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To: San Mateo County Planning and Building Dept
Attn: Steve Monowitz, Deputy Director

RE: Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Improvement Studies phase 1 and 2
Half Moon Bay to Devil's Slide

Dear Mr. Monowitz,

We are writing to provide these written comments to reiterate what we individually said at the Feb 29th and Mar 14th Midcoast Community Council meetings.

Some background: My spouse and I are new homeowners in this beautiful, rural community of Montara. We have loved Montara and the coastside for a long time and have been commuting here for over 11 years. We keep our horse in Montara and moved here from San Francisco in June 2011.

We also chose Montara as the ideal place to live to get away from the government of San Francisco and its Municipal Transportation Agency that has pushed its anti-car transportation agenda on residents with no regard for their needs or concerns regarding parking, access to roadways and the issue of bicycle lanes. The bike plan in San Francisco has made that city unpleasant for drivers and extremely dangerous for drivers and bicyclists alike due to the actions of bike riders who continue to disobey the laws and ride as though they are the only ones on the road.

With regard to the Safety and Mobility issues addressed in the studies, we believe the most important and essential issues should be to emphasize safety and improve driving on Highway 1 as well as moving access points to surrounding recreational areas away from peoples' homes. Both current study reports incorporate too many other factors - Coastal Trail, parallel/multi-modal/commuter trail, roundabouts and bridges across the highway.

We do not want trails of any kind near our homes and want recreation area trailhead access points to be close to the highway and out of our neighbourhoods.

We feel the priority should be to fix the highway and its problems on the coastside:

- widen the roadway and create shoulders where feasible in order to put a bike path alongside Hwy 1;
- make places for safe pedestrian crossings (and where people can walk their bikes across) with combinations of well-marked crosswalks and medians (NO roundabouts!);
- slow down the speed from Devil's Slide to HMB to 45mph (40mph through the Montara and Moss Beach communities);
- add medians and pockets to make left and right turns safe;
- take into consideration that people live on the west side of Hwy 1 in Montara and their driveways run right onto (and off of) the highway;
- deal with the parking problems at 1st & 2nd in Montara, along Hwy 1 from Devil's Slide and at Surfer's Beach area in El Granada;
- do not identify or point to any kind of "trail" (bike or pedestrian) that would funnel traffic into our communities.

If the county wants to improve the coastside experience for those who live here, enable us to travel between

Montara and Half Moon Bay without getting stuck at Surfer's Beach so we can visit El Granada and Half Moon Bay and support our local businesses. Once Devil's Slide park opens in 2013, this will be an even bigger issue as residents who live in HMB will also want to travel to the park and home again - by automobile.

Too much emphasis is being given to this idea for a parallel/multi-modal/commuter trail, which, in actuality, is a bike trail. Work is already progressing on the Coastal Trail with its own issues pertaining to respect for property owners and incorporating pedestrians, bicyclists, equestrians and people with disabilities. Residents have a hard enough time keeping on top of that process. Making residents also focus on a 2nd trail is redundant and just plain cruel!

In the study reports, ideas for a parallel/multi-modal/commuter trail have been overlaid on maps without due consideration given to where people live. Other separate reports include "informal parking" in our neighbourhoods.

This is all unnecessary when you consider improvements to the highway and parking areas and the work being done on the Coastal Trail.

Highway 1

Page 12 of the phase 2 study describes the CalTrans policy of supporting context sensitive solutions - considering the communities and lands around highways and addressing the physical settings to "preserve scenic, aesthetic, historic and environmental resources while maintaining safety and mobility." The complete streets policy supports increased mobility and access for all users on CalTrans roads, defining this as a "transportation facility that is planned, designed, operated, and maintained to provide safe mobility for all users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, and motorists appropriate to the function and context of the facility." The highway fits the definition of a complete street if it is modified appropriately.

Coastal Trail

Issues pertaining to the Coastal Trail already mention the need to respect property rights and residential uses, concern for protection of privacy and neighbourhoods, and the need for ADA compliance.

