

Subject: LandWatch comments on the Eastside Parkway [NEW]

Date: February 1, 2018 at 6:24:30 PM PST

To: FORA Board <board@fora.org>

Cc: Dominique Jones <Dominique@fora.org>, Michael Houlemard <michael@fora.org>

Dear FORA Board,

LandWatch urges you to reject the Eastside Parkway goals and objectives your staff has proposed for the following reasons:

1. **No need.** FORA demonstrated no need for the Parkway. While Base Reuse Plan identifies the need for traffic mitigation on the former Fort Ord, the certified EIR does not identify the Eastside Parkway as required mitigation.
2. **Better ways to spend limited funds.** Money spent on the Eastside Parkway would be better spent on other priorities. For example, the greater Fort Ord community would benefit more from blight removal and investments in transportation improvement projects that meet regional needs, as identified by the Transportation Agency of Monterey County, rather than the Eastside Parkway.
3. **Destroys oak woodland habitat and recreational values.** The Parkway as originally proposed would bisect and destroy a valuable oak woodlands habitat that FORA is mandated to protect, and recreational areas that thousands of local residents regularly use.
4. **Unrealistically budgeted.** The cost of the Parkway will not be \$18 million as budgeted. The cost of the one-mile upgrade of Eucalyptus Rd. was \$5.8 million 15 years ago.
5. **Strong public opposition.** The public overwhelmingly opposes the Eastside Parkway, as demonstrated by the 33 letters you have received in opposition to it as compared with two letters in support. (We know of at least an additional 30+ opposition letters since your board packet was distributed.)

Alternatively, LandWatch urges you to adopt the three goals we proposed in our December 19, 2017 letter:

1. **Prioritize regional transportation needs.** 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," taking into account the Transportation Agency of Monterey County's regional transportation plans, already programmed and funded road improvements and their expected

benefits.

2. **Fix existing roads.** 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. **Reject new roads in oak woodlands.** 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.

If FORA persists with making the Eastside Parkway a priority, you can expect further public outrage, continued distractions of FORA staff from what should be higher priority economic development initiatives, significant expenditures of public funds on environmental reviews and studies that will ultimately fail, other administrative costs, and an accelerated loss of public support.

FORA's first attempt at the Eastside Parkway wasted more than a \$1 million in public funds on lawyers, consultants and countless hours of staff and elected officials' time. This followed the County's failed effort on Whispering Oaks and Seaside's failed effort on Monterey Downs, which generated similar waste and loss of public confidence.

Please don't make that mistake again. Listen to the public. Reject the Eastside Parkway goals and objectives that FORA staff have drafted.

Regards,

Michael

Michael D. DeLapa
Executive Director
LandWatch Monterey County