

## RESPONSES TO COMMENTS:

on

### **SUBSEQUENT MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION BRITTANY WAY/EL DORADO HILLS BOULEVARD REALIGNMENT PROJECT**

- **Project Background and Previous Review:**

Several letters expressed disappointment that they had not heard of this project prior to moving into their homes.

**Response:** This project has been planned for many years. However because of delayed construction, new residents have moved in since 1998 when the project was originally planned and advertised. Information on the project has been available to the public in several locations. In addition to the two 1998 environmental documents discussed below under Project History, the project is listed in the *Interim Five-year Capital Improvement Program 03/04 through 07/08*, as well as the *Department of Transportation Proposed Five-Year Capital Improvement Program Fiscal Year 06/07 through 10/11* as Project #72332 (currently available on the DOT website <http://www.co-el-dorado.ca.us/DOT/BrittneyReport.html>). The project is also shown on the El Dorado County 2004 General Plan Circulation Map.

**Project History:** The proposed realignment and widening was originally coordinated with components of the Green Valley Road Ultimate Improvements Project in 1998 and addressed in the corresponding Green Valley Road Environmental Impact Report (EIR). It was then analyzed more specifically in the same year, 1998, within the Brittany Way/ El Dorado Hills Boulevard Realignment Project Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) prepared by Parsons Harland Bartholomew and Associates. However, after adoption of the 1998 MND, the project was not constructed.

The proposed project design configuration is effectively the same as it was in 1998, and construction is contemplated to commence in 2009/10. As part of the project delivery process, this Subsequent Initial Study/MND is being prepared approximately nine years after the original environmental analysis was conducted. As pointed out in the Subsequent MND document, potential changes in the regulatory context or the environmental setting of the County and the project area are addressed, and new determinations of impact significance are made where needed. Original mitigation measures that are still applicable will remain unchanged.

**Notification of the Public:** The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines sets forth standards in Sections 15072 and 15105 regarding public noticing for Mitigated Negative Declarations (see [http://ceres.ca.gov/topic/env\\_law/ceqa/guidelines/art8.html](http://ceres.ca.gov/topic/env_law/ceqa/guidelines/art8.html)). The Notice of Intent for this Subsequent MND was first advertised on February 9, 2007 for 31 days in the Mountain Democrat and sent to various affected agencies, including the El Dorado Hills Community Services District (EDH CSD) with a request to send copies to each homeowners' association. This more than satisfied the technical requirements of CEQA. However, when it was realized that contacting the homeowners associations through the EDH CSD was not as far reaching as originally anticipated, DOT extended the review period and re-noticed the project for another 25 days for a total of 56 days, which included sending several hundred individual notices to those residents located within 500 feet of the project.

- **Road Name Change:**

Many commenters disagree with the proposal to change the name of Francisco to El Dorado Hills Boulevard.

**Response:** The road name will not be changed as a part of the approval of the MND for the project. Changing a road name requires a public hearing to hear testimony on the proposed name change followed by the adoption of a resolution by the Board of Supervisors, and must follow the procedures set forth in Section 970.5 of the State of California Streets and Highways Code. The County will consider this issue separately from the approval of the project and MND, taking into consideration the concerns presented as part of the process.

- **Traffic and Circulation:**

Several commenters are concerned that this project would increase traffic volume along Francisco and cause more safety hazards, especially in regard to existing commercial trucks that utilize the road.

**Response:** While future traffic volumes are expected to increase cumulatively as a result of development and increased population, traffic volumes are not expected to increase as a direct result of this project. Traffic counts have consistently shown that the majority of north bound traffic along El Dorado Hills Boulevard turns left at Francisco en route to Green Valley Road versus continuing along El Dorado Hills Boulevard. The purpose of this realignment is to accommodate the existing traffic pattern more efficiently and safely. This realignment project will install a signal at Brittany Way and widen the road to four lanes, which will improve safety and efficiency of existing traffic. This project will not alter the nature of existing commercial traffic.

- **Access issues Regarding Brittany Place:**

A letter was written regarding access for APN 124-010-13 (formerly 112-100-31) currently using access from Brittany Place. APN 124-010-13 is located on the southwest corner of El Dorado Hills Boulevard and Brittany Place.

