

[Caltrans to address soundwall plans](#)

Tad Whitaker, IJ reporter

Sunday, March 20, 2005 - State transportation officials will be at tomorrow night's Mill Valley City Council meeting to discuss controversial plans to build a soundwall as part of a widening project for the offramp from southbound Highway 101.

The issue resulted in several large, contentious meetings late last month that pitted nearby residents who want a large soundwall against other community members who are opposed to a large concrete wall at one of the two entrances into Mill Valley.

County Supervisor Charles McGlashan has recommended a compromise that would include a smaller soundwall than what nearby residents have asked for. A spokeswoman for McGlashan said the supervisor is not planning to attend tomorrow night's meeting.

Last month, the California Department of Transportation unveiled the \$5 million plan to fix the problematic offramp, the site of numerous accidents because traffic backs up onto the freeway. Caltrans does not need city or county approval for the project, but it has requested community input.

Plans call for cutting down a grove of pine trees to make way for a new exit lane, with the end result being two lanes going into Tiburon and two lanes going into Mill Valley. The widening project - which does not require a soundwall - could start this fall and be completed by this time next year.

Residents who live adjacent to the freeway want a large soundwall erected because they say noise problems have increased with the widening of Highway 101. They said the problems will only get worse if the trees are cut down and another exit lane is added.

However, in addition to community members who do not like the visual aspects of soundwalls, the City Council and Board of Supervisors have passed legislation against any more soundwalls being built.

The feuding and delays, some officials have noted, could cause funding for the soundwall to be spent elsewhere around the state.

Councilman Clifford Waldeck, who voted for the city ordinance opposing a soundwall, said he is interested in the smaller soundwall proposal because it would provide some noise help while limiting the visual problems associated with massive concrete walls.

"We just don't want the big soundwall like you see in San Rafael," he said.

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