

Appendix K

Responses to Comments on the Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

The Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the Clean Transit Advancement Campus (CTAC) Project was distributed for public review on July 14, 2022, initiating a 30-day public review period ending on August 15, 2022. The document was made available online at the CTAC webpage (<https://www.sdmts.com/inside-mts/current-projects/clean-transit-advancement-campus-formally-division-6>), at the Malcolm X Library in the project area, and at the offices of the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) and the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG). A total of nine letters and emails were received before the close of the public comment period. Pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15074(b), "Prior to approving a project, the decision-making body of the lead agency shall consider the proposed negative declaration or mitigated negative declaration together with any comments received during the public review process." Additionally, CEQA Guidelines Section 15088(a) states that "the lead agency shall evaluate comments on environmental issues received from persons who reviewed the Draft EIR and shall prepare a written response." All comment letters received on the Draft IS/MND were evaluated for environmental issues, and written responses to comments on environmental issues were prepared." While this CEQA Guideline specifically mentions "Draft EIR," in practice, it is generally applied to all types of CEQA documents that are circulated for public review, including Negative Declarations and Mitigated Negative Declarations as well. Thus, all comment letters received on the Draft IS/MND were evaluated for environmental issues, and written responses to comments on environmental issues were prepared.

Table 1 provides a list of the comment letters received, including details on the agency, organization, or individual that submitted the letter and the date of the letter. This appendix presents written responses to comments on environmental issues raised in these letters. The written responses describe the disposition of significant environmental issues raised, as required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15088(c).

Table 1 COMMENT LETTERS RECEIVED ON THE DRAFT IS/MND FOR THE CTAC PROJECT		
Comment Letter	Public Agency, Organization, of Individual	Date of Letter
A	Eastern Area Communities Planning Committee	August 12, 2022
B	Oak Park Community Council	August 14, 2022
C	Webster Community Council	August 15, 2022
D	Webster Community Council	August 18, 2022
E	Lone Oak – San Diego III, L.L.C.	August 15, 2022
F	Kristen Hurst	August 2, 2022
G	Juanita Williams	August 6, 2022
H	Ron Bevilacqua	August 9, 2022
I	Carmi Strom	August 15, 2022

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Eastern Area Communities Planning Committee – chair.eacpc.sd@gmail.com

August 12, 2022

Denis Desmond
San Diego Metropolitan Transit System ("MTS")
Attn: CTAC Project Comments
1255 Imperial Avenue, Suite 1000
San Diego, CA. 92101

Re: CTAC Mitigated Negative Declaration, issued July 14, 2022

Dear Mr. Desmond,

I am writing to you in my capacity as chairperson of the Eastern Area Communities Planning Committee ("EACPC") with concerns about the Mitigated Negative Declaration ("MND") for the proposed CTAC project and how it relates to the Chollas Creek watershed, as well as the Webster community. EACPC is officially recognized by the City of San Diego as a representative of the community, and as an advisor to the City in actions that would affect the community. Webster is among the neighborhoods represented at EACPC and the Webster community is located closest to this project.

Although this area is commonly known as "Ridgeview-Webster," Ridgeview/City Heights residents and commercial businesses are located further away and to the north of the subject parcels.

Hazardous Waste and Burn Ash

First, as documented in the draft MND Technical Appendices, there is a history of hazardous waste in the soil around Webster, including substantial occurrences of toxic **burn-ash**. The Allied Geotechnical Engineers, Inc. Environmental Site Assessment ("ESA") lists several incidences of hazardous waste around the proposed project, including burn ash. The quality of prior remediation is unclear. One such site, an illegal former dump, poses a **"High Potential Impact"** involving burn-ash ("**Charlie's Place**" page 290). The MND's subsequent classification of the pending land disturbance hazard as "Less Than Significant" is therefore worrisome.

While an honest effort toward cleaning up burn ash sites is most definitely welcome, there is the perception among many locals that this problem has largely been downplayed by various agencies. The ambiguity in the findings of the ESA versus the "Less Than Significant" classification may be interpreted as more of the same. MTS is encouraged to be transparent and cautious with this issue.

Potential Exposures and Impacts to Webster


Other conclusions reached in the MND document present factual issues. The proposed CTAC parcel descriptions omit residential areas east of 47th Street in Webster (page 3). Impacts from this project may or may not create changes to non-industrial activity in Ridgeview/City Heights to the north, but will definitely impact much-closer-by Webster: Sensitive receptors in terms of pollutant concentrations and hazardous emissions should consider students at the Holly Drive Leadership Academy and the 300 or so senior residents of Leisureland, both just east of 47th Street, along with Webster Elementary School

A-1 This comment is an introductory statement that introduces the commenting organization and notes the overall concerns of the project relative to the Chollas Creek watershed and the Webster neighborhood. The Mid-City Communities Plan identifies the project site as within the geographical boundaries of the Ridgeview neighborhood of the City Heights community (Figure 5 on page 24 of the Mid-City Communities Plan). The referenced Mid-City Communities Plan map also shows that the Webster neighborhood within the Eastern Area community is adjacent and east of the project site. It is acknowledged that residential properties in the adjacent Webster neighborhood are closer to the project site than those in the Ridgeview neighborhood, as they occur east of 47th Street whereas those in Ridgeview are located north of Chollas Creek and across the associated canyon. As this comment does not raise any specific environmental issues with respect to the adequacy of the Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND), no further response is required.

A-2 There is no evidence that burn ash occurs on the project site. Section IX.b in the IS/MND (pages 40 through 41) discusses hazardous materials/wastes and discloses that an unregulated burn ash facility operated within the project area during the 1930s and 1940s but its precise location is not known. While records suggest that the burn ash site was located north of the project site, it is possible that it may have operated on a portion of the project site. The IS/MND concludes that while it is anticipated that burn ash was removed during grading and development of the existing on-site and surrounding uses, the potential to encounter burn ash during construction activities remains. The IS/MND identifies mitigation measures (HAZ-1 and HAZ-2) that would reduce impacts associated with burn ash to below a level of significance upon implementation of them, including soil sampling and analysis prior to construction to determine the presence or absence of burn ash. Thus, the impact conclusion in the IS/MND is appropriately identified as "Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated," which means (as described on IS/MND page 8) that the inclusion of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from a "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The information, analysis, and recommended mitigation contained in the IS/MND are consistent with the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) prepared for the project (see Table 2 on page 51 of the Phase ESA). As such, there is

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A-3 (cont.)	(pages 17 and 41). The use of City Heights data regarding housing (page 59), ignores the closest residential areas in Webster/Eastern Area. Acknowledging these sorts of details, in terms of recognizing the Webster neighborhood, is meaningful.
A-4	Lastly, there is not "existing sports lighting at the baseball fields in Sunshine Bernadini Park to the north" (page 11) – only security lights. This may be relevant for natural habitat issues.
A-5	<p><u>Protection of the Chollas Creek Habitat</u></p> <p>Chief among the area's natural assets is the Chollas Creek watershed – now a new regional park system. Restoration efforts such as those organized by Groundwork San Diego and the adjunct Chollas Creek Coalition are exceptionally appreciated. The Chollas Creek canyon area on the northern edge of the proposed project offers one of the few remaining pristine wildlife corridors in all of southeastern San Diego. Recent biological-technical studies for the proposed nearby "Fairmount Avenue" Fire Station (parcel 541901600, also adjacent to MHPA) provide evidence of special status wildlife and plant species within the Chollas Creek canyon area – just 200 yards away from the proposed Federal Blvd. parcels. That report documented several potentially significant negative impacts to adjacent flora and fauna, for instance, all raptor species and coastal California gnatcatchers (<i>Biological Technical Report for the Fairmount Avenue Fire Station Project, City of San Diego, California, July 2019</i> page 24).</p>
A-6	I was not able to locate a biological technical report for this project in the appendices.
A-7	<p>In addition to the above, there is conflicting public information about exactly where the MHPA boundaries lie. The Helix report's MND project location illustration (Figure 2) shows the MHPA as further away from the steep slopes north of the subject parcels than does SANDAG's GIS parcel lookup. What is more, according to the Mid-City Communities Plan (as well as SDMC section 143.0101), steep hillside habitat areas themselves are to be considered (<i>Mid-City Community Plan, Biological Resources</i> page 58). Items such as the Helix Noise Impact Report's mitigation measures sections – which indicate plans that have yet to be submitted – and the continued discharge of stormwater into Chollas Creek (MND page 46) – particularly if excavation uncovers toxic waste – deserve very careful consideration on the front end.</p>
A-8	<p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>The EACPC truly appreciates MTS' outreach efforts – coming to us twice - with regards to this project. We also enthusiastically support the city's conversion to zero-emissions buses and the economic boost that this project could bring to the local community. At the same time, the Webster community has endured the specter of burn ash in the ground for decades – as well as participated in restoration efforts for Chollas Creek. A more thorough examination of these issues would help provide the assurances that our community needs.</p> <p>Sincerely,  Linda Coffman Chairperson, EACPC</p>

