

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DISTRICT 4

OFFICE OF TRANSIT AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

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www.dot.ca.gov

*Making Conservation
a California Way of Life.***Governor's Office of Planning & Research****May 25 2021****STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**

May 25, 2021

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Jennifer Cruz, Principal Planner
Contra Costa County
Department of Conservation & Development
30 Muir Road
Martinez, CA 94553

Re: Oak Road Townhouse Condominium Project + Notice of Preparation (NOP)

Dear Jennifer Cruz:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Oak Road Townhouse 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 April 2021 NOP.

Project Understanding

The project proposes a rezoning of the project site to a Planned Unit District (P-1), subdivision of the project site into 19 residential lots, and a development plan to allow building condominiums on the site.

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.

If the project meets the screening criteria established in the City's adopted Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) policy 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 line with the City's VMT policy.

Projects that do not meet the screening criteria should include a detailed VMT analysis in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), which should include the following:

- VMT analysis pursuant to the City's guidelines. Projects that result in automobile VMT per capita above the threshold of significance for existing (i.e. baseline) city-wide or regional values for similar land use types may indicate a significant impact. If necessary, mitigation for increasing VMT should be identified. Mitigation should support the use of transit and active transportation modes. Potential mitigation measures that include the requirements of other agencies such as Caltrans are fully enforceable through permit conditions, agreements, or other legally-binding instruments under the control of the City.
- A schematic illustration of walking, biking and auto conditions at the project site and study area roadways. Potential safety issues for all road users should be identified and fully mitigated.
- The project's primary and secondary effects on pedestrians, bicycles, travelers with disabilities and transit performance should be evaluated, including countermeasures and trade-offs resulting from mitigating VMT increases. Access to pedestrians, bicycles, and transit facilities must be maintained.
- Clarification of the intensity of events/receptions to be held at the location and how the associated travel demand and VMT will be mitigated.

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 strong and regional accessibility is fair.

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

- VMT Banking and/or Exchange program;
- Addition/ Increase in number of affordable housing units in project;
- Orientation of project towards non-auto corridor;

- Location of the project near bicycle network(s);
- Incorporation of bicycle lanes in street design;
- Pedestrian network improvements;
- Traffic calming measures;
- Implementation of a neighborhood electric vehicle (EV) network, including designated parking spaces for electric vehicles (EVs);
- Limiting parking supply;
- Unbundled parking from property costs;
- Market price public parking;
- Ridesharing programs, Commute Trip Reduction programs, bike sharing programs;
- Transit and trip planning resources such as a commute information kiosk;
- Real-time transit information system; and
- Transit access supporting infrastructure (including bus shelter improvements and sidewalk/ crosswalk safety facilities).

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.

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 County of Contra Costa 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.

Equitable Access

If any Caltrans facilities are impacted by the project, those facilities must meet American Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards after project completion. As well, the project must maintain bicycle and pedestrian access during construction. These access considerations support Caltrans' equity mission to provide a safe, sustainable, and equitable transportation network for all users.

Encroachment Permit

Please be advised that any permanent work or temporary traffic control that encroaches onto the State Right of Way (ROW) requires a Caltrans-issued encroachment permit. As part of the encroachment permit submittal process, you may be asked by the Office of Encroachment Permits to submit a completed encroachment permit application package, digital set of plans clearly delineating the State ROW, digital copy of signed, dated and stamped (include stamp expiration date) traffic control plans, this comment letter, your response to the comment letter, and where applicable, the following items: new or amended Maintenance Agreement (MA), approved Design Standard Decision Document (DSDD), approved encroachment exception request, and/or airspace lease agreement. Your application package may be emailed to D4Permits@dot.ca.gov.

To download the permit application and to obtain more information on all required documentation, visit <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/ep/applications>.

Jennifer Cruz, Principal

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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. Additionally, for future notifications and requests for review of new projects, please contact LDIGR-D4@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Leong". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

MARK LEONG

District Branch Chief

Local Development - Intergovernmental Review

c: State Clearinghouse