

# Midcoast Community Council

*An Elected Municipal Advisory Council to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors*

P.O. Box 248, Moss Beach, CA 94038      www.MidcoastCommunityCouncil.org

Lisa Ketcham . Dave Olson . Chris Johnson . Laura Stein . Erin Deinzer . Dan Haggerty . Joel Janoe

## Approved Minutes: Special Meeting on Thursday, July 31, 2014, at Cypress Meadows, Moss Beach, CA

### **Call to Order — 7:07 p.m.**

Present: Councilmembers Ketcham, Olson, Johnson, Stein, Deinzer, and Haggerty.

Absent: Janoe.

- Supervisor Don Horsley
- Sarah Christensen, traffic consultant
- Roland Au-Yeung, Caltrans
- Aide Nicholas Calderón
- 34 members of the public

### **1. Public Comment**

- Cid Young, Moss Beach—Wanted to let the community know that the Big Wave North Parcel Alternative (NPA) Environmental Impact Report (EIR) document is now available for public review.
- Lisa Ketcham, MCC chair—Announced that there is a hardcopy of the Big Wave North Parcel Alternative (NPA) EIR document available for public review at the Half Moon Bay public library and the offices of the Granada Sanitary District; it is also available online at the County website. The Big Wave NPA permit processing schedule is as follows.
  - July 31 to September 2: 30-day EIR Addendum circulation for public comment.
  - Informational-only presentation by planner with applicant at the MCC meeting on August 8, 2014, at 7:00 p.m. at the Pillar Ridge Community Center. Parking is limited, so please carpool.
  - CDRC hearing on Thursday, September 11, 2014; this project is continued from the July 10, 2014, CDRC hearing.
  - Planning Commission hearing on Coastside on October 22, 2014.

### **2. Community Workshop**

- Status of Design Planning for Midcoast Highway 1 Pedestrian Crossings, Raised Medians, and Left-Turn Lanes.** Project consultant Sarah Christensen, staff engineer at URS made an electronic presentation to update the community on the project direction and progress resulting from feedback received at the community meeting on June 18, 2014, in Montara. See <http://www.midcoastcommunitycouncil.org/storage/mtgs-com2014/2014-07-31-H1ppt.pdf>. Christensen; Roland Au-Yeung, Office Chief, Office of Traffic, District 4, Caltrans; and San Mateo County District 3 Supervisor Don Horsley also answered questions from the public.
- In addition to Sarah Christensen's presentation, Supervisor Horsley also reviewed and summarized elements of the project.
  - Process began with Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Improvement Studies 2009-2012, following which a grant was obtained from the County Transportation Authority (TA) for design planning and permitting of crossing, left turns and raised medians which were identified as near-term, high-priority projects.
  - Supervisor Horsley and the County heard at the June 18, 2014, community meeting in Montara that the community was not happy with the designs presented; Supervisor Horsley decided that more thought and community input was needed before the project could proceed.
  - Feels that left-turn lanes and medians are the best possible options given the

scope of the project. Raised medians will require additional work like lowering of speed limits and widening of the roads.

-Acknowledged that the process is going to take a long time.

-Emphasized that he is working with community, Caltrans, and consultants to develop designs that will garner a larger percentage of public agreement.

—Laura Stein, MCC treasurer—Thanked Supervisor Horsley for renewing the discussion about the project. Surprised at the project schedule change, which has construction not beginning until 2019. MCC has tried to focus on “low-hanging fruit” and wonders what can be done before 2019?

-A: Sarah Christensen, URS—The designs presented at the June 18, 2014, meeting were the easiest and quickest and cheapest to implement. Mentioned there are two routes a project can take. If a project is estimated at less than a certain dollar amount, it uses a Peer Document, which is an expedited process. If more than a certain dollar amount, the project follows the traditional process, which requires project initiation, approval, and an EIR. The designs presented at the June 18, 2014, meeting would have met the criteria for the expedited process. Raised medians are more involved — requiring road widening, speed limit reduction, increased costs — and must be handled through the traditional process.

—Laura Stein, MCC treasurer—Why does the highway need to be widened for raised medians, especially in Moss Beach where the road seems plenty wide?

-A: Sarah Christensen, URS—To accommodate raised medians, space is needed for the 6-ft width of the median, 2-ft inside shoulder on either side of median, 12-ft travel lane, and 8-ft outside shoulder.

—Laura Stein, MCC treasurer—How was the decision made to eliminate the proposed crossing at Surfer’s Beach in El Granada?