no disparity between the conclusions of the Phase I ESA and the IS/MND. The identified mitigation measures would be implemented in accordance with the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Therefore, hazardous materials issues associated with burn ash, if present, would be addressed and remediated prior to construction.

- A-3 The IS/MND describes surrounding land uses in Section 2.2 (pages 2 and 3) and identifies existing residential development to the east. The analysis of environmental effects contained in the IS/MND and supporting technical studies considers the adjacent and surrounding uses regardless of neighborhood geographic boundaries. The air quality analysis accounted for sensitive receptors in the project area and focused on those that are closest to the project site, including Webster Elementary School and the residences east of 47th Street (IS/MND page 17), which are in the Webster neighborhood. The Holly Drive Leadership Academy is co-located with Webster Elementary School and Leisureland is located further to the northeast. Thus, air quality impacts to these sensitive receptors would be similar or less than those identified for Webster Elementary School and the residences. With regard to hazardous emissions, the IS/MND discloses (see Item IX.c on page 41) that Webster Elementary School is located in close proximity to the project site (less than one-quarter mile) and that people at nearby schools could potentially be exposed to emissions of hazardous materials (asbestos and/or lead-based paint) during demolition of existing buildings on the project site. Mitigation is identified (HAZ-3) that would reduce impacts to below a level of significance to nearby sensitive receptors.

Lastly, the demographic data in Section XIV, *Population and Housing*, of the IS/MND (page 60) has been updated to include the Eastern Area community in addition to the City Heights community. The inclusion of this additional data did not change the impact conclusions of the analysis with regard to population and housing.

- A-4 It is noted that the existing lighting at the baseball fields consists of security lights and not sports lighting. Item I.d in the IS/MND (page 11) has been revised accordingly. This correction does not change the impact conclusions of the of the light and glare analysis.

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- A-5 The project site is completely developed and paved except for a few ornamental trees. No sensitive habitat occurs within the project site that could support special status species. As described in Section 2.2 of the IS/MND (page 3 and elsewhere throughout the IS/MND), Chollas Creek is located approximately 300 feet to the north within the adjacent open space canyon. The adjacent open space canyon contains sensitive habitat that could potentially support sensitive species, but no disturbances or improvements would occur within the adjacent open space area as a result of the project. Thus, no direct impacts to special status species would occur. However, as described in Item IV.a of the IS/MND (pages 20 through 23), potential indirect impacts to sensitive species resulting from noise could occur and mitigation is identified (NOI-1 and NOI-2) to reduce impacts to below a level of significance. In comparison, the noted Fairmount Avenue Fire Station site is located on undeveloped land to the northeast between Fairmount Avenue and 47th Street.
- A-6 A biological resources technical report was not prepared nor warranted for the project because the site is completely developed and there are no biological resources present within the site. An evaluation of potential impacts to biological resources resulting from the project is contained in Section IV, *Biological Resources*, of the IS/MND (pages 20 through 25).
- A-7 The Multi-habitat Planning Areas (MHPA) boundary depicted in Figure 2 of the IS/MND is based on the latest available SANGIS data layer. This boundary is consistent with that shown on the SANDAG Parcel Lookup Tool (available at <https://sdgis.sandag.org/>). Pursuant to Section 143.01110 of the City of San Diego Municipal Code, steep hillsides are considered Environmentally Sensitive Lands (ESL) that could be subject to supplemental development regulations of the City of San Diego ESL Regulations. However, as stated in response A-5, the project would not impact the adjacent open space canyon, including the hillsides as project development would occur within the existing developed site.
- An analysis of potential direct and indirect impacts to the adjacent open space area, including Chollas Creek is contained in various sections of the IS/MND where applicable. For some resource areas such as hydrology and water quality (Section X of the IS/MND), adherence to existing regulatory requirements would adequately avoid potential impacts. Where

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potentially significant impacts are identified, such as biological resources (Section IV of the IS/MND) and noise (Section XIII), mitigation is identified that would reduce impacts to below a level of significance.

A-8 The comment is a concluding statement that affirms MTS' outreach efforts and supports the use of zero emission buses and the economic benefits of the project, as well as summarizes the overall concerns of the project as discussed in responses A-2 through A-7 above.

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August 14, 2022

Denis Desmond
San Diego Metropolitan Transit System
1255 Imperial Avenue, Suite 1000
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Mr. Desmond:

RE: CTAC Mitigated Negative Declaration (Site 7: Federal Boulevard and 47th Street), issued July 14, 2022, and a More Appropriate Site for Consideration

On behalf of the Oak Park Community Council (OPCC), a community volunteer group comprised of Oak Park residents and established since 1972, I am submitting this letter opposing consideration of Site 7 as the final selection but in favor of placing the proposed MTS CTAC at the **Gateway Center Complex on Market Street just east of I-15** rather than at Federal Blvd. & 47th St., an existing light industrial park. These Gateway sites (Sites 5 and 6) are listed in "Table 3. List of Potential Division 6 Sites," of the community outreach presentations I attended. And as stated in those presentations, just because one site (Site 7, the combination of Federal Blvd. and 47th St.) was selected for environmental review does not rule out any other listed site as being the final selection.

Either Site 5 or 6, or their combination, would fulfill major objectives of the MTS project:

- Provide a new and strategically located division in MTS's transportation corridor;
- Provide jobs and skills training particularly in an underserved area of San Diego;
- Reduce or eliminate impacts to residential neighborhoods, parks, schools, and waterways; and,
- Utilize / re-purpose existing and industrially classified (per the statewide General Industrial Permit) land use, facilities, and utilities rather than major razing, excavating, and re-developing. **A bus maintenance yard would fit in nicely with these SIC codes.**

Compared with Site 7 (Federal Blvd. and 47th St.), Sites 5 and 6 do not carry these major concerns to communities that would be impacted should Site 7 be chosen:

- Site 7 sits on the bank of a blue-line waterway, namely, the north fork of Chollas Creek, and major redevelopment and land disturbance would markedly alter or eliminate the established and buffered natural habitats.
- Of particular note is the proposal to provide "decking" because the ground-level footprint has been tentatively determined to be inadequate. Decking means "going up" which would certainly impact flight of resident and migratory bird populations and provide likely nesting / perching sites for "opportunists" such as crows, scavenger

