

Midcoast Community Council

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The Midcoast Pedestrian and Bike Plan 2011

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Introduction

In response to the City/County Association of Governments (C/CAG) of San Mateo County's County Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (CBPP), the Midcoast Community Council (MCC) has on short notice drafted this outline for some long-sought projects for the Midcoast. The MCC is an elected Municipal Advisory Council for the unincorporated Midcoast areas of San Mateo County comprising Montara, Moss Beach, Princeton, El Granada, and Miramar. While this document will only highlight a couple of the projects that have been circulating in the community for many years, it should be noted that there is a parallel process currently underway, [Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Improvement Study](#)¹, which may add to the identification of other projects and enhancements to these proposed projects.

Vision and Goals

The San Mateo County Midcoast is both a residential community and a recreational destination for hundreds of thousands of visitors annually that exacerbates the need for pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian trails to provide access to jobs, homes, schools, transit, shopping, community facilities, parks, regional trails, and beaches throughout the Midcoast and beyond.

It has long been a vision of Midcoast residents to have both connecting alternative (non-vehicular) transportation trails and recreational trails between all the communities and points of interest that would provide safe, convenient and accessible alternatives to the only current transportation corridor - Cabrillo Highway (SR 1).

There is also a need to enable special needs populations, children, seniors, and disabled, to move safely in their communities and to travel between communities to recreational and business facilities such as the harbor, shopping, Seton Coastside Hospital, Fitzgerald Marine Reserve, the many beaches, parks, and other destinations that residents and visitors use on a daily basis.

¹ [Highway 1 Safety & Mobility Improvement Study](#) - This report describes the background, process, and outcomes of the planning effort conducted in El Granada in June, 2009. The study focused on Highway 1 and adjacent communities between Frenchman's Creek in the City of Half Moon Bay, and the Half Moon Bay Airport in unincorporated San Mateo County. Phase II, from the airport north to Devils Slide, is underway now (2011).

Existing Conditions

Like many seaside visitor destinations in the State of California, the Midcoast is squeezed between the Santa Cruz Coastal Mountain Range and the Pacific Ocean with a single state road, SR 1 that connects the residents with the City of Half Moon Bay to the south and City of Pacifica to the north. And while the communities have some convenience stores, gas stations, elementary schools, and small businesses, the majority of Midcoast residents must travel to Half Moon Bay, Pacifica, and beyond for work, school, shopping, and other functions. On weekends and holidays, many Bay Area residents and visitors travel to the Coastside for its many beaches, trails, harbor, and other recreational offerings.

During morning and evening commute periods, and on weekends and holidays when the weather is right, the only north-south road, SR 1, reaches level of service (LOS) F (gridlock), and currently the Midcoast is at only 50% of the planned Local Coastal Program (LCP) build out. Together these two items makes it imperative that alternate transportation services are needed immediately to solve today's problems and to plan for future needs.

Roadways

The existing vehicular circulation network is comprised of a single state highway, SR 1, aka Cabrillo Highway, which runs from Pacifica (Linda Mar) to Half Moon Bay (HMB) where SR 92, aka San Mateo Road, intersects SR 1. All local communities in the Midcoast connect to SR 1 at numerous intersections which hinders traffic flow, compounds safety issues, and has been primary cause of residential dissatisfaction with living on the Midcoast. Both SR 1, going north, and SR 1 and SR 92, going south then east, respectfully, connect a majority (90%) of all Coastside commuters with jobs, school, and other major functions. These facilities are shown in Figure 1 Map 1 and are described below.

On weekends, the traffic flows are reversed from the normal weekday commutes and visitors trying to enter the Midcoast via SR 92 can be backed up for considerable lengths of time trying to reach the beaches and open space. For special events such as the HMB Pumpkin Festival, Mavericks' Surf Competition, and Dream Machines, SR 1 (and SR 92) come to a crawl for most of the day. This can only get worse once the Devils Slide Tunnels and the National Park Service's (NPS) Golden Gate National Recreational Area (GGNRA) Rancho Corral de Tierra open up the Coastside for even more visitors in the coming year.

Transit

The Coastside is served by two San Mateo County Transit (SamTrans) bus routes. Service is best described as sparse and serves mostly school students and low income wage earners during peak commute times.

