

# Midcoast Community Council Newsletter

Fall 2022



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## Issues with the Mid-Peninsula Housing Cypress Point Project



This housing project is on an 11 acre portion of an old military site. Later an elementary school was operated in one of the administrative buildings. The property is between Moss Beach and Montara, bordered by Sierra and 16th, and Carlos and Lincoln.

Since the closure of the elementary school many years ago, the site has been used principally by neighbors for walking, often with dogs, and by children and young adults for bike riding, skateboarding, and similar activities.

The site has been owned by the California School Employees Association (CSEA) since 1969, which purchased it as a real estate investment. There were several attempts to develop it over the years, all stopped for one reason or another. In the 1983 San Mateo County Local Coastal Program (LCP), the site was reserved for 148 units of housing, with 14% of the units to be reserved for low income housing, and 21% to be reserved for affordable income housing.

In 2016, MidPen Housing (MidPen) began investigating the possibility of building a housing project on the property, and eventually purchased an option to buy the property (as of July 2022, the property was still owned by CSEA). In 2017, the project was given the name Cypress Point.

MidPen held a number of public workshops regarding the property and their plans, and attended several MCC meetings to discuss the plans and answer questions about the project. The MCC has written a number of letters to the County and the Coastal Commission regarding the project, mostly focusing on traffic and safety issues of various kinds. Ultimately, MidPen decided to build 71 units, 100% of them affordable. This required an LCP amendment, a process that was started in 2019 and that was finalized in 2021.

In July 2022, MidPen submitted documents to obtain a Coastal Development Project (CDP) for the project, with fairly detailed plans and environmental documents (however, the Biological Impact form required by the County was submitted as an empty document). The MCC recently submitted [comments on the CDP](#), mentioning the missing biological document, concerns about safety of traffic to and from the project, and other concerns.

The CDP will be heard at the Planning Commission sometime in the next few months, and that will be followed by an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) commissioned by County Planning, paid for by MidPen. Once submitted, there will be a public comment period. Following the EIR, MidPen or their contractor will submit the documents for their building permit.

Links to most of the documents and the MCC letters are on the [MCC website Cypress Point page](#).

## **EI Granada Sidewalk Safety**



Residents in El Granada (EG) who use the 300 block of Avenue Portola to walk to and from the Post Office have complained of blockages on the right of way by some homeowners that force pedestrians to walk in the street, in a wet ditch, and/or into fast-moving traffic on that popular transit corridor. There have been falls and injuries reported, and several residents have asked the MCC to help solve the problem. The council discussed this matter at several meetings, including [this summary](#) from Sept. 14, and has had an ongoing dialog with County DPW.

DPW has stated that statutes regarding blocked sidewalks are complex and policy should be formulated with community support. DPW also cites a patchwork of EG development regulations, and the Code requirements (in the link above), which complicate any action and can involve special assessments. Residents involved insist that in some cases there were pre-existing sidewalks - now overbuilt with planters, etc. - and that all the neighbors require is a clear walkway in the Right Of Way; they do not want unnecessary sidewalk expense or delay in remedying a safety hazard.

To move toward a solution on this matter, the MCC is offering to **host a Community Workshop with DPW and interested EG residents** regarding the subject block AND OTHER blocks in the community where residents desire safer walkways. Residents in the 300 block of Avenue Portola are organizing a petition, and inviting residents who either live on that block and/or use that area of Avenue Portola to request action by DPW. If you are interested in signing the petition, contact [mwilbanks@techvets.com](mailto:mwilbanks@techvets.com). If you have OTHER EG LOCATIONS where you believe either a sidewalk or an unobstructed walkway is merited, please email [midcoastcommunitycouncil@gmail.com](mailto:midcoastcommunitycouncil@gmail.com) with the Subject of "EG WALKWAY REQUEST". We will post a notice of the workshop on our website and in local media.

## Improved Mental Health Crisis Response: Introducing CARES



Half Moon Bay partnered with several County and local organizations to create CARES, ***Crisis Assistance Response & Evaluation Services*** this year. CARES is designed as an alternative for dispatching calls involving a mental health crisis on the Mid-Coast. The program allows crisis calls centered around mental health issues to be redirected from law enforcement and other first responders to providers of sustainable mental health care and treatment. In essence, some emergencies are better handled by trained mental health professionals than by armed officers.

There are three objectives to the program:

1. To shift the demands of mental health related calls away from the County Sheriff's office.

2. To interrupt the cycle of mental health crises within a family.
3. To lower costs associated with emergency mental health care and the provision of police services.

In essence the program can be thought of as Rationalizing The Response, because an armed response might escalate, rather than de-escalate, a mental health crisis.

*Here's how it works:*

1. A member of the community calls 911/988.
2. The Crisis Call Center screens the call to determine the absence of three elements: No weapons, no medical emergency, and no crime.
3. The Call Center dispatches the CARES Team to the reported location. If it's a 988 call, they call the CARES Team directly.

*What happens when CARES arrives?*

1. 1. The scene is immediately assessed to determine if the CARES response is sufficient, or whether a higher-level response is required.
2. The CARES Team will begin immediate de-escalation and assessment, seeking scene stabilization.
3. Using Motivational Interviewing, a plan of action is put onto place, including referrals and safety plans.