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- B-1 This comment is an introductory statement in opposition of Site 7 and a recommendation for MTS to select Site 5 or 6 for the proposed project. As this comment does not raise any specific environmental issues with respect to the adequacy of the Draft IS/MND, no further response is required.
- B-2 As described in Section 2.2 of the IS/MND (page 3 and elsewhere throughout the IS/MND), Chollas Creek is located approximately 300 feet to the north within the adjacent open space canyon. Project development would occur entirely within the developed project site and no disturbances or improvements would occur within the adjacent open space area as a result of the project. Thus, the project would not directly impact sensitive habitat within the adjacent canyon. Furthermore, as described in Item IV.b of the IS/MND (pages 20 and 24), compliance with the MHPA Land Use Adjacency Guidelines discussed in Item IV.a of the IS/MND (pages 23 through 24) would ensure that inadvertent impacts to sensitive habitats located immediately adjacent to construction work areas are avoided.
- B-3 The project would include new buildings that would be one to three levels, as well as potential parking structures for cars and buses that could be more than one level. These new facilities would not be at a scale or height that would impede migratory bird flight patterns. Such issues are typically associated with high-rise buildings and are of greater concern in coastal areas associated with the Pacific Flyway, a route used by birds migrating from south to north in the spring and north to south in the fall along the coast. Furthermore, the project is located on an existing developed site; land uses would remain industrial, and the proposed project would not involve uses or create conditions that would attract predatory and/or scavenger bird species. Thus, there is no expectation that the project would increase nesting and/or perching of such species.

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B-3 (cont.) gulls, and peregrine falcons (yes, they are in urban San Diego) that prey on other birds or raid nests for eggs.

B-4 • The waterway is an important part of the proposed Chollas Creek Watershed Regional Park connecting communities in Council Dists. 4, 8, and 9 from the Mid-City Eastern Area down to the San Diego Bay. My understanding is that this park is already in the City's General Park Plan.

B-5 • The north fork is undeveloped park open space and a known wildlife corridor in the midst of Southeast San Diego (another fork runs westward through Encanto). When the Regional Park goes in, local residents would not have to drive outside the city to relax and enjoy nature via walking, hiking, biking, or just plain sitting and talking.

B-6 • **Site 7 directly impacts the communities of Webster, Ridgeview, Chollas View, and South Oak Park. I understand that many references in the drafting of the MND were based on City Heights locations and landmarks which are no where near Federal & 47th. We don't know why this happened. The Eastern Area Community Planning Committee should have been the primary liaison from the inception of this project, not the City Heights Planning Committee or any other City Heights entity such as a development corporation.**

B-7 • Adding a major transportation facility—the CTAC—would add to the current traffic congestion from Federal Express (on 47th St.) and the expected traffic from Crest Beverages (going in at Federal & 47th), another major trucking operation.

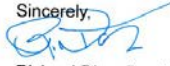
B-8 • Several schools are in the immediate area, and traffic congestion has been an on-going problem for parents and staff. Locating the CTAC on Federal Blvd. will only exacerbate the situation.

B-9 • We also are anticipating a new fire station going in on Federal Blvd. just west of Site 7 that would provide much needed and highly strategic coverage to several communities along SR-94.

B-10 • As the light industrial facilities at Federal Blvd. & 47th St. vacate over time, we envision down-zoning the sites to accommodate educational facilities and resources for our children. Being adjacent to a recognized and City-supported regional park would certainly be a Big Plus in Southeast San Diego for our families.

We do acknowledge the efforts made recently by MTS to present the project to the Eastern Area Community Planning Committee, the Webster Community Council, and other councils whose areas would be impacted. And we do appreciate MTS hearing and considering our voices. That's how government should work: open communication between **the truly impacted communities** and local agencies.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

 Richard Diaz, President
 Oak Park Community Council
 P. O. Box 152753
 San Diego, CA 92195
 619-188-9138

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- B-4 As discussed in response B-2, the project would not impact the adjacent open space canyon area or Chollas Creek to the north.
- B-5 As stated in Item IV.d of the IS/MND (page 24), the adjacent open space area and Chollas Creek corridor function as a wildlife corridor. The project, however, would not interfere with the function of the Chollas Creek corridor as a wildlife corridor and would not constrain wildlife movement through the area. The project would be constructed entirely within the developed site and would not disrupt the existing habitat corridor along Chollas Creek. In addition, implementation of standard construction best management practices (BMPs), such as installation of orange fencing to delineate the limits of disturbance and compliance with the MHPA Land Use Adjacency Guidelines (see response B-2) would ensure that indirect impacts to sensitive habitat within this wildlife corridor are avoided.
- B-6 The analysis of environmental effects associated with the project contained in the IS/MND and supporting technical studies considers the project site and adjacent and surrounding areas regardless of neighborhood geographic boundaries. The Mid-City Communities Plan identifies the project site as within the geographical boundaries of the Ridgeview neighborhood of the City Heights community (Figure 5 on page 24 of the Mid-City Communities Plan). The referenced Mid-City Communities Plan map also shows that the Webster neighborhood within the Eastern Area community is adjacent and east of the project site, and the Oak Park neighborhood (also within the Eastern Area community) is located further to the east and north, east of Euclid Avenue. The Chollas View neighborhood is located south of State Route 94 and is within the boundaries of the Encanto Neighborhoods planning area. MTS has included stakeholder groups within the project area throughout the planning process.
- B-7 Traffic congestion is not an environmental issue analyzed under CEQA. Senate Bill 743, which went into effect on July 1, 2020, changed the way transportation impacts are evaluated under CEQA. This legislation changed the transportation impact performance metric from level of service, which is a metric based on traffic congestion factors, to vehicle miles traveled (VMT), which measures the actual amount of automobile travel a project would create on the roadway network. As discussed in Section XVII, *Transportation*, of the IS/MND (pages 63 through 65), a project-specific

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transportation impact study was conducted for the project in accordance with industry standard methodology and concluded that impacts to transportation systems, VMT, and transportation-related hazards resulting from the project would be less than significant. Nonetheless, the Transportation Impact Study dated July 11, 2022 and included as Appendix J to the IS/MND analyzes roadway level of service and delay in Chapters 3 and 5 for informational purposes and requirements outside of CEQA. There are no locations where unacceptable level of service is expected at any study area intersection with the assumed signal modification to include an eastbound right turn arrow overlap phase at Federal Boulevard and 47th Street. This modification will need to be coordinated with the City of San Diego. Traffic conditions with the project are expected to be adequate and no off-site improvements are expected to be needed other than the traffic signal that is proposed as part of the project and the signal modification at Federal Boulevard and 47th Street. The roadway network has been designed for peak traffic conditions and the traffic levels associated with the project can be accommodated without exceeding the capacity of the roadway system. Site access would be provided by up to four driveways from Federal Boulevard, and the project would install a new traffic signal at the western-most driveway to facilitate bus ingress/egress.

- B-8 It is noted that a new fire station, the Fairmount Avenue Fire Station, is planned in the project area on undeveloped land to the northeast between Fairmount Avenue and 47th Street. This future planned project has been added to the public services section contained in Item XV.a.i of the IS/MND (page 61), as well as the cumulative analysis discussion contained in Item XXI.b in the IS/MND (pages 72 through 73).
- B-9 This comment provides a long-term vision for the redevelopment of existing industrial-zoned properties in the project area. As this comment does not raise any specific environmental issues with respect to the adequacy of the Draft IS/MND, no further response is required.
- B-10 The comment is a concluding statement that affirms MTS' community council outreach efforts. As this comment does not raise any specific environmental issues with respect to the adequacy of the Draft IS/MND, no further response is required.

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Webform submission from: Clean Transit Advancement Campus (formally Division 6)

San Diego Metropolitan Transit System <noreply@sdmts.com>

Mon 8/15/2022 8:52 AM

To: CTACProject <CTACProject@sdmts.com>

Submitted on Mon, 08/15/2022 - 8:52am

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

Name

Stephen Lamprides

Email

slamp2@att.net

Phone

[619-981-1398](tel:619-981-1398)

Question/Comment

As agreed upon we will be sending our final comments on CTAC DMND on 8/18/22. Thank you!

