

# California Department of Transportation

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT 10 DIRECTOR  
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August 13, 2024

**10-MER-99-PM 15.312**  
**Merced intermodal Track Connection Project (MITC)**  
**SCH#2023010061**

Dan Leavitt  
San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority  
949 East Channel Street  
Stockton, CA 95202

Dear Mr. Leavitt:

The California Department of Transportation appreciates the opportunity to review the DEIR for the Merced Intermodal Track Connection Project. The Project would include a new track connection from the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) corridor to the proposed integrated Merced High-Speed Rail (HSR) Station in downtown Merced between O and R Streets, in addition to a new platform that would allow for cross-platform transfer between the San Joaquin's passenger rail and HSR. The Project only includes the construction of the track connection; it does not include the construction of the proposed integrated Merced HSR Station. The project is located The Department has the following comments.

1. Please submit a Traffic Impact Study (TIS) to Caltrans for review and comment prior to project approval. The Merced Intermodal Track Connection Project (MITC)'s proposed at-grade crossing at Cooper Ave just west of State Route 59/16<sup>th</sup> Street intersection will potentially create safety and operational impacts on SR 59 at the intersection of Cooper Ave/Willowbrook Dr. The TIS is required to determine how this intersection may otherwise be affected by the proposed project, particularly as it relates to safety of the traveling public. The analysis must include a safety analysis approach that reduces risks to all road users and focuses on multi-modal conflict analysis. In addition, it must focus on queuing, potential conflicts, and impacts due to the proposed new at-grade crossing.
2. The queue analysis in the TIS needs to include the following:
  - a. The analysis scenarios should include Existing Traffic Condition, Opening Year Condition, Design Year Condition (usually 20 years from Opening Year)
  - b. The study must include the intersection at SR 59/Cooper Ave/Willowbrook Dr.
  - c. Please use Synchro/SimTraffic Version 12 for the analysis. The electronic files of Synchro/SimTraffic analysis must be submitted with the TIS for review as well.
  - d. The analysis needs to include the raw traffic count data (including heavy vehicles and pedestrians), figures to show traffic volumes (AM/PM) peaks for each studied scenario, and Synchro/SimTraffic results
  - e. The proposed new at-grade crossing at Cooper Ave just west of the SR 59/16<sup>th</sup> Street intersection and the frequency of train crossing need to be coded into the Synchro/SimTraffic analysis.

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3. Currently, the City of Merced proposes to widen the SR 59 from two-lane to four-lane from W. 16<sup>th</sup> St to Black Rascal Creek. The project applicant needs to contact the City of Merced for the status of the City's project and incorporate this City's improvement into the TIS's applicable studied scenarios.
4. Caltrans recommends a Complete Streets approach to planning this development and the surrounding area that promotes bicycle and pedestrian connectivity. This would include facilities such as crosswalks, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes.
5. Caltrans recommends that the development and nearby destinations include public parks and facilities necessary to accommodate alternate modes of transportation such as bus stops and shelters, bike racks, park-and-ride lots, and solar charging stations for electric vehicles.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (209) 483-2582 or Nicholas Fung at (209) 986-1552.

Sincerely,



Tom Dumas  
Chief, Office of Metropolitan Planning