
NOTICE OF PREPARATION

DATE: November 27, 2006

TO: Responsible Agencies, Organizations and Interested Parties

LEAD AGENCY: City of Rancho Cordova
Contact: Ben Ritchie
2729 Prospect Park Drive
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

SUBJECT: Environmental Impact Report for the Sunridge Specific Plan
Traffic Thresholds Project.

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the City of Rancho Cordova will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to address the impacts of proposed changes to the Traffic Thresholds established in the Sunridge Specific Plan (SRSP), approved by Sacramento County in 2002.

The project description, location, and the Traffic Thresholds to be replaced are contained in the attached materials.

As specified by the CEQA Guidelines, this Notice of Preparation will be circulated for a 30-day review period. The City of Rancho Cordova welcomes public input during this review. In the event that no response or request for additional time is received by any Responsible Agency by the end of the review period, the Lead Agency may presume that the Responsible Agency has no response.

Comments may be submitted in writing during the review period and addressed to:

Ben Ritchie
Planning Department
City of Rancho Cordova
2729 Prospect Park Drive
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

The comment period closes on:

December 28, 2006

A. PROJECT BACKGROUND

On July 17, 2002, after a lengthy environmental review process and numerous public hearings, the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors approved the SRSP. On July 1, 2003, the SRSP became part of the newly incorporated City of Rancho Cordova ("City"), whose planning staff and decision-makers thereafter began to process and ultimately to approve specific development proposals within the SRSP area.

On February 21, March 6 and March 20, 2006, the City approved General Plan Amendments, Rezones, Tentative Tract Maps and Development Agreements ("Approvals") for five properties located south of Douglas Boulevard and west of Grant Line Road within the SRSP: *Douglas 98*, *Douglas Grantline 103*, *Grantline 208*, *Montelena* and *Arista Del Sol* (the "Subject Properties"). The City based its approvals on two Mitigated Negative Declarations (MNDs) adopted on February 21 and March 20, 2006 (Resolutions 16-2006 and 26-2006), which incorporated mitigation measures contained in the zoning conditions previously adopted for the SRSP (see Sacramento County Ordinance No. "SZC 2002-0015").

The zoning conditions, inherited by the City from Sacramento County at the time of incorporation, require specified transportation improvements to be completed according to three threshold phases, and prevent the affected property owners from recording final maps that create more than a cumulative total of 2000, 3025, and 6500 lots within the SRSP before commencement of construction of corresponding transportation improvements (the "Threshold Conditions"). Accordingly, for properties that are subject to the Threshold Conditions, final maps cannot be recorded until commencement of construction of all of the transportation improvements for each threshold.

In early 2005 the City commissioned the preparation of the "Rancho Cordova Transportation Infrastructure Phasing Study" in order to test the assumptions and validity of the traffic thresholds, due in part to the fact that the development community had reached the early threshold limits of 2,000 units and they were not able to build beyond 3,025 units due to delays in obtaining federal permits for roadway construction projects. The effect of the thresholds would significantly impact the course of development, because of the delays to the construction of the listed roadways. The phasing study concluded that the 3,025 unit threshold could be adjusted to 5,225 units, with some variation to the timing of construction of certain roadway improvements and the addition of other road improvements that increased the efficiency of the overall system. Thus, in April 2006, the City modified its approvals of other properties within the SRSP (Anthology at Anatolia, Villages 9, 11, and 23 of Anatolia III, Anatolia IV, Cresleigh/Lot J, North Douglas, Sundance/Mather East, and Sunridge Park I & II) to modify the SRSP zoning conditions by replacing the Threshold Conditions applicable to those properties with a new threshold schedule based on dwelling unit equivalencies. That action, taken on April 17, 2006, was based upon an Addendum to the EIR for the SRSP (Resolution 31-2006). The Subject Properties are the only lands remaining within the SRSP that are still subject to the original Threshold Conditions.

B. PROJECT LOCATION AND CURRENT USE

The five properties addressed in this NOP are located south of Douglas Boulevard and west of Grant Line Road within the SRSP: *Douglas 98*, *Douglas Grantline 103*, *Grantline 208*, *Montelena* and *Arista Del Sol* (the "Subject Properties"). The location of the SRSP and the subject properties are shown in **Figure 1**. The subject properties are currently unoccupied.

C. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the proposed project are as follows:

- Provide the City with flexibility in the prioritization of roadway improvements in response to available funding, roadway capacity, demand, and the need for local, State, and federal agency approvals;
- Facilitate the implementation of the City's General Plan by allowing for timely delivery of development projects and thus the ongoing generation of fees to fund transportation improvements; and
- Facilitate the implementation of the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) by providing additional funding for CIP improvements.

D. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed Project described herein is a proposal to amend the Approvals for the Subject Properties by eliminating the Threshold Conditions in exchange for the payment, with the issuance of each building permit, of a per-unit transportation impact fee (Fee) reflecting the City's updated city-wide CIP, anticipated to be in place before building permits are issued for the Subject Properties, and any supplemental transportation fees as agreed upon in order to ensure timely delivery of critical improvements. The City will use the proceeds of the Fee to help fund the design and construction of transportation improvements identified in the updated CIP, including the improvements to which the Threshold Conditions were tied.

The updated CIP will include a more comprehensive set of improvements than were envisioned by Sacramento County in 2002, as the new program will reflect not only the City's recently adopted General Plan but also regional discussions with entities such as Caltrans, Folsom, and Sacramento County. Therefore the updated fee and any agreed upon supplemental fees will provide a greater total amount of money for the City for critically needed improvements, many of which might otherwise not all get built due to funding constraints. The proposed Project, which would contribute to this increased source of money for these improvements, would eliminate the Threshold Conditions in order to allow fee-generating SRSP development to proceed and thus contribute funding for these needed improvements. Absent the proposed Project, this development might not occur for several years (and, therefore, the funding contribution for CIP improvements would not be available), as it would be dependent on approvals of certain very specific transportation improvements that require approvals of local, State, or federal agencies.

Implementation of the proposed Project would not allow for any additional development or changes in the allowable development in the Subject Properties that was not fully addressed in both the SRSP EIR, certified by Sacramento County July 17, 2002, and in the two subsequently prepared MNDs, mentioned above, adopted by the City of Rancho Cordova on February 21 and March 20, 2006. Although the proposed Project would neither authorize increased development nor set a legally binding precedent applicable elsewhere in the City, it is nevertheless possible, and perhaps reasonably foreseeable, that approval of the proposed Project could persuade City decision-makers of the practical problems associated with a threshold-based approach to traffic mitigation, and thus indirectly result in similar modifications to and/or removal of proposed or existing threshold-based constraints for other projects within the City and the region, including the Rio Del Oro project to the north of the proposed Project,

the Westborough project north of Rio Del Oro, and the Suncreek Specific Plan to the south of the proposed Project. For this reason, the traffic impact analysis prepared for the proposed Project will assume that reasonably foreseeable development within the City will *not* be subject to thresholds similar to those proposed for elimination as part of the proposed Project.

E. TYPE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

At the time this Notice of Preparation was prepared and released to the public, it remained unclear whether the EIR to be prepared will be a "subsequent EIR" or a "supplement to an EIR." (See CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15162, 15163.) According to the California Resources Agency's "Discussion" following CEQA Guidelines section 15163, "[a] supplement to an EIR may be distinguished from a subsequent EIR by the following: a supplement augments a previously certified EIR to the extent necessary to address the conditions described in section 15162 and to examine mitigation and project alternatives accordingly. It is intended to revise the previous EIR through supplementation. A subsequent EIR, in contrast, is a complete EIR which focuses on the conditions described in section 15162." In other words, a subsequent EIR is a stand-alone EIR not dependent on a prior document for its legal adequacy whereas a supplement to an EIR is dependent on a previously certified final EIR, so that the two documents should be viewed together as two parts of a single package.

