

California Department of Transportation

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

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GTS #: 04-SM-2024-00572
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Co/Rt/Pm: SM/VAR/VAR

Brittany Bendix, Contract Town Planner
Town of Atherton
91 Ashfield Road
Atherton, CA 94027

Re: 2023-2031 Housing Element and Zoning Code Update – Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND)

Dear Brittany Bendix:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the 2023-2031 Housing Element and Zoning Code Update. 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 May 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 is the adoption of the Town of Atherton's 6th Cycle Housing Element, a Zoning Ordinance Amendment to implement the policies and programs of the Housing Element, and adoption of an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance.

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 General Plan. These two plans studied existing conditions for walking and biking along and across the State Transportation Network (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

"Provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment."

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.

To improve multimodal transportation system to better accommodate the future land use developments, please consider the following suggestions:

- Caltrans District 4 Bicycle Plan recommends Class 1 Corridor Improvement between Atherton Avenue & Encinal Avenue and improvements on the uncontrolled intersection on Watkins Avenue & El Camino Real.
- Caltrans District 4 Pedestrian Plan has designated Tier 1 Priority for State Route (SR)-82 El Camino Real for pedestrian facility improvements. The town may consider improving its streets that connect to SR-82.
- Please include high-visibility pedestrian crosswalks in all future restriping projects and increase the number of "YIELD TO PEDS" signs at uncontrolled intersections throughout the town.
- Please provide both short-term bike parking and long-term secure bike parking for residents in the new proposed developments.

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 reference to the current California Transportation Plan (CTP) in the General Plan. 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.

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

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forward to collaborating with the Town to prioritize projects that are equitable and provide meaningful benefits to historically underserved communities.

Caltrans encourages the Town to foster meaningful, equitable and ongoing public engagement in the General Plan development 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 Melissa Hernandez, Associate Transportation Planner via LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov. For future early coordination opportunities or project referrals, please contact LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Luo Yunsheng". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Luo" being more prominent and the last name "Yunsheng" written in a more connected, flowing style.

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

c: State Clearinghouse