California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 4
OFFICE OF TRANSIT AND COMMUNITY PLANNING
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Sofia Mangalam, Planning Manager
City of Foster City
610 Foster City Boulevard
Foster City, CA 94404

Re: 388 Vintage Park Drive Notice of Preparation (NOP)

Dear Sofia Mangalam:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the 388 Vintage Park Drive 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 July 2020 NOP.

Project Understanding

The proposed project consists of the demolition of a commercial building and construction of an approximately 95,931-square-foot, four-story (68-foot-tall, excluding a mechanical penthouse and associated equipment that would reach 80 feet) "B occupancy" research and development (R&D) office building including a ground-level parking garage with approximately 180 vehicle parking spaces. The project site is located north of State Route (SR 92) in the Vintage Park neighborhood in the City of Foster City, San Mateo County.

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*).

If the project meets the screening criteria established in Foster 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 or the Office of Planning and Research's (OPR) Technical Advisory. 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 fair 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.

- 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;
- Implementation of a neighborhood electric vehicle (EV) network, including designated parking spaces for EVs;
- Designated parking spaces for a car share program;
- Wayfinding and bicycle route mapping resources;
- Aggressive trip reduction targets with Lead Agency monitoring and enforcement;
- VMT Banking and/or Exchange program;
- Orientation of project towards non-auto corridor;
- Incorporation of bicycle lanes in street design;
- Pedestrian network improvements;
- Limiting parking supply; or
- Bike parking near transit facilities.

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

We encourage a sufficient allocation of fair share contributions toward multimodal 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. 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.

Lead Agency
As the Lead Agency, the City of Foster City 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, please contact Laurel Sears at laurel.sears@dot.ca.gov. Additionally, for future notifications and requests for review of new projects, please email LDIGR-D4@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Mark Leong

MARK LEONG
District Branch Chief
Local Development - Intergovernmental Review

c: State Clearinghouse