



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

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August 24, 2005

Ms. Karen Wilson
Chair, MidCoast Community Council
P.O. Box 64
Moss Beach, CA 94038

Dear Ms. Wilson:

Subject: Proposed Expansion of the MidCoast Road Standards to Include the Resurfacing of Substandard Streets

I would appreciate meeting with you and the Public Works subcommittee of the MidCoast Council to discuss including resurfacing as an alternate to the standards that are contained in the MidCoast Community Plan. Our meeting could then be followed by a discussion with the full Council at a regularly scheduled Council meeting, if there is a general consensus that including resurfacing as a standard should be pursued. The reason for requesting a meeting is as follows:

Current MidCoast Standards

The current standards were included in the Community Plan (Plan) for the area which was adopted in 1994. The Plan provides that "all owner and County initiated road improvement projects... shall comply..." with the standards as defined for each area of the MidCoast. We completed only three improvement projects in the MidCoast since 1994, as the financing of improvements was complicated by the passage of a Constitutional amendment (Proposition 218) that essentially eliminated a governmental agency's ability to levy assessments for property related improvements. Property related improvements are usually constructed together with road improvements.

Other Financial Options Evaluated

We subsequently discussed alternatives with your Council whereby no property related improvements would be constructed with a project. This eliminated the need for property assessments as the adjacent property owners would have to determine what they wanted or needed in terms of driveway, walkway or parking improvements, and then coordinate and pay for this work separately. Your Council approved this concept and we surveyed property owners on 12 streets to see if minimum street improvements were desired. We only received surveys back from a majority of property owners on portions of Etheldore Street in Montara and on

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Cornell and California Avenues in the Princeton area. We did not receive a majority of surveys back on the remaining nine (9) streets, as property owners either were not willing to commit to being responsible for work associated with their property, or were concerned that improvements would lead to more traffic traveling at a higher rate of speed.

Use of Mitigation Fees

We recently proposed the use of mitigation fees as a means of constructing drainage improvements in the MidCoast together with street improvements for areas that have drainage problems. Under this plan, property owners whose homes were built prior to the imposition of mitigation fees, were asked if they would voluntarily contribute an amount equal to the mitigation fee that they would be required to pay if constructing their homes today, or to enter into an agreement to pay the fees at such time as their property was sold. This option was initiated on Cypress Avenue in Moss Beach where localized flooding occurs on an almost yearly basis. We sent sixteen (16) property owners the surveys. However, we only received responses from four (4) property owners indicating that they were interested. We are now in the process of sending the property owners letters notifying them that we are dropping this proposal due to the lack of property owner interest.

Resurfacing of County Maintained Roads

Road resurfacing is generally considered a maintenance type project by the State Controller; the Planning Division of the Environmental Services Agency considers resurfacing as a maintenance type project and has, in the past, issued Coastal Development Permit Exemptions for this type of work; we continue to resurface (slurry seals, cape seals or asphalt overlays) streets in the MidCoast that were previously improved to a minimum standard; and the Board of Supervisors has, for other areas of the County, adopted the resurfacing of roads as the minimum standard. This has occurred in both the Emerald Hills and the Devonshire Canyon areas and is also one of the options for the Fair Oaks area adjacent to Redwood City.

We have not resurfaced roads that have not been built to a standard in the MidCoast due to the limiting language in the MidCoast Community Plan as previously discussed.

Proposed Resurfacing of Roads in the MidCoast

My intention is not to eliminate the standards as approved in the Community Plan, but to allow the Department more flexibility in maintaining the travel ways of the County maintained road system in a reasonable condition commensurate with the area. Past surveys, as stated previously, indicate that property owners are hesitant to agree to street improvements as they believe that improving only their street will attract traffic, as the other streets will remain unimproved.

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Approving resurfacing as an alternative could allow us to do parallel streets and thereby reduce the potential for shifting traffic and allay the property owners' concerns.

I believe that your Council can consider three options if you agree that resurfacing should be considered as an alternate for the MidCoast:

- 1) expand the language in the Community Plan to include resurfacing of the streets as an option;
- 2) remove the road standards from the Community Plan and have the standards adopted by the Board of Supervisors by resolution;
- 3) consider resurfacing of a maintained road as an allowed exception as provided in paragraph 3d, General Policies, of the Community Plan, on the premise that resurfacing the road will preserve the existing "neighborhood quality" of an area.

