

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Sep 11 2020**STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**

*Making Conservation
a California Way of Life.*

September 11, 2020

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Co/Rt/Pm: SCL/280/R2.39

Kara Hawkins, Environmental Project Planner
City of San Jose
200 E. Santa Clara Street
San Jose, CA 95113

Almaden Office Project – Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR)

Dear Kara Hawkins:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Almaden Office 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 are based on our review of the July 2020 SEIR.

Project Understanding

The proposed project would demolish the existing parking lot and construct up to approximately 1.7 million square feet (s.f.) of office in two 16-story towers, along with 40,000 s.f. of ground floor retail. The total floor area ratio (FAR) of both buildings combined would be 11.1.

This project is located at the northern west corner of Almaden Boulevard/Woz Way in downtown San Jose, in close vicinity to State Route (SR)-87 and I-280. It is located within the Downtown Growth Area Boundary, for which an EIR, *Downtown San Jose Strategy Plan 2040*, has been completed and approved.

Travel Demand Analysis

With the enactment of Senate Bill (SB) 743, Caltrans is focusing on transportation infrastructure that supports smart growth and efficient development to ensure alignment with State policies using efficient development patterns, innovative travel demand reduction strategies, multimodal improvements, and VMT as the

primary transportation impact metric. Caltrans commends the lead agency in providing thorough justification to demonstrate how the proposed project meets the screening criteria established in City Council Policy 5-1. Caltrans also commends the lead agency in preparing the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan, along with the monitoring and reporting system identified in the plan. The implementation of the proposed project and the TDM plan is in support of meeting state policy goals on transportation, VMT reduction, GHG emissions reduction, and betterment of the environment and human health.

Highway Operations

Caltrans recommends the lead agency to include the freeway segment and queuing analysis in the traffic report to identify any project-level traffic impacts on the State Highway system. The freeway segment analysis should include SR-87 from Woz Way to Park Avenue on both directions to assess any potential operational deficiency. This is consistent with the study limits in the Local Transportation Analysis report. The queuing analysis should include the following ramp terminal intersections:

- South Bound (SB) SR-87 on-ramp from Auzerais Avenue
- North Bound (NB) SR-87 off-ramp to Woz Way
- NB SR-87 on-ramp from Woz Way/Park Avenue
- SB SR-87 off-ramp to Park Avenue/Delmas Avenue

If traffic generated from the project impacts the freeway and ramp operations, the impacts shall be mitigated, or a fair share fee should be considered to allocate for the following two projects identified in the MTC's Regional Transportation Plan 2040:

- SR-87 Express Lane: I-880 to SR-85 (17-07-0082)
- I-280 Express lanes: US-101 to Magdalena (17-07-0084)

Hydraulics

The 100-year flood discharge is contained into the Guadeloupe River. Surface runoff from the project site to be discharged into the Guadeloupe River must be evaluated. Any increased design discharge to the river shall be mitigated to pre-construction levels.

Lead Agency

As the Lead Agency, the City of San Jose is responsible for all project mitigation, including any needed improvements to the State Transportation Network (STN). The project's fair share contribution, financing, scheduling, implementation

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responsibilities and lead agency monitoring should be fully discussed for all proposed mitigation measures.

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 stroke at the end.

Mark Leong
District Branch Chief
Local Development - Intergovernmental Review

cc: State Clearinghouse