



Trinity County Planning

Memo

To: Planning Commission
From: Frank Lynch, Principal Planner
Date: June 11, 2015
Re: Road Abandonment – Portion of East Fork Road, CR#421

BACKGROUND: The Department of Transportation (DOT) has forwarded a request for a general vacation of a public road for assessment by the Planning Commission for conformity with the General Plan. The following description is provided by DOT:

The property owner is requesting this road vacation so that he can place a gate across the road and prevent trespassers from using his property as a camp site. We have reviewed the request and investigated the site. DOT has no objection to vacating the end of East Fork Road.

The requested road vacation is on a very remote gravel segment of East Fork Road. While the existing road does not go through the Sullivan property the Trinity County Maintained Road Mileage list still shows the road going all the way through the Sullivan parcel to the Forest Service Boundary. As a precaution, we requested the consent of the Forest Service, which is verified in the attached email (USFS stated that they do not have a concern).

Vacation of the road on the Sullivan parcel would also vacate the turnaround at the end of the road. DOT staff has located an alternative turn around location up the road, and we propose to place a sign stating “no turn around beyond this point, “directly after the last turnaround. Alternatively, it may be feasible to develop a turnaround

at the new end of the road with significant amount of earthwork, and the Planning Commission may choose to require Mr. Sullivan to develop this prior to vacation.

PROJECT DISCUSSION: The project site lies at the terminus of East Fork Road, which extends approximately 5.5 miles north from Highway 299, through the historic community of Helena, terminating at the subject property. The area is all within a Resource General Plan land use designation and is zoned Unclassified. The majority of the property in the vicinity is under management of the U.S. Forest Service. Much of the surrounding area is forested and contains moderate to steep slopes. The Forest notes that they do have roads in the vicinity which do provide access to their lands.

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY: For the purposes of this action, the Commission needs to assess the compatibility of the project with the County's General Plan.

The property lies within the Resource land use designation, for which the intent is described as:

Resource Lands are those areas designated for the production of the variety of natural resources that occur with Trinity County. Natural resources include timber production, mineral production, and important grazing areas. Activities necessary for the production of the various resources are encouraged in this area, and can include industrial development sited adjacent to the resource base being used (timber, ore, etc.) if adequate transportation facilities and access are available and if an acceptable low level of environmental impact can be maintained.

The following are Policies and Objectives within the Circulation Element of the General Plan that are applicable:

Goals and Policies

Transportation System

Goal 1: Provide for the long-range development of the county's roadway system that is consistent with adopted land use patterns, ensures the safe and efficient movement of the people and goods, circulation objectives, and implements funding strategies for construction, improvement, and maintenance of existing and new roadways.

Objective 1.9: Develop standards for reviewing the abandonment of roadways. Standards shall include needs for generation circulation pattern, public utilities, and access to public resources and waterways.

Policy 1.9.A: Road abandonment shall provide the retention of utility and private easements as necessary.

Policy 1.9.B: Proposed abandonment of a road which provides reasonable access to public resources or waterways should be denied.

Policy 1.9.C: Abandonment of a road for vehicular traffic shall consider the need for retaining pedestrian, equestrian, utility or stock easements.

There is not much specific information on this area specifically within the General Plan, however the following is excerpted from the Land Use Element regarding the area surrounding the "Downriver" area, more specifically listed as the area "Trinity River – West of Helena (Downriver):

Findings:

The amount of privately held lands that come under the jurisdiction of Trinity County is extremely limited between Weaverville and Humboldt County along the Trinity River.

A retention of the rural character of the River communities is desired by the residents.

River and/or highway-oriented commercial development is the economic lifeblood of this area of Trinity County.

Flood prone areas, even with the existence of Trinity Dam are still definable.

Recreation facilities are too sparsely located to be available to children.

Fishing is an important recreation and economic component of Trinity County, and that area west of Weaverville and adjacent to the Trinity River is of particular importance.

Policies

1. GROWTH - Encourage new development, especially recreational development, along the state highway and the Trinity River.

a. All Down-River settlement should be designated

Village (V).

b. Provide for rural residential development in the highway/river corridor, consistent with the land's capability to support such development.

c. The County should encourage the development of industry or commercial units that are directly related to the resources in the "Down-River" area. Commercial developments that service the tourism/outdoor recreation industry should be encouraged.

2. SERVICES - In general, the existing low level of services should be maintained, although some improvement of services, such as water supply and fire protection improvements, may be desirable in some of the "Village".

3. RESOURCES - Encourages resource production, especially on the more remote lands and on land unsuited for urban uses.

a. No development should interfere with the restoration, enhancement or protection of the fishery of the Trinity River.

CONCLUSION: In viewing all policies within the various elements of the General Plan staff concludes that the proposed action would not conflict with any of the specific Goals, Policies, or Objectives cited above.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW: The abandonment process will cause only a change in the ownership of the subject property, and will not alter physical conditions.

