



## FRANKLIN CANYON VMT ANALYSIS

DATE: September 22, 2020

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SUBJECT: City of Hercules – Franklin Canyon VMT Analysis

Project #20135-000

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The purpose of this Memorandum is to present the analysis of the effect of the proposed project on regional vehicle miles traveled (VMT) for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This memorandum presents a description of the proposed project, a summary of nearby land uses that are similar to the existing and proposed land uses, quantitative and qualitative analyses that provides an estimated effect on regional VMT, and a summary of some potential improvements that could insure against VMT impacts.

### PROJECT BACKGROUND

The proposed project is located at 3100 Franklin Canyon Road in the City of Hercules. The parcel in question (APN 362-020-021-6) is approximately 161.95 acres and currently operates as a golf course, driving range, and clubhouse.

The proposed project would add 50 covered recreational vehicle (RV) storage spaces and 160 RV active camping spaces. The proposed project would also remove the existing 18-hole golf course and clubhouse, replacing them with an 18-hole putting course and larger clubhouse along with dining facilities, a maintenance building, and other support structures. The existing driving range would remain, and additional recreation features would be added, including an outdoor swimming pool, playgrounds, pickle ball courts, and horseshoe pits. A site plan for the proposed project is shown in **Figure 1**.

### VMT ANALYSIS APPROACH

According to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, the VMT effects of land use projects may be analyzed using one of two basic approaches:



Source: Abrams Associates, 2020.

**FIGURE 1. SITE PLAN**

1) VMT efficiency (compare projects to similar land uses in the jurisdiction or region) – this approach is recommended for residential and employment uses; and

2) Net VMT impact (any increase in VMT over the area affected by the project) – this approach is recommended specifically for retail and for other non-residential uses that are not employment focused.

The proposed project involves redevelopment of an existing recreational land use to a modified recreational land use. Therefore, a net VMT approach was determined to be most appropriate for this analysis, accounting for the potential effects of the displaced land use as well as the potential VMT inducing effects of the proposed use.

Note that the travel demand model maintained by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) was investigated as a potential tool for this analysis. However, the model takes employment as one of the primary determinants of trip end production and attraction. Both the golf course and proposed RV camp would best be characterized as service or “other” employment. Since the employment levels of the existing use and proposed project are not expected to differ significantly, the model would not be sensitive to VMT changes associated with the proposed project. Therefore, the CCTA model was not used in this analysis. Instead, the analysis relies on data on the existing golf facility customer base, the location of competing public golf courses, the expected customer base of the RV park, and the location of competing RV camping and storage facilities.

