

## California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 4  
OFFICE OF TRANSIT AND COMMUNITY PLANNING  
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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

**Feb 23 2022**

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**STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**

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Christy Usher, AICP, Senior Planner  
City of South San Francisco  
315 Maple Avenue  
South San Francisco, CA 94549

### **Re: Pointe Grand Life Science Research and Development Campus Project Notice of Preparation (NOP)**

Dear Christy Usher:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Pointe Grand Life Science Research and Development Campus 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 site is currently developed with 11 pharmaceutical or biotechnology research and development (R&D) office structures. The proposed project includes the demolition of six of the existing structures, which comprise 333,340 square feet of space, five existing structures, totaling 293,970 square feet, would remain. The demolished structures would be replaced with three laboratory and office structures of varying heights between six and ten stories, a two-story amenity building, and two parking structures. New structures along with the existing structures retained would total 1,329,490 square feet and would result in a net increase in built area of 702,180 square feet. The project would also involve the construction of pedestrian paths throughout the project site, connecting with arrival points of transit and parking structures. The project includes 3,791 parking spaces, exceeding the required 2,962 parking spaces. The project is located within the East of 101 Area Plan and roughly 0.6 miles east of the United States Route (US)-101/Grand Avenue interchange in South San Francisco.

### **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 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 alignment 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.
- 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:

- Orientation of project towards non-auto corridor;
- Incorporation of bicycle lanes in street design;
- Pedestrian network improvements;
- 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;
- Market price public parking;
- Ridesharing programs, Commute Trip Reduction programs, bike sharing programs;
- 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;
- Bike parking near transit facilities.
- Employer-based vanpool; and/or
- Telecommuting programs and alternative work schedules

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**

Please identify project-generated travel demand and estimate the costs of transit and active transportation improvements necessitated by the proposed project; viable funding sources such as development and/or transportation impact fees should also be identified. We encourage a sufficient allocation of fair share contributions toward multi-modal 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.

**Lead Agency**

As the Lead Agency, the City of South San Francisco 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.

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](mailto:LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



MARK LEONG  
District Branch Chief  
Local Development Review

c: State Clearinghouse