*What if the scene can't be stabilized?*

1. In some cases, transportation to additional services may be necessary.
2. Voluntary 5150 (emergency custody) holds can be facilitated.

Following a response, calls are made the next workday to ensure connections have been made between agencies, the client, and the client's support network.

The CARES program will serve any location on the Mid-Coast of San Mateo County, including homes, businesses, schools, shelters and homeless

encampments.

Starting 9/1/22, the CARES Team operates 7 days a week, from 8:00am to 6:30pm including two Crisis Intervention Specialists, one or both being bi-lingual, and one or both holding EMT certification. The Team is supervised by a fulltime Clinical Director (LCSW). The CARES program is collecting data on activity and outcomes to assess the efficacy of the program, including cost savings.

More information on the CARES program is available at [Half Moon Bay CARES](#).

The presentation made by the CARES team to the MCC can be viewed in full [here](#).

## Montara Safe Routes to School Workshop Results



A community workshop was held with the County Department of Public Works (DPW) on November 1st on the subject of traffic safety in Montara near

Farallone Elementary School. Approximately 20 people attended the workshop, including public works officials, school officials, parents and other Montara community members, and MCC councilmembers Len Erickson and Gregg Dieguez. The meeting identified short, medium, and long-range actions that seek to address community members' concerns about safety.

In the short term, the DPW will write local residents to trim any vegetation encroaching on visibility of intersections in the area, and they will follow up with enforcement actions as needed. In addition, DPW will proceed over the next couple months with street markings on intersections of concern, using existing maintenance budgets.

In addition, since there is no safe way to walk to Farallone View Elementary School along Highway 1 from Moss Beach, the MCC will follow up with Caltrans to request temporary concrete barriers (such as those temporarily in place near Mirada Rd and the Medio Creek Bridge). Recent fatal bicycle accidents in this area were offered as evidence of the urgency of this particular safety issue. The MCC will also invite the Sheriff to an upcoming meeting where residents can request both enforcement and measurement of traffic speeds on Sunshine Valley Road. The potential addition of hundreds of new residents in the Cypress Point development was offered as evidence of the need to address safety on Sunshine Valley Road and Carlos Street.

In the medium term, DPW will evaluate erecting signage for school crossings within 500' of the school entrance (for example, at 4th and Le Conte Ave.) based on Len Erickson's findings in the traffic regulations. The hope is that this will also fall within the current Maintenance budget, which would speed implementation.

Longer term, DPW will explore budgeting \$300-500K in the next 2023-25 budget cycle for a thorough traffic study which may yield the more comprehensive measures desired by the school staff and community. This could take six to twelve months elapsed time, followed by implementation



scheduling. The MCC will support DPW efforts to budget for this traffic study.

The discussion also highlighted some of the constraints in making changes to the roadways. For instance, DPW must follow established guidelines and standards in erecting street signage, or potentially face legal liability issues. DPW has studied all 5 intersections where the community requested Stop signs; however, all five fail the code requirements, so DPW cannot erect Stop signs at them. As an alternative, to establish Yield signs DPW must consider the secondary effects on traffic flow in the region, which can include faster traffic on the streets without Yield signs. DPW hopes to include this analysis in the comprehensive traffic engineering study previously mentioned. Finally, residents voiced concern that 25mph was too fast a speed limit for narrow Montara streets without sidewalks. However, the Right-of-Way (which includes portions of residents' yards) is 40', and thus the speed limit is consistent with design regulations.

## **Quarry Park Concerns Trigger Special Meeting**

Neighborhood flooding among issues for Nov. 30th



On Nov. 9th, the MCC was briefed by SMC Parks on the issue of CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) compliance for the [Quarry Park \(QP\) Master Plan](#). Due to repeated resident concerns about flooding from QP, the Council agreed to hold a special meeting on Nov. 30th to consider a letter to the Board of Supervisors to be submitted before they vote on the Master Plan. Below is background for understanding the briefing, followed by a short summary of the briefing itself.

### **Background:**

A master plan is a long-term planning document that establishes a vision and a conceptual layout based on community desires and legal, regulatory, or management obligations. It may include goals, policies, and specific projects, but need not have all of those things in it. Adoption of a master plan by a jurisdiction does not require that jurisdiction to execute every policy or complete every project in it; rather, the plan is used to advance priorities, develop projects, and inform policy. However, when considering the adoption of a master planning document, a jurisdiction must consider its obligations under CEQA to carry out an environmental review of anything in the document that meets the definition of a “project” under CEQA. A “project” under CEQA is defined as any activity which may cause either a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.

Several projects in Quarry County Park are not subject to CEQA environmental review at this time because they have already been completed, are already under construction, or are already currently under CEQA review. These projects include the following:

- Off-leash dog recreation pilot program
- South Ridge Fire Road connecting Coronado Avenue to the South Ridge Trail
- Bicycle pump track
- Multiple wildfire fuel management projects

- Minor Dam improvements and a new waterline for irrigation and fire suppression
- Multi-modal Trail on the east side of Highway 1 right-of-way connecting to the City of Half Moon Bay's trail to the south and to both Granada Elementary School and Coronado Ave on the north
- A new single vault toilet adjacent to the new pump track
- Expansion of the existing parking lot

Ongoing park operations and maintenance are part of the existing conditions and are also not subject to CEQA review.

