



County of Monterey

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Board Report

File #: RES 14-008, **Version:** 1

Public Hearing to consider adoption of a resolution to:

- a. Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Castroville Bicycle/Pedestrian Path and Railroad Crossing Project; and
- b. Adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

- a. Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Castroville Bicycle/Pedestrian Path and Railroad Crossing Project; and
- b. Adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan.

SUMMARY:

An Initial Study and a Mitigated Negative Declaration have been prepared pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to assess potential environmental impacts of the Castroville Bicycle/Pedestrian Path and Railroad Crossing project. A Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration was filed with the Clerk of the Board on September 24, 2013. The document was circulated as required from September 24, 2013 to October 24, 2013. One comment letter dated October 22, 2013, was received from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) stating that CPUC authorization is required for new grade separated highway-rail crossing with a minimum vertical clearance of 22'6" from top of rail and a minimum horizontal clearance 8'6" from centerline of track. The project is being designed to CPUC requirements in response to this comment (see Attachment 1). The analysis determined that a Mitigated Negative Declaration was appropriate.

DISCUSSION:

The proposed project is located in the community of Castroville. The proposed project is an approximately 3,878 foot (0.74 mile) bicycle/pedestrian path that runs along Salinas Street from McDougall Street to Axtell Street with a 1,170 foot long over crossing at Union Pacific and a bicycle path to Castroville Boulevard. The bicycle path pavement will be 8 feet wide, with 2 feet wide decomposed granite shoulders on each side.

Currently, pedestrians and bicyclists are unlawfully crossing the UPRR track. The proposed project will provide convenient, safe and legal access to, and continuity, with an existing Class I bicycle and pedestrian path that begins at Castroville Boulevard. The proposed project will provide a safe railroad crossing for bicyclists and pedestrians in the community of Castroville and North County. Approval of an environmental document is required prior to negotiating acquisition of right-of-way.

Portions of the proposed project will encroach into the coastal zone in the North County Land Use Plan Area and will require the removal of approximately 0.468 acres of agricultural lands. Pursuant to Monterey County Coastal Implementation Plan, Section 20.144.080 Subsection D.2, the conversion of cultivated land for non-agricultural purposes shall only be permitted where there is an overriding need to protect the public health and

safety from adverse erosion of water quality/quality impacts, or where the land is needed to infill existing 'developed' areas. Because the proposed project is not for water quality/quality impacts or to infill existing 'developed' areas, prior to its approval and development, the proposed project would require an amendment to the Local Coastal Program (LCP) to allow the conversion of agricultural lands for the purpose of addressing public health and safety issues.

The Planning Commission considered the project as part of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and found it to be consistent with the General Plan.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The County of Monterey is the lead local agency for the proposed bicycle/pedestrian path and over crossing. The County of Monterey Resource Management Agency-Public Works has circulated the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration through the California State Clearinghouse.

FINANCING:

There is no impact to the General Fund. Design, environmental, right of way, and a portion of construction is funded by Earmark Grade Crossing (Federal - \$965,818), Transportation Development Act (TAMC - \$953,192), Road Fund (\$174,000), and Transportation Enhancement (TE) (State - \$5,137,000) and an additional TE pending California Transportation Commission approval in March 2014 (State - \$1,500,000). The project budget has funding to pay for the mitigation fees for impacts to agricultural lands. Staff will seek federal, state and local grants for the unfunded amount of \$17,068.

Prepared by: Patricia A. Lopez, Management Analyst III (831) 759-6630

Approved by:

Robert K. Murdoch, P.E. Director of Public Works

Approved by:

Benny J. Young, RMA Director

Dated: January 24, 2014

Attachments: Resolution; Attachment 1-Comment Letter dated October 22, 2013; Project Budget; Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration; Exhibit A-Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan; Location Map (Attachments on file with the Clerk of the Board)