Each option has both positive and negative aspects. Option 1 and 2 would take more time to implement as public hearings would have to be held and a survey of the property owners in a subarea(s) would need to be conducted. Option 3 can be implemented in a shorter period of time but could subject your Council and the Department to criticism of attempting to "avoid" the process as required by the Community Plan.

The cost of resurfacing a road is considerably less expensive than reconstructing a road, and therefore, more resurfacing could be done with a like amount of funds. However, we believe that a priority list of roads to be resurfaced would have to be established as has been done in other parts of the County, as there are roads in the seven (7) subareas of the MidCoast that we believe need to be resurfaced.

Attached is an excerpt from the Community Plan that contains the current street standards and the exception criteria. I can have staff develop maps that indicate the roads that have been improved in the MidCoast to a standard, roads that remain to be reconstructed or resurfaced, and a "first cut" of roads that could be resurfaced pending the creation of a "complete" priority list.

As stated previously, my intent is not to eliminate the standards as approved in the Community Plan, but to allow the Department more flexibility in maintaining the County maintained road system. We could still consider minimum standard improvements where desired by the property owners. However, I believe the construction of drainage improvements would either have to comply with the standards in the Community Plan or an exemption that meets the criteria in paragraph 5 of the Community Plan would have to be approved by the Board of Supervisors, if the Community Plan is not amended.

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Please contact me at 650-599-1421 or by email at ncullen@co.sanmateo.ca.us to set up a mutually convenient time to meet, or if you have any questions that I need to answer prior to our meeting.

Very truly yours,



Neil R. Cullen
Director of Public Works

NRC:sdd

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Enclosure: Excerpt - MidCoast Community Plan

cc with enclosure: Supervisor Richard Gordon

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GOAL:

Develop a circulation system, and road standards for all Mid-Coast streets, which complement the small-town, semi-rural character of the community.

ISSUES:

Existing Circulation System

The existing circulation system, shown as Plate D.1, includes Highway One, major and minor thoroughfares, residential and commercial-fronting streets, and other streets in the Mid-Coast.

A new alignment for the Coast Highway was adopted by the State and County in 1958 to bypass Moss Beach, Montara, and Devil's Slide. The bypass was originally proposed as a 4-lane freeway, but the California Coastal Act of 1976 stipulates that the Coast Highway remain a 2-lane facility in rural areas. The future of the bypass project is now in question.

Road Standards

Because Montara, Moss Beach, and El Granada were subdivided between 1906 and 1909, prior to the adoption by the County of subdivision regulations, few of their streets are improved. The narrow streets contribute to the small-town character of the community; but they need to be paved to control drainage, eliminate dust, and to provide an adequate all-weather travel surface.

Previous County road standards called for roadway widths varying from 22 to 40 feet with paved parking lanes, curbs, gutters, and sidewalks.

The Mid-Coast Community Council determined that these standards are inappropriate for these communities because they allow wide streets with paved parking shoulders and pedestrian walkways at the expense of natural features and neighborhood character. In 1994, after a County-sponsored survey of all property owners, the Council developed new Mid-Coast road standards that prohibit parking bays, and in most areas, paved parking shoulders, sidewalks, and bikeways. These standards are more compatible with the community image and are intended to preserve existing trees and landscaping, minimize the impact on the neighboring environment, and enhance the small-town, semi-rural character of the Mid-Coast.

POLICIES:

GENERAL POLICIES

1. Develop public roads to serve the transportation needs of Mid-Coast residents. Roadway size and level of improvement shall preserve the small town, semi-rural character and quality of the Mid-Coast neighborhoods and protect the natural environment.
2. Establish Mid-Coast road standards to provide safe and functional use of roadways. The road standards shall: (a) limit roadway width to the

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minimum necessary for safe access compatible with surrounding residential development; (b) restrict pavement to the travel lanes; (c) prohibit bicycle lanes and bicycle paths east of Highway 1; (d) permit bicycle lanes and bicycle paths west of Highway 1 to access coastal resources and visitor-serving facilities; (e) prohibit parking bays; (f) permit paved shoulders and sidewalks in the El Granada and Clipper Ridge areas, and (g) permit unpaved shoulders (or paved shoulders with an encroachment permit) and prohibit sidewalks in the Montara/Moss Beach/Seal Cove/Princeton/Miramar area. Curbs, gutters and sidewalks are allowed in commercially-zoned areas to ensure public safety.

