



February 14, 2007

Mr. Eugene Moy
Redevelopment Director
El Monte Community Redevelopment Agency
11333 Valley Boulevard
El Monte, CA 91731-3293

Re: Caltrans Questions on El Monte Transit Village Draft TIS

J06-1614

Dear Mr. Moy:

The purpose of this letter is to address several questions concerning traffic issues related to the El Monte Transit Village project that were raised by Caltrans staff at our February 5th meeting. The concerns had to do with the possible redistribution of traffic at freeway interchanges adjacent to the project site, operations of the westbound merge between the bus-only lane from the El Monte Transit Center and the High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane on Interstate 10 (I-10), potential driver confusion at the eastbound bus-only lane, and additional detail showing the distribution of project trips. These concerns are addressed in turn below.

Redistribution of Traffic at Adjacent Freeway Interchanges

As we discussed at our meeting last week, and as described in the draft Traffic Impact Study for the Transit Village project, all project traffic to and from I-10 is expected to use the Santa Anita Avenue interchange. This distribution is based on a “select zone” run of SCAG’s Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) travel demand model, and it is also consistent with our knowledge of the circulation network in the vicinity. The proposed project’s access will be exclusively from Santa Anita Avenue, and the circulation network does not provide convenient alternatives even in the case of congestion at the Santa Anita Avenue interchange. In particular, the Rio Hondo separates the project site from the area to the west, resulting in a very circuitous route between the project site and the Baldwin Avenue and Temple City interchanges.

With the construction of the proposed project, however, it is possible that *non-project* traffic that would otherwise have used Santa Anita Avenue to access the freeway may shift to the Baldwin Avenue and Temple City interchanges. The RTP model allows us to examine this possibility. A comparison of model runs of year 2030 with project and without project scenarios indicates that there is, in fact, some shift in this direction. **Table 1** summarizes the increase in traffic volumes at these interchanges during the a.m. and p.m. peak hours in the with project scenario over the without project scenario.

Table 1: Increase in Freeway Ramp Traffic Volumes

Interchange	AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour	
	On-Ramp	Off-Ramp	On-Ramp	Off-Ramp
Baldwin Ave and I-10	34	52	18	33
Temple City Bl. and I-10	0	23	8	44

As shown in **Table 1**, the traffic shifts expected to affect both freeway interchanges as a result on an increase in traffic on Santa Anita Avenue are relatively small and will not affect interchange operations.



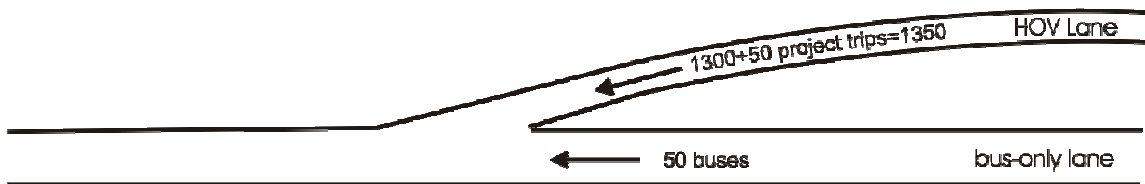
Westbound HOV Lane/Bus Lane Merge

The bus-only ramp exiting the El Monte Transit Center merges with the westbound HOV lane on I-10 west of the Santa Anita Avenue interchange. Based on published Caltrans data from 2005, the bidirectional peak hour volume on the HOV facility was 2,150 vehicles. According to the RTP model, 63% of peak hour traffic on this freeway segment is in the peak direction during the peak hour. Therefore, the peak hour volume in the westbound direction is approximately 1,300 vehicles. (This is a high-end estimate because the published peak hour volume is typically the p.m. peak hour, while the peak volume in the westbound direction occurs in the a.m. on this segment.)

During the a.m. peak hour, 213 project trips are expected to enter I-10 in the westbound direction. Conservatively assuming that 20% of project trips are carpools, and that all of them use the HOV lane, approximately 50 additional vehicles would use the HOV lane, resulting in a total volume of 1,350 vehicles in the lane approaching the merge with the bus-only ramp.

Based on published Caltrans data from 2005, the bidirectional peak hour volume on the bus-only ramps was 75 vehicles. Again, assuming that 63% of this volume is in the peak direction, approximately 50 buses are using the bus-only ramp departing the Transit Center during the a.m. peak hour. **Figure 1** below illustrates the volumes in the merge area.