Given the above, Planning staff did not identify any potential significant adverse environmental impacts associated with the abandonment of this right of way. Further, CEQA Section 15312 provides that the sale of surplus government land, in such instances, is Categorical Exempt from further environmental review. Finally, as the project may be determined to be exempt from CEQA, no filing fee per Fish and Game Code Section 711 is required.

ACTION NECESSARY BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION: The Planning Commission must consider that action and recommend to the Board of Supervisors if they believe the project is consistent with the General Plan.

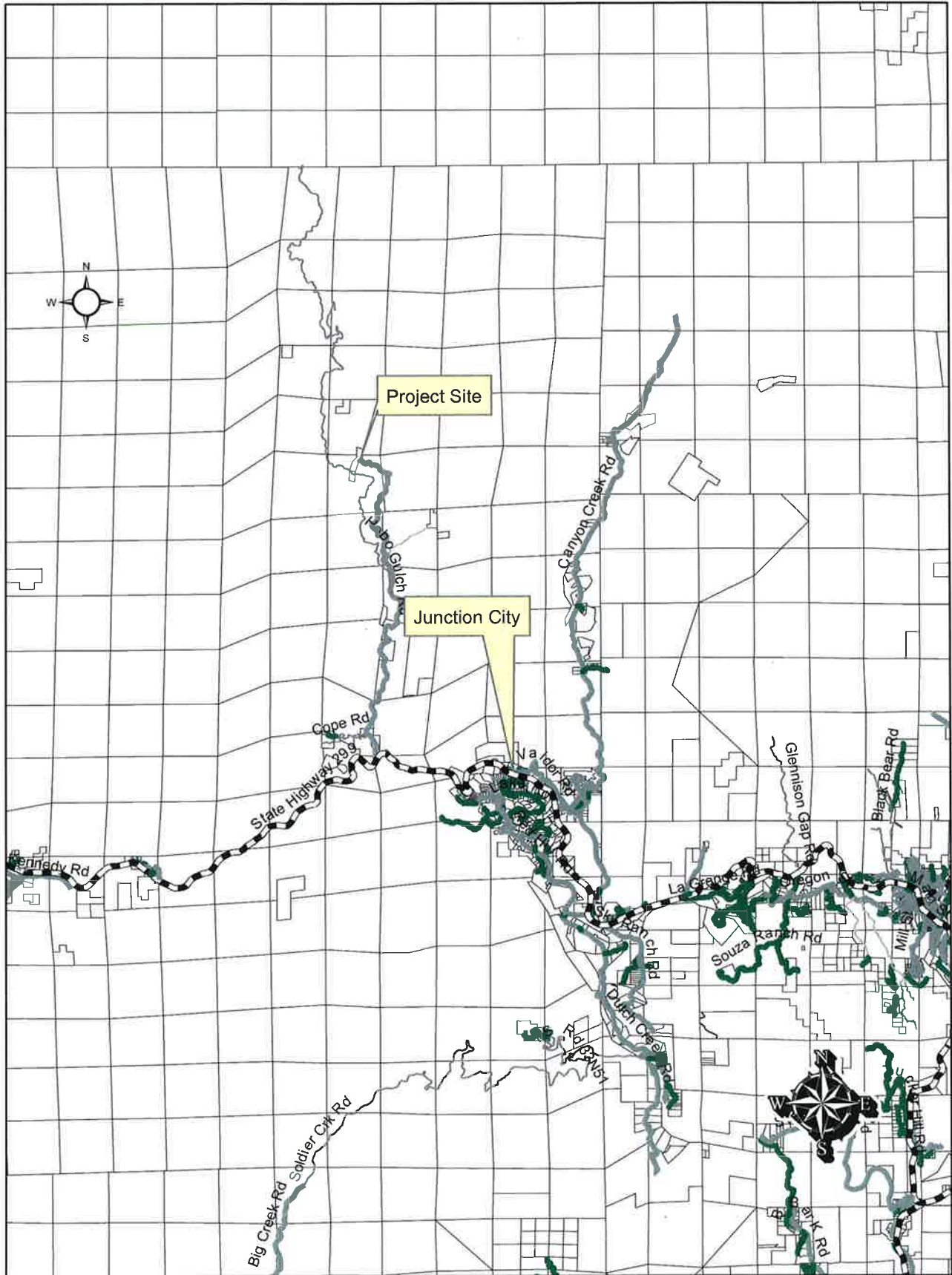
RECOMMENDED FINDINGS:

ENVIRONMENTAL RECOMMENDATION: That the project be found to be Categorical Exempt from CEQA (Class 12).

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY RECOMMENDATION: That the proposed project is consistent with applicable goals and policies of the General Plan.

ALTERNATIVE USE RECOMMENDATION: That this right of way would not be useful as a pedestrian, bicycle, or equestrian trail.

PW 15-03 Road Abandonment East Fork Road



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PW 15-03 Road Abandonment East Fork Road Land Use

