

Wandering and Wondering

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LINDA MAR OPPOSES WIDENING 4-1

"There's a common misconception that the public is in favor of the Highway 1 widening plan between Rockaway and Vallemar put forward by Caltrans. Residents of Linda Mar bear the full effect of traffic on Highway 1 in the mornings and evenings, and would also bear the brunt of construction delays for years. My results from canvassing door-to-door refute the notion that Linda Mar residents favor widening Highway 1. I knocked randomly on about 1,100 doors in Linda Mar in the order they were on the streets. At about half of the doors, someone answered. Of the folks I talked to, about 60 percent signed the petition to City Council asking it to hold hearings on alternatives to widening. This was about a 4-1 margin over those in favor of widening. The most frequent reason they gave for signing the petition was the merge from three lanes down to two in each direction that would occur at either end of the widening project. Comments like 'Are they (Caltrans) stupid?' were common. Caltrans has run roughshod over residents in Linda Mar and other Pacifica neighborhoods in both the draft and final environmental impact reports on the widening, finding (without exception) that the suggestions and objections put forward by citizens were without merit. City Council has not listened to pleas for public hearings on alternatives, choosing to hide behind excuses that it would wait for lawsuits to be settled. Council should hire a traffic consultant to do the job that Caltrans did not do — exploring alternatives to widening that are less damaging to Pacifica. When will Linda Mar and other Pacifica neighborhoods be heard?" (John Keener, candidate for City Council)

IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME

"Between 2011 and this year, the Santa Cruz County Transportation Commission has spent at least \$16 million to add 'auxiliary lanes' to Highway 1...with the idea being that this expenditure would improve traffic flow...How do you think we are doing with that? Local environmental advocates, and specifically a group called Campaign For Sensible Transportation, strongly opposed the proposed highway-widening project, before the Transportation Commission made its final, \$16 million commitment. One of the points made by highway widening opponents was that a phenomenon called 'induced demand' would result in new cars entering the highway when the project was done, using up any new capacity provided by the project. This is not some weird and wacky environmentalist theory, either. The reality of 'induced demand' is well recognized by traffic planning professionals. So, do you want to widen the highway? You can spend a lot of money. You can cause a lot of air pollution. You can increase the amount of gasoline consumed. But if you want to relieve traffic congestion, highway widening is not going to be your best route to success. The phenomenon of 'induced demand' means that the post-widening traffic congestion will be just the same as traffic congestion before the widening, but with more cars caught in the jam. In other words, the Highway 1 Auxiliary Lanes project is working exactly as predicted!" (excerpt from Santa Cruz environmental attorney Gary Patton's "Two World" blog post)

INACCESSIBLE CITY HALL

Connie Kelley found out the hard way that casting a ballot at Pacifica City Hall is extremely difficult for disabled voters due to steep steps to the second floor. After many phone calls to various city offices,

Connie finally got a live person who came downstairs and accepted her ballot, but while waiting, she saw several other seniors turn away and leave because City Hall is not wheelchair-accessible.

RIM FIRE

The infamous Rim Fire that burned 402 square miles near Yosemite last year was started by a bow hunter's illegal campfire in a posted danger zone. San Francisco Chronicle outdoors columnist Tom Stienstra has tried three times in person to get a statement from the Forest Service in Groveland, California about the bow hunter's identity and possible punishment, but the Feds won't talk. May I suggest 402 years of community service for the bow hunter?

SWAMI SEZ

"The revolutionary is concerned only with power and external change, not with values. But the rebel is drawn to unquiet minds and spirits, perpetually restless...seeks internal change (attitudes, emotions, outlooks of himself and the people he's devoted to) temperamentally unable to accept success and the ease it brings — when one frontier is conquered, he soon becomes ill-at-ease and pushes on to the new frontier." (Rollo May, "Power and Innocence")

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