

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DISTRICT 4

OFFICE OF TRANSIT AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

P.O. BOX 23660, MS-10D

OAKLAND, CA 94623-0660

PHONE (510) 286-5528

TTY 711

www.dot.ca.gov

9/9/2020

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Aug 24 2020

*Making Conservation
a California Way of Life.*

August 24, 2020

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

SCH # 2020070449

GTS # 04-ALA-2020-00551

GTS ID: 20040

ALA/13/~11.702

Elizabeth Greene, Senior Planner
Planning and Development Department
1947 Center Street, 2nd floor
Berkeley, CA 94704

Southside Zoning Ordinance – Notice of Preparation (NOP)

Dear Elizabeth Greene:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Southside Zoning Ordinance 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 June 2020 NOP.

Project Understanding

The project location is the "Southside" or "Southside Area" of the City of Berkeley and encompasses approximately 28 full city blocks and several more partial city blocks directly south of the main campus of the University of California at Berkeley. The southside area is regionally important given its location, diversity of uses (residential, commercial, educational, cultural/religious, recreational) and current density. There are currently multiple zoning districts within this area. This proposed zoning ordinance is a response to the need to increase residential housing production and availability in the area.

Caltrans commends and supports the proposed project's Car-Free Housing overlay, as well as the proposal to remove parking minimums for future development in this plan area. We support these techniques as a means to encourage mode shift to non-automobile travel and lower greenhouse gas emissions. Caltrans also commends the equity focus and analysis of micro-housing options and increasing height and Floor Area Ratio as ways to increase

"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability"

housing development options in the Southside area.

The [Caltrans Transportation Impact Study Guide \(TISG\)](#) identifies techniques that support CEQA streamlining of housing projects, including the development of residential projects composed of 100 percent or near-100 percent affordable housing and those located in an infill location and in Transit Priority Areas are also subject to CEQA streamlining, and thus identified to have less-than-significant-impacts on VMT. We encourage the City to refer to the Caltrans TISG as a means to identify opportunities to achieve reductions in VMT.

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.

According to the Initial Study performed for this project, the proposed zoning ordinance may result in significant transportation impacts to this area. Caltrans requests the following:

- Clarification of how the proposed modifications to the existing zoning ordinance may result in achieving the City's VMT reduction thresholds. The modifications, potentially in the form of mitigation measures, 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 in the project and study area roadways. Potential safety issues for all road users should be identified and fully mitigated.
- Description of the intensity of events to be held in this area and how the associated travel demand and VMT will be mitigated.

Multimodal Planning

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

growth approaches should be consistent with MTC's Regional Transportation Plan/SCS and would help meet Caltrans Strategic Management Plan targets.

Vehicle Trip Reduction

From Caltrans' *Smart Mobility 2010: A Call to Action for the New Decade*, the project site is identified as **Place Type 1b: Urban Centers** where location efficiency factors, such as community design and regional accessibility are both strong. Given the place, type and size of the project, the EIR 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 supports (including bus shelter improvements and sidewalk/crosswalk safety facilities);
- New development vehicle parking reductions;
- Implement 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; and
- Aggressive trip reduction targets with Lead Agency monitoring and enforcement.

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. Also, reducing parking supply can encourage active forms of transportation, reduce regional VMT, and lessen future transportation impacts on State facilities.

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

We encourage a sufficient allocation of fair share contributions toward multimodal and regional transit improvements to fully mitigate cumulative impacts to regional transportation. Caltrans welcomes the opportunity to work with the City and local partners to secure the funding for needed mitigation. Traffic mitigation- or cooperative agreements are examples of such measures.

Please identify in text and graphics existing and proposed improvements for the pedestrian, bicycle, and transit networks. The City should estimate the cost of needed improvements, expansion, and maintenance for the Plan area, as well as identify viable sources of funding, correlated with the pace of improvements, and a scheduled plan for implementation along with the DEIR.

Thank you again for including Caltrans in the environmental review process. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Laurel Sears at laurel.sears@dot.ca.gov. Additionally, for future notifications and requests for review of new projects, please contact LDIGR-D4@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Mark Leong
District Branch Chief
Local Development - Intergovernmental Review

cc: State Clearinghouse