

California Department of Transportation

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

January 26, 2024

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STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

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GTS #: 04-MRN-2024-00312
GTS ID: 31639
Co/Rt/Pm: MRN/VAR/VAR

Rebecca Markwick, Planning and Building Director
City of Belvedere
450 San Rafael Ave
Belvedere, CA 94920

Re: Belvedere 6th Cycle Revised Housing Element Update – Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND)

Dear Rebecca Markwick:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Belvedere 6th Cycle Revised 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 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 December 2023 MND.

Project Understanding

The proposed project includes a comprehensive update to goals, policies, and programs in the Housing Element of the City's General Plan and related zoning amendments and other actions needed to accommodate Belvedere's assessed share of the regional housing need.

Travel Demand Analysis

The project vehicle miles traveled (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. Caltrans commends the Lead Agency in including policies to encourage transportation alternatives to private vehicles into the City's General Plan.

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 MND. 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 to consider and explore the potential of excess state-owned property for affordable housing development, per Executive Order N-06-19.

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 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 City to prioritize projects that are equitable and provide meaningful benefits to historically underserved communities.

Caltrans encourages the City 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 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 Lisel Ayon, Associate Transportation Planner, via LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov. For future early coordination opportunities or project referrals, please contact LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov.

Rebecca Markwick, Planning and Building Director
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Luo Yunsheng". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Luo" and the last name "Yunsheng" written in a single continuous stroke.

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

c: State Clearinghouse