

## California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 4  
OFFICE OF REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY PLANNING  
P.O. BOX 23660, MS-10D | OAKLAND, CA 94623-0660  
[www.dot.ca.gov](http://www.dot.ca.gov)



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Lauren Clark, Assistant Planner  
City of Calistoga  
1232 Washington Street  
Calistoga, CA 94515

### **Re: Kortum Ranch Development Project – Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)**

Dear Lauren Clark:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Kortum Ranch Development 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 June 2025 DEIR.

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

#### **Project Understanding**

The proposed project would subdivide four existing parcels totaling 30 acres into 20 individual lots for the future development of single-family detached homes ranging between 2,500 to 4,500 square feet. Project construction would also include onsite road and utility improvements in addition to off-site improvements on both Kortum Canyon Rd and Terrace Dr between the project site and State Route (SR) 128 (Foothill Blvd). The project is also in close proximity to SR 29 (Lincoln Ave) where it intersects with SR 128.

#### **Highway Operations**

The Office of Highway Operations commented during the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a DEIR stage that all impacted State Highway facilities should be studied in the Transportation Impact Study (TIS). The project's primary ingress/egress at the intersection of Kortum Canyon Rd also intersects with SR 29 at the northeastern leg of the intersection. From review of the TIS Trip Distribution (page 9), it appears the

assumption was that all trips would be to/from SR 128. Please explain why this was the assumption and why SR 29 was not studied as well.

The Office of Highway Operations also requested in our previous letter a copy of the Gateway Plaza Project TIS prepared by W-Trans in February 2023. A copy of the Gateway Plaza TIS has not been received. Please provide a copy or kindly attach the Gateway Plaza Project TIS as an appendix to the TIS for this proposed project.

Please also include as an appendix to the TIS the traffic volumes and counts obtained on 3/16/2023, referenced in the Study Roadways section (page 8).

### **Design**

Please be advised that the project plans do not clearly show Caltrans property lines. Please ensure that project plan sheets clearly show Caltrans property lines for the entire plan limits along with any existing roadway features (lane lines, edge of pavement, curbs, existing signage, trees and utility poles, etc.). Please additionally ensure that proposed work within Caltrans right-of-way (ROW) conforms with the latest versions of the Caltrans Highway Design Manual ([link](#)) and Caltrans Standard Plans and Specifications ([link](#)).

Please also check the corner site distance at the Terrace Drive/SR 128 intersection for compliance with Caltrans Highway Design Manual (HDM) Topic 405.1(2) *Corner Sight Distance* ([link](#), page 26) to verify that the existing trees, utility poles, and fence are not in the clear sight triangle.

Additionally, Section 3.5.3 of the DEIR, *Access, Circulation, and Parking* (page 3-9), mentions the installation of access gates on Terrace Dr for emergency vehicles and occupants of Lot 20. Please depict these access gates in the subdivision tentative map plan sheets.

### **Multimodal Transportation Planning**

The curb ramp for the proposed sidewalk at the intersection of Kortum Canyon Rd and SR 128 does not appear to connect with any other marked pedestrian infrastructure. It is recommended that the project include construction of a pedestrian receiving area across Kortum Canyon Rd that would connect with the existing crosswalk Across SR 128 and/or the addition of a crosswalk across SR 128 at the southeast leg of the intersection that would connect with the sidewalk along the east side of SR 29.

Please also consider the following additional bicycle and pedestrian improvements to improve safety and minimize project-generated VMT and congestion impacts to the State Transportation Network (STN):

- Construct sidewalks along both the north and south sides of Kortum Canyon Rd

- Construct sidewalks and curb ramps along both the east and west sides of Terrace Dr
- Construct a sidewalk on SR 128 between Terrace Dr and Kortum Canyon Rd
- Add high-visibility crosswalks across SR 128 between Kortum Canyon Rd and SR 29 and at Terrace Dr
- Install a Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) or Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (HAWK) at Terrace Dr.

### **Biological Resources**

Please review and consider the following edits to the Biological Resources chapter of the DEIR:

- *Section 4.1.2 Environmental Setting – Special Status Species (page 4.1-13):* please note there is a spelling error at the top of the page for “special status plan species”, which should state special status plant species.
- *Section 4.1.2 Environmental Setting – Western Pond Turtle (page 4.1-15):* the western pond turtle genus name has been updated to *Atinemys* rather than *Emys*. Please update accordingly.
- *Section 4.1.4 Analysis, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures – Impact BIO-C (page 4.1-25):* the reference to Figure 4.1-1 produces an error message within the text. Please review and correct the reference source.

### **Hydrology**

Please ensure that any increase in storm water runoff to State Drainage Systems or Facilities be treated, contained on project site, and metered to preconstruction levels. Any floodplain impacts must be documented and mitigated.

Please clarify the area of new impervious surface that is expected to be created with the future development as well as any changes to existing drainage patterns that would occur.

### **Cultural Resources**

Should construction activities within Caltrans' ROW take place in relation to this project, these mitigation measures shall be implemented if there is an archaeological discovery. If there is an inadvertent archaeological or burial discovery within Caltrans' ROW, please immediately contact the Caltrans Office of Cultural Resource Studies at (510) 847-1977. A staff archaeologist will evaluate the finds within one business day

after contact. Caltrans requires review of any potential data recovery plans within Caltrans' ROW.

### **Construction-Related Impacts**

Project work that requires movement of oversized or excessive load vehicles on State roadways requires a transportation permit that is issued by Caltrans. To apply, please visit Caltrans Transportation Permits ([link](#)).

Prior to construction, coordination may be required with Caltrans to develop a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) to reduce construction traffic impacts to the STN.

Additionally, please be aware of several future Caltrans projects within the vicinity of this proposed project that may pose a construction conflict and/or require coordination if construction for this project would occur beyond 2030:

- Capital Preventative Maintenance (CAPM) pavement project on SR 128
- CAPM pavement project on SR 29
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) project on SR 29.

Please reach out to us to discuss coordination as needed.

### **Lead Agency**

As the Lead Agency, the City 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 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.

### **Encroachment Permit**

Please be advised that any temporary or permanent work including traffic control that encroaches in, under, or over any portion of the State highway ROW requires a Caltrans-issued encroachment permit.

The Office of Encroachment Permits requires 100% complete design plans and supporting documents to review and circulate the permit application package. The review and approval of encroachment projects is managed through the

Encroachment Permits Office Process (EPOP) or the Project Delivery Quality Management Assessment Process (QMAP), depending on project scope, complexity, and completeness of the application. Please use the following resources to determine the appropriate review process:

- TR-0416 Applicant's Checklist ([link](#))
- Caltrans Encroachment Projects Processes – Information Video ([link](#))
- Flowchart, Figure 1.2 in Section 108, Overview of the Encroachment Review Process, of Chapter 100 – The Permit Function, Caltrans Encroachment Permit Manual ([link](#))

The permit approval typically takes less than 60 days, but may take longer depending on the project scope, size, complexity, completeness, compliance with applicable laws, standards, policies, and quality of the permit package submitted. Projects requiring exceptions to design standards, exceptions to encroachment policies, or external agency approvals may need more time to process.

To obtain more information and download the permit application, please visit Caltrans Encroachment Permits ([link](#)).

Thank you again for including Caltrans in the environmental review process. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Luana Chen, Transportation Planner, via [LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov](mailto: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](mailto:LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



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

c: State Clearinghouse