



February 1, 2021

Mr. Mark Zall, AIA
 RossDrulisCusenbery Architecture Inc.
 18294 Sonoma Highway
 Sonoma, California 95476

CEQA Initial Study Checklist for the Santa Rosa Fire Station 5 Project

Dear Mr. Zall;

W-Trans has completed an Initial Study checklist based on criteria set forth in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the proposed replacement of Fire Station 5 in the City of Santa Rosa. This document includes a description of the proposed project and an analysis of how the project would align to each of the four transportation/traffic CEQA checklist items.

Project Description

The proposed project is the construction of a new Fire Station 5 to replace the one destroyed by the Tubbs Fire in 2017. The station would include six dorm rooms to host three firefighters on duty and an additional three during times of emergency. A new community meeting room/training room is also included in the proposed project.

CEQA Initial Study Checklist

The CEQA checklist for potential transportation/traffic impacts provides the framework for the analysis performed for the proposed project. The potential impacts are summarized in the following table.

XVI. Transportation/Traffic	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The project was evaluated based on the criteria above as well as consistency with the City of Santa Rosa's transportation, public services, and facilities policies from the *Santa Rosa General Plan 2035* (General Plan), City of Santa Rosa, 2014.

a) Would the project conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?

Less-than-significant impact with Mitigation Incorporated. The proposed project would potentially have a significant traffic impact if the design is not consistent with or does not conform to applicable City policies.

Regarding transit users, bicyclists, and pedestrians, there are no notable gaps in the multimodal circulation network and the project would not impact the existing or planned facilities, as most proposed improvements are located on-site. The General Plan includes the following goals and policies relevant to new development regarding public transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities:

- T-J-1 Pursue implementation of walking and bicycling facilities as envisioned in the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.
- T-J-4 Provide street trees to enhance the city's livability and to provide identity to neighborhoods and districts.
- T-K-3 Orient building plans and pedestrian facilities to allow for easy pedestrian access from streets, sidewalks, transit stops, and other pedestrian facilities, in addition to access from parking lots.
- T-K-4 Require construction of attractive pedestrian walkways and areas in new residential, commercial, office, and industrial developments. Provide landscaping or other appropriate buffers between sidewalks and heavily traveled vehicular traffic lanes, as well as through and to parking lots. Include pedestrian amenities to encourage and facilitate walking.
- T-L-1 Provide bicycle lanes along all regional/arterial streets and high volume transitional/collector streets.
- T-L-4 Maintain all roadways and bicycle-related facilities so they provide safe and comfortable conditions for bicyclists.
- T-L-5 Consider bicycle operating characteristics and safety needs in the design for roadways, intersections, and traffic control systems.
- T-L-8 Require new development to dedicate land and/or construct/install bicycle facilities and provide bicycle parking as specified in the Zoning Code, where a rough proportionality to demand from the project is established. Facilities such as showers and bicycle storage shall also be considered.

Fountaingrove Parkway serves as a major arterial in northeastern Santa Rosa. It is characterized by continuous sidewalks and street lighting along the project frontage. The project is located adjacent to the signalized intersection at Stagecoach Road, which includes pedestrian crossing facilities. Most streets in the vicinity of the project also have continuous sidewalks along both sides of the street. There are Class I shared-use paths along Fountaingrove Parkway and Class II bike lanes on Stagecoach Road adjacent to the project site. There are two transit stops for Santa Rosa CityBus Route 19 within 500 feet of the project site.

This project would align with the goals and policies set for roadway networks outlined in the General Plan provided the surrounding circulation system remains safe and efficient. The adjacent walking and bicycling facilities are consistent with the city's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan and no further bikeway/pedestrian projects are proposed in the area. By maintaining the shared-use paths and bike lanes surrounding the site, the project remains consistent with Policies T-J-1, T-L-1, and T-L-4. The design of the station should include street trees, attractive walkways, sidewalk buffers and bicycle/ pedestrian facilities to be consistent with Policies T-J-4, T-K-4, and T-L-8. The orientation of the station and bicycle operating characteristic should be thoughtfully treated to ensure the project conforms to Policies T-K-3 and T-L-5.

Mitigation T-1: The project should be designed to conform to or be consistent with the Policies as set forth in the City's General Plan. Implementation of this mitigation would make the impact less than significant.

b) *Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?*

Less-than-significant impact. CEQA Guidelines §15064.3, subdivision (b) indicate that land use projects would have a significant impact if the project resulted in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) exceeding an applicable threshold of significance. VMT thresholds for this analysis were established based on guidance provided by the California Office of Planning and Research publication *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA*, December 2018, as well as the *Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Guidelines Final Draft* issued by the City of Santa Rosa in June 2020. Both documents contain guidance indicating that projects expected to generate fewer than 110 trips per day may generally be assumed to cause a less-than-significant VMT impact. Because the trips associated with the fire station that was destroyed by the Tubbs Fire are essentially being replaced, only the community room, which is the only part of the new fire station that is not a replacement for the station that was lost, was considered in evaluating VMT.

