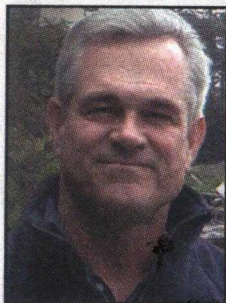


# HISTORY CORNER



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*Aptos Life*

## Round and round we go

*Traffic Patterns 11/14*

History is being made every day. If you have been down to the Rio Del Mar Esplanade recently you have seen construction work on the traffic circle. This new construction project will be the latest attempt to deal with four roads and a parking lot converging at a single point. The intersection must be able to deal with nine lanes of travel including fire trucks and busses. This was not always the case.

When development began in Rio Del Mar, in 1926 the Aptos Creek estuary was leveled and raised seven feet. The creek was channelized. A concrete dam was built in 1928 in order to create the "world's largest fresh water swimming pool," complete with a bathing pavilion. In 1929, the first-class, Spanish-style Hotel Don Rafael de Castro opened on the bluff overlooking Monterey Bay, exactly where the condominiums at 260 Rio Del Mar Blvd. stand today. Traffic was not an issue and

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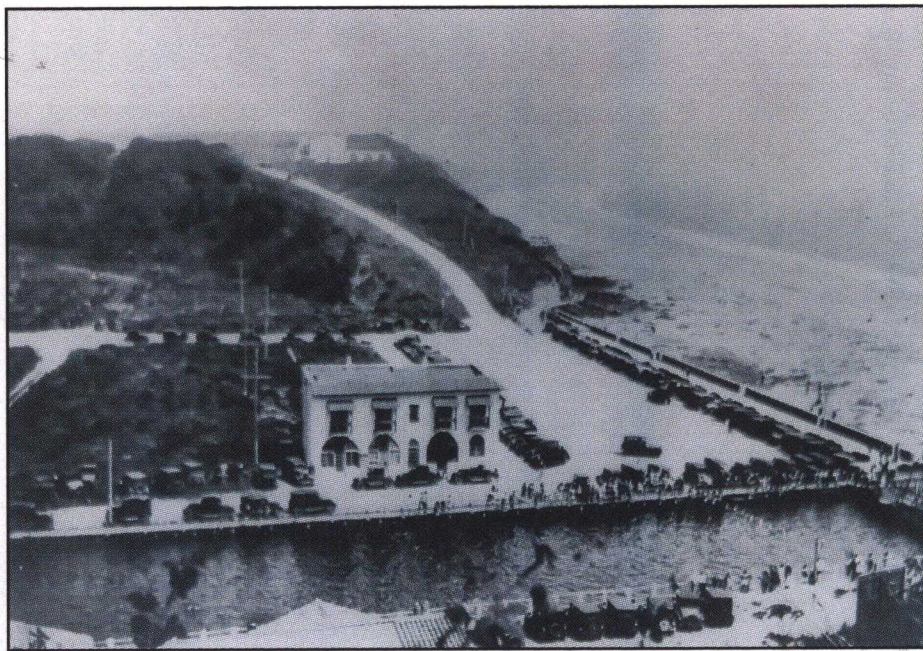
The intersection in 1967. Aptos History Museum collection

there were no traffic control devices at the intersection. Traffic became even less of an issue as the depression and World War II undermined tourism.

After the war Aptos began to grow, slowly at first and then by the 1960s the Esplanade intersection needed some form of clarification. In 1966 a trial installation of the traffic islands was first delineated by cinder blocks. The Rio Del Mar Improvement Association paid for striping the parking spaces, with the assurance that, after a test period, permanent markers would be installed. In March 1967 the Association asked the Board of Supervisors for an emergency allocation to restore traffic controls in the Esplanade

with Easter vacationers but there was no more money in the budget. Next, legal issues ensued between the county and the State Beach but were eventually resolved and by June 1968 permanent traffic islands were installed.

In the summer of 1999 volunteers from the Aptos Chamber helped to clean up the Esplanade. The traffic island was weeded, the curbs were painted, a small memorial to Bob Bailey was dedicated and a new Rio Del Mar sign was installed. The labor for the sign was donated by Steve Hosmer of Stokes Signs and Café Rio owner, Pat Duggan, paid for the redwood slab and the lettering. Gwen Kaplan of Lomak



This photo shows the hotel under construction about 1928 with Aptos Creek dammed for swimming and the bathing pavilion and sales office in place. Aptos History Museum collection



The 1966 traffic island trial installation made of cinder blocks. Aptos History Museum