

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DISTRICT 4

OFFICE OF TRANSIT AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

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a California Way of Life*

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Tom Smith
Community Development Department
City of Menlo Park
701 Laurel Street
Menlo Park, CA 94025

1350 Adams Court Project – Notice of Preparation

Dear Tom Smith:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced project. In tandem with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), Caltrans' mission signals a modernization of our approach to evaluate and mitigate impacts to the State Transportation Network (STN). Caltrans' Strategic Management Plan 2015-2020 aims to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) by tripling bicycle and doubling both pedestrian and transit travel by 2020. Our comments are based on the Notice of Preparation (NOP).

Project Understanding

Tarlton Properties (project sponsor) is proposing to construct an approximately 260,400-gross-square-foot (gsf) building for life science research and development (R&D) uses as the 1350 Adams Court Project (project). The Project site (also referred to as Lot 3) is located within the existing Menlo Park Labs Campus. Parking for the proposed R&D building would be provided in a podium above a lower parking level, and in-above-grade garages that would be integrated into the building. The Proposed building would have five levels, with a maximum height of approximately 92 feet. The Project site has 373 parking spaces, including seven Americans with Disabilities Act- (ADA-) compliant spaces and 29 electric vehicle (EV) spaces. The project is located 0.25 miles from the Adams Drive / SR 109 (University Avenue) intersection.

Traffic Operations

Please provide trip generation, trip distribution, and trip assignment estimates for this project. To avoid traffic conflicts such as inadequate weaving distances and queues spilling back onto the STN, the Traffic Impact Analysis mentioned in the Initial Study should evaluate the adequacy of roadway segment

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operations in the project vicinity. Project-generated trips should be added to existing and future scenario traffic volumes to avoid traffic conflicts due to queue formation for the surrounding STN intersections.

Vehicle Trip Reduction

From Caltrans' *Smart Mobility 2010: A Call to Action for the New Decade*, the project site is identified as **Place Type 4: Suburban Communities** (Dedicated Use Areas) where location efficiency factors, such as community design, are weak and regional accessibility varies. Given the project's parking supply and intensification of use, it should include a robust Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program that leverages nearby transit to reduce VMT and greenhouse gas emissions. Such measures will be critical in order to facilitate efficient transportation access to and from the site and reduce transportation impacts associated with the project. The measures listed below will promote smart mobility and reduce regional VMT.

- Subsidize transit passes for employees on an ongoing basis;
- Charging stations and designated parking spaces for electric vehicles;
- Project design to encourage walking, bicycling and convenient transit access;
- Secured bicycle storage facilities located conveniently near entrances to minimize deterrent of bicycle use due to weather conditions;
- Bicycle parking;
- Fix-it bicycle repair station(s);
- Lower parking ratios;
- Transportation and commute information kiosk;
- Outdoor areas with patios, furniture, pedestrian pathways, picnic and recreational areas;
- Showers, changing rooms and clothing lockers for bike commuters;
- Bicycle route mapping resources and bicycle parking incentives;
- Employee transportation coordinator;
- Emergency Ride Home program;
- Participation/Formation in/of a Transportation Management Association (TMA) in partnership with other developments in the area; and
- Aggressive trip reduction targets with annual Lead Agency monitoring and enforcement.

Transportation Demand Management programs should be documented with annual monitoring reports by an onsite TDM coordinator to demonstrate effectiveness. If the project does not achieve the VMT reduction goals, the reports should also include next steps to take in order to achieve those targets. Also, reducing parking supply can encourage active forms of transportation, reduce regional VMT, and lessen future transportation impacts on State facilities. These smart growth approaches are consistent with the MTC's Regional Transportation Plan/SCS goals and would meet Caltrans Strategic Management Plan sustainability goals.

For additional TDM options, please refer to the Federal Highway Administration's *Integrating Demand Management into the Transportation Planning Process: A Desk Reference* (Chapter 8). The reference is available online at:

<http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwahop12035/fhwahop12035.pdf>.

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Transportation Impact Fees

The Lead Agency should identify project-generated travel demand and estimate the costs of transit and active transportation improvements necessitated by the proposed project; viable funding sources such as development and/or transportation impact fees should also be identified and incorporated in the Conditions of Approval. We encourage a sufficient allocation of fair share contributions toward multimodal and regional transit improvements to fully mitigate cumulative impacts to regional transportation. For example, bicycle and pedestrian improvements on SR 109 from SR 84 to Notre Dame Avenue, *see Caltrans District 4 Bike Plan's Appendix A*. We also strongly support measures to increase sustainable mode shares, thereby reducing VMT.

http://www.dot.ca.gov/d4/bikeplan/docs/D4BikePlan_ProjectList.pdf

Lead Agency

As the Lead Agency, the City of Menlo Park 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.

Thank you again for including Caltrans in the environmental review process. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Jannette Ramirez at (510) 286-5535 or jannette.ramirez@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



for
PATRICIA MAURICE
District Branch Chief
Local Development - Intergovernmental Review

c: State Clearinghouse