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DISTRICT 4

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Piu Ghosh
Community Development Department
City of Cupertino
10300 Torre Avenue
Cupertino, CA 95014

Vallco Special Area Specific Plan – Draft Environmental Impact Report

Dear Piu Ghosh:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced project. Our comments are based on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR).

Project Understanding

The proposed project is the adoption of the community-developed Vallco Special Area Specific Plan and associated General Plan and Zoning Code amendments (referred to as “the project” or “Specific Plan”). The proposed project is located immediately south of Interstate (I-) 280 in the southwest and southeast quadrants of the I-280/S. Wolfe Road interchange. The project is partly located in the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority City Cores, Corridors & Station Areas Priority Development Area (PDA).

Consistent with the build-out envisioned in the adopted General Plan, the proposed Specific Plan would facilitate development of a minimum of 600,000 square feet (sq. ft.) of commercial uses, up to 2.0 million sq. ft. of office uses, up to 339 hotel rooms, and up to 800 residential dwelling units on-site. In addition, the project includes up to 65,000 sq. ft. of civic spaces in the form of governmental office space, meeting and community rooms, and a Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) lab, as well as a 30-acre green roof.

As a result of the planning process and scoping for environmental review, the City identified the following three project alternatives to the proposed project for review in the EIR, in addition to the No Project alternative required by CEQA:

Summary of Project and Project Alternative Development						
	Land Uses					
	Commercial (square footage)	Office (square footage)	Hotel (rooms)	Residential (dwelling units)	Civic Space (square feet)	Green Roof (acres)
Proposed Specific Plan	600,000	2,000,000	339	800	65,000	30
Project Alternatives						
General Plan Buildout with Maximum Residential Alternative	600,000	1,000,000	339	2,640	65,000	30
Retail and Residential Alternative	600,000	0	339	4,000	0	0
Occupied/Re-Tenanted Mall Alternative	1,207,774	0	148	0	0	0

The Specific Plan site is served by Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) bus routes and indirectly by Caltrain commuter rail service. The site acts as a transfer center for VTA bus routes and as a transit hub for private shuttles run by large employers (such as Google, Genentech, and Facebook). As part of the Specific Plan, the existing transit hub would be upgraded, and would include additional features such as an information center, drop-off point, and a bike sharing distribution point.

The Specific Plan would also include a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program to reduce vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled (VMT). The TDM program could include an on-site transportation coordinator, ride-share marketing and promotion, unbundled parking, a transit incentive program, safe routes to school support programs, transit and/or vanpool subsidy for employees, workplace parking pricing, employee parking cash-out, alternative work schedules and telecommute programs, and guaranteed ride home programs. Additional details about possible TDM measures are included in Table 28 in Appendix H of the DEIR. The TDM program for future development would be completed to the satisfaction of the City of Cupertino City’s Project Planner prior to approval of a development permit. Future Specific Plan development would submit an annual monitoring report to the Project Planner to measure the effectiveness of the TDM plan. Additional TDM measures may be required by the City if the TDM measures are not effective.

Transportation Impact Analysis

Caltrans requests the Lead Agency submit a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan, Conditions of Approval and Staff Report to Caltrans, and list the transit and active transportation improvements associated with this project under the “Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures” section of the DEIR. Please specify which multimodal projects will be funded by the project’s contribution to the City’s transportation impact fees (TIF) program. The transit and

active transportation improvements as well as the project's contribution to the City's TIF program should be incorporated into the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan. These improvements encourage a shift from single-occupancy vehicles to alternate modes of transportation. Examples of multimodal projects that could be used for mitigating the project's transportation impacts are the I-280 Channel Trail (Junipero Serra Trail) between Mary Avenue and Vallco Parkway found in the City of Cupertino's *2016 Bicycle Transportation Plan*, and I-280/Wolfe Road interchange improvements to provide low-stress access for bicyclists.

The State Route (SR) 85 Express Lanes Improvement should be removed as mitigation for the Specific Plan as this improvement is currently under review and its implementation date is uncertain. Caltrans recommends The Vallco Special Area Specific Plan include more vehicle trip reduction mitigation measures and aggressive TDM in the DEIR to reduce its impact on SR 85, SR 82 and I-280 freeway segments as discussed in the Transportation Impact Analysis (TIA). Examples of measures that can be implemented to reduce vehicle trips include: reducing vehicle parking and project phasing that allows for fully mitigated transportation impacts at each phase. Caltrans welcomes the opportunity to work with the Lead Agency and local partners to secure the funding for needed mitigation. Traffic mitigation- or cooperative agreements are examples of such measures.

