

ATTACHMENT 1: FINDINGS

1.0 CEQA FINDINGS

The proposed denial is exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15270 (Projects Which are Disapproved) of the Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act. Attachment 2, incorporated herein by reference, contains a more detailed discussion.

2.0 DESIGN REVIEW FINDINGS

Findings required for all Design Review applications for sites outside of the Montecito Community Plan area. In compliance with Section 35-184.6 of the Article II Zoning Ordinance, prior to the approval or conditional approval of an application for Design Review for sites outside of the Montecito Community Plan area, the review authority shall first make all of the following findings. However, as a result of the recommendation for project denial, only those findings which cannot be made are discussed below.

- 1. In areas designated as rural on the land use plan maps, the design, height, and scale of structures shall be compatible with the character of the surrounding natural environment, except where technical requirements dictate otherwise. Structures shall be subordinate in appearance to natural landforms; shall be designed to follow the natural contours of the landscape; and shall be sited so as not to intrude into the skyline as seen from public viewing places.*

The roadway leading to the bridge has a posted speed limit of 40 miles per hour. According to Ms. Donatello, the bridge and its approach have been specifically designed for higher speeds, which is an inappropriate technical standard for the narrow rural County highway bordered by residential development. Therefore, the Board of Supervisors finds that this is a case where the safety standards should be modified to consider the specific environment of the project site, including the rural character of the roadway and the environmentally sensitive habitat of the creek.

The proposed project would replace an existing, narrow stone bridge and would level and widen Highway 192 for a total of approximately 690 feet on the western approach and 290 feet on the eastern approach. The engineered bridge and roadway design would be incompatible with the existing character of the roadway which is narrow, scenic, and rural. The removal of the vertical curve is not compatible with the contours of the existing area. Vegetation removal necessary to build the project would denude what is now mature landscaping including specimen, +/- 80 foot tall clustered sycamore trees. The project includes removal of up to 64 mature, specimen trees including 12 sycamores and 21 oaks, many located within a riparian corridor. Removal of these trees within the riparian corridor is significant since the riparian corridor is an environmentally sensitive area that is protected by Coastal Plan policies. The engineered bridge and roadway design would be incompatible with the existing character of the surrounding natural environment

which is narrow, scenic, wooded, and rural. The new bridge and roadway would appear more like a freeway insofar as the bridge and roadway will be flattened and widened. Therefore, the scale and design of the project is not subordinate to the surrounding natural environment and is incompatible with the character of the surrounding natural environment, nor is it consistent with the applicable policies of the Coastal Land Use Plan.

7. *There will be a harmonious relationship with existing and proposed adjoining developments, avoiding excessive variety and monotonous repetition, but allowing similarity of style, if warranted.*

The proposed project would replace an existing, narrow stone bridge and would level and widen Highway 192 for a total of approximately 690 feet on the western approach and 290 feet on the eastern approach. The engineered bridge and roadway design would be incompatible with the existing character of the roadway which is narrow, scenic, and rural. Therefore, the proposed improvements are not in harmony with the current rural style of the area.

8. *Site layout, orientation, and location of structures, buildings, and signs are in an appropriate and well designed relationship to one another, and to the environmental qualities, open spaces, and topography of the property.*

All projects subject to SBAR approval are subject to the same findings of approval, whether the project consists of a new project or a redesign of an existing structure.

The proposed project would widen and level an existing stretch of narrow, scenic highway and would install a replacement bridge in the location of an existing narrow stone bridge. Construction of the project would necessarily flatten the existing topography. Additionally, the project would require the removal of all trees within 30 feet on either side of the roadway for the entire 980 foot length of the improvement thereby creating a sense of wide open highway where one does not currently exist. The project includes removal of up to 64 trees, many of which are mature, specimen trees including 12 sycamores and 21 oaks. Therefore, the project does not respect the environmental quality and topography of the area.

9. *Adequate landscaping is provided in proportion to the project and the site with due regard to preservation of specimen and landmark trees, existing vegetation, selection of planting which will be appropriate to the project, and adequate provisions for maintenance of all plantings.*

The proposed project does not have due regard to the preservation of specimen and landmark trees and existing vegetation. The project includes removal of numerous mature specimen trees including approximately 12 sycamores and 21 oaks, many located within a riparian corridor. Some of the trees proposed for removal reach up to 80 feet in height. Caltrans has stated that they will try to preserve the majority of a cluster of mature, riparian sycamores; however, it is highly unlikely that this will be feasible. Additionally, proposed new landscaping would maintain 30 feet clear on either side of the widened roadway for the entire length of the project

site. Therefore, regardless of the number of new plants proposed, landscaping will not will not be in proportion to the project, the site, or the area adjacent to Highway 192.