Using the rates published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) in the *Trip Generation Manual* for the “Community Center” (Land Use 495), it was estimated that the new community center would generate an average of 51 new trips per day. The estimated trip generation for the project is shown in Table 1. Because the project would be expected to generate fewer than 110 new trips per day it can reasonably be assumed to have a less-than-significant impact on VMT.

Table 1 – Trip Generation Summary

Land Use	Rooms	Daily		AM Peak Hour				PM Peak Hour			
		Rate	Trips	Rate	Trips	In	Out	Rate	Trips	In	Out
Community Center	1,761 ksf	28.82	51	1.76	3	2	1	2.31	4	2	2

Note: ksf = 1,000 square feet

c) *Would the project substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible use?*

Less-than-significant impact. The proposed project would take access from new driveways on both Fountaingrove Parkway and Stagecoach Road. Both streets have median dividers that currently limit access to adjacent parcels to right turns in and out. It is noted that within the vicinity of the proposed project Fountaingrove Parkway has a north-south alignment while Stagecoach Road is oriented east-west; these directions are used in the following discussion.

The Fountaingrove Parkway driveway would be located about 140 feet south of the crosswalk at the signalized intersection with Stagecoach Road. This new driveway would be limited to right turns in and out but would be about 80 feet further from the crosswalk than the existing driveway, providing additional separation from the signalized intersection and therefore less conflict. The proposed new driveway would be expected to provide an improvement in terms of design features over the existing driveway location.

Four driveways are proposed on Stagecoach Road. The westernmost would be about 55 feet from the crosswalk at Fountaingrove Parkway and would serve outbound movements only from two fire truck bays and both inbound and outbound movements from a third bay while the middle driveway, located about 130 feet east of the crosswalk, would serve both inbound and outbound movements. To allow fire trucks responding to an emergency to gain access to Fountaingrove Parkway from the fire truck bays, breaks in the median island at each of the driveways are proposed. Additionally, warning signs with flashing lights would be installed to notify westbound traffic in advance of the driveway during a fire apparatus pre-emption. The remaining two driveways would serve an overflow parking lot. A full-access driveway would be located opposite an existing full-access driveway to a mixed use development that was also destroyed in the Tubbs Fire and at the west end of the parking lot, where only right turns in and out would be allowed.

The two easterly driveways at the overflow parking lot would operate in a manner typical of other driveways along this road and are therefore not expected to introduce any potential hazards due to a design feature. Because the designs for the two westerly driveways includes openings in the median island, these two driveways were evaluated in greater detail.

The easterly site driveway would serve both inbound and outbound movements, with left turns accommodated via an opening in the median. As part of the project the westbound left-turn pocket would be extended to accommodate fire trucks turning left to enter the site. Consideration was given to potential conflicts associated with making left turns outbound from this easterly site driveway, assuming that such movements would be made primarily by employees in their personal vehicles and not fire trucks. From the driveway location there is adequate visibility of oncoming traffic from both the east and the west, including vehicles turning onto Stagecoach Road from Fountaingrove Parkway, allowing drivers to turn left across Stagecoach Road to travel west toward Fountaingrove Parkway. This driveway would therefore be expected to operate acceptably.

Finally, the westernmost driveway on Stagecoach Road would serve egress by fire trucks, including those turning left to access Fountaingrove Parkway. Because fire trucks exiting the fire station will typically be initiating an emergency response, it is imperative that they be given priority over other traffic. This is accomplished through use of emergency pre-emption timing at traffic signals, including the one adjacent to the site at Fountaingrove Parkway/Stagecoach Road. The pre-emption timing would clear westbound traffic from the approach to Fountaingrove Parkway, creating an open roadway for the fire trucks' use. Use of pre-emption signal timing in conjunction with warning signs and lights activated to flash when a firetruck is preparing to exit will allow this driveway to operate acceptably.

d) Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?

Less-than-significant impact. Due to the loss of the fire station further east along Fountaingrove Parkway during the Tubbs Fire, the surrounding area has experienced diminished fire response compared to conditions that existed when the fire station was operational. The proposed project will replace this facility, restoring improved response times to the surrounding area. The project has been designed to ensure that fire trucks can readily leave the site and travel in all directions from the site through the design of the western driveway on Stagecoach Road. The project would therefore have a beneficial impact on emergency vehicle response times and a less-than-significant impact on emergency access.

Thank you for giving W-Trans the opportunity to provide these services. Please call if you have any questions.

Sincerely,


Dalene J. Whitlock, PE, PTOE
Senior Principal

DJW/djw/SRO560.L1

