

Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Study: Phase 2
Response to Comments



County of San Mateo - Planning and Building Department

ATTACHMENT C

Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Study: Phase 2
Response to Comments
San Mateo County Planning and Building Department
November 9, 2012

This document categorizes the comments received regarding the Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Improvement Study: Phase 2 based on subject matter, cites or paraphrases them in *italics*, and provides the Planning and Building Department's response.

I. "Big Picture" Comments

A. Proceed carefully.

Implementation of the improvements identified by the study will require additional design work and analyses, and involve continued input from the community. The Planning and Building Department will be working with the Midcoast Community Council and other interested parties to ensure that stakeholder interests and regulatory requirements are addressed as part of these future steps.

B. Does the study take into account future growth?

The need for the type of safety and mobility improvements suggested by the study already exists and will increase as growth occurs. The additional design work and the technical and environmental analyses required to implement any of the projects suggested by the study must consider the needs and impacts of reasonably foreseeable development.

C. The study should include public transit.

The purpose of the study was to identify possible physical improvements to the network of roads and trails that serve pedestrians, bicyclists, and motor vehicles. The location of existing bus stops and routes were considered as part of this effort. A detailed evaluation of transit needs and opportunities will be address during the development of the Comprehensive Transportation Management Plan described by the Action Plan.

D. Preserve the rural character of the Midcoast.

Page 12 of the Study explains the concept of Context Zones and cites Caltrans' policy on Context-Sensitive Solutions. In accordance with this policy and the requirements of the County's Local Coastal Program, each project will be required to avoid and minimize impacts on views, habitats, agricultural lands, and community character. The additional design work and technical studies required to address these requirements will be coordinated with the Midcoast Community Council and other interested parties, which will provide additional opportunity for input on matters such as neighborhood compatibility and the protection of natural and scenic resources.

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II. Comments Regarding Roundabouts

A. General comments for and against roundabouts

Keep the roundabout idea and the parallel trail.

I support the Montara plans on pages 43-51 ... as well as a roundabout for 9th Avenue.

Linear medians are preferable to roundabouts. Roundabouts are disadvantageous to commuters during the week and will further congest the highway on the weekends.

No roundabouts.

A wide range of opinions have been expressed about the concept of installing roundabouts. Without disregard to these questions and concerns, the study simply recognizes the potential benefits of roundabouts, such as reduced delays by increasing an intersection's throughput and increased safety by reducing speeds and the number of points of conflict. The study's suggestion that roundabouts be considered during the design of future roadway projects does not represent a conclusion that roundabouts are the preferred option.

B. *Big roundabouts are not bike or pedestrian friendly. How will the pedestrians and bikes be accommodated? Does the Caltrans allow roundabouts?*

Page 32 of the plan depicts crosswalks at the roundabouts and discusses their use by bicyclists. Use of roundabouts on the State Highway system may be considered for the primary purpose of enhancing safety and operational characteristics at intersections. Chapter 3 of the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA's) technical publication, *Roundabouts: An Informational Guide*, discusses locations and situations that may lend themselves to roundabout installation, and the potential benefits that may be realized. Benefits may include safety improvements, intersection capacity improvement, and an overall betterment in operational characteristics of the intersection.

III. Comments Opposing Trails and Parking Facilities

A. *Routing the parallel bike trail on our street will destroy our quality of life with bicycle traffic and informal parking.*

Bicycle use within the Highway 1 corridor already exists, and is likely to increase with or without the conceptual projects contained in the Study. The process for implementing these projects will involve further analysis and discussion about how they should be designed and located to minimize adverse impacts on residential neighborhoods.

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- B. *Do not locate bike or pedestrian trails such that they would bring traffic to our communities.*

An Action Plan has been drafted that identifies the need for a Parking Study to address how to accommodate the parking needs of the users of bike and pedestrian trails, as well as the need for a Comprehensive Transportation Management Plan that addresses the role of public transit. The parking and transportation strategies that evolve from this Plan and Study should help reduce the number of visitors that drive through residential neighborhoods looking for parking.

IV. Comments Regarding Highway Realignment

The Midcoast will fight any highway realignment of the highway which encourages over-development, the destruction of the region's semi-rural character, or devaluation of the community's private properties along the Burnham Strip.

