

ADDENDUM

TO A PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION



SONOMA COUNTY AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION & OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

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The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation & Open Space District (District) has prepared an Addendum to a Previously Adopted Mitigated Negative Declaration for the:

MONTINI OPEN SPACE PRESERVE MANAGEMENT PLAN

BACKGROUND

On October 6, 2009, the District's Board of Directors adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) prepared for the Montini Open Space Preserve Management Plan and approved the project as described in the Initial Study and associated Management Plan. The Initial Study/Management Plan included provisions for resource management and trail construction. After the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Management Plan were adopted and the project was approved, the District, the City of Sonoma, and State Parks reached conceptual agreement on a minor realignment of the western access to the trail system planned for the Preserve identified in the Management Plan. The potential environmental effects of the trail system were included in the previously adopted MND and adequate mitigation measures were adopted as part of the MND. This Addendum consists of the description and analysis of the minor technical changes to the project description in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

DESCRIPTION OF MINOR TECHNICAL CHANGES TO THE PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The District is incorporating the following minor technical changes in the project description included in the previously adopted MND:

Realignment of Western Access: The trailhead on the west side of the preserve will be placed on the east side of Fourth Street West, across from its intersection with Harazthy Drive. The re-aligned trail segment will run roughly parallel to Fourth Street, while curving to the east to gain separation from the Montini Way subdivision. The portion of the trail from its connection to Fourth Street to a point north of Montini Way would lie within property owned by State Parks (see attached map). To allow for this encroachment, a memorandum of understanding from State Parks will be obtained. The re-aligned trail will curve up the hill above the Vallejo Home site to connect with a vista point located west of the water tanks and the rest of the interior trail system. Two handicapped parking spaces would be placed on Fourth Street at the trailhead. These would be striped as on-street spaces, rather than developed as a separate parking lot. The western access trail segment was designed to be handicapped accessible. The re-aligned segment will also comply with accessibility requirements. The area of change associated with the realignment amounts to approximately 1,000 lineal feet of trail.

CEQA PROCESS

CEQA provides a process for evaluating changes to a project in cases such as these. The process is defined in the CEQA Guidelines §15162 and implements §21166 of CEQA, which limit preparation of a subsequent document to certain situations.

CEQA Guidelines §15162(a) states:

When an EIR has been certified or a negative declaration adopted for a project, no subsequent EIR shall be prepared for that project unless the lead agency determines, on the basis of substantial evidence in the light of the whole record, one or more of the following:

- (1) Substantial changes are proposed in the project which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects;*
- (2) Substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or Negative Declaration due to the involvement of new, significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects; or*
- (3) New information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the previous EIR was certified as a completed or the Negative Declaration was adopted, shows any of the following:*
 - A. The project will have one or more significant effects not discussed in the previous EIR or Negative Declaration*
 - B. Significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than shown in the previous EIR;*
 - C. Mitigation measures or alternatives previously found not to be feasible would in fact be feasible, and would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the project, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative.*

CEQA Guidelines §15162(b) states:

If changes to a project or its circumstances occur or new information becomes available after adoption of a Negative Declaration, the lead agency shall prepare a subsequent EIR if required under subsection (a). Otherwise, the lead agency shall determine whether to prepare a subsequent Negative Declaration, and addendum, or no further documentation.

ANALYSIS OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT

The previously adopted Management Plan included management recommendations regarding the development and maintenance of a trail system designed to facilitate public access to the Preserve. The previously adopted MND for the Montini Open Space Preserve analyzed the potentially significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Interim Management Plan, including the construction and maintenance of the trail system. No potentially significant impacts were identified. The MND identified some environmental impacts that could be reduced to a less-than-significant level with the implementation of mitigation measures, which were adopted as part of the MND. Mitigation Measures were identified in the areas of Biological Resources and Cultural Resources. The previously adopted Mitigated MND for the Montini Open Space Preserve Management Plan included a Mitigation Monitoring Plan (MMP). The MMP included mitigation measures to avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, or compensate potentially significant impacts to a less than significant level. The MMP would apply to the proposed minor technical changes in the project description. As discussed below, no additional mitigation measures are necessary for the proposed minor technical changes in the project description associated with the realignment of the western access of the trail system.

Biological Resources: With respect to biological resources, the Management Plan includes recommendations regarding the rerouting of trails to avoid sensitive areas, such as wetlands and riparian

areas or areas that are likely to erode, except where necessary to complete the proposed trail system. The realignment of the western access identified in this Addendum complies with these recommendations. The trail system called for in the Management Plan was evaluated with respect to potential impacts on biological resources as part of the MND. The analysis prepared for the MND did not identify any adverse impacts to species having status as candidate, sensitive, or special status as a result of the development of the trail system. To determine whether the change to the western access segment would alter this finding, the revised alignment was evaluated by a botanist and a wetlands specialist to determine whether any significant biological resources would be affected by the change. The assessments prepared by these specialists found that that the proposed realignment of the western access trail segment would not result in any significant impacts on biological resources (see attached). The botanical survey did identify small patches of golden baby stars (*Leptosiphon acicularis*) in the vicinity of the trail at two locations. This plant is not considered rare or endangered, but it has been placed on a watch list by the California Native Plant Society due to its limited distribution. These plant clusters have been flagged and their locations have been geocoded by the District. The revised trail alignment did not pass through either of these clusters, but at the recommendation of the botanist, an increased buffer has been provided by offsetting the trail further from them.

