

California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 4
OFFICE OF REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY PLANNING
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May 18, 2026

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GTS #: 04-SM-2023-00776
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Co/Rt/Pm: SM/114/5.5

Christopher Turner, Senior Planner
City of Menlo Park
701 Laurel Street
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Re: 1005 O'Brien Drive and 1320 Willow Road– Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)

Dear Christopher Turner:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process 1005 O'Brien Drive and 1320 Willow Road. The Local Development Review (LDR) Program reviews land use projects and plans to ensure consistency with our mission and state planning priorities. The following comments are based on our review of the April 2026 DEIR.

Please note this correspondence does not indicate an official position or approval by Caltrans on this project and is for informational purposes only.

Project Understanding

This project is located on State Route (SR) 114 (Willow Road) and involves demolishing the three existing buildings on the site and constructing two research and development buildings. The proposed project also includes construction of a seven-level above grade parking structure, landscaping, and a sports court.

Travel Demand Analysis

With the enactment of Senate Bill (SB) 743, Caltrans is focused on maximizing efficient development patterns, innovative travel demand reduction strategies, and multimodal improvements. For more information on how Caltrans assesses Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) analysis for land use projects, please review Caltrans' Transportation Impact Study Guide ([link](#)).

The project VMT analysis and significance determination are undertaken in a manner consistent with the City's adopted VMT policy. Per the DEIR, this project is found to

have a less than significant VMT impact with the implementation of the proposed Transportation Demand Management Plan.

Highway Operations

The DEIR identifies Level of Service (LOS) E/F conditions at study intersections along Willow Road during peak hours. Under these conditions, there is potential for queueing and spillbacks that could affect driveway access and traffic operations along the project site. Please clarify how project access will function without blocking adjacent intersections or driveways, and without adversely affecting traffic operations along Willow Road.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Access

Please ensure that the eastern edge of the project limit that touches the crosswalk of the Ivy Drive & Willow Road intersection aligns with the City of Menlo Park Project 1W170 (Caltrans project ID), as it proposes bulb-outs for the sidewalk leading to crossing at Ivy Drive. In addition, project 1W170 proposes a Class IV bikeway that will pass through on both sides of Willow Road. Please also ensure that this project does not cause any hindrance to the planned bikeways under the 1W170 project.

The area on Willow Road west of Ivy Drive is considered “as a pedestrian focus area, defined as regionally significant area within the county are likely to have the highest walking activity” based on the 1W170 project. Due to this consideration, the project needs to ensure that the infrastructure built does not hinder any planned and future pedestrian facilities. Moreover, the project needs to ensure that pedestrian movements on sidewalks and bicycle movements on the roadway are not hindered. If construction activity causes any hindrance, the project needs to ensure mitigation measures.

Air Quality

Page 4.1-21, Operational Emissions Methodology: Please check that the operational year of 2028 is accurate in accordance with CalEEMod and correct if needed.

Page 4.2-36, Operational Emissions Methodology: Please check that the operational year of 2028 is accurate in accordance with CalEEMod and correct if needed.

Page 4.2-36, Operational Emissions Methodology: Please check that the operational year of 2023 is accurate in accordance with CalEEMod and correct if needed.

Page 4.2-37, Mobile Sources: Please check that the existing scenario year of 2023 is accurate in accordance with CalEEMod and correct if needed.

Page 4.2-38, Mobile Sources: Please check that the proposed project year of 2028 is accurate in accordance with CalEEMod and correct if needed.

Page 4.4-19, Construction Noise: Please check that “0 to 6 dBA L_{eq} in the average noise level scenario” is accurate, as it does not appear to match the information provided in Table 4.4-9 and correct if needed.

Cultural Resources

Should construction activities within Caltrans' Right of Way (ROW) take place in relation to this project, these mitigation measures shall be implemented if there is an archaeological discovery. If there is an inadvertent archaeological or burial discovery within Caltrans' ROW, please immediately contact the Caltrans Office of Cultural Resource Studies at (510) 847-1977. A staff archaeologist will evaluate the finds within one business day after contact. Caltrans requires review of any potential data recovery plans within Caltrans' ROW.

