

Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

for the

PFEIFFER BIG SUR STATE PARK CAMPGROUND CABIN PROJECT

State Clearinghouse # 2021050593

Lead Agency:



State of California
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
Monterey District
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This document, together with the Draft IS/MND, constitutes the Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (“Final IS/MND”) for the Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park Campground Cabin Project (“Proposed Project”). The Final IS/MND consists of an introduction, comment letters received during the 30-day public review period, responses to comments, and revisions to the Draft IS/MND if deemed applicable.

The California Department of Parks and Recreation (“State Parks” or “Parks”) is acting as the Lead Agency pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15050(a). As the Lead Agency, State Parks prepared an Initial Study pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15063, §15070 and §15152. State Parks circulated the Draft IS/MND for agency and public review during a 30-day public review period pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15073. State Parks prepared the Draft IS/MND to inform the public of the potential environmental effects associated with the Proposed Project and identify possible ways to minimize potential adverse environmental effects. This Final IS/MND evaluates and responds to comments received on the Draft IS/MND in accordance with CEQA Guidelines §15074.

This IS/MND is a “tiered” Mitigated Negative Declaration pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15152(a).¹ This IS/MND tiered off previous environmental analysis conducted by State Parks in connection with the Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park General Plan (“PBSSP General Plan” or “General Plan”). State Parks adopted the General Plan and certified a programmatic Environmental Impact Report (“EIR”) in 1999. The General Plan contained an evaluation of potential environmental effects associated with future use of PBSSP, including the development of recreational amenities (e.g., cabins) and other park features. The General Plan contained a generalized analysis of potential environmental effects and identified that State Parks would conduct future site-specific environmental review for future projects. This IS/MND incorporates, by reference, the previous environmental analysis conducted in support of the PBSSP General Plan pursuant to the requirements of CEQA Guidelines §15152(a) and §15150.

¹ Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15152 the analysis of general matters contained in a broader EIR may be incorporated into a later EIR or Negative Declaration on a narrower project wherein the previous analysis is incorporated by reference. This process allows future environmental analysis on narrower projects to focus on those issues that are specific to a later project. Tiering is appropriate when the sequence of analysis is from an EIR prepared for a general plan, policy, or program to an EIR or negative declaration for another plan, policy, or program of lesser scope, or to a site-specific EIR or negative declaration (CEQA Guidelines §15152(b)).

The Proposed Project consists of the construction and operation of a new camping facilities (i.e., low-cost visitor-serving accommodations) and associated infrastructure within Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park (“PBSSP” or “Park”). Specifically, the Proposed Project consists of the following:

- Nine (9) prefabricated hard wall camping cabins with accessible ramps and exterior amenities (e.g., picnic table, fire pit, etc.),
- A comfort station (combination restroom and shower building) consisting of three (3) lavatories and three (3) showers,
- Renovation of the existing parking lot,
- Internal campground paths,
- Split-rail cedar fencing around the outer perimeter of the site to preclude access and associated direct and indirect effects to adjacent sensitive habitats (i.e., riparian),
- Infrastructure improvements, including extending existing utilities to the site and upgrading existing water distribution lines and sanitary sewer facilities,
- Restoration and landscaping in temporarily disturbed areas, as well as other associated environmental enhancements to create, restore, and enhance existing habitat values, and
- Other miscellaneous site improvements (e.g., signage, interpretive elements, maintenance, lighting, fire hydrants, etc.).

The Proposed Project site (“project site” or “site”) lies in the middle of PBSSP and comprises approximately three (3) acres of the approximately 1,000-acre Park. PBSSP is located in the unincorporated area of Big Sur in Monterey County, California.

1.2 Public Participation

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15073(a), State Parks circulated the Draft IS/MND for a 30-day review period during which State Parks received two (2) comments. On May 27, 2021, State Parks distributed the Draft IS/MND for public review to responsible and trustee agencies, interested groups, and individuals. The review period ended on June 25, 2021. State Parks received two (2) comment letters on the Draft IS/MND. This Final IS/MND includes all comment letters received by State Parks as of July 23, 2021.

2.0 RESPONSE TO COMMENT

2.1 Introduction

This section provides responses to comments on the Draft IS/MND. This section contains all information available in the public record related to the Draft IS/MND as of July 23, 2021 and responds to comments received during the review period.

2.2 List of Comment Letters

The following is a list of comment letters received on the Draft IS/MND:

State/Federal Agencies	Date
A. State of California Department of Transportation.....	June 25, 2021

Local Agencies/Organizations

B. Transportation Agency for Monterey County.....	June 21, 2021
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2.3 Response to Comments

Each of the comment letters received on the Draft IS/MND is presented in this chapter, as described above. Individual comments in each letter are numbered. Correspondingly numbered responses to each comment are provided in the discussion following the comment letter. Some comments do not raise environmental issues, or do not require additional information. CEQA does not require a substantive response to such comments.

