California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 4
OFFICE OF TRANSIT AND COMMUNITY PLANNING
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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Dec 15 2021

December 15, 2021

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

SCH #: 2008062059
GTS #: 04-SM-2021-00398
GTS ID: 24810
Co/Rt/Pm: SM/101/22.7

Billy Gross, Principal Planner
City of South San Francisco
Department of Economic and Community Development
315 Maple Avenue
South San Francisco, CA 94080

Re: GOP 4 Density Transfer Project Notice of Preparation (NOP)

Dear Billy Gross:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the GOP 4 Density Transfer 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 November 2021 NOP.

Project Understanding
The project would modify the previously approved Gateway Business Park Master Plan project. The Gateway Business Park Master Plan project ("GOP 4") Density Transfer Project proposes to transfer up to 120,221 square feet of development potential from undeveloped adjacent property to expand one of the buildings approved for Phase 4 of the GOP 4 by that amount, to be configured in four additional floors. The project also proposes the addition of 240 parking stalls. Furthermore, the City of South San Francisco (City) will conduct a Supplemental EIR (SEIR) to evaluate impacts related to vehicle miles travelled associated with the 120,221 square-foot expansion and to other transportation-related resources. The project is located roughly 0.4 miles southeast of the US Route (US)-101/Oyster Point Boulevard interchange.

Travel Demand Analysis
With the enactment of Senate Bill (SB) 743, Caltrans is focused on maximizing efficient development patterns, innovative travel demand reduction strategies, and multimodal improvements. For more information on how Caltrans assesses

Transportation Impact Studies, please review Caltrans' Transportation Impact Study Guide.

If the project meets the screening criteria established in the City's adopted Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) policy to be presumed to have a less-than-significant VMT impact and exempt from detailed VMT analysis, please provide justification to support the exempt status in align with the City's VMT policy. Projects that do not meet the screening criteria should include a detailed VMT analysis in the SEIR, which should include the following:

- VMT analysis pursuant to the City's guidelines. Projects that result in automobile VMT per capita above the threshold of significance for existing (i.e. baseline) city-wide or regional values for similar land use types may indicate a significant impact. If necessary, mitigation for increasing VMT should be identified. Mitigation should support the use of transit and active transportation modes. Potential mitigation measures that include the requirements of other agencies such as Caltrans are fully enforceable through permit conditions, agreements, or other legally-binding instruments under the control of the City.

- A schematic illustration of walking, biking and auto conditions at the project site and study area roadways. Potential traffic safety issues to the State Transportation Network (STN) may be assessed by Caltrans via the Interim Safety Guidance.

- The project's primary and secondary effects on pedestrians, bicycles, travelers with disabilities and transit performance should be evaluated, including countermeasures and trade-offs resulting from mitigating VMT increases. Access to pedestrians, bicycle, and transit facilities must be maintained.

Mitigation Strategies
Location efficiency factors, including community design and regional accessibility, influence a project's impact on the environment. Using Caltrans' *Smart Mobility 2010: A Call to Action for the New Decade*, the proposed project site is identified as a Close-In Compact Community where community design is moderate and regional accessibility is variable.

Given the place, type and size of the project, the SEIR should include a robust Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program to reduce VMT and greenhouse gas emissions from future development in this area. The measures listed below have been quantified by California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) and shown to have different efficiencies reducing regional VMT:

- Project design to encourage mode shift like walking, bicycling and transit access;
- Transit and trip planning resources such as a commute information kiosk;

- Real-time transit information systems;
- Transit access supporting infrastructure (including bus shelter improvements and sidewalk/ crosswalk safety facilities);
- New development vehicle parking reductions;
- Implementation of a neighborhood electric vehicle (EV) network, including designated parking spaces for EVs;
- Designated parking spaces for a car share program;
- Unbundled parking;
- Wayfinding and bicycle route mapping resources;
- Participation/Formation in/of a Transportation Management Association (TMA) in partnership with other developments in the area;
- Aggressive trip reduction targets with Lead Agency monitoring and enforcement;
- VMT Banking and/or Exchange program; and/or
- Area or cordon pricing.

Using a combination of strategies appropriate to the project and the site can reduce VMT, along with related impacts on the environment and State facilities. TDM programs should be documented with annual monitoring reports by a TDM coordinator to demonstrate effectiveness. If the project does not achieve the VMT reduction goals, the reports should also include next steps to take in order to achieve those targets.

Please reach out to Caltrans for further information about TDM measures and a toolbox for implementing these measures in land use projects. Additionally, Federal Highway Administration's Integrating Demand Management into the Transportation Planning Process: A Desk Reference (Chapter 8). The reference is available online at: http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwahop12035/fhwahop12035.pdf.

Transportation Impact Fees
Please identify project-generated travel demand and estimate the costs of transit and active transportation improvements necessitated by the proposed project; viable funding sources such as development and/or transportation impact fees should also be identified. We encourage a sufficient allocation of fair share contributions toward multi-modal and regional transit improvements to fully mitigate cumulative impacts to regional transportation. We also strongly support measures to increase sustainable mode shares, thereby reducing VMT.

Lead Agency

As the Lead Agency, the City of South San Francisco 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 responsibilities and lead agency monitoring should be fully discussed for all proposed mitigation measures.

Equitable Access

If any Caltrans facilities are impacted by the project, those facilities must meet American Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards after project completion. As well, the project must maintain bicycle and pedestrian access during construction. These access considerations support Caltrans' equity mission to provide a safe, sustainable, and equitable transportation network for all users.

Thank you again for including Caltrans in the environmental review process. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, or for future notifications and requests for review of new projects, please email LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

MARK LEONG
District Branch Chief
Local Development Review

c: State Clearinghouse