

California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 4
OFFICE OF REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY PLANNING
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Co/Rt/Pm: SM/VAR/VAR

Akanksha Chopra, Associate Planner
City of San Carlos
600 Elm Street
San Carlos, CA 94070

Re: 2045 General Plan Reset – Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)

Dear Akanksha Chopra:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the 2045 General Plan Reset. 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 January 2025 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 is an update to the City of San Carlos's 2030 General Plan to amend the buildout capacity. Citywide development projections for growth through 2045 include estimates of up to 8,300 new housing units, 15,620 new residents, 8,927,300 new nonresidential square footage, and 26,530 new employees. Sections of U.S. Route 101 (U.S. 101) and State Route (SR) 82 are within the San Carlos City limits and are likely to be impacted by future developments under the General Plan.

Travel Demand Analysis

The project vehicle miles traveled (VMT) analysis and significance determination are undertaken in a manner consistent with the City's adopted Transportation Significance Criteria. Under these criteria any development that produces 15 percent less than the regional average VMT per service population, per capita, and per employee is considered less than significant.

Per the DEIR, the proposed project VMT impacts were determined to be significant and unavoidable. Caltrans acknowledges that the DEIR has identified Mitigation Measure TRAN-2 to help mitigate potential VMT impacts from future developments by amending the City's Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program to increase the required trip reduction to the extent feasible. The City is encouraged to review the 2023 Caltrans Transportation Demand Management Toolbox ([link](#)), which may contain additional TDM requirements and incentives not already discussed in the City's TDM program and General Plan.

Please additionally note that the City and County Association of Governments of San Mateo County (C/CAG) recently published its Final Report for the VMT/Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Model Mitigation Program ([link](#)). The VMT/GHG Model Mitigation Program was awarded through Caltrans' Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program and intends to assist project sponsors and developers in identifying feasible options for mitigating VMT and GHG emission impacts of land use and VMT-inducing transportation projects in the County. The City is encouraged to collaborate with Caltrans and C/CAG to explore more citywide or regional VMT mitigation options where feasible.

Mitigation Strategies

Caltrans Smart Mobility Framework Guide defines a place type based on four physical elements: built form, land use, mobility options, and people. Based on the Smart Mobility Framework 2022, the proposed project area is identified as an urban community that typically consists of moderately dense urban design, that are mostly residential but with mixed-use centers. Housing is varied in density and type. Transit is available to connect neighborhoods to multiple destinations. Street networks are fine-grained with good connectivity for pedestrians and limited connectivity for bicyclists.

Please also consider the measures listed below, which are quantified by the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) and shown to have different efficiencies in reducing regional VMT:

- Integrate Affordable and Below Market Rate Housing
- Locate Developments in Area with High Destination Accessibility
- Improve Destination Accessibility in Underserved Areas
- Implement Transit-Supportive Roadway Treatments
- Dedicate Land for Bike Trails
- Construct or Improve Bike Boulevards
- Provide Secure Bike Parking, especially near transit
- Create Urban Non-motorized zones
- Provide Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure
- Implement Shared Vehicle Program (car/bike/E-bike/scooter)
- Limit Residential Parking Supply

- Implement Market Price Public Parking (On-Street)

Lead Agency

As the Lead Agency, the City 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.

Fair Share Contributions

We encourage a sufficient allocation of fair share contributions toward multi-modal 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 recommends the City encourage fair share contributions from future development projects to the following Plan Bay Area 2050 projects:

RTP ID	Title	Scope	Open Period	Funding* (millions)
21-T06-027	Corridor & Interchange Improvements US-101 San Mateo County	This program includes funding to implement interchange improvements at SR-92, 3rd Ave, Holly St, Peninsula Ave, Produce Ave, Sierra Point Pkwy, University Ave, Willow Rd, and Woodside Rd; and funding for a planning study to scope interchange improvements at Candlestick.	2021 – 2035	\$901
21-T10-078	BRT Modernization SamTrans El Camino Real	This program includes funding to implement BRT improvements to existing bus service along El Camino Real from Daly City BART to Palo Alto Caltrain Station. Improvements include frequency upgrades (15-minute peak headways), dedicated lanes (45% of route), transit priority infrastructure and transit signal priority.	2036 - 2050	\$352
21-T12-119	Express Bus Service Expansion SamTrans	This program includes funding to implement new express bus service along US-101 and I-280 (on express lanes where available) from Foster City, San Mateo and Burlingame to Downtown San Francisco; from San Mateo and Palo Alto to Western San Francisco; and from San Bruno to	2021 - 2035	\$478

"Provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment."

		Sunnyvale. Improvements include park-and-ride facilities, ramp improvements and bus stop improvements (20-minute peak headways).		
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Multimodal Transportation Planning

Please review and include reference to the *Caltrans District 4 Pedestrian Plan (2021)* and the *Caltrans District 4 Bike Plan (2018)* in the DEIR. These two plans studied existing conditions for walking and biking along and across the STN in the nine-county Bay Area and developed a list of location-based and prioritized needs.

Please note that any Complete Streets reference should be updated to reflect Caltrans Director’s Policy 37 ([link](#)) that highlights the importance of addressing the needs of non-motorists and prioritizing space-efficient forms of mobility, while also facilitating goods movement in a manner with the least environmental and social impacts. This supersedes Deputy Directive 64-R1, and further builds upon its goals of focusing on the movement of people and goods.

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, please visit [Caltrans Transportation Permits \(link\)](#). Prior to construction, coordination may be required with Caltrans to develop a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) to reduce construction traffic impacts to the STN.

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

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.

The Office of Encroachment Permit requires 100% complete design plans and supporting documents to review and circulate the permit application package. The review and approval of encroachment projects is managed through the Encroachment Permits Office Process (EPOP) or the Project Delivery Quality Management Assessment Process (QMAP), depending on project scope, complexity,

and completeness of the application. Please use the following resources to determine the appropriate review process:

- TR-0416 Applicant's Checklist ([link](#))
- Flowchart, Figure 1.2 in Chapter 100 – The Permit Function, Caltrans Encroachment Permit Manual ([link](#))

The permit approval may take 30 days to 6 months or more depending on the project scope, size, complexity, completeness, compliance with policies and quality of the permit package submitted. Projects requiring exceptions to design standards or external agency approvals may need more time to process.

To obtain more information and download the permit application, please visit Caltrans Encroachment Permits ([link](#)). When the applicant is ready to pursue a Caltrans encroachment permit, please contact D4Permits@dot.ca.gov to initiate the process.

Thank you again for including Caltrans in the environmental review process. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Luana Chen, Transportation Planner, via LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov. For future early coordination opportunities or project referrals, please visit Caltrans LDR website ([link](#)) or contact LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



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

c: State Clearinghouse