

ATTACHMENT 3

Staff Report to County Planning Commission

October 25, 2016



Department of Conservation and Development

County Planning Commission

Tuesday, October 25, 2016 – 7:00 .P.M.

STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item: 3a

Project Title:	General Plan Amendments Regarding Camino Tassajara and the TriLink and Vasco Road-Byron Highway Connector Projects
County File Number:	GP16-0006
Applicant/Owner:	Contra Costa County
Project Location:	Camino Tassajara in the vicinity of the Contra Costa/Alameda County line and the Southeast County Area
California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Status:	Exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3)
Project Planner:	Will Nelson, Principal Planner, (925) 674-7791
Staff Recommendation:	Adopt a resolution recommending the Board of Supervisors adopt the proposed CEQA finding and General Plan Amendment. See full recommendation in Section II.

I. PROJECT SUMMARY

The proposed project consists of a County-initiated General Plan Amendment (GPA) to update the Transportation and Circulation Element, Roadway Network Plan, regarding Camino Tassajara and the area of the proposed TriLink (aka State Route 239) and Vasco Road – Byron Highway Connector, and add a policy to the Land Use Element related to the TriLink and Connector.

II. RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the County Planning Commission (CPC) adopt a resolution (Attachment A, County Planning Commission Draft Resolution #15-2016) recommending the Board of Supervisors:

1. FIND, on the basis of the whole record before the County, for purposes of compliance with CEQA, that there is no possibility the proposed project will have a significant effect on the environment, and the project is therefore exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15061(b)(3); and
2. ADOPT the GPA, County File #GP16-0006, amending the Transportation and Circulation and Land Use Elements of the 2005-2020 Contra Costa County General Plan, as the second consolidated GPA for calendar year 2016.

III. BACKGROUND & STAFF ANALYSIS

Camino Tassajara

Camino Tassajara is a principal arterial in Contra Costa County running from the Town of Danville to the Contra Costa/Alameda County line, where the roadway name changes to Tassajara Road in the City of Dublin. Both the Contra Costa County and City of Dublin General Plans identify an ultimate six-lane road configuration in the vicinity of the County line. Since 2010, the County Public Works Department has been coordinating with the City of Dublin to realign the roadway between Windemere Parkway and Fallon Road as part of the Camino Tassajara/Tassajara Road Realignment Project.

In 2014 the County was approached by the City of Dublin regarding policies for Camino Tassajara in the vicinity of the County line. Specifically, Dublin asked if the County would participate in a study to determine if future traffic volumes warranted a six-lane Camino Tassajara/Tassajara Road. The County and Dublin then initiated the Tassajara Road/Camino Tassajara Capacity Analysis ("Analysis"). Roadway improvements in this area are subject to certain requirements in the Dougherty Valley Settlement Agreement (DVSA), one of which is consultation with the Town of Danville and City of San Ramon. Both jurisdictions were consulted on the Analysis and engaged in the process. The Analysis determined that widening Camino Tassajara/Tassajara Road to four lanes (two in each direction) would result in minimal traffic diversion to other roads, similar levels-of-service at area intersections, and minimal increase in travel times compared to a six-lane configuration.

Because of the DVSA requirements, on December 7, 2015, staff reported the above findings to the Dougherty Valley Oversight Committee, which adopted a motion to approve reconfiguration of Camino Tassajara/Tassajara Road to four lanes instead of six.

Staff proposes amending the Roadway Network Plan to indicate a future four-lane roadway where a six-lane roadway is currently indicated (see Attachment A to the attached Draft CPC Resolution). Such amendment is a policy change that will result in the Public Works Department developing a Precise Alignment for a narrower right-of-way for the effected portion of Camino Tassajara (approximately 3,400 linear feet). There are several anticipated benefits:

- a. The costs to acquire land and construct the project will be lower.
- b. Construction of a narrower roadway presumably will result in fewer impacts to the natural environment.
- c. As building setbacks are typically measured from property lines, a narrower right-of-way will allow the seven private properties adjacent to the subject stretch of Camino Tassajara to retain and utilize more land.

