



County of Santa Cruz 485

REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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TOM BURNS, AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR

March 11, 1999

Agenda: March 23, 1999

Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Cruz

Board of Directors
County of Santa Cruz Redevelopment Agency
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

TRAFFIC IMPACT REDUCTION PROGRAM

Dear Members of the Board:

In October of last year, your Board directed the Redevelopment Agency, in consultation with the Department of Public Works, to develop recommendations for implementing a Traffic Impact Reduction Pilot Program in Live Oak and Soquel and to report back with the information on this agenda. Since that time, Agency and Public Works staff have met and developed an overall approach for implementing the initial phase of such a program as presented in the following paragraphs.

The Basis for Traffic Impact Reduction Programs

Programs geared to reducing the speed and volume of traffic, also known as traffic calming and traffic management programs, have been implemented in numerous communities throughout the United States and worldwide. Closer to home, California and the western states have developed many such successful programs. The impetus for traffic impact reduction programs is always the same--residents, and the municipalities that serve them, are seeking solutions to the problems associated with ever-increasing traffic volume and speeds. Traffic impact reduction programs have proved an effective means for ensuring safer streets and an improved quality of life in residential neighborhoods, business districts, and in the vicinity of public facilities such as schools, recreational sites, and libraries. The basis for developing a traffic impact reduction program in Live Oak and Soquel follows:

- An ongoing safety concern voiced by many residents is related to vehicle traffic--there's too much of it and it is moving too fast. A traffic impact reduction program will

provide an opportunity for Public Works and Agency staff to work with residents who, are interested in addressing their concerns.

- Traffic impact reduction measures are generally less intrusive within a neighborhood setting than the more traditional safety measures provided by road and sidewalk construction projects. Thus, traffic impact reduction programs can address traffic issues while maintaining the residential character of neighborhoods.
- Traffic impact reduction measures are often attractive and can visually enhance a neighborhood or business area while helping to address traffic issues.
- Since it is likely that funding will not be available for traditional sidewalk and bikelane improvements on many of our neighborhood streets, traffic impact reduction measures provide a less costly alternative to implementing road safety improvements and can often be financed, in part, through matching funds from neighborhood groups seeking to improve safety and quality of life on their streets.

Examples of Traffic Impact Reduction Measures

As your Board is aware, the basis for traffic calming has already been established in the unincorporated area of the County through the incorporation of road bumps into the County's Design Criteria. This typical traffic control measure has been utilized in a number of instances where residents have requested assistance in slowing traffic on their streets or where the County has recognized the need to do so. Once the proposed road bump installation has been reviewed by Public Works and approved by the Board of Supervisors, the bump is installed in part through matching funds provided by the affected residents.

To date, road bumps have proved an effective tool for reducing traffic speeds where they have been installed. However, road bumps are only one of many possible traffic calming measures available to our community. An effective traffic impact reduction program would provide an entire menu of options, making it possible to address the wide range of traffic issues confronting our neighborhoods and affecting access to businesses and public facilities. An example of such a menu from Boulder, Colorado's established and successful traffic calming program is provided as Attachment 1.

Developing a Pilot Program for Santa Cruz County

A pilot project is an appropriate first step in the future development of a more formal approach to reducing traffic impacts. As part of the annual budget process, the Redevelopment Agency has previously allocated funds for traffic impact reduction activities in Live Oak and Soquel and can provide staff for the purpose of program development and management in conjunction with Public Works. As proposed, the pilot program would span a period of approximately two years, potentially laying the groundwork for an eventual County-wide program. The basic elements that will need to be considered in the start-up

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of a pilot project include staffing, funding, project selection, project implementation and maintenance, and evaluation methods for individual traffic calming efforts as well as for the program as a whole.

1. Project Staffing. A pilot program will provide staff with the opportunity to develop an experienced in-house team consisting of Redevelopment Agency and Public Works staff for the purpose of implementing the program. Because traffic calming is a unique area of expertise in the field of traffic engineering and because of limited staff time, the Agency and Public Works are recommending contracting for traffic consulting services during the pilot project. An agreement Fehr & Peers Associates, a firm that specializes in the design and implementation of traffic calming measures, is provided as an attachment to this letter. Their traffic calming design team has implemented a number of successful traffic impact reduction programs and measures in communities such as ours. It is anticipated that they will also be able to assist staff in developing a public awareness component for the project to help ensure its success. Because of the unique nature of the projects in this program, the proposed contract includes a modification to the County's standard language in that the contractor would be liable only under conditions in which their performance was negligent. The typical County contract language does not incorporate the word negligent.
2. Financing Traffic Impact Reduction Measures. \$270,000 in funds are available in the Redevelopment Agency's budget for approximately two to three years of designing and constructing traffic calming measures, depending on how many measures are implemented each year and the costs involved. Because it is essential that the majority of residents adjacent to the location of a traffic calming measure support the effort, many traffic impact reduction programs require that the residents of the affected street or neighborhood contribute some amount of matching funds to the project. Part of the purpose of the pilot project would be to determine when such a match is appropriate and what percentage of total costs the match should be.
3. Project Selection Process. Typically, the locations on which specific traffic calming measures will be implemented are selected from a pool of requests made by the residents from a street or neighborhood. Initiating a traffic impact reduction pilot project at this time is opportune in that suggestions from residents and neighborhoods can be solicited through the Redevelopment Agency's community newsletter which is scheduled for mailing to all Live Oak and Soquel residents in the spring/summer of this year. The newsletter can be used to explain what traffic calming is and to inform residents how their requests should be forwarded for consideration.

