

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DISTRICT 4

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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

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Andy Ross, Associate Planner
City of Livermore Community Development
Department
1051 South Livermore Avenue
Livermore, CA 94550

Lassen Road Residential Development Project – Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND)

Dear Andy Ross:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for this project. In tandem with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), Caltrans' mission signals our continuing approach to evaluate and mitigate impacts to the State's multimodal transportation network. Our comments are based on the September 9, 2019 IS/MND.

Project Understanding

The project applicant (LD-Fund III Livermore Land LLC c/o Westgate Ventures) is proposing to amend the existing General Plan and Zoning designations and develop approximately 186 dwelling units with 386 parking spaces, plus 64 guest spaces on the project site. Residential development would occupy approximately 12 acres of the eastern portion of the site and the remaining approximately 23 acres of the western portion of the site would remain undeveloped and preserved as open space, which includes Arroyo Seco. Regional access is provided via I-580 at First Street approximately 0.2 miles away.

Aesthetics/Visual

I-580 is an eligible scenic highway from post mile 0.0-47.4 and is a Classified Landscape Freeway adjacent to the site from post mile 10.22 to 10.82. I-580's adjacent views consist of surrounding rolling hills covered in naturalized grasses. The I-580 corridor views of the Altamont hills with the wind turbines are visible to

travelers at the location of the site and designated as a visual resource by the City of Livermore. The proposed townhomes will be highly visible to the highway and street viewers on Springtown Blvd./First St., I-580 Westbound on-ramp and I-580 Westbound. We commend this project's design to blend into the landscape with a large landscaped berm seen by viewers traveling on I-580 Eastbound. The berm will block a small portion of the view of Altamont Pass.

Adjacent to the I-580 Westbound on-ramp on the southeast portion of the project site, we strongly recommend a wider buffer space to provide a safety set back and create a visual screen for highway users. The buffer space needs to have a wide berm and should be planted with layers of trees and vegetation to minimize the visual impact of the development and ensure the visual quality on the I-580 corridor. Heights of both berms should take into consideration screening the development as well as avoiding, as much as possible, blocking the view of the Altamont hills. In addition to acting as a visual screen, the berm will create a sound barrier for the residents of the development.

The Livermore General Plan and County of Alameda General Plan designate I-580 as a Scenic Corridor with views of the hills, ridges and Altamont hills designated as visual resources. According to The Livermore General Plan:

Development including roads, buildings and other structural or land coverage shall be located, sited and designed to fit and be subordinate to the natural landforms. Under no circumstances shall development create uniform, geometrically terraced building sites which are contrary to the natural landforms and which detract, obscure or negatively affect the visual quality of the landforms.

We recommend that photo simulations be made of the edited plan to include views of the Altamont hills on a clear day along the I-580 corridor, views from the Springtown Blvd./First St. overpass, and I-580 Westbound that capture all townhomes that might be visible from that location.

We advise to have a cost estimate created for the landscape and berms at this stage in the project. The addition costs of grading, trees, irrigation, retaining walls, planting, hydroseeding should be assessed early on and included in future cost estimates.

Multimodal Planning

The project's primary and secondary effects on pedestrians, bicyclists, travelers with disabilities, and transit users should be evaluated, including

countermeasures and trade-offs resulting from mitigating VMT increases. Access for pedestrians and bicyclists to transit facilities must be maintained. These smart growth approaches are consistent with MTC's Regional Transportation Plan/SCS and would help meet Caltrans Strategic Management Plan targets.

Vehicle Trip Reduction

From Caltrans' *Smart Mobility 2010: A Call to Action for the New Decade*, the project site is identified as **Place Type 4d: Suburban Communities (Neighborhoods)** where location efficiency factors, such as community design, are weak and regional accessibility varies. Given the place, type and size of the project, it should include a robust Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program to reduce VMT and greenhouse gas emissions. Such measures are critical to facilitating efficient site access. The measures listed below will promote smart mobility and reduce regional VMT.