Figure 1: Merge of I-10 HOV Lane and Bus Lane



As shown in **Figure 1**, under with project conditions, approximately 1,350 vehicles in the HOV lane will merge with approximately 50 buses during the a.m. peak hour. The total downstream volume of 1,400 vehicles is well below the capacity of a single lane. In addition, the merge itself will still be able to occur safely and without congestion because the ratio of merging vehicles (buses) to vehicle flow in the HOV lane is quite low; buses will be merging at a rate of less than one per minute.

Eastbound HOV Lane/Bus Lane Diverge

On occasion, drivers of private automobiles have mistakenly used the bus-only ramp from the eastbound HOV lane and entered the restricted area of the El Monte Transit Center. While this is not a project impact, Caltrans has expressed concern about ways to reduce the possibility of such situations occurring in the future. It should be noted that Caltrans has recently improved the signage along the HOV lane in this area. In addition, the recent extension of the HOV lanes to I-605 has included a restriping of the HOV lane in this area that more clearly directs drivers into the proper lane than had been the case in the past.



However, a field review of the signage along the HOV lane indicates that further improvements could be made to reduce the possibility of driver confusion. The eastbound HOV lane is generally signed as “BUS ONLY – CARPOOLS OK.” The repetition of this formulation leads drivers to believe that carpools are permitted in lanes designated as “BUS ONLY.” The actual bus-only ramp approaching the Transit Center is signed as “BUS ONLY.” Drivers have been led to believe that carpools are OK in “BUS ONLY” lanes, and confusion can result. Therefore, it is recommended that the HOV lane be signed as almost all other such lanes are signed, simply “CARPOOLS ONLY.” (The westbound HOV lane is signed in this way until Del Mar Avenue, where the “BUS ONLY – CARPOOLS OK” formulation begins.) This change in signage would not lead drivers to expect that carpools are OK in “BUS ONLY” lanes; therefore, when they reach the “BUS ONLY” sign approaching the Transit Center, they will not be led to believe that it is open to carpools.

Detail on Project Trip Distribution

As described in the draft Traffic Impact Study for the Transit Village project, without project and with project scenarios were analyzed based on separate runs of the RTP travel demand model. Since with project traffic volumes were not developed by a simple addition of project trips to without project conditions, a figure illustrating just project trips was not included in the report. The enclosed **Figure 2** illustrates the distribution of project trips based on the “select zone” run of the RTP model that was used to develop the project’s study area. The enclosed **Figure 3** illustrates project turning movements at each of the study intersections. Because of pass-by trips, which are trips that are already using the road network but that make an additional stop at the project site, the total movements in and out of the project access points do not always match the total movements at adjacent intersections.

As shown in Figure 2, 14% of project trips will use I-10 west of the project site, and 16% will use I-10 east of the project site. **Table 2** summarizes the total project trips on I-10.

Table 2: Project Traffic Volumes on Interstate 10

Segment	AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour	
	Eastbound	Westbound	Eastbound	Westbound
West of Santa Anita Ave.	275	213	258	243
East of Santa Anita Ave.	243	315	277	295