Planned actions in the Master Plan that have not yet been implemented and that qualify as a "project" under CEQA may be subject to future CEQA review. These include the following:

- Quarry County Park mountain bike design standards and formalization of mountain bike trails
- Trail system and signage actions regarding new trails, modifications, and connections
- Visitor facilities and amenities, including the overlook deck and playground
- Natural resource management actions, including implementing high and high-moderate priorities in the PWA report to address issues of erosion, runoff, infrastructure, and drainage improvements

The County Parks Department ("Department") has two approaches to choose from in preparing CEQA analyses for the [Quarry Park Master Plan](#), or for individual projects or actions identified within the plan. The first is a programmatic approach: the Department could prepare an Initial Study or Environmental Impact Report that covers all actions described in the Master Plan that are subject to CEQA. The benefit of this approach is that it potentially avoids duplicative reconsiderations of projects and reduces the need to do CEQA analyses in the future. The drawback is that if a project being analyzed is currently not well defined, it may still require CEQA analysis in the future, once the definition of the project is clear. The second approach is a project-

specific approach: each proposed action in the Master Plan that is subject to CEQA would undergo CEQA analysis at the time it is proposed for implementation. The benefit of this approach is that it allows the Department to ensure that each project is well defined and that there is a strong understanding of potential environmental effects for the CEQA analysis to consider. The drawback is that a separate CEQA analysis will have to be done for every individual project.

As long as the Quarry Park Master Plan serves as a planning and policy guidance document only and does not commit the Department to approving or funding any of the future activities in the Master Plan, the adoption of the Plan would not cause direct or indirect environmental impacts, and its consideration by the Board of Supervisors falls under a statutory exemption under CEQA. In this case, the Department is not obligated to prepare a CEQA document on the Master Plan.

## Highway 1 Rehabilitation Project

Caltrans title: State Route 1 Multi-Asset Roadway Rehabilitation Project



This Fall, the MCC approved a comment letter on a Caltrans Draft Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration for the [State Route 1 Multi-Asset Roadway](#)

[Rehabilitation Project \(EA 04-0Q130\)](#) asking for continued, active communication between Caltrans and all the partners to address community concerns. The location of the project is shown in the map above.

The MCC expects Caltrans to adapt their proposed plans to meet our community's concerns, including possible adverse aesthetic impacts from the urban/industrial look of the proposed Midwest guardrails in a rural/coastal scenic corridor. We asked Caltrans to provide diagrams for clarification of proposed lanes, shoulders, street parking, and bicycle lanes for thorough public review. The MCC also requested that Caltrans provide an assessment of the condition of the existing guardrails to understand the context of their request for full replacement of ALL existing guardrails, and for photos and specifications for the proposed guardrail 'crash cushions'. The Council questioned Caltrans' assessment of climate change-related risks and asked for a reassessment based on the most recent science and local data. The Council also reiterated keeping the SR-1 Medio Creek culvert as a safe pedestrian under-crossing at SR-1 (*picture above*).

In response to County Planning's need for traffic flow information, the MCC expressed a preference for roadway embedded inductive loop traffic sensors at Capistrano, Coronado, Frenchman's Creek, and SR-92 - instead of cameras - since the City of Half Moon Bay and the Midcoast previously expressed objections to cameras during the 2021 public sessions for the proposed Multi-Asset project (Caltrans Project 2K880 State Route 1 Traffic Operational Systems Improvements Project Negative Declaration).

San Mateo County is the lead agency for the Coastal Development Permit (CDP) in the unincorporated area. A CDP is required for all public works projects in the Coastal Zone. This project is in the coastal zone and would be governed in part by the County's Local Coastal Program (LCP) and will require a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) or exemption from CDP requirements and will be appealable to the California Coastal Commission (CCC). It is with that sensitivity that we offered the [comment letter](#) on August 25, 2022, to Caltrans district 4, as the lead agency for environmental review (CEQA) and to the other parties to this project.

## Help Govern The Midcoast By Serving On The MCC



There is a seat available on the Midcoast Community Council! This is your opportunity to help influence the direction of our community.

To serve on the MCC, you must be a resident of the unincorporated Midcoast, that is, living in El Granada, Princeton, Moss Beach, Montara or the part of Miramar that is NOT in the Half Moon Bay City limits. The vacant seat(s) will be appointed by Supervisor Mueller based on recommendation of the current Council.

Interested residents should write the MCC at [midcoastcommunitycouncil@gmail.com](mailto:midcoastcommunitycouncil@gmail.com). Information on screening interviews will follow.

### Get Involved

- Attend a virtual **Midcoast Community Council Meeting**, scheduled on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month, or watch [past meetings](#).
- Attend or [live stream](#) a virtual **San Mateo County Board of Supervisors Meeting**.
- Let us know how we can improve this newsletter by **providing feedback and ideas** [here](#).



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