

California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 4
OFFICE OF REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY PLANNING
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February 10, 2025

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Warren Sattler, Real Estate Manager/Special Projects Director
Sonoma County
2550 Ventura Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Re: County Administration Center Redevelopment Project — Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)

Dear Warren Sattler:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the County Administration Center Redevelopment Project. 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 December 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 would involve the construction of a 300,000- square-foot office building and an additional single-story 7,000 to 13,000 gross square-foot Emergency Coordination Center (ECC). The project would also include up to 1,000 residential units within multiple four- or five-story buildings with residences on top of a garage podium. The project is directly adjacent to US-101.

Project Coordination

The proposed project is within the limits of a Caltrans project known internally as 1Q700. The project will upgrade bridge rails in and near Santa Rosa at Mendocino Avenue Overcrossing No. 20-0179, Fulton Road Overcrossing No. 20-0200, Shiloh Road Overcrossing No. 20-0202, and Limerick Lane Overcrossing No. 20-0066. This project will begin construction in Spring 2025 and end in Winter 2026.

Landscape Architecture

Below the existing trees along the highway, the site and proposed large parking lots will be visible. Please consider screening the site, cars, and car headlights within and around the edges of the parking lots with planting to minimize stray light and provide shade over cars and pavement to reduce visibility of cars and pavement from the highway. Caltrans recommends preserving existing mature trees on site to reduce visual change.

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](#)).

Caltrans expresses concerns regarding the proposed residential project due to its potential to significantly increase traffic volumes on US-101. The project's proximity to the highway and the projected number of residential units could create traffic congestion, safety hazards, and impact the freeway's operations.

Caltrans recommends a comprehensive Traffic Impact Study (TIS) to assess the project's impact on traffic flow, intersection capacity, and pedestrian safety. The TIS should analyze traffic generation, trip distribution, peak hour analysis, and VMT impacts.

Integrated Transportation and Land Use Planning

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 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 County 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 aligns with the County'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 County should also continue to coordinate with Caltrans to identify and implement necessary network improvements and impact mitigation.

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.

Lead Agency

As the Lead Agency, the County 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.

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.

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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 Melissa Hernandez, Associate 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marley Mathews". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

MARLEY MATHEWS
Acting Branch Chief, Local Development Review
Office of Regional and Community Planning

c: State Clearinghouse