



Responses to Public Comments on the East Laurel Drive Pedestrian Improvements Project Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration

Introduction

The purpose of this memo is to transmit the public comments and responses to comments received on the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the East Laurel Drive Pedestrian Improvements Project located in the City of Salinas. The Draft IS/MND was released for public review and comment by the City of Salinas on August 20, 2019 for a 20-day public comment period ending on September 9, 2019.

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15074, the City of Salinas, as the Lead Agency, must consider the IS/MND together with any comments received during the public review process. Written responses have been prepared to comments received during the public review period.

CEQA Requirements Regarding Comments and Responses

CEQA Guidelines Section 15204(b) states that “persons and public agencies should focus on the proposed finding that the project will not have a significant effect on the environment. If persons and public agencies believe that the project may have a significant effect, they should:

1. Identify the specific effect,
2. Explain why they believe the effect would occur, and
3. Explain why they believe the effect would be significant.”

CEQA Guidelines Section 15204(c) further advises, “Reviewers should explain the basis for their comments, and should submit data or references offering facts, reasonable assumptions based on facts, or expert opinion supported by facts in support of the comments. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064, an effect shall not be considered significant in the absence of substantial evidence.” Section 15204(d) states, “Reviewing agencies or organizations should include with their comments the name of a contact person who would be available for later consultation if necessary. Each responsible agency and trustee agency shall focus its comments on environmental information germane to that agency’s statutory responsibility.” CEQA Guidelines Section 15204(e) states, “This section shall not be used to restrict the ability of reviewers to comment on the general adequacy of a document or of the lead agency to reject comments not focused as recommended by this section.”

List of Respondents

The following is a list of public agencies, organizations, and individuals and businesses that submitted comments on the IS/MND received as of close of the public review period on September 9, 2019. No comments were received after September 9.

- Virginia Boyce, Director of General Services – Salinas Union High School District (Letter 1)
- Debra L. Hale, Executive Director – Transportation Agency for Monterey County (Letter 2)
- Raul Martinez, Assistant Engineer – Monterey County Resource Management Agency (Letter 3)

Responses to Comments

Responses have been provided to comments on significant environmental points in order to describe the disposition of issues and new information or clarifications, as appropriate. When comments did not address the completeness or adequacy of the environmental documentation, or did not raise significant environmental issues, the receipt of the comment is noted; no further response is provided. This section is formatted so that the respective comment letters are followed immediately by the corresponding responses.

Letter 1 **Salinas Unified School District**
Virginia Boyce, Director of General Services
August 28, 2019

From: Virginia Boyce <virginia.boyce@salinasuhd.org>
Sent: Wednesday, August 28, 2019 12:12 PM
To: Eda Herrera <eda@ci.salinas.ca.us>
Cc: Ana Aguillon <ana.aguillon@salinasuhd.org>
Subject: Comments: E.LaurelDr Pedestrian Improvement IS/MND

Good Afternoon,

The Salinas Union High School District has reviewed the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration of the East Laurel Drive Pedestrian Improvements Project and do not have any comments.

Please note, it would be beneficial to the Mission Trails Regional Occupational Programs that construction at our intersection occur during the summer months when school is not in session; however, as long as bus, car, and pedestrian access remains available there are no issues.

We wish you great success on your project.

Sincerely,

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Virginia Boyce
SUHSD, Director of General Services
x 1102
Direct: (831) 796-7074

Letter 1: Response 1

The comments of the Salinas Unified School District are noted regarding the maintenance of access during construction to the school district's Mission Trail Regional Occupancy Program (ROP) site. The ROP site is accessed from entrance road to the Monterey County East Laurel Facility (Ranch View Lane). As noted in the IS/MND Project Description, project construction would occur over approximately six months. During construction, a minimum of one travel lane in each direction on East Laurel Drive and Constitution Boulevard would be operational. No roadways would be completely closed during construction and access for vehicles and pedestrians would be maintained. This comment does not address the IS/MND's adequacy or raise a significant environmental issue.

Letter 2 TAMC (Transportation Agency for Monterey County)
Debra L. Hale, Executive Director
September 5, 2019



55-B Plaza Circle, Salinas, CA 93901-2902 • Tel: (831) 775-0903 • Website: www.tamcmonterey.org

September 5, 2019

Eda Herrera, P.E., Senior Civil Engineer
Public Works Department
City of Salinas
200 Lincoln Avenue
Salinas, CA 93901

SUBJECT: Comments on the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration of the East Laurel Drive Pedestrian Improvement

Dear Eda Herrera:

The Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) is the Regional Transportation Planning and Congestion Management Agency for Monterey County. TAMC staff have reviewed the Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the East Laurel Drive Pedestrian Improvement Project and offer the following comments:

1. The Transportation Agency strongly supports the project's purpose in enhancing pedestrian safety and increasing connectivity, mobility, and access for transit users and pedestrians.
2. TAMC supports the thorough implementation of safety measures to protect the intersections that are part of this project.
3. The Transportation Agency's Active Transportation Plan proposes the implementation of a Class II Buffered Bike Lane along E Laurel Drive, in addition to a Class I shared use path – such as the boardwalk component of the proposed project. TAMC suggests that when the roadway is repaved and restriped, that 6' (minimum) bike lanes are included in the restriping plan along the entire corridor of E Laurel Drive within this project area.

