

April 6, 2015

Honorable Mayor Bob Whalen
City Council Member Steve Dicterow
City Council Member Tony Iseman
City Council Member Robert Zur Schmiede
City Council Member Kelly Boyd

City Manager John Pietig
Parking/Traffic Circulation Committee
City of Laguna Beach Police Department

Subject: South Laguna Traffic, Safety and Public Nuisance Concerns in South Laguna Neighborhoods, Thousand Steps and Table Rock Beaches.

Dear City Leaders,

This letter is being sent to advise you of concerns being expressed by a substantial number of South Laguna residents. These concerns are centered on the negative impacts to our neighborhoods and streets, beaches (Thousand Steps and Table Rock), Coast Highway and our once peaceful airspace as a direct result of multiple unmitigated decisions and actions made by the City of **Laguna Beach, the County of Orange and Cal Trans.**

These decisions and actions combined with existing conditions in our community, internet blogs, Yelp and other internet sites have resulted in massive numbers of visitors flocking to South Laguna to use the beaches on a year around basis. This growth has skyrocketed in the last three years creating extreme congestion, both vehicular and pedestrian, that severely and negatively impacts our neighborhoods, quality of life and property values.

The unmitigated decisions and actions we are referring to are as follows:

- **Installation of a tragic signal at 9th Street and Coast Highway to provide access to Thousand Steps Beach.**
 - *No plan for visitor parking or safe access (as in sidewalks) to get to the signal in order to get to the beach.*
 - *Cars parking on Coast Highway from Thousand Steps to Three Arch Bay resulting in large numbers of people walking on the highway and crossing it illegally. These visitors come with strollers, coolers and beach equipment.*
 - *Increased noise in our neighborhoods from groups of visitors walking, talking, yelling, and parking day and night.*
 - *Visitors parking in our neighborhoods are leaving trash, urinating and defecating on private property and creating multiple traffic and circulation hazards.*
- **Supervision and Management of Thousand Steps and Table Rock Beaches.**
 - *These beaches are isolated and under-supervised. Minimal to no public safety presence to accommodate the large crowds.*
 - *Steep and dangerous beach does not have year around life guards.*
 - *Beach is not cleared each night and gate is not locked as agreed upon.*

- Tremendous increase in the amount of trash on the beach. Trash is not picked up on the beach and only bagged trash at the bottom of the stairs is carried up the stairs by the County contractor.
- Inadequate number of bathrooms. Recently, the county removed one of only two bathroom stalls to install a single ADA stall at Thousand Steps Beach. This is at the bottom of 218 steps with no other access.
- Excessive use of stairway by trainers. Barely room to get to beach most days.
- **Parking on Coast Highway.**
 - Lack of and inconsistent placement of red curbs to allow safe ingress and egress to intersecting streets and driveways.
 - Lack of sidewalks to allow safe pedestrian passage resulting in large numbers of people walking in or dangerously close to traffic. People still jaywalk to cross the highway because it is not safe to walk on it to the crosswalk.
 - All parking is free. This promotes use by people who use and abuse our resources but do not spend money in our City to help pay for its maintenance.
 - Parking signage not adequate and/or non-existent. Property owners posting own no parking signs on public property.
- **The Trolley has turned Coast Highway and our neighborhoods into a parking lot for downtown Laguna Beach.**
 - Cars can park for free on our streets and ride the trolley into Laguna which mitigates the downtown congestion and parking problem by moving it to our neighborhoods without mitigation. Streets closest to the hospital parking lot are getting overrun by cars.

Local residents and property owners can no longer absorb the brunt of this unmitigated situation. As we witness our neighborhoods, beaches, and quality of life deteriorate; we are highly concerned about the impact to our property values and the reputation of Laguna Beach as a community.

Following is a list of possible solutions to help manage the problems we have identified so that we can continue to enjoy the quality of life we expect.

- *Metered parking on coast Highway. Revenues generated to be spent on enforcement.*
- *Sidewalks on Coast Highway from West Street to Three Arch Bay.*
- *Resident only by permit parking on neighborhood streets 8am-5pm.*
- *Vegetation removal and red curbs on Coast Highway to permit visibility and reduce parking.*
- *Hardline ticket and tow policy for parking violators.*
- *Increase public bathrooms at Thousand Steps Beach.*
- *Year round daily beach patrol.*
- *Security at top of Thousand Steps and Table Rock stairs to prevent dogs and liquor from being taken to the beach.*
- *Pedestrian traffic counts to quantify the numbers of persons using Table Rock and Thousand Steps beaches.*
- *Develop public paid parking structure in South Laguna to accommodate visitors to our beaches.*
- *Stop property owners from using public right of way for personal use such as landscaping that restricts pedestrian and vehicular circulation.*

- *Require trash containers to be kept out of public right of way on non-trash pickup days.*

We request that a public meeting be held so that residents can express their concerns and be part of the solution so that immediate action is taken by City Staff under the direction of our elected officials to resolve these issues.

Respectfully yours,

*Phil and MJ Abraham
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Attachment: Sampling of feedback from community residents and photos taken March 29th thru April 4th 2015 depicting trash and parking issues.