

## Planning & Zoning Committee of the MidCoast Community Council

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September 28, 2001

To: **Mike Schaller**

San Mateo County Planning and Building Division

Mail Drop PLN122, 455 County Center

Redwood City, CA 94063

650.363.1849 - FAX: 650.363.4849

**re: PLN2001-00430:** Coastal Development Permit, PAD Permit, RM Permit and Negative Declaration to replace an existing 6" raw water main with a new 4" above ground water main from Montara Creek Diversion to Storage reservoir at 714 Alta Vista Rd. in Montara. APN 036-180-030

Mike:

At our meetings of 9/5/01 and on a subsequent site visit on 9/9/01, the Planning & Zoning Committee of the MCC reviewed the above referenced application. We had the following comments:

In summary:

1. The existing pipe is in need of repair and represents a danger and threat to the community and the environment.
  2. Extensive damage to the Montara Creek Riparian Corridor has occurred from the existing installation and failures of the pipeline.
  3. Immediate action is necessary to secure damaged areas to prevent excessive erosion and siltation to the creek in this coming rainy season.
  4. Full environmental review will be necessary to evaluate damage that has occurred, mitigation and restoration measures necessary, and to evaluate the proposed replacement along with other possible, less environmental damaging and more secure alternatives.
1. The committee found the condition of the existing pipeline obviously in need of replacement, especially in the area where the pipe is above ground in the Montara Creek corridor (STA 15+95.5 on onward to the diversion). The bench area above the creek that the pipe runs along from this point to approx STA 20+00 is littered with discarded pieces of corroded metal pipe and fittings from previous failures and breakages, as is the area above this where the pipe lies directly in the creek high water flow channel. Please refer to **images 1 and 2** attached.

2. In two places, approx. STA 18+00 and 19+50, the bank has collapsed and slid into the creek channel from what appears to be either previous pipe failures or excessive stormwater erosion from the design of the bench. The first slide area (18+00, **image 3**) appears to have been recent from the lack of any vegetation on the bare eroded soil. The second and larger one (19+50, **image 4**) appears to have occurred 3-4 years ago based on re-growth of vegetation.

Both of these areas exhibit minimal mitigation or repair work outside of tarps that had been put in place and that are now partly detached and falling down the bank., and both exhibit excessive erosion and siltation of the creek.

Beyond this point, the installation and repair of the pipe that continues to the diversion has resulted in considerable disturbance to the riparian corridor and the accumulation of damaged, broken, corroded pipe within the high-flow channel and other debris down in the main creek bed.

3. The exposed slide areas, pipeline bench and the leftover debris will need immediately attention and remediation before this year's rainy season begins. The exposed soil will cause erosion and siltation into the creek. Instead of the tarps that had been used, which have not stayed in place and only funnel stormwater forcefully into the creek channel while discouraging any revegetation of the banks, we'd recommend that the exposed slide areas need to be treated with permeable erosion control methods, such as jute netted blankets, straw wattles, and fast-growing vegetation restoration (willows, riparian grasses and reeds, etc.)
4. This project will need extensive environmental review, analysis of alternatives and mitigation to past and potential future impacts to the Montara Creek Riparian Creek Corridor. This corridor, from STA 17+00 on to the diversion, should be designated a Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA). The deep canyon exhibits classic riparian & wetland vegetation, primarily Arroyo and Sitka willows, creek dogwood, oenathe, ferns, and sedges.

The construction of the existing bench for the pipe, slope collapse, the installation of the pipe in the highwater channel and leftover debris from earlier repairs has had substantial impact already on this habitat, with loss of existing vegetation, erosion into the creek, and corroded materials within the flow channels.

We also found a number of the endemic species *Lupinus eximius*, the Montara Mountain Blue Bush Lupine, found only on Montara Mountain and listed as a species of concern by the California Native Plant Society (**images 4, 5 & 6**) in the area of the larger slide.

The plans that were supplied with the referral were very inadequate in describing the extent of the environmental issues and impacts associated with this project. We feel this area would need full biological review and mapping of the extent of riparian

habitat and species of concern and/or special status before any work, beyond the necessary emergency repairs of the slide areas and/or any subsequent pipe breakages, is allowed to commence. We recommend that the review contain consideration and analysis of alternatives, including pumping water up from the diversion, moving the diversion to a less sensitive area downstream, or the reduction of or elimination of the diversion altogether for the health of the creek. This last alternatives is brought up from examination of the amount of water flowing into the diversion structure and the very small amount allowed to continue into the creek has raised the issue of whether this impoundment is drawing amounts of water from the creek to the point of being detrimental to the riparian & creek environment.

The committee recommends that the above actions be instituted before this application can proceed any further. Thank you for your help, and please keep us informed of any further developments, redesigns, hearings, approvals or appeals concerning this application.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chuck Kozak". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chuck Kozak, MCC Planning and Zoning Committee Chair  
POB 370702, Montara CA 94037  
Voice/FAX: 650.728.8239 Day: 650.996.8998 - [cgk@montara.com](mailto:cgk@montara.com)

attached: Images 1 – 6.