *Vista Canyon Transit Center, Santa Clarita, CA – Summary of Expected Travel Characteristics*

RS13-3122

This memorandum describes City's Vista Canyon Transit Center, which will be located in the City of Santa Clarita, east of State Route (SR 14) between the Sand Canyon Road and Via Princessa interchanges. This memo provides a detailed description of the expected travel characteristics of two key components of the transit center: a new Metrolink Commuter Rail Station, and a City Bus Transfer Station.

Background

In 2011, the City of Santa Clarita certified the Vista Canyon EIR and approved a transit-oriented mixed-use development project, which includes the Vista Canyon Transit Center. For EIR analysis purposes, the project consisted of the following trip-generating land uses:

- 442 condominiums/townhome units
- 579 apartment units
- 96 single-family dwelling units
- 646,000 square feet of business professional
- 131,000 square feet of retail
- 10-screen movie theater
- 200-room hotel
- Metrolink Commuter Rail Station
- City Bus Transfer Station

The Draft EIR included a comprehensive analysis of 23 study intersections plus the SR 14 freeway mainline and on/off ramps. Project impacts were analyzed under existing, near-term, interim, and cumulative conditions.

According to the EIR, the above land uses (including travel associated with the Metrolink Commuter Rail Station and City Bus Transfer Station) are expected to result in 10 percent internal trips and 7 percent external trips made by transit. The EIR traffic analysis indicated that project buildout would cause the following significant roadway system impacts under existing conditions:

- Soledad Canyon Road/Sand Canyon Road

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- Soledad Canyon Road/SR 14 SB Ramps
- Soledad Canyon Road/Lost Canyon Road
- Sand Canyon Road/Lost Canyon Road
- Via Princessa/Lost Canyon Road
- Via Princessa/SR 14 NB ramps
- Via Princessa/SR 14 SB ramps
- Soledad Canyon Road/Sierra Highway
- Mainline segments of SR 14

A variety of mitigations were identified for these impacts including new traffic signals, additional lanes at intersections, signal retiming, and a fair share contribution to Caltrans for future improvements to SR 14.

Expected Travel Characteristics of Metrolink Commuter Rail Station

The proposed project includes a new Metrolink Station that would replace the existing, temporary Via Princessa Metrolink station. The new station would help relieve parking shortages at other existing stations in the Santa Clarita Valley and draw new riders to Metrolink commuter rail.

The EIR provided a comprehensive evaluation of transit ridership and vehicle trips associated with the new Metrolink station. This analysis began with a review of data collected from the existing Via Princessa Metrolink station. Key findings from that data included:

- A 2008 survey of AM peak hour riders found that over 80 percent of surveyed riders reside in ZIP codes located north or east of the station and typically come from nearby residential locations. Downtown Los Angeles and its environs (54%) were the most common work destinations, followed by Burbank (38%) and Glendale (8%).
- The station has 392 parking spaces. Parking is free. Based on November 2008 surveys, the number of occupied parking spaces at the station was 302 at 7:00 a.m., 338 at 8:00 a.m., and 362 at 9:00 a.m.
- Ridership data was obtained from Metrolink for June, July, and August, 2008. Because of the functionality of Metrolink service, only AM peak period boardings and alightings are recorded on a station-by-station basis. During the weekday AM peak period, an average of 359 boardings and 16 alightings occur at the station.
- Based on turning movement counts at the station driveway, the Via Princessa station was estimated to generate approximately 70 vehicle trips during the AM peak hour, with 80 percent being inbound. During the PM peak hour, the station generated about 200 vehicle trips, with approximately 85 percent being outbound. The daily trip generation was estimated to be 940 trips based on boardings/alightings, parking occupancy, and factoring of peak hour data.

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The new Vista Canyon station will serve primarily local residents who desire to commute to work destinations to the south. The additional parking to be provided at the new station will accommodate some of the latent demand due to parking shortfalls at other stations. Since Metrolink service provides a time-competitive alternative to driving to reach destinations to/from the south, some shifts in travel mode from auto to transit are expected.

