

California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 4
OFFICE OF TRANSIT AND COMMUNITY PLANNING
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February 8, 2022



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Zachary Dahl, Director
Community Development Department
City of San Mateo
330 West 20th Avenue
San Mateo, CA 94403

Re: San Mateo General Plan Update Notice of Preparation (NOP)

Dear Zachary Dahl:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the San Mateo 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 2022 NOP.

Project Understanding

The project includes the preparation of the City of San Mateo General Plan Update. The update will guide the City's development and conservation through 2040. The update will add new and expanded policy topics to address the current requirements of State law, modernize the City's policy framework, and address land use mapping issues and inconsistencies. The project encompasses the entire City and is located along segments of State Route (SR)-82 (El Camino Real), SR-92, and United States Route (US)-101.

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 projects within the General Plan area meet 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 Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), which should include the following:

- VMT analysis pursuant to the City's 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 traffic safety issues to the State Transportation Network (STN) may be assessed by Caltrans via the Interim Safety Guidance.
- 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.

In addition, any improvements within the Caltrans' Right-of-Way (ROW) must follow Caltrans' process, policy, and design requirements. Any additional or re-zoning of improvements adjacent to Caltrans' ROW, including SR-82, SR-92, US-101, should include be included in the travel demand analysis with possible mitigation.

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:

- Addition/ Increase in number of affordable housing units in project;
- Orientation of projects towards non-auto corridor;
- Location of projects near bicycle network;
- Incorporation of bicycle lanes in street design;
- Pedestrian network improvements;
- Traffic calming measures;
- Implementation of a neighborhood electric vehicle (EV) networks, including designated parking spaces for EVs;
- Limiting parking supply;
- Unbundled parking;
- Implementation of Urban Non-Motorized Zone(s);
- Market price public parking;
- Ridesharing programs, Commute Trip Reduction programs, bike sharing programs;
- Transit and trip planning resources such as commute information kiosks;
- Real-time transit information system;
- Transit access supporting infrastructure (including bus shelter improvements and sidewalk/ crosswalk safety facilities);
- VMT Banking and/or Exchange program; and
- Bike parking near transit facilities.

Using a combination of strategies appropriate to this location 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 San Mateo 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 projects with the General Plan area, 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.

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

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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.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Leong". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal tail stroke.

MARK LEONG
District Branch Chief
Local Development Review

c: State Clearinghouse