

California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 4
OFFICE OF REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY PLANNING
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August 6, 2024

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Lisa Porras, Planning Manager
City of San Carlos
600 Elm Street
San Carlos, CA 94070-3085

Re: San Carlos Northeast Area Specific Plan – Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)

Dear Lisa Porras:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the San Carlos Northeast Area Specific Plan (NEASP). 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 July 2024 NOP.

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 to develop the NEASP, which will guide new development within the approximately 145-acre Plan area. The NEASP would be built out over an approximate 20-year period and would allow for a net increase of 1,890 residential units in the Plan area, where no residential units currently exist, as well as increase the net square footage of existing non-residential land uses. The Plan also proposes multi-modal transportation improvements. The Plan area is located between U.S. Route 101 (U.S. 101) and State Route 82 (SR-82) and is bound by U.S. 101 on its eastern side.

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](#)).

If the project meets the screening criteria established in the City's adopted VMT policy to be presumed to have a less-than-significant VMT impact and exempt from detailed VMT analysis, please provide justification to support the exempt status in alignment with the City's VMT policy. Projects that do not meet the screening criteria should include a detailed VMT analysis in the DEIR.

Multimodal Transportation Planning

Please review and include the 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 State Transportation Network (STN) in the nine-county Bay Area and developed a list of location-based and prioritized needs.

The *Caltrans District 4 Pedestrian Plan* identifies SR-82 as a high-priority area for pedestrian facility improvements and highlights the intersections of SR-82/Oak St and SR-82/5th Ave, as well as the Holly St and U.S. 101 overcrossing, all located near the project site, as in need of crossing improvements. Please consider incorporating higher visibility striping for any crosswalks planned within the project limits and installing "YIELD TO PEDS" signs as needed within the project limits.

The *Caltrans District 4 Bike Plan* identifies the SR-82/Holly St intersection as a high-priority area for bicycle crossing improvements. Please consider offering both short-term bicycle parking and long-term secure bike storage for the users of the new development facilities.

Please also review and include reference to the nearby Regional Transportation Planning (RTP) project for the U.S. 101 and Holly St Interchange Access Improvements under the *U.S. 101 South Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan* (2020). The project would convert existing full cloverleaf ramp configurations to a partial cloverleaf design by eliminating two of the existing loop off-ramps of the interchange, realign the diagonal on- and off-ramps into signalized T-intersections with local streets, and construct a new pedestrian and bicycle overcrossing on the south side of the Holly St interchange.

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

Potential impacts to the State ROW from project-related temporary access points should be analyzed. Mitigation for significant impacts due to construction and noise should be identified. 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.

Additionally, please note the following three Caltrans State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) projects within the vicinity of the project site that may pose a potential construction conflict. For future project coordination, please contact Rommel Pardo, Senior Project Manager of Program Project Management for San Mateo County at Rommel.Pardo@dot.ca.gov.

- *Project 04-2J73A* – pavement rehabilitation, upgrade guardrails, and bio monitoring along U.S. 101 near Cordilleras Creek Bridge.
- *Project 04-4W730* – Capital Maintenance (CAPM) Roadway Rehabilitation on SR-82 in San Mateo from 43rd Ave to Santa Inez Ave.
- *Project 04-1Q582* – CAPM Roadway Rehabilitation on U.S. 101 from the Santa Clara/San Mateo County line to South Airport Blvd.

Integrated Transportation and Land Use Planning

Transportation and housing are integrally connected. The NEASP development process provides a mechanism to reflect current transportation and land use policy and adopt efficient land-use strategies such as transit-oriented, infill and mixed-use developments that can potentially reduce vehicle miles traveled and address climate change.

Please review and include the reference to the current California Transportation Plan (CTP) in the DEIR. CTP 2050 envisions that the majority of new housing located near existing housing, jobs, and transit, and in close proximity to one another will reduce vehicle travel and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and be accessible and affordable for all Californians, including disadvantaged and low-income communities. The location, density, and affordability of future housing will dictate much of our future travel patterns, and our ability to achieve the vision outlined in CTP 2050. Caltrans encourages the City to consider and explore the potential of excess state-owned property for affordable housing development, per Executive Order N-06-19.

Caltrans looks forward to reviewing the DEIR that should demonstrate how the future housing development patterns align with the City's adopted VMT policies. Caltrans supports collaboration with local agencies to work towards a safe, functional, interconnected, multi-modal transportation network integrated through efficient and equitable land use planning and policies. The City should also continue to coordinate with Caltrans to identify and implement necessary network improvements and impact mitigation.

Aeronautics

One of the goals of the Caltrans Aeronautics Program, is to assist cities, counties, and Airport Land Use Commissions or their equivalent (ALUC), to understand and comply with the State Aeronautics Act pursuant to the California Public Utilities Code (PUC), Section 21001 et seq.

The proposed project is in Safety Zone 6 (Traffic Pattern Zone), with a portion of the Project site in Safety Zone 3 (Inner Turning Zone) of the San Carlos Airport, established by the San Mateo County ALUC pursuant to Section 21675(c). Therefore, the proposed Project shall adhere to the safety and land use criteria and restrictions defined in the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) formed by the ALUC pursuant to the PUC Section 21674 and Section 21676 and may be subject to review authority by the ALUC.

