

Table Notes – Upper Mission Canyon – MCPAC meeting 8 April, 2009

Roughly a dozen folk participated at the Upper Mission Canyon discussion table.

Facilitators – Jenny Cushnie, Barbara Lindemann, Ray Smith

Relevant issues included:

- 1) Parking, both legal and illegal, at the Tunnel Road trail head,
- 2) Relative lack of enforcement of existing laws, especially with respect to illegal parking and smoking on Tunnel trail,
- 3) Concerns with respect to adequate ingress/egress from canyon during an emergency,
- 4) Need for information/education at the trail head regarding firesafe behavior,
- 5) Need for adequate turn around, especially for emergency personnel, at trail head,
- 6) Possible creation of an Assessment District, to cover expenses associated with fire and security issues for the Canyon,
- 7) A long-term vision for the creation of a hike/bike trail through the Canyon linking to Tunnel trail head.

Suggested Strategies

1 & 2) Parking and Enforcement.

There was general agreement that existing parking regulations should be consistently enforced, with towing as necessary.

Strategies included: contracting with City meter readers/ticketers to visit Mission Canyon area to ticket illegally parked cars; coordinating with SB Botanic Gardens for use of their parking area and trail from east to west across Garden to Tunnel road; use of shuttle bus (bus 22) on busy weekends (this has the downside of stranding folk in the canyon should a wildfire break out). There was also some concern about noise and fumes from bus traffic, as well as inadequate turn-around by the water tank.

There is also a need to fully and consistently clarify “when (and where) parking is allowed”. Martin Johnson’s (County Fire Department) power point presentation showed traffic lanes of 10 feet and parking lanes of 8 feet, thus a road of minimum of 36 feet wide for parking on both sides. Thus, 28 feet (10+10+8) would be required for parking on one side of a roadway. It was noted that the striping on Tunnel road is 9 feet from the center line, that according to MCPAC handout TR is 20-24 feet wide, and that nowhere is Tunnel Road as wide as 28 feet. Thus, according to County FD rules, there should be no parking anywhere along Tunnel Road.

3) Emergency Ingress/Egress from Upper Mission Canyon.

Safe evacuation by all and access for first responders during an emergency is viewed as a critical health and safety issue.

Strategies included: parking enforcement (as noted above); no visitor parking during Red Flag Alert (RFA) days – strictly enforced; no Trail head parking after dusk (note that the Sierra Club holds nighttime hikes several times per year); strict vegetation clearance along major roadways; more consistent roadside signage is required for proper enforcement.

4) Tunnel Trail Head Education/Information

It was noted that many folk from out of town make use of our back country trails and that firewise education/information is necessary.

Strategies included: posting of information signs at the trail head (Smoky Bear signage); posting of fire risk (low, medium, high, extreme) at trail head; no entrance signs during extreme and RFA days; a sign-in and out system during the season when fire danger is ever present. This would make hikers aware of the possibility of being trapped should a fire break out.

5) Trail Head Turnaround

It was noted that there is no adequate turn around at the Tunnel Trail head. During an emergency all trail head parking would need to make U-turns on the narrow road in order to exit the Canyon.

Suggested Strategies included: burying the water tank at the trail head thus creating a turnaround area (for fire trucks and shuttle buses as well as general traffic); alternatively, carving out a proper area for a turn around in front of the locked gate.

6) Mission Canyon Assessment District

It is recognized that many suggestions require funding in order to be carried out.

Suggested Strategies included: creating an Assessment District to cover expenses associated with fire and security issues for the Canyon,

7) Long-term Vision

Mission Canyon, from Rocky Nook Park to the Tunnel Trail head could be an attractive hiking area.

Suggested Strategy: creation of a hike/bike trail through the Canyon linking to Tunnel trail head.

MCPAC RESIDENTIAL PARKING STRATEGY WORKSHOP

Wednesday April 8, 2009

Report from Mission Canyon Heights

Consolidated Tables - Amanda De Lucia, Suzanne Foley, Jacqueline Hynes – Facilitators

Participants in the Mission Canyon Heights group made liberal use of the map overlay, marking areas where visibility is hindered by vegetation, where vehicles are parked on the street and interfere with the safe passage of vehicles and pedestrians as well as impeding visibility, and suggested sites for new stop signs. The map overlay with an explanatory legend was submitted to staff.

Although outside our assigned discussion area, speeding on Foothill Rd was discussed at some length. Several solutions such as speed bumps were proposed, but the suggested remedies seemed to have as many drawbacks as advantages.

Suggestions regarding on street parking included:

- Parking by permit only, with enforcement.
- Parking on only one side of the street.
- Limiting the number of cars per household.
- Use of shuttles.

The group unanimously agreed that the main problem regarding parking in the Mission Canyon Heights neighborhood is lack of enforcement, enforcement of existing parking regulations including those related to “long term parking” and of regulations related to right of way encroachments.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION NEEDED:

Information regarding the feasibility of contracting with the City of Santa Barbara or the County Sheriff's department for “meter maid” type enforcement.

