

Measure J is Agenda 21

Measure J proponents argue that Measure J will fund Highway 1 widening and alternative means of transportation projects. Opponents see the measure as an ineffective crutch to support an allegedly unsustainable car culture. Both sides fail to explain what this bond will truly accomplish.

([PRWEB](#)) October 25, 2004 -- The \$577 million dollars that will be raised by the passing of Measure J (plus interest) are slated to fund not only the deliberately slow and agonizing process of widening Highway 1 (which will last until 2017), but it will also include restrictions on how we use that extra lane once it is in place. Measure J will also fund the purchase of a 32-mile railroad right-of-way currently owned by Union Pacific. In addition, transportation planners have added a number of other projects that will be left up to the individual cities and unincorporated counties areas to determine. Will this mean more "traffic calming" projects? Measure J funds will not be used to solve the Fish Hook bottleneck at the junction of Highways 1 and 17.

Deteriorating trestles like this one in La Selva Beach will cost millions to repair

A bird's-eye view of transportation policy in Santa Cruz County shows that Measure J is merely one step in a progression of various policies that, over the years, are planning to remove residents from their cars and create a community dependent on tax-subsidized transportation. What's not always recognized by even the most astute observers is the fact that government-subsidized transportation systems are being developed in conjunction with housing policies with the end result of transferring county residents into densely-packed communities along the railroad and bus line corridors, with heavy restrictions on every aspect of their lives. Transportation is only the beginning.

Ellen Pirie, a Santa Cruz County Supervisor, said recently that Measure J would have the effect of "getting people out of their cars". She was also part of a team that granted authority to the County Planning Director to determine "emergency" zoning densifications along transportation corridors.

"Smart Growth" Funding

Sunne Wright-McPeak, the Secretary of Business, Transportation and Housing for the State of California under Governor Schwarzenegger, has declared that housing and transportation funding from the state level will be dispersed more willingly to those communities that follow "smart growth" principles, which include various efforts to promote heavily-subsidized alternate modes of transportation, extremely dense housing blocks with an associated "jobs balance". When Santa Cruz officials announced recently that they would receive \$295 million dollars in funding from the state Housing and Community Development agency, they were voicing their agreement that government planners should be dictating where people will live, where they will work, and how they will travel.

The Santa Cruz County Planning Department and Board of Supervisors are seeking approval from the State Housing and Community Development Office for the Santa Cruz County Draft Housing Element. The projections in that plan are based on demographic studies done by the non-elected regional planning agency of Monterey Bay, called the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG). AMBAG has called for the construction of approximately 10,000 new units over the next 25 years, most of which will be built in high-density developments in close proximity to the railroad tracks and bus lines in order to fall under the designation of "transit-oriented development", a category called for in McPeak's statewide "smart growth" agenda. Every "smart growth" plan conceived includes an alternative transportation element and Measure J



would clear that hurdle, thereby speeding the movement of Santa Cruz County toward the controlled and concentrated camps envisioned by County planners.

"Underutilized" Properties Targeted

Meanwhile, as Measure J is bringing bank-breaking transportation schemes to our community, the correlative housing policies have declared over 190 properties to be "underutilized", which make them prime targets for rezoning, demolition and reconstruction to achieve planners' density "visions". Lest anyone be confused, "underutilized" parcels are those that may or may not have buildings on them and whose use does not comply with planners' concocted schemes for the neighborhood. This means that parcels with existing homes and businesses are targeted for change to fit within the high-density, government-controlled housing plans.

The "alternate modes of transportation" funded by Measure J are already being promoted through the establishment of various community plans across the county. The Aptos Village Plan, a pet project of Supervisor Ellen Pirie, will bring in over 300,000 square feet of new development, the majority of which appear to be controlled by a single development company that appears willing to be compliant to planners' Smart Growth dictates. Many of these new housing 'units' will be leased or sold under "affordable" (subsidized) housing guidelines which place many living and resale restrictions on the renters and homeowners. Communities that are subjected to these "village plans" will be redesigned with an emphasis on carless mobility, in part to encourage dependency on public transit systems.

Government-Private Partnerships

As community infrastructure develops around transportation corridors housing will be built through a series of government-private partnerships, which require cooperation between private industry and government power brokers in order to do business. This unholy alliance benefits insiders at taxpayers' expense and to the detriment of consumer choice.

The system that has been put in place is morally corrupt and encourages abuse by business operators who seek preferential treatment and are willing to submit to "Sustainable Development" guidelines in order to secure inflated government building contracts. Consider the pandering that can take place as public officials seek to have their political agendas implemented by use of a litany of "incentives", "exemptions" and "allowances" to curry action by compliant developers. At Planning Commission hearings one developer can be denied his building permit simply for failing to denote the names of the plants in his project in English (rather than their proper Latin names), while a huge non-profit developer can get an affordable housing project with a significant lack of parking or other rationally required improvements with nary an eyebrow raised.

Conclusion

As Santa Cruz County voters go to the polls on November 2, 2004, they will be asked to make a few very quick decisions that could have far-reaching effects on the makeup of our community. Measure J, a bond measure that would create a half-cent sales tax to raise money for transportation projects, is a devious attempt to con local residents into funding the very demolition of their community.

Note: See the related article, A Citizen's Analysis of Measure J, by Michael Shaw...

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