Erosion control must be implemented along Surfer's Beach by adjusting the breakwater before considering highway realignment. The Army Corps of Engineers and San Mateo County Harbor District are currently studying this problem.

Building bridges over coastal washouts would be preferable to realigning the highway in such a way that would prevent the implementation of the Burnham Strip Committee's "Burnham Strip Park Vision."

The Highway 1 realignment options contained in the Phase 1 and 2 Studies represent a subset of alternatives that must be considered when evaluating potential solutions to the problems being created by coastal erosion in the Surfer's Beach area. Realignment proposals are intended to improve access, safety, and circulation. If pursued, such options will be subject to environmental reviews and permit approvals that will need to address the concerns raised by the above comments.

V. Comments Regarding Highway Speed Limits

Caltrans' 2000 study says that there will be no reduction in speed limits in the Phase 2 area. The Midcoast Mobility Study assumes speeds will decrease through the use of design features. As long as speeds remain in the 45-55mph range, there can be no safe crossing.

Reduce speeds to 45mph and 40mph.

I don't support reducing speeds from 50mph to 40mph through Moss Beach and from 50mph to 45mph approaching El Granada as illustrated on page 18.

Maximum speed throughout the Midcoast should be 45mph, except alongside the airport.

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State law requires an engineering and traffic survey to set speed limits below 65 mph on state highways. As noted above the design features suggested by the study are expected to reduce driving speeds in a manner that may support future speed limit reductions. Such reductions will increase safety and add only a minute-and-a-half of travel time through the corridor.

VI. Comments Regarding Parking

A. General comments regarding parking

Limit the parking ideas.

Enforce parking laws.

People park on my street to use the parks and beach.

Address parking problems at 1st and 2nd Streets in Montara.

Address parking problems along Hwy 1 South of Devil's Slide.

Address parking problems at Surfer's Beach in Granada.

The Study identifies potential locations for organized parking in high visitation areas in an effort to meet parking demands and avoid spillover impacts into residential neighborhoods. As described by the Action Plan, implementation of any of the parking projects conceptualized by the Study will require further discussions with the parks agencies and the affected communities, accompanied by additional analyses of demands and alternatives.

B. *Parking facilities should include bike racks.*

County Parks, State Parks, and National Parks will be responsible for their respective parking facilities and will be encouraged to provide bike racks at these facilities.

C. Comments regarding impacts of parking on coastal views

Parking should be revisited. Parking lots may disrupt scenic views and natural areas. Intensive parking events are only intermittent, and parking dis-incentivizes alternative modes of travel.

Parking: Please consider our scenic highway—particularly Montara and Surfer's Beach.

Montara Beach: Consider expanding gravel shoulders instead of building parking lots to accommodate crowds on relatively rare sunny weekends. This would preserve views the rest of the time.

All parking projects will be subject to environmental review and Local Coastal Program consistency. This will require a comprehensive analysis of visual impacts and the use of measures and alternatives that avoid and minimize such impacts.

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D. Comments regarding parking options at Surfer's Beach

Alternative to Surfer's Beach Option E (west-side parking with highway realignment): consider acquiring the Harbor RV lot and returning it to beach parking. The RV park leasing land from the Harbor District is on a former public parking lot. The RV park now sells daily parking too expensively, resulting in a mostly empty lot even when street parking is crowded. The RV park should be returned to use as a public parking lot. This would return much-needed restroom facilities to general public use. Permanent coastal armoring is already in place, so this could be a long-term solution. Screening plantings are already in place, so replacing RVs with cars will not degrade scenic views. Paving and access are already in place. The highway would not need to be rerouted.

Alternative to Surfer's Beach Option A (east-side parking, no realignment): Consider securing access from Obispo Rd across GSD land to gravel parking on the east side right-of-way as a quicker, less expensive method for a short-term parking solution. Try to accomplish this, at least temporarily, before GSB construction project this summer.

The alternatives options referenced above are noted by the study and will be further evaluated in accordance with the Action Plan.

E. Comments regarding parking options at Rancho Corral del Tierra

I recommend that any possible parking area for the GGNRA be located east of the Highway. Parking west of the highway will generate more crossings.

Please do not locate parking lot on east end of fallow field in Montara. This will destroy the integrity of the space.

I know that the fallow field has some appeal to GGNRA, but I would still like to explore options further north of possible, where there are existing roads that can provide access.

