

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

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Governor's Office of Planning & Research  
MAR 19 2019  
STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

March 19, 2019

Mr. Raymond Santiago, Principal Planner  
Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District  
1011 Anderson Drive  
San Rafael, CA 94901

SCH # 2018102042  
04-MRN-2018-00110  
GTS ID 13098

**San Rafael Transit Center Replacement Project – Request For Information, External**

Dear Mr. Santiago:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above-referenced project. In tandem with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), Caltrans mission signals a modernization of our approach to evaluating and mitigating impacts to the State Transportation Network (STN). Caltrans' *Strategic Management Plan 2015-2020* aims to reduce Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) by tripling bicycle and doubling both pedestrian and transit travel by 2020. Our comments are based on the January 17, 2019 Request for Information, External. Please address our concerns in the November 20, 2018 Caltrans NOP comment letter.

***Project Understanding***

The Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (District), in coordination with the City of San Rafael, Marin Transit, Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM), and Sonoma-Marín Area Transit (SMART), proposes to replace the transit center in downtown San Rafael. The proposed San Rafael Transit Center Replacement Project is needed primarily to preserve and enhance the functionality and effectiveness of the transit center following the implementation of the SMART Phase 2 line to Larkspur and the resulting loss of some of the transit center facilities. A new transit center solution in downtown San Rafael would address near-term and long-term transit needs while improving the desirability and usability of transit for both residents and regional commuters. Regional access to the project site is provided either at southbound US 101/2<sup>nd</sup> Street or at northbound US 101/Mission Avenue interchanges.

The District has identified five preliminary alternatives described below.

- **Two-Story Concept** includes six bus bays on the ground level and 12 bus bays on the upper level. The Two-Story Concept is bounded by 4<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, Hetherington Street to the east, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street to the south, and Tamalpais Avenue to the west.

- **Across-the Freeway Concept** has two options: the first would include a three-bay transit island on Hetherton Street between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets, and the second option would shift Hetherton Street to the west to allow for on-street bays on the east side of Hetherton Street between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets. This concept also incorporates the area underneath US 101, which would eliminate some existing Caltrans Park and Ride stalls and require covering Erwin Creek, a tributary of San Rafael Creek. The Across-the Freeway Concept is bounded 5<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, Irwin and Hetherton Street to the east, 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to the south, and Tamalpais Avenue to the west.
- **4<sup>th</sup> Street Gateway Concept** would accommodate three curbside bus bays and preclude southbound right-turn movements from Hetherton Street to 4<sup>th</sup> Street. This concept is bounded by 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the north, Hetherton Street to the east, and SMART tracks to the west.
- **Whistlestop Block Concept** co-locates the proposed transit center on the same block as the existing SMART station. The Whistlestop building would either be relocated, reconfigured, or restored and used for customer service functions with the proposed transit center. This concept is bounded by the 4<sup>th</sup> to the north, Hetherton Street to the east, 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to the south, and Lincoln and Tamalpais Avenues to the west.
- **North of 4<sup>th</sup> Street Concept** would accommodate 17 bus bays within the block and require the customer service center, restrooms, and pick-up/drop-off function area be located offsite. This concept would occupy the entire block of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the north, Irwin Street to the east, 4<sup>th</sup> Street to the South, and Hetherton Street to the west. This concept would also eliminate some existing parking stalls in the Caltrans Park and Ride lot and require covering Erwin Creek across the full length of the block.

#### ***Right-of-Way***

An Airspace Lease will be required for any use of Caltrans right of way. It may also not be possible to eliminate Park and Ride parking due to federal requirements or other obligations. The viability of the alternatives noted in the January 17, 2019 Request for Information will be addressed by the various Caltrans functional units after detailed design plans and specifications have been submitted.

#### ***Lead Agency***

As the Lead Agency, Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District is responsible for all project mitigation, including any needed improvements to the STN. The project's financing, scheduling, implementation responsibilities and monitoring should be fully discussed for all proposed mitigation measures, prior to the submittal of an encroachment permit.

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***Encroachment Permit***

Please be advised that any work or traffic control that encroaches onto the State ROW requires an encroachment permit that is issued by Caltrans. To obtain an encroachment permit, a completed encroachment permit application, environmental documentation, and six (6) sets of plans clearly indicating the State ROW, and six (6) copies of signed and stamped traffic control plans must be submitted to: Office of Encroachment Permits, California DOT, District 4, P.O. Box 23660, Oakland, CA 94623-0660. To download the permit application and obtain more information, visit <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops/developserv/permits/>.

Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Stephen Conteh at 510-286-5534 or [stephen.conteh@dot.ca.gov](mailto:stephen.conteh@dot.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



PATRICIA MAURICE  
District Branch Chief  
Local Development - Intergovernmental Review

c: State Clearinghouse