- Route 17 runs from Linda Mar Shopping Center in Pacifica to Moon Ridge in Half Moon Bay weekdays between 6:00 am and 9:00 pm. During the morning commute crunch (6 am – 8am) the service is approximately every 30 minutes, and during the evening commute crunch (5 pm - 9 pm) the service is approximately every 90 minutes. Mid-day (9:30 am – 4 pm) service is approximately every 90 minutes. Weekends and Holidays service is every 2 hours between 6:30 am – 9:30 pm.
- Route 294 runs weekdays from Linda Mar Shopping Center in Pacifica to Hillsdale Shopping Center in San Mateo approximately every 90 minutes between 6:00 am and 9:00 pm. There is no service on weekends or holidays.

It should also be noted that there is only one school bus providing service for a small number of economically disadvantaged students. The lack of school buses has added to the congestion at SR 1 and North Main Street and at SR 1 and SR 92 between 7 am – 8:30 am and to a lesser extent in the afternoon between 2:30 pm – 3:30 pm because the evening commute has not started. However, afternoon activities at the schools can sometimes run into early evening commute after 4 pm and the nurseries' closing at 5 pm can cause significant congestion on SR 1 from SR 92 north to Miramar.

Roads SR 1 Corridor

- SR 1, a two-lane, north-south roadway, is the only route through all the communities on the Coastside from HMB to Pacifica but the Plan Area will focus on Montara to Miramar - aka the unincorporated Midcoast.
- SR 1 is intersected by numerous local feeder streets in every community, as well as many business entries, private residential driveways, and beach parking.

Major Intersections and Parking

Travelling north to south, here is a list of major intersections that need attention.

- Devil Slide South Portal at-grade Crossing – Proposed (open 2011) at-grade crossing for both public transit and pedestrian/bicycle crossing.
- Gray Whale Cove – Parking on the east side of SR 1, as well as a trail head, and beach access on the west side of SR 1, with an at-grade crossing without any markers.
- Montara Mountain / Green Valley Trail Head – Parking on the east side of SR 1 for 4 or 5 cars right on the highway.
- Montara State Beach (north) – Across from Ocean View Farms unimproved and inadequate parking on the west side of SR 1 frequent overflow parking along SR 1 on both sides of the road during nice weather weekend days.
- Montara State Beach (south) – At 2nd St. and SR 1 and La Costanera Restaurant parking after 5 pm. This location is a primary unmarked at-grade crossing for Montara residents to access the beach and is a major portal for vehicular traffic travelling south on SR 1 to make a left turn to enter Montara.
- Montara – At 8th St. and SR 1 is a major portal for vehicular traffic exiting Montara to make a left turn for travelling south on SR 1.
- Montara – At 9th St. and SR 1 is a major portal for vehicular traffic travelling north on SR 1 to make a right turn to enter Montara. There are also some business parking lots on the highway between 7th St. and 9th St.
- Montara Lighthouse and Hostel and 16th St. – Dangerous intersection on a curve, traffic at 50 MPH+ with no left turn lanes
- Moss Beach – Carlos St. – less than 500 ft. south of the Lighthouse, dangerous intersection on a curve, traffic at 50 MPH+ with no left turn lanes
- Moss Beach – California St. and Weinke Way – Major portal for both north and south traffic in and out of Moss Beach, Fitzgerald Marine Reserve, Sheriff’s Office, Post Office, and local businesses. Also, Wienke Way creates a complex and hazardous intersection on the west side of SR 1.
- Moss Beach – Cypress St. – Major portal for both north and south traffic in and out of Seal Cove, Princeton, and Pillar Ridge. This could potentially become the north portal for a County approved Office Park and Wellness Center that is designed to draw over 2100 vehicle trips per day.
- El Granada – Capistrano Rd. (southern) – Currently has a stop light because of the traffic flows from El Granada, Princeton, Pillar Ridge, and Seal Cove onto SR 1. Also the Harbor, restaurants, and mall add to the traffic congestion here. This could also become the south portal for the aforementioned

County approved Office Park and Wellness Center that is designed to draw over 2100 vehicle trips per day.

