



City of San Clemente City Council Transportation Subcommittee

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August 15, 2022

SENT VIA E-MAIL

Jayna Harris
20 Executive Park, Suite 200
Irvine, CA 92614
I-5HOVSouthCounty@dot.ca.gov

Dear Ms. Harris,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the scope and content of the Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) for the I-5 Improvement Project. We support the efforts of Caltrans to complete a high occupancy lane on I-5 in San Clemente. However, we are opposed to any widening beyond the existing pavement footprint.

While we understand the project is in the preliminary stages, widening the footprint of the I-5 in San Clemente is not consistent with our understanding of the improvement project. It was our understanding that the HOV lane would be accommodated within the existing I-5 pavement footprint. The traffic volumes do not warrant the detrimental environmental impacts of a widening project.

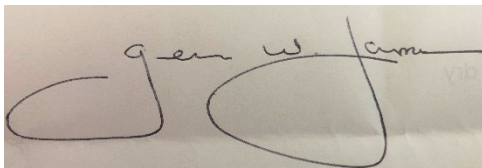
We are submitting comments as the City of San Clemente City Council Transportation Subcommittee. We respectfully request that the I-5 Improvement Project EIR/EA address the following:

- **On/off ramp improvements.** The on/off ramp improvements must be consistent with local plans and policies, including San Clemente landscaping and pedestrian and bicycle safety requirements. The EIR/EA should identify San Clemente plans and policies relevant to landscaping and safety, and ensure the project is designed to be consistent with said plans and policies and/or mitigation measures are required to ensure consistency.
- **Widening impacts.** We oppose any widening of existing pavement. The vehicular volume does not warrant widening the existing pavement footprint. The environmental impacts would be significant (e.g. sound, visual, and air quality). The project should stay within the boundaries of the existing pavement footprint, not further into the interstate right-of-way.

- **New HOV lane.** When adding the HOV lane, consider fewer non-HOV lanes given that fewer lanes total can accommodate the lower number of vehicular trips on this segment of I-5.
- **Noise and sound walls.** It is critical that noise impacts are minimized and sound walls do not create new or worsening impacts to our community. Therefore, the EIR/EA should pay particular attention to the Noise Study and should analyze the noise impacts of vehicular traffic and sound walls. The EIR/EA should focus on the existing noise impacts that are not addressed by a wall and the cumulative noise effects with added lanes. In addition, the EIR/EA should consider: does the proposed sound wall material adequately reduce noise impacts; does the sound wall material block the sound, absorb the sound, or both; what are the noise impacts of the sound walls for immediately adjacent properties; and what properties will hear an increase of noise as a result of sound reflection from the sound walls.
- **Location of existing walls.** We oppose any movement of retaining and sound walls closer to our residents, including the homes along Del Presidente and the homes in the southwest neighborhoods.
- **Bike lanes.** We oppose any removal of existing bike lanes, especially those along Del Presidente.
- **Safe Routes to School.** We oppose any removal of existing safe routes to schools, especially those along Del Presidente.

Thank you for addressing our comments. If you have any questions, please reach out to us by phone at (949) 361-8322, or by email at JamesG@san-clemente.org and WardK@san-clemente.org.

Sincerely,



Gene James
Mayor / Transportation Subcommittee
City of San Clemente



Kathy Ward
Councilmember / Transportation Subcommittee
City of San Clemente