3. Allow exceptions to the road standards when applying the roadway design techniques of the Creative Road Design Guide to: (a) protect natural features, including trees, (b) conserve resources, (c) fit the topography, and (d) preserve neighborhood quality.
4. Encourage SamTrans and other transit providers to continuously evaluate transit service within the Mid-Coast area transit corridor, to ensure the public is provided the most timely and cost-efficient transit service possible between residential areas, employment centers, commercial districts, recreation areas, and other major destinations within the County.

MID-COAST ROAD STANDARDS

All owner and County-initiated road improvement projects, i.e., road improvement projects on major and minor thoroughfares, residential and commercial-fronting streets, and other streets, shall comply with the one of following sets of Mid-Coast road standards:

1. Montara/Moss Beach/Seal Cove/Princeton/Miramar Road Standards

Road improvement projects in the Montara, Moss Beach, Seal Cove, Princeton, and Miramar area (as shown on Plate D.2) shall comply with the following standards; road improvement projects in El Granada may comply with the following standards upon petition of property owners fronting onto project area roads in accordance with the current qualification criteria used in the formation of assessment districts:

- a. Travel Lanes. Limit roads to two 11-foot wide, asphalt-paved travel lanes.
- b. Drainage. Surface drainage facilities shall consist of standard gray concrete-paved valley gutters to channel runoff to underground conduits through catch basins or inlets as necessary. Paved curb and gutters may be constructed in commercially-zoned areas, i.e. C-1, C-2, and CCR zoning districts, to ensure public safety. The curbs and gutters shall be constructed on both sides of the street and for complete blocks.
- c. Parking. Prohibit parking bays. Parking may consist of unpaved shoulders located adjacent to the travel lanes. Paved parking shoulders and driveway extensions may be allowed, except at street

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intersections or where necessary to preserve existing trees, upon issuance of an encroachment permit by the Department of Public Works. In such cases, an acceptable parking surface material shall be determined by the Department of Public Works based on slope, drainage, and engineering conditions; however, concrete is prohibited. Paved parking shoulders, as allowed above, shall be located adjacent and parallel to the travel lane and limited to that width necessary to park a vehicle.

- d. Sidewalks. Prohibit sidewalks, except in commercially-zoned areas, i.e. C-1, C-2, and CCR zoning districts, where sidewalks may be allowed to ensure public safety. The sidewalks shall be constructed on one or both sides of the street and for complete blocks.
- e. Bicycle Facilities. Prohibit bicycle lanes in the road right-of-way east of Highway 1. A bicycle lane is a striped lane for one-way bicycle travel directly adjacent to the travel lane.

2. El Granada Road Standards

Road improvement projects in the El Granada area (as shown on Plate D.2) may use either the following El Granada Road Standard or the Montara/Moss Beach/Seal Cove/Princeton/Miramar Road Standard. The standard to be used shall be determined upon petition of those property owners fronting onto the project area road(s), in accordance with the current qualification criteria used in the formation of assessment districts.

- a. Travel Lanes. Limit roads to two 11-foot wide, asphalt-paved travel lanes. Existing one-way street travel lanes wider than 11 feet may be narrowed upon consent of those property owners fronting onto the road, in accordance with the current qualification criteria used in the formation of assessment districts.
- b. Drainage. Surface drainage facilities shall consist of standard gray concrete curbs and gutters to channel runoff to underground conduits, through catch basins or inlets, as necessary.
- c. Parking. Prohibit parking bays. Parking shall consist of asphalt-paved shoulders located adjacent and parallel to the travel lanes and limited to that width necessary to park a vehicle, except that no parking shall be provided at street intersections or where necessary to preserve existing trees.
- d. Sidewalks. Allow sidewalks on one or both sides of the street, adjacent to roadway improvements, and shall be made of standard gray concrete.
- e. Bicycle Facilities. Prohibit bicycle lanes in the road right-of-way. A bicycle lane is a striped lane for one-way bicycle travel directly adjacent to the travel lane.