C-1

C-1 The President of the Webster Community Council contacted SANDAG during the public review period for the Draft IS/MND (July 14, 2022 through August 15, 2022) to ask if the Webster Community Council could have a few more days beyond August 15, 2022 to complete their comment letter. This comment notes that MTS and SANDAG agreed to accept formal comments on the Draft IS/MND from the Webster Community Council no later than August 18, 2022. The comment letter from the Webster Community Council (letter D) and responses follow this page.

Webster Community Council

4973 Elm Street | San Diego, CA 92102 | (619) 981-1398

August 18, 2022

Dennis Desmond, Director of Planning
 San Diego Metropolitan Transit System
 1255 Imperial Ave., Suite 1000
 San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Mr. Desmond:

RE: Clean Transit Advancement Campus Mitigated Negative Declaration Site Seven (Federal Blvd. and 47th St.) Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration

On behalf of its community members, Webster Community Council submits our comments on the subject draft mitigated negative declaration, DMND, and its adequacy and sufficiency for the proposed project's potential impacts on our community and environment. Webster Community Council is a nonprofit corporation whose chief purpose is the betterment of the community through accurate communication and neighborhood involvement. We believe that our community, who's western boundary is 47th Street will suffer more of the externalities from the project at the currently proposed location, than any other residential community.

In a review of the draft initial study and combined mitigated declaration and technical appendices, we are concerned about the adequacy and sufficiency of traffic circulation on streets common to our community and the subject project, in light of the newly constructed Reyes beverage facility and the ability to implement geometric solutions to the intersection of 47th Street and Federal Boulevard. There is no indication that mitigation for impacts resulting from the subject or alternative analysis as would be expected in an EIR which we urge you to produce will be accomplished.

It appears that the processing for the subject document has been undertaken in a non-traditional order/format process from that suggested by CEQA. This results in an incomplete, informational, full-disclosure document.

We find the notice of intent to prepare an environmental document, difficult to understand due to the style in which it was written and the nomenclature utilized. It appears that the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) and Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) as project proponents, create the situation of agencies policing themselves directly, seemingly unsuitable for the task. This results in agencies with vested interests not pursuing objectivity with vigor.

It appears that the list of responsible agencies should include as a minimum the Regional Water Quality Control Board, (due to the subject's proximity to the heavily impaired Chollas Creek and the potential for stored hydrocarbons to be perched above the creek to be accidentally released) and the San Diego Regional Air Pollution District, (to review the Green House Gas [GHG] calculations), and the Southern Indian Health Coalition for review of historical sites adjacent to Chollas Creek.

D-1 This comment is an introductory statement that describes the location of the Webster neighborhood in relation to the project site and states that Webster will be impacted more severely by the project than other nearby residential neighborhoods. The analysis of environmental effects contained in the IS/MND and supporting technical studies considers the adjacent and surrounding uses regardless of neighborhood geographic boundaries.

D-2 Traffic congestion is not an environmental issue analyzed under CEQA. Senate Bill 743, which went into effect on July 1, 2020, changed the way transportation impacts are evaluated under CEQA. This legislation changed the transportation impact performance metric from level of service, which is a metric based on traffic congestion factors, to vehicle miles traveled (VMT), which measures the actual amount of automobile travel a project would create on the roadway network. As discussed in Section XVII, *Transportation*, of the IS/MND (pages 62 through 64), a project-specific transportation impact study was conducted for the project in accordance with industry standard methodology and concluded that impacts to transportation systems, VMT, and transportation-related hazards resulting from the project would be less than significant. Thus, no mitigation measures for transportation impacts are required under CEQA.

Nonetheless, the Transportation Impact Study dated July 11, 2022 and included as Appendix J to the IS/MND analyzes roadway level of service and delay in Chapters 3 and 5 for informational purposes and requirements outside of CEQA. There are no locations where unacceptable level of service is expected at any study area intersection with the assumed signal modification to include an eastbound right turn arrow overlap phase at Federal Boulevard and 47th Street. This modification will need to be coordinated with the City of San Diego. Traffic conditions with the project are expected to be adequate and no off-site improvements are expected to be needed other than the traffic signal that is proposed as part of the project and the signal modification at Federal Boulevard and 47th Street. The roadway network has been designed for peak traffic conditions and the traffic levels associated with the project can be accommodated without exceeding the capacity of the roadway system.

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Dennis Desmond, Director of Planning
Comments on CTAC DMND

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August 18, 2022

Timing and Presentation Order

D-6

We believe that MTS has taken actions that give impetus to a planned or foreseeable project (the Subject) in a manner that forecloses alternatives or mitigation measures that would ordinarily be part of an EIR review of that public project. Here, the agency has not conditioned the agency's future use of the project site on an EIR or full alternative consideration.

D-7

We believe, further, that the detailed civil engineering study of the preferred/proposed site has been undertaken by Dokken Engineering, who received MTS board approval on March 10, 2022 for a contract in the amount of approximately \$206,000 for planning services; (stated purpose determine the exact project description) commits the agency to the project before the environmental analysis/process is started/completed. This is very powerful because it directs the decisions to prepare an MND instead of an EIR with alternative analysis. (We don't need an EIR with alternative site analysis because we have already selected and invested in site seven.)

D-8

The geotechnical study is dated February 5, 2021 and the notice of intent July 14, 2022 shows a great disparity in temporal timing and although the study is preliminary, it indicates a preference for the 47th Street and Federal Blvd site. In addition, has a geotechnical study been done for an alternative site?

D-9

The first presentation (notice) the public attended was on September 13, 2021 using the virtual computer program zoom. Wherein an informational handout sheet was posted during the zoom meeting. Interestingly, it included the preferred site, location seven 47th and Federal, the notion of alternatives was merely skimmed over.

D-10

The preferred site location 47th and Federal was disclosed Apr 14, 2022 via e-mail to interested persons. Then the faulty Notice Of Intent to prepare a Mitigated Negative Declaration was filed on July 14, 2022.

D-11

We acknowledge that several factors are relevant to the determination of when CEQA review must be completed and that pre-approval agreements may fall on a spectrum between mere interest in a project and a commitment to a definite course of action. However, it appears that the current determination and information timing indicates as a practical matter, the proponents are committed to the 47th street/Federal Blvd project.

D-12

Again, we urge the preparation of an environmental impact report with alternatives and mitigations to significant impacts such as transportation infra-structure.

Sincerely,



Stephen Lamprides,
President Webster Community Council

With regard to implementation of CEQA mitigation measures for other impact areas, the identified mitigation measures in the IS/MND would be implemented in accordance with the project's Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (included in the Final IS/MND) that is required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The comment also suggests that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) should be prepared for the project; however, no facts or other evidence is provided to support this assertion. The conclusions and supporting analysis contained in the Draft IS/MND that the proposed project would not result in significant environmental effects are supported by substantial evidence contained in the record. Project impacts are adequately analyzed and assessed based on established methodologies and identified CEQA significance thresholds. Where potentially significant impacts are identified, feasible mitigation measures are identified that would avoid or reduce impacts to below a level of significance. Therefore, preparation of an EIR for the project is not warranted or required.

D-3

The Draft IS/MND and associated notices were prepared in accordance with the CEQA statute (Public Resources Code, Division 13, Section 21000 et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Sections 15000 et seq.). The format, content, and environmental review process of the Draft IS/MND are consistent with the requirements of CEQA.

