

## Department of Public Works



# COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

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DIRECTOR

August 23, 2002

Mr. Chuck Kozak, Chairman  
MidCoast Community Council  
P.O. Box 64  
Moss Beach, CA 94038

Dear Mr. Kozak:

**Re: Road and Drainage Projects in the MidCoast**

I explained in my previous letters which discussed Road and Drainage Projects in the MidCoast, that the most recent changes in the State Constitution (Proposition 218 plus enabling legislation) has made it more difficult and expensive to form assessment districts for the construction of improvements, or to finance the maintenance of drainage improvements that are not within the road rights-of-way. However, we still need to maintain the MidCoast roads and the following discusses proposals to address improving and maintaining the roadway system in the MidCoast.

**Proposed Resurfacing of Specific Substandard Roads**

We are proposing that some roads that may not have been improved to a specific standard be resurfaced to maintain their rideability while a program to improve the MidCoast road system is further defined and developed.

April Vargas and I recently discussed road improvements for the MidCoast and I explained that we have adopted Outcome Based Management goals as directed by the Board and the County Manager, and one of our goals is to improve the condition of the surface of the maintained streets as measured by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Pavement Management System (PMS). The PMS uses a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) to rate the condition of a road's pavement in terms of cracking or other structural defects. The PMS does not evaluate the smoothness of the road or use other "rideability" criteria.

Road surfaces with PCI's over 56 are considered good, over 41 are considered fair and pavements with PCI's below 41 are considered to be in poor condition. The PCI's of the MidCoast roads have been evaluated and work on the roads is necessary in order to maintain the surfaces of these roads in a reasonable condition. We are continuing with projects to maintain roads that have been improved and are now recommending that we also surface other roads that either provide access for residents or access to visitor serving

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facilities. We believe that the resurfacing of these roads is not an improvement as defined by the MidCoast Community Plan, but are maintenance type projects since the roadway widths will not be increased and additional improvements are not proposed. The roads proposed to be surfaced are:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Street - Main Street to Highway 1 (access to Montara)
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street - Main Street to Audubon Avenue (access to Montara)
- Main Street - 2<sup>nd</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> Streets (access to businesses and Montara)
- Cypress Avenue - Highway 1 to Airport Street (access to Seal Cove)
- Etheldore Street - Entire length (access to Moss Beach)
- Vermont, Virginia and California Avenues - Highway 1 to Etheldore Street  
(access to Moss Beach)
- Magellan Avenue - Highway 1 to Mirada Road  
(access to visitor serving facilities)
- Mirada Road - Magellan Avenue to Medio Avenue  
(access to visitor serving facilities)

The above roads are shown on the attached maps and are in addition to the surfacing projects that are proposed to maintain the roads which have been previously reconstructed to a standard. The roads with structural sections are also shown on the attached maps.

Road resurfacing provides a smoother surface and can lead to higher vehicular speeds and complaints about these higher speeds. We are currently evaluating traffic control devices such as speed humps and dips, but do not as of yet have a program that incorporates traffic control devices into our pavement maintenance program.

#### **Petitioned for Projects**

We believe property owners who want the County to go forward with constructing road improvements financed in part with property assessments, and which they had petitioned for prior to the change in the Community Plan, should pay the cost of the ballot required by the State Constitution to determine if there is a majority support for the project and assessments.

There are proposed projects that were petitioned for by property owners prior to the change in the MidCoast Community Plan. The petitions are still considered valid pursuant to Ordinance 03606 which was adopted by the Board when the revisions to the Community Plans were approved. The ordinance provides that these projects should be considered on a first come first serve basis. However, the ordinance was adopted prior to the change in the State Constitution, which now requires a ballot to determine if assessments are to be levied.

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The construction of the roads in the petitioned for projects may not be the best use of our limited funds when considering an overall program to construct improvements to the roadway system in the various areas of the MidCoast. The changes in the State Constitution as discussed above have also changed our view of how we can determine if the petitioned for projects can move forward. Previously, the property owners were not committed financially to a project until they received "guarantees" of costs and what the improvement would be. The County financed all the preliminary costs which entailed a considerable amount of time and expense to obtain property owner approval of a project they petitioned for. The changes in the State Constitution has now added the requirement of a secret ballot election and the establishment of an assessment method which can have a high probability of being challenged based on the language in the enabling legislation. We believe this cost should be financed "up front" by the property owners as the ballot is to determine if the property owners are willing to go forward with a project that will build improvements in front of their property first.

#### **Drainage Issues**

An alternative to assessments for drainage improvements would be to make minor corrections where possible to reduce the impact of flooding at specific locations where possible, and to use the funds currently available from Mitigation Fees to correct major identified problems such as at Cedar and Harte Streets, with the understanding that problems across private property would not be corrected unless private funding is obtained or a voluntary assessment district is formed (i.e. 100% approval of the property owners to be assessed); and that the drainage system for the area would remain as overland flow (ditches and cross drains). We can also evaluate the enactment of ordinances that would provide a mechanism for the removal of constrictions in the existing drainage ditches (i.e. substandard or damaged driveway pipes, etc.) that contribute to some local flooding situations; and requirements for reducing peak discharges from private property as a condition of obtaining building or encroachment permits.

Your Counsel may want to evaluate or develop a process that could be used by your Counsel to make recommendations to spend the limited Mitigation Fees to provide drainage improvements. The process could include requiring some matching funds from owners of previously developed property in an area, or agreements whereby property owners agree to contribute funds to reimburse the Mitigation Fee Fund for the cost of improvements that would be built.

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**Re-Visit the Ordinance which Established Policies Related to Road Improvements in the MidCoast**

Your Counsel may also want to review Ordinance No. 03606 which established road improvement policies (petitioned for projects on a first come first serve basis) in order to consider other parameters in establishing which roads should be reconstructed and in what order. The Ordinance identifies seven (7) sub-areas in the MidCoast but the need for improvements and the level of improvements, we believe, vary. Clipper Ridge is fully developed and projects in this area are for the purpose of maintaining these standard streets; and it may not be prudent to construct concrete valley gutters in Seal Cove given the location of the fault line and the potential for ground movement in this area.

We have developed a priority list of roads in other areas of the County, including Sequoia Tract, West Menlo Park and most recently North Fair Oaks, which is then used to sequence the determination if improvements are desired by the property owners on a specific street. The MidCoast may be more difficult to prioritize since there are seven (7) sub-areas and our past experience has been that the location of utility or special district facilities in the roadway area impact the timing of some projects. Attached is the road priority list for North Fair Oaks which was established based on drainage issues, PCI (see above) and the response to property owner surveys. Other parameters could be used including improve access to visitor serving facilities since these facilities are given priority in the Local Coastal Plan, along with preserving existing developed areas.

April Vargas suggested a meeting to discuss some of the issues prior to my meeting with the Public Works Subcommittee of the MidCoast Council or the full Council. Please call me at 650-599-1421 if you wish to arrange a meeting, or to discuss the contents of this letter or if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,



Neil R. Cullen  
Director of Public Works

NRC:sdd

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Enclosures: Ordinance, Map, Priority List

cc: Supervisor Richard Gordon  
April Vargas, Chair, Public Works Subcommittee, MidCoast Community Council  
Marcia Raines, Director of Environmental Services