



CITY OF PINOLE

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December 18, 2009

Contra Costa County
Department of Conservation and Development
615 Pine Street, 4th Floor North Wing
Martinez, CA 94553
Attn: Patrick Roche, Project Planner
Via Email: Patrick.Roche@dcd.cccounty.us

RE: Draft EIR for Proposed Downtown El Sobrante General Plan Amendment

Dear Mr. Roche:

The City of Pinole appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft EIR for the proposed Downtown El Sobrante General Plan Amendment (File: GP#03-0003). The City also welcomes ongoing focused County planning efforts to transform downtown El Sobrante over time into a pedestrian-friendly, appealing business district that benefits residents and visitors to the El Sobrante Area.

The current County General Plan includes widening of Appian Way to two lanes in each direction. The proposed project includes amending the Transportation-Circulation Element to maintain one travel lane in each direction on this Route of Regional Significance. The proposed project also does not include any land use changes for the portion of Appian Way between the Pinole City limits and Appian Village Drive. The City is concerned about the impact of this change as it relates to the portion of Appian Way from Michael Drive in Pinole to Valley View Road in unincorporated Contra Costa County.

The City has several comments below related to the circulation impacts of the proposed project.

1. The City requests further analysis in Chapter 3.3 about how the proposed project will impact roadway performance within Pinole. Specifically, we request that the signalized intersection of Appian Way and Fitzgerald Drive/Sarah Drive be analyzed in the EIR to provide existing as well as future LOS levels for the AM and PM peak hours. This analysis will help assess how retaining the current Appian Way roadway capacity outside Pinole will affect LOS levels.

The decreased future capacity of Appian Way in unincorporated Contra Costa County was not anticipated in the current WCCTAC Action Plan and by Pinole during

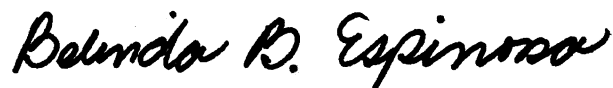
review of projects developed within the City limits. The 2009 West County Action Plan contemplated widening of Appian Way to four lanes from Valley View Road to Michael Drive in Pinole. Given that this is a route of regional significance and the Action Plan calls for maintenance of LOS D or better at all signalized intersections on Appian Way, the analysis of the nearest signalized intersection in Pinole is warranted to assess proposed project circulation impacts and consistency with the 2009 West County Action Plan.

2. The Draft EIR includes a brief discussion on pages 3-28 and 3-29 about side street delay. Please include information about which side streets were observed along Appian Way and the dates that these side streets were observed. We are interested in learning the specific observation information for all unsignalized intersections on Appian Way both within our city limits (e.g. Rancho Road) and within our Sphere of Influence (e.g. Manor Road) in order to better understand the long-term project impacts on performance at unsignalized intersections along Appian Way.
3. The City appreciated the inclusion of alternative modes impacts and mitigations discussion within the Draft EIR. Mitigation Measure 3.3.-5 is commendable but appears inadequate. Consulting with transit providers does not ensure that increases in transit demand can be accommodated. Further, the Draft EIR and this mitigation measure does not include a threshold or a criteria of any kind about when, where, and what types of mitigation would be required from individual projects. This issue is of particular concern since the County has recently failed to send project plans for a proposed 17-unit residential project at 970 Appian Way to AC Transit for review and comment. Furthermore, there appears to have been little effort to require transit stop amenities for existing Route 70 riders along the Appian Way in the unincorporated portion of Contra Costa County. We encourage the County to add additional mitigation specifying transit stop amenity upgrades, improvements for mobility impaired riders and bus turnouts as appropriate to assure transit demand is accommodated.

AC Transit Route 70 along Appian Way is an important transit corridor that links Pinole to BART Service. Further specificity in the Draft EIR needs to be included to ensure impacts to transit are adequately mitigated and future transit service improvements actually occur given that the project proposes less through lanes to accommodate busses than is currently planned.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Draft EIR. If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Planning Manager Winston Rhodes by phone at (510) 724-9832 or via email at wrhodes@ci.pinole.ca.us.

Sincerely,



Belinda B. Espinosa, City Manager

CC: City Council