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## **TRAFFIC, TRAFFIC AND MORE TRAFFIC COMING IN AND OUT OF ROSSMOOR**

The Rossmoor Homeowners Association, through its traffic committee, has for many years represented our community by monitoring road conditions in our area, encouraging law enforcement to conduct more patrols and seeking to mitigate safety hazards on our streets.

We know that traffic volumes are increasing in and around Rossmoor, because our own residents have more cars in their households, more parents are driving their children to the elementary schools in our area and commercial development has steadily increased on the major boulevards that surround us.

The newest of these traffic issues involves The Shops at Rossmoor, the development that has added department stores, restaurants and clothiers, among much else. The site has in its plans a Toys-R-Us, an In-N-Out hamburger outlet and an office supply retailer. The consequences of the development may again increase traffic on the major streets and has some potential to impact streets inside Rossmoor.

For over a year, the traffic committee has held meetings with Century National Properties, Inc, the corporation that owns The Shops at Rossmoor, and the city of Seal Beach. Our immediate concern has been the redesign of the intersection of St. Cloud and Seal Beach Blvd., where formerly a Chevron gas station operated and a future Rite Aid is under construction.

Seal Beach has plans for a number of projects to improve traffic flow in both directions of Seal Beach Blvd, including the redesign of the intersection at the corner where the new Rite Aid is planned. The city is building a two lane turn pocket, replacing the existing one lane pocket for traffic on northbound Seal Beach Blvd. going left onto St. Cloud. The existing pocket often becomes full and then clogs traffic on northbound Seal Beach Blvd.

In general, the RHA traffic committee believes the improvement should provide benefit to Rossmoor homeowners, reducing their waiting time to enter the community. But we have also raised concerns over a number of potential problems, including whether the design would actually restrict some traffic turning onto Yellowtail Drive. As a result of our work, the county Public Works Department conducted a traffic study that showed backups should not occur. It created an administrative record that will be important if any negative consequences occur later on.

The committee is also monitoring the ongoing development at the center, responding to concerns that Century National or a future owner might seek to increase the use of Montecito Road for access into the center. We will be working with the county and Century National to ensure that any new traffic pattern does not create bottlenecks or have other adverse consequences for Rossmoor.

At this point, we do not know whether the completed shopping center will have significantly more traffic than it had historically, when a movie theater, bowling alley, gas station and grocery store—all very high volume retail operations—operated at the site. But we are committed to finding the answers and seeking new traffic studies where we think they are warranted to protect the quality of life in our community.

The other major development that involves the property is its designation as a future low income housing site by the city of Seal Beach. The site of the proposed nearly three dozen housing units was selected by Seal Beach from about a dozen such sites. At this point, we believe there is little possibility that any low income housing will ever be built at the location. Century National has recently told the RHA that it has no intention of developing the site for low income housing. The

RHA itself believes the designation is little more than a legal formality that allows Seal Beach to satisfy state and federal requirements for other programs. Nonetheless, RHA will closely monitor that situation and oppose the designation if it makes sense to do so

The traffic committee has been active elsewhere in Rossmoor. We have worked with the county to install a new median on Hedwig Road, in response to two pedestrian injury accidents near Rossmoor Park. We have also worked with the California Highway Patrol, the agency responsible for traffic enforcement in our unincorporated community, to increase patrols and periodically bring in radar speed signs.

The RHA has also closely monitored and worked with Caltrans in its I-405 work. We have watched closely to insure that the detours have not increased the amount of traffic that cuts through Rossmoor to avoid congestion on the major streets. In past years, the committee has identified state laws that allowed the CHP to use radar to address rampant speeding in our community.

But the traffic committee has little more than an advocacy role and it operates with unpaid volunteers. As much as many in our community would like to stop commercial development or summarily demand the installation of new stop signs, those kinds of actions are unlikely to succeed. Traffic engineers as a professional group seek to improve and increase the flow of traffic, not reduce it to satisfy homeowners who prefer tranquility or want to block outsiders from entering their domain.

Traffic issues were one of the main reasons that the committee and the RHA supported the creation of a city, which would have given Rossmoor legal standing to control its own streets, enforcement and planning. The majority of voters, however, decided they wanted to remain without that power and as a result the volunteer committee is the only voice our community of 10,000 has going for it.

We encourage everybody in Rossmoor to join RHA, because it will enhance the traffic committee's ability to influence the county and the CHP in maintaining safety and orderly conditions in our community. While the Rossmoor Community Services District (RCSD) is the only elected government body in our community, it has jurisdiction over parks, trees and street sweeping, along with a few other tasks. Still RHA and RCSD work closely together. Everybody in Rossmoor needs to pull together to address the many serious issues we are facing.

There are many reasons to join RHA, but if you are fed up with traffic jams and fed up with outside municipalities trying to dump their problems in our backyard, then you should join RHA and get involved at this time as have many other residents of Rossmoor. The traffic committee, chaired by Ralph Vartabedian, would like to count you as a supporter. You can email him at [ralphv9@aol.com](mailto:ralphv9@aol.com)