- El Granada – Coronado St. – Currently has a stop light because of the traffic flows from El Granada onto SR 1.

Minor Intersections by Communities

There are numerous other intersections, businesses, and beach/recreational parking along SR 1 that should be noted. They are listed below by communities with a brief descriptor.

Montara:

- 7th St.,
- 8th St.,
- 14th St.

Moss Beach:

- Etheldore St. (north) & Vallemar St. – serves local traffic
- Virginia Ave. – serves local traffic and Coastside Deli
- Vermont Ave. – serves local traffic and gas station
- Lancaster Ave. – west side of SR 1 only, serves local traffic
- Terrace Ave. – west side of SR 1 only, serves local traffic
- Marine Blvd – east side of SR 1 only, serves local traffic and Seton Coastside Hospital.
- Etheldore St. (south) – Dangerous intersection on a curve, traffic at 50 MPH+ with no left turn lanes
- Airport St. runs parallel to SR 1 between Cypress Ave. and Princeton serves Pillar Ridge and Seal Cove and contributes to substantial traffic in the Princeton area.

El Granada:

- Capistrano Rd. (north) – west side of SR 1 only, serves Princeton, Pillar Ridge and Seal Cove. This could also become a major portal for the aforementioned County approved Office Park and Wellness Center that is designed to draw over 2100 vehicle trips per day.
- Coral Ridge: Coral Reef Ave. – east side of SR 1 only, serves local traffic.

Miramar:

- Magellan Ave – west side of SR 1 only, serves local traffic, Miramar Beach and Mirada Surf Trail.

- Medio Ave. – west side of SR 1, serves local traffic, including restaurants, Bach Dancing and Dynamite Society and other popular visitor-serving businesses.

Bikeways

There are no designated bike lanes in the unincorporated Midcoast. Currently, surface streets, the shoulders of SR 1 and Airport St., and some trails along the bluffs serve as bikeways. These bike routes are not safe, are not marked, meander through neighborhoods, and don't serve the communities that need them the most: children going to school, lower paid workers going to work.

There is a paved Coastal Trail – separated from SR 1 – that starts at the southern edge of Pillar Point Harbor, continues past Surfer's Beach in El Granada (with a dangerous unimproved 400' gap between Surfer's beach and Mirada Surf West). The paved segment resumes at the intersection of Coronado and SR1 and ends at Magellan Ave. The Coastal Trail continues on surface streets – Magellan and Mirada Rd. – to Half Moon Bay's improved section of the Coastal Trail that goes from the bridge at the south end of Mirada Rd in Miramar to Popler Ave. in Half Moon Bay. The Coastal Trail is primarily a recreational trail and is not intended or designed to effectively serve commuters as it winds along the coastline.

Trail connectivity is problematic for commuters going to school, shop and work. Low-income residents without access to a car, commute along the shoulder of SR1 to work at local restaurants, farms and nurseries.

Pedestrian Conditions

There are no safe at-grade crossings from Devils Slide through Capistrano Rd. in El Granada where there is one of only two stop lights in the unincorporated Midcoast (the other is at Coronado Ave. in El Granada). There are also no safe at-grade crossings in Miramar. And even with the two signals in El Granada the majority of people cross SR 1 from roadside parking at "Surfers Beach" where there are no crosswalks.

The speed limit of 45 – 50 mph on SR 1 through all the communities isolates children, seniors, and special needs residents who have slower walking speeds, slower reaction times, and other mobility issues. These vulnerable groups have an increased risk of being injured or

worse. There are no accommodations to assist these groups in safely crossing the highway.

There are no interconnecting walkways between the neighborhoods for safe and efficient travel. Most of the time, it is necessary to either cross SR 1 or walk on the shoulder to get to another community.

There are many informal trails west of SR 1 which allows people to enjoy ocean and mountain views in a natural setting but these are not connected or contiguous today.

Similarly, there are many trails on the east side hills of the Midcoast in the Rancho Corral de Tierra lands which will soon be included into the National Parks Service (NPS) Golden Gate National Recreational Area (GGNRA). There are plans to have some trail heads located close to SR 1 in the Montara, Moss Beach, and El Granada areas that will attract both local residents and visitors.

