



Regional Transportation Planning Agency • Congestion Management Planning
 Local Transportation Commission • Monterey County Service Authority for Freeways & Expressways

October 27, 2008

Ms. Alana Knaster
 Planning Manager
 County of Monterey
 Government Center
 168 West Alisal Street, 2nd Floor
 Salinas, California 93901

**SUBJECT: Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the
 County of Monterey 2007 General Plan Update**

Alana
 Dear Ms. Knaster:

The Transportation Agency for Monterey County is the Regional Transportation Planning Agency and Congestion Management Agency for Monterey County. Transportation Agency staff has reviewed the proposed Draft Environmental Impact Report for the County of Monterey 2007 General Plan Update.

The proposed project consists of a comprehensive update of the existing 1982 County General Plan and will establish the general pattern of land use and adopted goals and policies to guide the County in future land use decision-making, including, but not limited to, setting a development pattern centered on cities, Community Areas, and Rural Centers; providing infrastructure to serve new development concurrently with that development; and conserving sensitive natural areas.

Transportation Agency staff appreciates the County's coordination and discussion of this document early in the process and offers the following comments for your consideration:

Analysis Scenarios

Cumulative Conditions

- The draft report indicates that the transportation network analyzed under analysis scenarios Cumulative 2030, Cumulative 2030 Prior Land Use, and Cumulative Buildout includes seventeen proposed improvements to the roadway network that are set to receive funding from our agency's regional development impact fee program. Please note that full funding and construction of these projects by 2030 is dependent on funding in addition to the partial funding provided by the fee program. The passage of the proposed Measure Z initiative by the voters of Monterey County together with State and Federal funds would complete the funding for the majority of

the projects. Absent this additional source of local transportation funding, which would also be used to secure State and federal matching funds, the project delivery schedule for some of these improvements, such as the Highway 156 – U.S. 101 interchange project, would need to be pushed out beyond 2030. Ultimately, if this were to occur, the roadway network assumed in the cumulative analysis scenarios may not be fully completed until after the Year 2030, if at all, which would result in some of the studied segments and intersections to experience lower Level of Service standards than depicted in the report.

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Impacts TRAN-1A, 2A, 3A, & 4A

Project-Specific Impacts

- With exceptions for some community areas, the Transportation Agency supports the use of Level of Service standard D, a measurement of roadway volume-to-capacity, as the threshold for impact mitigation from new development. This standard level is a cost effective method for gauging the scope of needed roadway improvements and also helps to encourage the use of alternative forms of transportation, such as transit, carpooling, and bicycle travel.
- As a means of providing mitigation for project-specific impacts from new development to meet the Level of Service D threshold, the Transportation Agency supports fair-share contributions towards identified improvements or for the project applicant to construct the improvement concurrently with the proposed development.
- The Transportation Agency also supports the policies related to the requirement of new development to design public facilities to accommodate pedestrians, bicycles, and transit as a means of reducing the impacts from vehicle traffic. Please see enclosed for our agency's *Principles for Community Development* for recommendations on implementing these policies and accommodating alternative transportation in new development. Further discussion of alternative transportation is provided under our agency's comments to draft report sections TRAN-1F through 5F (Alternative Transportation).

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Impacts TRAN-1B, 2B, 3B, & 4B

County & Regional Roadway Impacts

- Page 4.6-45 of the draft report notes that: *The County and the Transportation Agency are planning to implement Traffic Impact Fees to fund improvement projects, but the amount of the fees are limited for affordability and total fee burden reasons.*

The Transportation Agency's Regional Development Impact Fee program has been adopted by all the cities plus the County Board of Supervisors and went into effect on August 27, 2008. The amount of the regional fees are not limited for affordability or based on the burden that the cost of mitigation places on development, but are dictated by the cost of the improvement projects that the program funds and the amount of vehicle trips generated by new development that is forecasted in the County. In the event that a specific development type generates fewer trips than is assumed in the fee program, such as with affordable housing, the amount of the fees

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can be reduced to more accurately reflect the development's level of impacts. In this manner, each new development will contribute its proportionate share in fees towards the improvement project costs, fully mitigating its cumulative transportation impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act.

