



Monterey County Zoning Administrator

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Agenda Item # 3

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PLN110289 - County of Monterey RMA Public Works (Highway 1 Climbing Lane)

Public hearing to consider a Combined Development Permit to construct a climbing lane on northbound State Route 1 from Carmel River Bridge through the Carmel Valley Road intersection, including removal of 31 trees.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that Zoning Administrator:

Adopt a resolution to:

- 1) Approve a Coastal Development Permit for the construction of a climbing lane on northbound State Route 1 from Carmel River Bridge through the Carmel Valley Road intersection to connect with the existing climbing lane on northbound State Route 1 north of Carmel Valley Road; upgrading of the wooden signal poles at the intersection of State Route 1 and Carmel Valley Road; and grading of approximately 16,670 cubic yards of cut and 5,750 cubic yards of fill; and a Coastal Development Permit for the removal of 31 trees greater than 6 inches in diameter (which includes one double-trunked Coast Live Oak, Arroyo Willows and Black Cottonwoods); and
- 2) Consider a Mitigated Negative Declaration and Addendum that were previously adopted by Caltrans.

SUMMARY:

Monterey County Resource Management Agency (RMA) in cooperation with California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is proposing to construct a northbound climbing lane on State Route 1 between Rio Road and Carmel Valley Road. The project consists of widening on the east side of State Highway 1 to provide for a second northbound through-lane (climbing lane), ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) ramp improvements at the intersection at the Rio Road intersection, and upgrading the wooden signal poles at the intersection of Carmel Valley Road. Approximate limit of construction is from Carmel River Bridge to 400 feet north of Carmel Valley Road. The purpose of the road widening is to improve traffic operations and safety. The widening would not result in significant changes to road capacity.

The project is generally located on the boundary of the Carmel Area Land Use Plan, Carmel Valley Master Plan and Greater Monterey Peninsula Area plan boundaries. In November of 2011, it was determined that the Highway 1 right-of-way is located in the Coastal Zone and is subject to the Carmel Area Land Use Plan policies (Determination No. 17-2011). Staff has reviewed the project for consistency with the Carmel Area Land Use Plan and the 1982 General Plan. Potential issues were identified involving the removal of trees, development with California red-legged frog habitat, and impacts resulting from temporary noise generation

during construction. As designed, conditioned, and mitigated, the project conforms to the applicable policies and regulations.

DISCUSSION:

RMA-Public Works and Facilities in cooperation with Caltrans proposes improvement to State Route 1, from Carmel River Bridge to Carmel Valley Road, near the City of Carmel. The project is to construct an additional northbound lane (climbing lane) that would improve operations at this section of State Route 1. The proposed climbing lane would connect with the existing climbing lane north of Carmel Valley Road. The project is within Caltrans right-of-way and does not require acquisition of new State right-of-way.

A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) was prepared for the project by Caltrans. Caltrans is the lead agency on the CEQA determination. The MND was circulated to the public and regulatory agencies in August 2011 and January 2012. Two public meetings were held; the first on August 16, 2011 at the Monterey County Government Center (168 W. Alisal St, Salinas, CA) and the second on January 11, 2012 at Monterey County Regional Fire District (Mid Valley Fire Station, 8455 Carmel Valley Rd, Carmel, CA). Three comments were received. One comment inquired about the feasibility of roundabouts at the intersection of State Route 1 and Rio Road and at the intersection of State Route 1 and Carmel Valley Road. Due to the substantial right-of-way required and the geographical constraints, the cost and the environmental impacts would be greater than the planned proposed project. The other two comments were in support of the project. Caltrans finalized the environmental document and filed the Notice of Determination in April 2012.

Following the Caltrans approval of the project and adoption of the Mitigated Negative Declaration, Caltrans re-evaluated the vehicle speeds on the project segment of State Route 1 and determined the 85th percentile speed has increased from 45 to 55 miles per hour, necessitating the need to modify the geometric design of the roadway and meet the increase in speed. The modified design required expansion of the project limits an additional 400 feet south toward the Carmel River Bridge and 400 feet north of Carmel Valley Road. Due to the revised project design, an Addendum to the Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared by Caltrans addressing the expanded project limits. Caltrans adopted the Addendum on April 23, 2012.

