

California Department of Transportation

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

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STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

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Tess Tyler, Senior Project Manager
San Francisco Creek Joint Powers Authority
2100 Geng Rd., Suite 201
Palo Alto, CA 94303

Re: SAFER Bay Project, Notice of Preparation (NOP) for a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)

Dear Tess Tyler:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the SAFER Bay 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 April 2022 NOP.

Project Understanding

The Project proposes to restore former salt production ponds, Pond R1 and Pond R2, located in the Ravenswood Complex, as part of the SAFER Bay Project. The restoration scenarios include tidal marsh or a combination of tidal marsh and managed ponds. The Project will construct levees, floodwalls and other flood protection features necessary to enable the restoration of tidal action to these ponds and includes design and construction of the pond restoration itself to mitigate the Project's impacts to jurisdictional wetlands and aquatic habitats. The Project also proposes to increase the diversity of habitat by building tidal salt marsh-upland transition zone habitat (transition zone habitat) on the bayward slope of appropriate segments of levee adjacent to existing and/or restored tidal salt marsh. In addition, the Project proposes to enhance recreational access to the shoreline by creating new sections of the Bay Trail and by placing existing sections of the Bay Trail atop new levees where they will be less susceptible to flooding.

Climate Change Planning

Caltrans acknowledges that this NOP recognizes the potential impacts of sea level rise may on transportation facilities located in the project area, primarily SR-84 and the Dumbarton Bridge West Approach. Executive Order (EO) S-13-08 directs State agencies planning construction projects in areas vulnerable to sea level rise to begin planning for potential impacts by considering a range of sea level rise scenarios for years 2050 and 2100. Higher water levels may increase erosion rates, change environmental characteristics that affect material durability, lead to increased groundwater levels, and change sediment movement along shores and at estuaries and river mouths, as well as affect soil pore pressure at dikes and levees on which transportation facilities are constructed. These factors, among others, must be addressed through geotechnical and hydrological studies conducted in coordination with Caltrans. Caltrans encourages multi-agency collaboration with partner agencies to achieve multi-benefit approaches to protect bayfront development, infrastructure, and assets from sea level rise and other climate change impacts. Partnership can help distribute potential mitigation costs while balancing environmental justice concerns to achieve equitable adaptation solutions.

Caltrans requests and analysis that fully addresses the projected sea level rise of 3.5 ft and flooding concerns from such rise. Additionally, please address how the proposed flood protection measures, such as floodwalls, may conflict with existing State drainage facilities. Include all existing State and local drainage facilities on the plans. Proposed drainage/flooding design changes need to address any drainage-related conflicts. Please coordinate with Caltrans to address drainage solutions and potential drainage concerns in the project area.

Include an explanation of how the proposed flood protection facilities (floodwalls, levees, flood gates, pump stations, etc.) will be maintained and how resources (funding, personnel) for maintenance of such facilities will be allocated or made available. Consideration of regular maintenance of flood protection facilities is an integral part of a successful flood protection management plan.

Lead Agency

As the Lead Agency, the County 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 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.

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>.

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,



MARK LEONG
District Branch Chief
Local Development Review

c: State Clearinghouse