



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: PLANNING AND BUILDING

File #: 18-595

Board Meeting Date: 7/24/2018

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: Steve Monowitz, Community Development Director
Subject: Comment Letter on the Recirculated Draft Environmental Impact Report Regarding Stanford University's General Use Permit Application

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation to authorize and direct the President of the Board of Supervisors to sign the attached comment letter regarding the Recirculated Draft Environmental Impact Report prepared as part of Santa Clara County's review of Stanford University's General Use Permit Application.

BACKGROUND:

Stanford University (Stanford) has submitted a General Use Permit (GUP) application to Santa Clara County that proposes the construction of up to 2.27 million square feet of new academic and academic support facilities, and 3,150 new on-campus housing units, between 2018 and 2035. The development proposed under this GUP adds to the 10.25 million square feet of academic facilities and 15,237 housing units constructed under the prior General Use Permit.

In October 2017, Santa Clara County published a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as part of its review of this application for the new GUP. San Mateo County submitted comments in response to the DEIR on January 26, 2018. In June 2018, Santa Clara County published recirculated portions of the DEIR that introduce two additional alternatives to the proposed project. These alternatives increase, to varying degrees, the amount of housing that Stanford would be required to construct on campus in order to help meet the growing demand for housing associated with the proposed academic and facility expansions.

DISCUSSION:

CEQA requires an analysis of a project's impact on the environment in order to inform decision makers and the public of the potential consequences of the proposed development. CEQA also requires an analysis of how to reduce a project's environmental impacts to insignificant levels where feasible. In this case, the project under review is located entirely within the unincorporated area of Santa Clara County. Santa Clara County is therefore the Lead Agency and sole decision maker as to whether to approve the GUP and certify the EIR.

Although the physical development proposed by Stanford is generally confined to its main campus, the environmental impacts of this development will occur over a much larger region, including in the unincorporated areas of San Mateo County. The project's impacts on circulation and housing in San Mateo County are of particular concern. The comments that San Mateo County submitted on the DEIR, and the comments staff has drafted in response to the Recirculated DEIR, are intended to ensure that these and other environmental impacts are adequately addressed. In addition to participating in the environmental review and the public hearings conducted by Santa Clara County regarding the GUP, San Mateo County will continue to investigate its options to influence Santa Clara County decisions on these important matters.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Other than the staff resources needed to review and comment on the DEIR, Recirculated DEIR, and GUP, the development proposed by Stanford will not have direct fiscal impacts on San Mateo County. However, the project is likely to have significant indirect fiscal impacts, some of which are likely to benefit certain sectors of the local economy. There are also likely to be significant negative fiscal impacts associated, for example, with increased traffic and housing costs, and the need to mitigate these impacts. Stanford proposes, and the DEIR requires, that Stanford mitigate some of these impacts by paying into housing and traffic mitigation funds. The adequacy of these proposed mitigations, and the methods by which these funds will be distributed to impacted jurisdictions, are of significant concern to San Mateo County, as detailed by the attached and former comment letter.

ATTACHMENT:

A. Draft Comment Letter