

California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 4
OFFICE OF REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY PLANNING
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Sage Schaan, Planning Director
City of Woodside
2955 Woodside Road
Woodside, CA 94062

Re: Woodside Housing Element Update – Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)

Dear Sage Schaan:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Woodside Housing Element Update. 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 May 2023 NOP.

Project Understanding

The proposed project is both a policy document and an implementation tool for implementing the Town's General Plan to account for changing demographics, market conditions, and projected housing need over an 8-year planning period that runs from 2023 through 2031. The project would involve changing the zoning ordinances in order to facilitate the future development of up to 423 units within the approximately 11.8-square-mile Planning Area.

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](#)).

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 alignment with the city's VMT policy. Projects that do not meet the screening criteria should include a detailed VMT analysis in the 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 traffic safety issues to the State Transportation Network (STN) may be assessed by Caltrans via the Interim Safety Guidance (*link*).
- 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.

Multimodal Transportation Planning

Please review and include the reference of the *Caltrans District 4 Pedestrian Plan* (2021) and the *Caltrans District 4 Bike Plan* (2018) in the DEIR. These two plans studied existing conditions for walking and biking along and across the STN in the nine-county Bay Area and developed a list of location-based and prioritized needs.

Please note that any Complete Streets reference should be updated to reflect Caltrans Director's Policy 37 (*link*), which supersedes Deputy Directive 64-R1, and further builds upon its goals.

Integrated Transportation and Land Use Planning

Transportation and housing are integrally connected. The Housing Element Update process provides a mechanism to reflect current transportation and land use policy and adopt efficient land-use strategies such as transit-oriented, infill and mixed-use developments that can potentially reduce vehicle miles traveled and address climate change.

Please review and include the reference to the current California Transportation Plan (CTP) in the DEIR. CTP 2050 envisions that the majority of new housing located near existing housing, jobs, and transit, and in close proximity to one another will reduce vehicle travel and GHG emissions, and be accessible and affordable for all Californians, including disadvantaged and low-income communities. The location, density, and affordability of future housing will dictate much of our future travel patterns, and our ability to achieve the vision outlined in CTP 2050. Caltrans encourages the City of Woodside to consider and explore the potential of excess state-owned property for affordable housing development, per Executive Order N-06-19.

Caltrans looks forward to reviewing the DEIR that should demonstrate how the future housing development patterns align with the City of Woodside's adopted VMT policies. Caltrans supports collaboration with local agencies to work towards a safe, functional, interconnected, multi-modal transportation network integrated through efficient and equitable land use planning and policies. The City of Woodside should also continue to coordinate with Caltrans to identify and implement necessary network improvements and impact mitigation.

Lead Agency

As the Lead Agency, the City of Woodside 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.

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.

Sincerely,



YUNSHENG LUO
Acting District Branch Chief
Local Development Review

c: State Clearinghouse