If comments raised environmental issues that required additions or deletions to the text, tables, or figures in the Draft IS/MND, a brief description of the change is provided and the reader is referred to **Section 3.0, Revisions to the Draft IS/MND**. The comments received on the Draft IS/MND did not result in a "substantial revision" of the negative declaration, as defined by CEQA Guidelines §15073.5, and the new information added to the negative declaration merely clarifies, amplifies, or makes insignificant modifications to the IS/MND. No new, avoidable significant effects were identified since the commencement of the public review period that would require mitigation measures or project revisions to be added to reduce the effects to insignificant.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Making Conservation
 a California Way of Life.

June 25, 2021

MON-1-46.195
 SCH#2021050593

Matthew Allen
 Senior Environmental Scientist Supervisor
 California Department of Parks and Recreation
 2211 Garden Road
 Monterey, CA 93940

Dear Mr. Allen:

COMMENTS FOR THE MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION (MND) – PFEIFFER BIG SUR
 STATE PARK CAMPGROUND CABIN PROJECT, MONTEREY COUNTY, CA

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), District 5, Development Review, has reviewed the Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park Campground Cabin Project which proposes to build nine rustic cabins and related infrastructure. Caltrans offers the following comments in response to the MND:

1. Caltrans supports local development that is consistent with State planning priorities intended to promote equity, strengthen the economy, protect the environment, and promote public health and safety. We accomplish this by working with local jurisdictions to achieve a shared vision of how the transportation system should and can accommodate interregional and local travel and development. Projects that support smart growth principles which include improvements to pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure (or other key Transportation Demand Strategies) are supported by Caltrans and are consistent with our mission, vision, and goals. Comment
A-1
2. Please be aware that if any future work is completed in the State's right-of-way it will require an encroachment permit from Caltrans and must be done to our engineering and environmental standards. The conditions of approval and the requirements for the encroachment permit are issued at the sole discretion of the Permits Office, and nothing in this letter shall be implied as limiting those future conditions and requirements. For more information regarding the encroachment permit process, please visit our Comment
A-2

Matthew Allen
June 25, 2021
Page 2

Encroachment Permit website at: <https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-5/district-5-programs/d5-encroachment-permits>.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed project. If you have any questions, or need further clarification on items discussed above, please contact me at (805) 835-6543 or at Christopher.Bjornstad@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Christopher Bjornstad

Chris Bjornstad
Associate Transportation Planner
District 5 Development Review

LETTER A: State of California Department of Transportation

- A-1:** This comment identifies that the State of California Department of Transportation (“Caltrans”) supports local development that is consistent with State planning priorities intended to promote equity, strengthen the economy, protect the environment, and promote public health and safety. Projects that support smart growth principles which include improvements to pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure are supported by Caltrans and are consistent with their mission, vision, and goals. This comment does not raise an environmental issue warranting a response under CEQA. Comment acknowledged; no further response is necessary.
- A-2:** This comment advises of the requirement to obtain a Caltrans encroachment permit for any work in the State’s right-of-way and that any such work be completed to Caltrans engineering and environmental standards. This comment does not raise an environmental issue warranting a response under CEQA. As the Project does not contemplate any work within State right-of-way, an encroachment permit is not required. No further response is necessary.

June 21, 2021

Matthew Allen, Senior Environmental Scientist Supervisor
California Department of Parks and Recreation
2211 Garden Road
Monterey, CA 93940

via email: matthew.allen@parks.ca.gov

**RE: Comments on Mitigated Negative Declaration for
Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park Campground Cabin Project**

Dear Mr. Allen:

The Transportation Agency for Monterey County is the Regional Transportation Planning and Congestion Management Agency for Monterey County. Agency staff have reviewed the Notice of Availability of a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park Campground Cabin Project.

The proposed project consists of construction and operation of new overnight accommodations including nine rustic cabins, a comfort station (restroom and shower building), renovation of an existing parking lot, internal campground paths and other landscaping and utility upgrades. The proposed project is identified to be visitor-serving and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the State Parks 2015 Accessibility Guidelines.

Agency staff offer the following comments for your consideration:

1. The Agency appreciates acknowledgement of the recently completed Big Sur Sustainable Transportation Demand Management Plan. Staff strongly encourages coordination with Caltrans District 5 and TAMC's Travel Demand Management Program (Go831) to employ travel-demand management solutions for visitors to the campground. As the Big Sur Sustainable Travel Demand Management Plan solutions are employed, it will be critical that the visiting public provided information about the alternative commute options along the scenic Highway 1 corridor. Tracy Burke Vasquez, TAMC's Go831 Smart Commute Program Coordinator, can be reached at tracy@tamcmonterey.org.
2. The Agency encourages coordination with Monterey-Salinas Transit to accommodate existing and planned transit connections to the project site. Monterey-Salinas Transit's existing Line 22 provides service from Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park to the City of Monterey. Information about this existing route and future transit connections should be provided to the visiting public to encourage the use of alternative commute options.

Comment
B-1

Comment
B-2

3. Consideration should be given to the installation of electric vehicle charging stations, as new construction provides an opportunity to install this needed infrastructure at a much lower cost.