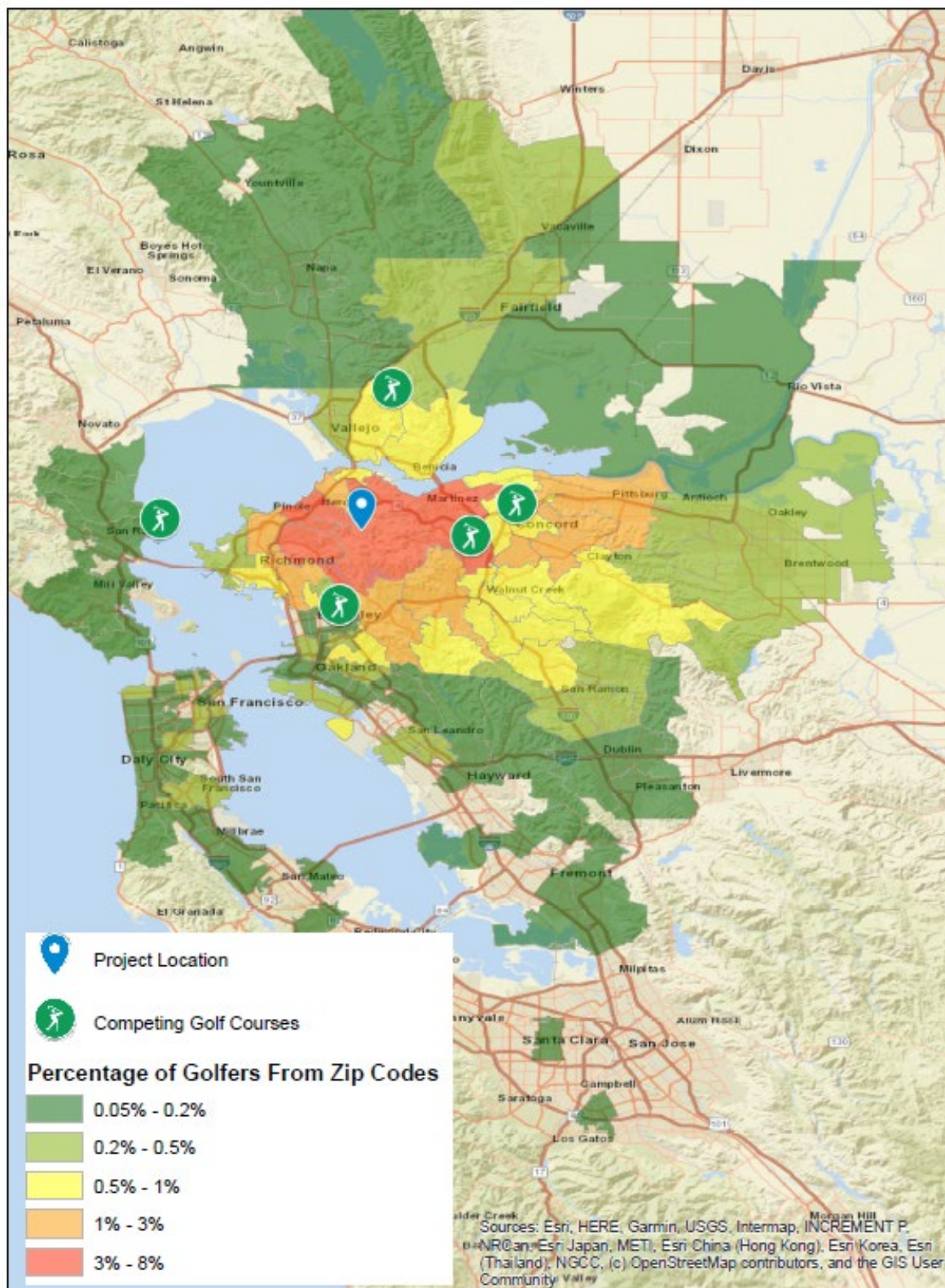
## POTENTIAL VMT CHANGES

The potential VMT effects of each component of this multi-use project are discussed below. Much of the analysis relies on the location of similar nearby competing facilities.

### GOLF COURSE (REMOVAL)

The removal of the golf course would not be expected to change the regional demand for golf or number of trips but would instead shift this demand to alternative nearby public courses. The effect on VMT would depend on whether the existing golf course customers would have to drive farther to reach a public golf course. **Figure 2** provides the location of nearby golf courses as well as the distribution of current users of the existing golf course by zip code.

Sales data by zip code from the existing golf course for the period between January 1, 2020 and August 4, 2020 were examined to assess potential VMT impacts. The analysis focused on the 138 zip codes accounting for 95% of the golfers. Of these, 32 local zip codes account for almost 53 percent of patrons. About 20% of patrons did not disclose their home zip code, 5 percent used a third-party booking site associated with a Florida zip code, and the remaining zip codes account for less than 0.5% of patrons each (cumulatively about 17% of patrons).



**FIGURE 2: NEARBY GOLF COURSES**

There are currently two golf courses within five miles of the project site that could serve most existing golfers. **Table 1** shows the proportion of existing golf course bookings by zip code, the average distance to the existing golf course, and the average distance to the assumed nearest alternative golf course. On average, if each patron diverts to the nearest alternative golf course, the trip distance will *decrease* by 4.92 miles per round trip, as the alternative courses are closer, on average, to the patrons. This will lead to a reduction in VMT, with the total reduction depending on vehicle occupancy.

