

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

DISTRICT 4

OFFICE OF TRANSIT AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

P.O. BOX 23660, MS-10D

OAKLAND, CA 94623-0660

PHONE (510) 286-5528

TTY 711

www.dot.ca.gov

Making Conservation  
a California Way of Life.

Governor's Office of Planning &amp; Research

**Dec 18 2020****STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**

December 18, 2020

SCH #: 2020110243

GTS #: 04-SM-2020-00339

GTS ID: 21311

Co/Rt/Pm: SM/ 84/ 26.483

Payal Bhagat, Contract Principal Planner  
701 Laurel Street  
Menlo Park, CA 94025

**Re: Menlo Flats Project Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR)**

Dear Payal Bhagat:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Menlo Flats Project. We are committed to ensuring that impacts to the State's multimodal transportation system and to our natural environment are identified and mitigated to support a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system. The following comments are based on our review of the November 2020 NOP.

**Project Understanding**

The project proposes a mixed-use building with 158 dwelling units and commercial space, including open space and parking. This project proposes to comply with the City of Menlo Park's Below Market Rate (BMR) Ordinance with 15 percent of units BMR. The site is within close proximity to US-101 and SR-84.

**Travel Demand Analysis**

With the enactment of Senate Bill (SB) 743, Caltrans is focused on maximizing efficient development patterns, innovative travel demand reduction strategies, and multimodal improvements. For more information on how Caltrans assesses Transportation Impact Studies, please review Caltrans' Transportation Impact Study Guide.

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Screening: If the project meets the screening criteria established in the City's Council Procedure #CC-20-012 (Transportation Impact Analysis Guidelines) to be presumed to have a less-than-significant VMT

impact and exempt from detailed VMT analysis, please provide justification to support the exempt status in align with the City's VMT policy. Projects that do not meet the screening criteria should include a detailed VMT analysis in the DEIR.

### **Mitigation Strategies**

Location efficiency factors, including community design and regional accessibility, influence a project's impact on the environment. Using Caltrans' *Smart Mobility 2010: A Call to Action for the New Decade*, the proposed project site is identified as a Close-In Compact Community where community design is moderate and regional accessibility is strong.

Given the place, type and size of the project, the DEIR should include a robust Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program to reduce VMT and greenhouse gas emissions from future development in this area. The measures listed below have been quantified by California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) and shown to have different efficiencies reducing regional VMT:

- Increase in number of affordable housing units in project;
- Orientation of project towards non-auto corridor;
- Pedestrian network improvements;
- Bicycle network improvements or Fair Share contribution to such measures;
- Traffic calming measures;
- Implementation of designated parking spaces for EVs;
- Limiting parking supply;
- Unbundled parking from property costs;
- Transit and trip planning resources such as a commute information kiosk;
- Real-time transit information system;
- Transit access supporting infrastructure (including bus shelter improvements and sidewalk/ crosswalk safety facilities);
- VMT Banking and/or Exchange program;

Using a combination of strategies appropriate to the project and the site can reduce VMT, along with related impacts on the environment and State facilities. TDM programs should be documented with annual monitoring reports by a 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.

Payal Bhagat, Principal Planner  
December 18, 2020  
Page 3

Please reach out to Caltrans for further information about TDM measures and a toolbox for implementing these measures in land use projects. Additionally, 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 transit and active transportation improvements necessitated by the proposed project; viable funding sources such as development and/or transportation impact fees should also be identified. 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.

### **Lead Agency**

As the Lead Agency, the City of Menlo Park 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.

Thank you again for including Caltrans in the environmental review process. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Laurel Sears at [laurel.sears@dot.ca.gov](mailto:laurel.sears@dot.ca.gov). Additionally, for future notifications and requests for review of new projects, please contact [LDIGR-D4@dot.ca.gov](mailto:LDIGR-D4@dot.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



MARK LEONG  
District Branch Chief  
Local Development - Intergovernmental Review

c: State Clearinghouse