- Project design to encourage walking, bicycling and transit access;
- Real-time transit information system;
- Ten percent vehicle parking reductions;
- Charging stations and designated parking spaces for electric vehicles;
- Unbundled parking;
- Bicycle route mapping resources;
- Participation/Formation in/of a Transportation Management Association (TMA) in partnership with other developments in the area; and
- Aggressive trip reduction targets with Lead Agency monitoring and enforcement.

Transportation Demand Management programs should be documented with annual monitoring reports by an onsite TDM coordinator to demonstrate effectiveness. If the project does not achieve the VMT reduction goals, the reports should also include next steps to take in order to achieve those targets. Also, reducing parking supply can encourage active forms of transportation, reduce regional VMT, and lessen future transportation impacts on State facilities. These smart growth approaches are consistent with the MTC's Regional Transportation Plan/SCS goals and would help meet Caltrans Strategic Management Plan sustainability goals.

For additional TDM options, please refer to the Federal Highway Administration's *Integrating Demand Management into the Transportation Planning Process: A Desk Reference* (Chapter 8). The reference is available online at: <http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwahop12035/fhwahop12035.pdf>.

Transportation Impact Fees

Please identify project-generated travel demand and estimate the costs of public transportation improvements necessitated by the proposed project; viable funding sources such as development and/or transportation impact fees should also be identified. The City of Livermore should collect fair share traffic impact fees for future improvements to the I-580 and Springtown Blvd/First St. interchange.

Additionally, we encourage a sufficient allocation of fair share contributions toward multi-modal and regional transit improvements to fully mitigate cumulative impacts to regional transportation. We also strongly support measures to increase sustainable mode shares, thereby reducing VMT.

Construction-Related Impacts

Potential impacts to the State right-of-way (ROW) from project-related temporary access points should be analyzed. Mitigation for significant impacts due to construction and noise should be identified in the IS/MND. Project work that requires movement of oversized or excessive load vehicles on state roadways requires a transportation permit that is issued by Caltrans. To apply, visit: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/transportation-permits>.

Prior to construction, coordination is required with Caltrans to develop a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) to reduce construction traffic impacts to the STN.

Utilities

Any utilities that are proposed, moved or modified within Caltrans' Right-of-Way (ROW) shall be discussed. If utilities are impacted by the project, provide site plans that show the location of existing and/or proposed utilities. These modifications require a Caltrans-issued encroachment permit.

Lead Agency

As the Lead Agency, the City of Livermore is responsible for all project mitigation, including any needed improvements to the State Transportation Network (STN.) The project's fair share contribution, financing, scheduling, implementation responsibilities and lead agency monitoring should be fully discussed for all proposed mitigation measures.

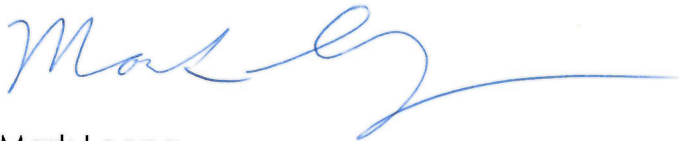
Encroachment Permit

Please be advised that any work or traffic control that encroaches onto the State right-of-way (ROW) requires a Caltrans-issued encroachment permit. To

obtain an encroachment permit, a completed encroachment permit application, environmental documentation, six (6) sets of plans clearly indicating the State ROW, and six (6) copies of signed, dated and stamped (include stamp expiration date) traffic control plans must be submitted to: Office of Encroachment Permits, California DOT, District 4, P.O. Box 23660, Oakland, CA 94623-0660. To download the permit application and obtain more information, visit <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/ep/applications>.

Thank you again for including Caltrans in the environmental review process. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Andrew Chan at 510-622-5433 or andrew.chan@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Mark Leong
District Branch Chief
Local Development - Intergovernmental Review

c: State Clearinghouse