

# California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 4  
OFFICE OF TRANSIT AND COMMUNITY PLANNING  
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May 24, 2022

SCH #: 2019090428  
GTS #: 04-SM-2019-00431  
GTS ID: 17175  
Co/Rt/Pm: SM/ 114/ 5.765

Kyle Peralta, Planning Manager  
City of Menlo Park  
Community Development – Planning Division  
701 Laurel Street  
Menlo Park, CA 94025

**Governor's Office of Planning & Research**

**May 24 2022**

**STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**

## **Re: Willow Village Master Plan Project Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)**

Dear Kyle Peralta:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Willow Village Master Plan 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 April 2022 DEIR.

### **Project Understanding**

The proposed Project would demolish all existing onsite buildings and landscaping and construct new buildings and site improvements. The proposed Project would result in a net increase of approximately 1 million square feet (sf) of nonresidential uses (office space and non-office commercial/retail), for a total of approximately 2 million sf of nonresidential uses at the Project site. The nonresidential sf would include approximately 1,750,000 sf offices, up to 200,000 sf retail/non-office commercial uses, and approximately 10,000 sf community serving space. In addition, the Proposed Project would include multi-family housing units (approximately 1,735 units), a hotel (approximately 200-250 rooms), an approximately 4-acre park, and other public open space. The Project Site would include a circulation network for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians inclusive of both.

### **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 ([link](#)).

Caltrans' acknowledges that the project Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) analysis and significance determination are undertaken in a manner consistent with the Office of Planning and Research's (OPR) Technical Advisory. Per the DEIR, this project is found to have significant VMT impacts. Caltrans supports the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program and encourages yearly monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of the TDM measures proposed, in conjunction with the City of Menlo Park and C/CAG.

Regarding the Transportation Impact Analysis (TIA), please consider the following:

- Include the Hamilton North and Hamilton South redevelopment sites in all Figures in the TIA depicting the proposed project;
- To fully understand the movement of the Bayfront Expressway between Marsh Road and University Avenue, include a typical field observation day, instead of the atypical observation day (page 44);
- Clarify the method and tools used for the Freeway Analysis. Note that the Freeway Analysis should be conducted for the 2040 Cumulative Conditions;
- Provide details of freeway analysis to substantiate information in Table 23 (i.e., demand volumes, capacities that reflect field conditions). Also, clarify if demand volumes or count volumes are used in the analysis;
- Clarify if the Traffic Volumes of both existing and near term plus project conditions used in the Ramp Capacity Analysis are count volumes or demand volumes. The analysis should be based on demand volumes; and
- The notes in Table 26 in the TIA indicated the existing volumes referenced intersection counts collected in 2019. Provide said traffic counts for review (Appendix A: Traffic Counts is missing from the TIA). Also, provide the calculation of demand volumes for review.

### **Environmental Analysis- Cultural Artifacts**

Should ground-disturbing activities take place within Caltrans' Right-of-Way (ROW) and there is an inadvertent archaeological or burial discovery, in compliance with CEQA, PRC 5024.5, and the SER, all construction within 60 feet of the find shall cease and the Caltrans District 4 Office of Cultural Resource Studies (OCRS) shall be immediately contacted at (510) 847-1977.

## **Hydraulics and Maintenance**

Please note the following:

- Coordinate with Caltrans to review the proposed development, as Caltrans is responsible for design and maintenance of pump stations along State Route (SR)- 84. The entire project area and surrounding areas drain to a major trunk line that leads to the Caltrans Ravenswood Pump Station. The pump station pumps the stormwater trunk line to Ravenswood Slough in San Francisco Bay on the north side of SR- 84.
- As part of a holistic approach to understanding existing conditions and impacts from proposed flood protection measures being considered, Caltrans encourages the Project development staff to coordinate with the Strategy to Advance Flood Protection, Ecosystems and Recreation (SAFER) Bay project. The proposed flood protection measures from both projects may impact the tailwater conditions, potential conflicts, flood-related design objectives due to sea level rise and other factors.

## **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.

## **Encroachment Permit**

Please be advised that any permanent work or temporary traffic control that encroaches onto Caltrans' ROW requires a Caltrans-issued encroachment permit. 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 Caltrans' 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](mailto:D4Permits@dot.ca.gov).

Please note that Caltrans is in the process of implementing an online, automated, and milestone-based Caltrans Encroachment Permit System (CEPS) to replace the current permit application submittal process with a fully electronic system, including online payments. The new system is expected to be available during 2022. To obtain information about the most current encroachment permit process and to download

Kyle Peralta, Planning Manager  
May 24, 2022  
Page 4

the permit application, please visit <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/ep/applications>.

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](mailto:LDR-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 Review

c: State Clearinghouse