D-4

The Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration (NOI) was prepared in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15072. There is no required template or specific format for the NOI as long as it contains all the information listed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15072. As stated in Section 1, *Introduction*, of the IS/MND (page 1), the project is a joint effort between MTS and SANDAG. MTS would acquire the necessary property (phase one) and SANDAG would build the new facility (phase two). MTS would be the owner and operator. As the agency with the principal responsibility for carrying out the first phase of the proposed project and the agency that will act first on the proposed project, MTS is the Lead Agency under CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15050 and 15367. SANDAG is considered a Responsible Agency under CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15381. The involvement and role of both agencies is clearly defined, appropriate, and consistent with CEQA.

COMMENTS

RESPONSES

- D-5 Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15381, A Responsible Agency is defined as:
- A public agency which proposes to carry out or approve a project, for which a Lead Agency is preparing or has prepared an EIR or Negative Declaration. For the purposes of CEQA, the term “Responsible Agency” includes all public agencies other than the Lead Agency which have discretionary approval power over the project.
- The Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego Air Pollution Control District, and the Southern Indian Health Council do not have discretionary approval power over the project because no permits and/or discretionary approvals are required by these agencies and organizations and thus, they are not considered Responsible Agencies under CEQA.
- D-6 For the reasons discussed in response D-2, preparation of an EIR for the project is not required. The comment does offer any basis for its assertion that “MTS has taken actions that give impetus to a planned or foreseeable project. . .” In compliance with CEQA, the MTS Board of Directors will consider the IS/MND prior to taking the discretionary actions listed in Section 2.4 of the IS/MND (page 5).
- D-7 The comment alleges that MTS prematurely commenced engineering analysis of a specific site prior to completion of the environmental review process. MTS began working on identifying potential sites for the project dating back to 2016. More recently, as the need for a new bus facility has become critical due to the requirement to convert the MTS bus fleet to zero emission buses to meet state mandates by 2040, additional site location analysis has occurred. This planning process has been openly shared with the public, as seen in the identification of seven potential sites in the project area based on an operational analysis with specific siting criteria. As a result of this site location analysis, MTS has identified the Federal Boulevard/47th Street site as the preferred site at this time and is undergoing engineering feasibility and preliminary conceptual design under contract with a civil engineering consultant. The MTS Board of Directors has not taken any action constituting an approval of the proposed project site under CEQA. Expenditure of funds on preliminary studies for a proposed project does not amount to a project approval or an incentive to ignore environmental concerns, as the commenter suggests.

COMMENTS

RESPONSES

The engineering analysis provided estimated building square footage, project layout, and other meaningful information necessary for environmental assessment. The IS/MND analyzes a preferred project site and includes an accurate, stable, and consistent description of the proposed project that provides for a complete evaluation and review of its environmental impacts in compliance with CEQA. An EIR with an alternatives analysis is not required under CEQA because there is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the agency, that the project, with the implementation of mitigation measures, would have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines Section 15070(b), MTS has prepared an IS/MND for the proposed project. The IS/MND evaluates potential environmental effects of the preferred site. If the MTS Board of Directors does not select the preferred site, subsequent environmental review would be required for the site that is ultimately selected.

The comment also states that an EIR with alternative site analysis should be prepared for the project. For the reasons discussed in response D-2, preparation of an EIR for the project is not required. The purpose of alternatives within the context of CEQA and an EIR, is to reduce or avoid identified significant impacts of a project. EIR alternatives are developed by identifying potentially significant impacts of a project and making revisions to the project design or location to lessen or avoid such impacts (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6). Identification and analysis of project alternatives are only required for an EIR. As such, environmental analysis of project alternatives is not included or required within the IS/MND prepared for the project. The environmental review process of the Draft IS/MND has been conducted in accordance with the requirements of CEQA.

D-8 The date of the project-specific geotechnical desktop study (included as Appendix D to the IS/MND) is dated May 24, 2022. This date is indicated on the study itself and in Section 6, *References*, of the IS/MND (page 75). The geotechnical study evaluates the proposed site and is not required to analyze additional sites under CEQA. Consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15147, the IS/MND summarizes the technical detail in the geotechnical study and other appendices sufficient to permit an assessment of potentially significant environmental effects.

COMMENTS

RESPONSES

- D-9 The comment states that at the September 13, 2022 meeting, the preferred site was identified and alternative sites were “merely skimmed over.” To the contrary, the presentation included a discussion of potential site locations and slides that showed the sites under consideration. The presentation is available at: <https://www.sdmts.com/sites/default/files/attachments/mts-division-6-presentation-eng-20210913.pdf> (see slides 7 and 8). While the location of the currently preferred site is shown among the potential sites, it was not identified as the preferred site and all sites under consideration are shown. As this comment does not raise any specific environmental issues with respect to the adequacy of the Draft IS/MND, no further response is required.
- D-10 The comment infers that MTS inappropriately selected a preferred site prior to the release of the NOI for the MND. As discussed in response D-7, MTS has identified a proposed site for consideration by the MTS Board of Directors, and the environmental review process has been conducted in accordance with the requirements of CEQA. The comment also states that the NOI is “faulty.” As discussed in response D-4, the NOI was prepared in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15072.
- D-11 As discussed in response D-7, MTS has identified a proposed project site for consideration by the MTS Board of Directors as required by CEQA. There have been no actions by MTS, or any surrounding circumstances, which preclude adequate consideration of the proposed project site under CEQA. The IS/MND evaluates potential environmental effects of the proposed project site. If the MTS Board of Directors does not select this site, subsequent environmental review would be required for the site that is ultimately selected.
- D-12 The comment is a concluding statement recommending preparation of an EIR with project alternatives and mitigation for the project. Preparation of an EIR for the project is not required for the reasons discussed in response D-2. As stated in response D-7, identification and analysis of project alternatives are only required for an EIR. As such, environmental analysis of project alternatives is not included or required within the IS/MND prepared for the project.

COMMENTS

RESPONSES

Lastly, there is no substantial evidence that the project, with the implementation of mitigation measures, would have a significant effect on the environment. Where potentially significant impacts are identified, feasible mitigation measures are identified that would avoid or reduce impacts to below a level of significance.

Allen Matkins

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E-mail: rfriess@allenmatkins.com
Direct Dial: 949.851.5478 File Number: 390937.00001/4893-6769-9501.4

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

August 15, 2022

MTS
ATTN: CTAC Project Comments
1255 Imperial Avenue
Suite 1000
San Diego, CA 92101

Email: CTACProject@sdmts.com

Re: Comment on the MTS's Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the MTS's Proposed Clean Transit Advancement Campus Project

Dear Metropolitan Transit System and its Board of Directors:

I am writing this letter on behalf of Lone Oak – San Diego III, L.L.C., an affiliate of Crest Distributing, L.L.C. and Reyes Holdings, L.L.C. Lone Oak owns an approximately 15-acre property on which Crest/Reyes have long operated a beverage-distribution business. Nearly 2.5 acres of this distribution facility are within the footprint of the proposed site for the MTS's planned Clean Transit Advancement Campus Project.

Lone Oak would like to express its overall support for the MTS's project and for the value this innovative project will add to the community. Lone Oak would also like to express its support for the selection by the MTS's staff of Site 7 as the preferred alternative; that alternative strikes an appropriate balance between meeting the MTS's project needs and limiting potential impacts.

Lone Oak submits this comment letter not to demand that the MTS prepare a full environmental impact report but instead to bring to the MTS's attention that its draft initial study/mitigated negative declaration has failed to mention, let alone study, the reasonably foreseeable impacts associated with the MTS's plan to acquire the 2.5 acres owned by Lone Oak. Those acres have long been used by Reyes, and now Crest, as part of a beverage-distribution facility. They are completely redeveloping that beverage-distribution facility, and the 2.5 acres will continue to be an important component of the redeveloped facility. The redeveloped facility will be completed in the coming months.

