

Clubhouse Drive stop signs questioned

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RIO DEL MAR — Soon-to-be installed four-way stop signs at Rio del Mar Boulevard and Clubhouse Drive will only add to problems at the area's busiest intersection, the Rio del Mar Improvement Association charged Monday.

The stop signs are to be installed within a few weeks, having already been approved by the county Board of Supervisors. They are seen as an interim traffic measure by the county, which has acknowledged that a redesign of the intersection — with traffic signals — is warranted.

The two additional stop signs will be installed on Clubhouse Drive. Presently, only motorists on Rio del Mar Boulevard have to stop.

While Improvement Association directors stopped short of an official protest against the interim traffic measure, they did make a gloomy projection. It included

traffic backing up onto nearby Highway 1 because of the new stop signs.

"Stop signs are going to create just as much confusion and additional problems there as we do now," said George Truckell, association vice president. Director and immediate past president Raymond Garcia said he has received numerous calls from members against a four-way stop.

Director Allen Downey questioned where all of the Clubhouse Drive traffic would go, saying it most assuredly would back up onto Highway 1 during rush hour. Director Bunny Stage maintained that a stop sign on Clubhouse coming south from the residential area might be beneficial, "but I can't see those coming from the freeway having to stop."

Directors also had some words against county Transportation Commission plans on how to come up with nearly \$2 million in road and sidewalk improvements for the area. Directors agreed with sentiment

expressed from some residents at last week's traffic meeting, saying they would be willing to tax themselves in order to get immediate road improvements.

While plans are not final, Transportation Commission staff was proposing that \$1.1 million in road improvements be paid for in the form of a \$513-per-unit assessment on new development. Another \$800,000 in funding for sidewalks would be raised by a \$70-a-year assessment (for three years) to existing property owners.

Directors said they would prefer taking on assessments for road improvements over additional taxes for sidewalks. Truckell noted that it could be 25 or 30 years before enough new development fees are raised for road improvements.

Garcia also had concerns about a plan approved by supervisors last week that formed a Rio del Mar Traffic Improvement Area to raise funds for the eventual redesign of the Rio del Mar Boulevard-Clubhouse Drive intersection. Those funds

would come mostly from fees collected from future new developments.

"That intersection is a county problem. Those who live here do not solely create those problems," Garcia said in advocating that other county funds should be used to pay for the estimated \$240,000 in improvements needed.

Garcia added that it was "interesting" to hear county Chief Transportation Planner Ron Marquez advocate a parking prohibition on a portion of Clubhouse Drive, in conjunction with the controversial "safety striping" that is to be added.

"We've been hearing for 1½ years that the striping would not take away on-street parking," said Garcia. "County officials have assured us all along. Now, look what they're saying."

The association unanimously passed a motion asking Second (Aptos) District Supervisor Robley Levy to attend next month's meeting to discuss traffic.