Equestrian Conditions

One of the unique features of the Midcoast that differentiates it from the rest of San Mateo County is the number of horse stables and private owners who board their animals here. While there are trails east of SR 1 for recreational riding, because there are no safe at-grade crossings on SR 1, and because the farmer across from the airport blocks equestrians from riding past the farm fields, there is no beach access.

Needs Analysis

Bicyclists' Needs

One could define the current state of biking on the Coastside as only for the "strong and fearless" since most of the cycling is either done off road on bluff trails or in the open spaces east of the communities or it is done along the shoulders of the highway where vehicular traffic a few feet away is going 50+ mph. Some bicyclists ride on local streets, however most communities have substandard streets which are both narrow and have many vehicles (cars, boats, RVs) parked on the street limiting visibility and forcing bikes into the flow of traffic. Due to these concerns, some parents drive their children to school, after school activities, play dates, etc, further compounding traffic congestion. This contributes to obesity and overall lack of physical fitness.

Many people of all ages and fitness levels are apprehensive that any biking typically means either crossing SR 1 or having part of the trip being on SR 1, Airport St., or Sunshine Valley Rd., where traffic speed, noise, and dirt kicked up from the roads makes it an unpleasant experience. Some of these people are in the “interested but concerned” category that will more often than not get in a car instead biking.

If safe bike trails were constructed to connect the communities, businesses, schools, and recreational facilities, many of these concerns mentioned above would be eliminated and more parents would have their children ride their bikes to their friends’ houses and recreational spots instead of having to be driven on SR 1, adding to the congestion.

Pedestrians’ Needs

All Coastside communities need safe Highway 1 at-grade crossings. Residents on the west side of SR 1 need safe access to businesses, post offices, public transit stops, etc which are mostly located on the east side of SR 1. Residents on the east side of SR 1 need safe access to the things that many people moved here for: beaches, trails and other recreational facilities located on the west side of SR 1. The SR 1 speed limit is between 45 mph and 50 mph through these communities and cars travel even faster when traffic is light. Pedestrians sometimes must cross halfway when traffic is heavy and wait in the unprotected center strip to finish crossing. There are no crosswalks, signage or other appropriate crossing facilities in any of the communities with the exception of the two stop lights and crosswalks in El Granada (at Capistrano and at Coronado).

Most parts of Montara, Moss Beach, Seal Cove, Princeton, El Granada, and Miramar have no sidewalks, have uncontrolled intersections, narrow streets, blind driveways and many other unsafe conditions for local pedestrian traffic, especially for younger children. None of these communities have continuous walking facilities.

There are no interconnecting trails between the neighborhoods for safe and efficient travel. Most of the time, it is necessary to either cross SR 1 or walk alongside it to get to another community. For instance to get from Montara to Moss Beach, adjacent communities, it is necessary to either walk alongside SR 1 between 16th St and Carlos St. or walk along the east side of Montara and Moss Beach on Sunshine Valley Rd. which is narrow, has speeding cars, many blind curves, blind

driveways, no sidewalks, and sometimes has equestrian riders and bicyclists which makes it extremely dangerous. Likewise, trying to connect from the east side of Moss Beach to Seal Cove, Pillar Ridge, and Princeton means crossing SR 1 (at California or Cypress) and then using surface streets such as Airport St. to reach these communities. One last example is connecting El Granada with the east side of Miramar which requires heading south from Coronado St. to Medio Ave. on the east side shoulder of SR 1.

There is also a need for safe trails serving the low income residents of Pillar Ridge who walk or bike to work or school along Airport St. and through the substandard streets of Princeton to get to the main transportation corridor.

Equestrian Needs

There is a need for safe equestrian crossing from the east side trails of the Midcoast to the west side to provide access to beaches, parks, and the harbor. The current traffic speeds and volumes have made most riders cease crossing SR 1.

The farm across from the airport has also prevented equestrians from using the Caltrans right of way to connect between Moss Beach and El Granada, thereby isolating many riders from Montara and Moss Beach stables from the only safe crossing stop lights in the Midcoast.

