

California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 4
OFFICE OF REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY PLANNING
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October 11, 2024

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Co/Rt/Pm: ALA/VAR/VAR

Liz McElligott, Assistant Planning Director
Alameda County
224 W. Winton Avenue, Room 111
Hayward, CA 94544

Re: Alameda County 2023-2031 Housing Element Update – Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND)

Dear Liz McElligott:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Alameda County 2023-2031 Housing Element Update Project. 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 September 2024 MND.

Please note this correspondence does not indicate an official position by Caltrans on this project and is for informational purposes only.

Project Understanding

The proposed project would amend the Alameda County General Plan by updating the current Housing Element. The recirculated MND analyzes a total number of 3,779 units by 2031 from a residential rezone program which will be implemented to adequately meet the County's assigned Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) of 4,711 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 vehicle miles traveled (VMT) analysis for land use projects, please review Caltrans' Transportation Impact Study Guide ([link](#)).

The project VMT analysis and significance determination are undertaken in a manner consistent with the Office of Planning and Research's (OPR) Technical Advisory. Per the MND, this project is found to have a less than significant VMT impact, therefore working towards meeting the State's VMT reduction 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 County 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 County'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 County should also continue to coordinate with Caltrans to identify and implement necessary network improvements and impact mitigation.

Equity and Public Engagement

We will achieve equity when everyone has access to what they need to thrive no matter their race, socioeconomic status, identity, where they live, or how they travel. Caltrans is committed to advancing equity and livability in all communities. We look forward to collaborating with the County to prioritize projects that are equitable and provide meaningful benefits to historically underserved communities.

Caltrans encourages the County to foster meaningful, equitable and ongoing public engagement in the Housing Element Update process to ensure future transportation decisions and investments reflect community interests and values. The public engagement process should include community-sensitive and equity-focused

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approaches seeking out the needs of individuals from underserved, Tribal, and low-income communities, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities.

Thank you again for including Caltrans in the environmental review process. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Melissa Hernandez, Associate Transportation Planner via LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov.

For future early coordination opportunities or project referrals, please visit Caltrans LDR website ([link](#)) or contact LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Luo Yunsheng".

YUNSHENG LUO
Branch Chief, Local Development Review
Office of Regional and Community Planning

c: State Clearinghouse