

Community group explores ways to reduce traffic near Heights school

By Marsha Sutton

Members of the Torrey Pines Community Planning Board were updated on the status of several ongoing projects at their June board meeting.

The transportation committee recommended forming a subcommittee to explore options to reduce traffic congestion and improve safe conditions for students at Del Mar Heights School.

TPCPG chair Wayne Dunlap is presently organizing the subcommittee, which will meet regularly for several months to develop a comprehensive study of the issues.

The subcommittee will consist of several board members, representatives from the school and the school district, nearby homeowners, city of San Diego traffic engineers, and Leslie Burke from Councilmember Harry Mathis's office. In addition, Del Mar schools superintendent Tom Bishop will attend the TPCPG's July meeting, to address some of these concerns.

The nominating committee reported on its review of the TPCPG bylaws. The TPCPG is divided into three areas: Area 1 is the Del Mar Terrace neighborhood along Carmel Valley Road, Area 2 is the neighborhood south of Del Mar Heights Road, and Area 3 is the neighborhood north of Del Mar Heights Road. All areas are west of I-5, from Sorrento Valley north to Via de la Valle, excluding the city of Del Mar.

According to the bylaws, Area 1 gets 4 seats on the board (with a population of 1,577), Area 2 has 5 seats (for 3,023 people), and Area 3 gets 4 seats (2,339 residents).

Three seats are reserved for business representatives, which brings the total available seats to 16.

With 17 board members and over-representation from Area 1, the TPCPG is out of compliance with its bylaws, so the nominating committee plans to recommend changes at next month's meeting.

Leslie Burke from Mathis's office then reported on the progress of other projects with which the board has been involved:

- The missing portion of sidewalk along the south side of Cordero Road is now in design and will be paid for by the city's superfund.
- The median project along Del Mar Heights

Road is under way. It is currently in design and will extend from Mango Drive to Nob Drive, where the city of San Diego ends and the city of Del Mar begins.

- The Carmel Valley Road Improvement Project is awaiting a final environmental impact report.

- The full opening of the north end of Sorrento Valley Road is being considered, along with two other options: full closure and partial opening.

Another task force meeting will be held in August, and an EIR is in progress.

- On July 15, the helicopters will fly in the southern part of their corridor, over Torrey Pines State Park and south of the Terrace, where residents have been complaining about the level of noise and frequency of flights.

But board members expressed skepticism over whether pilots will actually follow the new regulations. "Let's give them until July 15 — then we'll see what happens," Dunlap said, asking members for patience.

Finally, significant progress has been made on a project the board reviewed and endorsed in October 1996: the undergrounding of overhead power lines in the Del Mar Terrace, the neighborhood along Carmel Valley Road.

A special assessment district was formed two years ago to ask Terrace homeowners if they would pay to move their utilities underground. This is a pilot program for the city of San Diego. "The city council is very much in favor of this type of program," said Burke. "This is an experimental case, and we are forging new ground in this neighborhood."

The total cost for the project was determined by the city to be just under \$1.2 million, which amounts to \$7,748 per parcel.

Homeowners were recently sent ballots by mail and voted on whether they support this special one-time assessment. According to Burke, only five ballots of 150 were not returned, and the majority supported the proposal.

Frank Belock, the city's director of engineering and capital projects, has taken over the project and hopes to begin undergrounding by the end of the year.

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