With design modifications a total of 31 trees will be removed. Included in the removal are coast live oaks, black cottonwoods, and arroyo willows. Trees will be replaced at a 3:1 ratio following construction. The lone landmark (coast live oak) will be replaced at 25:1 ratio. All the trees are located on the east side of State Route 1 between Rio Road and Carmel Valley Road.

No biological impacts were identified in the MND prepared for the project; however, the expanded southern limit of the project is near Carmel River. On May 6, 2016 a qualified biologist conducted a focused assessment of the upland habitat throughout the Biological Study Area and its potential to support the federally threatened California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*). No California red-legged frog were observed or heard during the field assessment. Project activities within the habitat area involve excavation in the existing roadway and the unimproved dirt road shoulder only. Avoidance and minimization measures contained in the

during construction. As designed, conditioned, and mitigated, the project conforms to the applicable policies and regulations.

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Mitigated Negative Declaration will be implemented including pre-construction surveys by a qualified biologist and installation of exclusionary environmental sensitive area fencing during construction.

Temporary impacts on traffic and noise were also considered in the MND and Addendum. These impacts will occur during an approximately three month period. To comply with County noise ordinance, the construction contractor will be required to implement noise control measures as described in the mitigation monitoring and reporting plan. To minimize traffic delays, traffic management plan will be prepared and implemented, which will included, but not limited to detours, traffic control, signing, public awareness campaign, and pedestrian and bicycle access control.

In all, the project will improve traffic operations and safety in the area; is consistent with the Carmel Area Land Use Plan Policies, specifically those contained in Section 3.1.3; and environmental impacts have been avoided or mitigated to a less than significant level as described in the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Addendum prepared for the project.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The following agencies have reviewed the project, have comments, and/or have recommended conditions:

- California Department of Transportation
- California Department of Parks
- RMA-Public Works & Facilities
- RMA-Environmental Services
- Carmel Cypress Fire Protection Department
- Water Resources Agency
- Environmental Health Bureau
- City of Carmel-by-the-Sea

The Carmel Valley and Carmel Highlands Land Use Advisory Committees reviewed the project on August 12, 2012. Both Committees recommended approval of the project subject to including a dedicated right-turn lane from northbound State Route 1 onto Rio Road by a vote of 6 ayes, 0 noes (Carmel Valley LUAC), 4 ayes, 1 noes (Carmel Highland LUAC). The recommended change of adding a dedicated right-turn lane from northbound State Route 1 onto Rio Road was analyzed. It was determined that the current proposed project configuration can sufficiently accommodate this right-turn movement and no further revision is required. The existing bicycle/pedestrian trail east of State Route 1 would be impacted if a dedicated right turn lane were added.

FINANCING:

The total estimated project cost, including engineering, environmental, and construction, is \$5.5 million. Funding from a variety of State and local revenue in the amount of \$5.5 million has been authorized for design, environmental, and construction of the project. Sufficient appropriations are available in the FY17 Adopted Budget for RMA - Public Works Budget (Fund 002, Unit 8195) to finance the project.

Prepared by: Jonathan L. Pascua, P.E., Senior Civil Engineer, x8963
Reviewed by: Brandon Swanson, RMA-Planning Services Manager
Approved by: Benny J. Young, Interim Deputy Director RMA-Public Works & Facilities and
Carl Holm, AICP, Director Resource Management Agency

Attachments:

Exhibit A - Vicinity Map

Exhibit B - Draft Resolution

- Conditions
- Site Plans

Exhibit C - Mitigation Measures

Exhibit D - CalTrans Mitigated Negative Declaration

Exhibit E - CalTrans Addendum

cc: Front Counter Copy; California Coastal Commission; Bob Schubert, Senior Planner;
Jonathan Pascua, Senior Civil Engineer; The Open Monterey Project (Molly Erickson);
LandWatch (Executive Director); John H. Farrow; Janet Brennan; Project File PLN110289