A portion of the project site is also in the 60 decibel (dB) community noise level contour (CNEL) of the Future Conditions (2035) Aircraft Noise Contours for the San Carlos Airport per the ALUCP. Development in this area would be subject to the noise compatibility policies of the ALUCP. Of note, multi-family residential development in the 60 dB CNEL contour is conditionally compatible and must be capable of attenuating exterior noise levels to an interior noise level of CNEL 45 dB or lower.

PUC Section 21659 prohibits structural hazards near airports. Structures should not be at a height that will result in penetration of the airport imaginary surfaces. In accordance with Federal Aviation Regulation, Part 77 "Objects Affecting Navigable Airspace" a Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration (Form 7460-1) may be required by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). For further information or a copy of Form 7460-1, please refer to the FAA website ([link](#)).

Lastly, in accordance with PUC Section 21676 et seq., prior to the amendment of a general plan or specific plan, or the adoption or approval of a zoning ordinance or building regulation within the planning boundary established by the ALUC, the local agency shall first refer the proposed action to the ALUC. If the commission determines that the proposed action is inconsistent with the commission's plan, the referring agency shall be notified.

These comments reflect the areas of review by Caltrans Aeronautics with respect to airport-related noise, safety, and land use planning issues. Caltrans Aeronautics appreciates the opportunity to comment. Should you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact Tiffany.Martinez@dot.ca.gov.

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. Any floodplain impacts must be documented and mitigated.

The Office of Hydraulics would like to ensure that the discharge from new development will not impact the existing drainage systems at U.S. 101 and SR-82 during the raining season and that no surface flow will get into the roadside ditches between the development area and southbound U.S. 101 as well as SR-82. For future design phase review, please submit plan views, profiles, cross-sections, details of all drainage facilities, and hydrologic calculations showing before and after conditions at this location.

Water Quality

Please include the following information in the Hydrology and Water Quality section as suggested by the Office of Water Quality:

This Plan (project) conforms to all applicable water quality regulations and/or permit requirements of the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), and the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), including but not limited to, the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Statewide Stormwater Permit and Waste Discharge Requirements for State of California Department of Transportation (Order No. 2022-0033-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000003), the NPDES General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities (Order No. 2022-0057-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000002), the Caltrans Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP) and any subsequent revisions and/or additional requirements at the time of construction to mitigate temporary and permanent Water Quality impacts.

The Plan (project) is within the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (Region 2), which is responsible for implementation of State and Federal laws and regulations for water quality protection & in the San Mateo County Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Area. Laurel Creek & San Francisco Bay, Lower are the nearest 2020-2022 303(d) List receiving waterbodies. The job location "between Ralston Avenue & Holly Street on U.S. Route 101" is within "Moderate to High 2022 Trash Generation Rating Area" and will address Region 2's trash requirements.

Climate Change/Sea Level Rise

In the 2020 Caltrans District 4 Adaptation Priorities Report ([link](#)), U.S. 101 adjacent to the project location is identified as a high-priority Caltrans asset vulnerable to sea level rise, storm surge, and climate change impacts, including increased precipitation. Caltrans would like to be included in discussions, to stay informed as Caltrans is interested in engaging in multi-agency collaboration early and often, to find multi-benefit solutions that protect vulnerable shorelines, communities, infrastructure, and the environment. Please ensure that Caltrans remains informed about the various climate stressors affecting the project location, and the ongoing development and implementation of adaptation and resilience initiatives. Of particular concern to Caltrans is Belmont Creek, which has recently experienced localized flooding. Since the project site is situated between Caltrans Right-of-Way (ROW) on SR-82 and U.S. 101, Caltrans looks forward to collaborating with entities such as One Shoreline and the City to develop adaptation and resilience measures for Belmont Creek. Additionally, please provide updates to Caltrans on any efforts in constructing new culverts or other assets aimed at maintaining hydrological quality and managing stormwater effectively.

For any questions or concerns within District 4's geographical boundaries, please contact the Caltrans Bay Area Climate Change Planning Coordinators at Vishal.Ream-Rao@dot.ca.gov and Lucius.Wu@dot.ca.gov.

Lead Agency

As the Lead Agency, the City of San Carlos 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.

Equity and Public Engagement

We will achieve equity when everyone has access to what they need to thrive no matter their race, socioeconomic status, identity, where they live, or how they travel. Caltrans is committed to advancing equity and livability in all communities. We look forward to collaborating with the City to prioritize projects that are equitable and provide meaningful benefits to historically underserved communities.

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Caltrans encourages the City to foster meaningful, equitable and ongoing public engagement in the NEASP development process to ensure future transportation decisions and investments reflect community interests and values. The public engagement process should include community-sensitive and equity-focused approaches seeking out the needs of individuals from underserved, Tribal, and low-income communities, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities.

Encroachment Permit


Please be advised that any permanent work or temporary traffic control that encroaches onto Caltrans' ROW requires a Caltrans-issued encroachment permit. 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.

The Office of Encroachment Permit requires 100% complete design plans and supporting documents to review and circulate the permit application package. To obtain more information and download the permit application, please visit Caltrans Encroachment Permits ([link](#)). Please note that the checklist TR-0416 is used to determine the appropriate Caltrans review process for encroachment projects. Your application package may be emailed to D4Permits@dot.ca.gov.

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,



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

c: State Clearinghouse