Please note that the Transportation Agency is preparing to launch a new pilot program that would provide supplemental funding for the added cost of safety improvements in existing pavement and restriping projects. More information will be provided at the October 3rd TAMC Technical Advisory Committee meeting, starting at 9:30 am at the TAMC office.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed project. If you have any questions, please contact Madilyn Jacobsen of my staff at 831-775-4402 or madilyn@tamcmonterey.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "DLH", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Debra L. Hale
Executive Director

Letter 2: Response 1

TAMC's support of the proposed project is noted. The IS/MND identifies an existing six-foot-wide bike lane on southbound East Laurel Drive within the project limits. On-street bike lane improvements were completed by the City of Salinas in June 2019 and included a 5-foot-wide bike lane with a new 3-foot-wide buffer on East Laurel Drive from Constitution Blvd to St. Edwards on the northbound direction. Additionally, Constitution Blvd was restriped to provide a 6-foot-wide bike lane with a new 3-foot-wide buffer the entire length of road in both directions. The existing trail fronting East Laurel Drive and between Ranch View Lane and the Natividad Creek Detention Basin will be rehabilitated with a new asphalt concrete surface. No additional bike improvements are proposed on East Laurel Drive as a part of the project. This comment does not address the IS/MND's adequacy or raise a significant environmental issue.

Letter C-3 **Raul Martinez, Assistant Engineer**
September 9, 2019

MONTEREY COUNTY
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCY
Carl P. Holm, AICP, Director

LAND USE & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT | PUBLIC WORKS, PARKS & FACILITIES
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September 9th, 2019

City of Salinas
Public Works Department
Attn: Eda Herrera, P.E., Senior Civil Engineer
200 Lincoln Avenue
Salinas, CA 93901

SUBJECT: Public Review Draft of the East Laurel Drive Pedestrian Improvement IS/MND

Dear Ms. Herrera,

The RMA-Public Works would like to thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the East Laurel Drive Pedestrian Improvement project, dated August 2019.

It is our understanding that the proposed East Laurel Drive Pedestrian Improvement Project would improve pedestrian, vehicular, and trail facilities along East Laurel Drive and Constitution Boulevard by providing new sidewalk facilities, a trail system and boardwalk for pedestrians and bicyclists, trail lighting, and new street lighting on the roadway. The project site spans from East Laurel Drive to Constitution Boulevard to the northwest toward North Sanborn Road to the southeast; and on Constitution Boulevard from East Laurel Drive to approximately 375 feet south of Manchester Circle. The rehabilitation of an existing trail is also proposed from the entrance to the Monterey County East Laurel Facility (facility yards), along East Laurel Drive, to the northern trail at the Natividad Creek Detention Basin. Lighting improvements would be provided on two existing trails, one trail near the parking lot of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park extending approximately 800 feet north and another trail around the inland side Natividad Creek Detention Basin to approximately 95 feet west of Garner Avenue at Gee Street.

In this light, have we have following comments:

- The IS/MND indicates that segments of the proposed project fronts with County property. The County would like to confirm that once the path(s) are constructed the City will maintain facilities such as a drainage, sidewalk, curb, gutter, lighting, etc.
- It appears most the work will be on City Right-of-Way (R.O.W). However, if there is work in County R.O.W.; then a County encroachment permit will be required or agreement.

- Veteran Way is the only access to the County's fleet/maintenance vehicles and fueling station. We would like to reiterate the importance of having it open at all times.

If you have any question please contact me via e-mail: martinezrr@co.monterey.ca.us or call (831) 905-4229.

Sincerely,


Raul Martinez, Assistant Engineer
Traffic Section

Letter 3: Response 1

The City would be responsible for the maintenance of pedestrian sidewalks, curb and gutters, and other public facilities within the City's right-of-way both during construction and operation. Trail construction activities are proposed within the County's rights-of-way. The City recognizes that an encroachment permit from the County will be required.

During construction, a minimum of one travel lane in each direction on East Laurel Drive and Constitution Boulevard would be operational. No roadways would be completely closed during construction and access for vehicles and pedestrians would be maintained including the entrance road to the Monterey County East Laurel Facility (Ranch View Lane). Therefore, access for the County's fleet/maintenance vehicles would be available.

It is also noted that the City and Monterey County are currently commenting of the Co-op Agreement for the financial assistance of this project.