

## California Department of Transportation

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Mr. Skip Strathearn  
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Mariposa County  
Planning Department  
5100 Buillion Street  
Mariposa, CA 95338

**MPA-VAR-All**  
**Midpines Community Plan**  
**Initial Study SCH 2026030499**  
**GP Amendment No 2024-113**

Mr. Strathearn,

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the Initial Study for the General Plan Amendment No. 2024-113 covering the Midpines Community Plan. Midpines is one of 17 geographical areas in Mariposa County that the Mariposa County General Plan describes as Planning Areas. Plan development for each Planning Area is consistent with the format of the General Plan and each plan is considered a mini general plan that governs the specific Plan Area. The boundaries of the Midpines Community Plan area encompass approximately 22.7 square miles (14,544 acres).

The Midpines Community Plan is a policy document. The document lays the groundwork for the establishment of zoning standards that will implement the policies and standards of the Plan and will specifically guide development within the Planning Area boundaries. The Plan reflects the community's vision relating to how the area is to be developed. No specific development is proposed as part of the Plan adoption process.

### **Caltrans has the following comments:**

#### **Environmental**

- If there are any construction related activities that will encroach into Caltrans Right of Way (ROW) as a result of the project, the project proponent must apply for an Encroachment Permit with the Caltrans District 10 Encroachment Permit Office.
- All California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation, with supporting technical studies, must be submitted with the Encroachment Permit Application. These studies may include an analysis of potential impacts to any cultural sites, historic properties, biological resources, hazardous waste/materials, scenic

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highways, and/or other environmental resources within Caltrans ROW, at the project site(s).

- If the CEQA Lead Agency finds the project exempt from CEQA, the applicant must provide Caltrans with a copy of the Notice of Exemption that was filed with the County Clerk and State Clearinghouse.
- Any work performed in State Route (SR) 140 ROW or where traffic activities may be disrupted (e.g., lane/shoulder closures, staging, access changes) may require traffic handling plans consistent with Caltrans/CA MUTCD to maintain safety and operations. The proponent's CEQA only biological documentation in the Encroachment Permit phase may need to include a Biological Assessment (BA) focused on temporary and permanent impact areas within or adjacent to the ROW. Especially where jurisdictional drainages run parallel to and/or cross SR 140 between PM 22 and PM 32, the proponent's CEQA only biological documentation in the Encroachment Permit phase may need to include a Biological Assessment (BA) focused on temporary and permanent impact areas within or adjacent to the ROW.
- A field based habitat assessment of riparian corridors and drainage crossings may need to be conducted to determine whether focused, protocol level surveys are needed for special status species in the corridor. In addition, prior to any vegetation work, seasonally appropriate pre-construction nesting bird surveys may be required.
- Where drainages intersect the ROW, an aquatic resources delineation may be needed to map streams, wetlands, and riparian features to support avoidance and minimization efforts.

### **System Planning**

- Caltrans supports projects that incorporate Smart Growth Principles, including those that promote mixed land uses, provide a diverse range of housing opportunities, preserve open space, and reduce the environmental impacts of development. As the Plan is a policy-level document and does not include specific details regarding the timing or implementation of such improvements, the applicant may consider submitting a formal request to Caltrans identifying the need for proposed improvements. Upon receipt, Caltrans will review and evaluate the request to ensure consistency with its policies and practices, as well as to assess any potential effects on highway operations and safety.
- Caltrans commends Mariposa County for its commitment to preserving the area's rural character while planning for diverse neighborhoods and protecting environmental and natural resources. However, it is important to emphasize that adequate studies, data analysis, and the development of transportation plans and access concepts are essential when residential and commercial development is proposed. Such development is expected to generate an increase in vehicle trips, which may result in higher traffic volumes. Over time, this increase could reach thresholds that necessitate additional lanes or other operational improvements to maintain safe and efficient travel conditions.

### **Rural Planning - Tribal**

While there are no large federal reservations located directly in the town of Midpines, the area is rich in indigenous history and active tribal presence. Midpines and the surrounding Mariposa County are the ancestral homelands of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation (also known as the American Indian Council of Mariposa County). The cooperative process includes stakeholders from American Indian Council of Mariposa. Mariposa County consults with American Indian Council of Mariposa on transportation projects, coordination of infrastructure improvements, and transit services. Through these efforts Mariposa County works to support tribal sovereignty, enhance mobility and promote transportation solutions for tribal communities and the broader regions.

### **Active Transportation Planning**

Caltrans looks to endorse and support Green House Gas (GHG) reducing proposed active transportation local routes and trails parallel to the State Highway System where possible. Not all segments of the State Highway System will be able to provide the most appropriate/most ideal bike facility given the constraints of existing narrow paved shoulders, high posted speed limits, and the presence of oversized vehicle traffic. We also endorse proposed active transportation routes and trails that link to or connect with YARTS bus stops, as cycling can act as a transit multiplier.

All future development for the project location will require further review by Caltrans. If you have any questions or would like to discuss these comments, please contact Lloyd Clark at (209) 986-9802 (Email: [Lloyd.Clark@dot.ca.gov](mailto:Lloyd.Clark@dot.ca.gov)) or me at (209) 483-7234 (email: [Gregoria.Ponce@dot.ca.gov](mailto:Gregoria.Ponce@dot.ca.gov)).

Sincerely,

*Gregoria Ponce'*

Gregoria Ponce'  
Chief, Office of Rural Planning