**Response:** As proposed, this newly aligned El Dorado Hills Boulevard and new intersection at Brittany Way would provide improved circulation to the Crown Valley and Promontory developments. Following completion of the new Brittany Way intersection, the road and public utility easement currently known as Brittany Place would be abandoned and transferred to the EDH CSD, consistent with requirements of the September 19, 1999 final map amendment for the Crown Valley Subdivision (subdivision H-150). Brittany Place would then end as a cul-de-sac within the Crown Valley Subdivision area as originally intended. Once the property is turned over to the CSD and the new roadway improvements are in place, this connection to Brittany Place would become the property of the EDH CSD. Access issues to the newly configured Wild Oaks Park have not yet been finalized. The location of access to APN 124-010-13 is also undetermined at this time. Any proposed direct access onto El Dorado Hills Boulevard would require an encroachment permit from the County DOT.

- **Traffic Speed:**

Several comments referred to potential speed increases as a result of the project. There were also comments as to speed problems on Green Valley Road and El Dorado Hills Blvd.

**Response:** Green Valley Road and El Dorado Hills Blvd are recognized as major thoroughfares that provide traffic with a means to travel not only within the community of El Dorado Hills, but also to Cameron Park, Placerville, Pilot Hill, and Folsom. The speed limits on County roads are established by law in accordance with Section 22358 of the Vehicle Code of the State of California.

The project does not propose to increase the posted speed limit, nor does it expect traffic speeds to increase as a result of the project. The project will improve traffic flow, reduce idling vehicles and improve local air quality by replacing the existing stop-controlled intersection and predominant left-turn movement with a signal-controlled through movement that favors the existing predominant traffic pattern. Because of the realignment and traffic signal, more consistent speed may result in the vicinity of the new intersection due to the fact that some traffic will pass through the intersection on a green light phase of the traffic signal.

- **Access issues from Embarcadero and Cambria onto Francisco Drive**

Several comments referenced the current access from Cambria and Embarcadero onto Francisco Drive, and were concerned about the impact this project may have and if widening of Embarcadero and Cambria would be considered.

**Response:** It has been determined that this project will not generate additional traffic on Francisco Drive or any side streets that meet Francisco Drive. In general, installation of additional lanes is considered if the traffic volumes indicate a need for additional lanes to improve the operational efficiency of the roadway. At this time, Embarcadero operates at a satisfactory level of service (as defined by the County General Plan) with a relatively small amount of traffic, and therefore, no improvements are proposed at this time.

- **Traffic Issues Regarding Village Shopping Center and Telegraph Hill Road:**

Several commenters were concerned about the traffic from the Village Shopping Center onto Telegraph Hill Road, which is used as a short-cut route.

**Response:** The driveway into the Village Shopping Center was approved with the creation of the shopping center. This realignment project will not affect traffic volumes within the shopping center onto Telegraph Hill, and is not related to this project. It is likely the reason Telegraph Hill Road is currently being used as a cut-through route for traffic is that the intersection of El Dorado Hills Blvd and Francisco Drive is not functioning very well because so many northbound vehicles make the left turn onto Francisco. This realignment project is designed to address this issue by providing safe efficient movement of traffic on the major roadways, which should minimize the cut-through traffic onto the side streets. However, Telegraph Hill Road is a public roadway and all the public has the right to use it. Abandonment of a public roadway (and conversion to a private roadway) must be accomplished by action of the Board of Supervisors as outlined in the State of California Streets and Highways Code. This process is separate and distinct from the project at hand.

- **Suggestion to Widen El Dorado Hills Boulevard Rather than Francisco Drive:**

Several commenters stated that it would make more sense to widen El Dorado Hills Boulevard instead of Francisco Drive because it provides a straighter through-way to Green Valley Road.

**Response:** The predominant destination of traffic proceeding north on El Dorado Hills Boulevard approaching Francisco Drive is towards the west end of the County on Green Valley Road. Traffic

counts show that majority of motorists make the left turn onto Francisco to reach Green Valley Road. If traffic were encouraged to continue on to Green Valley Road via existing El Dorado Hills Blvd, it would increase driving time and create additional traffic on Green Valley Road westbound between Salmon Falls Road and Francisco. The project as proposed meets or exceeds all safety standards for this classification of roadway.

- **Suggestion to Create Two One-Way Boulevards:**

Was it ever considered to create two one-way streets with El Dorado Hills Boulevard going north (to Green Valley) and Francisco Drive going south?

**Response:** This issue was discussed in 1998 and it was not found to be helpful to the traffic flow given the traffic patterns. The majority of northbound traffic uses Francisco Drive to access Green Valley Road and points north and west. The creation of two one-way streets would lengthen the driving time for north and west bound traffic and would not be the most efficient solution to traffic flow. Traffic counts would increase on El Dorado Hills Boulevard between the intersection and Green Valley Road, and would increase traffic on Green Valley Road between Francisco Drive and El Dorado Hills Boulevard resulting in potential negative impacts to communities that are served by the streets intersecting El Dorado Hills Boulevard and Francisco Drive in the suggested one-way segments.

