



January 22, 2018

Mr. Patrick Streeter  
City of Santa Rosa  
Planning and Economic Development Department  
100 Santa Rosa Avenue, Room 3  
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

## **Response to Caltrans Comments on the Dutton Avenue Residences Project**

Dear Mr. Streeter;

We received a copy of the letter dated December 6, 2017, to you from Ms. Patricia Maurice of Caltrans District 4, and on behalf of the applicant provide the following responses to comments relative to the traffic analysis and potential impacts. Note that the comments are paraphrased and provided in italics for ease of review.

*Caltrans provided guidance on the requirements under Senate Bill (SB) 743 to prepare a travel demand analysis and achieve vehicle miles traveled (VMT) goals.*

The guidelines regarding SB 743 are currently undergoing the adoption process at the State. The City has until 2020 to develop standards of significance and implement VMT analysis as part of CEQA documentation. Until such time that the City adopts VMT thresholds of significance and specifies methodologies for determining VMT, it is not possible to assess the project's ability to achieve specific VMT goals.

The project's daily VMT can be estimated using standard data available on-line regarding the average trip length for residents of Santa Rosa, the persons per household (population divided by number of households), and the number of new households proposed by the project. Based on this data, the 107-unit project would be expected to have a daily VMT of approximately 2,745 miles.

The traffic impact study prepared for the project addressed its potential safety impacts as well as effects on modes other than passenger vehicles.

*Caltrans recommends a robust Transportation Demand Management Program (TDM) and suggests that a Transportation Management Association (TMA) be established in partnership with other developments in the area.*

The City of Santa Rosa has taken an aggressive stance on providing facilities for alternative modes as a way of reducing the travel demand for new residents as well as those that already live and work in the City. This includes provision of bicycle facilities connecting the site to regional trails as well as bus service.

It is noted that the location of this site in a partially-built out suburban setting that includes a mix of low-density residential and employment uses. Some of the suggested trip reduction techniques such as establishment of a TMA typically need a greater area-wide density; in less densely developed areas these techniques tend to fail because of the lack of a sufficient number of potential participants. While it is not possible for the project to change the density or "urban fabric" of the surrounding area, the project itself would consist of relatively high-density housing that will be considerably more travel-efficient than the existing single-family homes in the surrounding area. The project's density and proximity of an adjacent Sonoma County Transit route help to reduce reliance on auto travel. The City's emphasis on providing access for travel via alternative modes is expected to be effective in reducing travel demand in the area over time as continued infill development occurs.

The project as proposed has incorporated a number of elements intended to reduce the transportation demand, including EV (electrical vehicle) charging stations, sidewalks along the street frontage and connecting buildings within the site, and the portion of the Class II bike lane along the site's frontage to connect the site to nearby facilities, including the SMART multi-use path. Additionally, the project applicant has indicated a willingness to contribute to the construction of a shelter and other amenities if a transit stop with commuter service is located along the site's frontage; this could be accomplished by moving a nearby stop to this site.

*The project should provide connections to existing bike lanes and trails.*

The need for the project to provide connected facilities along its frontages is addressed in the traffic study, including the provision of a path as discussed above.

*The project should contribute its fair share to the Class II bike lanes on Dutton Avenue.*

The City of Santa Rosa has a traffic mitigation impact fee program, and is expected to levy fees on the project as appropriate. Any planned infrastructure along the site's frontage, including a Class II bike lane, would need to be constructed as part of the project and would be required by the City as part of the project.

*Lower parking ratios are encouraged to achieve the TDM strategies presented in the letter.*

The project as designed provides parking as required under the City's zoning ordinance. Provision of an insufficient supply to meet the City's standards is inconsistent with their requirements.

We hope this information adequately addresses the comments from Caltrans. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Dalene J. Whitlock, PE, PTOE  
Principal

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