Tribal Coordination

If pre-contact or historic-era archaeological resources or human remains are encountered during project construction or implementation, it is recommended that the project applicant retain and compensate Tribes with ancestral ties to San Mateo County to perform Tribal Monitoring services.

It is recommended that the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) be consulted to obtain the most current contact information for Tribes with ancestral ties to San Mateo County.

Please see below for the list of Tribes with ancestral territories in San Mateo County based on the NAHC:

- Amah Mutsun Tribal Band of Mission San Juan Bautista
- Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe
- Indian Canyon Mutsun Band of Costanoan
- Muwekma Ohlone Indian Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area
- Rumsen Am'a Tur'ataj Ohlone
- Tamien Nation
- The Ohlone Indian Tribe
- Wuksache Indian Tribe/Eshom Valley Band

Hydrology

Please ensure that any increase in storm water runoff to State Drainage Systems or Facilities be treated, contained on project site, and metered to preconstruction levels. Any floodplain impacts must be documented and mitigated.

Construction-Related Impacts

Project work that requires movement of oversized or excessive load vehicles on State

roadways requires a transportation permit that is issued by Caltrans. To apply, please visit Caltrans Transportation Permits ([link](#)).

Prior to construction, coordination may be required with Caltrans to develop a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) to reduce construction traffic impacts to the State Transportation Network (STN).

Equitable Access

If any Caltrans facilities are impacted by the project, those facilities must meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards after project completion. The project must maintain bicycle and pedestrian access during construction. These access considerations support Caltrans' equity mission to provide a safe, sustainable, and equitable transportation network for all users.

Encroachment Permit

Please be advised that any temporary or permanent work including traffic control that encroaches in, under, or over any portion of the State highway ROW requires a Caltrans-issued encroachment permit.

The Office of Encroachment Permits requires 100% complete design plans and supporting documents to review and circulate the permit application package. Please ensure that proposed work within Caltrans ROW conforms with the latest versions of the Caltrans Highway Design Manual ([link](#)) and Caltrans Standard Plans and Specifications ([link](#)). Project plans within State ROW must clearly show the State ROW line for the whole plan limits along with all existing roadway features (lane lines, edge of pavement, curbs, existing signage, trees and utility poles, etc.).

In the Encroachment Permit application package, be sure to include a hydrology report with hydraulic calculations showing pre- and post- project conditions, ensuring no increase in flow to the existing drainage systems within Caltrans ROW.

The review and approval of encroachment projects is managed through the Encroachment Permits Office Process (EPOP) or the Project Delivery Quality Management Assessment Process (QMAP), depending on project scope, complexity, and completeness of the application. Please use the following resources to determine the appropriate review process:

- TR-0416 Applicant's Checklist ([link](#))
- Caltrans Encroachment Projects Processes – Information Video ([link](#))
- Flowchart, Figure 1.2 in Section 108, Overview of the Encroachment Review Process, of Chapter 100 – The Permit Function, Caltrans Encroachment Permit Manual ([link](#))

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The permit approval typically takes less than 60 days, but may take longer depending on the project scope, size, complexity, completeness, compliance with applicable laws, standards, policies, and quality of the permit package submitted. Projects requiring exceptions to design standards, exceptions to encroachment policies, or external agency approvals may need more time to process.

To obtain more information and download the permit application, please visit Caltrans Encroachment Permits ([link](#)).

Thank you again for including Caltrans in the environmental review process. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Mary McGee, Transportation Planner, via LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov. For future early coordination opportunities or project referrals, please visit Caltrans LDR website ([link](#)) or contact LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Luo Yunsheng".

YUNSHENG LUO
Branch Chief, Local Development Review
Office of Regional and Community Planning

c: State Clearinghouse