Since many of the problems that face bicyclists and pedestrians are also encountered by equestrians, many of the trails identified here could be used by all three groups with some modifications. One problem for horse riders is paved trails which can cause horses to have footing problems because of the pavements interaction with the horseshoes. And the horseshoes can cause rapid deterioration of the pavement. It would make sense to have a dirt path next to trails where equestrians would most likely travel.

Proposed Plans

Priority Corridors

The Coastside is a destination for recreational visitors to ride their bikes, horses and walk along the ocean bluffs and the surrounding hills. It is also a series of five communities, Montara, Moss Beach, Princeton, El Granada, and Miramar and smaller neighborhoods such as Seal Cove, Pillar Ridge and Coral Reef which have unique needs and

amenities that draw local residents to many of their neighboring communities. The following are just a few priority projects to begin connecting the Midcoast communities with each other and provide them with both recreational trails and alternative commuting. It is hoped that with more projects added in the future we can connect to the Bay Area Network of bikeways and trails.

Multimodal Trail

This is also known as the Parallel Trail and was written into the certified Local Coastal Program in 1980. It is designated to be a Class I bicycle and pedestrian trail running along the east side of SR 1 in the Caltrans right of way. It would connect the east sides of Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, and Miramar neighborhoods, where the majority of the population lives, with a direct, continuous, and safe route from the Midcoast to Half Moon Bay to the south and to Pacifica (Linda Mar) to the north.

When complete, the trail will go south from the Green Valley trailhead in Montara (across from the north end of Montara State Beach) to the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Half Moon Bay.

There are some challenging areas through Moss Beach and Montara where the SR 1 shoulders are narrow. Some of these can be bypassed by Class II trails using Carlos St. in Moss Beach and Main St. in Montara which could also serve local businesses with much needed business traffic. There would also be a need for some pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and support facilities in these areas.

Likewise, north of Montara to Devils Slide and on to Linda Mar there are some shoulders which due to erosion are too narrow and will need to be addressed in a detailed plan. There are numerous groups, Highway 1 Safety and Mobility, Midcoast Community Council, and GGNRA to name a few, who are looking at various plans right now to extend the trail and provide safe crossings in this area. These will need to be agreed upon and formalized.

Multimodal Trail - Seal Cove Extension

This would extend the Multimodal Trail, on the east side of SR 1, to the west side communities of Princeton, Pillar Ridge, Seal Cove, Moss Beach (west), and Fitzgerald Marine Reserve. This area has many low income families who use bicycle and pedestrian trails to get to

businesses and schools on the east side of SR 1. It would also serve to connect the Harbor, a central focus area, with the communities on the east side of the Midcoast. This extension could do double duty as an inland strand of the Coastal Trail through the area.

The extension would run along Airport St. from Stanford Ave. in Princeton to Cypress Ave. in Moss Beach. This strand would provide safe access along Airport St. for people who live and work in Princeton, Pillar Ridge, Seal Cove, Moss Beach (west), and for people visiting the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve and Pillar Point Harbor. Low income residents of Pillar Ridge in Moss Beach need safe bicycle and pedestrian access along Airport St. Many accidents have happened on this stretch of road including a pedestrian fatality in recent years.

Coastal Trail

The Coastal Trail runs from Pacifica to Half Moon Bay through the unincorporated Midcoast. Because erosion on the bluffs has reached private property lines on the west sides of Montara and Moss Beach, it will be necessary to have the trail cross to the east side of SR 1 in this area. Probably the most expedient solution would be for the Coastal Trail to follow the Multimodal trail from Devils Slide through Montara and Moss Beach. It could then cross SR 1 in Moss Beach at a safe crossing, at California Ave., and then continue south through Moss Beach (west) and Seal Cove and Pillar Ridge. The exact route through this area is being discussed as part of the Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Study.

