

California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 1
P.O. BOX 3700 | EUREKA, CA 95502-3700
(707) 445-6600 | FAX (707) 441-6314 TTY 711
www.dot.ca.gov



December 5, 2022

1-HUM-101-86.94
Cal Poly Humboldt Student Housing
SCH#2022030008

Ms. Dierdre Clem
California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt
Planning, Design, & Construction
Facilities Management
1 Harpst Street
Arcata, CA 95521

Dear Ms. Dierdre Clem:

Thank you for giving Caltrans the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to develop student housing for California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt (Cal Poly Humboldt). The project would include the development of up to 964 student beds in approximately 240 apartment-style, student residence units. The project site is located near the intersection of the St. Louis Road and U.S. Highway 101 (US 101) overcrossing, approximately 0.5 mile north of Cal Poly Humboldt. We offer the following comments for your consideration:

Hydrology

With respect to the physical improvements at the Craftsman Mall/project site, we note that Caltrans has a two-foot diameter culvert at US 101 postmile 87.26 that discharges to the area that is planned as parking in the southeast corner of the planned project. The expectation is that storms will become more intense with climate change which may result in the need to increase the diameter of this culvert to accommodate an increase in storm water runoff. If stormwater quantities do increase over time, Caltrans will continue to accept and convey storm water at this location. We note that storm water will be retained on-site, however we suggest that the parking and water conveyance facilities be designed to ensure that the potential increase in flow rates can be accommodated.

The DEIR discusses the cumulative effects from Cal Poly Humboldt's enrollment increases on transportation and it notes the location and scale of other campus educational and student housing facilities. We have not evaluated the potential impacts of increased stormwater runoff from increased development on campus as this review appears to be for the proposed new housing to the west of 101 only. The cumulative impacts of additional stormwater runoff with Cal Poly Humboldt

infrastructure improvements do not appear to have been addressed. We offer to work with Cal Poly Humboldt to evaluate any needed improvements to US 101 cross drains as a result of increased impervious surfaces.

Transportation

As it relates to State priorities to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled that result from new development, we support the project objectives as described in E.S.2.3, particularly with respect to providing additional housing near existing and planned mobility infrastructure (i.e., pedestrian and bicycle facilities and transit) to reduce vehicle trips, vehicle miles travelled, and parking demand; and to support and advance Cal Poly Humboldt's educational mission by guiding the physical development of housing proximate to campus to accommodate gradual student enrollment growth up to a future enrollment of 12,000 full-time-equivalent students per the 2004 Master Plan while preserving and enhancing the quality of campus life.

We concur with the conclusions of the Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) assessment; that the student housing project is expected to result in insignificant levels of VMT. We recognize and appreciate Cal Poly Humboldt's efforts to contribute toward the State's Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission reduction goals and to incorporate multimodal travel into the design and mitigation for the project. We offer to partner with Cal Poly Humboldt, the City of Arcata, and other local transportation stakeholders to ensure that students have safe and accessible modes of travel to and from the University campus.

The following insights are offered for further consideration with the proposed mitigation efforts or as part of Cal Poly Humboldt's ongoing transportation center/Travel Demand Management (TDM) program. The recommendations are not CEQA-required mitigation measures for this project, but may contribute towards other campus-expansion projects:

- The DEIR Appendix A, NOP project description on page 5 (pdf p. 300) proposes a bus/shuttle stop along the project site, as stated here: "...In addition, the project would include creation of a bus/shuttle stop at the St. Louis Road turnaround, located along the eastern boundary of the project site." (DEIR App A, p.5, pdf p. 300)." While the concept from the NOP was not carried through to the DEIR project concept and mitigation, we encourage Cal Poly Humboldt to provide a transit bus or shuttle stop for the project site, with or without coordinated HTA service. The transit facility should include an all-weather bus shelter, signage, lighting, ADA and other improvements.
- Cal Poly Humboldt is encouraged to work with Caltrans and the City of Arcata to further improve a connection between the Annie & Mary Trail and campus,

as well as pedestrian and bicycle access along Sunset Avenue at LK Wood Boulevard and H Streets should be considered.

- As part of the mitigation proposal to provide a connected bicycle and pedestrian facility to LK Wood Blvd via St. Louis Road, we recommend extending the southbound bike lane from St Louis Road beyond where the bike lane ends at Granite Ave to the intersection at Sunset Ave. If there is an intent for cyclists destined for the University campus to exit LK Wood right-of-way at Granite Ave, please consider working with the City of Arcata to provide an intersection crossing treatment to protect bicyclists making left turns across uncontrolled travel lanes in the north- and southbound directions.
- We encourage Cal Poly Humboldt to add a parking study and parking management to the suite of existing Travel Demand Management (TDM) measures already employed for students, faculty, and staff.

Feel free to contact me with questions or for further assistance with the comments provided at (707) 684-6879 or by email at: <jesse.robertson@dot.ca.gov>.

Sincerely,

Jesse G. Robertson

Jesse Robertson
Transportation Planning
Caltrans District 1

e-copy: State Clearinghouse
Marianne Lowenthal, Ascent Environmental
Netra Khatri, City Engineer, City of Arcata
Greg Pratt, General Manager, Humboldt Transit Authority