

Supervisors approve Live Oak traffic plan

Residents expected to pay share of costs

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A \$23 million Live Oak street-and-sidewalk improvement plan approved last week by the county Board of Supervisors could prove costly for residents.

While supervisors agreed that Live Oak residents should not have to bear the entire cost of funding the plan, Supervisor Dan Forbus said they should expect to pitch in.

In so saying, Forbus, whose district encompasses Live Oak, spiked the contention, voiced by residents, that the county should shoulder the burden of paying for improvements to Live Oak streets.

Residents point to the county's growth-control measure, which they say has funneled more development into the urban-zoned Live Oak area than its street system can handle. That, plus the wear and tear of heavy through traffic, has necessitated the street-improvement plan. Since residents outside the Live Oak area have benefited, Live Oak residents say, they should be the ones to pay for the improvements.

Rob Bremner, president of the Live Oak Community Association, last Tuesday called financing the street improvements "a kind of bone of contention to the people in Live Oak."

Of several possible funding methods listed in the plan, he particularly objected to the suggestion that a County Service Area be formed in Live Oak. Such a method would charge property owners a set fee over a given period of time.

"A CSA in Live Oak is unacceptable to residents," Bremner said.

He proposed instead raising developers' fees to help offset the cost. Developers now pay about \$1,800 per unit to build in Live Oak, but until recently, they paid only about \$80 per unit.

That low fee was a mistake on the county's part, Bremner said, and, "I don't think Live Oak residents should have to pay for the mistakes of the county."

Forbus objected to raising developers' fees.

"You can't make new developers pay for all past sins," he said. "The people living there

that will enjoy the roads will have to help pay for it also."

Exactly who will pay for the improvements, and how much, will be discussed during the upcoming 1986-87 county budget hearings.

The board directed the county administrative officer and the Capital Improvements Program Task Force to incorporate the Live Oak Traffic Study plan into the county's Capital Improvements Program, and to report back on possible funding mechanisms.

The plan lists two phases of improvements designed to bring Live Oak's network of narrow streets up to county standards, Martin Carver, associate transportation planner, told the board.

The first phase consists of improvements needed now, estimated to cost \$8.2 million, while the second phase would be improvements needed to handle the area's growth within the next 20 years, expected to cost \$14.6 million.

Streets surrounding schools are given high priority for sidewalks; those leading to community centers are rated medium

priority; and others are scheduled for improvement on a low-priority basis.

Street improvements include widening Capitola Road to five lanes, mapping a truck route to keep trucks off smaller side streets, and installing a four-way stop sign at 17th Avenue and East Cliff Drive, described in the plan as "the most dangerous intersection in Live Oak."

At Forbus' request, the board eliminated a recommendation that a flashing yellow light be installed at 17th Avenue and Rodriguez Street, near Green Acres Elementary School. That recommendation also called for a school crossing guard at the intersection.

Forbus asked that a four-way stop sign be installed and the crossing guard eliminated.

Forbus pointed to two issues he said he feels should be included in the study: the need for another off-ramp from Highway 1 near Dominican Hospi-

tal, and the possibility of a Brommer Street/Broadway connection to better handle the traffic flow. Such a connection was funded at one time, but fell by the wayside. It should be studied again, Forbus said.

Besides developers' fees and a CSA in Live Oak, the plan suggests the formation of a Live Oak Redevelopment Agency, already initiated by the board, which would derive funds from the incremental increases in property taxes that occur over time.

Another possibility is an increase in the local sales tax.

"I don't think (the community association) would go so far as to advocate that we do this," Bremner said, "but maybe it's something we should look into."

He commended county planners for their work on the traffic study, but cautioned that the plan will need constant updating because "it sure doesn't fix Live Oak by any means.

"But it is a start," he added. "It is a building block for Live Oak."

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