



December 19, 2017

Mayor Ralph Rubio, Chair
Fort Ord Reuse Authority (FORA) Board of Directors
920 2nd Avenue, Suite A
Marina, CA 93933
board@fora.org | planning@fora.org

Subject: FORA Transportation Project Goals and Objectives [Eastside Parkway]

Dear Chair Rubio, FORA directors, and FORA staff:

At workshops held on December 6, 2017, FORA staff and consultants sought public input on project “goals and objectives” related to the Eastside Parkway. More than 90% of the people at the workshop I attended voiced strong opposition to a new freeway across Fort Ord. Acknowledging this overwhelming opposition, LandWatch Monterey County offers revised goals for transportation improvements that meet identified needs (attached). We also rename the project —formerly known as the Eastside Road and also as the Eastside Parkway—to reflect public support for regional projects that improve safety and reduce traffic congestion.

There is no demonstrated need for a new “parkway” in Fort Ord. Traffic volumes, regional traffic models, and other traffic data don’t justify it. Moreover, the public strongly opposes significant loss of oak woodlands, as made clear during the Whispering Oaks referenda and the Monterey Downs debacle.

Consequently, the goals we propose focus FORA’s transportation improvements and limited funds on mitigation for identified development projects on the former Fort Ord. This of course begs the question whether FORA’s limited funds would be better spent on blight removal, which remains a very significant impediment to economic development – more so than roads.

In developing these goals, LandWatch consulted with community leaders, transportation engineers, land use attorneys, and others with extensive experience in regional transportation issues, CEQA, and Fort Ord reuse. We are confident that the goals we recommend will stand both public scrutiny and help FORA avoid further costly lawsuits.

Please also enter LandWatch’s previous correspondence into the public record:

- October 9, 2017 letter from Keith Higgins to Michael DeLapa identifying issues the Fort Ord Reuse Authority, Monterey County and Cities of Marina and Seaside should address for the planning of Eastside Parkway in northeastern Fort Ord.

- October 10, 2017 letter from Michael DeLapa to Mayor Ralph Rubio seeking clarification of on-call engineering and design services on the Oct. 13 FORA Agenda in the context of Eastside Parkway.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael D. DeLapa". The signature is stylized with large, overlapping loops for the letters.

Michael D. DeLapa
Executive Director

cc: State Senator Bill Monning
Assemblymember Mark Stone
Monterey County Board of Supervisors
City of Seaside City Council
City of Marina City Council
Keep Fort Ord Wild

¹Regional Transportation Improvement Project² to Mitigate Transportation Impacts of Identified Development Projects on the Former Fort Ord

Project Goals

1. Identify and prioritize funding for the most economically and environmentally cost effective network of regional road improvements that by 2035 would mitigate known development impacts on the former Fort Ord and provide a level of service “D,³” taking into account the Transportation Agency of Monterey County’s regional transportation plans, already programmed and funded road improvements and their expected benefits.
2. Correct existing, unprogrammed and unfunded road deficiencies prior to dealing with potential long-term deficiencies. For example, these could include the Highway 1 interchanges with Fremont Boulevard and Imjin Parkway.
3. Consistent with strong public sentiment at the public workshops, which also opposed the now defunct Monterey Downs and Whispering Oaks proposals, reject any new road that would significantly impact oak woodland habitat or induce growth.

Comments

1. If a north-south transportation improvement is identified as a necessary mitigation, improvement of existing roads, such as Gigling Road to Eighth Avenue to Inter-Garrison, and roundabouts, should be preferred alternatives because road enhancements will likely generate fewer significant environmental impacts and have lower costs than building new roads.
2. All road designs shall be consistent with best design practices of the Regional Urban Design Guidelines adopted by the FORA Board.
3. Recognize that collaboration with LandWatch and Keep Fort Ord Wild is the best strategy for developing community consensus and avoiding unnecessary legal costs.

¹ “Known development” is existing development and future development for which a local land use agency has issued development approvals that include at least a lot-level subdivision map or building permit.

² Renamed the project formerly known as the Eastside Road to reflect an identified transportation need.

³ LOS D is the Monterey County, Seaside and Marina standard.