Comment
B-3

4. The Agency encourages integration of secure bicycle parking on the project site. While this destination is relatively rural, the Pacific Coast Bike Route traverses along Highway 1 through Big Sur and is used by many long-distance cyclists who may access the project site and surrounding bicycle and pedestrian trails. Bicycle racks should be placed near building entrances, and the development should ensure bike lockers and bike racks have adequate lighting to improve safety and visibility.

Comment
B-4

5. The Agency appreciates acknowledgement of the regional development impact fee (“TAMC Fee”). While the TAMC Fee is not applicable to the proposed project, Agency staff would like to offer a correction on the description of the fee program. Since the passage of Senate Bill 743, the TAMC Fee can no longer be used to satisfy CEQA mitigation requirements because it relies on Level of Service, not Vehicle Miles Traveled. Below is a revised description of the program:

Comment
B-5

“The TAMC Regional Development Impact Fee program is designed with regional transportation improvements that provide congestion relief from the effects of new development throughout Monterey County.”

6. The Agency requests that clarification is added to the discussion about Measure X funding and the TAMC Fee: “Additional funding ~~will be~~ **for these regional transportation improvement projects may be** provided by Measure X, the Transportation Sales Tax measure” (pg. 115).

Comment
B-6

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,

Debra L. Hale
Executive Director

LETTER B: Transportation Agency for Monterey County

- B-1:** This comment acknowledges the recently completed Big Sur Sustainable Transportation Demand Management Plan and encourages future and continued coordination with Caltrans and TAMC's Travel Demand Management Program. This comment does not raise an environmental issue warranting a response under CEQA. Comment acknowledged; no further response is necessary.
- B-2:** This comment encourages coordination with Monterey-Salinas Transit to accommodate existing and planned transit connections to the project site. This comment does not raise an environmental issue warranting a response under CEQA. Comment acknowledged; no further response is necessary.
- B-3:** This comment requests consideration be given to the installation of electric vehicle charging stations, as new construction provides an opportunity to install this needed infrastructure at a much lower cost. This comment does not raise an environmental issue warranting a response under CEQA. Substantial electric infrastructure upgrades would be needed to accommodate this request and the related costs are anticipated to be cost prohibitive to the project. No further response is necessary.
- B-4:** This comment requests consideration be given to the installation of secure bicycle parking on the project site. Although this comment does not raise an environmental issue warranting a response under CEQA, it should be mentioned that bicycles can be safely stored overnight within the cabins depending on the number of guests utilizing each unit. Nevertheless, State Parks will evaluate the potential of adding bike racks within the Project area during the final design phase. No further response is necessary.
- B-5:** This comment confirms that the TAMC Fee is not applicable to the Proposed Project. The comment also identifies a minor clarification regarding the TAMC Fee since the passage of Senate Bill 743. Specifically, the comment notes that since the passing of Senate Bill 743, the TAMC Fee can no longer be used to satisfy CEQA mitigation requirements because it relies on Level of Significance ("LOS"), not Vehicle Miles Traveled ("VMT"). Comment acknowledged. The text of the IS/MND has been revised to clarify the nature of the TAMC fee. Please refer to **Section 3.0, Revisions to the Draft IS/MND**, for more information.
- B-6:** This comment identifies a minor clarification to the discussion regarding Measure X funding and the TAMC Fee. The text of the IS/MND has been revised to clarify the nature of the TAMC fee. Please refer to **Section 3.0, Revisions to the Draft IS/MND**, for more information.

3.0 REVISIONS TO THE DRAFT IS/MND

This following section includes revisions to the text of the Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, in amendment form. The revisions are listed numerically by page number. All additions to the text are shown underlined and all deletions from the text are shown ~~stricken~~. In addition, an explanation of the reason for the text revision is provided.

Section 4.14 Transportation, Page 115, second and third paragraphs, are amended as follows:

The Transportation Agency for Monterey County (“TAMC”) and its member jurisdictions have adopted a county-wide, regional development impact fee (“TAMC Fee”) to cover the costs for studies and construction of many roadway improvements throughout Monterey County. The TAMC Fee program is designed with regional transportation improvements that provide congestion relief from the effects of new development throughout Monterey County. This impact fee, which went into effect on August 27, 2008, is applied to new development within Monterey County. The governing document for the fee is the Regional Impact Fee Nexus Study Update (March 26, 2008) prepared by Kimley-Horn Associates, Inc. The Regional Impact Fee Nexus Study Update was updated in October 2018 by Wood Rodgers.

~~TAMC, Monterey County, and Caltrans have agreed that the payment of the TAMC Fee satisfies the Project’s fair share contribution to cumulative impact mitigation throughout the regional highway system. This includes highways that will operate deficiently, but no capital improvement project is programmed to correct the deficiency. Additional funding will may be provided by Measure X, the Transportation Sales Tax measure. These local funding sources are anticipated to leverage State and federal funding sources to fully fund the improvements. The TAMC Fee would not be applicable to the Proposed Project (Zeller, 2021).~~