




**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM**

Date: March 23, 2021

To: Evan Mattes, Senior Planner

From: Dave Spiegelberg, Senior Engineer, and Tia Raamot, Transportation Planner 

Subject: **DR19-0006. Cool General Retail, Response to comments**

This memo responds to transportation related comments relating to the Dollar General Project in Cool, Ca. Comments were submitted by: 1) Caltrans District 3 Office of Transportation Planning dated March 9, 2020; 2) Caltrans District 3 Office of Transportation Planning dated May 20, 2020 and; 3) The Pilot Hill Advisory Committee dated February 8, 2021. Only the letter from the Pilot Hill Advisory Committee was dated after release and public review of the EIR. DOT will nonetheless attempt to address all concerns with this memo.

Letter 1 - Caltrans District 3 Letter dated March 9, 2020

This letter was written based on the review of a prior version of the project and the draft Mitigated Negative Declaration dated April of 2020.

Issue 1: Design Vehicle Access to the project via Northside Drive

Caltrans: The traffic analysis for the Cool Dollar General Store did not specify the type of trucks entering/driving to the store and did not specify the length of truck.

Response: Truck turning analysis was included in exhibits provided to DOT (copy attached), and has demonstrated adequate access for the AASHTO WB-67 Design Vehicle, which is approximately 73 feet in overall length, with a 45 foot trailer and a 15 foot cab, including sleeper. This is equivalent to the "California Legal Design Vehicle 50 Foot Radius" as shown in Figure 404.5C of the Caltrans Highway Design Manual. The applicant states that the actual delivery vehicles typically used for this size of store as smaller than those analyzed.

Issue 2: Sidewalks

Caltrans: The plans did not include frontage sidewalks along the south side of Northside Drive

Response: As Northside Drive is not a county maintained facility, nor does it appear on Figure TC-1 of the General Plan, the County's Ordinance 5044 regulating frontage improvements on County roadways does not apply to Northside Drive.

Issue 3: Multi-use Path

Caltrans: Class I multi use path (for pedestrians and bikes) will be challenging to construct

Response: County DOT believes sufficient room exists from the Edge of Travelled Way to the toe of the existing cut slope along the project frontage to allow construction of an eight (8) foot Class II Bike Lane, as prescribed in the El Dorado County Transportation Commission's (EDCTC) Active Transportation Plan. That is proposed as a Condition of Approval. It should be noted that the "SR49 Side Path Exhibit" was proposed in an earlier version of the project, as a mixed use trail and is no longer relevant. Subsequent comments relating to this configuration are also no longer relevant. Such issues would usually be addressed with the final design plan submitted to Caltrans in the Encroachment Permit review process.

Issue 4: Caltrans Jurisdiction

Caltrans: All work proposed and performed within the State's highway right of way must be in accordance with Caltrans' standards and require a Caltrans Encroachment Permit prior to commencing construction.

Response: This is a statement of Caltrans Policy. This work would be performed by the project proponents at such time as an Encroachment Permit is requested from District 3. The Developer would need to comply with all Caltrans Policies and Standards in order to obtain an Encroachment Permit.

Issue 5: Hydraulics

Caltrans: Provide drainage plans and calculations

Response: The project is conditioned to comply with the County's Stormwater Ordinance. In addition, the applicant's Engineer will need to comply with all Caltrans Policies and Standards in order to obtain an Encroachment Permit.

Letter 2 - Caltrans District 3 Letter dated May 20, 2020

Issue 1: Hydraulics

Caltrans: The addition of Type E Dike along SR-49 will change the existing drainage patterns. A spread and depth analysis should be completed to confirm no objectionable backwater based on a 25-year storm event, per HDM Table 831.3

Response: No Type E Dike is proposed or required. The developer will be required to construct the Class II Bike Lane, which is in the Caltrans right of way. This will require an encroachment permit from Caltrans District 3. The developer would need to comply with all Caltrans Policies and Standards in order to obtain an Encroachment Permit.

Issue 2: Traffic Operations – Highway Operations

Caltrans: The proposed Class II Bike Lane on the east side of State Route 49 is strongly recommended. This will provide great connectivity from the bike path along State Route 193 south of the proposed project. Please indicate the plan to accommodate pedestrians.

Response: In accordance with the EDCTC's Active Transportation Plan, the Class II Bike Lane is a requirement of the project. The Active Transportation Plan does not specify the need for sidewalks at this location.

Caltrans: The southeast corner of the intersection of State Route 49 and Northside Drive will need to meet intersection improvements, which includes curb/dike and a radius for delivery trucks to make the turn.

Response: Caltrans will control this element of the project when the encroachment permit is applied for. The developer would need to comply with all Caltrans Policies and Standards in order to obtain an Encroachment Permit.

Caltrans: Indicate what type/size delivery trucks and provide a truck turning template to show that the trucks can safely make the turns.

Response: See response under Letter 1, Issue 1 above.

Caltrans: There are future plans to improve the intersection of State Route 49 and State Route 193, possibly with a signal or roundabout. Fair share fees should be collected to contribute to

the intersection improvements. Indicate if El Dorado County has a mechanism to collect funds to contribute to future projects.