- **Project Design Details:**

Will there be a median between the four lanes with trees and plants or is that just for new developments?

**Response:** The roadway will be constructed with a median that varies in width from four (4) to sixteen (16) feet. The EDH CSD has historically installed and maintained landscaping within the County right-of-way, as evidenced by landscaping along El Dorado Hills Boulevard south of Governor's and St. Andrews Drives. The EDH CSD has expressed a desire to construct and maintain landscape improvements within the project limits, and the County will allow them to do so under permit after completion of our project construction. Such landscaping is subject to decisions by the EDH CSD and are not considered a part of this project.

- **Noise:**

There were many comments regarding the potential for increased noise as a result of this project as well as comments regarding existing noise levels. There were also questions as to the location of sound receptors and why they weren't placed elsewhere, as well as questions about whether or not sound walls will be installed.

**Response:** : DOT appreciates that noise impacts occur as a result of increased population and increased traffic. For this reason, DOT decided to use rubberized asphalt as part of the project which has proven to be successful in sound reduction. The noise analysis that was conducted by professional sound engineers found that this project will not result in increased noise pursuant to General Plan thresholds established in the 2004 General Plan. (please refer to the sound study within the MND) The rubberized asphalt, combined with the fact that no increase in traffic volume will occur, along with improved traffic flow, noise impacts have been determined to be less than significant. The placement of additional sound receptors would not change this conclusion.

**Nighttime Construction Noise:** The 2002 memo provided in the appendix of the Subsequent MND set forth criteria for future projects to use with respect to night time lighting and noise. Since that

time, the 2004 General Plan addressed this issue in Policy 6.5.1.1 by allowing for exceptions to the standards for temporary nighttime construction noise "...if it can be shown that construction beyond these times is necessary to alleviate traffic congestion and safety hazards.". The County only uses night time construction when necessary to avoid traffic impacts during the day, especially on busy thoroughfares such as El Dorado Hills Boulevard and Francisco Drive. This project will be constructed in stages. The additional (southbound) lanes will be constructed first. Traffic would then be moved over to the new lanes, and the reconstruction of the old pavement could be accomplished. This staging of the construction will allow the project to be completed with a minimum traffic disruption and therefore a minimum of night work.

**Sound Walls as Mitigation:** As outlined above, according to the sound study conducted for the environmental document on this project, due to the configuration of the realignment and the use of rubberized asphalt for re-pavement, no additional noise impacts will result over and above existing noise levels. Therefore, no sound walls will be constructed relative to this project.

It may be helpful to point out that the County's approach to noise impacts, when identified as a result of the project in question, is addressed within the Noise section of the El Dorado County General Plan. Policy 6.5.1.5 discourages the use of sound walls along high volume roadways for noise mitigation. Often, sound walls are not as effective as other methods, can be aesthetically displeasing and can also inadvertently create unintended noise elsewhere. The use of rubberized asphalt has proven to be a very effective tool for transportation noise. In the case of this project, the use of rubberized asphalt will prevent any noise increases from occurring as a result of this project

- **Right-of-Way Acquisition**

Several comments asked if there will be right of way acquisition?

**Response:** The project has been designed to utilize the existing 80' right-of-way. While minor additional right-of-way areas may be subsequently determined necessary for specific design features such as drainage inlets and slope stabilization, no new rights-of-way are anticipated beyond the land swap detailed in Figure 2-4 of the Draft MND. The County has a strong desire to avoid any additional impacts to private property adjacent to this project

- **Air Quality:**

Several questions were posed relative to emissions, air quality conformance, and enforcement of asbestos standards.

**Response:**

Traffic volumes will increase with or without this project but will not increase as a result of this project. This realignment project serves to accommodate existing traffic patterns more efficiently. Because of this, no significant additional emissions would occur as a result of this project, including at the traffic signal at Francisco and Green Valley as mentioned in one comment.