-A: Supervisor Horsley—Stated that he made this decision. He feels that it doesn’t make sense to put a crosswalk in any specific location until a parking solution is created for Surfer’s Beach which funnels pedestrians to one crossing location.

-A: Sarah Christensen, URS—Recommended splitting Surfer’s Beach off into a separate project.

—Laura Stein, MCC treasurer—Are there accident statistics available to help prioritize project elements?

-A: Sarah Christensen, URS—Yes, we looked at accident statistics along the project corridor and found that most pedestrian/vehicle conflicts occur at night.

—Laura Stein, MCC treasurer—Is there a specific model to test design proposals with regard to traffic flow?

-A: Roland Au-Yeung, Caltrans—It depends on the treatment. For stoplights, yes there is a model. For the effectiveness or impact of raised medians, there is not a model, but have learned that impact is minimal.

—Chris Johnson, MCC secretary—Is there any “new project” scope and/or proposal being considered or developed now that the recommendation is that Surfer’s Beach be split off from the current project?

-A: Supervisor Horsley—No, but Surfer’s Beach could be included as part of the larger Transportation Management Plan (TMP).

—Dan Haggerty, MCC—Can alternative design elements like colors, rumble strips, or divot technology be incorporated for this project?

-A: Sarah Christensen, URS—There is a possibility of doing at-grade medians using those types of design elements in place of raised medians, but those elements may not help with traffic calming, which is part of this project scope.

—Dan Haggerty, MCC—How does traffic calming improve congestion? Does slowing traffic down add to congestion?

-A: Roland Au-Yeung, Caltrans—With higher speeds, the distances between cars increase, and stop and go becomes more pronounced, which generally creates congestion. There is not going to be much of a difference in terms of calming with a

5 MPH speed limit reduction. To determine appropriate speed for a location, Caltrans collects speed data to create a speed profile. Then we take the 85 percentile speed and use that as the recommended speed, plus or minus 5 MPH, at the engineer's discretion. This is a federal process; if Caltrans does not follow this process, the speed cannot be legally enforced.

—Dan Haggerty, MCC—Have you considered sacrificing left-turn lanes in a couple of spots to avoid having to widen the highway?

-A: Sarah Christensen, URS—We are considering that right now as part of the traffic studies to see where left-turn lanes are really needed. If a left-turn is eliminated in a certain spot, then the road would not have to be widened there to install a raised median.

—Dan Haggerty, MCC—Can we discuss the possibilities of roundabouts again?

-A: Sarah Christensen, URS—The County TMP could look at roundabouts, they are not in this project scope.

—Erin Deinzer, MCC—Where are you looking to make crossings safer and how were these locations decided upon?

-A: Sarah Christensen, URS—We started with a baseline of locations provided by the County based on the Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Improvement concept plans, pedestrian crossing information, and traffic studies, which are still ongoing. We are still evaluating the best spots for crossings.

—Erin Deinzer, MCC—Are you still considering Gray Whale Cove as a possible crossing location?

-A: Sarah Christensen, URS—Yes, we have identified it as a potential location for a crossing and for a left-turn lane.

—Lisa Ketcham, MCC chair—When you refer to lights, you are referring to streetlights, not traffic signals, and only for night lighting, yes?

-A: Sarah Christensen, URS—Yes.

—Lisa Ketcham, MCC chair—Does Caltrans have regulations for a minimum level of lighting for safe crossings? Is there any data on degree of safety improvement due to lighting at crossings?

-A: Roland Au-Yeung, Caltrans—Didn't have stats in front of him but said there are "all kinds of studies" showing the safety value of night lighting for pedestrians.

-A: Sarah Christensen, URS—Cited a study that showed that more than 50 percent of fatal pedestrian collisions occurred during hours of darkness, despite only 25 percent of the traffic occurring during this time. There is a minimum amount of lighting; it is determined by the project electrical engineer.

—Lisa Ketcham, MCC chair—Can acceleration lanes move up on the project priority list?

-A: Sarah Christensen, URS—I think acceleration lanes would need to be a separate project. We would have to look at specific traffic data for that.

-A: Supervisor Horsley—Yes, we could look at traffic data and approach Caltrans separately about that issue.

—Lisa Ketcham, MCC chair—Is there any way to pare down the project as a whole in order to get something sooner?

-A: Sarah Christensen, URS—As part of our study, we can look for extra-low-hanging fruit.

—Dave Olson, MCC vice chair—Feels that the Midcoast would be better off if some lighting and some painted crosswalks were installed ASAP while other options are being studied.

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—Steve Schneider, Montara—Wants something done quickly. Wants the Sheriff to enforce existing speed limits.

—Cid Young, Moss Beach—Are crosswalks with flashing lights in the road possible? Feels that this option may be preferable to the community than overhead flashing

signals. Has this option been considered for this project? Has the County looked into a right-turn lane on Cypress Avenue west of Highway 1?

-A: Supervisor Horsley—Yes, in-road crossing lights have been considered. This element has been installed in a lot of communities, but there would still need to be overhead lighting too. The County is aware of the problems with Cypress Avenue turning south on Highway 1, but due to drainage ditch there is not enough room on Cypress to add a right turn lane.

—Cid Young, Moss Beach—Big Wave Project will likely significantly increase traffic on the Midcoast. Have the current studies considered this?

-A: Sarah Christensen, URS—We will review the Big Wave NPA EIR document as part of our process.

—Cid Young, Moss Beach—Will there be jaywalking enforcement at Surfer's Beach?

A: Dave Olson, MCC vice chair—Captain Mike Maskarich of the CHP told us earlier this month that pedestrian crossing is legal in that location.

—Cid Young, Moss Beach—The overflow parking lot for Sam's Restaurant greatly contributes to traffic near Surfer's Beach. It does not seem like that project had to go through the same study and vetting process as this project.

A: Supervisor Horsley—The County required a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) and an archaeological survey.

A: Lisa Ketcham, MCC chair—This item was agendaized at an MCC meeting and the MCC provided comments to the County planner, but the comments were ignored.

—Leonard Woren, El Granada—Emphasized that this area is semi-rural. Feels that Caltrans acceleration lanes are poorly constructed—they are too short and narrow and need to be longer and wider. Feels that 45 MPH speed limit is as low as it can go; signals do not improve traffic flow. States that the solution in Moss Beach is mid-block medians for crossings. Wants a broader community survey about roundabouts because he feels that community support for them is high. Wants lighting standards to be low to the ground. Is unclear about how the County measures road width.

-A: Supervisor Horsley—The County will re-evaluate roundabouts as part of the TMP.

—David Vespremi, Moss Beach—One short-term solution that would be easy to implement and very helpful would be to eliminate shoulder parking and presence of "For Sale" cars on Highway 1 and enforce laws against using vehicles for advertising. Wants right-of-way (ROW) landscape requirements enforced in Moss Beach for the Chevron station and El Gran Amigo. Thinks that lease for RV park at Surfer's Beach should be revoked. Feels that tunnel crossings are not what the community wants. Notes that lighting increases pedestrian safety but light poles are sources of high-fatality rates for motorists.

—Bill Kehoe, Moss Beach—Agrees that Sheriff needs to enforce current speed limits. Feels that current speed limits on the Midcoast are illogical because there are slower limits in rural zones and faster limits in village zones. Notes that the Midcoast has been waiting far too long for safe crossings. Supports doing whatever can be done right now, even if it's just a painted crosswalk, while working simultaneously on larger projects.

—Adrian Mallinger, Montara—Concerned about night sky. Wonders if installed lights can be timed and if there's any way to balance lighting with safety.

-A: Sarah Christensen, URS—Lighting enhances safety for pedestrians and motorists, which is part of this project scope. Dimmable lights are possible.

—Dan Haggerty, MCC—Will this project feature both light stanchions and pedestrian light poles?

-A: Sarah Christensen, URS—Yes.

—Ed Love, Moss Beach—Doesn't understand the big delay and cost for widening the road for raised medians when Caltrans quickly widened the road in front of Sam's Restaurant. Wonders why that project was able to go through so quickly.

- A: Sarah Christensen, URS—She could not speak to the details of that project but did state that “this project is going to follow the rules.”
- Ed Love, Moss Beach—Is there a long-term plan for Highway 1?
  - A: Supervisor Horsley—Replied that this is a question for Caltrans. He doesn’t know if Caltrans has a long-term plan.
  - A: Lisa Ketcham, MCC chair—For more information about plans for Highway 1, look at the Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Study on the MCC website; also look at the TMP, also on the MCC website, which has some long-term visioning statements in it.
- Ed Love, Moss Beach—Are the City of Half Moon Bay, the MCC, and Caltrans coordinating on this plan?
  - A: Lisa Ketcham, MCC chair—More accurately the County rather than the MCC.
- Carl May, Moss Beach—Wants people to look beyond technical traffic studies and use their personal experience and observations to help make decisions. There are rules in place, but traffic speeds can and do get lowered; more pressure is needed to get this done. Roundabouts “suck” and there is no community consensus on them. Wants to see a phased list of project priorities.
- Katy Jaeger, Moss Beach—Wants safe crossings implemented in a timely manner. Supports widening the highway. Is hopeful for a bike lane between Moss Beach and El Granada.
- Liz Murphy, Moss Beach—Asked why a pedestrian crossing is being proposed for Cypress Avenue in Moss Beach instead of at Virginia Street where the village center is.
  - A: Lisa Ketcham, MCC chair—Pointed out that a crossing has been proposed for Virginia Street.
  - A: Sarah Christensen, URS—We are still looking at pedestrian counts to determine potential crossing sites.
- James Gartrell, Montara—Asked if pedestrian studies have considered the pedestrians walking alongside Highway 1 in addition to those walking across it. Has this type of pedestrian traffic been considered in the plan?
  - A: Supervisor Horsley—No, that is not part of the plan. Part of the problem is lack of easements to create trails to take pedestrians to locations like Devil’s Slide Park (DSP). Progress is being made on acquiring those specific easements; for the long term, County will need to develop a shuttle service for DSP. “We won’t widen the highway” to make a parallel trail to access DSP.
- James Gartrell, Montara—Wonders whether the County is required to follow standards with regard to ambient lighting. Feels that “as-needed” lights would be great.
  - A: Supervisor Horsley—Based on the community input from the June 18, 2014, meeting, the County has pulled plans for most of the signals. There is no legal or County standard for lighting, but lights are required. The County is trying to be as sensitive as possible on this issue. The County understands that this is an important issue for Coastsiders.
  - A: Sarah Christensen, URS—This project will look at all lighting options. A visual impact analysis will consider lighting; this is a future element of the project scope.
- James Gartrell, Montara—What options besides road widening are being considered or are possible?
  - A: Sarah Christensen, URS—Alternatives to raised medians would be flashing beacons and at-grade medians.
- Laura Stein, MCC treasurer—It will be important for everybody to have a clear understanding of how wide the roads need to be before we discuss this again at the next meeting.
- Steve Schneider, Montara—Asked if there is a solution for getting bicycles off Highway 1 through Devil’s Slide.

- A: Supervisor Horsley—The County is working to develop a multimodal trail to connect the Midcoast with DSP.
- Neil Merrilees, Moss Beach—Begged for crosswalks to be installed in Moss Beach and Montara before 2020. Feels the best location for the Moss Beach crosswalk is Virginia, not Cypress. Thanked the County and Supervisor Horsley for the newly installed bathroom at Moss Beach Park.
- Maureen Hawkins, Moss Beach—From this discussion, doesn't see any relief for problems with turning left onto Highway 1 from Cypress Avenue heading north. Requests that large dip at mouth of Cypress on west side of Highway 1 be fixed to allow easier turning right heading southbound.
- James Gartrell, Montara—Asked how fast something could be done at the Pt. Montara Lighthouse/16th street/Carlos Street crossing of Highway 1.
  - A: Dave Olson, MCC vice chair—Noted that pedestrian crossing at this location is more difficult now that a left-turn lane has been installed there.
  - A: Sarah Christensen, URS—A flashing beacon and an at-grade crossing would be the fastest and cheapest solution.
- Fran Pollard, El Granada—The Burnham Strip Committee is going to meet to discuss its ideas for solutions. Hopes that the County will work with the Harbor District to incorporate parking at the Harbor as part of the Surfer's Beach solution.
- Len Erickson, El Granada—Stated that 16th and Carlos Streets should be joined together and access Highway 1 at one intersection. County Department of Public Works (DPW) and Caltrans will need to work together on this solution.
- Laura Stein, MCC treasurer—What is the next step in this process?
  - A: Sarah Christensen, URS—A draft report will be prepared and available for review by November 2014. Another community workshop will be scheduled for early 2015.

### **3. Future Agendas**

- August 13, 2014—Big Wave North Parcel Alternative (NPA) and Addendum to 2010 Environmental Impact Report: Informational presentation by County project planner. Special venue: Pillar Ridge Community Center, Moss Beach.
- August 27, 2014—The MCC will receive an introductory presentation on the Transportation Management Plan.
- September 10, 2014—The MCC will receive a presentation of the Plan Princeton Alternatives document. Also, on October 2, 2014, there will be a County Community Workshop on Plan Princeton Alternatives at the Oceano Resort in Princeton.

**Adjournment — 8:51 p.m.**