The above data as well as other information in the EIR was used to estimate the new Vista Canyon Metrolink station ridership levels and vehicular trips. The analysis considers several critical factors that will influence the new station's use including: projected household growth in the Santa Clarita Valley, the proximity of the new station to regional travel routes (i.e., SR 14), expected worsening congestion on SR 14 and I-5, and transit system service and frequency improvements.

Based on these considerations, the EIR analysis assumed that the new Vista Canyon station would have a 50 percent increase in peak parking demand over the Via Princessa station. This implies that approximately 72 percent of planned spaces will be occupied during peak periods. Using this data, the new Vista Canyon station was assumed to generate the following external vehicle trips and ridership levels:

Vista Canyon Metrolink Station Vehicular Trip Generation

AM Peak Hour: 110 trips

PM Peak Hour: 300 trips

Daily: 1,430 trips

Vista Canyon Metrolink Station Ridership ProjectionsDaily Boardings/Alightings (non-Vista Canyon): 1,200 passengers¹Daily Boardings/Alightings (Vista Canyon related): 1,636 passengers²**Expected Travel Characteristics of City Bus Transfer Station**

The proposed project also includes a City Bus Transfer Station that will accommodate both local and express bus service. The following types of riders are expected to use the buses that will stop at the transfer station:

¹ Estimated based on an expected 50 percent increase over the 800 boardings/alightings at the Via Princessa station. Refer to above text supporting the expected increase in ridership.

² Table 4.3-6 of the *Vista Canyon Ranch Draft EIR* (October 2010) shows 1,859 daily external project trips made by Metrolink or Bus under Interim (Year 2015) conditions. EIR traffic analysis estimated that 88 percent of those trips are made by Metrolink with the remaining 12 percent made by bus.

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- Trips to/from Vista Canyon to access its residential, retail, entertainment, and employment uses.
- Trips to/from Vista Canyon for purposes of transferring from one bus line to another.
- Trips to/from Vista Canyon for purposes of boarding/alighting a Metrolink train.

For analysis purposes, the EIR assumed the Bus Transfer Station would generate 50 daily trips, with the majority being buses. The EIR estimated that daily bus ridership by Vista Canyon residents, employees, and business patrons would be in the 200 to 250 person range. Estimates were not made for the other trip purposes described above.

Conclusions

Prior to completion of the new Vista Canyon Metrolink rail station and City bus transfer station, several roadway improvements will be in place to provide access to the project site. All of these roadway improvements are the responsibility of the Vista Canyon project developer and would be in place in advance of the Transit Center. Lost Canyon Road is the primary street that will traverse the Vista Canyon development. It will extend northeasterly (parallel to SR 14) from its terminus at Jakes Way to La Veda Avenue, thereby connecting with existing Lost Canyon Road (to allow access to Sand Canyon Road). In addition, Vista Canyon Road will extend from Lost Canyon Road across the Santa Clara River (as a bridge) to connect with an existing underpass of SR 14, thereby providing connectivity to Soledad Canyon Road.

The Vista Canyon project developer will construct improvements to the intersections that serve each project access. New traffic signals will be installed at the Soledad Canyon Road/Vista Canyon Road and Lost Canyon Road/Sand Canyon Road intersections, and the existing signalized Lost Canyon Road/Via Princessa intersection will be upgraded.

The *Vista Canyon Ranch Final EIR* (May 2011) analyzed the proposed transit-oriented-development project's impacts on the surrounding transportation system including the effects of the Metrolink station and City bus transfer station. Mitigation measures were required to lessen the significance of identified impacts, all of which are the responsibility of the Vista Canyon developer and would be in place in advance of the Transit Center. The mitigations not only addressed project access needs, but also mitigation requirements for the Transit Center.

Finally, the assumptions and conclusions of the analysis completed for the Final EIR would remain valid today, as little or no development has occurred since certification of the Final EIR due to the recession.