Almost 22% of existing golf course patrons come from zip codes each contributing less than 0.5% of the total. These patrons live in locations served by alternative courses that closer than the existing Franklin Canyon golf course. It is expected that these golfers would most likely choose a closer alternative golf course, leading to a reduction in VMT. Finally, the 20.5% of patrons that did not disclose a zip code are presumed to follow the geographic distribution of the other patrons, with similar VMT effects. Overall, the closure of the golf course is not expected to cause a net increase in VMT for golf recreational purposes.

### DRIVING RANGE (EXISTING AND PROPOSED PROJECT)

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Since the driving range land use will remain accessible to the general public, minimal change to VMT, if any, is expected. Customers who previously used the driving range at this location will likely continue to do so. The driving range is also an amenity for the RV campground that would tend to reduce the need for campers to leave the site for recreation, having a VMT-reducing effect.

### PUTTING COURSE (PROPOSED)

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Because the putting course is a new recreational facility and there are no nearby similar facilities, this new use might possibly draw some new clientele to the location, having a VMT increasing effect. An unknown number of golfers at the existing course may use this putting course instead, with no associated VMT change. Note that this use is not comparable to mini-golf facilities that draw more casual golfers and family groups with themed decorations and arcade games. Because there is likely some overlap with the clientele of the driving range, the net effect is difficult to determine. This potential VMT increasing effect should be countered with VMT reducing measures to the greatest extent possible.

**TABLE 1: EXISTING GOLF PATRONS BY ZIPCODE AND DISTANCE TO NEAREST ALTERNATIVE**

ZIP CODE	NUMBER GOLFERS	PERCENT EXISTING GOLFERS	ESTIMATED DISTANCE TO EXISTING SITE	ESTIMATED DISTANCE TO CLOSEST GOLF COURSE	ESTIMATED CHANGE IN VMT <sup>a</sup>
94547	2,422	7.70%	4.9	15.45	(25,552)
94553	1,697	5.40%	6.5	7.05	(933)
94564	1,528	4.86%	6.95	13.5	(10,008)
94803	1,251	3.98%	10.3	10.75	(563)
94523	1,212	3.85%	11.65	2.95	10,544
94806	918	2.92%	10.7	13.15	(2,249)
94549	667	2.12%	15.55	7.65	5,269
94530	473	1.50%	15.7	4.4	5,345
94706	424	1.35%	16.3	3.8	5,300
94805	408	1.30%	12.25	7.6	1,897
94521	404	1.28%	18.1	6.5	4,686
94565	396	1.26%	20.1	7.8	4,871
94563	371	1.18%	18.4	6.7	4,341
94518	367	1.17%	15.7	6.2	3,487
94572	348	1.11%	7.65	14.4	(2,349)
94591	310	0.99%	13.8	6.65	2,217
94804	264	0.84%	15.1	7.9	1,901
94598	256	0.81%	20.6	9.95	2,726
94520	252	0.80%	15.1	2.2	3,251
94526	251	0.80%	26.05	16.05	2,510
94597	242	0.77%	13.4	5.5	1,912
94596	237	0.75%	19.4	7.95	2,714
94611	212	0.67%	27	7.85	4,060
94707	208	0.66%	16.85	3.15	2,850
94510	207	0.66%	22.55	14.1	1,749
94525	193	0.61%	5.25	12.1	(1,322)
94595	190	0.60%	17.8	9.8	1,520
94507	186	0.59%	22.5	9.95	2,334
94517	185	0.59%	27.4	15.2	2,257
94502	175	0.56%	30.55	15.75	2,590
94556	172	0.55%	20.45	12.35	1,393
94519	168	0.53%	15.3	3.1	2,050
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,594</b>				<b>40,796</b>

a) Assumes single vehicle occupancy

## RV CAMPGROUND (PROPOSED)

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The campground is not a tourist draw in and of itself. Therefore, this development would not be expected to induce additional recreational trips, instead providing an additional or alternative stop for travelers already on a long-distance RV trip. The proposed campground will draw from existing demand, offering a more central location to visitors to the Bay Area or serve as a stopping point for travelers passing through the region. **Figure 3** shows the location of nearby competing RV campgrounds. Due to the central location of the project site, the proposed RV campground is expected to reduce VMT as it is closer to the Bay Area attractions and generally is a more central location.