- The Transportation Agency supports and appreciates the County's commitment to work with our agency and other local jurisdictions to improve congestion through the coordination of regional and countywide traffic impact fees and the development of the Regional Transportation Plan. Our agency is currently in the process of developing an update to the Regional Transportation Plan in coordination with the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments, the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission, and the San Benito Council of Governments. As our agency progresses on the updated plan, we will work collaboratively with the local agencies and seek input from County staff.
- Our agency also supports that County requires impacts to regional transportation facilities to be mitigated through the Regional Development Impact Fee program. Participation by County staff in stakeholder meetings during the development of the regional fee program was helpful in shaping a comprehensive and equitable program and the County's continued support in mitigating cumulative impacts through the regional fee program is appreciated.
- Area Plan Policies for the North County and Greater Salinas areas make note of a bypass of Highway 101 north of Salinas being provided to provide additional highway capacity and improve access. The Prunedale Bypass project, as these policies seem to describe, is not likely to be constructed by the Year 2030 cumulative analysis scope and should not be included as part of the analyzed transportation network. To address issues of capacity and access in the North County and Greater Salinas areas, our agency is proposing the construction of the Westside Bypass from Boronda Road to Davis Road, the Eastside Connector from an upgraded Harris Road interchange to Williams Road, widening Highway 156, and frontage roads along Highway 101 from south Salinas to Soledad.

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Impacts TRAN-1F, 2F, 3F, & 4F

Alternative Transportation

- Page 4.6-53 of the draft report states that: *Bicycling, walking, and transit are less attractive alternatives to the automobile when greater distances are involved. Further, lower density development spread over a larger is effective to serve by transit than higher density, mixed-use communities.*

While increases in travel distances tend to result in the selection of automobiles over alternative modes of transportation, higher density and mixed-use communities are better suited to service with transit and attract bicycle and pedestrian trips over lower density development. This statement should be revised to reflect the positive impact that high density development has on encouraging the use of alternative modes of transportation.

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- The Transportation Agency supports accommodation of alternative forms of transportation (rail, bus transit, bicycle and pedestrian transportation), both through the design of transportation facilities, and through the design and orientation of land uses. As such, our agency supports the County's proposed policies to encourage alternative modes of travel by providing increased transit service, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, compact and mixed-use development, requirements for site designs that support transportation choice, and ensuring that new developments provide multimodal facilities.
- The draft report notes that, where appropriate and sufficient right-of-way is available, that bicycle paths shall be separated from major roads and highways. Our agency also encourages and recommends the inclusion of on-street bike lanes in the construction of new major arterials and collectors with an average daily traffic greater than 3,000 or with a speed limit in excess of 30 miles per hour, to reduce vehicle-bicycle conflicts at intersection crossings and improve safety for bicyclists making turning movements through intersections.
- The draft report should address the need for new roadways on the interior of developments to be designed to accommodate bicycles with adequate pavement for bike travel, with specific dimensions clearly identified, particularly along major arterials.
- A premium should be placed on safe and accessible pedestrian access to development sites from intersections and crosswalks, sidewalks, and bicycle facilities. Our agency recommends that the draft report address issues of pedestrian travel, access, and safety. Our agency supports proper striping requirements at all pedestrian crosswalks to clearly identify areas of pedestrian travel and ensure safe transitions for vehicles and pedestrians. Consideration in the draft report should also be given to supporting the inclusion of intelligent crosswalks, which provide flashing notification lights when a pedestrian enters the crosswalk to increase visibility and alert drivers of their presence. New developments should be required to be designed with American Disability Act-compliant sidewalks that connect to external facilities, provide access to transit stops, and to not include the use of cul-de-sacs without a cut-through for pedestrian travel.
- In addition, The Transportation Agency recommends that implementation of bicycle facility-related policies encourage new developments to install public bicycle racks and lockers. Adequate lighting at these locations to improve safety and visibility should be provided by the development. The Transportation Agency encourages project developers to apply for our Bicycle Protection Program, which provides grant funding for bicycle parking facilities (racks and lockers) for local businesses, governments, and school districts.
- Our agency supports the concentration of new development along major transportation corridors and near incorporated cities to make transit services more feasible. The draft report should also indicate a preference for working early in the development process with Monterey-Salinas Transit to ensure that transit access and facilities are properly planned and provided. New development should also be

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required to utilize Monterey-Salinas Transit's *Designing for Transit* Guideline Manual as a resource for accommodating transit service at new development sites.

