

# California Department of Transportation

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

July 10, 2023

**Jul 10 2023**

## STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

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Liz Ruess, Planning Manager  
Town of Hillsborough  
1600 Floribunda Avenue  
Hillsborough, CA 94010

### **Re: Town of Hillsborough 6th Cycle Housing Element and Focused General Plan Update and Municipal Code Update Program– Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)**

Dear Liz Ruess:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Town of Hillsborough (Town) 6th Cycle Housing Element and Focused General Plan Update and Municipal Code Update Program. 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 Local Development Review (LDR) Program reviews land use projects and plans to ensure consistency with our mission and state planning priorities. The following comments are based on our review of the June 2023 NOP.

### **Project Understanding**

The proposed project will serve as an update of the existing Housing Element of the General Plan. The Housing element will be the focus with additional elements such as Land Use and Open Space. The project will also include updates to relevant implementation tools such as Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance and Objective Development Standards. The future EIR will serve as an environmental assessment to the updated element and implementation tools. Hillsborough's town limit extends from I-280 on the west to the City of San Mateo on the east, the City of Burlingame to the north, and unincorporate areas of San Mateo County to the south.

### **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 Town'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 Town's VMT policy. Projects that do not meet the screening criteria should include a detailed VMT analysis in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), which should include the following:

- VMT analysis pursuant to the Town's guidelines. Projects that result in automobile VMT per capita above the threshold of significance for existing (i.e. baseline) town-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 Town.
- 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 to 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](#)) that highlights the importance of addressing the needs of non-motorists and prioritizing space-efficient forms of mobility, while also facilitating goods movement in a manner with the least environmental and social impacts. This supersedes Deputy Directive 64-R1, and further builds upon its goals of focusing on the movement of people and goods.

### **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 Town 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 Town'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 Town should also continue to coordinate with Caltrans to identify and implement necessary network improvements and impact mitigation.

### **Lead Agency**

As the Lead Agency, the Town of Hillsborough 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.

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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 Marley Mathews, Transportation Planner, via [LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov](mailto:LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov).

For future early coordination opportunities or project referrals, please contact [LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov](mailto:LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Luo Yunsheng". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

YUNSHENG LUO  
Acting District Branch Chief  
Local Development Review

c: State Clearinghouse