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Requests from residents would take the form of a brief description of a traffic related problem in their neighborhood that might be addressed through traffic calming measures. Agency and Public Works staff would review requests and select projects for potential implementation. Prior to further consideration, projects would most likely require a petition from residents to ensure majority support and participation in cost-sharing, similar to the process already adopted for road bumps.

Public Works and Agency staff have discussed the importance of a flexible selection process during the pilot program, one in which staff and the traffic consultant are free to choose the most creative and effective solution for a particular situation. Clearly, solutions would need to be properly engineered but would not necessarily be provided for in the County's Design Criteria at this time. Traffic calming measures that proved to be effective during the pilot program could then be incorporated into the Design Criteria at a later date.

Most traffic impact reduction programs concentrate on local and neighborhood streets. However, communities have also implemented traffic calming measures to enhance safety on larger streets, such as collectors and arterials, particularly in the vicinity of public facilities that by their very nature attract a large volume of pedestrians and bicyclists. Several such locations, including Portola Drive at the Live Oak Library and Porter Street at Soquel Elementary School, have been the focus of numerous comments from residents regarding the safety of pedestrian crossings to these facilities. Public Works staff has evaluated these locations and based upon discussions with other communities that have successfully addressed similar situations, it is recommended that a new pedestrian activated safety lighting system be tried at these two sites as part of the pilot program.

4. Implementation, Maintenance, and Monitorina of Traffic Impact Reduction Measures. Once petitions had been received from a majority of residents supporting a solution to a particular traffic problem, staff would work with that neighborhood group to suggest and evaluate potential solutions. Once a solution was identified, it would be engineered and a cost estimate developed, including an estimate of the County's share and the percentage of neighborhood matching funds. The solution would then be presented to the Board of Supervisors for review and approval prior to implementation. Once installed, the measure would be monitored for its effectiveness in addressing the original traffic issue and for any potential impacts to adjacent neighborhoods or streets.
5. Evaluatina the Pilot Project. It is anticipated that it will require several years of operating a pilot project to determine its success and whether or not to proceed with a County-wide effort. Clearly, a County-wide effort would also have funding

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considerations to address. With the implementation of each traffic impact reduction project, staff will have a better understanding of the process for selecting and implementing measures, including the community process. As noted, your Board will be updated regarding the progress of the pilot program as each proposed measure is reviewed by the Board of Supervisors prior to implementation. Additionally, a status report will be developed at the end of each year of the pilot program.

Summary

The goal of the proposed pilot project, to reduce the impacts of traffic in Live Oak and Soquel, is twofold: 1) to develop an effective strategy for addressing traffic issues that is sensitive to the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles alike and that is geared to the character of these communities, and 2) to determine if such a program would be appropriate on a County-wide basis. The process for developing both a pilot project and a more expanded program is fairly complex, involving a wide range of issues and challenges. However, it is clear that an effort to reduce the impacts of traffic can result in safer neighborhoods, business districts, and public gathering locations and an improvement in the quality of life, through the design, financing, and installation of cost-effective traffic calming measures.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that your Board, as the Board of Directors for the Redevelopment Agency, take the following actions:

1. Approve the Live Oak/Soquel Traffic Impact Reduction Pilot Program as outlined and direct the Redevelopment Agency, in conjunction with the Department of Public Works, to move forward with program implementation, including pedestrian crossing safety measures at the Live Oak Library and Soquel Elementary School;
2. Approve a contract for traffic consulting services for an amount not to exceed \$15,000 with Fehr & Peers Associates (Attachment 2); and
3. Provide a status report, in conjunction with the Department of Public Works, on the Live Oak/Soquel Traffic Impact Reduction Pilot Program on or before May 23, 2000.

It is further RECOMMENDED that your Board, as the Board of Supervisors, take the following actions:

1. Approve the Live Oak/Soquel Traffic Impact Reduction Pilot Program as outlined and direct the Department of Public Works, in conjunction with the Redevelopment Agency, to move forward with program implementation; and

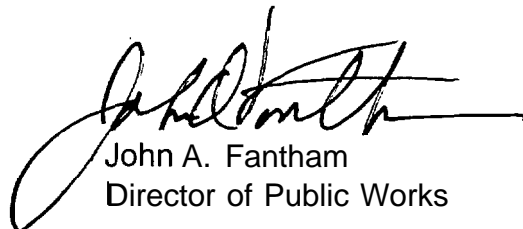
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2. Direct the Department of Public Works to work with the Redevelopment Agency and traffic engineering consultants to design and install pedestrian crossing safety measures at the Live Oak Library and Soquel Elementary School.

Very truly yours,

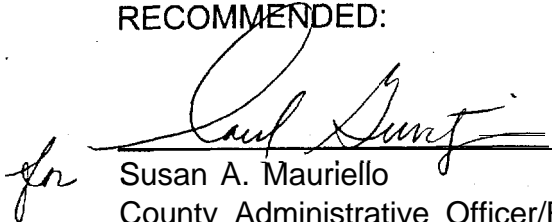


Tom Burns
Redevelopment Agency Administrator
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John A. Fantham
Director of Public Works

RECOMMENDED:



Susan A. Mauriello
County Administrative Officer/Redevelopment Agency Director

Attachments:

- Attachment 1 - Example of a Neighborhood Traffic Mitigation Program Tool Kit
- Attachment 2 - Contract for Services

cc. Fehr 8 Peers, Associates
Public Works
RDA

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