

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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CITY OF MENLO PARK
BUILDING

July 15, 2016

SMGen085
SCH#2015062054

Ms. Deanna Chow
City of Menlo Park
701 Laurel Street
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Dear Ms. Chow:

ConnectMenlo – Draft Environmental Impact Report

Thank you for continuing to include the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the ConnectMenlo (Plan). Caltrans new mission, vision, and goals signal a modernization of our approach to the State Transportation Network (STN), in which we seek to reduce statewide vehicle-miles-traveled (VMT) and increase non-auto modes of active transportation by 2020. Caltrans targets are to triple bicycle, and double pedestrian and transit. These targets support the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) Sustainable Communities Strategy, which promotes the increase of non-auto mode shares by ten percentage points and a decrease in automobile VMT per capita by ten percent. Our Notice of Preparation letter dated July 20, 2015 is incorporated by reference. Future comments may be forthcoming pending final review.

Project Understanding

The proposed Plan is an update to the Land Use and Circulation Elements to the City of Menlo Park's (City) General Plan and a zoning change to the M-2 Area. The City is located at the southern edge of San Mateo County. It is generally bounded by San Francisco Bay; the cities of East Palo Alto and Palo Alto and Stanford University to the southeast; Atherton, unincorporated North Fair Oaks, and Redwood City to the northwest. The City is accessed by Interstate (I)-280, US-101, Caltrain, and State Route (SR) 84. The M-2 Area contains major regional transportation links, including SRs 84, 114, and 109, and the Dumbarton Bridge. The proposed updates frame the type and scale of potential development that may occur over the next 20 years and their potential impact to the local, regional and state transportation system.

Project of Statewide, Regional, or Areawide Significance

Since this project has the potential for causing significant effects, e.g., traffic, extending beyond

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the City limits, it meets the criteria of a Project of Statewide, Regional, or Areawide Significance as stated in the *2016 California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Statutes and Guidelines*, under section 15206 on pages 224 to 225. The Plan should be submitted also to the appropriate metropolitan area council of governments for review and comment.

Mitigation

The Transportation and Circulation section states that segments the following State Routes of Regional Significance would continue to operate at below their level-of-service (LOS) threshold under 2040 Plus Project conditions:

- SR 84 (Bayfront Expressway) from US 101 to Willow Road.
- SR 84 (Bayfront Expressway) from Willow Road to University Avenue.
- SR 84 (Bayfront Expressway) from University Avenue to the Alameda County line.
- SR 109 (University Avenue) from SR 84 to Kavanaugh Drive.
- SR 114 (Willow Road) from US 101 to SR 84.
- US 101 from Whipple Avenue to Santa Clara County Line.

The proposed Land Use plan should consider restricting the magnitude of future development in the City in order to reduce future VMT demand on the STN.

The City as Lead Agency is responsible for pursuing options that would ensure that the Plan traffic impacts are mitigated to a less than significant level. Specifically, mitigation measures, policies, and goals that include the requirements of Responsible Agencies such as Caltrans are fully enforceable through permit conditions, agreements or other legally-binding instruments under the City's control. We look forward to hearing from the City and its collaboration with San Mateo County Transportation Authority and Caltrans to ensure adequate mitigation funding.

Please also identify traffic impact fees to be used for project mitigation. Development plans should require traffic impact fees based on projected traffic and / or based on associated cost estimates for public transportation facilities necessitated by development. Please refer to the California Office of Planning and Research (OPR) *2003 General Plan Guidelines*, page 163, which can be accessed on-line at the following website:
<http://www.opr.ca.gov/index.php?a=planning/gpg.html>.

Scheduling and costs associated with planned improvements on State right-of-way should be listed, in addition to identifying viable funding sources correlated to the pace of improvements for roadway improvements, if any.

This information should also be presented in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan of the environmental document. Caltrans also encourages the City to contribute to a multi-modal fee program to plan for further growth by improving transit and regional transportation. Contributions would be used to help fund regional transportation programs that improve the STN and improve mobility.

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Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Keith Wayne at 510-286-5737 or keith_wayne@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



PATRICIA MAURICE
District Branch Chief
Local Development - Intergovernmental Review

c: Scott Morgan, State Clearinghouse