

California Department of Transportation

CALTRANS DISTRICT 5
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April 11, 2022

Marjie Kirn, Executive Director
Santa Barbara County Association of Governments
260 North San Antonio Road, Suite B
Santa Barbara, CA 93110

Dear Ms. Kirn:

This letter is in response to questions raised to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) during the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) Board meeting held on March 17, 2022.

Director Patino inquired about the following three items:

1. Safety concerns at the U.S. 101/166 East northbound off-ramp and an update on upcoming improvements at this location.

Response: Caltrans currently has a project (EA 05-1M750) in the design phase to install a signal at the eastern side of the U.S. 101/166 interchange to improve queuing conditions. This project is expected to go to construction early next year.

2. Coordination between Caltrans and the City of Santa Maria on homeless encampments in or near State highway right-of-way.

Response: Caltrans shares the City's concern for public safety of all members of the Santa Maria community. In addressing encampment cleanups, Caltrans collaborates with cities, counties, and local social services providers that connect people experiencing homelessness with available housing and health services. When these individuals receive local services, they are less likely to return to encampments on State right-of-way. Caltrans will proceed to approve the removal of encampments that pose a critical health and safety concern. When an encampment meets threshold for removal, outreach procedures are required before this may occur. While Caltrans is not the appropriate entity to provide social services or relocation assistance, we continue to be a committed partner in working with local and State experts on homelessness in developing solutions for people taking shelter on Caltrans property.

Since June 2021, Caltrans has been actively working with City Net staff that provide these critical social services to Persons Experiencing Homelessness (PEH) at the unsanctioned encampments in Santa Barbara County. Once outreach has been documented, we will coordinate with our hazmat contractor and California Highway Patrol (CHP) for clean up to restore and maintain the property. In February 2022, Caltrans learned that the City of Santa Maria had been planning to clean up accumulating garbage in the Santa Maria riverbed associated with encampments. Unfortunately, this was not enough advanced notification for Caltrans to obtain the necessary approvals to provide resource assistance to the City of Santa Maria at that time.

However, by the end of this month, Caltrans will be scheduling encampment removals in the Santa Maria area at the following locations:

- U.S. 101 - Santa Maria River Bridge
- U.S. 101 - Donovan Road to Jim May Park
- U.S. 101 - E. Main Street to Jones Street

For future inquiries associated with litter removal and encampments within Caltrans right-of-way, please contact the following Caltrans Encampment Coordinators:

- Carolyn Norris: (805) 801-1513 or Carolyn.Norris@dot.ca.gov
- Nancy Cross: (805) 458-3714 or Nancy.cross@dot.ca.gov

3. Status of Caltrans encroachment permit application for installing cameras on State Route 166 in downtown Santa Maria.

Response: The following encroachment permits have been submitted by the City of Santa Maria Police Department to Caltrans for installation of cameras on State Route 166: 0522-NMC-0114 and 0522-NMC-0117. Caltrans permit staff is actively coordinating with City staff regarding necessary adjustments to the design and location of the camera poles to ensure consistency with Caltrans' Highway Design Manual (HDM) and safety standards.

Director Julian requested point of contact information for Caltrans projects at the State Route 1/166 junction in the City of Guadalupe.

Response: Meg Henry is the Caltrans project manager for the State Route 1/166 Intersection Improvement and Pasadera Highway Improvement oversight projects in the City of Guadalupe. For any questions regarding these efforts, she can be contacted at meg.henry@dot.ca.gov or (805) 441-3792.

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide clarification to the SBCAG Board on these important items. Please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff Melissa Streder at melissa.streder@dot.ca.gov or (805) 458-2717 or Hana Mengsteab at hana.mengsteab@dot.ca.gov or (805) 835-6520 with any additional questions.

Sincerely,

 for

SCOTT EADES
Deputy District Director
Planning and Local Assistance

c: Meg Henry, Project Manager, Caltrans
Melissa Streder, Transportation Planning Branch Chief, Caltrans
Hana Mengsteab, Associate Transportation Planner, Caltrans
Carolyn Norris, Encampment Coordinator, Caltrans
Nancy Cross, Encampment Coordinator, Caltrans