On page A-24, in the first complete paragraph, the notes state that "fallow agricultural lands" might provide an opportunity for a trailhead. If these fallow lands consist of prime soils, they should not be considered for parking and trailhead unless there are no alternative (non-prime soils) sites available.

The location of the parking lot in the fallow field is yet to be determined. Placing it in a specific place led to controversy. Maybe it is better to show its location more generally.

The potential for establishing a parking area on the fallow field was identified as one of many potential sites for access to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). The County's prime soils maps show that there are no prime soils on the field. The ultimate locations of GGNRA trailheads and parking areas will be chosen based on additional analyses and discussions with the community, as described by the Action Plan.

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VII. Comments Regarding Priorities

A phased approach starting with the low-hanging fruit would be best.

Prioritize simple solutions for highway safety and mobility.

Near-term solutions are needed.

The Action Plan identifies actions that can be taken in the near-term with maximum potential to improve safety and accessibility throughout the corridor. Progress is being made in the pursuit of near and mid-term solutions, including the recent allocation of Transportation Authority Highway Program funds towards the implementation of Highway 1 pedestrian crossings, median, and turn lanes.

VIII. Comments Regarding the Parallel Trail

The frontage roads need to be connected for local car traffic as well as bicycles and pedestrians.

There should be a parallel trail along the east side of SR1 to connect the communities of Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, and Miramar for biking, walking, etc.

In the near term, the parallel trail could be on frontage roads. In the long term, it should be built along the edge of the SR1 right-of-way but substantially separated from the road.

The parallel multi-modal trail should be on the east side of the highway because I believe the purpose of it is to improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation for Midcoast residents by allowing travel in the area without crossing the highway.

Improve bicycle safety on Hwy 1 instead of developing the parallel trail. The Coastal Trail will be there, too. Developing Hwy 1 as the bicycle route would be better than the parallel trail's crisscrossing of the highway.

The Potential Alternative Parallel Trail alignment shown along the west side of SR1 at the Half Moon Bay Airport should be deleted. The purpose of the Parallel Trail is to enable people who live on the east side of SR1 to walk or bicycle north and south without having to cross the highway. There is sufficient room along the east side of the highway for the trail in this area.

The east-side parallel trail has long been a priority and is identified in the Measure A Strategic Plan for 2009-2013.

MCC will work with the County to find funding for an engineering study of the parallel trail.

I support linear trail proposals.

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The concept for the parallel trail presented by the study is for a trail located on the east side of the highway except in segments where a west side alignment may be more feasible due to safety, ownership, and/or environmental considerations. It is also conceived as a path that will be separated from the roadway except where such separation is precluded by right-of-way limits or environmental constraints. The segment of the trail in the vicinity of the Airport may be one such area where the west side option is more feasible because the land adjacent to the Highway is owned by the County and would avoid impacts to agricultural land. However, FAA restrictions on airport lands also present challenges. Both options remain worthy of consideration until the additional information needed to effectively compare them is obtained. Improving Bicycle safety on Highway One, such as by establishing formalized bike lanes is included in the Action Plan, but will not provide an equivalent level of safety and enjoyment for all levels of cyclists.

With regard to frontage roads, the use of Alhambra or Obispo and Carlos and Main are identified as potential short and long term solutions. Right-of-way limits and environmental constraints in the area between existing frontage roads (e.g., between Carlos and Main Street) call into question the feasibility of connecting frontage roads in a manner that accommodates motor vehicles.

IX. Comments Regarding Other Trails

- A. *Map of Pedestrian and Bikeway Network: Moss Beach to Pillar Point Harbor, page 26: The "Parallel Trail Route Connector" depicted along Bernal Avenue in Seal Cove extending across private property to Airport Street should be deleted, as it would duplicate the POST parking area Jean Lauer Trail, and require crossing significant wetlands and a pond.*

The maps depict several options for trail routes. The map referenced above shows that the parallel and coastal trails will be connected in this area. The map's legend states "On-street routes to be determined with Seal Cove resident input."

- B. *The plan should include a trailhead south or east of the Coral Reef area.*

The maps on pages 24, 25, and 26 of the Phase 1 plan depict the street as a potential connection between the Highway 1 corridor and the inland trail network.

- C. *The study should include a discussion of a possible trailhead across from the airport.*

The map on page 26 depicts a trailhead across from the airport.