Response: At this time, Caltrans has not programmed a specific project for this intersection. The County's Traffic Impact Fee (TIF) contains a line item for Traffic Signal and Intersection Operational Improvements. A portion of the TIF collected from building permits issued by the County are set aside for as yet unspecified intersection improvements. The County maintains an Intersection Needs Priority List, updated on an annual basis. Once Caltrans District 3 programs a specific project for this intersection, the County will consider adding the intersection to the priority list. It should be noted that this is the intersection of two state highways.

Caltrans: Past reviews of this project had mentioned curb, gutter, and sidewalk on the south side of Northside Road. There is no mention of them in this iteration. Please indicate the plan for Northside Road, and why the curb, gutter, and sidewalk were removed.

Response: Northside Drive is a privately maintained road. The County's frontage improvement ordinance provides the authority for the County to require frontage improvements on publicly maintained roadways in El Dorado County. Additionally, the County Department of Transportation believes that the introduction of curb, gutter and sidewalk at this location is out of character for the area, and would be the only segment of curb, gutter likely to ever be constructed in Cool.

Issue 3: Traffic Operations – Encroachment Permits

Caltrans: If the proposed work requires encroachment into the Caltrans right of way and/or based on the other Caltrans functional units, the proposed work requires an encroachment permit.

Response: See response to Issue 1 of this memo above.

Letter 3 – Cool Pilot Hill Advisory Committee (CPAC) dated February 8, 2021

Issue 1: Traffic Study

CPAC: There are several issues regarding the traffic study, first that while it is stated the study was done July to September, it appears it was done one day only, particularly during a non-school day and a year-long pandemic. This is not a predictor of the usual traffic that exists in Cool, particularly at the four way stop signal at Hwy 49 and 193.

Response: The Traffic Impact Study for the Cool dollar General Store revised March 2, 2020 relied on traffic counts taken on June 12, 2019, which predates the 2020 COVID pandemic. El

Dorado County Traffic Engineering staff, Caltrans staff, and an independent peer review agency, DKS and associates, have all reviewed the traffic study without concern about the counts used. An excerpt from the study follows:

“This analysis was limited to the weekday p.m. peak hour based on Caltrans and El Dorado County consideration of SR 49 traffic volumes throughout the day, as well as the relative difference between project’s a.m. and p.m. peak hour trip generation. Available data indicates that the background a.m. peak hour volume is less than that in the p.m. peak hour. As noted in the subsequent assessment of project trip generation, Dollar General Stores typically generate considerably less traffic during the morning peak period.”

An addendum to the TIS was prepared by KD Anderson & Associates, Inc. to address concerns with summer weekend travel patterns in the project area. Within it, Ken Anderson states:

“Because the exact effects of COVID-19 on regional travel are uncertain, an applicable method was used to adjust these counts to “normal” summer weekend conditions and to validate the result. A cell-phone based “Big Data” service (i.e., Streetlight) was employed. Streetlight aggregates continually recorded cell phone based data (pings) and uses algorithms to equate that data to automobiles based on available traffic volume data. In this case, data was collected at the SR 49 / SR 193 intersection for Saturdays in July-August from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Data was assembled for 2019 (No COVID-19) and for 2020 during this time period. To validate this information the average total traffic volume reported by Streetlight for the noon-2:00 p.m. period was found for summer 2020 conditions (1,828 vehicles) and compared to that in the August 29, 2020 two-hour count (1,778 vehicles) as shown in Table 1. The difference of 50 vehicles, or 2.8%, is not significant.”

August 29, 2020 count	Average July- August 2020	Difference (count minus average)	Average July- August 2019	Difference (2019-2020)	Adjustment Factor Applied
1,778	1,828	50 (2.6%)	1,971	143 (8%)	10%

Issue 2: Geometry of Northside Drive

CPAC: It is noted that Caltrans prefers, (requires?) a straight of clean driveway entrance to Hwy 49. Northside Drive is NOT a straight or clean driveway entrance, not that it is barely wide

enough for two passenger vehicles to pass, how on earth will it accommodate a DG delivery truck and another vehicle?

Response: The existing configuration of Northside Drive was presumed to be constructed under an Encroachment Permit from Caltrans. Additionally, Caltrans did not request a realignment of the intersection in the two above-addressed letters. As previously discussed, the project is required to obtain an encroachment permit from Caltrans for the Class II Bike Lane. The developer would need to comply with all Caltrans Policies and Standards in order to obtain an Encroachment Permit. Lastly, as noted in the response above to Letter 1, Issue 1, the developer's Engineer provided truck turning exhibits to demonstrate access by an AASHTO WB-67 Design Vehicle.

Issue 3: Large Trucks

CPAC: Concerns were expressed over large trucks and delivery vehicles using SR49 from Auburn / I80.

Response: SR-49 is a Class 3 Caltrans facility and a California Legal route with KPRA (kingpin to rear most axle distance) Advisory restrictions. Approval of the project would not affect Caltrans decisions regarding restrictions on SR49.

Issue 4: Traffic Safety

CPAC: The residents of the Divide are real people with real concerns about their safety and well-being and local government needs to consider all of these important safety issues.

Response: The Traffic Impact Study identified no significant traffic safety issues existing in the project vicinity, and none were identified that could be attributed to the project.