

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DISTRICT 4

OFFICE OF TRANSIT AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Making Conservation
a California Way of Life.**July 01 2021****STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**

July 1, 2021

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Tiffany Brown, Associate Planner
City of Morgan Hill
17575 Peak Avenue
Morgan Hill, CA 95037

Re: New Horizons Residential Project – Notice of Preparation (NOP) for a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)

Dear Tiffany Brown:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for this 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 June 2021 NOP.

Project Understanding

The proposed project would remove the existing structures and develop the project site with a total of 337 residential units, which include 262 one- to two-single-family detached houses, 20 two-story age-restricted single-family houses, and 55 age-restricted three-story condominiums. This approximately 69.4-acre project site is located east of Hill Road, bounded by residential development to the north, Barrett Avenue to the south, and Sorrel Drive and Jackson Park to the east.

Travel Impact 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. Caltrans looks forward to reviewing the project's Vehicle Miles Travel (VMT) evaluation and potential mitigation measures, if any, in the upcoming DEIR. For more information on how Caltrans assesses VMT impacts for land use projects, please review Caltrans' Transportation Impact Study Guide.

If the City of Morgan Hill has not adopted VMT screening criteria, please follow the Office of Planning and Research (OPR)'s guidelines. A detailed VMT analysis should include the information:

- VMT analysis pursuant to the City (if available) or OPR'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, bicycle, 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.

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.

Lead Agency

As the Lead Agency, the City of Morgan Hill 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.

Tiffany Brown, Associate Planner

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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 Yunsheng Luo at Yunsheng.Luo@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, flowing style with a long horizontal tail stroke extending to the right.

MARK LEONG

District Branch Chief

Local Development - Intergovernmental Review

c: State Clearinghouse