

California Department of Transportation

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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Jul 12 2023

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

July 12, 2023

Torie F. Gibson, Ed.D., Superintendent
Amador County Unified School District
217 Rex Avenue
Jackson, CA 95642

**Notice of Preparation
Amador County Unified
School District
SCH 2023060568**

Dear Dr. Gibson:

Caltrans appreciates the opportunity to review and respond to the Amador County Unified School District (ACUSD) Notice of Preparation for the proposed School Consolidation project, affecting ACUSD's school campuses, including Amador High School, Sutter School, Jackson Junior High School, Lone Elementary School, Jackson Elementary School, and the Sutter Creek Elementary School.

ACUSD provides preschool through 12th grade and adult education services to Amador County. The ACUSD is considering a program to consolidate eight schools onto six campuses. Sutter Creek Primary School and Lone Elementary School will be closed for later disposition.

ACUSD proposes to combine Amador High School (HS) and Argonaut HS at Argonaut HS. This would change the enrollment capacity from 925 students to 1,325 students; the school would continue to serve grades 9 through 12. This campus would have site and building improvements to accommodate the increase in enrollment including adding a two-story 10-classroom building (with 4 science labs and 6 standard classrooms), relocate 5 portable classrooms from Jackson Junior HS and Lone Elementary School to this campus, convert 2 preschool classrooms to regular classrooms, convert a classroom for counseling office, renovate and expand the kitchen, and renovate and expand gymnasium locker rooms. The campus would have a new parent drop-off, new access road connecting to Stony Creek Road, and accessibility compliance improvements throughout the campus.

Also proposed is to combine Lone Junior HS and Jackson Junior HS at Amador HS. This change would not affect the enrollment capacity (875 students) of the campus nor the number of teaching stations (35 teaching stations). The campuses would serve grades 7 through 8 instead teaching stations (35 teaching stations).

Also proposed is to relocate Lone Elementary School to Lone Junior HS and would add preschool and transitional kindergarten (TK), and grades 1 through 5, to the campus. This would change the enrollment capacity of the campus from 775 students serving grades 6 through 8 to 801 students serving preschool and grades TK through 6. This campus would also have site and building improvements to accommodate the increase in enrollment including adding 2 new classroom buildings and playground for preschool, TK, and Extending Learning; convert science labs to kindergarten classrooms; and convert restrooms to kindergarten restrooms. Also planned is expanding the parent drop-off/pick-up areas, the kindergarten drop-off area, the kitchen, and construct a new play structure and hardcourt areas.

Jackson Junior HS would be converted into the County Preschool Center. This would change the enrollment capacity and grade levels from 475 students in grades 6 through 8 to 195 preschool and transitional kindergarten students. The number of teaching stations would decrease from 19 to 15. Restrooms and fountains would be converted to age-appropriate fixtures.

ASUCD would add 6th grade to Jackson Elementary School. The enrollment capacity of 575 students and 23 teaching stations would remain the same.

Expansion is planned for Sutter Creek Elementary School to create a TK through 6th grade campus. This would increase the enrollment capacity from 325 students in grades TK through 2 to 625 students in grades TK through 6. To accommodate the increase in students, a new classroom building with 12 classrooms and a lunch shelter would be constructed.

The project areas include Amador City, Lone, Jackson, Plymouth, Sutter Creek, and unincorporated regions within the County.

Caltrans at this time has the following comments:

Environmental

If any construction-related activities encroach into Caltrans Right of Way (ROW), the project proponent must apply for an Encroachment Permit to the Caltrans District 10 Encroachment Permit Office. All California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation, with supporting technical studies, must be submitted with the Encroachment Permit Application. These studies will analyze potential impacts to any cultural sites, historic properties, biological resources, hazardous waste locations, scenic highways, and/or other environmental resources within Caltrans ROW at the project site(s).

Hydrology

We request to review the pre- and post-construction runoff calculations and drainage plans to understand flow patterns. Once drainage plans and calculations are submitted for Argonaut High School, Lone Jr. High School, and Sutter Creek Elementary School improvements, additional review will be done.

Traffic Operations

Senate Bill 743 is changing the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis of transportation impacts. It requires local land use projects to provide a safe transportation system, reduce per capita Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), increase accessibility by mode share of bicycle, pedestrian, and transit travel, and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. VMT reduction is necessary to meet the statewide GHG. Caltrans recommends VMT per capital thresholds are 15% below existing regional VMT per capita. A Traffic Impact Study (TIS) will need to include VMT analysis (including induced travel demand) to determine the significance of those impacts and identify potential mitigation measures. Caltrans also recommends the establishment of programs or methods to reduce VMT and support appropriate bicycle, pedestrian, and transit infrastructure.

This project may significantly change traffic patterns. Thus, a VMT study will be required for CEQA analysis. The VMT study should include VMT mitigation measures. Some possible VMT mitigation measures include school buses, shuttle buses, transit bus programs, and bike & pedestrian facility improvement that promotes walking & biking to school.

- In addition to the VMT analysis, the proposed project needs to conduct the queue analysis at the intersections of State Route (SR) 49/Hoffman St, SR 49/Sutter St, and SR 88/Argonaut Lane to analyze the potential safety impacts of the project, as it may significantly change the traffic patterns. The queue analysis will determine if any left-turn/right-turn storages at these intersections can accommodate additional traffic generated from the proposed project.
- The queue analysis, at minimum, needs to provide the following:
 - Existing turning movement traffic count, including pedestrians/students (AM & PM peaks)
 - Trip generation and trip distribution of the proposed project, including the estimation of the number of students who will use crosswalks at SR 49/Hoffman St, SR 49/Sutter St, and SR 88/Argonaut Lane
 - Synchro/SimTraffic analysis

Caltrans suggest Amador County and ACUSD continue to coordinate and consult with Caltrans to identify and address potential cumulative transportation impacts that may occur from this project and other developments near this location. This will assist Caltrans in ensuring that traffic safety and quality standards are maintained for the traveling public on existing and future state transportation facilities.

Encroachment Permits

If any future project activities encroach into Caltrans ROW, the project proponent must submit an application for an Encroachment Permit to the Caltrans District 10 Encroachment Permit Office. Appropriate environmental studies must be submitted with this application. These studies will include an analysis of potential impacts to any cultural sites, biological resources, hazardous waste locations, and/or other resources within Caltrans ROW at the project site(s). For more information, please visit the Caltrans Website at: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/ep/applications>

If you have any question or would like to discuss these comments, please contact Paul Bauldry at (209) 670-9488 (email: paul.bauldry@dot.ca.gov) or me at (209) 483-7234 (email: Gregoria.Ponce@dot.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



Gregoria Ponce', Chief
Office of Rural Planning

c: Chuck Beatty, Director, Amador County Planning Department
State Clearinghouse