

**GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE, HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT**

**RESOLUTION 2012-075**

**ADOPT A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR  
AND APPROVE THE DESIGN OF THE  
ALEXANDER AVENUE/DANES DRIVE INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

October 26, 2012

**WHEREAS**, Alexander Avenue: is a two lane roadway located within the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) to the northeast of the Golden Gate Bridge, provides access from Highway 101 to the City of Sausalito, CA; and, was constructed in 1937 as part of the original construction of the Golden Gate Bridge; and,

**WHEREAS**, in addition to providing access to the City of Sausalito, Alexander Avenue connects and provides access to the road system serving Fort Baker and the other lands of the GGNRA located to the east and west of Highway 101, and traffic use, both vehicular and bicycle on Alexander Avenue has increased in recent years and that trend is expected to continue due to recent improvements at Fort Baker and recreation areas throughout the GGNRA; and,

**WHEREAS**, in 2000, the National Park Service (NPS) issued a Record of Decisions (ROD) on the Final EIS for the Fort Baker Plan, and improvements to Alexander Avenue including the Alexander Avenue/Danes Drive intersection were included in the ROD to improve existing conditions at the intersection; and,

**WHEREAS**, the NPS and District have been working together to plan and conduct an environmental analysis for improvements to Alexander Avenue, including the Alexander Avenue/Danes Drive Intersection Improvement Project, whose purpose is to correct existing deficiencies and substandard roadway conditions to the extent possible at the Alexander Avenue left-turn lane to Danes Drive; and,

**WHEREAS**, the existing left-hand turn lane from Alexander Avenue to Danes Drive does not provide sufficient deceleration length and queuing capacity to accommodate peak hour traffic, and, as a result, vehicles tend to encroach into the main travel lane of Alexander Avenue. Further, the combination of narrow shoulders along the section of Alexander Avenue between the Highway 101 interchange and Danes Drive, and the heavy bicycle and pedestrian use, create the potential for conflict between these different user groups; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Project will: widen and extend the left-turn lane on Alexander Avenue; convert the intersection from a Y to a T-type intersection; add roadway shoulder to the portion of Alexander Avenue within the project limits; and, replace the existing guardrail with a new guardrail; and,

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**WHEREAS**, NPS in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the lead agency for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance and the District is the lead agency for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance, and NEPA and CEQA require federal and state agencies respectively to conduct studies of the impacts of a proposed project that have the potential to affect the environment, and consider alternatives to the proposed project before any decisions are made; and,

**WHEREAS**, NPS: hosted an open house on April 26, 2011, at Fort Mason in San Francisco, in order to describe and answer questions regarding the project; mailed out a project newsletter to the public in April 2011; and, sent consultation letters to State and federal agencies with regulatory or review authority over the potentially affected resources to solicit comments on the project; and,

**WHEREAS**, after receipt of scoping comments, several different project alternatives were developed and reviewed, and, as a result, it was determined that the FHWA should prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) under the provisions of NEPA, and that the FHWA, on behalf of the District, would prepare an Initial Study (IS) pursuant to CEQA to assess the potential environmental impacts of the Project; and,

**WHEREAS**, on December 23, 2011, the draft Environmental Assessment/Initial Study (EA/IS) was issued and circulated for review and comment by the public and other interested parties, agencies and organizations; and,

**WHEREAS**, on September 21, 2012, the District again circulated for review the EA/IS, which evaluated the potential environmental impacts of four different alternatives including three "Build Alternatives" and one "No Build Alternative"; and,

**WHEREAS**, from the evaluations performed as a part of the IS, it was determined that the proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment and that the District should adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the project; and,

**WHEREAS**, NPS received comments from four (4) public agencies, three (3) organizations and eleven (11) individual parties during the initial public review and comment period, which occurred from December 23, 2011 to January 27, 2012; and,

**WHEREAS**, the District received a response letter from the State Clearinghouse, which stated they did not receive comments from any of the state agencies to whom they submitted the IS MND; and,

**WHEREAS**, the comments ranged from general support of the project, concerns for bicycle and pedestrian safety and traffic management during construction of the project, questions on how the preferred alternative was selected, to general opposition to the project; and,

