

California Department of Transportation

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

May 8, 2023

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STATE CLEARING HOUSE

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Afifa Awan, Senior Environmental Scientist
State Lands commission
100 Howe Avenue, Suite 100-South
Sacramento, CA 95825

Re: San Francisco Bay Fiber Optic Cables Project – Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND)

Dear Afifa Awan,

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the San Francisco Bay Fiber Optic Cables 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 2023 Draft IS/MND.

Project Understanding

The Project would install two nonlinear, parallel, and close-together fiber optic cables across San Francisco Bay from a landing vault in Brisbane to a landing vault in San Leandro. The two fiber optic cables would be installed using horizontal direction drilling from the landing vault locations into the San Francisco Bay before being exiting the bay floor and being buried using a jet sled across most of the route in San Francisco Bay. The western cable landing site would be located adjacent to US-101.

Construction-Related Impacts

Project work that requires movement of oversized or excessive load vehicles on State roadways requires a transportation permit that is issued by Caltrans. To apply, visit: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/transportation-permits>. Prior to construction, coordination may be required with Caltrans to develop a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) to reduce construction traffic impacts to the State Transportation Network (STN).

State Drainage System

The IS/MND does not specify the burial depth of the cable conduit crossing beneath US-101. The State drainage system is typically installed between 6 to 10 feet below the roadway surface. The project engineer should survey the existing State drainage facilities to determine their depths and locations in the affected area.

All proposed fiber optic cable conduit lines must cross and pass beneath the State drainage facilities to avoid any potential conflicts. The minimum vertical clearance of 2 feet is required between the top of the cable conduit and the flowline of the State drainage facilities, including drainage channels, drainage ditches and culverts.

Utilities

Any utilities that are proposed, moved, or modified within Caltrans' Right-of-Way (ROW) shall be discussed. If utilities are impacted by the project, provide site plans that show the location of existing and/or proposed utilities. These modifications require a Caltrans-issued encroachment permit.

Lead Agency

As the Lead Agency, the California State Land Commissions is responsible for all project mitigation, including any needed improvements to the 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

The IS/MND mentions that the applicant would obtain an encroachment permit from Caltrans for the western cable landing site. 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

Afifa Awan, Senior Environmental Scientist
May 8, 2023
Page 3

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 "Luo Yunsheng". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

YUNSHENG LUO
Acting District Branch Chief
Local Development Review

c: State Clearinghouse