X. Comments Regarding Pedestrian Crossings

- A. *Are the crossings safe? Is there enough sight distance? Are they located at pedestrian desire paths?*

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Sight distances and trail connectivity were considered during the analysis of potential crossing locations. Further analysis of safety issues and design features that maximize the safety of these crossings will be addressed during the implementation phase.

- B. *The study proposes crossings in high-demand areas. Because the high-demand areas are far from each other, there will still be crossings without crosswalks.*

Comment noted. As stated on Page 30 of the study, pedestrians may legally cross where there are no crosswalks (except between adjacent intersections controlled by signals or officers), but must yield to drivers.

- C. Comments regarding overpass at Montara lighthouse/hostel

I would like to emphasize the need for an overpass crossing at the Montara Point Lighthouse. I know it was in the plan tonight but only as one of two possibilities...Safety should be paramount.

The at-grade crossing at the lighthouse is after a blind curve!!! A pedestrian bridge is safer! (and a more beautiful experience)

The Action Plan identifies the overcrossing as a long-term solution to the problem. Its implementation partly depends on funding and community support.

- D. *An at-grade crossing at the tunnel portal is a setup for mortalities!!! Find an alternative. At minimum, there should be a pedestrian-activated light system.*

The plan on page 33 proposes flashing lights activated by pedestrians.

- E. *Who would install and maintain the HAWK at Sam's Chowder House and Surfer's Beach? Are HAWKs even allowed?*

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission includes HAWK signals in its safety toolbox. Installation would require Caltrans approval and participation.

- F. *The trail at Etheldore should cross the Highway at the stop bar instead of before the stop bar.*

The drawing referenced by the comment depicts trail and parking concepts. The specific location of the crossing will be determined during the implementation phase in the event that this project is pursued.

- G. Other comments regarding crossings

Whatever is done should consider regular commuters; highest priority: safe crossings of Hwy 1.

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Make safe pedestrian crossings with islands and crosswalks.

Pedestrian crossings with refuge islands in each community, most importantly in Moss Beach.

The county should encourage Caltrans to build crossings in Moss Beach.

How many crosswalks are crossing Hwy 1 in the Montara State Beach/La Costanera area? I think there should only be a crossing at 2nd Street. More people currently cross on the north end of 2nd Street. If the crossing is to be on the south side, consider adding a No Crossing sign on the north side and at 1st Street. The crossing at 1st Street will be blocked by cars queuing to make the left turn into the La Costanera parking lot.

I support "on-demand" crosswalks that would flash when pushed by pedestrians.

We agree that there need to be safe crossings in Moss Beach and Montara, but we'll leave the final decisions and placements of those crossings up to the residents of those Communities, since they know best where and what they should be.

The plan proposes improved crossings of Highway 1 throughout the Midcoast, with the intent of improve safety and mobility for all users. The crossing locations depicted in the plan were chosen through analyses of pedestrian behavior and the input provided by the community. Traffic control measures like warning and stoplights will be installed where appropriate.

XI. Comments Regarding Roadways

A. Mobility for automobiles should be the priority.

The plan is intended to improve mobility and safety for all users of the Highway 1 corridor.

B. Add medians and pockets to make turning actions safe.

The Action Plan identifies medians and crossing improvements, which include left turn pockets, as short-term high priority projects.

C. Congestion occurs at Surfer's Beach.

The Phase 1 and Phase 2 studies have identified a range of potential solutions to this problem.

D. Houses on the west side of Hwy 1 are served by driveways leading to the Highway.

The study recommends driveway treatments such as illumination and curbing or median treatments in conjunction with driveway consolidation, particularly in Miramar and El Granada.

E. I support the Montara plans on pages 43-51 including: sidewalks, medians, landscaping, traffic calming measures, curb extensions, gateway "Welcome to Montara" signage and banners, as well as a roundabout for 9th Avenue. The island bound by Hwy 1, Main

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Street, and 9th Street in Montara could be enhanced with gateway features.

The Montara section of the plan currently calls for gateway features at the northern community boundary. Page 45 shows a gateway feature facing northbound traffic on the southern edge of Montara.

F. *The lack of shoulders in the Devils Slide area is dangerous to bicyclists.*

The Action Plan that accompanies the Study calls for improved bicycle lanes along the entire length of Highway One.

