

# California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 4  
OFFICE OF TRANSIT AND COMMUNITY PLANNING  
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## Governor's Office of Planning & Research

June 30, 2022

**Jun 29 2022**

## STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

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Vicki Parker  
Community Development and Economic Development Director  
City of Novato  
922 Machin Avenue  
Novato, CA 94945

### **Re: Novato 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element Update Notice of Preparation (NOP) for Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)**

Dear Vicki Parker:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Novato 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element Update 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 Housing Element Update will encompass the entirety of the City of Novato. The Housing Element Update presents a comprehensive set of housing policies and actions for the years 2023-2031. The Housing Element Update will be based on the City's latest Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) estimates, which determined that the City needs to plan for 2,090 residential units, plus a buffer of units to ensure ongoing compliance with the No Net Loss provisions of State housing law. As a built-out City, Novato may be required to find additional sites – some in areas not previously targeted as opportunity sites – as well as upzone other areas. For purposes of the EIR, the City will evaluate sites that could accommodate the entire RHNA estimate plus a 20 percent buffer, as recommended by California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), totaling approximately 2,508 residential units.

### **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 ([link](#)). Please note that current and future land use projects proposed near and adjacent to the State Transportation Network (STN) may be assessed, in part, through the TISG.

### **Transportation Impact Fees**

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. Caltrans welcomes the opportunity to work with the City and local partners to secure the funding for needed mitigation. Traffic mitigation or cooperative agreements are examples of such measures.

### **Lead Agency**

As the Lead Agency, the City of Novato is responsible for all project mitigation, including any needed improvements to the 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.

Thank you again for including Caltrans in the environmental review process. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, or for future notifications and requests for review of new projects, please email [LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov](mailto:LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



MARK LEONG  
District Branch Chief  
Local Development Review

c: State Clearinghouse