

Capitola council recommends new Highway 1 access ramps

CAPITOLA — The City Council is recommending a new freeway on-ramp and off-ramp be built between Park Avenue and State Park Road on Highway 1 to lessen increased traffic the controversial Wingspread Beach development proposal in Aptos would impose.

As is the routine on environmental impact reports on proposed large projects, the council Tuesday night made formal its concerns. Such concerns will be forwarded to the county, which is handling the public review of the draft document.

The council has already come out against the housing and convention center/performing arts complex on the 66-acre Porter-Sesnon property. Like the county Board of Supervisors and the state Parks and Recreation Commission, it is advocating expansion of adjacent New Brighton Beach State Park.

Increased traffic at the Park Avenue/Highway 1 intersection was the primary concern expressed by the council. It was noted that proposed mitigation measures in the environmental impact report do not include consideration of a new on/off ramp in the area.

Mayor Ron Graves said, "Park Avenue, especially during peak hours, is really not tolerable now."

Police Chief Bob Allen, in a letter to the council, said the interchange was presently "taxed beyond capacity." He added, "Any increased demands, however slight, might be catastrophic."

To accomodate the increased traffic, the environmental impact report calls for signals at two area intersections including Park Avenue and Highway 1, as well as widening and restriping of lanes.

The council maintained this is not adequate. It also expressed concern about "fiscal impacts" on the city.

For example, if traffic signals were installed, a minimum annual energy cost would be \$8,000 to \$12,000. The city would want to be reimbursed.

The council had additional concerns about police service.

The environmental impact report notes that the county Sheriff's Department would have difficulty manning the increased activities of the development. "These additional manpower needs would most surely have an impact on Capitola police activities," said the council.

In summary, the council concluded the environmental impact report "does seem to point up the areas of interest" to the city. The exceptions were as noted.

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