

*(DRAFT for council consideration April 1, 2021)*

**Resolution Advising Expedited Completion of  
Gualala Downtown Streetscape Project**

Whereas Gualala serves as the critical Southern Gateway to the Mendocino County's eco-tourism industry;

Whereas duly authorized members of the Gualala Community, including the ad hoc Gualala Area Coalition and Gualala Municipal Advisory Council (GMAC), have planned continuously for improvements to the Highway 1 downtown corridor since 1995 as a means of reflecting the area's natural setting, reducing congestion, and enhancing economic opportunities;

Whereas this streetscape project serves as the cornerstone of the 2002 Gualala Town Plan (GTP), which requires three lanes on the highway, landscaped sidewalks, bike paths, and an end to permanent on-highway parking;

Whereas the GTP is enshrined in County Ordinances and certified by the California Coastal Commission as the Local Coastal Plan;

Whereas the GTP requires this project "help make Highway 1 a scenic element of the Gualala townscape, to decrease traffic congestion and reduce potential safety hazards, and to encourage more pedestrian activity in the town of Gualala;"

Whereas the GTP states the sole exception to the "strict application" of its requirements is where "existing development, site topography or physical constraints mandate a greater or lesser right-of-way (ROW) width;"

Whereas MCOG staff and designated community leaders agreed after years of review that a maximum ROW width of 60-feet should apply for this reason;

Whereas a January 2021 Caltrans survey found area residents were "very supportive" of a 3-lane road concept with a 60-foot ROW, 5-foot sidewalks, landscaping, and bike lanes;

Whereas the same Caltrans survey found less than a majority of residents favored retaining parking at any part of the project, which supports the long-term goal of the GTP;

Whereas the GTP requires eventual elimination of permanent on-highway parking and Gualala already has 600-plus off-highway spaces used by more than 95% of its motorists;

Whereas, the Surf Center affirmed plans in March 2021 to add up to 90 off-highway spaces where most of the remaining on-highway parking occurs;

Whereas Caltrans, in a 2019 CEQA review, presented Alternatives 1 and 2, which complied with a 60-foot ROW and other GTP requirements, including the elimination of on-highway parking;

Whereas Caltrans later added Alternative 4, which also complies with a 60-foot ROW and would comply with other GTP requirements upon the eventual elimination of "interim" parking on the northern end of the project when it is determined a turn lane is needed to enhance safety;

Whereas any further variation from the GTP requirements would likely require an Amendment to the GTP that would unreasonably delay this project, add substantially to its costs, and rekindle a now-settled debate within the community;

Whereas the good people of Gualala have patiently waited a quarter-century for these downtown improvements despite rising traffic levels, injury accidents, and frequent near-misses on their Main Street;

Whereas the CHP has advised Caltrans that improved visibility of oncoming cars as proposed in these alternatives would enhance safety; and

Whereas Gov. Newsom in Executive Order N-19-19 directed the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) to manage “congestion through innovative strategies that encourage alternatives to driving;” now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, that the Gualala Municipal Advisory Council (GMAC) advises members of the Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) to:

1. adopt without further delay either Caltrans Alternatives 1 or 2 for the Gualala Downtown Streetscape, given they already comply with the GTP, or Alternative 4 if it can be completed without a costly and time-consuming amendment to the GTP;
2. ask Caltrans to adopt its survey results and other community input under its 2019 CEQA review instead of launching another review that would retrace well-trod ground and result in additional delay;
3. direct MCOG staff to work urgently with both elected and career state officials to secure funding for landscaping, sidewalks, and bike path portions of the project, including additional funding from CalSTA and Caltrans per the governor’s order, N-19-19;
4. ask MCOG staff to coordinate with GMAC and other community-level organizations on plans for landscaping implementation and long-term maintenance.

Mover:

Secunder: