

Midcoast Community Council

*An elected Advisory Council to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
representing Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton, and Miramar*
P.O. Box 248, Moss Beach, CA 94038-0248 - www.MidcoastCommunityCouncil.org

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Chair Vice-Chair Secretary Treasurer

Date: April 12, 2018

To: Ruemel Panglao, Project Planner

Cc: Kellyx Nelson, SMC Resource Conservation District
Steve McGrath, SMC Harbor District General Manager
Renée Ananda, CCC Coastal Program Analyst

From: Midcoast Community Council/ Dave Olson, Chair

Subject: **Proposed 50-space RV Park on vacant 3.3 acres at NW corner
Capistrano & Highway 1 in Princeton – PLN2017-00320 – APN-047-081-430**

Wide public opposition to this project continues unabated since the 2015 pre-application workshop.

Harbor Gateway

Key community concerns are the visual aesthetic of the harbor gateway, and preservation of the remaining slice of ocean view corridor from southbound Hwy 1. No further coastal view blocking should be allowed than already obstructed by earlier phases of this development – Oceano Hotel & wedding building, Harbor Village shopping mall, restaurant/bar, and perimeter row of cypress trees.

In order to preserve the existing view corridor, MCC requests a height-restricted Clear View Easement Area as shown on the attached site plan. All plantings within this area shall be no greater in height at maturity than 3 feet above the adjacent Capistrano Rd. elevation.

MCC proposes a landscaping aesthetic within this Clear View Easement, or Harbor Gateway, that consists primarily of California native plants suited to the local climate and soil conditions, selected and spaced so they can achieve their mature size and natural form without disfiguring pruning or obstruction of harbor and ocean views. Maintenance could include selective pruning that retains natural form, but not stub cuts, or hedging into unnatural shapes. Plantings should have a natural informal style with varying form, texture, and shades of green, not long tight linear rows of the same species, and most definitely not the proposed perimeter fence as 400-ft-long vine-covered 5-foot wall backed by Escallonia hedge.

This perimeter fence has conflicting descriptions on the landscape plan. The 3-ft split rail fence is much preferred for style and transparency over the 4-ft post/wire mesh packed with vines. Please broaden the curve of the perimeter fence at the highway corner and pull it inside the sign, providing informal native plantings outside the fence in the public view.

The corner sign at Hwy 1 should be drastically reduced in size. It blocks the ocean view and is out of scale with its location. Some of the contents are redundant with the Harbor Village entrance sign (Sweetport, Caffe Mezzaluna, Lamas) and some are potentially illegal off-site advertising in the highway scenic corridor (Mezzaluna, HMB Brewing Co, Oceano Inn). All that is needed here is Oceano Hotel & Spa and Harbor Village Shoppes & RV Park (delete misnomer Half Moon Bay Harbor).

MCC would also like to coordinate with the Harbor District on their landscape plans for the harbor gateway.

Traffic Impacts

Please include the following in the traffic analysis:

- Use Saturday peak-hour trip generation data from Pillar Point RV Park as directly comparable to the project in size, location, and use. Exclude the other two RV parks in the survey that are not Coastside or that allow long-term residential use.
- Verify that vehicles intended to occupy the 50-ft long RV spaces can safely make the turns into and out of Capistrano Rd. If not, delete those oversize spaces or include intersection changes in the project.
- Clarify if RV turning movements necessitate removal of existing parking spaces along the shared access driveway.
- Analyze RV site access via the northwest Harbor Village driveway.
- Include in background conditions Half Moon Bay development under review, including the proposed Hotel and RV Park at Dunes Beach.

RV Park

RV spaces are tight at 20 ft wide. CA HCD requires minimum 6-ft space between RVs. Interior rows show ~2-ft space between RVs in places, per dashed lines on plan.

Eight visitor spaces are likely inadequate for extra vehicles or visitors. Presumably only one car or tow vehicle could be accommodated on each RV space. No offsite overflow parking is available because all Capistrano Rd parking has been removed to accommodate the Oceano Hotel, and the Harbor Village lot was maxed out after the addition of the wedding building in 2014.

Landscaping tall enough to screen the RVs from northbound Hwy 1 and Capistrano Rd needs to be planted north and outside of the Clear View Easement, which will require some modification of the RV layout plan. At a minimum this could be provided by removing space 32, 49 & 50 (south ends of inner rows) and devoting the full width of the rows at space 32 & 49 to tall landscaping backed by 10-ft lattice fence.

The landscape palette is heavily reliant on exotic species and quite similar to the adjacent hotel grounds under same ownership, where certain invasive species have been allowed to proliferate, while other plants have unfortunately declined, disappeared to bare dirt, or been pruned into unnatural shapes. The RV parking lot will greatly enlarge the vast unbroken expanse of Harbor Village parking lot, which sorely lacks visual interest that should be provided by extensive use of landscaping.

- Investigate the depth and quality of topsoil in Harbor Village parking islands as to the cause of failure of those plantings to grow or survive. RV lot planting islands must have deep fertile root run for trees to thrive and mature to full size.
- Plant larger trees in vacant or underutilized planting islands in Harbor Village lot after addressing any soil/drainage issues.
- Choose boxed multi-trunk Arbutus 'Marina' rather than pruned as standards, for beautiful natural form and better screening in wide planting islands.
- Remove all invasive Mexican feather grass from Harbor Village/Oceano landscape and encourage adjacent Capistrano businesses where it has spread to do the same.
- No new planting of Pride of Madeira, which invades our coastal open spaces.

Agricultural buffer: This new visitor lodging use immediately adjacent to designated agricultural land requires an adequate buffer to separate the two uses. Rather than a single row of exotic trees, we prefer a substantial hedgerow of native shrubs/trees to bring biodiversity to the landscape. This should extend along the agricultural boundary with Harbor Village parking lot as well. SMC Resource Conservation District can help with appropriate local native plant selection. This plant list and natural arrangement would also be much more appropriate for filling the gaps among cypress trees along the highway instead of the linear rows or exotic species in the plan.

https://www.rcdmonterey.org/images/docs/publications/CAFF_Hedgerow_Manual_2018.pdf

Exterior colors: New traffic-cone orange paint on large Harbor Village restaurant should be restored to former color. The size, shape and placement of the restaurant make it eminently noticeable, without the jarring color. Hotel/Restaurant Conditions of Approval include: "Exterior colors for the development shall be natural and nautical shades (ie, blues, grays, whites, etc) and shall be to the approval of the Planning Director."

Thank you for your consideration of our comments on this project of significant importance to the Midcoast community.

