



Transportation Agency for Monterey County

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NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND SCOPING MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) will serve as the Lead Agency, consistent with Section 15020 and 15021 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), in preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed **Fort Ord Regional Trail & Greenway (FORTAG)** project (proposed project or FORTAG trail). TAMC is requesting your input on the scope and content of the environmental issues and alternatives to be evaluated in the EIR. Responsible agencies may need to use the EIR to be prepared by TAMC when considering permits or other approvals for the project, and trustee agencies should plan to review and comment on the EIR with respect to trust resources within their jurisdiction.

PROJECT LOCATION: The proposed project consists primarily of an approximately 27-mile-long trail in northwestern Monterey County, including the preferred alignment and spur trails shown in Figure 1. Several optional alignments are also being considered, which total approximately 11.6 miles. The FORTAG trail would traverse the cities of Monterey, Del Rey Oaks, Seaside, and Marina, as well as unincorporated Monterey County and areas under the jurisdiction of California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB), the Fort Ord Reuse Authority, the Army, Caltrans, and the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District. The FORTAG trail would connect to the existing Monterey Bay Scenic Coastal Trail under the jurisdiction of State Parks.

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD: This NOP is available for public review and comment pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15082(b). The 32-day public comment period, during which time TAMC will receive comments on the NOP for the FORTAG EIR, begins June 13, 2019 and ends on July 15, 2019. Comments should be sent to the address provided at the end of this notice.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The intended purposes of the FORTAG trail are to: connect people to open space from their homes, workplaces, and hospitality bases; connect core habitat areas; facilitate social interaction between the former Fort Ord, Monterey Peninsula, and the Salinas Valley communities; and function as an artery for non-vehicular travel for commuting and from which to launch numerous other recreational activities. The trail is intended to be a pleasant and visually obvious route that invites safe and accessible use by families, pedestrians, commuter cyclists, and recreational cyclists of all physical abilities.

The proposed FORTAG trail alignment includes approximately 27 miles of new paved trail, primarily on the inland side of State Route 1 (SR 1) (Figure 1). The FORTAG trail would connect with the existing Monterey Bay Coastal Recreation Trail at several locations on the coastal side of SR 1, but there would be no improvements to the coastal trail as part of the proposed project. The FORTAG trail would primarily consist of three loops – a northern, central, and southern loop – that roughly encircle the City of Marina, the CSUMB campus, and the City of Seaside, respectively. On the north side of South Boundary Road, the trail would extend east to Rancho Saucito in Monterey and link to bike facilities in the Ryan Ranch Business Park. The proposed trail alignment also includes several spurs (included in the 27-mile length) that extend from the three loops to connect with existing bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure. Prominent spurs are intended to connect neighborhoods to the trail at Broadway Avenue/General Jim Moore Boulevard and Kimball Avenue/General Jim Moore Boulevard in Seaside; Plumas Avenue and Carlton Drive in Seaside and Del Rey Oaks. The preferred alignment would also connect to the planned North Fremont Street bicycle and pedestrian improvements in Monterey. Optional alignments are

also shown in certain areas, which may be pursued as a substitute for the preferred alignment in those locations.

The proposed trail alignment would cross public roadways in several locations. Most of these crossings would consist of at-grade crossings. In some areas, several design options are being considered for each crossing, including: an undercrossing or roundabout at the intersection of 2nd Avenue and 8th Street along the northern end of the central loop; either an at-grade crossing or roundabout at 2nd Avenue and Divarty Street, at the southern end of the central loop; and an undercrossing, roundabout, or at-grade crossing at SR 218 near Frog Pond, along the southern end of the southern loop. The alignment would cross SR 1 in two locations: at 9th Street and at 1st Street/Divarty Street, both generally west of the CSUMB campus. At 9th Street the trail would utilize an existing SR 1 freeway overcrossing; at 1st Street/Divarty Street the trail would utilize an existing SR 1 undercrossing. An undercrossing is also proposed beneath General Jim Moore Boulevard north of SR 218/Canyon Del Rey Boulevard. An undercrossing is proposed to cross Reservation Road at Inter Garrison Road. A new traffic signal is proposed on Del Monte Avenue between English Avenue and SR 218 to connect the FORTAG trail to the Monterey Bay Scenic Coastal Trail. The proposed project includes two new bicycle/pedestrian bridges: one over Blanco Road, between the Marina Airport and Salinas River; and one over Imjin Road between Imjin Parkway and 8th Street. At-grade street crossings may modify roadway and lane alignments and construct medians, curb extensions, warning devices, traffic control devices, and changes to signing and striping that enhance bike and pedestrian crossing safety.