The determination as to which type of EIR will be prepared for the project for which this NOP is being prepared may turn on the decision of the California Supreme Court in pending litigation entitled, *Vineyard Area Citizens et al. v. City of Rancho Cordova* (Supreme Court No. S132972). The decision in that case, which will focus on the adequacy of the discussion of water supplies and possible impacts to the Cosumnes River, will determine the legal adequacy of the 2002 Final EIR prepared by Sacramento County for the Sunrise Douglas Community Plan and Sunridge Specific Plan. The Zoning Conditions proposed for amendment as part of the proposed project derived from the 2002 Final EIR, which addressed the transportation-related impacts of buildout of the Sunridge Specific Plan. Because oral argument in the *Vineyard Area Citizens* litigation occurred on November 7, 2006, and because the Supreme Court typically issues its decisions less than 90 days following oral argument, the City expects to know by early 2007 whether, as both the Sacramento Superior Court and Court of Appeal have held, the 2002 EIR is adequate. If the Supreme Court rules in the City's favor, the EIR for the proposed project will likely be a supplement to the 2002 EIR. If the Supreme Court rules against the City, legal counsel for the City will have to determine whether an adverse ruling on issues unrelated to transportation-related matters will prevent the preparation of such a document and will instead require preparation of a stand-alone subsequent EIR.

F. REQUIRED APPROVALS

City of Rancho Cordova: Actions that would be required from the City Council, Planning Commission and/or City staff may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Certification of the EIR** - Certification that the EIR adequately identifies any significant environmental effects of the Proposed Project, pursuant to CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines;
- **Mitigation Monitoring** – Adoption of a Mitigation Monitoring Plan to reflect the measures required to mitigate significant impacts, if any, of the project;

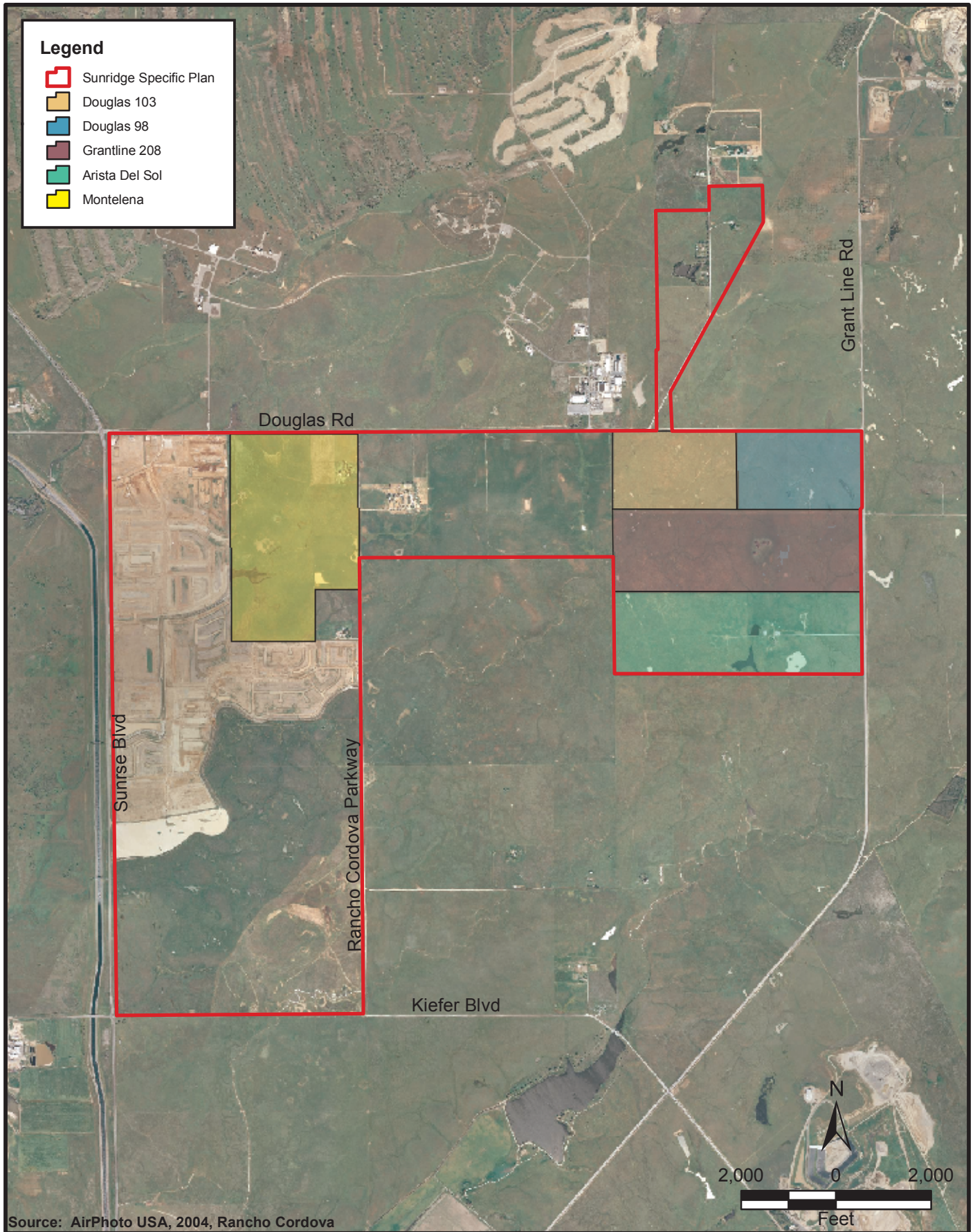
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- **Amendment to Zoning Conditions** – Modification of the zoning conditions for the subject properties in order to reflect the actions of the proposed project; and
 - **Modification of Map Conditions** – Modification of the map conditions for the subject properties to allow for construction without traffic improvement thresholds.

G. POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The Sunridge Traffic Thresholds project has the potential to result in significant impacts to the environment. City staff intends to prepare an Initial Study to be released concurrent with the subsequent or supplemental EIR as described above. It is anticipated that any potentially significant impacts associated with the proposed Project will be limited to traffic-related impacts (some of which may be significant), as no development or approvals beyond those addressed in the 2002 EIR certified by Sacramento County are proposed. Additional study of the indirect traffic effects of approval of the proposed Project may have in respect to other similar development projects in the region will be included. The initial study will address the potential for the project to result in impacts to the environment consistent with the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G checklist.

ATTACHMENTS

- Figure 1- Subject Properties
- Threshold Improvements



Phased Traffic Improvements - SDCP/SRSP EIR - Based on MMRP

MM# from MMRP	Location	Improvement	Current Condition	Phasing (lots)
34-1	Douglas Road between Sunrise Boulevard and Rancho Cordova Parkway	Widen to six lanes.	Under Construction	2000
34-2	Douglas Road between Rancho Cordova Parkway and Americanos Boulevard	Widen to six lanes.	Two Lanes	2000
34-3	Intersection of Douglas Road and Sunrise Boulevard	6x6 Intersection with signalization.	Portion Under Construction	2000
34-4	Sunrise Boulevard between Douglas Road and Chrysanthy Boulevard	Widen to six lanes.	Under Construction	2000
34-5	Intersection of Sunrise Boulevard and Chrysanthy Boulevard	6x4 Intersection with signalization.	Under Construction	2000
34-6	Intersection of Sunrise Boulevard and Kiefer Boulevard	Interim 4x4 intersection with signalization.	Under Construction	2000
34-7	Sunrise Boulevard between Sunrise Park Drive and Douglas Road	Widen to six lanes.	Under Construction	2000
34-8	Folsom South Canal Trail Access	Provide access at Douglas Road	Unknown	2000
34-9	Intersection of Zinfandel Drive and International Drive	Install signalization.	Stop Sign	2000
35-1	Douglas Road between Sunrise Boulevard and Rancho Cordova Parkway	Widen to six lanes.	Under Construction	3025
35-2	Douglas Road between Rancho Cordova Parkway and Americanos Boulevard	Widen to six lanes.	Two Lanes	3025
35-3	Intersection of Douglas Road and Sunrise Boulevard	6x6 Intersection with signalization.	Portion Under Construction	3025
35-4	Intersection of Douglas Road and Rancho Cordova Parkway	6x4 Intersection with signalization.	Portion Under Construction	3025
35-5	Intersection of Douglas Road and Zinfandel Drive	Construct north and south through lanes.	Roadway Doesn't Yet Exist.	3025
35-6	Sunrise Boulevard between Douglas Road and Chrysanthy Boulevard	Widen to six lanes.	Under Construction	3025
35-7	Sunrise Boulevard between Chrysanthy Bouelvard and Kiefer Boulevard	Widen to six lanes.	Under Construction	3025
35-8	Sunrise Boulevard between Kiefer Boulevard and SR -16	Widen to six lanes.	Under Design	3025
35-9	Intersection of Sunrise Boulevard and Chrysanthy Boulevard	6x4 Intersection with signalization.	Under Construction	3025
35-10	Intersection of Sunrise Boulevard and Kiefer Boulevard	6x4 Intersection with signalization.	Under Design	3025
35-11	Intersection of Sunrise Boulevard and SR-16	6x6 Intersection with signalization.	Under Design	3025
35-12	Intersection of Sunrise Boulevard and Grant Line Road	6x6 Intersection with signalization.	3x2 Stop Sign	3025
35-13	Intersection of Grant Line Road and SR-16	6x4 Intersection with signalization.	3x2 Signalized	3025
35-14	Intersection of Grant Line Road and White Rock Road	Add exclusive left turn lane on White Rock	2x2 Stop Sign	3025
35-15	Chrysanthy Boulevard from Sunrise Boulevard to Rancho Cordova Parkway	Construct 4 lane roadway.	Under Construction	3025
35-16	Intersection of Chrysanthy Boulevard and Rancho Cordova Parkway	4x4 Intersection with signalization.	Under Construction	3025
35-17	Rancho Cordova Parkway between Douglas Road and Chrysanthy Boulevard	Construct 4 lane roadway.	Under Construction	3025
35-18	Sunrise Bouelvard between Sunrise Park Drive and Douglas Road	Widen to six lanes.	Under Construction	3025
35-19	Folsom South Canal Trail Access	Provide access at Douglas Road	Unknown	3025
35-20	Intersection of SR-16 and Bradshaw Road	4x4 Intersection with signalization.	5x5 Signalized	3025

