



County of Monterey

Item No.15

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Legistar File Number: PAR 25-009

June 03, 2025

Introduced: 5/28/2025

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Matter Type: Preliminary Analysis
Report

Receive a preliminary response to **Board Referral Number 2025.05** (Daniels) regarding actions needed to continue the parking prohibition with physical barriers on Coast Road near Bixby Bridge, beyond the completion of repair work on Highway 1 at Rocky Creek.

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

- a. Receive a preliminary analysis report in response to **Board Referral No. 2025.05** and;
- b. Direct staff to proceed with completion of its response to the referral based on the proposed project description in this report; or,
- c. Direct that staff:
 - i. Proceed with completion of its response to the referral based on modifications by the Board; or,
 - ii. Return to Board with a more comprehensive analysis of the referral and anticipated effort for completion.
- d. Rescind the referral.
- e. Provide further direction, as appropriate.

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS:

On April 23, 2025, Supervisor Daniels submitted a referral (Referral No. 2025.05) requesting staff to define actions needed to continue the parking prohibition with physical barriers on Coast Road near Bixby Bridge, beyond the completion of repair work on Highway 1 at Rocky Creek (**Attachment A**).

Proposed Project Description:

On June 25, 2024, the Board of Supervisors adopted Ordinance No. 5418, an urgency ordinance amending Section 12.28.010 of the Monterey County Code, to prohibit parking at all times on both sides of Coast Road from the centerline of State Highway 1 easterly for a distance of 1,260 feet (Attachment B). The parking restrictions were deemed necessary to address dangerous conditions for pedestrians, motorists and residents due to significant congestion combined with the temporary queuing from the one-way traffic control at Rocky Creek. That urgency ordinance is valid from June 25, 2024 until it is terminated or superseded. Following approval of the urgency ordinance, on July 25, 2024 the County of Monterey Zoning Administrator approved an Emergency Coastal Development Permit (ECDP, PLN240212, Resolution No. 24-026) to allow installation of temporary k-rail barriers and temporary no parking signs along Coast Road in Big Sur, during the time that one-way traffic control is in place near Rocky Creek on Highway 1 (Attachment C).

After approval of the Emergency Permit by the County of Monterey Zoning Administrator, the Department of Public Works, Facilities and Parks (PWFP) installed K-rails and no parking signs at

the turnout on Coast Road east of Bixby Bridge. Letters describing the dangerous conditions, and in support of the urgency ordinance and Emergency Permit, were provided by elected officials, representatives from the California Highway Patrol (CHP), California Department of Transportation (CalTrans), and the Big Sur community.

Caltrans has been working on repairs at the Rocky Creek slide on Highway 1 and it is anticipated that the repairs will be completed this summer (2025). Upon completion of repairs and removal of the one-way traffic control on Highway 1 at Rocky Creek, the terms of the Emergency Permit will require that the K-rails and signs on Coast Road be removed.

Caltrans is planning another project in the vicinity. The timeline and scope are still being developed. Staff will continue to be in discussions with Caltrans about this future project.

Policy Analysis for continuing parking restrictions on Coast Road

The urgency ordinance adopted to restrict parking on Coast Road will remain in effect until or unless amended by separate ordinance. The physical barriers (K-rail) and signs installed under the Emergency Coastal Development Permit (ECDP) were approved on a temporary basis. Under the terms of that ECDP, the signs and K-rail would need to be removed once one-way traffic control ends at the Rocky Creek slide. A revision to the Emergency Permit to extend the approval of the physical improvements beyond the completion of repairs to the Rocky Creek slide, or a Coastal Development Permit, not processed as an emergency permit, would need to be approved by the County to extend the permissions for the K-rail and signage.

The Housing, Community and Development Department (HCD) staff have reviewed the applicable policies and regulations regarding public access, road capacities, and safety improvements including the California Coastal Act (Coastal Act), the Big Sur Land Use Plan (BSLUP) and Coastal Implementation Plan (CIP) for Big Sur. The Coastal Act is a state law that prioritizes the protection and enhancement of public access to the coast as a top priority. Section 30210 of Article 2 of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act states: *“In carrying out the requirement of Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution, maximum access, which shall be conspicuously posted, and recreational opportunities shall be provided for all the people consistent with public safety needs and the need to protect public rights, rights of private property owners, and natural resource areas from overuse.”*

The Coastal Act also requires that local governments prepare a Local Coastal Program (LCP) for those portions of its jurisdiction that lie within the coastal zone boundaries (Chapter 6 of the Coastal Act). Certification of a Local Coastal Program by the California Coastal Commission is a determination that the LCP policies regulating land use and development are consistent with the Coastal Act. The County of Monterey has an adopted LCP pursuant to the Coastal Act. As it relates to this report, the BSLUP) and its implementing regulations (CIP) regulate development and changes in use within the Big Sur coastal areas. HCD staff has reviewed the BSLUP and CIP to determine if the extension of the parking prohibition is consistent with the LCP.

