

April 21, 2022

To: San Mateo County Planning Commission

Re: April 27, 2022 Planning Commission Meeting Regular Agenda Item # 6:
File # PLN2014-00430: Connect the Coastside (CTC)

The comments below are an updated summary of Midcoast ECO's previous comments to date on the CTC draft plans, with a focus on the more recent October 2021 draft.

General CTC Comments:

While the October 2021 Draft is well written to make it reader friendly, the long-range timelines and high cost projections for most of these projects raise the question as to their viability, especially considering the many agencies involved and the changing environment over the 30-year timeframe. We are very concerned that this plan may not provide timely mitigation for the impact of residential and commercial development on coastal access and environmental concerns as intended by the LCP and further that it may serve as a tool for developers to defer or avoid accountability for traffic issues related to their specific projects. In order to meet the intent of the LCP, **it is important that** certain elements of the current plan be prioritized and implemented much sooner and that **additional short-term solutions for the longer-timeline elements (e.g. roundabouts, traffic lights) be identified and implemented sooner** as well.

Below are some general points we believe are important to note:

1. **No Evacuation / Hazard Plan exists for the Coast** - A real evacuation / hazard plan for the coast does not exist and the County declares CTC "is a transportation plan that intends to improve traffic conditions for typical conditions." Connect the Coastside has provided additional information on other County emergency response and evacuation efforts on p.167 of the Plan. However, CTC does not adequately address evacuation options for the Midcoast, particularly with regard to the impact of further residential and commercial development and an increasing number of visitors.
2. **Significant costs and who will pay?** – The cost estimates totaling almost \$77 million are planning-level and conceptual and will likely be much higher and there is no funding identified for these projects. The process to secure grants and public funding is long and very competitive. The CTC team added a clause in "Overview" section of Chapter 8, "Implementation of Connect the Coastside will require strong partnerships with actors like Caltrans, other agencies, and ongoing support from the community to work together to find common ground on detailed project designs and funding mechanisms, such as pursuing competitive grants or using existing resources." With major questions on feasibility and cost still in the preliminary stage, can this CTC plan be considered 'comprehensive'?

3. **Exceedingly Long Timeline** - The project implementation timeline (Table 33) and early implementation actions (Table 34) are acknowledged as optimistic and yet many project timelines are exceedingly long. The major projects impacting the Highway 1 intersections along the Midcoast are projected to be completed beyond 8-16 years out. Completion of the Pe2 Multimodal Coastal Trail and T3 Increased Midcoast Transit Service are also out in the 8 to 16-year timeframe. These projects also require the cooperation and commitment of several key agencies (for example, Caltrans, SamTrans) who have yet to commit to this plan. Considering that residential and commercial development on the Coastside will likely progress, there is concern that the implementation timing of key projects in this CTC plan will not be completed in time to offset the traffic impacts of those developments.
4. **Transportation impacts due to visitors / non-residents are not considered** - "Connect the Coastside is intended to address LCP Policy 2.53 Transportation Management Plan, which is to address the cumulative traffic impacts of residential development. The Plan does not provide specific data on visitor-related traffic but does reference the impact of visitors more generally on travel conditions. Visitor traffic is an important consideration for the development of the recommendations and is incorporated into the analysis as part of weekend peak period traffic counts. The Plan's recommendations intend to mitigate for vehicle trips due to both residents and visitors with a focus on modal shift." --- Yet the timeline projected for the modal shift depends on implementation of transit improvements and new modes of transportation, both of which are optimistically out in the 8 to 16-year projection at best. Unless shorter-term or temporary solutions are identified, increases in traffic in the meantime will go unmitigated.
5. **LCP Policies Not Fully Addressed** - The LCP identifies specific policies that are to be part of the comprehensive traffic management plan as well as evaluation of the feasibility of in-lieu traffic fee mitigation, the expansion of public transit and the development of a mandatory lot merger program. Although the County intends to submit individual LCP amendments stemming from implementation of Connect the Coastside to the CA Coastal Commission for consideration, the above policies remain incomplete in this final draft.

Specific CTC comments:

In order to be maximally effective in offsetting the impacts of commercial and residential development as well as ongoing increases in visitor traffic, CTC should prioritize completion of the following projects in the near-term (0-8 years).

Near-term Projects (currently proposed in CTC with longer timelines - indicated **in green** on the attached map):

1. Add marked (Class II) bike lanes on HWY1 from Devil's Slide to HMB.
2. Improve bike/ped access on Airport St.
3. Improve bus service for schools either through the school system or through SamTrans.
4. In Moss Beach and Montara, consider a combination of reduced traffic speeds and acceleration lanes for cross traffic at a few intersections to provide near-term improvements to circulation and safety at low cost. Specifically,
 - a. Widen Cypress Av and California Av approaches to HWY1, stripe separate lanes for right and left turns onto the highway and add acceleration lanes on the highway for left turns from Cypress Av and California Av.
 - b. Upgrade the HWY1/Carlos St north intersection: no left turn from Carlos onto HWY1, add median on Carlos to channel right turn traffic onto the highway, add a right turn acceleration lane on the highway, clear vegetation on the south facing berm of the highway to improve sight distance. Also, shorten the HWY1 left turn lane approaches north to the Lighthouse and south to Carlos St to provide better separation from the left turn lane for 16th St and to eliminate "suicide arrows".
5. Add smart pedestrian crossings on HWY1 with raised medians and flashing beacons at California Av and 2nd St. (exclude Cypress Av and 16th St - explained below).
6. Remove the unsafe and poorly-located crosswalk at HWY1/Virginia Av.
7. Complete the Parallel Trail section between 16th St and 14th St in Montara to provide a much-needed safe route from Moss Beach to Farallone View Elementary School.
8. Do not extend the parallel trail on Carlos St between 16th St and California Av. Instead, construct a new HWY1 pedestrian overpass bridge near the north end of Carlos Street connecting Carlos to the MWSD frontage road. This bridge could connect the Parallel Trail from Montara to the Coastside Trail, via Vallemar Av to the Vallemar Bluff Trail or Julianna Av, then proceeding via Weinke Way to California Ave.
9. Do not change Carlos St in the Moss Beach commercial area to one-way. The change is not adequately justified, will add to highway congestion, create confusion and inconvenience for residents and visitors and will likely result in a net increase in VMT.
10. Improve bike/ped access on California Av west for Coastal Trail connection to Airport St via Dardanelle/Bluff Trails and Cypress Av. Don't encourage bike/ped use of Cypress Av west, as it is too narrow and unsafe and cannot be easily widened due to the creek.

Longer term projects (should be reassessed after the above improvements are in place and include the use of updated traffic data at that time - indicated **in red** on the attached map):

1. Perform ICE for HWY1/California Av. Include Coastal Trail access here and compare various signalization and roundabout options. Include options assessment for Wienke Way.
2. Reassess/update ICE for Hwy1/Cypress Av. Focus on vehicle traffic improvements only. Do not encourage bike/ped traffic on Cypress Av west.
3. Reassess the HWY1/16th St intersection and the Carlos/16th St realignment.

Thank you for your consideration,

Midcoast ECO Board of Directors

cc: San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
Midcoast Community Council
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Attachment: Proposed Short-term CTC Improvements to Moss Beach

