

California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 4
OFFICE OF REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY PLANNING
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Ashley James, Senior Planner
City of Berkeley
1947 Center Street, 2nd Floor
Berkeley, CA 94704

Re: Gilman Gateway Rezone Project – Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)

Dear Ashley James:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Gilman Gateway Rezone Project. The Local Development Review (LDR) Program reviews land use projects and plans to ensure consistency with our mission and state planning priorities. The following comments are based on our review of the October 2024 DEIR.

Please note this correspondence does not indicate an official position by Caltrans on this project and is for informational purposes only.

Project Understanding

The proposed project would create a new zoning district referred to as Manufacturing, Research and Development (M-RD) and would rezone the 11.54 acre project site to that zoning district which that would permit a variety of uses, including office, industrial and heavy commercial, laboratory, light manufacturing, and research and development (R&D). The Berkeley General Plan and West Berkeley Plan will be amended to include the new zoning designation. Demolition and reconstruction of the project site would allow up to 1,005,266 square feet of non-residential space. At least one historic property on the site would not be demolished. The project site is adjacent to Interstate (I)-580.

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 Vehicle

Miles Traveled (VMT) analysis for land use projects, please review Caltrans' Transportation Impact Study Guide ([link](#)).

The project VMT analysis and significance determination are undertaken in a manner consistent with the Office of Planning and Research's Technical Advisory. Per the DEIR, this project is found to have a less than significant VMT impact, therefore working towards meeting the State's VMT reduction goals.

Caltrans acknowledges the DEIR recommending mitigation strategies identified in Alameda County VMT Reduction Estimator Tool to help reduce VMT and improve multimodal transportation options for land use development. The proposed measures identified in the Alameda County VMT Reduction Estimator Tool should be documented with annual monitoring reports to demonstrate effectiveness.

Also, please note that there may be other VMT mitigation options for the lead agency's consideration if onsite TDM measures cannot mitigate a project's VMT impact to a less-than-significant level, such as VMT-based Transportation Impact Fee program, VMT Mitigation Exchange program, and VMT Mitigation Bank. Some local jurisdictions and county transportation authorities have been successfully awarded funds through Caltrans' Sustainable Transportation Planning program to study those options. Please look at the grant program website ([link](#)) for more detail information if interested.

Hydrology

Please ensure that any increase in storm water runoff to State Drainage Systems or Facilities be treated, contained on project site, and metered to preconstruction levels.

If the project involves drainage work that flows into the State Drainage System, please provide a drainage design memo showing how the proposed drainage system flows on the Plans. The drainage design memo should include pre- and post- project flows to the existing drainage system. The Drainage Plan and Profile Sheets should include lengths, size, and types of new and existing pipes, inlets, outlets, and systems showing any utility conflicts. Please include drainage details and profiles for connection to the existing drainage system. Any assumptions and calculations used in designing the drainage system should be shown.

Thank you again for including Caltrans in the environmental review process. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Melissa Hernandez, Associate Transportation Planner, via LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov.

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For future early coordination opportunities or project referrals, please visit Caltrans LDR website ([link](#)) or contact LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Marley Mathews

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Branch Chief, Local Development Review
Office of Regional and Community Planning

c: State Clearinghouse