



September 12, 2008

Ms. Diana Hurlbert
Senior Planner
City of Seaside
440 Harcourt Avenue
Seaside, California 93955

**SUBJECT: Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the
Projects at Main Gate Specific Plan**

Dear Ms. Hurlbert:

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 Projects at Main Gate Specific Plan.

The project proposes a 250 room hotel, 291,000 square feet of retail, 61,000 square feet of restaurants, and approximately 2,500 parking spaces located on 57 acres of the former Fort Ord, northwest of Light Fighter Drive and Second Avenue. The draft document contains many provisions to support alternative modes of transportation throughout the development and the Transportation Agency appreciates the efforts made to include bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Transportation Agency staff offers the following comments for your consideration:

Regional Road and Highway Impacts

1. The total new development for this project is estimated to generate 26,067 weekday daily trips and 2,544 trips in the PM peak hour. With development of this magnitude, it can be expected that there will be significant impacts at regional access points, particularly at the SR-1 interchanges at Light Fighter Drive and 12th Street as well as General Jim Moore Boulevard, Imjin Parkway, and Reservation Road. To mitigate cumulative impacts, the Transportation Agency supports and considers payment of the Fort Ord Reuse Authority's development impact fee as sufficient mitigation of impacts to regional facilities for projects located within the boundary of the former Fort Ord. As such, our agency is supportive of the applicant's intentions to pay the Fort Ord Reuse Authority impact fee.

2. Site-specific impacts will still need to be addressed and our agency supports the funding of circulation infrastructure improvements through fair-share payments. In particular, our agency supports that the development will contribute towards signalizing impacted intersections at General Jim Moore Boulevard / Broadway Avenue and Second Avenue / First Street as well as funding the widening of Imjin Parkway between Imjin Road and Reservation Road.

Pedestrian, Bicycle & Transit Travel

3. 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. The Transportation Agency supports that the goal of the Specific Plan is to create a bike and pedestrian-friendly development, with the specific goals of connecting the site to “other nearby amenities, offering access for pedestrians and bicyclists to and from the site,” striving to create a “sense of place at a pedestrian scale,” and providing “ease of access, transit connections, and non-automobile alternatives as a component of the project.”

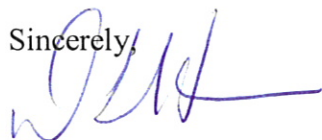
To accomplish these goals, the development planning should place a premium on safe and accessible pedestrian access to the site from intersections and crosswalks, sidewalks, and bicycle facilities. The project site should also be designed with sidewalks that connect to external facilities, provide access to transit stops, and do not include the use of cul-de-sacs without a cut-through for pedestrian travel. As per Caltrans standards, bicycle lanes should be constructed to the left of any right-hand turn lanes included in the development or constructed off-site as mitigation. Also, the document should address the need for new roadways to be designed to accommodate bicycles with adequate pavement for bike travel, with specific dimensions clearly identified, particularly along major arterials.

4. Our agency recommends that planned bike paths and walkways in the development be linked to existing facilities that surround the project area, particularly on Imjin Parkway, 2nd Avenue, General Jim Moore Boulevard, and bike trails in the former Fort Ord area. Also, the project applicant should consult with the Transportation Agency and the City of Seaside’s Bike Plans to ensure that all proposed bicycle facilities are accounted for in the site planning of this project, such as the Class 2 facility on First Avenue connecting to the scenic trail, Class 1 facility on General Jim Moore Boulevard connecting to the existing bike path, and additional Class 2 facilities on Monterey Road, Light Fighter Drive, Gigling Road, and Third Street.
5. The Transportation Agency supports that a pedestrian walkway will be constructed to allow coastal access via the existing First Street under-crossing. As noted in our letter dated February 5, 2007 on the Notice of Preparation for this project, a discussion of necessary upgrades to the First Street under-crossing should be included in the draft Environmental Impact Report and a fair-share contribution towards those improvements should be made as mitigation.
6. With the considerable amount of space that will be dedicated for vehicle parking, our agency recommends that proper striping be included for all pedestrian crosswalks and

walkways to clearly identify areas of pedestrian travel and ensure safe transitions for vehicles and pedestrians. Consideration should be given to 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. In addition, the development should explore the use of gray granite pavement for the parking area, which has the benefit over traditional blacktop of increasing nighttime visibility and is permeable to aid in the control of on-site water run-off.

7. The Transportation Agency appreciates that bicycle racks will be installed and made publicly available in the development, which should be placed near building entrances. The development should also consider installing lockers at these locations and providing adequate lighting to improve safety and visibility.
8. The site plan enclosed with the document (Conceptual Plans A & B) depicts planned pedestrian and non-motorized facilities within the development. This map should be expanded to include areas outside of the immediate project vicinity to show how the development will address connectivity to regional areas through bike and pedestrian travel and a recirculated map should be provided. In addition, the planned location of bicycle racks, pedestrian walkways, shuttle services, and transit access should be clearly labeled.
9. The development should include plans to provide non-motorized access to the planned intermodal transportation center at First Avenue and Fifth Street as well as the two park and ride facilities at Imjin Road and Twelfth Street and Gigling Road and Eighth Avenue. The Transportation Agency is also planning on developing Bus Rapid Transit service that would run along Eighth Street and Inter-Garrison Road. Monterey-Salinas Transit's *Designing for Transit* Guideline Manual should also be used as a resource for accommodating existing (Monterey-Salinas Transit Line 16) and potential future transit access to the project site.

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
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