TriLink and Vasco Road-Byron Highway Connector

The proposed Vasco Road-Byron Highway Connector would provide an east-west vehicular connection between Vasco Road and Byron Highway, thereby improving regional traffic flow in the southeastern portion of the County and access to Byron Airport. The Connector was considered part of the larger TriLink (aka State Route 239) project, but is now identified as a stand-alone project in the Contra Costa Transportation Authority's (CCTA) new 30-year Transportation Expenditure Plan, which will appear as Measure X on the November 2016 ballot. The CCTA has suggested that the County's General Plan make reference to the TriLink and Connector projects.

While the County's Roadway Network Plan already indicates a proposed expressway in the area envisioned for TriLink and the Connector, final alignments have not been identified for these projects. These alignments will be determined based on several factors including physical constraints, cost, impacts to existing residents and land uses, and impacts to biological and cultural resources. Given the uncertainty regarding the alignments, staff proposes amending the Roadway Network Plan to delete the existing reference to a proposed expressway and indicate a "Special Planning Area" where potential conflicts with the alignments should be considered in land use decisions (see Attachment A to the attached Draft CPC Resolution).

Staff also proposes adding the following policy to the Land Use Element as Policy 3-77 under the *Policies for the Southeast County Area* subheading:

- 3-77. The TriLink (State Route 239) and Vasco Road-Byron Highway Connector (Airport Connector) projects are proposed in the Southeast Area of the County. The "Special Planning Area" indicated on the Roadway Network Plan encompasses the area of potential right-of-way alignments for these projects. Because the final alignments have not been determined, potential alignment conflicts within the Special Planning Area shall be considered in land use decisions.

The proposed policy requires consideration of potential conflicts, but does not prohibit development within the potential alignments. The intent is to provide awareness to the public and decision makers, not to restrict use of private property.

If the proposed policy is adopted, then existing Policy 3-77 will become Policy 3-78 and all subsequent policies will be renumbered to conclude at Policy 3-217.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed project consists of amendments to the General Plan. Such amendments qualify as projects under CEQA and are therefore subject to environmental review. Staff has determined that the proposed project would not have a significant impact on the environment for the following reasons:

1. None of the proposed revisions to the General Plan confer a right or entitlement for development.
2. The specific projects discussed in the proposed revisions to the General Plan, namely the Camino Tassajara/Tassajara Road widening and the TriLink and Vasco Road-Byron Highway Connector, would be subject to their own CEQA reviews, allowing any project-specific environmental impacts to be studied at the time each project was undertaken.
3. The Tassajara Road/Camino Tassajara Capacity Analysis conducted by the County and City of Dublin, in consultation with the Town of Danville and City of San Ramon, determined that widening Camino Tassajara/Tassajara Road to four lanes (two in each direction) would result in minimal traffic diversion to other roads, similar levels-of-service at area intersections, and minimal increase in travel times compared to the previously-planned six-lane configuration.
4. Constructing a narrower Camino Tassajara/Tassajara Road would presumably result in fewer impacts to the natural environment, especially given the biological sensitivity of the project area.
5. The revisions regarding the TriLink and Vasco Road-Byron Highway Connector projects are informational and provide guidance on application processing; they do not impact the environment in any way.

Based on the foregoing, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15061(b)(3), the proposed project is exempt from CEQA because it can be seen with certainty that the project would not have a significant effect on the environment.

V. CONCLUSION

The proposed General Plan Amendment would update and clarify the Transportation and Circulation and Land Use Elements based on recently completed studies and would not result in significant environmental impacts. Therefore, staff recommends that the County Planning Commission adopt Resolution #15-2016, recommending that the Board of Supervisors 1) find the project to be exempt from CEQA, and 2) adopt the proposed General Plan Amendment.

VI. ATTACHMENT

- A. Draft County Planning Commission Resolution #15-2016