E-1 The comment is an introductory statement in general support of the project at the subject site. As this comment does not raise any environmental issues with respect to the adequacy of the Draft IS/MND, no further response is required.

E-2 The comment states that the Draft IS/MND did not identify that property acquisition would be required to implement the project at the subject site, nor did it evaluate the environmental effects of property acquisition and relocation of existing on-site uses at the beverage distribution facility that comprises a portion of the project site. Section 2.4 of the IS/MND (page 5) identifies that real property transactions would be required of MTS, including but not limited to purchase and sale agreements for fee title acquisition, relocation benefits agreements with tenants, quiet title actions, and all other actions that may be required for public agency voluntary or involuntary acquisitions. Additionally, Item XIV.b of the IS/MND (page 60) indicates that existing on-site businesses would require relocation.

The scope of CEQA analysis focuses on physical impacts to the environment and does not require analysis of social or economic impacts. Under CEQA, an economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment. A social or economic change related to a physical change may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant. (CEQA Guidelines Sections 15131 and 15382). Effects analyzed under CEQA must be related to a physical change (CEQA Guidelines Section 15358[b]). Property acquisition and the need to relocate in and of themselves are not physical impacts required to be analyzed under CEQA. While physical changes associated with an actual relocation may involve a change in land use and secondary environmental effects associated with that change, it is too speculative to ascertain not only the new location of businesses that might relocate, but the physical conditions and environmental setting of the unspecified locations as well. Businesses that would relocate may be required to undergo a discretionary approval process that includes environmental review. The scope of such analysis is outside of the purview of the proposed project, as impacts would be too speculative pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15145. While CEQA requires consideration of reasonably foreseeable indirect physical changes in the environment, a change that is speculative is not reasonably foreseeable (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(d)). It would be speculative

COMMENTS

RESPONSES

Allen Matkins Leck Gamble Mallory & Natsis LLP
Attorneys at Law

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Page 2

Put simply, the initial study/MND cannot evaluate the impacts of taking Lone Oak's property and forcing the relocation of part of Crest's operations if the initial study/MND does not even mention this acquisition. As a result, the initial study/MND has not determined whether the impacts of this acquisition and relocation are significant and require mitigation.

1. Project Description

The MND describes the MTS's project site as encompassing approximately 12.1 acres and lists each of the parcels that will make up that 12.1 acre site. Roughly 2.5 of those acres (Assessor Parcel Number 541-611-27-00 and shown on Figure 2 of the Draft MND) is owned by Lone Oak and has long been used as part of Reyes' Coca-Cola distribution operations. The entire facility, including the 2.5 acres, is being redeveloped for use as a warehouse/distribution facility for Crest, which has been a part of the San Diego community for a very long time.

The redevelopment project is targeted to be completed in the coming months, and the 2.5 acres are a key aspect of this redeveloped facility. Those acres will continue to provide parking for trucks and trailers, and Crest's business plan provides that the acres may end up, for example, being used for certain electric vehicle operations/solutions.

The heart of Crest's distribution operations is its truck fleet. Thus, ensuring adequate and appropriate truck parking is an important and necessary part of Crest's facility.

While the MND correctly identifies that the 2.5 acres are planned as part of the MTS's proposed 12.1-acre project site, the MND never mentions that Lone Oak owns those acres or that Crest is actively using them, meaning that Crest's operations on these 2.5 acres will need to be relocated somewhere.

2. Reasonably Foreseeable Environmental Impacts

Because the MND does not mention the MTS's acquisition of Lone Oak's 2.5 acres, the MND does not study the reasonably foreseeable environmental impacts that stem from the MTS's acquisition of those acres. Crest has not itself studied whether the impact of relocating its operations are significant and unmitigable, but it seems obvious that the MTS should study these impacts and make a determination as to whether the impacts rise to a level of significance. And if there are significant impacts, the MTS should incorporate mitigation measures where feasible.

In an effort to assist the MTS with its review of reasonably foreseeable environmental impacts associated with its acquisition of the 2.5 acres and the relocation of the operations on it, Lone Oak suggests that the MTS should analyze the potential impacts identified below.

- **Air-Quality Impacts.** As noted above, the acres the MTS intends to acquire are used as truck-and-trailer parking for a beverage-distribution facility. Once the MTS

to assume that MTS would have discretionary approval authority over unknown sites for potential relocation or the authority to impose and enforce any mitigation measures the commenter suggests could be required.

E-3 As discussed in response E-2, Section 2.4 of the IS/MND (page 5) identifies that real property transactions would be required of MTS and that existing on-site businesses would require relocation in Item XIV.b of the IS/MND (page 59).

E-4 As described in response E-2, the analysis of relocation of existing on-site businesses and associated secondary environmental effects is not required to be included in the IS/MND prepared for the project. The physical conditions and environmental setting of a potential site for relocation are necessary elements to analyzing air quality, transportation, and noise impacts, as the commenter requests. Without this information, any analysis would be speculative and outside of the requirements of CEQA.

COMMENTS

RESPONSES

Allen Matkins Leck Gamble Mallory & Natis I.L.P.
Attorneys at Law

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acquires those acres, Crest's onsite truck-and-trailer parking will be limited, which may mean that trucks and trailers will need to be parked at some unidentified offsite property or properties. The MTS should study potential relocation properties, evaluate the additional miles these trucks will need to travel to use the offsite parking, evaluate the associated emissions, and evaluate air-quality impacts with this additional travel.

- **Transportation.** The MTS should also study transportation impacts for the same reason that it should study air-quality impacts. Once the MTS acquires Lone Oak's acres, the trucks normally dispatched from there will need to utilize an alternative location, which will likely be further away from the distribution facility and/or their routes, meaning they will spend more time on the road. The MTS should identify where Crest could park these trucks and calculate and analyze the VMT (vehicle miles traveled).
- **Noise.** The MTS should analyze potential noise impacts associated with offsite parking for trucks and trailers. Depending on where the trucks park, there could be greater noise impacts, for example, if sensitive receptors are located nearby.

3. Conclusion

In sum, Lone Oak would again like to express its support for the MTS's project and for the selection of Site 7 for the project. Lone Oak hopes that the MTS will consider its comments and strengthen the MTS's overall environmental analysis so that all stakeholders have a better understanding of the potential environmental impacts associated with the MTS's project. Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,


K. Erik Friess

KLF:slp

E-5 The comment is a concluding statement that reiterates the support of the project at the subject site and a general statement requesting consideration of the comments contained in this letter. See responses E-2 through E-4 for specifics.

E-4
(cont.)

E-5

COMMENTS

RESPONSES

Clean Transit Advancement Campus

Kristen Hurst <hurst.kristen@gmail.com>

Tue 8/2/2022 4:47 PM

To: CTACProject <CTACProject@sdmcs.com>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

August 2, 2022

Metropolitan Transit System
1255 Imperial Avenue, Suite 900
San Diego, CA. 92102

Re: Clean Transit Advancement Campus

Dear Mr. Desmond,

F-1

I am writing this letter as a resident of the Community of Webster to express my opposition to any MTS facility in the Webster Community, including the proposed Clean Transit Advancement Campus (site 7) on Federal Blvd.

F-2

As a resident of the Webster Community for over 12 years, I am extremely concerned about the location of a bus maintenance yard adjacent to the pristine and protected open space along Chollas Creek. In addition to living in the Webster Community I also work as an Elementary Science Teacher for San Diego Unified School District in an adjacent community that is situated along Chollas Creek. My students and I use the outdoor learning space along the creek often and we know that Chollas Creek is home to the federally threatened Coastal California Gnatcatcher and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Species of Concern, the Coastal Cactus Wren. Both birds have undergone dramatic population declines that commensurate with the urbanization and destruction of their habitat. My students and I are very worried that businesses like MTS are more concerned with profit than people and environmental protection. What example are we setting for our youth if we allow projects like the MTS facility to jeopardize and endanger their right to a healthy future?

