

## Monterey County Planning Commission

<b>Meeting:</b> December 13, 2006	<b>Agenda Item:</b> 8	<b>1:30 pm</b>
<b>Project Description:</b> Receive a presentation and relevant documents related to the Castroville Community Plan and schedule a public hearing on January 10, 2007 to consider a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors		
<b>Project Location:</b> Castroville		
<b>Environmental Review:</b> Environmental Impact Report		
<b>Department:</b> Resource Management Agency – Housing and Redevelopment Office		

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the Planning Commission receive a presentation and relevant documents related to the Castroville Community Plan and schedule a public hearing on January 10, 2007 to consider a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.

### **OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED ACTION:**

This item has been scheduled to provide the Planning Commission with an overview of the Castroville Community Plan, which has been under preparation for several years. In addition, the draft Community Plan and Errata, Draft and Final EIR will be distributed to the Planning Commission members for review. A public hearing will be scheduled for January 10, 2007 to consider a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.

### **DISCUSSION:**

The draft Castroville Community Plan is a comprehensive land use and public improvement program developed in partnership with community residents, business owners and landowners to guide future development and redevelopment of the community.

Castroville is one of the oldest communities in Monterey County and is fortunate to embody many positive qualities, one of the most important being a strong identity. The people of Castroville, residents, business owners, and employees, know their community and are proud of their place in both the present and historical context of Monterey County. Castroville is also fortunate to possess many physical characteristics that are the very same ones that urban planners are attempting to replicate in the much-touted “new urbanism” and “smart growth” developments springing up throughout the nation. Existing Castroville already has a compact development pattern, walkable streets, mixed income neighborhoods, a defined downtown with many historic buildings and an attractive setting. The community is strategically located at the cross roads of three major highways, which provides access to regional destinations, employment centers and prime public open space and visitor serving areas.

However, in spite of these enviable qualities, Castroville also faces many challenges. Heavy traffic impacts the entire community, compromising the character of the downtown and creating gridlock for residents, commuters and visitors. The ability to attract new businesses that can provide the needed move-up jobs for the young people of Castroville is limited by the existing traffic deficiencies and economic conditions. In addition, flooding from the overtopping of the Salinas River and the Tembladero Slough continues to constrain redevelopment of the downtown and puts existing businesses and residences at risk. And finally, the community lacks sufficient housing affordable to the existing residents and workers and neighborhood amenities that support quality housing.

The Castroville Community Plan has been prepared to present a program to address these challenges in a way that builds upon and enhances Castroville's many strengths. The program contained in the Community Plan brings the following elements together into an integrated approach to direct and guide the future development of Castroville.

#### The Community Plan:

- Provides a solution to the existing traffic and circulation problems, enabling the community to attract new businesses and visitors.
- Includes the development of mixed income neighborhoods that expand the housing opportunities for the residents and workers of Castroville.
- Increases the economic base to allow residents and their families to remain in the community even as their employment and housing needs change, thereby preserving the existing community identity.
- Provides a feasible economic development strategy that combines attracting specific businesses that will benefit Castroville with job training to ensure that new jobs will be accessible by the existing residents.
- Addresses the current flood hazards in a creative approach that will protect existing development, reclaim underutilized properties, and create quality open space amenities in the community.
- Provides the opportunity to create a "downtown" that embodies Castroville's historic traditions and identity.
- Respects the surrounding valuable agricultural lands by requiring compact, land efficient design, well defined community boundaries, and adequate buffering between urban and agricultural uses.
- Provides an implementation program that identifies all required infrastructure needed for new development and contribution to community amenities and services to ensure that the existing residents of Castroville are not impacted by the new development.

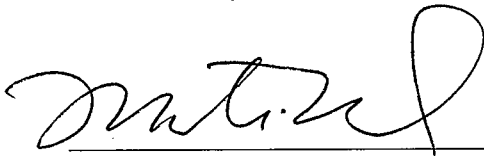
The community of Castroville has been actively participating in the preparation of the Community Plan for several years. Numerous well-attended community meetings and public workshops have been conducted. The Community Plan has evolved through this process to reflect the community's vision and priorities. The plan has been unanimously recommended for approval by the Castroville Citizens' Advisory Subcommittee and is highly supported by residents, landowners, and development interests.

A draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared in May 2006 and distributed for public review. Comment letters received, responses to the comments and changes to the DEIR have been incorporated into a Final EIR. The primary impacts that were identified include circulation, groundwater, surface hydrology, and loss of agricultural land. Specific mitigation measures have been incorporated and, where appropriate, revisions made to the draft Community Plan in the Errata.

**OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:**

The Castroville Redevelopment Citizen's Advisory Subcommittee (CAC) has held numerous public workshops and meetings on the Community Plan and the associated EIR. The meetings were widely noticed and well attended by residents, property owners, business owners, service providers, and interested groups. On September 13, 2006 the CAC voted to forward the draft Community Plan onto the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors with a recommendation that it be approved.

Submitted By:



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