



September 16, 2008

County of Monterey  
Resource Management Agency – Housing & Redevelopment Office  
Attn: Marti Noel, Assistant Director  
168 West Alisal Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Salinas, California 93901

County of Monterey  
Resource Management Agency – Planning Department  
Attn: Taven Kinison Brown, Planning Manager  
168 West Alisal Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Salinas, California 93901

**SUBJECT: Comments on the Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration / Initial Study  
for the Mid-Peninsula Housing Coalition Cynara #1 Project**

Dear Ms. Noel:

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 Mitigated Negative Declaration / Initial Study for the Mid-Peninsula Housing Coalition Cynara #1 project.

The project proposes mixed-use development including 40, 100% affordable apartments and townhomes, an 1,800 square feet community center, and 750 square feet for retail and office uses located along Highway 183 near Tembladera Slough within the Castroville Community Plan area. 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 267 weekday daily trips and 24 trips in the PM peak hour. As the document notes, it can be expected that the development trip generation will add to existing significant impacts at regional access points, particularly at the interchanges of Highway 183 and Highway 156, Castroville Boulevard and Highway 156, and Highway 183 and Oak Street/Blackie Road. To mitigate cumulative impacts, the Transportation Agency considers payment of the Regional Development Impact Fee as sufficient mitigation of cumulative impacts to regional facilities and supports that a fair-share contribution in regional fees is listed as a condition of approval for this project.

The Transportation Agency is currently in the process of updating the Regional Impact Fee Implementation Guidelines to address affordable housing developments. Acknowledging that studies have shown a consistently lower level of trip generation from affordable and below-market rate housing developments in comparison to traditional market-rate developments, our agency is investigating an appropriate trip generation rate that can be used across the county for the purpose of calculating regional fees for this type of development. Also, since a traffic study was already completed as part of the environmental review for this project, if the study determined that an alternative trip generation rate was appropriate for this project, this alternative rate may be submitted to the Transportation Agency for consideration in calculating the fair-share amount of regional fees.

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 funding the ramp improvements at Highway 1 and Highway 183 as well as the proposed Artichoke Avenue loop road improvements, in addition to other site-specific fair-share contributions that the project will make as part of the conditions for approval.

### **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 document identifies that the project will lead to an increased demand for non-motorized vehicle facilities and greater access to transit service and facilities. To accommodate this demand, 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, constructed off-site as mitigation, or lead into the project site at main entrance points.
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 Highway 156, Highway 183, and Molera Road. Also, the project applicant should consult with the Transportation Agency and the County of Monterey'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 facilities on Castroville Boulevard, Blackie Road, and Espinosa Road.
5. The Transportation Agency recommends that bicycle racks and lockers be installed and made publicly available in the development, which should be placed near building entrances. The development should also consider providing adequate lighting to improve safety and visibility.

6. Item G on the Initial Study checklist assesses whether the project will “conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)”. While earlier in the document, it is noted that the development will result in an increased demand for transit demand and facilities, considered to be a potentially significant impact, this section does not provide a discussion of how the development will accommodate transit at the project site. The Transportation Agency supports that the development will be required to contribute their proportionate fair share towards providing additional bus shelters along northbound Merritt Street at the intersections of Mead and Union Streets and along southbound Merritt Street at the intersection with Pajaro Street. This section should be updated to address this issue for the final document and Monterey-Salinas Transit’s *Designing for Transit* Guideline Manual should also be used as a resource for accommodating existing (Monterey-Salinas Transit Lines 27 and 28) 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Hale', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Debra L. Hale  
Executive Director

CC: Dave Murray, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 5  
Paul Greenway, Monterey County Department of Public Works  
Carl Sedoryk, Monterey-Salinas Transit  
Nicholas Papadakis, AMBAG  
Ed Kendig, Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District