The extent to which the RV campground patrons must drive to and from the site to meet shopping, recreation, and other needs during their stay<sup>1</sup> should also be considered. In this respect, the site has a disadvantage in its lack of direct access to westbound SR-4. To counter this effect, which requires a more circuitous route for trips heading towards Hercules or points west, the proposed project should implement VMT reducing measures to the greatest extent possible. These measures include providing convenience shopping, operating a shuttle, and connecting to trails and are further discussed in the last section of this memo.

## RV STORAGE

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There are multiple RV storage sites available nearby the project site. To the east there is an RV storage site in Pinole, and to the west, there are three sites in Martinez and Concord. There are no clear areas of residential land use that are closer to the proposed site, so while the RV storage use should be considered a source of increased regional storage capacity as opposed to an immediate source of new trips and VMT, there may be some relocation of vehicles from sites that were closer to their owners homes, potentially increasing VMT. However, other factors such as price and perceived security come into play when selecting an RV storage facility. Moreover, the storage and retrieval of recreational vehicles is an occasional activity (in contrast to an almost daily activity like commuting) so the magnitude of any VMT changes will be small over time.

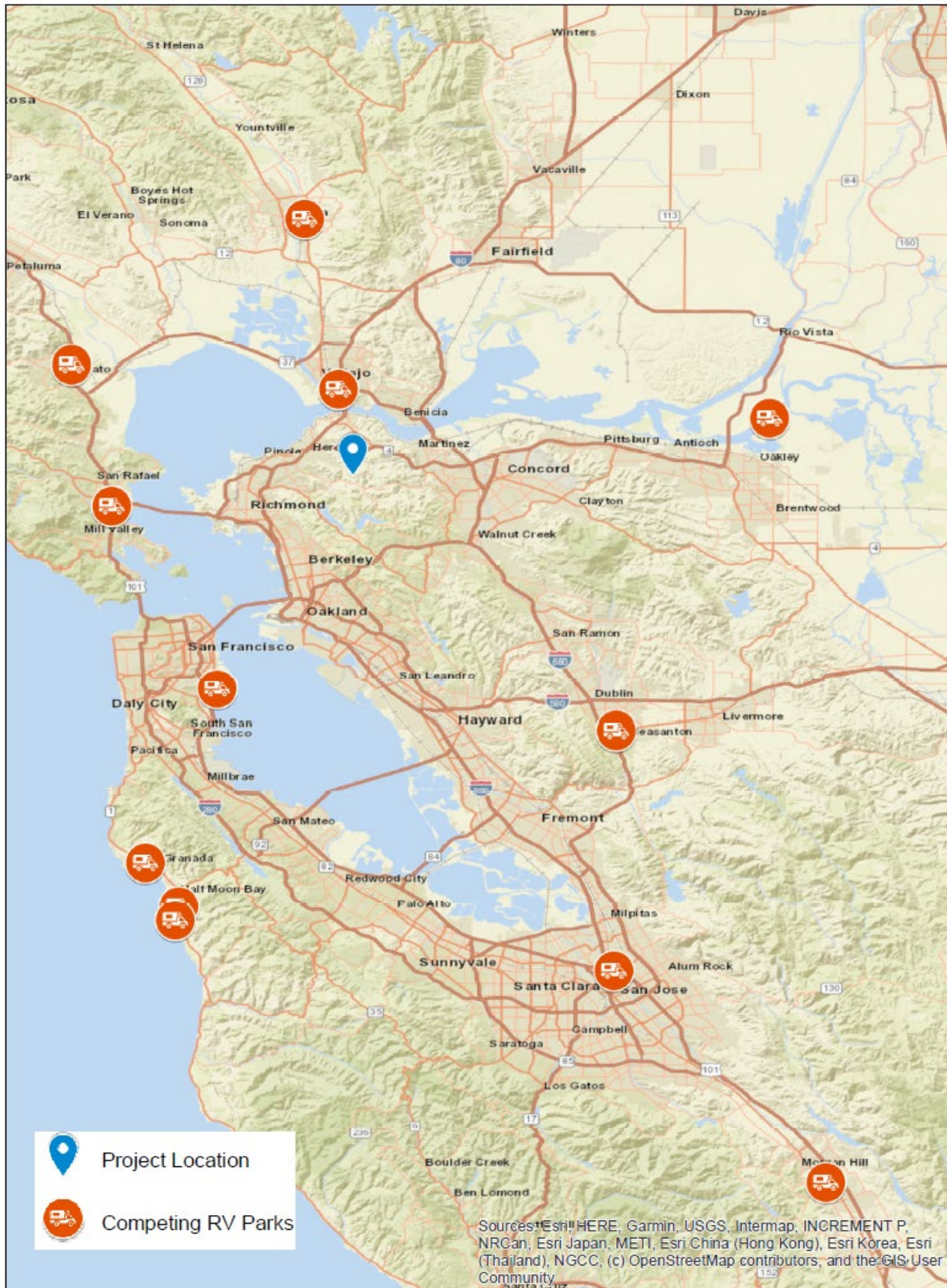
## DINING AND OTHER RECREATIONAL FACILITIES (PROPOSED)

