

Bradley Olin
Community Development Department
City of Watsonville
PO Box 50,000
Watsonville, CA 95077

March 21, 2008

RE: Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration for the Proposed Santa Cruz Medical Foundation Expansion Project

Dear Mr. Olin,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration for the proposed Santa Cruz Medical Foundation Expansion Project in the City of Watsonville. The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) serves as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for Santa Cruz County. The RTC has reviewed the document and offers the following comments:

1. The RTC supports reducing the number of single-occupant vehicle (SOV) trips made by employees to the proposed project site by replacing SOV trips with trips using transportation alternatives including, but not limited to, carpooling, vanpooling, riding the bus, bicycling, walking and telecommuting. Parking provisions for the project, as stated on page 16, may encourage unnecessary use of single occupancy vehicles by employees. Staff recommends the City and project sponsor discourage the provision of unlimited, free parking for employees in favor of effective, long-term employer-based TDM programs (*2005 Regional Transportation Plan policy 6.13*). For example, the project sponsor should consider providing preferential parking for carpools and vanpools in the new parking areas and incentives for employees use transit.
-Is there a transit stop?

Please feel free to work with our Commute Solutions Program (831-429-POOL) to implement transportation demand management strategies that work towards this goal. Staff also encourages to the Santa Cruz Medical Foundation join Ecology Action's Transportation Membership Services (formerly the Santa Cruz Area Transportation Management Association) to take advantage of their transportation demand management strategies for employers and employees. (*2005 RTP policies 1.3.1 and 1.3.2*)

2. RTC staff recommends the development of safe, direct and pleasant pedestrian walkways; provisions for lighting at pedestrian crosswalks within the facility; and fully accessible pedestrian facilities, such as curb cuts. Specifically, the site plan should include direct, designated pedestrian access from sidewalks on adjacent roadways to the front entry of the building.

3. To ensure consistency with the Regional Transportation Plan policy 2.1.1, which considers the needs of the non-motorized traveler in all construction and project development activities, staff recommends provisions for secure bicycle parking at the site, including bicycle lockers for use by employees and bicycle racks recommended by the Commission's Bicycle Committee for the Bikes Secure program.
4. The proposed project will result in increased traffic on roadways in the vicinity, including the state highway system. According to the adopted Watsonville General Plan, the intersection of Main Street (Highway 152) and Highway 1 operates at a LOS E and F. Please clarify the proposed project's impact on the roadway system and the adjacent roadway system in relation to the existing traffic load. The existing language used to describe the proposed project's impact on the roadway system is vague (p. 14).

Note: Watsonville/Vista requires street improvements when traffic volumes exceed LOS D

Why does the LOS with project improve at Green Valley Road and Lawrence Ave.?

LOS at intersection charts reflect cumulative impacts or project specific? What is included in cumulative?

The proposed project will result in the reduction in the LOS from C to D at two intersections, South Green Valley Road/Pennsylvania Drive and South Green Valley Road/ Freedom Boulevard, and reduce the South Green Valley Road/ Freedom Boulevard intersection from LOS D to E during the pm peak period. Although a LOS D is acceptable to the City of Watsonville, the proposed project sponsor should mitigate any traffic impacts that reduce the overall LOS rating at intersections below the existing LOS rating.

5. The proposed project sponsor should work closely with the City of Watsonville and Caltrans to ensure that adjacent roadway and intersections LOS, including the intersection of Main Street (Highway 152) and Green Valley Road are not negatively impacted by changes to the signal timing.
6. Staff recommends that the developer work with the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District to ensure that all the existing transit routes on Green Valley Road include the proposed stop on the project frontage on Green Valley Road.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions about these comments, please contact Grace Blakeslee of my staff at (831) 460-3219.

Sincerely,

George Dondero
Executive Director

CC: SCCRTC
Commissioner Reilly
Commissioner Coonerty

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