



June 4, 2007

Mr. Robert L. Borchard, AICP
Project Manager
City of Marina
Development Services Department
3056 Del Monte Avenue, #205
Marina, California 93933

**SUBJECT: Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the
Marina Station Specific Plan**

Dear Mr. Borchard:

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 draft Environmental Impact Report for the Marina Station Specific Plan. The project consists of the development of 320 acres of the Armstrong Ranch property to include 1,360 residential units, 60,000 square feet of commercial use, 143,808 square feet of office space, and 651,624 square feet of industrial buildings located in the northern portion of the City of Marina along both sides of Del Monte Boulevard.

The Transportation Agency appreciates the City of Marina's coordination with our staff on this project to include our agency's proposed rail station as well as pedestrian walkways and access to transit services as key design features in the Marina Station development. Our agency looks forward to continued collaboration with the City through the development of this project and offers the following comments for your consideration:

Regional Road & Highway Impacts

1. The document indicates that regional access to the project site will be delivered by Highway 1 via Reservation Road and Del Monte Boulevard with a net 25,837 daily trips at build-out, with 2,606 trips originating during the PM peak hour. To address the impacts from this project to the transportation system, the Transportation Agency is supportive of the planned project-specific mitigation strategies, which include payment of the City of Marina Traffic Impact Fee as well as funding improvements to Del Monte Boulevard and Highway 1 / Reservation Road outside of the City's fee program. The document also states that the project will have a significant cumulative impact at regional facilities outside the study area and will contribute its fair-share in regional impact fees as mitigation contingent upon the adoption of the fee program,

however the impacts will remain unavoidable if a regional development impact fee is not adopted and the identified improvements are not included in the program.

The Transportation Agency appreciates and supports the City's intention to collect regional impact fees as mitigation for cumulative impacts from this project, but is expecting that this project will contribute its fair share in regional fees regardless of the adoption status of the program. The Transportation Agency and Caltrans consider payment of regional development impact fees, as identified in our agency's *Nexus Study for a Regional Development Impact Fee*, on an ad hoc basis as adequate mitigation for new developments' cumulative impacts to state highways and regional roads. Our agency is in the process of updating the impact fee program, and as such, if building permits are to be issued prior to the adoption of the fee program then regional fees should be paid on an ad hoc basis. Fees for this project are eligible for discounts based on any overlap with the City of Marina Traffic Impact Fee and affordable housing units included in the development.

Rail & Bus Rapid Transit

2. As the document indicates, the existing railroad tracks that run through the project site are currently inactive. The Transportation Agency, however, plans to establish light rail and/or bus rapid transit service on the Monterey Branch Line from Monterey to Marina, with service beginning in 2014. With the reestablishment of service, a station has been planned immediately north of Marina Greens Drive on the west side of Del Monte Boulevard in the Marina Station development.

While the document indicates that vibration-sensitive residential structures will be constructed within approximately 150 to 200 feet from these tracks as to yield sufficient vibration levels when the tracks become active, the document does not consider the establishment of rail or bus rapid transit service in determining potential noise impacts. Considering the City's plans to realign Marina Greens Drive with the relocation of an existing at-grade crossing and the possible construction of a new at-grade crossing, additional noise impacts will be created from crossing bells and the required use of train horns at highway-rail crossing locations. To properly identify all potential noise impacts, the document should include the potential noise impacts originating from commuter or light rail and/or bus rapid transit service, crossing bells, and train horns at highway-rail crossing locations on sensitive receptors throughout the project site in its analysis. Further, it is requested that recognition of these impacts be included in the sales information and deeds for the development products.

3. The document should also acknowledge that the Transportation Agency retains preexisting rights for transportation conveyance along the Monterey Branch Line right-of-way and does not intend to provide mitigation for any impacts to the Marina Station development from the use of the rail line. To mitigate potential noise impacts from the use of the rail line, the City may elect to establish a Quiet Zone as specified by the Federal Railroad Administration's *Use of Locomotive Horns at Highway-Rail Grade Crossings*. This would remove the requirement for train horns to be sounded at highway crossings by placing active warning devices consisting of flashing lights, gates, constant warning circuitry, and power-off indicators at crossings as well as

advanced signs for motorists at least one-half mile along the length of the railroad right-of-way.

4. The Transportation Agency is supportive of the requirement for the master developer to consult with our agency to identify necessary corridor improvements, including crossings and access to the transit station. It should be noted that the construction of any new at-grade crossing will also require clearance from the Public Utilities Commission.

Pedestrian & Bicycle

5. The Transportation Agency supports accommodation of alternative forms of transportation both through the design of transportation facilities and through the design and orientation of land uses. The Transportation Agency is supportive of the document's proposed Circulation Policies 1-1 through 1-5 related to bicycle and pedestrian travel. Our agency in particular appreciates the consideration given to the encouragement of bicycle use for internal trips through the inclusion of bicycle travel lanes and planned linkages with external bicycle routes, the connection of parks, neighborhoods, commercial areas, and transit stops with pedestrian facilities, and the commitment to work with the Transportation Agency and Monterey-Salinas Transit to provide access to transit throughout the project site.

To facilitate the implementation of these policies, our agency recommends:

- The inclusion of on-street bicycle lanes and routes throughout the project site in place of the dedicated bicycle paths planned for Del Monte Boulevard and Crescent Avenue. On-street bicycle facilities provide safer travel for bicyclists, particularly at intersections, than separated bike paths.
 - The use of Monterey-Salinas Transit's *Designing for Transit Guideline Manual* as a resource for accommodating transit access to the project site.
6. The proposed site plan maps indicate the cul-de-sacs will be incorporated into the site design in some areas. The Transportation Agency discourages the use of cul-de-sacs as they create impediments to bicycle and pedestrian travel between neighborhoods and block linkages to bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Our agency recommends constructing cut-throughs from cul-de-sacs to provide for more direct access, remove impediments and reduce bicycle and pedestrian trip lengths.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this document. If you would like to discuss these comments further, 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
Ron Lundquist, Monterey County Department of Public Works
Carl Sedoryk, Monterey-Salinas Transit
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