Cultural Resources: The realignment of the western access was reviewed by E. Breck Parkman, Senior State Archaeologist for California State Parks. According to Mr. Parkman, there are no known archaeological sites in the area where the realignment would occur, nor is there any reason to expect that any such sites would be found. In addition, the mitigation measures already set forth in the MND that address the possibility of encountering previously unknown cultural or archaeological resources would be applicable to the entire trail system, including the realigned segment.¹

Transportation: As set forth in the Master Plan and evaluated in the MND, the elements of the trail system providing access from the west side of the Preserve included a north/south path along the frontage of the pasture property at Fifth Street West. Beginning roughly at the center of this path, the trail would meander through the center of the pasture property, curving up the hillside on the east to connect with a vista point and the trail system within the interior of the preserve. Two handicapped parking spaces were to be developed at the north end of the north/south path segment that fronts 5th St. West, at the intersection of Verano Avenue and Fifth Street West. This intersection would be reconfigured as a four-way stop and a crosswalk would be striped across Fifth Street West in order to improve pedestrian access. The transportation analysis provided as part of the MND found that the trail project would likely generate 50 vehicle trip ends on a peak weekend day and 14 trips on an average day, resulting in an annual average of 16 trip ends per day. This level of traffic generation was found not to be significant and the MND further found that there was sufficient on-street and off-street parking in the vicinity of the two trail heads to accommodate trail visitors.

In the proposed adjustment to the western access trail segment, the trailhead would originate on the east side of Fourth Street West, across from the intersection with Harazthy Drive. The trail would run roughly parallel to Fourth Street, curving to the east away from the Montini Way subdivision. The portion of the trail from its connection to Fourth Street to a point north of Montini Way would be within property owned by State Parks. To allow for this encroachment, a memorandum of understanding from State Parks would be obtained. As with the original alignment, the trail would curve up the hill above the Vallejo Home site to connect with the vista point and the interior trail system. Two handicapped parking spaces would be placed on Fourth Street at the trailhead. These would be striped as on-street spaces, rather than developed as a separate parking area, as was the case with the original alignment.

To determine whether the revised alignment would result in any traffic impacts, the traffic engineers who performed the original analysis for the MND prepared an updated evaluation (attached). This analysis found that the proposed realignment of the western trail access, including the relocation of the trailhead to Fourth Street West, would not result in any significant traffic impacts on the local and regional street network or on residential properties in the vicinity of the trailhead.

¹ Email communication from E. Breck Parkman to Leslie Lew dated February 18, 2010.

CONCLUSION

- (1) The proposed realignment of the western trail access constitutes a minor technical change in the project description of the Montini Open Space Preserve Management Plan. This change is not considered substantial and will not require major revisions in the previously adopted MND because there were no new significant environmental effects. The previously adopted MND did not identify any significant environmental effects involved. All potentially significant environmental impacts that were identified could be mitigated to a less than significant level, a finding which has not changed as a result of the proposed realignment. Therefore, the MND will not require major revisions to incorporate the minor technical changes to the project description.
- (2) The proposed minor technical changes in the project description do not constitute a substantial change with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken. As documented in the attached studies, the proposed minor technical changes in the project description will not result in new, significant environmental effects. The previously adopted MND did not identify any significant effects and the minor technical changes in the project description will not increase the severity of any environmental effects identified in the previously adopted MND. No revisions to the previously adopted MND are necessary because no new significant environmental effects or substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects are involved.
- (3) There is no new information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the previous MND was adopted. The proposed minor technical changes in the project description do not show any of the following:
 - A. One or more significant effects not discussed in the previous Negative Declaration,
 - B. Substantially more severe significant effects that shown in the previous Negative Declaration, or
 - C. The feasibility of mitigation measures or alternatives that were previously found not to be feasible, and that would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the project.

The proposed minor technical changes in the project description for the Montini Open Space Preserve would not result in any of the conditions stipulated in CEQA Guidelines §15162(a), therefore, the District can prepare this Addendum to the previously adopted MND pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15164.

The District is not required to prepare a Subsequent EIR or Supplemental EIR or Negative Declaration because none of the conditions stipulated in CEQA Guidelines § 15162(a) were met. This Addendum does not require circulation for public review, as noted in CEQA Guidelines §15164(c).

Attachments:

1. Rare Plant Survey of the Montini Open Space Preserve Trail Realignment; Napa Botanical Services, June 30, 2010.
2. Conceptual Realignment Trail Evaluation, Montini Open Space Preserve, Sonoma County, California; Lucy MacMillan, April 1, 2010.
3. Montini Open Space Preserve—Evaluation of Western Trailhead Access; W-Trans, June 24, 2010.