The FORTAG trail would accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists of all abilities, and equestrians in some segments. The majority of the trail would be 12-foot wide paved path with an unpaved two-foot-wide shoulder on both sides. Approximately 2,000 feet of the trail would be on existing paved roadways in two locations: in Del Rey Oaks on Angelus Way between Rosita Road and Del Rey Gardens; and on Beach Road between Del Monte Boulevard and De Forest Road in Marina. In the Frog Pond area of Del Rey Oaks, the proposed trail width would be reduced to eight feet, and decomposed granite would be used in lieu of pavement. Where space allows, the trail would be surrounded by an open space buffer (greenway) on both sides. Portions of the greenway would support unpaved paths for use by hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians, and naturalists. Fencing would be added only where necessary to separate trail users from conflicting vehicle traffic or from equestrian use on the greenway. Fencing may also be used to protect habitats with sensitive species or to channelize bike riders and pedestrians in locations where the trail is adjacent to private property and access control is required. Retaining walls may be needed to retain slopes at certain locations. Trail lighting is anticipated to be used at conflict points with vehicular travel, such as street crossings, and at locations where lighting would aid crime prevention. In open space areas, trail lighting is intended to be at levels that respect wildlife and the natural setting.

PROJECT ALTERNATIVES: As required by CEQA, TAMC will consider project alternatives, which must meet most of the project objectives while avoiding or substantially lessening significant environmental impacts of the proposed project. As part of this scoping process, TAMC is soliciting input from agencies and the public on alternatives that should be considered for evaluation within the alternatives section of the EIR. Comments regarding alternatives should include a clear narrative and graphic description to the extent possible. Comments on this subject will be most helpful if they include the author's thoughts regarding how well they might meet the project purpose (described above) and reduce environmental impacts.

PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS: The EIR will address the potential physical environmental effects of the proposed project for each of the environmental topics outlined in the CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G. The EIR will also address the cumulative impacts resulting from other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future projects. As of the date of this NOP and based on currently available information, it is anticipated that the proposed project may have potentially significant impacts in connection with Aesthetics, Biological Resources,

Cultural Resources, Hydrology and Water Quality, Hazardous Materials, Geology and Soils, Land Use, Public Services, and Traffic.

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING: Pursuant to the public participation goals of CEQA, as set forth in particular in Public Resources Code Section 21083.9, subdivision (a), TAMC, in its role as Lead Agency, will hold two public scoping meetings to provide an opportunity for the public and representatives of public agencies to address the scope of the Environmental Impact Report. Both Scoping Meetings are scheduled for Thursday, June 27, at the following times and locations:

Thursday, June 27, 2:00-4:00 p.m.
Oldemeyer Center, Blackhorse Meeting Room
986 Hilby Avenue
Seaside, California 93955

Thursday, June 27, 6:00-8:00 p.m.
Marina Library Meeting Room
188 Seaside Circle
Marina, California 93933

COMMENTING ON THE SCOPE OF THE EIR. TAMC welcomes agency and public input regarding environmental factors potentially affected (listed above) and project alternatives to be considered for evaluation. All written comments will be considered and must be submitted by 5:00 PM on Monday, July 15, 2019, to TAMC at:

Transportation Agency for Monterey County
Attn: Rich Deal, Principal Engineer
Transportation Agency for Monterey County
55-B Plaza Circle
Salinas, California 93901
rich@tamcmonterey.org

Figure 1 FORTAG Alignment



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