

Coastal Trail and Community Center Exploratory Walk – March 22, 2009

Walkers: Sandy Emerson, Lisa Boville, Sabrina Brennan, Lisa Ketcham, Neil Merrilees, Barry Parr, Leonard Woren

On an extremely windy Sunday, seven valiant walkers started from the RV parking lot to explore the route of the Coastal Trail from Mirada Surf to Pillar Point.

First Segment: transition between RV lot parking lot and Mirada Surf. A discussion began about the challenges of the transition between the Mirada Surf West Coastal Trail extension and Surfer's Beach – so we worked our way backwards along the cliffs and gullies, wetlands edges, and curb lane until we reached the Mirada Surf property at the abandoned roadway at Coronado. The erosion from the combined effects of the weather and the breakwater leaves precious little room to extend the Coastal Trail along this stretch. Proposed solutions were wide-ranging:

- Bridging the ravine (wouldn't make sense unless the erosion is corrected by breaching the breakwater). In any case, with global warming it's likely that this beach will disappear and that Highway One will need to be relocated, anyway.
- Having the Trail cross Highway One and continue as a trail or boardwalk following the alignment of Obispo;
- Creating a safe crossing with a pedestrian light from the "informal parking lot" area at the foot of Portola to Surfers' Beach
- Building a staircase down to Surfers' Beach (the current options are either to slide down a gully or pick your way over the rip rap). The staircase wouldn't pass the "50-year erosion setback" test, though.

Second Segment: Mirada Surf south to the bridge at Magellan. Although we recognize that the Mirada Surf trail alignment is well along in its planning, we have the following comments about some possible variables in implementation:

- Several participants voiced objections to having the trail paved, preferring gravel or other permeable surface. Sabrina mentioned that Blue Sky Café has paved its alley with permeable paving.
- There was a strong feeling that the trail should be kept to minimum width – the very wide bridge approaches at Magellan were alarming, although we don't know whether this width would continue for the trail itself. As we were in discussion, an RV used the bridge approach to make a 3-point turn, nicely illustrating our feeling that the bridge road-width is more like a road than a trail. The figure quoted for this bridge over the year-round creek was \$400,000.00. Whew! We discussed the flush toilet vs. vault toilet issue, and heard the history of this debate. [What are the current story poles at the toilet's location? Looks like a house??]
- On the way back to Surfers' Beach we noted that there could be a pedestrian bridge over Highway One just south of the elementary school, which would connect Mirada Surf West with Mirada Surf East.
- Although it's not part of the Coastal Trail, we were hoping that the staircase at the end of Magellan could be repaired.



Third Segment: RV Lot to proposed Community Center site at HMB Kayak rental.

- Discussion of the locked restroom at the RV Lot. It should be open as per the lease agreement.
- The paved path below the Beach House and Sam's looks fine – narrow and easy. The memorial benches are nice. The access gate through the Beach House property should open both ways – there's no access from the trail side.
- The pedestrian bridge in the area of Sam's doesn't seem to make sense. The crossing should be at the foot of Portola, and there should be a toilet in the Surfer's Beach changing area, where the shower is.
- The proposed site for a marine-themed Community Center looks do-able, although its longevity would need to be calculated to take into account rising water levels.

Fourth Segment: Harbor parking lot to Barbara's Fishtrap.

- Participants (the three remaining at this point) felt that the Trail should continue along the edge of the parking lot, along the existing sidewalk.
- In a perfect world, the Trail would continue behind Barbara's Fishtrap on a bridge/boardwalk.
- There's no alternative to getting dumped into the busy sidewalk at Barbara's, at the moment. It was suggested that the landscaping be pulled in a bit.
- The bicycle path through the Oceano lot was discussed, but doesn't get any votes so far.

The last segments through Princeton Harbor out to the Pillar Point parking lot will be covered in a future walk.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandy Emerson