**WHEREAS**, as a result of the comments received, District Staff and Counsel determined that no significant modifications should be made to the Project based on the comments received by interested parties and the public; and,

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**WHEREAS**, as noted above, to increase safety, the Project will widen and extend the left-turn lane on Alexander Avenue; convert the intersection from a Y to a T-type intersection; add roadway shoulder to the portion of Alexander Avenue within the project limits; and replace the existing guardrail with new a guardrail; and,

**WHEREAS**, the underlying roadway is owned by the NPS and maintained by the District; and,

**WHEREAS**, FHWA performed the roadway design in accordance with American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHTO), NPS and State design standards. FHWA determined that the roadway will comply with all design standards except for a stopping site distance; and,

**WHEREAS**, the posted speed within the project limits currently is 45 mph, and FHWA performed a speed study on Alexander Avenue to determine typical traffic speeds along the corridor, and considered the changing use of the roadway, including the increased presence of bicyclists and pedestrians on the shoulder; and,

**WHEREAS**, the speed study and use analysis concluded that the design speed standard should be 35 mph; and,

**WHEREAS**, the widening and extension of the left-turn lane on Alexander Avenue is located on a horizontal curve with a radius of 510 feet, and that area is also located between two steep hillsides to the west and east of the roadway; and,

**WHEREAS**, the minimum required stopping site distance for such a curve for a design speed of 35 mph is 250 feet, and the proposed project will lengthen the existing uphill stopping site distance of 190 feet to 228 feet; and,

**WHEREAS**, in order to provide the minimum 250 feet standard, the project would have to further cut into the existing steep hillsides, which would result in significant impacts to the integrity of the geologic features by extensive excavations and to endangered plants and animals that are present at the site, and also would increase Project costs in a very significant way; and,

**WHEREAS**, FHWA engineers determined that an exception to the stopping sight distance standard was appropriate at this location; and,

**WHEREAS**, after taking into consideration the existing site conditions and potential design alternatives for the improvements in the area of the Alexander Avenue/Danes Drive intersection, the District Engineer concurs with the FHWA determination that the proposed design represents the most optimal and cost-effective solution and recommends approval of the design; and,

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**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Directors of the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District that:

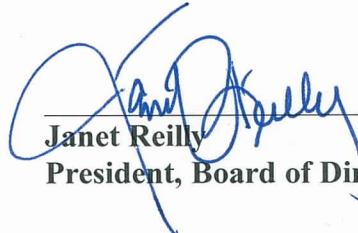
1. The Board of Directors hereby finds and declares that, based upon its independent judgment following review of the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and consideration of the record of the Project as a whole, there is no evidence before the District that the proposed project, as modified, will have a significant effect upon the environment; and
2. The Board of Directors finds that the Project will not have a significant effect on the environment and therefore adopts the Mitigated Negative Declaration; and
3. The Board of Directors hereby adopts the mitigation monitoring plan included within the Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration included with the Initial Study; and
4. The Board of Directors hereby adopts the Project; and
5. The General Manager is directed to file a Notice of Determination promptly with the County Clerk of Marin County and the State CEQA Clearinghouse; and
6. The record of this action shall be maintained by the District Secretary at the District Secretary's Office, Administration Building, Toll Plaza, San Francisco.
7. The Board of Directors hereby approves the Project design, which includes an exception to provide for a shorter, 228 foot long, stopping sight distance than the design standard of 250 foot long stopping sight distance required by the Highway Design Manual for a horizontal curve with a radius of 510 feet in light of topographical and other physical limitations, as analyzed and recommended by the design consultants for the Project, as well as by the District's Engineering Department.


**ADOPTED** this 26<sup>th</sup> day of October 2012, by the following vote of the Board of Directors:

**AYES (15):** Directors Arnold, Campos, Elsbernd, Fredericks, Moylan, Pahre, Rabbitt, Renée, Sears, Snyder, Sobel, Stroeh and Theriault; First Vice President Eddie; President Reilly

**NOES (0):** None

**ABSENT (4):** Directors Chu, Cochran and Mar; Second Vice President Grosboll

  
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**Janet Reilly**  
President, Board of Directors

**ATTEST:**   
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**Janet S. Tarantino**  
Secretary of the District