

# **ATTACHMENT B CEQA DETERMINATION**

**TO:** Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Jackie Campbell, Supervising Planner  
Development Review Division, Planning and Development

**DATE:** February 7, 2002

**RE:** Finding that CEQA Section 15164 (Addendum) applies to the removal of Santa Claus  
(01CDH-00000-00058)

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## **LOCATION**

The site is addressed as 3819 Santa Claus Lane in the First Supervisorial District (APN 005-450-009).

## **BACKGROUND**

CEQA section 15164 allows an addendum to be prepared when only minor technical changes or changes which do not create new significant impacts would result. The Toro Canyon Plan EIR, 2000-EIR-1, is hereby amended by this 15164 letter. The Toro Canyon Plan EIR evaluated impacts to historic and visual resources associated with the roadside vernacular theme of the Santa Claus Lane commercial district. The EIR identifies Santa as the last remaining example of roadside architecture in Santa Barbara County and concludes that the Santa Claus figure is clearly recognizable and retains its significance as an example of roadside programmatic signage.

## **Historic Resources**

The Toro Canyon EIR finds the Santa Claus buildings constructed between 1948 and 1961 are contributing elements to the historic significance of Santa Claus Lane. In particular, the Santa Claus figure retains some of its integrity of setting within the original Santa Claus Village location along a frontage road immediately adjacent to Highway 101. Although the Santa figure has been repainted and has lost some of its original elements, the figure retains sufficient integrity of design and is still clearly recognizable. The EIR finds that the removal of the Santa Claus would constitute a potentially significant impact because of its significance as programmatic roadside signage which rests in its relationship to the former Coastal Highway, its original historic location and setting, and now Highway 101. The EIR also finds that without the Santa, the remainder of the Santa Claus Village buildings lose their associative value and significance.

The following impact is identified in 2000-EIR-1:

**Impact CR-5:** *Demolition or alterations that would remove character-defining features on the historically significant buildings associated with the Santa Claus theme. The existing CH zoning along Santa Claus Lane allows only limited commercial use, restricted to roadside visitor-serving uses. The pressure to remodel to accommodate new permitted uses with a proposed seaside architectural theme would have a potentially significant impact on the Santa Claus resources.*

The following site-specific development standard was identified in the EIR as mitigation measure to address this impact:

**Mitigation CR-3:** *To preserve the significance of Santa Claus as the last remaining example of vernacular roadside architecture in Santa Barbara County, the Santa Claus figure and its underlying building shall be preserved in place and maintained in good condition. Implementation of this measure would allow for uses that highlight its uniqueness, such as a museum or roadside attraction, consolidating Santa Claus memorabilia in one building.*

In adopting the Toro Canyon Plan and its EIR, the Board of Supervisors found that the Santa figure is a structure of historic merit, but recognized that it was not given landmark status by the Historic Landmarks Advisory Committee. Santa has lost some of its historic integrity because of the removal of neighboring Christmas-themed figures and businesses and other changes to the village setting on Santa Claus Lane. Accordingly, under the County's Historic Landmarks Ordinance, the County has no legal authority to require preservation and maintenance of the Santa figure in place. Further, on November 1, 2001, the Building Official determined that the Santa is a dangerous structure and ordered its repair or removal by May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2002. Once Santa is removed, the existing buildings will lose their associative historic value. As such, photo-documentation of the buildings will be required as a condition of approval of the Coastal Development Permit to remove/demolish the Santa figure. Given these facts, the Board of Supervisors found that it was technically and legally infeasible to require the retention of the Santa figure on the roof of the building at 3819 Santa Claus Lane without the owner's desire to retain and repair it. In addition, no other landowner on Santa Claus Lane has consented to allow Santa to be located on his/her property. Therefore, the measures identified in the EIR are not required to be enforced and the substitute mitigation measures identified in the MOU and reiterated in the conditions of approval of the Coastal Development Permit for the removal/relocation and demolition of the Santa mitigate the impact to the maximum extent feasible. These measures include photo-documentation of the associated buildings and the Santa figure before it is removed from the rooftop, installation of a commemorative plaque before Santa is removed from the property, crating the Santa to protect it from damage during removal, retaining the figure on the property for up to one year, and offering the figure for relocation and preservation prior to allowing the Santa to be demolished.

## **Visual Resources**

U.S. Highway 101 is a major view corridor through the Carpinteria area. Both northbound and southbound Views of the Pacific Ocean are obstructed by the Santa Claus Lane commercial development. In this particular area, the Coastal Plan has designated a View Corridor Overlay. This is a special planning tool “intended to give additional protection to areas where there are views from a major coastal road to the ocean.” Removal of the Santa Claus from its rooftop location would actually remove one of the most prominent structures in this view corridor, thereby improving the potential for views to the ocean from Highway 101.

## **CHANGES IN PROJECT IMPACTS**

Based on the findings adopted by the Board of Supervisors in approving the Toro Canyon Plan, the proposed project would not result in any changes in impacts to historic resources and would actually result in a beneficial impact to visual resources as discussed above.

## **FINDINGS**

It is the finding of Planning and Development that the previous environmental document as herein amended may be used to fulfill the environmental review requirements of the current project. Because the current project meets the conditions for the application of State CEQA Guidelines Section 15164, preparation of a new EIR is not required.

Discretionary processing of the Santa Claus Removal (01CDH-00000-00058) may now proceed with the understanding that any substantial changes in the proposal may be subject to further environmental review.