

**Monterey County Board of Supervisors
Referral Submittal Form**

Referral No. 2023.22
Assignment Date: 11/28/23

(Completed by CAO's Office)

SUBMITTAL - Completed by referring Board office and returned to CAO no later than 10:00AM on Wednesday prior to Board meeting:

Date: 11/9/23	Submitted By: Supervisor Mary Adams	District #: 5
Referral Title: Bixby Bridge - Traffic and Pedestrian Safety		
Referral Purpose: Identify solutions to respond to the immediate health and safety emergency concerns at the Bixby Bridge in Big Sur due to increased levels of visitation resulting in traffic congestion, parking issues, blocked residential access, and unsafe illegal pedestrian crossings across Highway 1.		
Brief Referral Description (attach additional sheet as required): See attached		
Classification - Implication		Mode of Response
<input type="checkbox"/> Ministerial / Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land Use Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Social Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Budget Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Memo <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Board Report <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation
		Requested Response Timeline
		<input type="checkbox"/> 2 weeks <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 month <input type="checkbox"/> 6 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> Status reports until completed <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Specific Date: _____

ASSIGNMENT – Provided by CAO at Board Meeting. Copied to Board Offices and Department Head(s) Completed by CAO's Office:

Department(s):	Referral Lead:	Board Date:
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REASSIGNMENT – Provided by CAO. Copied to Board Offices and Department Head(s). Completed by CAO's Office:

Department(s): Public Works, Facilities and Parks	Referral Lead: Randy Ishii	Date: 11/28/23
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ANALYSIS - Completed by Department and copied to Board Offices and CAO:

Department analysis of resources required/impact on existing department priorities to complete referral:	
Analysis Completed By: _____	Department's Recommended Response Timeline
Date: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> By requested date <input type="checkbox"/> 2 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> 1 month <input type="checkbox"/> 6 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> 6 months <input type="checkbox"/> 1 year <input type="checkbox"/> Other/Specific Date: _____

REFERRAL RESPONSE/COMPLETION - Provided by Department to Board Offices and CAO:

Referral Response Date:	Board Item No.:	Referrals List Deletion:
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Note: Please cc Claudia Escalante and Karina Bokanovich on all CAO correspondence relating to referrals.

Brief Referral Description (*continued*):

On September 6, 2023, The Big Sur Byway Organization (BSBO) voted unanimously recognizing the situation at Bixby Bridge as a Public Health and Safety crisis and recommending immediate action be taken by the relevant state and local jurisdictions. As a result, BSBO representatives requested that the Big Sur Multi-Agency Council (BSMAAC) respond to these health and safety concerns through a coordinated effort. Over the past decade, Bixby Bridge has become a destination for the millions of Big Sur visitors each year. Unfortunately, due to a lack of proper infrastructure, parking ordinances, enforcement personnel, and geographic space, the area has become an unsafe bottleneck with visitors stopping and parking directly on Highway 1, barricading access points, and illegally crossing the Highway in order to take a photo of the iconic Bridge. On the North side of the Bridge, Highway 1 intersects with Monterey County's Old Coast Road, a residential access point and emergency alternative to Highway 1, which has been severely impacted by the increased levels of visitation.

- Residents from Keep Big Sur Wild collected data including number of cars parked and number of people crossing Highway 1 over Labor Day Weekend in 2022. An overwhelming 650 pedestrians crossed the Highway within 4 hours, which equates to about 1,300 crossings as they must cross the Highway again to return to their vehicle parked on Old Coast Road. The Bixby Bridge turnout on Highway 1 and the intersecting Old Coast Road are significantly impacted by this over-visitation to the point where vehicles on Highway 1 are fully stopped and residents who live on Old Coast Road cannot safely access Highway 1 due to road blockages by parked vehicles and a steady stream of pedestrian crossings.
- Health and Safety Concerns: There is an increase in unsafe and illegal pedestrian crossings and traversing along the Highway with very little or no median. Because this is a major State Highway, there is no crosswalk or infrastructure to accommodate thousands of pedestrians at this location and the risk of injury and death resulting from vehicular accidents is high. Additionally, there are no public facilities, such as restrooms or waste receptacles, resulting in high levels of trash and unsanitary conditions
- Highway 1: When parking on Old Coast Road and the Highway 1 turnout is overwhelmed, vehicles park directly in both northbound and southbound lanes of Highway 1, creating a hard stop for traffic. This can lead to long delays for the traveling public and most importantly blocks emergency responders from reaching their destination in a timely manner.
- Old Coast Road: Adjacent to Bixby Bridge at Highway 1, Old Coast Road is used as a makeshift parking lot for visitors attempting to reach the Bridge. It is a one lane, single access, dirt road with a 300-foot drop-off to the canyon below. Residents are routinely blocked by parked vehicles on Old Coast Road and are unable to enter and exit safely, if at all. Residents often report critical situations where someone experiencing a medical emergency cannot access Highway 1 to seek immediate medical attention due to the high number of illegally parked cars along the roadway's entrance. Additionally, there are increasing cases of aggressive behavior by visitors when residents attempt to direct traffic, creating confrontations in an area that is hard for law enforcement to reach without reliable cell reception.
- Social Media: The rise of social media and the virality of Bixby Bridge is partly to blame for this escalating crisis and any solution will also need to incorporate online strategies.
- LUP- The Big Sur Land Use Plan guarantees visual access to the Big Sur Coast. It does not guarantee absolute physical access to every location. Highway 1 and Bixby Bridge are crucial pieces of infrastructure designed to connect the most remote parts of our County and it is important that we maintain and protect them to allow visitors and residents alike the opportunity to continue to access the Big Sur area.