



January 11, 2010

Mr. Bill Farrell  
Community Development Director  
City of Gonzales  
P.O. Box 647  
Gonzales, California 93926

**SUBJECT: Comments on the Notice of Preparation for the Gonzales 2010  
General Plan**

Dear Mr. Farrell:

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 Notice of Preparation for the Gonzales 2010 General Plan.

The proposed updated General Plan adds approximately 2,150 acres of land for a variety of urban and open space uses and approximately 2,130 acres of land for urban reserve, for a total of 3,490 acres if all land is incorporated and developed, with a total buildout population of approximately 37,000 persons and total employment base of 7,300 jobs.

Transportation Agency staff offers the following comments for your consideration:

**Regional Road and Highway Impacts**

1. The Draft Environmental Impact Report should analyze the impacts to regional transportation infrastructure associated with implementation of the updated general plan. The Transportation Agency has completed a Nexus Study for the regional development impact fee program that analyzed the regional, countywide traffic impacts of development according to adopted city and county general plans. This Nexus Study identifies projects to address countywide impacts to regional infrastructure, including interchange improvements to US 101 in Gonzales, and a schedule of development impact fees based on the proportion of project costs that can be attributed to new trips. Our agency recommends that the Nexus Study be used as a resource to identify the regional traffic impacts associated with implementation of the updated Gonzales General Plan, and requests that the regional fees be identified as the preferred mechanism for mitigating regional transportation impacts.

2. The traffic analysis in the Draft Environmental Impact Report should have a clearly defined study area including the significant regional roadways outside of the city limits that would potentially be impacted by development allowed by the proposed General Plan. All state highways and principal arterials within this study area should be identified. Applicable level of service standards for each of the roadway segments and intersections on state highways and principle arterials should also be identified in the report.
3. The traffic analysis in the Draft Environmental Impact Report should include information on existing traffic volumes within the study area, especially for those roadway segments and intersections on state highways and principal arterials. This information should be based upon recent traffic counts. The existing level of service for each roadway segment and intersection should also be calculated and included in the report.
4. The level of service for each regional roadway segment and intersection should be calculated under project-specific and cumulative conditions and included in the draft report. Cumulative conditions should be clearly defined in the report. Roadway performance deficiencies and feasible mitigation measures under both scenarios should be identified. The Transportation Agency and Caltrans consider the regional development impact fee to be sufficient for addressing the cumulative regional traffic impacts of new land use development.
5. The methodology used to calculate level of service should be consistent with the methods in the current version of the Highway Capacity Manual. All level of service calculations should be included in the draft report as an appendix and made available for public review.

### **Pedestrian & Bicycle Travel**

6. 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 multi-modal facilities.
7. A discussion of any travel demand reduction measures to be implemented by the City of Gonzales should be included in the draft report. In addition, any bicycle and pedestrian facilities to be implemented according to the updated plan should be identified in the Draft Environmental Impact Report and be consistent with the Transportation Agency General Bikeways Plan for Monterey County.
8. Our agency 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.
9. 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.
  10. 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.
  11. 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.
  12. 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 required to utilize Monterey-Salinas Transit's *Designing for Transit* Guideline Manual as a resource for accommodating transit service at new development sites.

### **Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

13. Senate Bill 375 requires the Metropolitan Planning Organization to develop a Sustainable Communities Strategies as a comprehensive approach to addressing greenhouse gas emissions at a regional level by linking land use and transportation planning decisions. Our agency encourages the City's coordination with the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments in the development of the region's Sustainable Communities Strategy and for developments within the General Plan area to be consistent with the plan once it is completed.
14. Our agency supports the use of light-colored pavement for pedestrian areas to cut down on the heat island effect. In addition, the development should explore the use of gray granite pavement for parking areas and roadways, 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.

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,



*for* Debra L. Hale  
Executive Director

CC: Dave Murray, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 5  
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