

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DISTRICT 4

OFFICE OF TRANSIT AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

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Adam Petersen, Principal Planner
County of Santa Clara-Department of Planning and Development
70 W. Hedding Street, 7th Floor
San Jose, CA 95103

Re: Z-Best Composting Facility Modifications – Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)

Dear Adam Petersen:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Project. We are committed to ensuring that impacts to the State's multimodal transportation system and to our natural environment are identified and mitigated to support a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system. The following comments from District 4 and District 5 (San Luis Obispo) are based on our review of the January 2021 DEIR.

Project Understanding

The proposed project site is the existing Z-Best Composting Facility at 980 State Route (SR)-25. The project includes modification of the existing composting process from the current windrow method to an aerated static pile process. SR-25 along the project site frontage would be widened to allow the installation of acceleration and deceleration lanes into and out of the facility entrance, which would be relocated to become a new fourth leg of the existing SR-25/Bolsa Road intersection.

State Highway Access

The expansion of the Z-Best facility is expected to increase the truck movement in and out of the facility at the intersection. These trips should be restricted to off peak times whenever possible. Since southbound (SB) SR-25 has only one lane at the Bolsa intersection, a merging lane should be provided for trucks turning

right when leaving the facility. A storage lane should be provided for the vehicles turning left at the intersection towards Bolsa Road.

Caltrans has documented operational benefits of a SB receiving lane from Bolsa Road and documented these benefits with the project sponsor in an Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) report. Caltrans recommends that the project add a receiving lane in the SB median for traffic making a left from SB Bolsa Road onto SB SR-25. It should be noted that the proposed project uses all available Right-of-Way (ROW) making it a challenge for Caltrans to pursue the addition of a receiving lane as a standalone project. As stated previously, and as a condition of approval for any Caltrans encroachment permit, Caltrans requests that the appropriate ROW considerations are made as to not preclude future intersection improvements.

Safety

The proposed retaining walls on both sides of SR-25 are within the clear recovery zone. Please consider obtaining additional right of way to extend the side slope to match with the existing ground. Otherwise, the Midwest Guardrail System (MGS) is needed at the hinge point to prevent errant vehicles going over the retaining walls.

SR-25 Widening Project

There are plans for widening SR-25 from San Felipe Road within the Hollister City limits to US-101 near Gilroy. In 2016, a Project Approval and Environmental Document (PAED) was completed that generally set an outline of ROW needs for such a project. Before any approvals are given, it is important to confirm that the project modifications preserve enough ROW consistent with the final document. The ultimate project includes constructing a median barrier as part of the expressway conversion which will make the Z-Best facility driveway a right-in right-out scenario.

Hydraulics

The applicant should provide calculations showing the pre- and post-project runoff to Caltrans facilities when submitting the encroachment permit application for the project work along SR-25.

Construction-Related Impacts

Project work that requires movement of oversized or excessive load vehicles on state roadways requires a transportation permit that is issued by Caltrans. To apply, visit: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/transportation->

permits. Prior to construction, coordination may be required with Caltrans to develop a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) to reduce construction traffic impacts to the State Transportation Network (STN).

Lead Agency

As the Lead Agency, the County of Santa Clara is responsible for all project mitigation, including any needed improvements to the STN. The project's fair share contribution, financing, scheduling, implementation responsibilities and lead agency monitoring should be fully discussed for all proposed mitigation measures.

Encroachment Permit

Please be advised that any permanent work or temporary traffic control that encroaches onto the ROW requires a Caltrans-issued encroachment permit. If any Caltrans facilities are impacted by the project, those facilities must meet American Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards after project completion. As part of the encroachment permit submittal process, you may be asked by the Office of Encroachment Permits to submit a completed encroachment permit application package, digital set of plans clearly delineating the State ROW, digital copy of signed, dated and stamped (include stamp expiration date) traffic control plans, this comment letter, your response to the comment letter, and where applicable, the following items: new or amended Maintenance Agreement (MA), approved Design Standard Decision Document (DSDD), approved encroachment exception request, and/or airspace lease agreement. Your application package may be emailed to D4Permits@dot.ca.gov.

To download the permit application and to obtain more information on all required documentation, visit <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/ep/applications>.

Adam Petersen, Principal Planner
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Thank you again for including Caltrans in the environmental review process. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Yunsheng Luo at Yunsheng.Luo@dot.ca.gov. Additionally, for future notifications and requests for review of new projects, please contact LDIGR-D4@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Leong". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal tail on the "g".

MARK LEONG
District Branch Chief
Local Development - Intergovernmental Review

c: State Clearinghouse