

California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 1
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November 27, 2023

1-LAK-29-3.76/4.34

Middletown Rancheria Fee-to-Trust
SCH# 2023100714

Mr. Chad Broussard
Environmental Protection Specialist
Bureau of Indian Affairs
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 95825

Dear Mr. Chad Broussard:

Thank you for giving Caltrans the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed Environmental Assessment for the 62.87-Acre Fee-to-Trust Project on behalf of the Middletown Rancheria of Pomo Indians of California, in Lake County, California. The project is located on the west side of State Route (SR) 29, on parcels to the north and south of the existing Middletown Rancheria.

State Route (SR) 29 provides regional access to the parcels proposed for transfer from fee to trust lands. The section of SR 29 in the vicinity of this project is designated access-controlled expressway, which means that adjacent parcels do not have a legal right to access the public right of way except at designated locations ("access openings"). Caltrans has jurisdiction over the public (State) rights of way for SR 29 and we have attached the right of way maps in order to show the locations of, and existing constraints for, access openings that may be of interest to the Middletown Rancheria when developing improvements on the proposed trust lands. The right of way maps are technical renderings prepared by and for surveyors. We offer to clarify any of the descriptions provided by the Caltrans Right of Way Engineers to ensure that the maps are clearly understood by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Middletown Rancheria.

Caltrans standard lane widths are generally either 11 or 12-feet wide. Two way traffic on State roadways typically requires twenty-two (22) to twenty-four (24)-foot road widths, plus shoulders. Shoulder width is prescribed according to the roadway traffic volumes. Regarding the 20-foot-wide private driveway opening at Station 206+20, the access was intended to serve only a single small farm or residence and is not suitable for roadways with two-way traffic. The 40-foot opening at Station 219+10 and the 30-

foot opening at 228+75 were likely designed in 1960 to serve smaller traffic volumes than they currently, or are proposed to, serve.

Note that the Rancheria's access to the frontage road connecting to Western Mine Road is 31.01 feet wide, which may be too narrow for the proposed use, depending on improvements planned or required by the county to make that connection. Widening that connection would involve the private or State adjoiner.

Also worth noting is a Caltrans project to install a Middle-Mile Broadband Network (MMBN) fiber-optic line within the Route 29 right of way, adjacent to the Rancheria, probably on the far side of the highway. MMBN conduit will be installed within Caltrans right of way in close proximity to adjacent property. With the proposed future Tribal developments, consider that broadband utilities will be underground and will need to be avoided during construction.

Another Caltrans project approved a public multi-use path within the State right of way, running north from Rancheria Road to Middletown on the west side of SR 29.

For informational purposes, District 1 has a 6-foot-wide by 5-foot-high box culvert located at post mile 4.08, and a 3.5-foot diameter Corrugated Steel Pipe (CSP)(culvert) located at post mile 3.89.

With respect to the future housing, etc., identified for the proposed trust lands, we request to work with the Tribe to ensure that the access points are designed to serve the intended land uses and to identify any improvements needed on SR 29 to reduce potential conflict points and collisions. We encourage the Tribe to reach out to Caltrans District 1 when planning for housing and site circulation. Depending on the development plans, it may be desirable to prepare a "traffic study" to properly design access improvements or intersection control devices, like roundabouts or traffic signals.

We also encourage the Tribe to consider utilizing transit service for new Tribal development:

1. The three subject parcels slated for residential development are located in close proximity to Lake Transit Authority transit line #3. Line 3 offers connectivity to the regional transit network via SR 29 and service to destinations such as Clearlake, Middletown, Calistoga, St. Helena, etc. The Rancheria may choose to design the proposed residential units with transit accessibility in mind so as to minimize auto dependence.

2. We encourage the Tribe to promote internal circulation (auto, ped and bike) that provides convenient links to transit, which addresses a wide range of transportation

needs (such as youth, disabled, elderly, low-income) and furthers goals to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. Consider connecting multimodal networks to transit, the safety and comfort of bus stops, uninterrupted sidewalks, and protected bike lanes.

3. Travel and transportation facilities extend beyond jurisdictional boundaries, so we encourage the Rancheria to reach out to Caltrans District 1, Lake Transit Agency, and other transportation agencies in the region to collaborate on the transportation needs of current and future tribal residents. Consider taking up issues such as the frequency of transit serving the Rancheria (Line 3), transit stop locations, rider safety and comfort, transit and transportation funding, transit marketing, data collection, etc.

Please contact me with questions or for further assistance with the comments provided at (707) 684-6879 or by email at: <jesse.robertson@dot.ca.gov>.

Sincerely,

Jesse G. Robertson

Jesse Robertson
Transportation Planning
Caltrans District 1

Attachments: LAK-29-3.5_rwe_1264.pdf
 LAK-29-4.0_rwe_1265.pdf
 LAK-29-4.5_rwe_1266.pdf
 Middletown Rancheria Highway Access Review_jgr.pdf

c: State Clearinghouse
 Heidi Quintrell, Chief, Caltrans District 1 Encroachment Permits
 Kathleen Sartorius, Caltrans District 1 Native American Liaison