

California Department of Transportation

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May 16, 2022

11-IMP-78, 11-IMP-86
PM VAR
2022 City of Westmorland Housing Element
NEG DEC/SCH# 2022040558

Mr. Teri Nava
City Treasurer
City of Westmorland
355 South Center Street
Westmorland, CA 92281

Dear Mr. Teri Nava:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Negative Declaration for the 2022 City of Westmorland Housing Element Plan located near State Route 86 and State Route 78 (SR-86 and SR-78). The mission of Caltrans is to provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment. The Local Development Review (LDR) Program reviews land use projects and plans to ensure consistency with our mission and state planning priorities.

Safety is one of Caltrans' strategic goals. Caltrans strives to make the year 2050 the first year without a single death or serious injury on California's roads. We are striving for more equitable outcomes for the transportation network's diverse users. To achieve these ambitious goals, we will pursue meaningful collaboration with our partners. We encourage the implementation of new technologies, innovations, and best practices that will enhance the safety on the transportation network. These pursuits are both ambitious and urgent, and their accomplishment involves a focused departure from the status quo as we continue to institutionalize safety in all our work.

Caltrans is committed to prioritizing projects that are equitable and provide meaningful benefits to historically underserved communities, to ultimately improve transportation accessibility and quality of life for people in the communities we serve.

Caltrans has the following comments:

Planning

As part of the City's 2022 Housing Element update, Caltrans requests that the City include discussions and mapping/graphics that describe the City's existing and future housing inventory per the City's Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA).

Housing-element law requires a quantification of each jurisdiction's share of the regional housing need as established in the RHNA Plan prepared by the jurisdiction's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) or council of governments.

In accordance with California Government Code Sections 65583 and 65584, housing elements shall contain an analysis of population and employment trends and documentation of projections and quantification of the locality's existing and projected housing needs for all income levels. These projected needs shall include the locality's share of the regional housing needs (i.e., RHNA) per Government Code Section 65584.

Traffic Impact Studies

- New developments resulting from the City's Housing Element update should provide a Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT) based Traffic Impact Study (TIS). Please use the Governor's Office of Planning and Research Guidance to identify VMT related impacts.¹
- The TIS may also need to identify the proposed project's near-term and long-term safety or operational issues, on or adjacent any existing or proposed State facilities.
- Any improvements within Caltrans' Right-of-Way (R/W) from future housing development projects will be required to comply with Caltrans Highway Design Manual guidelines and standards.
- Any pedestrian facility enhancements from future housing development projects that are within Caltrans' R/W will need to comply with Caltrans Design Information Bulletin (DIB) 82-06.

¹ California Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) 2018. "Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA." http://opr.ca.gov/docs/20190122-743_Technical_Advisory.pdf

Complete Streets and Mobility Network

Caltrans views all transportation improvements as opportunities to improve safety, access, and mobility for all travelers in California and recognizes bicycle, pedestrian and transit modes as integral elements of the transportation network. Caltrans supports improved transit accommodation through the provision of Park and Ride facilities, improved bicycle and pedestrian access and safety improvements, signal prioritization for transit, bus on shoulders, ramp improvements, or other enhancements that promotes a complete and integrated transportation network. Early coordination with Caltrans, in locations that may affect both Caltrans and the City of Westmorland, is encouraged.

To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and achieve California's Climate Change target, Caltrans is implementing Complete Streets and Climate Change policies into State Highway Operations and Protection Program (SHOPP) projects to meet multi-modal mobility needs. Caltrans looks forward to working with the City to evaluate potential Complete Streets projects.

Bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit access during construction is important. Mitigation to maintain bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit access during construction is in accordance with Caltrans' goals and policies.

Land Use and Smart Growth

Caltrans recognizes there is a strong link between transportation and land use. Development can have a significant impact on traffic and congestion on State transportation facilities. In particular, the pattern of land use can affect both local vehicle miles traveled and the number of trips. Caltrans supports collaboration with local agencies to work towards a safe, functional, interconnected, multi-modal transportation network integrated through applicable "smart growth" type land use planning and policies.

The City should continue to coordinate with Caltrans to implement necessary improvements at intersections and interchanges where the agencies have joint jurisdiction.

Noise

The applicant must be informed that in accordance with 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 772, Caltrans is not responsible for existing or future traffic noise impacts associated with the existing configuration of SR-86 and SR-78.

Environmental

Should future projects based upon the changes enacted from the General Plan have elements and/or mitigation measures that affect Caltrans R/W, Caltrans would welcome the opportunity to be a Responsible Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Public agencies are sponsoring projects within Caltrans R/W

An environmental document as well all other appropriate studies will be needed to finalize the project. A series of permits will be required for existing traffic control at the checkpoint, for the inspection operations and equipment within the facility, and for a temporary checkpoint while the project is in construction. A new Freeway Maintenance Agreement will be required for the portion of the existing canopy that is within Caltrans R/W.

Broadband

Caltrans recognizes that teleworking and remote learning lessen the impacts of traffic on our roadways and surrounding communities. This reduces the amount of VMT and decreases the amount of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and other pollutants. The availability of affordable and reliable, high speed broadband is a key component in supporting travel demand management and reaching the state's transportation and climate action goals.

Right-of-Way

- Please coordinate with Caltrans on future development projects that are a mile or less away from Caltrans' State facilities, to mitigate adverse impacts, preserve, and enhance the State's transportation facilities and operations.
- Per Business and Profession Code 8771, perpetuation of survey monuments by a licensed land surveyor is required, if they are being destroyed by any construction.
- Any work performed within Caltrans' R/W will require discretionary review and approval by Caltrans and an encroachment permit will be required for any work within the Caltrans' R/W prior to construction.

Additional information regarding encroachment permits may be obtained by contacting the Caltrans Permits Office at (619) 688-6158 or emailing D11.Permits@dot.ca.gov or by visiting the website at <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/ep>. Early coordination with Caltrans is strongly advised for all encroachment permits.

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If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Charlie Lecourtois, LDR Coordinator, at (619) 985-4766 or by e-mail sent to Charlie.Lecourtois@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Maurice A. Eaton

MAURICE EATON
Branch Chief
Local Development Review