

Midcoast Community Council

*An elected Municipal Advisory Council to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
Serving 12,000 coastal residents*

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June 22, 2011

Supervisor Don Horsley
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
400 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063

Re: Pilarcitos Quarry DEIR Comments

Honorable Supervisor Horsley,
Michael Schaller, Senior Planner,

The Midcoast Community Council (MCC) recommends and requests that the following required mitigation measures be incorporated into the Final EIR:

1. The Applicant will formally request that San Mateo County petition Caltrans to post the full length of the eastbound uphill passing lane "Trucks Use Right Lane Only at all times", with the Applicant to pay any costs levied by Caltrans.
2. Applicant to install an automated signal system at the end of the quarry road to meter trucks onto SR 92 as follows: Signal green: A truck may turn onto SR 92. Once that single truck is past the sensor, the signal turns red for the required time -- 2 minutes or 4 minutes, depending on time of day.
3. If Applicant uses a "flag man", applicant must ensure that the flagman NEVER stops through traffic on SR 92 in order to let a truck leave the quarry driveway.
4. Left turns out of the Quarry onto Eastbound SR 92 should be prohibited between 7 am and 8:30 am on weekdays. The same restriction exists for the dump trucks. Alternatively, a center merge lane for a single truck could be built at applicant's expense.

Supporting Analysis Notes

Due to the size of the Draft EIR for the subject project and the limited time and resources of the Midcoast Community Council, our submitted comments will address only section 3.7.2 -- Traffic. Traffic impacts negatively impact thousands of commuters who drive eastbound on SR 92 on weekday mornings. The DEIR's method using averages, leads the Draft EIR to significantly understate multiple aspects of the traffic impacts on the morning commute.

DEIR statement: The loaded trucks have an average speed that is 30%-40% slower than passenger vehicles.

Analysis: Assuming that passenger vehicles are traveling at the posted speed limit of 45 MPH, this statement indicates that the average truck speed is 27-31 MPH. However, that is the average, meaning that many trucks are significantly slower. From actual experience, it is common to have trucks lumbering up the hill at 10 MPH or even 5 MPH, creating massive backups for eastbound commuter traffic.

DEIR statement: The long passing lane beginning east of the quarry driveway allows commuters to pass the slower moving eastbound trucks.

Analysis: The passing lane doesn't begin until 0.6 miles east of the quarry driveway (per DEIR). Since trucks must stop at the bottom of the quarry driveway before turning onto SR 92, they are starting out very slowly from the instant they are on SR 92. As they pick up speed from zero to 30 MPH, the average speed in that 0.6 mile stretch is much lower than 30 MPH. At an assumed average speed of 20 MPH for that 0.6 miles, it requires 90 seconds for the truck to reach the passing lane, with commuters stuck behind the rolling roadblocks the whole time.

In addition, even at the "long passing lane" section, trucks moving slightly less slow than the slowest trucks often occupy the left lane in order to pass the slowest moving trucks. This has the effect of holding up all traffic to a speed of 20-30 MPH. Also, not all commuters will pass at the speed limit, yet most of those slow commuters will not move to the right lane and get behind a 20 MPH truck, effectively limiting all traffic to the speed of the slowest commuter even if there are no trucks passing other trucks.

The passing lane ends 0.5 miles before the summit (per DEIR), all traffic ends up stuck behind the slow moving trucks anyway. By the time the trucks have reached this summit, the slowest ones are often moving at only 5 MPH. At 5 MPH, it requires 6 minutes to travel 0.5 miles, time that commuters are stuck behind a slow truck. Trucks do not then go at downhill at higher speeds and there are no downhill passing lanes, creating a long backup with no opportunity to pass until SR 92 reaches the signal at Canada Road / I-280. If a slow truck stops at the signal on SR 92 at lower SR 35, the truck again starts out very slowly on the uphill section east of the signal.

Sincerely,

s/Len Erickson
Chair, Midcoast Community Council

Cc: San Mateo County Supervisors