And it is already understood that there may be gaps in the trail due to topographical, private property or residential area issues. The focus on another trail to accommodate bicyclists who want to ride back and forth between HMB and Montara is not only redundant but also violates the mandates of the Coastal Trail.

SB 1396

(h) Senate Bill 908 directed that the California Coastal Trail be developed in a manner that demonstrates respect for property rights and nearby residential uses, and consideration for the protection of the privacy of adjacent property owners.

http://scc.ca.gov/webmaster/pdfs/Laird_Bill.pdf

4. Assure that the location and design of the Coastal Trail is consistent with the policies of the California Coastal Act and local coastal programs, and is respectful of the rights of private landowners.

The California Coastal Trail is a public facility and therefore must comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA).

RESPECT. The trail must be located and designed with a healthy regard for the protection of natural habitats, cultural and archaeological features, private property rights, neighborhoods, and agricultural operations along the way.

<http://www.californiacoastaltrail.info/cms/pages/trail/done.html>

People live in Montara, *we* live in Montara. People live on Main Street and Farallone Street in Montara as well as

the north end of Carlos Street in Moss Beach (between 16th St. and Admiral Street). And we don't want a designated bike trail outside our front doors.

You are talking about our homes and our community when you propose bringing visitors/outsideers further into our residential areas. Under the guise of improvements, the quality of life of residents is put at risk, and sometimes destroyed, in order to serve a non-resident population.

Keep the trails in the parks or along the highway and away from our homes and streets. And don't confuse the Coastal Trail issue with a parallel/multi-modal/commuter trail. The highway is there to move traffic so do something to get it moving more smoothly.

Refrain from telling outsiders to drive through our neighbourhoods to get to a national, state or county park or the beach; don't disregard the members of this community in order to fulfill some fantasy of an additional parallel/multi-modal/commuter trail. Just because we are a small, unincorporated area of SMC does not mean we do not have a loud voice to respond to these issues.

Homes in Montara and Moss Beach (near the highway) are built so close to the road (mostly without sidewalks), anything you do to create new pathways along those roads will infringe on the surrounding properties.

The minute you "identify" a bike route through communities, you will have the "mini tour de france" saying yippee! Let's do a group ride through those communities. None of us who live here want that - residents who live on Main and Farallone already have enough traffic to contend with.

That kind of invitation to come through our small community will ruin it. We live between Main and Farallone and right near "old" Main Street. We do not appreciate having those two streets constantly thrown out as an ideal location for part of a pedestrian & bikeway network or even as part of the Coastal Trail.

Do not pretend that you are improving our community by suggesting that a parallel/multi-modal/commuter trail will primarily serve the locals -- it will only draw outsiders here to park in our driveways or alongside our neighbour's house - campers and RV's would not be far behind.

Scenario: Such a nice idea, my dear - let's drive to Montara and utilize the "informal parking" (next to someone's house) so we can ride our bikes to HMB and back. Hope there aren't any of those pesky pedestrians spread out across the bike path cuz they block our way and never respond properly by jumping out of the way when I ring my bell or yell at them.

Better yet, let's bring the camper and then we can stay overnight and bring the dogs. We can go over to GGNRA and let them run off-leash because we've done *that* before and by golly we will continue to do that no matter whether there are leash laws or darn horse people (and others) who complain about it.

We implore you, focus on the highway, keep the trails and trail entrances in the parks or alongside the highway and give residents some peace and quiet in our homes and on our streets.

Some specific points:

1. Bike riders and bike lanes (general): bike trails through neighbourhoods in rural areas such as the coastside do not serve the general population.
 - % of population that ride bikes:
 - San Mateo County census data indicates that the 2010 population of the whole county = 718,451;
 - Approximately 1/2 of those people are 16 years or older and are working (around 360,000);
 - The 2000 census showed that less than 1% -- 0.82% -- of the working population used a bike as the main method of transportation to and from work:
 - That means, using the 2010 census numbers, $0.82\% \times 360,000 = 2952$ people, in all of San Mateo County ride bikes to and from work;

