

Master Response 7: Trip Distribution

This master response addresses the issues comments raise with respect to the trip distribution analyzed in the Draft EIR and corresponding Traffic Impact Study prepared by TJKM Associates.

The Draft EIR addresses this topic area in Chapter IV.O, Transportation; see especially page IV.O-25, Project Trip Distribution and Impact O-1 (traffic increases on the street system). This master response addresses all or part of the following comments: 9-4, 16-78, 16-106, 16-109, 16-121, 16-199, 16-214, 16-261, 16-279, 24-17, 24-18, 24-22, 25-38, 47-2, 48-2, 54-1, 95-13, 103-6, 105-1, 148-15, 151-9, and 157-1.

Comments note that additional roadways that could be used to access the project site are not analyzed in the Draft EIR. Comments specifically state that:

- Because of the poor level of service for traffic on Broadway, it is anticipated that there would be increased usage of alternative routes throughout the City and County; for example along F Street from Fairway Drive to Herrick Avenue.
- The traffic analysis is too focused and does not include sufficient number of intersections in the analysis.
- Traffic along the 6th and 7th Street corridors should be analyzed because drivers use those corridors to avoid long delays on Broadway near the project site.
- The Draft EIR omits transportation corridor effects outside the immediate vicinity of the project area.

Response

As described on page IV.O-25 of the Draft EIR, the project trip distribution was based on the Humboldt County Greater Eureka Area Traffic Model, also referenced as the new Humboldt County countywide travel model. The model was made project-specific by calibrating to segment and intersection counts. The origin and destination functions of the traffic model were further verified by an independent origin-destination study for the nearby Costco. Although, the figures presented in Chapter IV.O, Transportation, only illustrate vehicle turning movements at the 27 selected study intersections, the model plots present in Appendix P of the Draft EIR illustrate project trip distribution throughout Eureka.

As shown on the output plots, project trips were distributed throughout the city, although the vast majority of project trips were assigned to Broadway (U.S. 101) east and south of the project site, a few other arterial routes, such as 6th and 7th Streets east into Downtown. The model results demonstrate that intersections beyond the study intersections are anticipated to operate at acceptable levels of service. Therefore, the project would have a less-than-significant impact on those additional segments and intersections and there was no need to extend the analysis further. The project-generated traffic was distributed onto all streets within the Greater Eureka Area

Traffic Model, and the volume and location of those trips are portrayed in Appendix H of the Traffic Impact Study (Appendix P of the Draft EIR).

The list of 27 study intersections was developed through consultation with the City of Eureka and Caltrans District 1. As outlined on page IV.O-10 of the Draft EIR, it was determined that the intersections of Fourth and H Streets, Fourth and I Streets, Fifth and H Streets, and Fifth and I Streets were the busiest in Downtown, so that if project impacts were insignificant at these intersections, intersections farther east would have even less effect and need not be studied. And, to the south on Broadway, the intersection of Harris Street/North Bayshore Mall access drive and Broadway was determined, during consultation, to be the most likely southern intersection to be affected. There are several intersections located between these study intersections, most of which are secondary (i.e., Broadway and Grant Streets, Broadway and Cedar Streets, and Fifth and A Streets), meaning that they are local access streets with relatively low traffic volumes. The study intersections fairly represent the “worst case” for such minor intersections, and if the study intersections were shown in the modeling results to continue to perform adequately, the secondary intersections would be anticipated to perform adequately as well. On this basis, not all intersections along U.S. 101 were included as study intersections. Consequently, the project would have a less-than-significant effect on these other intersections on the U.S. 101 corridor.

Comments point to specific corridors and intersections that are not expressly identified for analysis in the Draft EIR, such as the 6th and 7th Streets couplet, F Street, Herrick Avenue, and Myrtle Avenue. A review of the 2030 traffic model results, in which proposed project traffic zones and trips were added, shows that relatively few project-generated trips would be expected to use those identified routes and intersections, and none would be expected to experience greater than 50 additional trips per peak hour (in the City of Eureka). In addition, the added trips would not result in significant changes in levels of service for any of the identified intersections. Consequently, the project impact to other intersections beyond those studied would be less than significant and no additional mitigation is warranted. It should also be noted that the expected volume increases are all within the existing capacity of local streets.