Phased Traffic Improvements - SDCP/SRSP EIR - Based on MMRP

MM# from MMRP	Location	Improvement	Current Condition	Phasing (lots)
35-21	Intersection of SR-16 and Eagles Nest Road	4x4 Intersection with signalization.	3x2 Stop Sign (Eagles Nest Only)	3025
35-22	Intersection of SR-16 and Excelsior Drive	4x4 Intersection with signalization.	3x2 Stop Sign (Excelsior Only)	3025
35-23	Sunrise Boulevard between Douglas Road and Kiefer Boulevard	Install Fronting Access Signals	Stop Signs (For Access)	3025
35-24	SR-16 from Sunrise Boulevard to Grant Line Road	Widen to four lanes with median	Two Lanes	3025
35-25	Rancho Cordova Parkway (Sunrise Reliever)	Begin Planning, Design, and Environmental Review	Under Review	3025
35-26	Intersection of Zinfandel Drive and International Drive	Install signalization.	Stop Sign	3025
36	Zinfandel Drive between current terminus to Douglas Road	Construct a minimum of two travel lanes.	Does Not Exist	3025
37-a	Rancho Cordova Parkway (Sunrise Reliever) between US-50 and Douglas Road	Construct a minimum of two travel lanes.	Does Not Exist	6500
37-b	Sunrise Boulevard between Douglas Road and SR-16	Widen to six lanes.	Under Construction to Kiefer, Under Design for Remainder	6500
37-c	Douglas Road from the Folsom South Canal to Grant Line Road	Widen to four lanes.	Under Construction From Sunrise to Grant Line Road. Remainder Unknown (County)	6500
37-d	Chrysanthy Boulevard from Sunrise Boulevard to Americanos Boulevard	Construct four traffic lanes.	Under Construction to Rancho Cordova Parkway, Awaiting Permits for Remainder	6500
37-e	Americanos Boulevard between Douglas Road and Chrysanthy Boulevard	Construct four traffic lanes.	Designed, CEQA Complete, Awaiting Permits	6500
37-f	SR-16 from Bradshaw Road to Sunrise Boulevard	Widen to four lanes.	Two Lanes	6500
37-g	Intersection of SR-16 and Bradshaw Road	Phase II Intersection Improvements	5x5 Signalized	6500
	Intersection of SR-16 and Eagles Nest Road	Phase II Intersection Improvements	3x2 Stop Sign (Eagles Nest Only)	
	Intersection of SR-16 and Excelsior Drive	Phase II Intersection Improvements	3x2 Stop Sign (Excelsior Only)	