The group felt that pedestrian paths are needed for safety, especially along those streets where parking is particularly congested forcing pedestrians out into the roadways.

Various means of blocking parking adjacent to fire hydrants were explored with the full realization, again, that enforcement of existing law would resolve this problem.

Summary of Discussion at the Foothill Road and Lower Canyon Table April 8, 2009

A good turnout of Foothill Road residents -- seven properties, eleven owners and family members -- plus Lorna Moore -- made this a lively and informative session. Neil Graffy's placing notices in mailboxes along Foothill Road boosted attendance, with some attendees saying this was their only notice of the meeting.

The general topic was Traffic & Parking, and the various issues subsumed therein: emergency ingress and egress, streetside parking, no-parking zones, vegetation encroachment, speeding, traffic enforcement, narrow roadways, drainage, special events, red flag restrictions, etc.

The participants at this table focused mainly on one question: What will the CalTrans Project mean in terms of their property, and specifically the existing parking and turnaround areas streetside to Foothill Road?

Each participant had a different situation, but all the Foothill participants had driveways entering on to Foothill Road and small lots with constrained on-site parking. All the Foothill Road participants utilized streetside areas either for guest/visitor parking, or for "turnarounds" so that they would not have to back out into the Foothill Road traffic. None of these participants had been expressly advised by CalTrans (or any County official) that these streetside spaces would be eliminated or squeezed out or rendered illegal as a consequence of the CalTrans Project. However, the magnitude of the Project, plus talk about pedestrian pathways and bicycle lanes the length of Foothill Road, as well as paved shoulders extending up to 8' off the travel lanes, has given the participants pause for concern.

The participants all feel protective about their streetside parking/turnaround spaces, saying; (a) They had created and used these spaces in some cases for over 20 years; (b) If they did not have these spaces, they would have to back out on to Foothill Road

to exit their property; (c) These spaces serve a public need -- providing a parking space for service and emergency vehicles, and turnouts for disabled vehicles that would otherwise block traffic.

The participants, especially Neil Graffy, questioned the need for these wide, paved shoulders:

1. Pedestrians. Very, very few people actually walk along Foothill Road. No one in their right mind walks this route. Sightings of school children walking to and from Roosevelt School along Foothill are rare. One participant, at least, added that the Project would improve pedestrian safety, for the occasions when an individual must actually walk along Foothill.

2. Bicycles. Experienced bikers know to avoid bicycling along Foothill. There are safer, more picturesque routes along Puesta del Sol and other side streets. [Sidenote: Parking in bike lanes is not illegal unless no-parking signs have been posted -- Will Robertson, County Transportation Planner]

3. Drainage. Foothill Road has historically handled storm runoffs without property damage or flooding. With the exception of inadequate drainage at the Glen Albyn intersection (which this Project will fix), the existing drainage system has been more than adequate.

4. Safety. The effect of having wide, paved aprons running the length of the Project Area, with streetside parking eliminated, will make the roadway appear wider and more open, thus causing cars to go faster along this stretch. Various instances of reckless driving, 100 mph motorcyclists, rude and inconsiderate driving were cited by the participants.

This topic introduced the need for better traffic enforcement along Foothill Road. The participants offered up their streetside parking/turnouts for motorcycle officers with radar guns. Or for the flashing speed indicator signs frequently seen on Ontare Road. Will Robertson, Transportation Manager for Santa Barbara County, said he would pursue this. Robertson, however, also said

that doing a speed survey on Foothill Road would be more likely to force a higher speed limit, rather than a lower one, citing the California Vehicle Code that requires enforceable limits to be no lower than 85% of the actual traffic speeds.

5. Evacuation/Emergencies. A poll of the participants showed that none of the participants had ever witnessed a traffic blockage on Foothill, of other than a brief duration. Fire engines and ambulances routinely speed uninterrupted along Foothill Road to their various emergencies.

Accurate information was lacking on many of these issues. It was not altogether clear as to whether CalTrans or the County would be the party making the determination that streetside parking on Foothill Road would be illegal¹. According to Mr. Robertson, that decision would have to be approved by the Board of Supervisors. In addition, signage would have to be posted along Foothill Road before the ban could be enforced.

Additional discussions and comments were made regarding 911 calls. If County Fire or Emergency Services were to make earlier, advisory evacuation calls, prior to issuing evacuation orders, it might be possible to spread the flow of traffic over a greater period of time, and thereby reduce the potential for blockage during a precipitous evacuation from the Canyon.

Some of our participants wanted more information about the scope of the drainage work -- the retaining walls, the catch basins, and other extensive work to be done in the vicinity of 2839 Foothill Road. Someone should evaluate this project for its effect on each parcel within the Project area. Each resident deserves to know what specific consequences he or she will experience because of this work. While CalTrans made its pitch on March 31st, it is unfortunate that no CalTrans rep was at the meeting tonight.

¹ Rosie Dyste, County Long Range Planning, advises that the County Board of Supervisors, would be the decider. The Board would have to adopt a formal resolution designating the specific no-parking zones.