

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

*Making Conservation
a California Way of Life.***Governor's Office of Planning & Research****Mar 22 2021****STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**

March 22, 2021

SCH #: 2021010203

GTS #: 04-SM-2021-00349

GTS ID: 21933

Co/Rt/Pm: SM/101/22.022

Billy Gross, Senior Planner
City of South San Francisco
315 Maple Avenue
South San Francisco, CA 94083

Re: South San Francisco General Plan Update + Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report

Dear Billy Gross:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the South San Francisco General Plan Update 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 January 2021 NOP.

Project Understanding

The proposed project will update the goals, policies, and actions in the proposed General Plan Update and will serve as a compass for decision-makers and will shape future plans and actions of the City. This revised document will replace the 1999 General Plan and will inform updates to the City's Zoning Ordinance. The proposed South San Francisco General Plan Update has a temporal horizon of 2040. The proposed plan update includes new housing and employment opportunities by the year 2040.

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 DEIR, which should include the following:

- VMT analysis pursuant to the City's guidelines; if the City has not adopted guidelines at this point, please use the Office of Planning and Research's (OPR) 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 safety issues for all road users should be identified and fully mitigated.
- 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.
- Clarification of the intensity of events/receptions to be held at the location and how the associated travel demand and VMT will be mitigated.

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 strong.

Given the place, type and size of the project, the DEIR 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:

- Increase in number of affordable housing units in project;
- Orientation of project towards non-auto corridor;
- Pedestrian network improvements;
- Transit access supporting infrastructure (including bus shelter improvements and sidewalk/ crosswalk safety facilities);
- Bicycle network improvements or Fair Share contribution to such measures;
- Traffic calming measures;
- Implementation of a neighborhood electric vehicle (EV) network, including designated parking spaces for EVs;
- Limiting parking supply;
- Unbundled parking from property costs;
- Transit and trip planning resources such as a commute information kiosk;
- Real-time transit information system;
- Transit access supporting infrastructure (including bus shelter improvements and sidewalk/ crosswalk safety facilities);
- VMT Banking and/or Exchange program;

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>.

Billy Gross, Senior Planner
March 22, 2021
Page 4

Lead Agency

As the Lead Agency, South San Francisco is responsible for all impact 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.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Leong". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

MARK LEONG
District Branch Chief
Local Development - Intergovernmental Review

c: State Clearinghouse