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Alternatives to the 2007 General Plan

Transit-Oriented Development Alternative

- As previously noted, the Transportation Agency supports the efforts presented in the 2007 General Plan to increase the use of public transportation and enhance Monterey-Salinas Transit's areas of operations and infrastructure. In addition to this, the proposed Transit-Oriented Development alternative is consistent with our agency's plans to encourage and support a combination of increased fixed-route bus service, commuter and passenger rail, express bus services, and bus rapid transit. Implementation of this alternative, with designated Transit-Oriented Development nodes located in Castroville, Pajaro, former Fort Ord, and the Route 68 corridor, may require our agency to modify the initial planning and funding assumptions for some of the regional transportation improvement projects in the regional fee and *Investment Plan* programs. Our agency requests that if this alternative is selected that the County work collaboratively with our agency to ensure consistency of implementation with our plans and programs for the regional transportation network.

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Climate Change

Land Use and Circulation

- The draft report describes how development and other activities associated with 2007 General Plan would contribute to global climate change. The Transportation Agency supports the policies identified in the 2007 General Plan for land use, circulation, and open space conservation to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Related to the policies outlined in the draft report, Senate Bill 375 (Transportation, Land Use, and the California Environmental Quality Act) provides a path for better planning by providing incentives for locating new developments in a manner that reduces vehicle miles traveled. The bill requires the regional governing bodies in each of the state's major metropolitan areas to adopt, as part of their regional transportation plan, a "sustainable community strategy" that will meet the region's target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Our agency encourages the County to coordinate its efforts and policies that address climate change with the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments and its currently underway Blueprint Planning process, which is the basis for the Monterey County "sustainable community strategy".

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Thank you for the opportunity to review this document. If you have any questions, please contact Michael Zeller of my staff at (831) 775-0903.

Sincerely,

Debra L. Hale
Executive Director

CC: Dave Murray, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 5
Paul Greenway, Monterey County Department of Public Works

Letter to Ms. Alana Knaster
October 23, 2008

Carl Sedoryk, Monterey-Salinas Transit
Nicholas Papadakis, AMBAG
Ed Kendig, Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District

Enclosures: Transportation-Related Principles for Community Development
Alternative Measures

Transportation Agency for Monterey County Transportation-Related Principles for Community Development

Mission

The Transportation Agency for Monterey County aims to develop and maintain a multi-modal transportation system that enhances the mobility, safety, access, environmental quality, and economic activities in Monterey County.

The purpose of the following set of principles is to reduce future impacts to Monterey County's regional transportation system, reduce the cost of transportation infrastructure, and improve the Transportation Agency's ability to meet Monterey County's regional transportation needs. Our agency recommends that new land use development in the county adhere to the following set of principles, which emphasize developing a land use pattern that is supportive of non-single occupant auto modes of transportation so as to maximize the carrying-capacity of Monterey County's existing regional transportation infrastructure.

1. Land Use



- ❖ **1.a** Encourage mixed use developments to accommodate short trips by non-auto modes
- ❖ **1.b** Encourage growth in areas where transportation infrastructure exists or is most cost-effective to extend
- ❖ **1.c** Encourage a balance of employment and housing to reduce regional commute demands
- ❖ **1.d** Encourage higher residential densities in core areas or around transit stops to support regular transit service throughout the region
- ❖ **1.e** Encourage land use jurisdictions to utilize the Caltrans Traffic Impact Studies Guide or develop traffic impact study guidelines of their own when analyzing the impacts of growth on the regional transportation system
- ❖ **1.f** Require new development to pay for its proportional impact to the transportation system, preferably via regional and local fee programs, or on-street project construction