G. *Pedestrian and Bikeway Network, Highway 1, page 22, recommends a minimum 6 foot wide paved shoulder for bicyclists and pedestrians where there is no sidewalk. A Class 2 Bike Lane only needs to be 5 feet wide, if there is no curb. Widening could encourage illegal parking on the paved shoulder or unsafe passing by vehicles on the right. It would be preferable to designate and sign the 5 foot wide Bike Lane.*

Wider shoulders allow a larger cushion of space between cyclists and vehicles. It makes the experience of walking and bicycling more comfortable and provides room within the bike lane for cyclists to pass one another. The provision of safe and attractive bike routes does not have to be sacrificed in order to control parking.

H. *Consider making the southbound turn pocket onto 2nd Street longer than the northbound pocket, as I routinely see more southbound cars turn into Montara than turn into the La Costanera lot.*

The lengths of these turn pockets will be determined by additional technical analyses and highway design standards.

I. *Share the Road signs would impose a safety risk to the bicyclists and an added burden on drivers to constantly be on the lookout for bicyclists.*

The intent of the signs is to remind car and truck drivers that they must be on the lookout for bicyclists. The placement of such signs will avoid locations that create a hazard.

J. *Highway One Characteristics, Page 9: states that California statute designates SR1 from Higgins-Purissima Road south of the City of Half Moon Bay to I-280 as an Expressway. This designation is inconsistent with Coastal Act Section 30254, which states that Highway 1 shall remain a "scenic two-lane road" in rural areas. Thus, between the urban/rural boundary at the northern urban limit line of Montara and the southern urban limit of Pacifica at Linda Mar, SR1 is limited to two lanes. The Study should clarify that the Coastal Act will not allow expansion of SR1 into an expressway in the rural area north of Montara. The first sentence on Page 12 should be similarly corrected.*

It is understood that the Coastal Act requires that Highway One remain a two-lane road within

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rural areas of the coast. The Expressway designation does not alter this requirement, nor does it preclude the implementation of the improvements contained in the study.

H. *Please install a left turn pocket into the lighthouse.*

The plan on Page 50 depicts a median left turn pocket into the lighthouse.

XII. Comments Regarding Technical Analyses

The study should use quantitative analysis to build a stronger case for improvements and to ensure that the improvements are really made where needed. Analysis should include traffic, bicycle, pedestrian, and parking counts, projections of parking demand and the use of the new Recreation Area, and analysis of the effect of a through-trail parallel to the Highway on traffic counts.

Decisions should be based on statistical and technical data instead of anecdotal information.

Traffic volumes during peak commute and weekend hours should be used instead of daily averages.

Implementation of many of the projects contained in the study will require the collection and analysis of the type of data requested above.

XIII. Comments Regarding Process and Implementation

A. *The Board of Supervisors has directed the Director of Parks to develop an action plan to implement Phase 1.*

The Action Plan that accompanies the Phase 2 Study addresses both the Phase 1 and Phase 2 reports and satisfies this directive.

B. *Discussions of parking and circulation in the Surfer's Beach area must include the Coastal Commission, the Harbor District, and the Granada Sanitary District.*

Comment noted and addressed by Action Plan.

C. *The Action Plan should include the preliminary step of determining whether each action conforms to the Local Coastal Program, particularly the sensitive habitat, agriculture, and visual resource policies.*

Each proposal will be evaluated based on its feasibility and conformance to existing regulations, as well as its benefits and costs.

XIV. Miscellaneous Comments Not Requiring a Response

Community Fringes, Page 12, should point out the existence of the permanent urban/rural

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boundary at the northern end of Montara, where the urban pattern of development suddenly changes to rural agriculture and open space.

The designation of the Midcoast as a Priority Development Area is opposed by many residents who are concerned about unwanted repercussions from receiving funding through the program or being labeled with the name.

Shadowy NGOs from out of the area want to take away our cars and implement Agenda 21 by installing traffic calming measures and a parallel trail. These new features will frustrate everyone and force us to live in apartments. Will the voices of the people be heard?

Lots of good ideas in the study.

Bravo! In my opinion, this change will be appreciated by any pedestrians who walk to Montara State Beach.

The project contributes to the County's 2025 Shared Vision of Environmentally Conscious Community.

The project has engaged and will engage residents in planning pedestrian corridors and highway improvements.