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The proposed project includes a clubhouse with dining facilities, a fitness and wellness center, and an outdoor swimming pool. Additional recreational amenities such as playgrounds, pickle ball courts, and horseshoe pits are also planned. The clubhouse will continue to be open to the public and draw from the same market area as the existing clubhouse, resulting in no net change in VMT. The remainder of the amenities are restricted for use by RV campground patrons and therefore will not draw additional patrons to the site. As such, these amenities will reduce the need for campers to drive off site for dining and recreational needs, thereby reducing VMT associated with the campground.

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<sup>1</sup> The proposed maximum stay proposed for the RV park is 30 days.



**FIGURE 3: NEARBY RV CAMPGROUNDS**

## EMPLOYEE VMT

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The RV Park will require a similar number of employees as the former golf course, driving range and club house and there is no reason to believe that these employees will be drawn from a substantially different geographic area. Some RV park employees might even be the same as previously employed by the golf course. Moreover, at least one RV resort employee will be a caretaker who will live onsite, thereby further reducing employee commute VMT. Therefore, the overall impact to employee VMT is likely to be minimal.

## RECOMMENDED VMT REDUCING MEASURES

The overall effect of the proposed project is likely to be reduced or unchanged VMT. However, there are some elements, such as the new putting course, that have the potential to increase VMT. To ensure that overall VMT is reduced or unchanged, the project sponsors should implement VMT reducing measures to the greatest extent possible.

These measures include strategies to reduce the need for RV park patrons to travel off site in their motor vehicles. The putting course, dining facilities, and outdoor recreation amenities all reduce the need for RV campground patrons to travel off site for dining and recreation. A convenience store would further reduce the need to travel off site for shopping and supplies.

Provision of a shuttle service to downtown Hercules and/or nearby attractions should also be considered. A shuttle service could provide connection to nearby dining, shopping, and additional recreation opportunities, such as the San Francisco Bay Trail along the coast and further reduce VMT associated with the campground.

Finally, there is access to open space trails on the southwestern boundary of the project site. Provision of area maps and/or a bicycle share or rental program onsite will offer additional nearby pedestrian and bicycle recreation opportunities.