2. Street Network Design

- ❖ **2.a** Provide an interconnected street system for new development to facilitate short trips by non-auto modes of transportation using the following features:
 - **2.a.1** Provide a grid-based street network.
 - **2.a.2** Encourage short block lengths in new development
 - **2.a.3** Discourage cul-de-sac streets in new development unless they incorporate pedestrian and bike easements that reduce trip lengths
- ❖ **2.b** Incorporate traffic calming features into the street network to slow the flow of traffic and enhance the pedestrian environment:
 - **2.b.1** Provide curb bulb-outs at intersections to reduce the length of pedestrian crossings
 - **2.b.2** Allow on street parking to slow the flow of cars and create pedestrian/auto buffer
 - **2.b.3** Provide landscaped buffers between pedestrians and motorized traffic and provide pedestrian-scale street lighting no more than 15 feet high

- ❖ 2.c Design streets to accommodate all modes of transportation
 - 2.c.1 Incorporate sidewalks and bicycle lanes into new street construction
 - 2.c.2 Accommodate safe bicycle travel by providing on-street bicycle lanes and routes instead of separated bicycle paths
 - 2.c.3 Incorporate bus pullouts, transit stops, transit shelters and other transit amenities to serve new development according to the MST Designing for Transit Handbook

3. Site Design

- ❖ 3.a Orient buildings to face the street in new development to improve access for pedestrians from sidewalks
- ❖ 3.b Incorporate residential uses over commercial uses in commercial areas to encourage trips by foot, bike, or transit and improve access by each of these modes
- ❖ 3.b Incorporate reduced building setbacks, especially in commercial areas, to reduce the length of pedestrian trips and facilitate easy access
- ❖ 3.c Locate on-site parking to the rear of structures or underground
- ❖ 3.d Provide pedestrian facilities connecting building entrances with the street where parking is not provided to the rear of structures to enhance pedestrian access and safety
- ❖ 3.f Incorporate bicycle storage facilities into site plans to accommodate access by bicyclists

4. Transportation Demand Management

- ❖ 4.a Encourage telecommuting in non-residential development as a traffic mitigation measure
- ❖ 4.b Encourage flexible work schedules for employees as a traffic mitigation measure
- ❖ 4.c Encourage employers to utilize available rideshare programs or create their own
- ❖ 4.d Encourage employers to offer transit incentives to employees to mitigate traffic impacts
- ❖ 4.e Provide preferential carpool or vanpool parking in non-residential developments
- ❖ 4.e Encourage large employers to offer child care facilities as resources allow and encourage all employers to provide information on nearby child care resources
- ❖ 4.f Locate child care facilities near employment centers

SAMPLES OF ALTERNATIVE MEASURES

1. Provide ridesharing, public transportation and nearby licensed child care facility information to tenants/buyers as part of move-in materials.
2. Print transit information on promotional materials.
3. Install bicycle amenities, such as bicycle racks and bicycle lanes.
4. Provide bus pullouts, pedestrian access, transit stops, shelters and amenities as part of the site plan.
5. Provide locked and secure transportation information centers or kiosks with bus route/schedule information, in common areas.
6. Provide pedestrian facilities linking transit stops and common areas.
7. Provide resources for site amenities that reduce vehicular trip making.
8. Park-and-ride facilities.
9. On-site childcare facilities.
10. Shuttle bus service, bus pools or improved transit service as part of the development.
11. Facilities to encourage telecommuting.
12. Pedestrian and bicycle system improvements.
13. Transit oriented design and/or pedestrian oriented design.
14. Provide preferential carpool/vanpool parking spaces.
15. Implement a parking surcharge for single occupant vehicles.
16. Provide shower/locker facilities.
17. Employ or appoint a transportation/rideshare coordinator.
18. Implement a rideshare program.
19. Provide incentives for employees to rideshare or take public transportation.
20. Implement compressed work schedules.

SAMPLES OF STREET AND ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

1. Safety improvements
2. Traffic signal improvements.
3. Traffic signals.
4. Turning or auxiliary lanes.
5. Add travel lanes.
6. Improve highway interchange.
7. Construct interchange.
8. Construct new street or road.