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3. Clipper Ridge Road Standards

Road improvement projects in the Clipper Ridge area (as shown on Plate D.2) shall comply with the following standards:

- a. Travel Lanes. Travel lanes shall be asphalt-paved and limited to the same pavement width as existing paved streets, i.e., 32 to 40-foot paved roadway width.
- b. Drainage. Surface drainage facilities shall consist of standard gray concrete curbs and gutters to channel runoff to underground conduits through catch basins or inlets, as necessary.
- c. Parking. Prohibit parking bays. Parking shall consist of asphalt-paved shoulders located adjacent and parallel to the travel lanes and limited to that width necessary to park a vehicle, except that no parking shall be provided at street intersections or where necessary to preserve existing trees.
- d. Sidewalks. Require sidewalks on both sides of the street, adjacent to roadway improvements, and shall be made of standard gray concrete.
- e. Bicycle Facilities. Prohibit bicycle lanes in the road right-of-way. A bicycle lane is a striped lane for one-way bicycle travel directly adjacent to the travel lane.

4. Coast Highway (State Route 1) Road Standards

Road improvement projects on State Route 1 (as shown on Plate D.2) including travel lane width, drainage facilities, parking, sidewalks, and bicycle routes shall comply with standards of the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans).

5. Exceptions to Mid-Coast Road Standards

Where the topography impedes compliance with the Mid-Coast road standards, the Board of Supervisors, upon recommendation by the Department of Public Works, may allow minor exceptions to the road standards. However, in no case shall exceptions result in paved roads with less than two travel lanes for emergency vehicles and drainage facilities to control surface storm water. Exceptions shall not be used as a means of implementing road standards requiring a greater level of improvement than required in the Mid-Coast road standards.

6. Amendments to Mid-Coast Road Improvement Provisions

Any amendment to policies, standards, or other provisions regulating Mid-Coast road improvements shall require public hearing(s) before the Mid-Coast Community Council. In addition, any amendment to road standards specifically applicable to any of the following areas shall require a written survey of the property owners in that area: (1) Montara, (2) Moss

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Beach, (3) Seal Cove, (4) Princeton, (5) Miramar, (6) El Granada, or (7) Clipper Ridge.

TRAILS:

GOAL:

Develop a trail system to provide intra-community circulation and access to recreation facilities, schools, and open space.

ISSUES:

Pedestrian

Access throughout the community is designed primarily for cars; in most areas pedestrians must walk in or along the streets. This is especially bad for school children during wet weather. Walkways, paths, and hiking trails are needed to provide pedestrian access within the individual communities, and to the schools, parks, beaches, and open space.

Bicycle

The increase in bicycling for recreation and transportation in recent years has resulted in a need for safe facilities throughout the County. Since the coastside attracts recreation cyclists from the Bayside, provisions need to be made for both local residents and visitors.

Equestrian

There are many stables in the community, especially along Sunshine Valley Road. Access to recreation centers and the open lands of the Santa Cruz Mountains needs to be provided for equestrians.

POLICIES:

- Utilize stream and drainage channels extending into urbanized areas as a basis for a trail system for hikers and equestrians which serves parks, schools, beaches, and open space.
- Develop equestrian paths alongside selected roads and in open space areas.
- Allow bicycle lanes and bicycle paths in the road right-of-way west of Highway 1 only, to provide access to coastal resources and visitor-serving facilities. Bicycle lane and bicycle path projects shall require public hearing(s) before the Mid-Coast Community Council. A bicycle lane is a striped lane for one-way bicycle travel directly adjacent to the travel lane. A bicycle path is a path that is separated from the travel lanes for exclusive use of bicycles.
- Construct a bicycle route along the Coast Highway, for intra-community as well as regional access.

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TRAIL SYSTEM:

Hiking and equestrian trails are shown in generalized locations on Plate E. Most of them follow stream courses and connect with parks, beaches, and open space. A hiking trail is indicated along the ocean front, and a bicycle route parallels the Coast Highway.