F-3

I have attended several community meetings and listened to representatives of MTS make the conjecture that this facility will "improve" environmental conditions, but the facility there is already regulated by the State Industrial General Permit which regulates stormwater and related water quality impacts. I appreciate that the proposed MTS site will house electric buses, but the facility and its operation will bring more pollution and negative environmental impacts to my community.

F-4

The MTS bus yard will have negative impacts on the Community of Webster's goal of trails and nature spaces. We are already a community that has a glaring park deficit and to negatively impact potential nearby open spaces and trails is appalling and insulting!

F-5

Please understand that our communities deserve to live in places unburdened by traffic, noise, and pollution just like other communities throughout San Diego County. This proposed facility will undermine our quality of life.

Sincerely,
Kristen Hurst

F-1

This comment is a general statement opposed to the proposed project within the Webster neighborhood. The Mid-City Communities Plan identifies the project site as located within the geographical boundaries of the Ridgeview neighborhood of the City Heights community (Figure 5 on page 24 of the Mid-City Communities Plan). The referenced Mid-City Communities Plan map also shows that the Webster neighborhood within the Eastern Area community is adjacent and east of the project site. As this comment does not raise any environmental issues with respect to the adequacy of the Draft IS/MND, no further response is required.

F-2

As described in Section 2.2 of the IS/MND (page 3 and elsewhere throughout the IS/MND), Chollas Creek is located approximately 300 feet to the north within the adjacent open space canyon. Project development would occur entirely within the developed project site and no disturbances or improvements would occur within the adjacent open space area, including Chollas Creek, as a result of the project.

F-3

The proposed project would occur on developed properties zoned and designated for industrial uses. Implementation of the project would replace the existing industrial uses that were constructed between the 1950s and 1980s with new buildings and facilities that would be designed to achieve a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification, which would provide a framework for more sustainable, efficient, and cost-effective green buildings. Additionally, buses at the proposed facility would be all electric, which do not generate pollutant emissions. The new facility would also be required to comply with current stormwater and water quality requirements, as described in Section X, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, of the IS/MND (pages 44 through 49). Lastly, Section III, *Air Quality*, of the IS/MND (pages 14 through 19) concludes that air quality impacts resulting from construction and operation of the proposed project would be less than significant.

F-4

As stated in response F-2, the project would not impact the adjacent open space area to the north as development would occur within the existing developed project site.

COMMENTS

RESPONSES

- F-5 The comment states that the project would result in traffic, noise, and pollution that undermines the Webster neighborhood's quality of life. Traffic congestion is not an environmental issue analyzed under CEQA. Senate Bill 743, which went into effect on July 1, 2020, changed the way transportation impacts are evaluated under CEQA. This legislation changed the transportation impact performance metric from level of service, which is a metric based on traffic congestion factors, to vehicle miles traveled (VMT), which measures the actual amount of automobile travel a project would create on the roadway network. As discussed in Section XVII, *Transportation*, of the IS/MND (pages 63 through 65), a project-specific transportation impact study was conducted for the project and concluded that impacts to transportation systems, VMT, and transportation-related hazards resulting from the project would be less than significant.
- Nonetheless, the Transportation Impact Study dated July 11, 2022 and included as Appendix J to the IS/MND analyzes roadway level of service and delay in Chapters 3 and 5 for informational purposes and requirements outside of CEQA. There are no locations where unacceptable level of service is expected at any study area intersection with the assumed signal modification to include an eastbound right turn arrow overlap phase at Federal Boulevard and 47th Street. This modification will need to be coordinated with the City of San Diego. Traffic conditions with the project are expected to be adequate and no off-site improvements are expected to be needed other than the traffic signal that is proposed as part of the project and the signal modification at Federal Boulevard and 47th Street. The roadway network has been designed for peak traffic conditions and the traffic levels associated with the project can be accommodated without exceeding the capacity of the roadway system.
- As discussed in Item XIII.a of the IS/MND (pages 53 through 58), the project could result in potentially significant noise impacts during construction and operations because noise levels could exceed allowable levels at the edge of the Multi-habitat Planning Area (MHPA) preserve to the north. However, mitigation is identified in the IS/MND (NOI-1 and NOI-2) that would reduce impacts to below a level of significance. With regards to pollution, Section III, *Air Quality*, of the IS/MND (pages 14 through 19) concludes that air quality impacts resulting from construction and operation of the proposed project would be less than significant.

COMMENTS

RESPONSES

Concerns about MTS

Juanita Williams <juanitawilliams257@gmail.com>

Sat 8/6/2022 9:48 PM

To: CTACProject <CTACProject@sdmts.com>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

G-1

Environmental issues that impacts quality of air, water, respiratory health and increase further worn out, potholes and poor raggedy road conditions, traffic congestion, and contribute to already littered, unkempt and trashed community that needs a serious decluttering, street cleaning along federal Blvd and throughout pockets of Webster community. The rapid development of large businesses (new brewing co and potentially fire station, Some type of power, electrical or G5 tower on "A" street and MTS bus) are overshadowing residents in the Webster community and environmentally overloading this community with unspoken toxicity, pollution and creating unsafe environment that doesn't promote a healthy and vibrant residential community. Be fair and level the playing field and consider other communities that hasn't had any new developments. Webster community has its share of problematic issues and adding MTS bus does not positively uplift our community or fit into Webster community mission statement nor does it beneficially increase our home values or community. We as a community are diligently working very hard to restore and build our community back to an enrichment residential community for our family legacy, future generations and children that reflects community pride, beautification and maintain a safe, clean, declutter streets of trash, illegal dumping sites, crime-free, school age, elderly and pedestrian safely to walk and cross streets without being injured due to increased high traffic of MTS buses and employees, employees of Brewing company, fire station, etc. The challenge of commuting and maneuvering entering and exiting your own community due to increased traffic congestion. How does these business give back to Webster community not speaking about job opportunities. Oversaturating and Top Heavy the residential Webster community with Such Big businesses create environmental issues and brings about longevity disasters and destroys and debilitate th Webster community which defeat all the progress and hardworking we have made to improve our community.
Sent from my iPhone

G-1 This comment raises a number of concerns and focuses on potential environmental impacts associated with air quality, water quality, and traffic within the Webster neighborhood. First, the Mid-City Communities Plan identifies the project site as located within the geographical boundaries of the Ridgeview neighborhood of the City Heights community (Figure 5 on page 24 of the Mid-City Communities Plan). The referenced Mid-City Communities Plan map also shows that the Webster neighborhood within the Eastern Area community is adjacent and east of the project site. However, the analysis of environmental effects contained in the IS/MND and supporting technical studies considers the adjacent and surrounding uses regardless of neighborhood geographic boundaries.

With regards to air quality, Section III, *Air Quality*, of the IS/MND (pages 14 through 19) concludes that air quality impacts resulting from construction and operation of the proposed project would be less than significant. In terms of water quality, the proposed project would be required to comply with current stormwater and water quality requirements, as described in Section X, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, of the IS/MND (pages 44 through 49), which concludes that water quality impacts resulting from construction and operation of the proposed project would be less than significant.

