

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**DISTRICT 6**

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*Making Conservation
a California Way of Life.*

November 19, 2019

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

NOV 19 2019

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

06-MAD-41-3.232
Rio Mesa Boulevard
Notice of Preparation
SCH # 2017101048

SENT VIAL EMAIL

Ms. Jamie Bax, Deputy Director
Madera County
200 W. 4th Street
Madera, California 93637

Dear Ms. Bax:

Thank you for including Caltrans in the environmental review process for the project referenced above. To ensure a safe and efficient transportation system, we encourage early consultation and coordination with local jurisdictions and project proponents on all development projects that utilize the multimodal transportation network.

We provide these comments consistent with the State's smart mobility goals that support a vibrant economy and build communities. The following comments are based on the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Rio Mesa Boulevard Project dated October 23, 2019 to allow for the construction of the following:

The County of Madera is proposing to construct a 2.6-mile segment of new road providing a connection between Avenue 12 to the south to a planned segment of Rio Mesa Boulevard within the Tesoro Viejo community to the north. The proposed roadway would include two northbound and two southbound travel lanes with six-foot-wide asphalt concrete bike lanes, curbs and gutters, landscaping, and separated sidewalks. The County of Madera circulated a Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the proposed Project in October 2017. It was then determined that an EIR would be prepared for the proposed Project in compliance with CEQA requirements. An intersection of Avenue 12 and Rio Mesa Boulevard would initially be formed as a 3-legged intersection at the Project Phase I, and ultimately would form a 4-legged intersection. Caltrans has the following comments:

- Caltrans previously provided a comment letter dated November 15, 2017. The study should include an operational analysis of the future SR 41/Avenue 12 interchange. A Caltrans Project Study Report to construct a new interchange for SR 41/Avenue 12 was completed in June 2008. The project would construct a partial cloverleaf interchange.
- The proposed Rio Mesa Boulevard connecting to Avenue 12 is located at approximately 1,300 feet from the existing intersection of State Route (SR) 41 and Avenue 12. The future plan is to convert the existing intersection to an interchange. The 1,300-foot spacing would not provide enough separation between the future SR 41 northbound off/on ramps to the proposed Rio Mesa Boulevard. Therefore, the intersection of Avenue 12 and Rio Mesa Boulevard should be relocated at a minimum of 0.25 mile from the future interchange footprint. The distance may be increased if the Draft EIR determines that greater intersection spacing is needed due to the increased of traffic volumes, impacts due to queuing, or to maintain traffic signal timing efficiency.

*"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system
to enhance California's economy and livability"*

Ms. Jamie Bax
November 19, 2019
Page 2

- A future cumulative buildout traffic scenario should be studied. This should include the buildout of the Rio Mesa Area Plan, the future development on the southeast quadrant, and the proposed Community Hospital located on the northeast quadrant of the SR 41 and Avenue 12 intersection. Access to the future hospital should also be studied. The study should also include the future extension of Rio Mesa Boulevard to the south at Children Boulevard. The Rio Mesa Boulevard extension to the south would form an ultimate 4-legged intersection with Avenue 12.
- Caltrans request an opportunity to comment on the scope of work prior to the preparation of the traffic impact study.

If you have any further questions, please contact me at (559) 444-2493.

Sincerely,



DAVID PADILLA
Associate Transportation Planner
Division of Transportation Planning

c: Michael Navarro, Chief, Planning North Branch, Caltrans