This Subsequent MND was reviewed and approved by the El Dorado County Air Quality Management District (AQMD). AQMD standards are incorporated into the project for use throughout the greater Sacramento Region, including El Dorado County. These measures are approved by the State of California Air Resources Board (CARB) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Additionally, El Dorado County AQMD rules 223-1 and 223-2 require grading activities be conducted utilizing established best management practices (BMP's) for dust control. The contractor must prepare a fugitive dust mitigation plan demonstrating

incorporation of BMP's into the grading operations. Since the project site is located within an area likely to contain naturally occurring asbestos (NOA), DOT will have a project geotechnical evaluation prepared that will look for the presence of NOA. If the presence of NOA is discovered at any time on the project site, the Contractor must prepare and implement an Asbestos Dust Mitigation Plan (ADMP) in accordance with Rule 223-2.

The project earthwork will include minor amounts of excavation (cut) and significant amounts of imported fill to complete the construction as planned. Since only minor amounts of excavation are anticipated, the risk of uncovering and disturbing unusual amounts of NOA is minimal.

- **Wild Oaks and St. Andrews Parks:**

Many letters reflected concern about potential loss of park land within the Wild Oak Park and St. Andrews Park.

**Response:** Figure 2-4 and the *Area Calculations for the Land Exchange Between the County of El Dorado and the El Dorado Hills Community Services District* (both attached) illustrates the land swap between the El Dorado Hills CSD and the County. Mitigation from the 1998 MND required the abandoned road right-of-way from the existing alignment of El Dorado Hills Blvd be reclaimed for recreational use. Specifically, the fragment of bisected land from Wild Oaks Park which would now lie to the east of El Dorado Hills Boulevard shall be reclaimed and restored for use in St. Andrews Park. The most northern and northwestern portions of the existing Wild Oaks Park that would be bifurcated by the new roadway will remain open space/landscape area. The southwestern portion of the existing Wild Oaks Park will be increased in size with the addition of lots A (Area 11), B (Area 12), and E (Area 9).

Upon completion of the exchange with the County, the CSD will achieve a 3.08 gain in acres of additional recreational area under the jurisdiction of the CSD.

There was also a question about play equipment. New play equipment is not part of this project. The EDH CSD has authority and responsibility for recreational equipment in the EDH area. No existing equipment will be affected as a result of this project.

- **Potential impacts to wetlands, vernal pools and endangered species:**

Comments were made concerning how mitigation would be addressed relative to wetlands and endangered species.

**Response:** The Green Valley Road Ultimate Improvement EIR referenced potential wetlands, but did not conduct an actual delineation of waters of the US. This is why additional project specific analysis was conducted in 1998 in the form of a mitigated negative declaration (MND). That MND required a wetland delineation prior to construction, with associated mitigation as required by the California Department of Fish and Game, the Army Corp of Engineers (ACOE), the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. This delineation was conducted for the current project (see Appendix B) and is subject to ACOE verification. Vernal pools are included in the analyses of all wetland delineations. Appropriate mitigation will be finalized once the delineation has been verified. Additionally, potential impacts to endangered species are discussed at length in the biology section of the Subsequent MND.

- **Consideration of Future Development in the Area:**

Does the County consider future development when analyzing this project?

**Response:** The County, first and foremost, considers future development within all areas of the County when developing the County General Plan. The latest General Plan revision was adopted in 2004. The Circulation Element within the General Plan envisions future needs based on population projections, the resultant anticipated traffic from the projected growth, and the anticipated road improvements necessary to maintain a satisfactory Level of Service (LOS) pursuant to General Plan Policies. The County Traffic Impact Mitigation fees, which are also required pursuant to General Plan policy, are fashioned to fund these anticipated improvements. The Brittany Way/EI Dorado Hills Boulevard Realignment Project is identified in the *2004 El Dorado County General Plan*, the *Interim Five-Year Capital Improvement Program 03/04 through 07/08* as Project #72332 and the currently proposed 2007 Capital Improvement Program. The proposed improvements will provide for levels of growth anticipated in the General Plan.

- **Sofia Parkway and Silva Valley Parkway**

A comment was made that DOT should focus on extending Sofia Parkway and Silva Valley to US 50 to ease traffic on EI Dorado Hills Boulevard, which stands alone as the only entrance into EI Dorado Hills.

**Response:** Sofia Parkway currently connects with Empire Ranch Road in Folsom. The City of Folsom is in the process of conducting an environmental analysis for the proposed US 50/ Empire Ranch Interchange. DOT staff have been actively participating in that process in support of the project. These plans are under the jurisdiction of the City of Folsom. Silva Valley Parkway is planned to connect to US 50 through the construction of the Silva Valley Park Interchange. A complete list of the projects currently being advanced by DOT can be found in the Proposed Five year Capital Improvement Plan available on the County website at <http://www.co.el-dorado.ca.us/cao/2007CIP.html> .