Traffic congestion is not an environmental issue analyzed under CEQA. Senate Bill 743, which went into effect on July 1, 2020, changed the way transportation impacts are evaluated under CEQA. This legislation changed the transportation impact performance metric from level of service, which is a metric based on traffic congestion factors, to vehicle miles traveled (VMT), which measures the actual amount of automobile travel a project would create on the roadway network. As discussed in Section XVII, *Transportation*, of the IS/MND (pages 63 through 65), a project-specific transportation impact study was conducted for the project and concluded that impacts to transportation systems, VMT, and transportation-related hazards resulting from the project would be less than significant. Nonetheless, the Transportation Impact Study dated July 11, 2022 and included as Appendix J to the IS/MND analyzes roadway level of service and delay in Chapters 3 and 5 for informational purposes and requirements outside of CEQA. There are no locations where unacceptable level of service is expected at any study area intersection with the assumed

COMMENTS

RESPONSES

signal modification to include an eastbound right turn arrow overlap phase at Federal Boulevard and 47th Street. This modification will need to be coordinated with the City of San Diego. Traffic conditions with the project are expected to be adequate and no off-site improvements are expected to be needed other than the traffic signal that is proposed as part of the project and the signal modification at Federal Boulevard and 47th Street. The roadway network has been designed for peak traffic conditions and the traffic levels associated with the project can be accommodated without exceeding the capacity of the roadway system.

The comment also states that development of new businesses is deteriorating the residential character of the Webster neighborhood. The proposed project would occur on developed properties zoned and designated for industrial uses. The project would replace existing aging industrial uses with a new industrial use; it would not displace or otherwise adversely affect existing residential properties in the surrounding area.

The comment further states that the introduction of the project and other new businesses does not benefit the community in terms of employment opportunities. As discussed in Item XIV.a of the IS/MND (page 59), the project would provide employment opportunities, which could provide up to as many as 575 jobs at full buildout of the proposed facility. It is anticipated that most of these jobs would be filled by existing residents in the region.

COMMENTS

RESPONSES

Webform submission from: Clean Transit Advancement Campus (formally Division 6)

San Diego Metropolitan Transit System <noreply@sdmts.com>

Tue 8/9/2022 1:15 PM

To: CTACProject <CTACProject@sdmts.com>

Submitted on Tue, 08/09/2022 - 1:15pm

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

Name

Ron Bevilacqua

Email

ronbevi@gmail.com

Phone

[6198049576](tel:6198049576)

Question/Comment

Hi. I absolutely LOVE this project idea !!!!

Hopefully this can be completed, and the nearby residents will realize that this is something that they and the city both benefit from. And they will also realize that their concerns were rather minor and insignificant.

ONWARD !!!!!

Thanks.
Ron.

H-1

H-1 This comment is a general statement in support of the project. As this comment does not raise any environmental issues with respect to the adequacy of the Draft IS/MND, no further response is required.

COMMENTS

RESPONSES

Purposed MTS facility

Strom Carmi <cstrom@sandi.net>

Mon 8/15/2022 1:00 PM

To: CTACProject <CTACProject@sdmts.com>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

August 15th, 2022

Metropolitan Transit System
1255 Imperial Avenue, Suite 900
San Diego, CA. 92102

Re: Clean Transit Advancement Campus

Dear Mr. Desmond,

I write this letter as a resident of the community of Webster and as Principal of a small Elementary School in the neighborhood to express my opposition to any MTS facility in the Webster community, including the proposed Clean Transit Advancement Campus (site 7) on Federal Blvd. As a Principal of the school and as a member of this community (I live near the school), I am extremely concerned about the location of a bus maintenance yard adjacent to pristine open space along Chollas Creek. We have heard it represented by MTS that this facility will "improve" environmental conditions, but the facility there is already regulated by the State Industrial General Permit regulating stormwater and related water quality impacts. The proposed MTS site intensification will bring more pollution and negative environmental impacts not less.

The MTS bus yard will have negative impacts on the community's goal of trails and nature spaces. We are creating a new pocket park nearby.

Please understand that communities near the proposed site deserve to live in places unburdened by traffic, noise, pollution like other communities throughout San Diego County. This proposed facility will undermine our quality of life.

Sincerely,

Carmi Strom
Principal
Webster Academy of Science and Research
4801 Elm St.
San Diego, Ca. 92102
(619) 362-3000
cstrom@sandi.net<mailto:cstrom@sandi.net>

I-1 The comment states the opposition of the proposed project within the Webster neighborhood. The Mid-City Communities Plan identifies the project site as located within the geographical boundaries of the Ridgeview neighborhood of the City Heights community (Figure 5 on page 24 of the Mid-City Communities Plan). The referenced Mid-City Communities Plan map also shows that the Webster neighborhood within the Eastern Area community is adjacent and east of the project site. However, the analysis of environmental effects contained in the IS/MND and supporting technical studies considers the adjacent and surrounding uses regardless of neighborhood geographic boundaries.

The comment also expresses concerns about the proximity of the project site to the open space area and Chollas Creek. As described in Section 2.2 of the IS/MND (page 3 and elsewhere throughout the IS/MND), Chollas Creek is located approximately 300 feet to the north within the adjacent open space canyon. Project development would occur entirely within the developed project site and no disturbances or improvements would occur within the adjacent open space area, including Chollas Creek, as a result of the project.

Additionally, the comment states that the proposed project would not result in improved environmental conditions at the site and surroundings, but increased pollution and negative environmental impacts. The proposed project would occur on developed properties zoned and designated for industrial uses. Implementation of the project would replace the existing industrial uses that were constructed between the 1950s and 1980s with new buildings and facilities that would be designed to achieve a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification, which would provide a framework for more sustainable, efficient, and cost-effective green buildings. Additionally, buses at the proposed facility would be all electric, which do not generate pollutant emissions. The new facility would also be required to comply with current stormwater and water quality requirements, as described in Section X, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, of the IS/MND (pages 44 through 49). Lastly, Section III, *Air Quality*, of the IS/MND (pages 14 through 19) concludes that air quality impacts resulting from construction and operation of the proposed project would be less than significant.

COMMENTS

RESPONSES

- I-2 As stated in response I-1, the project would not impact the adjacent open space area to the north as development would occur within the existing developed project site.
- I-3 The comment states that the project would result in traffic, noise, and pollution that undermines the Webster neighborhood's quality of life. Traffic congestion is not an environmental issue analyzed under CEQA. Senate Bill 743, which went into effect on July 1, 2020, changed the way transportation impacts are evaluated under CEQA. This legislation changed the transportation impact performance metric from level of service, which is a metric based on traffic congestion factors, to vehicle miles traveled (VMT), which measures the actual amount of automobile travel a project would create on the roadway network. As discussed in Section XVII, *Transportation*, of the IS/MND (pages 63 through 65), a project-specific transportation impact study was conducted for the project in accordance with industry standard methodology and concluded that impacts to transportation systems, VMT, and transportation-related hazards resulting from the project would be less than significant. Nonetheless, the Transportation Impact Study dated July 11, 2022 and included as Appendix J to the IS/MND analyzes roadway level of service and delay in Chapters 3 and 5 for informational purposes and requirements outside of CEQA. There are no locations where unacceptable level of service is expected at any study area intersection with the assumed signal modification to include an eastbound right turn arrow overlap phase at Federal Boulevard and 47th Street. This modification will need to be coordinated with the City of San Diego. Traffic conditions with the project are expected to be adequate and no off-site improvements are expected to be needed other than the traffic signal that is proposed as part of the project and the signal modification at Federal Boulevard and 47th Street. The roadway network has been designed for peak traffic conditions and the traffic levels associated with the project can be accommodated without exceeding the capacity of the roadway system.
- As discussed in Item XIII.a of the IS/MND (pages 53 through 58), the project could result in potentially significant noise impacts during construction and operations because noise levels could exceed allowable levels at the edge of the Multi-habitat Planning Area (MHPA) preserve to the north.

COMMENTS

RESPONSES

However, mitigation is identified in the IS/MND (NOI-1 and NOI-2) that would reduce impacts to below a level of significance. With regards to pollution, Section III, *Air Quality*, of the IS/MND (pages 14 through 19) concludes that air quality impacts resulting from construction and operation of the proposed project would be less than significant.

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