

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

DISTRICT 4

OFFICE OF TRANSIT AND COMMUNITY PLANNING 7/14/2020

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Governor's Office of Planning &amp; Research

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July 13, 2020

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Adam Paszkowski  
City of Morgan Hill  
17575 Peak Avenue  
Morgan Hill, CA 95037

**Morgan Hill Technology Center Mixed Use Project- Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)**

Dear Adam Paszkowski:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Morgan Hill Technology Center Mixed Use 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 May 2020 DEIR.

***Project Understanding***

The proposed project is located west of Mission View Road, south of Cochrane Road, east of US-101, and north of Half Road, immediately adjacent to US-101. The project proposes a mix of industrial, commercial, and residential uses on the 89-acre site. The industrial and commercial portions of the project, located on approximately 61 acres on the western half of the site, would develop 1.04 million s.f. of light industrial uses contained in six buildings on a 57.8-acre area of the site, 45,000 s.f. of industrial office in one building situated between the industrial buildings on a 2.31-acre parcel, and 50,000 s.f. of retail/commercial on a 2.92-acre parcel fronting on Cochrane Road. The residential portion of the project would consist of approximately 319 residential units on 28 acres in the eastern and southern portion of the site.

This DEIR evaluates project-level impacts for the commercial and industrial portions and program-level impacts for the residential portion of the project.

### **Highway Operations**

Based on the Freeway Segment Level of Service (LOS) Analysis in the DEIR, the proposed project would result in an increase in traffic volumes of more than one percent of freeway capacity on ten of the directional mixed-flow lanes and one directional HOV lanes, each of which are currently operating at unacceptable LOS F. To evaluate the full-scope impact of the project on the affected freeway segments, a queuing analysis should be performed for the ramp terminal intersections along US-101 from San Martin to SR-85, consistent with the study limits for the Freeway Segment Analysis identified in the DEIR. Please include the queuing analysis in the Final EIR.

Vehicle queues due to the project added traffic shall be accommodated within the ramps and freeway traffic shall not be impacted. If the project generated traffic impacts ramp operations, impacts shall be mitigated or allocate a fair share fee for the mitigation, as described in the *Fair Share Contributions* section below.

### **Hydraulics**

The 100-year flood discharge is contained in the Madrone Channel. Surface runoff from the project site to be discharged to the channel must be evaluated. Any increased design discharge to the existing channel shall be mitigated to the pre-project level.

A drainage report is recommended for this project. Calculations of the design discharge for pre- and post-developments must be provided. All flow discharge that points to the Madrone Channel must be clearly defined. Also, the EIR should have a section for the floodplain to discuss impacts to the Madrone Channel due to the project, and mitigation measures necessary to address the impact.

### **Landscape Architecture**

A portion of US-101 adjacent to the project site is designated as a Classified Landscaped Freeway. This designation limits the placement of billboards and electronic advertising displays where there is existing continuous highway planting. The highway user's experience includes views of open space and the foothills beyond. Please consider the visual impact of the proposed improvements relative to the highway user.

Please verify the protection of any existing planting in Caltrans' Right of Way (ROW). Trees within ROW damaged or removed during construction are required to be replaced per Caltrans Replacement Highway Planting Policy. Please refer to Caltrans Project Development Procedures Manual, Chapter 29 for more detailed information: <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/design/documents/pdpm-chapter29-a11y.pdf>.

In addition, any tree removal, planting, trimming and landscape maintenance work performed within Caltrans' ROW would require an encroachment permit per the Encroachment Permit Manual, Chapter 500 (<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/traffic-operations/documents/encroachment-permits/chapter-5-ada.pdf>) and must be in compliance with safety, sight distance and setback requirements per the Highway Design Manual, Chapter 900 (<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/design/documents/chp0900-a11y.pdf>).

### **Fair Share Contributions**

As stated in the Highway Operations section above, due to the significant impact of the project on the freeway segments identified in the DEIR and therefore, the City of Morgan Hill, as the lead agency, 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. Fair share fees should be allocated for the impacted freeway sections due to added project traffic. The project applicant shall coordinate with the City of Morgan Hill, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority and Caltrans for the proposed mitigation.

Fair share contributions should be considered to projects listed below:

- A regionally significant project: Plan Bay Area 2040 Project 17-07-0002 – Caltrain Grade Separations throughout Santa Clara County.
- Active transportation projects in support of building a multimodal transportation system to accommodate users of all ages and abilities:
  - In the Caltrans District 4 Bike Plan:
    - Buffered bike lanes on Cochrane Road and Malaguerra Avenue from Monterey Road to Coyote Creek Trailhead. (Project ID SC-101-X05)
  - In the City of Morgan Hill's Bikeways, Trail, Parks and Recreation Master Plan:

- Multi-modal intersection improvements at the Cochrane Road and US-101 intersection. (Project B-D4)
- Multi-use trail improvements, pave and enhance access to the existing Madrone Channel Trail. (Project T-A1)
- A bike/pedestrian bridge crossing at US-101 on Diana Avenue. (Appendix G – Bikeways and Trail Network Map)
- Multi-use trail along Mission View Drive. (Appendix G – Bikeways and Trail Network Map)

### **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, including the sidewalk and curb, must meet American Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards as well as other Caltrans Standard Plan 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, six (6) sets of plans clearly delineating the State ROW, six (6) copies 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. 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 Paszkowski, City of Morgan Hill

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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](mailto:Yunsheng.Luo@dot.ca.gov). Additionally, for future notifications and requests for review of new projects, please contact [ldigr-d4@dot.ca.gov](mailto: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 stroke extending to the right.

Mark Leong  
District Branch Chief  
Local Development - Intergovernmental Review

cc: State Clearinghouse