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MEMORANDUM

TO: Howey-in-the-Hills Planning Board
CC: J. Brock, Town Clerk
FROM: Thomas Harowski, AICP, Planning Consultant
SUBJECT: County Staff Letter on Number Two Road
DATE: January 18, 2024

The Planning Board requested a discussion be scheduled on the letter from Mr. Schneider regarding Number Two Road. This memo is intended to provide some background information for the discussion.

Essentially the staff agrees with both points made in the letter. The letter identifies improvements to Number Two Road that should be made by the Mission Rise and Hilltop Groves projects. The Town's position for both projects is that each development needs to obtain permits from Lake County for the road connections and make any improvements required by the county including dedication of additional right-of-way, widening of travel lanes, turn lanes and other elements such as sidewalks. For both projects the Town is requiring the construction of a multi-use path to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians. We expect this facility to be located within the expanded right-of-way unless Lake County objects.

The inclusion of the central collector roads within the Hilltop Groves and Mission Rise projects is consistent with our comprehensive plan requirements. For development of projects of these sizes multiple access points are required for safety, and the more traffic access options that are available, the more traffic will be distributed across the entire road network. This outcome reduces demand on individual facilities by providing options for drivers. The project designs include interconnections between the projects, and as the Mission Rise traffic study demonstrated, an estimated 10% of the trips generated by Mission Rise will use the local road network within the Hilltop Groves development.

Other factors being equal, drivers will tend to use the route that is shortest for the intended trip, both in time and distance. Drivers will prefer roads where higher speeds can be maintained and routes where they feel the safest to drive. If portions of Number Two Road, or any road, are perceived as being less safe, drivers will often choose another route even if that route takes longer to complete the trip. This is not to suggest that widening for safety does not need to be pursued or that Number Two Road will not

experience increased traffic as a result of developments that have been and are being considered, not just by Howey, but by Lessburg and Lake County itself.

In evaluating the impacts of proposed developments on Number Two Road, the Town has required the study to reduce the capacity of Number Two Road to reflect the more difficult travel conditions. The Mission Rise traffic study reduced the capacity by 25%. This capacity reduction advances the point where the available capacity is exceeded and some form of contribution to improvements beyond impact fees is considered. While Howey uses a fair share contribution system to address capacity issues, Lake County does collect a traffic impact fee. To date the traffic studies, which include existing traffic, normal background traffic increases, traffic projected from approved but not yet built projects and traffic from new project proposals, have not resulted in predicted capacity issues on Number Two Road, even at the reduced capacity.

The letter states the need to address the areas of Number Two Road that will not be improved as a result of planned development. The Town agrees with that statement and has indicated a willingness to support Lake County in efforts to obtain funding for this work. The bottom line here is that Lake County is the agency responsible for the road, and they need to take the lead in this effort. The Town can take a supporting role in this effort, just as the Town has supported the county in bringing the road to standard in areas where development has been proposed or approved.