- Even if that were doubled to include children under 16 and recreational bicyclists, that is still only 5904 individuals in the whole county (448.41 square miles);
 - Looking at the coastsides with an approximate population of 24,000 and possibly higher rates of bike riding (1.6-2.5%) you are only looking at 384-600 people.
- Take the parallel/multi-modal/commuter trail off the table! It does not serve the general population and is not compatible with the area.
 - It is unreasonable to consider building a bike trail from HMB to Montara to accommodate such a small % of the population.
 - The majority of residents in Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada and Half Moon Bay want to be able to drive back and forth between our communities.
 - Do not give in to a small, aggressively vocal minority who keep pushing for bike trails.
- Bike lanes in Europe, Canada and many other countries are clearly marked by color (red or green) and follow alongside busy roadways and highways.
- This type of bike lane could be built alongside Hwy 1 from Devil's Slide park (or the tunnel) all the way down to Half Moon Bay, without intruding into neighbourhoods or having the "bike trail" zig-zag back and forth across the highway.
- If the speed limit were reduced to 45mph (40mph through communities) it would be no different than having bike lanes alongside roadways in urban areas.
 - Page 22 of the phase 2 study points out that there is a need to deal with bike traffic between Devil's Slide and the coastsides communities and that "providing enhanced shoulders for bicyclists should be a priority consideration."
 - If the highway from Devil's Slide to Montara is not wide enough to incorporate a bike lane, use of trails in McNee Ranch State Park and Rancho Corral de Tierra should be investigated for bringing cyclists down and around to connect back with a bike lane on the highway in Montara and through Moss Beach and beyond.

2. Problems with a parallel/multi-modal/commuter trail:

It is a fantasy to think that there could be, or needs to be, a trail that connects HMB and Montara. The highway is there and that is where bicyclists should stay.

A parallel/multi-modal/commuter trail is a bike trail in disguise and it is totally unrealistic and incompatible with the Montara and Moss Beach communities, especially when there is talk of bringing a trail into those communities.

The fact that these communities – Montara in particular – were built so close to the highway means there is no route that does not infringe on the rights of residents to a peaceful neighbourhood without intrusive visitors/outsideers.

Also, to be realistic, nobody is going to walk to Half Moon Bay to go shopping on Saturday – they would drive! So fixing the highway problems would make that a very simple matter.

In addition, parallel/multi-modal/commuter trails (like the Coastal Trail) must be ADA compliant for disabled access. This has proven to be difficult for the Coastal Trail and would be problematic for any other kind of trail.

Pedestrians have difficulties with bicyclists on trails; the elderly and those with disabilities (including hearing problems) do as well. The bicyclists tend to take over any trail and, rather than give the right of way to pedestrians, they expect walkers to jump out of their way and not "clog up" the trail by walking side by side. Walkers just give up and seniors and people with disabilities don't even want to try.

Community members also have issues with the suggestion that “old” Main Street Montara would be ideal as part of a trail along Main Street and into Moss Beach. This idea totally ignores what would happen to the neighbourhood from 9th to 14th in Montara.

“Old” Main Street is not in the best condition and, what is there now (and below it) is probably helping to support the properties that run alongside it at the ends of 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th. Also, the old road is part of the buffer for those homes – the roadbed and shrubbery protect the homes from being right on the highway.

In order to bring that part of the road “up to standard,” the old roadbed would have to be taken out and a new roadway built. In order to do that, not only would the shrub/tree buffer be removed but also the county would then be in the position of having to ensure the safety of the foundations of the homes that abut it by preventing any future land slippage.

Community members already walk along this old roadway and are perfectly happy with things the way they are.

3. Law enforcement:

How did it happen that people have been allowed to park alongside the highway and intrude into neighbourhoods, creating the bottleneck at Surfer’s Beach and hazardous conditions along Hwy 1??? Where is the enforcement of no parking zones? This doesn’t bode well for the future if there is no enforcement now.

It would appear that San Mateo County has already shown how it fails miserably in the areas of law enforcement, implementing and enforcing parking regulations, and general care of the most heavily impacted areas -- the Surfer’s Beach and surrounding sections of Hwy 1 and the situation at 1st & 2nd here in Montara.

