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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

**May 22 2023**

## STATE CLEARING HOUSE



*Making Conservation  
a California Way of Life.*

May 19, 2023

City of Thousand Oaks Community Development Department Planning Division  
ATTN: Justine Kendall, AICP, Associate Planner,  
2100 East Thousand Oaks Boulevard  
Thousand Oaks, CA 91362

RE: Latigo Hillcrest Project – Draft  
Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)  
SCH# 2022100528  
GTS# 07-VEN-2022-00542  
Vic. VEN-101 PM 7

Dear Justine Kendall:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced project. The project applicant proposes to demolish the existing one-story commercial structure and construct two new podium buildings comprised of: a four-story mixed-use development (604,606 total gross square feet); 333 multi-family residential units (including 30 very low-income affordable units) common areas, and amenities such as a lounge, game room and fitness facilities; and 5,300 square feet of commercial restaurant space above a semi-subterranean parking structure. Development of the project would result in demolition, grading, and construction of buildings, paving and hardscape, and landscape planting.

The nearest State facility to the proposed project is U.S. 101. After reviewing the DEIR, Caltrans has the following comments:

Caltrans acknowledges and supports infill development that aims to increase land use mix, remove surface parking, and create more sustainable communities. However, the project proposes to exceed the City's requirements and build 581 car parking spaces. While it is greatly beneficial that these spaces will be unbundled from individual units, their construction significantly increases project costs, which are ultimately subsidized by residents and customers alike. This abundant car parking also poses the risk of inducing demand for additional vehicle miles traveled. For California to achieve its goals, this demand should be addressed with appropriate design and management principles. Caltrans recommends the following:

- Reducing the amount of parking whenever possible, as research on parking suggests that abundant car parking enables and encourages driving. Research looking at the relationship between land-use, parking, and transportation indicates that the amount of car parking supplied can undermine a project's ability to encourage public transit and

active modes of transportation. For any project to better promote public transit and reduce vehicle miles traveled, we recommend the implementation of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies as an alternative to building an excessive amount of parking.

- Rates of car ownership and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) are significantly lower for low-income households than they are for high-income households. Seeing as this project includes 30 very low-income affordable units, this should be taken into serious consideration. There is sufficient justification to reduce the amount of parking for projects that include affordable housing, like the one proposed, to promote affordability and better achieve the project's goals.

Recommendations for W Hillcrest Drive:

- Provide fully protected Class IV bike lanes and improved transit stop shelters along W Hillcrest Drive from Hillcrest Plaza (west of the project) to Ventu Park Center (east of the project). This infrastructure would go a long way in providing employees, residents, and patrons of the project site safe transportation mode choices when meeting their daily trip needs.
- Caltrans also encourages the City of Thousand Oaks to consider any reduction in vehicle speeds a significant benefit for pedestrian and bicyclist safety, as there is a direct link between impact speeds and the likelihood of fatality or serious injury. The most effective methods to reduce pedestrian and bicyclist exposure to vehicles is through physical design and geometrics. These methods include the construction of physically separated facilities such as Class IV bike lanes (mentioned above), wide sidewalks, pedestrian refuge islands, landscaping, street furniture, and reductions in crossing distances through roadway narrowing.

Finally, the Project area is located immediately adjacent to the U.S. 101 Rancho Conejo Blvd off-ramp. An encroachment permit will be required for any project work proposed on or in the vicinity of Caltrans right-of-way and all concerns must be adequately addressed.

If you have any questions, please contact project coordinator Anthony Higgins, at [anthony.higgins@dot.ca.gov](mailto:anthony.higgins@dot.ca.gov) and refer to GTS# 07-VEN-2022-00542.

Sincerely,



MIYA EDMONSON  
LDR Branch Chief

cc: State Clearinghouse