

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DISTRICT 4

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John Chwastyk, Director of Facilities
Fremont Unified School District
4210 Technology Drive
Fremont, CA 94538

Williamson Elementary School Project – Notice of Preparation (NOP)

Dear John Chwastyk:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Williamson Elementary School Project. We are committed to ensuring that impacts to the State's multimodal transportation system and to our natural environment are identified and mitigated to support a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system. The following comments are based on our review of the November 2019 NOP.

Project Understanding

The project proposes to construct Williamson Elementary School, which would accommodate 750 students from kindergarten to fifth grade. The total project square footage consists of 78,331 square feet covering four structural components; buildings A, B, C, and D. Building A consists of 11,636 square feet and includes a kindergarten and administration building; building B consists of 12,924 square feet and serves as a multi-use building with various functions; building C consists of 38,237 square feet over two floors and includes classrooms and a learning center; and building D consists of 15,534 square feet over two floors and includes classrooms and a media center. Regional access is provided from State Route (SR)-238/Mowry Avenue and Interstate (I)-880/Thornton Avenue, each about 2.1 miles away.

Travel Demand Analysis

Please submit a travel demand analysis that provides a Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) analysis resulting from the proposed project. With the enactment of

Senate Bill (SB) 743, Caltrans is focusing on transportation infrastructure that supports smart growth and efficient development to ensure alignment with State policies using efficient development patterns, innovative travel demand reduction strategies, multimodal improvements, and VMT as the primary transportation impact metric. Please ensure that the travel demand analysis includes:

- A vicinity map, regional location map, and site plan clearly showing project access in relation to the State Transportation Network (STN). Ingress and egress for all project components should be clearly identified. Clearly identify the State right-of-way (ROW). Project driveways, local roads and intersections, car/bike parking, and transit facilities should be mapped.
- A VMT analysis pursuant to the City's guidelines or, if the City has no guidelines, the Office of Planning and Research's Draft Guidelines. Projects that result in automobile VMT per capita greater than 15% below existing (i.e. baseline) city-wide or regional values for similar land use types may indicate a significant impact. If necessary, mitigation for increasing VMT should be identified. Mitigation should support the use of transit and active transportation modes. Potential mitigation measures that include the requirements of other agencies such as Caltrans are fully enforceable through permit conditions, agreements, or other legally-binding instruments under the control of the City.
- A schematic illustration of walking, biking and auto conditions at the project site and study area roadways. Potential safety issues for all road users should be identified and fully mitigated.

With respect to the local and regional roadway system, provide project related trip generation, distribution, and assignment estimates. To ensure that queue formation does not create traffic conflicts, the project-generated trips should be added to the existing, future and cumulative scenario traffic volumes for the intersections and freeway ramps. Potential queuing issues should be evaluated including on-ramp storage capacity and analysis of freeway segments near the project; turning movements should also be evaluated. In conducting these evaluations, it is necessary to use demand volumes rather than output volumes or constrained flow volume.

Multimodal Planning

The project's primary and secondary effects on pedestrians, bicyclists, travelers with disabilities, and transit users should be evaluated, including countermeasures and trade-offs resulting from mitigating VMT increases. Access for pedestrians and bicyclists to transit facilities must be maintained. These smart growth approaches can be consistent with MTC's Regional Transportation Plan/SCS and would help meet Caltrans Strategic Management Plan targets.

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** where location efficiency factors, such as community design, are often weak and regional accessibility varies. Given the place, type and size of the project, it should include a robust Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program to reduce VMT and greenhouse gas emissions. Such measures are critical to facilitating efficient site access. The measures listed below can promote smart mobility and reduce regional VMT.

- Project design to encourage walking, bicycling and transit access;
- Transit and trip planning resources such as a commute information kiosk;
- Real-time transit information system;
- Transit subsidies on an ongoing basis;
- Ten percent vehicle parking reductions;
- Charging stations and designated parking spaces for electric vehicles;
- Carpool and clean-fuel parking spaces;
- Designated parking spaces for a car share program;
- Showers, changing rooms and clothing lockers for employees that commute via active transportation;
- Emergency Ride Home program;
- Employee transportation coordinator;
- Secured bicycle storage facilities;
- Fix-it bicycle repair station(s);
- Bicycle route mapping resources;
- Aggressive trip reduction targets with Lead Agency monitoring and enforcement.

TDM 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.

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>.

Transportation Impact Fees

Please 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. We encourage a sufficient allocation of fair share contributions toward multi-modal and regional transit improvements to fully mitigate cumulative impacts to regional transportation. We also strongly support measures to increase sustainable mode shares, thereby reducing VMT.

Lead Agency

As the Lead Agency, the Fremont Unified School District 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 Andrew Chan at 510-622-5433 or andrew.chan@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Mark Leong
District Branch Chief
Local Development - Intergovernmental Review

c: State Clearinghouse