



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: Planning & Development
Department No.: 053
For Agenda Of: October 4, 2016
Placement: Departmental
Estimated Time: 30 minutes on 10/4/16
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Glenn S. Russell, Ph.D., Director, Planning & Development
Director(s) (805) 568-2085
Contact Info: Daniel Klemann, Deputy Director, Long Range Planning
(805) 568-2072
SUBJECT: State Scenic Highway Designation for Highway 101 – Gaviota Coast

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Other Concurrence: N/A

Recommended Actions:

Consider a recommendation to submit the final application to Caltrans for State Scenic Highway Designation along the Highway 101 on the Gaviota coast, as follows:

- (a) Approve the letter of intent from the County of Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors to seek official scenic highway designation of Highway 101 from the City of Goleta boundary to Las Cruces (Attachment 1) and direct staff to submit the application packet; and
- (b) Determine that the proposed action is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act, pursuant to Guidelines Section 15308, Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment, and CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), Preliminary Review.

Summary Text:

California's Scenic Highway Program was created by the Legislature in 1963 to preserve and promote the natural beauty along state highways and adjacent corridors. Scenic highways are those that traverse an area of outstanding scenic quality and contain striking views and natural features. A highway may be designated as scenic depending upon how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes upon the traveler's enjoyment of the view.

The State Scenic Highway Program is coordinated by Caltrans, which has established guidelines for Scenic Highway applications and approves or denies applications based upon these guidelines. The

application to nominate eligible scenic highways for official designation requires the preparation of a visual assessment and corridor protection plan. The application must also include relevant maps and discussion of the scenic elements in the corridor, including a discussion of any visual intrusions on scenic views. If Caltrans staff determines that the highway corridor meets the legislative standards, a recommendation to designate the highway as scenic will be forwarded to the Caltrans Director. Planning and Development staff has completed a draft application which has successfully completed preliminary review by regional Caltrans staff.

The Scenic Highway Designation would designate 21 miles of Highway 101 on the Gaviota coast as a State Scenic Highway. The proposed Scenic Highway Corridor would run from the City of Goleta's western boundary to Route 1 at Las Cruces, where it would connect with the existing Designated State Route 1 into Lompoc.

The Scenic Highway Designation will highlight the Gaviota coast as a travelway of unique scenic value and formalize the recognition of the unique visual resources by Highway 101 along the Gaviota Coast. No new land use policies or ordinances will be adopted in association with the Scenic Highway Designation. Benefits of Designation can include increased tourism along the route and enhanced community identity and pride in the scenic character of the Gaviota coast.

Background:

Scenic Highway Designation Eligibility

At present there are two State highways in Santa Barbara County which have been officially designated as Scenic Highways. They are State Route 1 from its intersection with Highway 101 at Las Cruces north to the southerly city limits of Lompoc, and the entire length of State Highway 154 in the Santa Ynez Valley.

Portions of other State highways traversing the County are in the State's masterplan of highways eligible for Scenic Highway designation. The masterplan was adopted by the California State Legislature. The eligible highways are:

- State Highway 33 from the junction of State Highway 166 south into Ventura County;
- State Highway 166 from the junction of State Highway 33 west through Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties to its junction with State Highway 101;
- State Highway 101, its entire length in Santa Barbara County; and,
- State Highway 150 from its junction with State Highway 101 east into Ventura County.

The authority and direction to seek scenic designation status at this time comes from the Coastal Land Use Plan. Policy 4-8 in the Coastal Land Use Plan states that, "The County shall request the State of California to designate that portion of Highway 101 between Winchester Canyon and Gaviota State Park as a 'Scenic Highway'."

Further, Action VIS-3 in the Initiated Draft Gaviota Coast Plan directs the County to apply to Caltrans for a scenic highway designation for Highway 101, from the Goleta city boundary to Highway 1. It is one of several actions in the Draft Plan intended to implement the Critical Viewshed Corridor Policies within the Gaviota Coast.

Scenic Highway Application Process

The application to Caltrans for State Scenic Highway Designation includes three components (see Attachment 2):

- Maps showing current zoning and land use as well as existing structures,
- A Visual Assessment, which describes the scenic properties of the proposed scenic highway corridor and also any visual intrusions, and
- A Corridor Protection Plan, which describes all relevant, existing land use policies along the corridor.

The local governing body must also submit a letter of intent to seek official scenic highway designation. The letter should cite the reasons for seeking official scenic highway designation. Reasons for seeking Designation for the Gaviota coast corridor include the fact that it is the last best example of rural, coastal, Southern California, and is the largest remaining rural coastline within the southern region. Santa Barbara County policies and development standards have been enabling protection of the unique Gaviota Coast for the past three decades, and protection and promotion of the scenic qualities are intended to continue through development and implementation of the Gaviota Coast Plan.

If approved, the route would become an official State Scenic Highway. Caltrans would then display State Scenic Highway signs along the designated segment and the route would be added to State Scenic Highway maps and other State materials. Caltrans' decision is expected two to three months after submittal of the final application materials, and installation of signs would occur within the following year.

Public Outreach

County of Santa Barbara and Caltrans staff held a community meeting on August 18, 2016 to present the project, discuss concerns and questions, and solicit feedback. Approximately 30 people attended the meeting. Discussion topics included concerns that the State Scenic Highway Designation would prevent or restrict future development within the Highway 101 viewshed. The Scenic Designation does not place any new zoning or policy restriction on development or on future planning and land management activities. A representative from State Parks attended the meeting and a letter of support has been received from the State Parks Superintendent (Attachment 3). Additionally, property owners within 300 feet of the potentially designated corridor were sent notification of the application to Caltrans and the October 4, 2016 Board of Supervisors' hearing.

Environmental Review

Staff recommends that your Board determine that the Scenic Highway Designation application is exempt from CEQA, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308, Actions for Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment, and CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), as it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the Scenic Highway Designation may have a significant effect on the environment. Please see the Attached Notice of Exemption (Attachment 4) for additional information.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: Yes **Fiscal Analysis:**

Funds for the current fiscal year are fully budgeted in the Long Range Planning Division's Operating Expenditures (General Fund Contribution) on page D-295 of the County of Santa Barbara's Operational Plan for Fiscal Year 2016-2018.

The project will not result in any facilities impacts. Implementation of State Scenic Highway Designation will occur by Caltrans, with no cost to the County. Implementation would include installation of signs along the designated route and the addition of the designated route to State Scenic Highway maps and other State of California promotional and informational materials.

Special Instructions:

No noticing is required for this project. The Clerk of the Board shall provide a copy of the Board Minute Order to Planning and Development, attn: David Villalobos.

Attachments:

Attachment 1 Letter of Intent from the County Board of Supervisors

Attachment 2 Draft Application Packet to Caltrans

Attachment 3 Letter from California State Parks

Attachment 4 CEQA Notice of Exemption

Authored by:

Selena Evilsizor, Planner, 568-3577

ATTACHMENT 1: LETTER OF INTENT FROM THE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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ATTACHMENT 2: DRAFT APPLICATION PACKET TO CALTRANS

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ATTACHMENT 3: LETTER FROM CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

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ATTACHMENT 4: CEQA NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

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