The BSLUP acknowledges that safety and overuse are a significant concern in Big Sur and that these factors degrade resources and degrade the recreational enjoyment of the coast. Quotes from the BSLUP

- *“Slow-moving vehicles, numerous access points to the highway from private roads or recreational areas, roadside parking, and unpaved turnouts cause traffic to slow down, effectively reducing the traffic capacity of the highway and limiting access to Big Sur.”*
- *Improvements consistent with the character of the two-lane scenic highway are desirable to increase its safety and traffic capacity.*
- *Because preservation of the land in its natural state is the highest priority, the County's basic policy is that all future access must be subordinate to this objective. Care must be taken that while providing public access, that the beauty of the coast, its tranquility, and the health of its environment, are not marred by public overuse or carelessness.*
- *Visual access should be emphasized throughout Big Sur as an appropriate response to the needs of visitors.*
- *In order to enhance public access to the Big Sur coast and to reduce traffic congestion, an improved level of public bus service is encouraged. Monterey Peninsula Transit, other public 66 carriers, and private and public recreational facilities are requested to participate in reaching this objective.*

The proposed action, to restrict parking on Coast Road near Bixby Bridge would limit the number of cars that can park in turnout areas off Highway 1, which does constrain this visual public access from historic levels (parking on Coast Road). There is no physical access to the Coast from this location and parking in turnouts on Highway 1 near the bridge would remain.

Extending parking restrictions will be considered “development” as defined in the Coastal Act and the LCP, due to the change to access and the physical improvements for signs and barriers. This will trigger the need for the County to act on a Coastal Development Permit.

It is HCD staff opinion that reasons for approval of the urgency ordinance and Emergency Permit (health and safety combined with ongoing overuse) will continue to exist even without the one-way traffic control on Highway 1 at Rocky Creek. Therefore, a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) to extend the parking restrictions can be found consistent with the LCP and Coastal Act provided there is adequate evidence demonstrating that the unrestricted parking in the area results in conditions that are hazardous to health and safety and degrade the recreational use, visual quality, and enjoyment of the area.

In processing a CDP, analysis of opportunities for “off peak” access and alternative modes of transportation for access will need to be considered. This would include provisions such as “no parking on weekends and no parking between 10:00 am and 7:00 pm from June through August and consideration of opportunities for coordination with public transit services or tour operators to provide bus parking only areas. All options will require enforcement by CHP to be effective.

In the end, any County decision on parking restriction extensions will be appealable to or by the California Coastal Commission (CCC).

Estimated Project Cost:

Costs are not fully-determined at this time, but will consist primarily of staff time, and signage material

costs if necessary. Time impacts associated with this request may include staff time from PWFP, HCD, the Office of the County Counsel, Monterey County Sheriff's Office (MCSO), and outside departments such as the CHP, Caltrans, CCC, State Parks, and the United States Forestry Service (USFS). The range of costs for the options varies, depending on complexity of scope: for temporary signage, a likely cost estimate is \$10,000; for a complicated scope, it could be upwards of \$100,000.

Staffing Level Estimate:

Staffing level estimates are undetermined at this time. Time impacts associated with this request may include staff time from PWFP, HCD, the Office of the County Counsel, MCSO, CHP, Caltrans, CCC, State Parks, and USFS. Staff time is dependent on the complexity of the range of options: for straightforward matters like temporary signage, it is estimated to be 40 hours of staff time; for permanent signage, and the associated approvals, it could be significantly upwards of 120 hours to prepare permit applications. The review time by any applicable state, federal or local permitting/regulatory entities is at their discretion.

This report has been prepared by PWFP and HCD in consultation with CalTrans and the CCC. The CCC would be responsible for certifying any local ordinances or policy revisions adopted by the County to extend parking restrictions on Coast Road long term. The CCC will also have appeal authority over any Coastal Development Permits approved by the County related to this effort.

Departmental Challenges:

Acquiring permits and approvals through State and Federal agencies will be a challenge.

Proposed Response Date:

Staff proposes to return to the Board prior to July 1, 2025.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

The recommended action supports the Board of Supervisors' Strategic Initiatives for Administration and Public Safety. These services will enhance our Transportation needs, and will improve the quality of life for County residents.

- ☐ Economic Development
- ☒ Administration
- ☐ Health & Human Services
- ☐ Infrastructure
- ☒ Public Safety

Prepared by: Randell Ishii, MS, PE, TE, PTOE, Director of Public Works, Facilities and Parks
Craig Spencer, AICP, Director of Housing and Community Development

Approved by: Randell Ishii, MS, PE, TE, PTOE, Director of Public Works, Facilities and Parks

The following attachments are on file with the Clerk of the Board:

Attachment A - Board Referral #2025.05

Attachment B - Ordinance No. 5418

Attachment C - ECDP PLN240212 Res No 24-026

