

Midcoast Community Council

An elected Advisory Council to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors

representing Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton, and Miramar

PO Box 248, Moss Beach, CA 94038-0248 | midcoastcommunitycouncil.org

Len Erickson | Michelle Weil | Claire Toutant | Barbra Mathewson | Dan Haggerty | Dave Olson

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Date: October 28, 2020

To: Nina Hofmarcher, Environmental Planner, Caltrans

Cc: Don Horsley, San Mateo County Supervisor
Erik Martinez, Coastal Program Analyst, California Coastal Commission

From: Midcoast Community Council

Subject: **Caltrans SR1 Traffic Operational Systems Improvements Project**

The Midcoast Community Council has been asked to comment on Caltrans Traffic Improvement Plan, which includes variable message signs and sensors that measure traffic flow. We appreciate the presence of Caltrans personnel in presenting this proposal to us.

Part of our historic interest in this issue stems from the 2019 closure of the Lantos Tunnel due to electrical problems. At that time, we requested that Caltrans have a way for its offices to monitor traffic problems on the coast, that shortages of electrical power would no longer close the tunnel and that measures would be taken to communicate urgent changes in traffic flow to motorists.

On the surface, the present plan seems to address our requests, but falls short due to its focus on the Coast's role as a tourist destination, rather than on our concerns about safety-oriented traffic management.

The generator being installed at the tunnel will undoubtedly help ensure continued operation of the tunnel. It may be that the traffic monitoring will help with communication between the Coast and Caltrans. The signage, however, presents major problems.

If we supported any signage, it would be for the purpose of urgent and emergency communications. We are an isolated community, served exclusively by two roads which often carry heavy visitor traffic. And we are vulnerable to major disruptions, such as potential fire evacuation and closures of either of our two roads. In the event of rare disruptions of that scale, immediate communication with motorists and residents would be vital.

We do not, however, need or want signage as proposed by Caltrans. We don't need weather advisories or information about how long it takes to get to the next town or what events are taking place. We are asking for signage specifically geared to road closures or emergency communications only. We do not want continuous lighting, and any signs lit at night for essential purposes should be Dark Sky Friendly. We would want any signage to be located near places that already have some development, so as to avoid placing signs in more rural locations. Emergency electronic signs would also need to be designed to

function in the case of loss of electrical service, as would likely be the case in a community-wide emergency.

We understand that your funding mechanisms may make it difficult to separate out components of your plan from each other. That is unfortunate. The community, however, is united in not wanting the sort of signage you propose. We appreciate Caltrans' willingness to work with the community in this and other issues and we hope that we can reach an agreement on this and on the other issues we are working on together.

MIDCOAST COMMUNITY COUNCIL
s/Len Erickson Chair