

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

DISTRICT 11, DIVISION OF PLANNING

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March 22, 2012

11-SD-163

PM 1.41

Balboa Park Plaza de Panama

DEIR

SCH# 2011031074

Ms. Elizabeth Shearer-Nguyen  
City of San Diego  
Development Services Department  
1222 First Avenue, MS-501  
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Ms. Shearer-Nguyen:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) received a copy of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the proposed Balboa Park Plaza de Panama project located near State Route 163 (SR-163). Caltrans and the City of San Diego have been in coordination on this project. Based on these coordination efforts and Caltrans review of the EIR, we have the following comments:

It is recommended that the Balboa Park Plaza de Panama project coordinate with Caltrans regarding the seismic retrofit to the Laurel Street Overcrossing and the State Transportation Improvement Program Transportation Enhancement (STIP TE) Balboa Park historic preservation projects as it relates to the bypass bridge alternative construction. Please contact Caltrans Project Manager Lou Melendez at (619) 688-3328 for more information.

Construction access is proposed from SR-163. Encroachments within the access control lines of Freeways and Expressways will require review and approval by Caltrans for an Encroachment Permit. As mentioned in previous discussions, as part of the Encroachment Permit application, additional justification is needed, as this is considered a longitudinal encroachment which requires approval by Caltrans Headquarters in Sacramento. If access to SR-163 is granted, the longitudinal encroachment permit may place time constraints on work and require lane closures in order to minimize traveler effects on SR-163. It must be clearly demonstrated that the accommodation will not adversely affect highway safety and traffic operations, as well as a full explanation of other potential options to the proposed encroachment, and how such options cannot be implemented at a reasonable cost and the consequences if the requested encroachment is not approved.

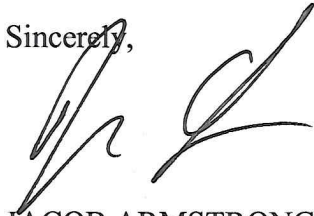
Elizabeth Shearer-Nguyen

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Caltrans appreciates the opportunity to review the DEIR and will continue close coordination efforts with the City. If you have any specific questions regarding the comments Caltrans has provided, please contact Marisa Hampton of the Development Review Branch at (619) 688-6954.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Armstrong', written over a horizontal line.

JACOB ARMSTRONG

Development Review Branch Chief

- c: Bill Figge, Acting District Director, Caltrans District 11
- Ross Cather, Deputy District Director Program/Project Management, Caltrans District 11
- Marisa Hampton, Transportation Planner, Caltrans District 11
- Lou Melendez, Project Manager, Caltrans District 11