

CSA #50

Flood Control for the Lower Carmel River

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March 1, 2008

Public Comment on the
Rancho Canada Village Subdivision Development Application Specific Plan
(PLN040061, SCH#2006081150)

Comment Related Solely to Flood Control Aspects of the Project

To: Monterey County Resource Management Agency, Planning Department
Attn: Ms. Jacqueline R. Onciano
168 West Alisal Street, 2nd Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

County Service Area #50 was developed by local residents and property owners after the devastating floods of 1995, which did tens of millions of dollars of damage to our neighborhoods and businesses. Our job is oversee flood control planning and projects for the Lower Carmel River area. We try to be diligent in advancing flood control solutions, and in calling attention to things that could exacerbate flood risks to our area. We ask that you also keep flood threats and flood control in mind as you review this Rancho Canada Village project.

CSA #50 is a part of the Monterey County Department of Public Works, and also works closely with the Monterey County Water Resources Agency, as well as various other public and private agencies. Our jurisdiction includes all of the Mission Fields neighborhood west of Highway 1, and the commercial-residential area east of Highway 1, which includes the Crossroads Shopping Village, the Arroyo Carmel and Riverwood housing developments and other nearby properties in the 100-year flood plain. The eastern boundary of CSA #50 is very close to the western boundary of the West Golf Course of Rancho Canada, the site of the Rancho Canada Village project.

Since 1995 CSA #50 has completed or participated in a series of flood control projects. These have created a floodway to the south of the Carmel River, and have protected the developed north bank of the river. One major improvement is what is called a "tie-back levee" that runs from near the eastern end of Rio Road toward the river, ending right at the edge of Rancho Canada property. On top of the tie-back levee runs a vehicle path which allows access for the driveways of three adjoining properties. This levee was constructed in late 1997, and requires some on-going maintenance.

In 2001-2002, CSA #50 commissioned a \$116,000 hydrology and computer modeling study entitled *The Lower Carmel River Flood Control Project* by Philip Williams and Associates (PWA). This studied various alternatives and recommended the best methods to offer CSA #50 100-year flood protection. A key component is to raise the level of the Rio Road tie-back levee 4.0 feet to an elevation of 39.5 feet, which in turn

would require widening the base, to reconstruct and grade Val Verde Road also to an elevation of 39.5 feet, and to construct a stretch of floodwall from the end of the Rio Road tie-back levee toward the river.

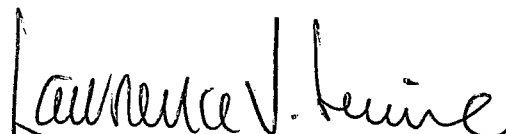
When the Rancho Canada Village project was initially conceived, the late Mr. Nick Lombardo met with our CSA #50 Committee and assured us that if public safety authorities required a secondary access road from the west side of the project, that it would be constructed on top of the tie-back levee, and the project would raise the levee to the flood control specifications called for in the CSA #50 Philip Williams and Associates study. Following Mr. Lombardo's passing, his son Mr. Anthony Lombardo and other associates assured us that that plan was still in force.

On February 19, 2008, the CSA #50 Committee had an official meeting where the agenda included discussion of the Rancho Canada Village. We were pleased to review project maps and have comments from the current project team, including Mr. Alan Williams of the Carmel Development Company and Mr. Ed Ballman of Balance Hydrologics, as well as from Mr. Tom Moss of the Water Resources Agency, who had studied the project. Our purpose was limited to discussion of those aspects of the project which might have positive or negative impacts on flooding and flood control impacting the territory of CSA #50.

We are NOT writing to either support or oppose this project. Our Committee did, however, vote unanimously to call these three points to your attention, and we request that you pursue and consider them before making a decision on the project:

1. We understand that instead of placing the access road on top of the tie-back levee after raising it to the 39.5 feet called for in the PWA report, the project plan now includes placing the access road on top of the levee at its current height, and constructing an adobe floodwall south of the tie-back levee, between the levee and the Riverwood Housing Complex, to the height of 39.5 feet elevation. We have been told this floodwall will provide flood protection equal to raising the levee. **We find that there is not sufficient clarity about this new aspect of the project and its feasibility or acceptability, and this proposal should be fully described and reviewed by you in light of the PWA Study, before you take action on the Draft EIR.**
2. We also believe that there needs to be clarification of the plans for long-term maintenance and liability concerns of the tie-back levee road and/or floodwall, and there should be conditions on the project that guarantee maintenance and coverage and which protect CSA #50 from any expense of maintenance or liability of these features of the project.
3. We understand there is a proposal to move dirt from the "blister area" on the "Odello East" property south of the Carmel River to the Rancho Canada Village project area. Pending appropriate review by qualified geologists, CSA #50 supports this concept, with the understanding that this would occur at no cost to CSA #50. Removing dirt from the floodway is a positive.

Thank you for your consideration.


Lawrence V. Levine, Chair
CSA #50 Advisory Committee