The following are additional documents that should be considered in this matter:

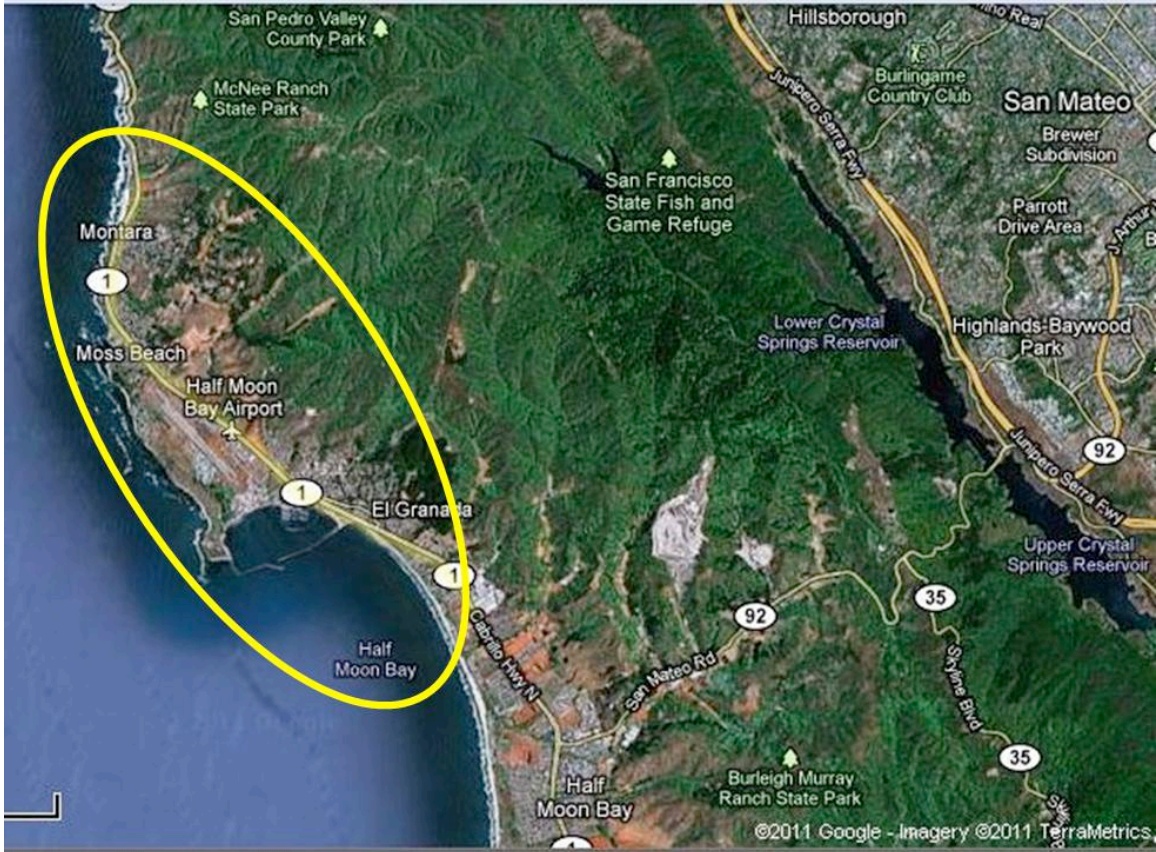
- Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Study – Phase I
- Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Study – Phase II - Draft under review
- California Coastal Trail (Mirada Surf to Pillar Point) – Approved
- California Coastal Trail North (Pillar Point to Devil’s Slide) – Draft under review
- California Coastal Trail Concept Plan Input for Pillar Point to Devil’s Slide - 12 Walks

Project Table

Location	Project Group	Project Title	From	To	Miles	Class	Cost
Unincorporated San Mateo County	Pacific Coast Bikeway North – South Bikeway Countywide Bikeway Network	Multimodal Trail Highway 1	Devil Slide Tunnel	Miramar	7	Class I	\$7M
Unincorporated San Mateo County	Pacific Coast Trail	Coastal Trail	El Granada	Devil Slide	6	Class I	\$6M
Unincorporated San Mateo County	Pacific Coast Bikeway North – South Bikeway Countywide Bikeway Network	Multimodal Seal Cove Extension	Moss Beach (west)	El Granada	2.5	Class I	\$2.5 M

Appendix A

San Mateo County unincorporated Midcoast Plan Area Map 1



Montara Plan Area Map 2



Moss Beach Plan Area Map 3



Princeton & Seal Cove Plan Area Map 4



El Granada & Miramar Plan Area Map 5