Outside users park wherever they please because they know there is no enforcement. Here in Montara, the poor people who live near the restaurant are constantly faced with vehicles parked on their street. And then there is the deplorably dangerous illegal parking along the highway in all areas. Not only do people illegally park along the highway but they also disregard the No Parking signs at all the little turnouts and entrances to parks such as the McNee Ranch State Park gate just north of Montara.

Just cleaning up the Highway 1 shoulder parking would go a long way toward enabling traffic to move smoothly and safely between Half Moon Bay and Devil’s Slide. It would also make it safer for bicyclists.

Visitors need to be sent a clear message: if there is no legal parking in designated areas then you must “move along” – sorry, but no stopping at the beach or the restaurant today!!

4. Park entrances and parking:

Keep the trails in the parks and away from our homes and streets; the same goes for parking.

The idea to use the roadway at the south end of Ocean View Farms in Montara that terminates in a small, unobtrusive parking area with restrooms (away from the highway and homes) makes sense. This would move the access point for GGNRA away from the Le Conte neighbours.

However, it goes against all priorities of all the “coastal plans” for any kind of development to use the fallow field as a parking lot. It would be an eyesore and probably have serious environmental repercussions due to automobile pollution (oil and gas).

As it now stands, neighbours at Le Conte and the residents of Coral Reef in El Granada are suffering due to the fact GGNRA has turned informal entrances into Rancho Corral del Tierra into formal park

entrances. Now, those residents not only have to deal with locals who access the area through those trailheads but outsiders who come to use the park and drive through or park in their neighbourhoods.

What is SMC doing to help them? Is the county working with GGNRA or are the residents on their own to fight it out with GGNRA?

Why did the county allow this to happen? The National Park Service does not own those streets so why have they been allowed to publicize these access points?

5. Bicycles and Safety:

What plans are being developed with regard to safety on the highway for pedestrians and bicyclists?

Who will ensure that bikes are walked across the highway at all times – none of the usual “stick out your arm and cut off traffic to turn left.”

Who will ensure that safety gear is worn according to the law – helmets, reflective vests, lights.

Who will ensure that bicyclists give way to pedestrians, equestrians and the disabled, not the other way around.

Main and Farallone in Montara are the primary access roads for residents and tradespeople who work on projects here as well as for those who come to visit residents or stay in vacation homes. Turning into and off of the highway at 14th, 9th, 8th and 2nd mean vehicles must use those streets to access the community.

Any kind of “share the road” designation for bikes would impose an added safety risk to the bicyclists and an added burden on drivers to constantly be on the lookout for riders (along with the resident skunks, raccoons, cats, etc.).

Keeping bicycles alongside Hwy 1 totally eliminates the criss-crossing of the highway that would be necessary if an attempt were made to build a parallel/multi-modal/commuter trail for bicyclists that goes partially through our neighbourhoods. The highway goes straight through all coastside communities whereas a parallel trail would not – the safety risks involved in that type of trail would increase rather than reduce accidents.

Eliminate the redundancy of a parallel/multi-modal/commuter trail and keep bike lanes alongside the highway or through the recreational space behind Montara and Moss Beach.

Do one thing and do it well – the highway needs to be the focus.

Sincerely

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cc. Midcoast Community Council
Supervisor Don Horsley, San Mateo County, 3rd District

REFERENCES

Bay Area Census:

<http://www.bayareacensus.ca.gov/counties/SanMateoCounty.htm>

California Coastal Trail:

<http://www.californiacoastaltrail.info/cms/pages/trail/done.html>

Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Improvement Study: Phase 1 and Phase 2

<http://mcc.sanmateo.org/H1-Midcoast.html>

Implications of training programs for bicycle safety:

<http://depts.washington.edu/hiprc/pdf/report.pdf>

Some photos of bike lanes in Canada and Europe



Red painted lane / one on each side of road:

http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Utrecht-IMG_7242.JPG



Red lane / divided:

http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Viale_Spartaco_Lavagnini_%28Firenze%29_17.JPG



Red lane / divided with different markings (jogger just making use of trail):

<http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Cicloviainicio.jpg>