The project should remove the Intersection #2: Stevens Creek Boulevard/SR-85 Ramps (East) improvement as part of its mitigation measures. The improvement is programmed and under construction as mitigation to a significant impact caused by another development. Rather, the TIA should evaluate the Specific Plan's impact on the intersection post completion of this programmed improvement and provide additional mitigation measures if needed.

Please provide operational analysis that demonstrates the proposed mitigation at Intersection #51: I-280/Lawrence Expressway/Calvert Drive south-bound ramps is feasible and will improve operations.

Per Appendix H in the TIA, the project will generate a significant increase in VMT as well as pedestrian, bicycle and transit use. The proposed development could change traffic patterns and trigger a need for traffic signal adjustments at Intersections #9, #22, #44, and #47. Signal-related work will have to be coordinated, reviewed, and approved by the Caltrans Office of Signal Operations.

The Traffix computational worksheets, provided in the TIA's Appendices I through K, show that there may be insufficient storage capacity for the intersections and ramp turning movements listed below.

- a. De Anza Boulevard/I-280 Ramps (North) - Intersection #9,
- b. Wolfe Road/El Camino Real (SR 82) - Intersection #22,
- c. I-280 Ramps (West)/Calvert Drive/Stevens Creek Boulevard - Intersection #44,
- d. Lawrence Expressway/El Camino Real (SR 82) - Intersection #47.

The queues formed at the intersections and ramps may cause spill-back onto the freeway and conventional highway mainlines. The project should provide intersection and ramp evaluations and provide mitigation if negatively impacted. At signalized intersections with turning movements exceeding demands of 300 vph, “dual turn” lanes will need to be provided where applicable, see latest *Highway Design Manual* sections 405.2 and 405.3. If the existing number of through lanes in each direction cannot accommodate anticipated forecasted traffic as shown on the submittal, additional through lanes may be required.

Hydraulics

Please submit a drainage plan for Caltrans’s review. The Junipero Serra Channel and major state drainage facilities are located on the I-280/North Wolfe Road interchange area and the project’s impacts to the state drainage facilities will need to be evaluated and mitigated where needed.

Landscape Architecture

The Lead Agency is directed to reference Caltrans’ *Highway Design Manual*, link provided below, for any landscape work on the state right-of-way. Caltrans welcomes the opportunity to continue collaboration on the project during design review and plan development. Caltrans requests the comments listed below be addressed before the submission of an Encroachment Permit application.

- Trees and shrubs should be added where appropriate to maintain or improve a visual screen or buffer between I-280 and the project. Maintain any site clearance setback requirements per the City and Caltrans design guidelines. (DEIR’s Appendix C: Arborist Report).
- Remove any dead trees to avoid fall hazards onto I-280, or ramps adjacent to the I-280 right-of-way. (DEIR’s Appendix C: Arborist Report).
- Any existing water meters and backflow preventers that may exist just outside of state right-of-way should be identified and protected in place; they are often located just outside of state right-of-way. (DEIR’s Appendix I: Utility Studies).

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/design/manuals/hdm.html>

Encroachment Permit

Please be advised that any work or traffic control that encroaches onto the State right-of-way requires an Encroachment Permit that is issued by Caltrans. Traffic-related mitigation measures should be incorporated into the construction plans prior to the encroachment permit process. To apply, a completed Encroachment Permit application, the adopted environmental document, and five (5) sets of plans clearly indicating State right-of-way must be submitted to the address below. Traffic-related mitigation measures should be incorporated into the construction plans prior to the encroachment permit process.

David Salladay, District Office Chief

Piu Ghosh, City of Cupertino
July 9, 2018
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Office of Permits, MS 5E
California Department of Transportation, District 4
P.O. Box 23660
Oakland, CA 94623-0660

See the following website for more information:

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/trafficops/ep/index.html>

Lead Agency

As the Lead Agency, the City of Cupertino 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. Furthermore, this project meets the criteria to be deemed of statewide, regional, or areawide significance per CEQA Guidelines §15206. The DEIR should be submitted to MTC, ABAG and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority for review and comment.

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,



PATRICIA MAURICE
District Branch Chief
Local Development - Intergovernmental Review

c: State Clearinghouse