

California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 4
OFFICE OF TRANSIT AND COMMUNITY PLANNING
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May 26, 2022



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Will Gibson, Planner III
San Mateo County, Planning & Building Dept
455 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063

Re: North Fair Oaks Rezoning and General Plan Amendment Project Notice of Preparation (NOP) for a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)

Dear Will Gibson:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the North Fair Oaks Rezoning 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

In order to promote infill development along commercial and transportation corridors, this project proposes more effective zoning by revising provisions that are difficult to administer with objective standards, refining development application and review procedures. As well, this project would increase capacity for housing in the project area by modifying General Plan designations and zoning standards to potentially allow greater density.

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 this area meet the screening criteria established in the County's adopted Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) policy to be presumed to have a less-than-significant VMT impact and exempt from detailed VMT analysis, those projects will need to provide justification to support the exempt status in alignment with the County's VMT policy. If projects do not meet the screening criteria, they will need to include a detailed VMT analysis.

Mitigation Strategies

Location efficiency factors, including community design and regional accessibility, influence a project's impact on the environment. Using Caltrans' Smart Mobility Framework Guide 2020 ([link](#)), this area is identified as an Urban Community where community design is moderately efficient and regional accessibility is strong.

Given the place, type and size of the project, the DEIR should support robust Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Programs 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:

- Project design to encourage mode shift like walking, bicycling and transit access;
- Transit and trip planning resources such as a commute information kiosk;
- Real-time transit information systems;
- Transit access supporting infrastructure (including bus shelter improvements and sidewalk/ crosswalk safety facilities);
- New development vehicle parking reductions;
- Implementation of a neighborhood electric vehicle (EV) network, including designated parking spaces for EVs;
- Designated parking spaces for a car share program;
- Unbundled parking;
- Wayfinding and bicycle route mapping resources;
- Participation/Formation in/of a Transportation Management Association (TMA) in partnership with other developments in the area;
- Aggressive trip reduction targets with Lead Agency monitoring and enforcement;
- VMT Banking and/or Exchange program;
- Area or cordon pricing;
- Inclusion of additional below-market-rate or affordable residential housing options in the Plan.

Using a combination of strategies appropriate to this area 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 projects within this area do 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 County and local partners to secure the funding for needed mitigation. Traffic mitigation- or cooperative agreements are examples of such measures.

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 projects within this area, those facilities must meet American Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards after project completion. As well, those projects 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' Right of Way (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

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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,

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

MARK LEONG
District Branch Chief
Local Development Review

c: State Clearinghouse