

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DISTRICT 4

OFFICE OF TRANSIT AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

P.O. BOX 23660, MS-10D

OAKLAND, CA 94623-0660

PHONE (510) 286-5528

TTY 711

www.dot.ca.gov

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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Aug 25 2020*Making Conservation
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August 25, 2020

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Zach Tusinger, Planning & Building Director
City of Calistoga, Planning and Building
Department
1232 Washington Street
Calistoga, CA 94515

The Veranda Hotel at Indian Springs – Initial Study and Mitigated Declaration (IS/MND)

Dear Zach Tusinger:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Veranda Hotel at Indian Springs project. 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 August 2020 IS/MND.

Project Understanding

The project proposes to demolish seven existing single-story structures onsite to construct a new two-story, U-shaped building to expand the existing Resort at Indian Springs by approximately 80,000 square feet (s.f.). The proposed project would construct and operate a 96-guest room hotel, restaurant, ground floor retail, pools, public courtyard, parking. It would also include streetscape improvements to Lincoln Avenue and Fair Way as well as construction of an Emergency Vehicle Access (EVA) road extending between Fair Way and Magnolia Drive.

This 6.97-acre project site is located in downtown Calistoga, immediately adjacent to State Route (SR)-29.

Highway Operations

The proposed signalizations/restriping at intersections along SR-29, including SR-29/Fair Way and SR-29/Foothill Blvd, require documentation to ensure that other alternatives besides signalization have been considered in accordance with the Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) policy. Early coordination with Caltrans is necessary before any mitigation measures are proposed. For clarification on the ICE policy and its requirements, visit <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/ice>, or contact the Caltrans District 4 ICE coordinator, Whitney Lawrence at whitney.lawrence@dot.ca.gov.

Travel Demand Analysis

With the enactment of Senate Bill (SB) 743, Caltrans is focusing on transportation infrastructure that supports smart growth and efficient development to ensure alignment with State policies using efficient development patterns, innovative travel demand reduction strategies, multimodal improvements, and VMT as the primary transportation impact metric. Caltrans commends the Lead Agency regarding the construction of the planned section of the Vine Trail along the project frontage along Lincoln Avenue. This project supports the State's goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve multimodal transportation options for land use development.

Caltrans also commends the Lead Agency in recommending strategies to reduce employee-based VMT, therefore working towards meeting the State's goal of a 15-percent reduction. To further ensure that this target is met, Caltrans encourages the Lead Agency to provide further justification of its hotel guest VMT-related methodology, as we as the employee VMT-related methodology, particularly as it relates to the Office of Planning & Research's (OPR) Technical Advisory methodology in evaluating VMT thresholds for retail/hotel uses. Also, the proposed Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures identified in the report should be documented with annual monitoring reports to demonstrate effectiveness.

Hydraulics

Caltrans requests further clarification regarding the post-construction drainage pattern in the report. Please ensure the post-construction drainage pattern follows the existing pattern. Flows to the State Right-Of-Way (ROW) should be metered to pre-construction levels and documentation regarding related calculations are required.

Cultural Resources

Caltrans recommends continuing to include Mr. Scott Gabaldon, Chairperson of the Mishewal-Wappo Tribe of Alexander Valley, in the archaeological monitoring of construction phase as the project moves forward.

Lead Agency

As the Lead Agency, the City of Calistoga is responsible for all project mitigation, including any needed improvements to SR-29. The project's fair share contribution, financing, scheduling, implementation responsibilities and lead agency monitoring should be fully discussed for all proposed mitigation measures.

Construction-Related Impacts & Encroachment Permit

Please be advised that any permanent work or temporary traffic control that encroaches onto the ROW requires a Caltrans-issued encroachment permit. The IS/MND indicates that a temporary encroachment onto the State ROW would be expected during construction on SR-29. Note that potential impacts to the State ROW from project-related temporary access points should be analyzed. Project work that requires movement of oversized or excessive load vehicles on state roadways requires a transportation permit issued by Caltrans. Prior to construction, coordination may be required with Caltrans to develop a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) to reduce construction traffic impacts to SR-29. For more information, and to apply, visit:

<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/transportation-permits>.

If any Caltrans facilities are impacted by the project, those facilities must meet American Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards after project completion. Please ensure that sidewalk on State ROW must be 6 feet wide and any driveways on State ROW must be in accordance with Caltrans Standard Plans. As part of the encroachment permit submittal process, you may be asked by the Office of Encroachment Permits to submit a completed encroachment permit application, six (6) sets of plans clearly delineating the State ROW, six (6) copies of signed, dated and stamped (include stamp expiration date) traffic control plans, this comment letter, your response to the comment letter, and where applicable, the following items: new or amended Maintenance Agreement (MA), approved Design Standard Decision Document (DSDD), approved encroachment exception request, and/or airspace lease agreement.

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To download the permit application and to obtain more information on all required documentation, visit <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/ep/applications>.

Thank you again for including Caltrans in the environmental review process. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Yunsheng Luo at Yunsheng.Luo@dot.ca.gov. Additionally, for future notifications and requests for review of new projects, please email LDIGR-D4@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Leong". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal tail stroke extending to the right.

Mark Leong
District Branch Chief
Local Development - Intergovernmental Review

cc: State Clearinghouse