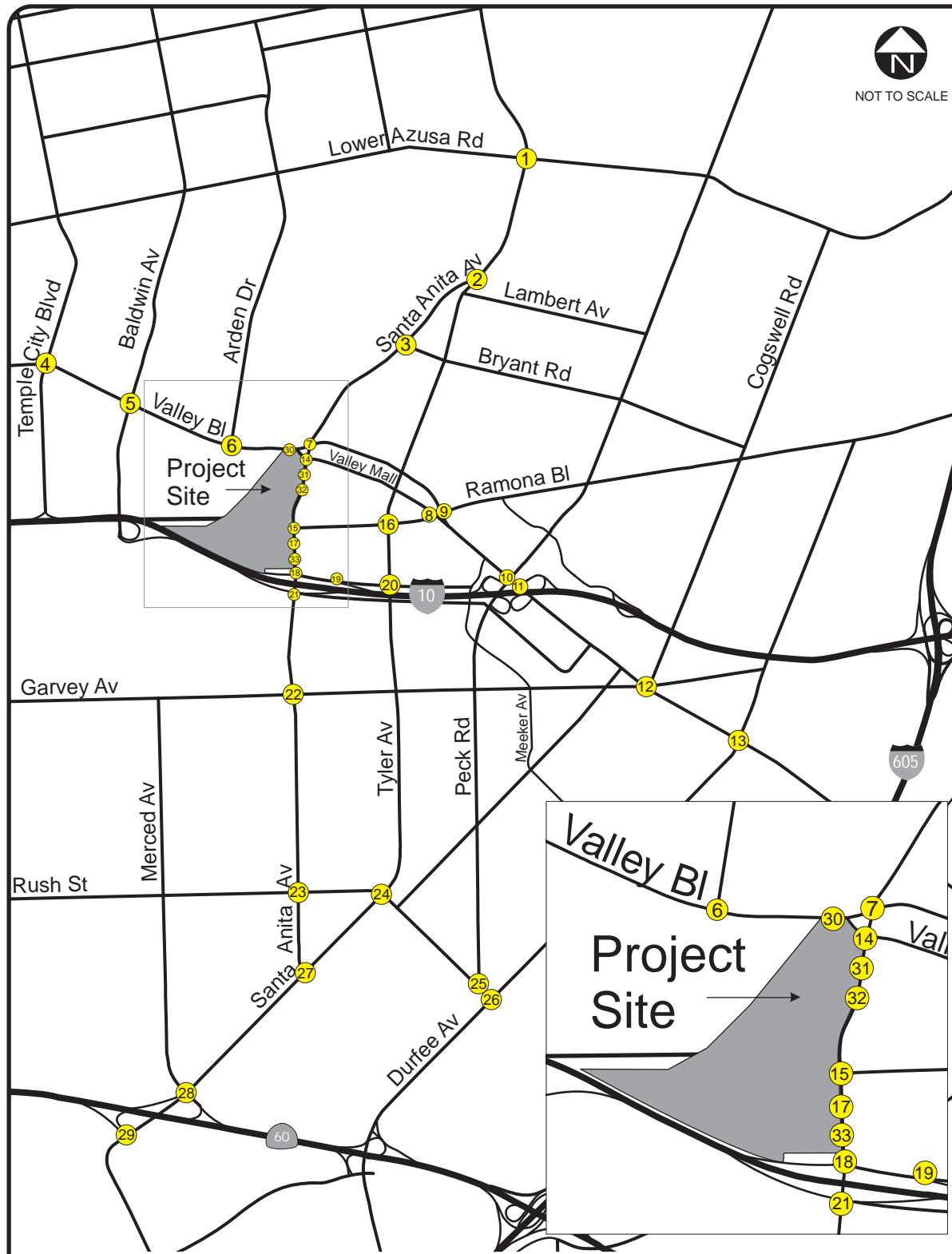
If you have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to call me at (213) 488-0345 or e-mail me at sbg@iteris.com.

Sincerely,

Meyer, Mohaddes Associates
a business unit of Iteris, Inc.

Steven Greene, Ph.D.
Senior Transportation Engineer

Encl: Figure 2: Project Trip Distribution
Figure 3: Total Project Trips



1. Santa Anita Av & Lower Azusa Rd	2. Santa Anita Av & Tyler Av (N)	3. Santa Anita Av & Bryant Rd	4. Valley Bl & Temple City Bl	5. Valley Bl & Baldwin Av	6. Valley Bl & Arden Dr	7. Santa Anita Av & Valley Bl
8. Valley Mall & Ramona Bl	9. Valley Bl & Ramona Bl	10. Valley Bl & Peck Rd	11. Valley Bl & I-10 WB Ramp	12. Valley Bl & Garvey Av	13. Valley Bl & Durfee Av	14. Santa Anita Av & Valley Mall
15. Santa Anita Av & Ramona Bl	16. Tyler Av & Ramona Bl	17. Santa Anita Av & MTA Way	18. Santa Anita Av & I-10 WB On Ramp & Brockway St	19. I-10 WB Off Ramp & Brockway St	20. Tyler Av & Brockway St	21. Santa Anita Av & I-10 EB Off Ramp & Asher St
22. Santa Anita Av & Garvey Av	23. Santa Anita Av & Rush Rd	24. Tyler Av & Rush Rd	25. Peck Rd & Rush Rd	26. Durfee Av & Peck Rd	27. Santa Anita Av & Tyler Av (S)	28. Merced Av & Santa Anita Av
29. Santa Anita Av & SR-60 EB Ramp	30. Driveway A & Valley Mall	31. Santa Anita Av & Driveway B	32. Santa Anita Av & Driveway C	33. Santa Anita Av & Driveway D		

Legend
 X Study Intersection
 XXX/XXX AM/PM Peak Hour Volume



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