

August 29, 2020

City Council Members
City of Yachats

Mary F. Aebi
PO Box 372
Yachats, OR 97498

Regarding the proposal for the "Driftwood Lane"

Dear Council Members,

The City Council has until December 2021, to execute the ODOT grant for \$100,000. This is an important decision for the City Council Members with a major financial and physical impact on our city and the future of the Wetlands and the Park behind the Commons. The final configuration of the area between the field and the 501 Bldg. needs to be evaluated not only from an engineering standpoint but also in the areas of safety, wetlands preservation and impact, and green space utilization.

There are three aspects of the proposed project that need to be carefully considered.

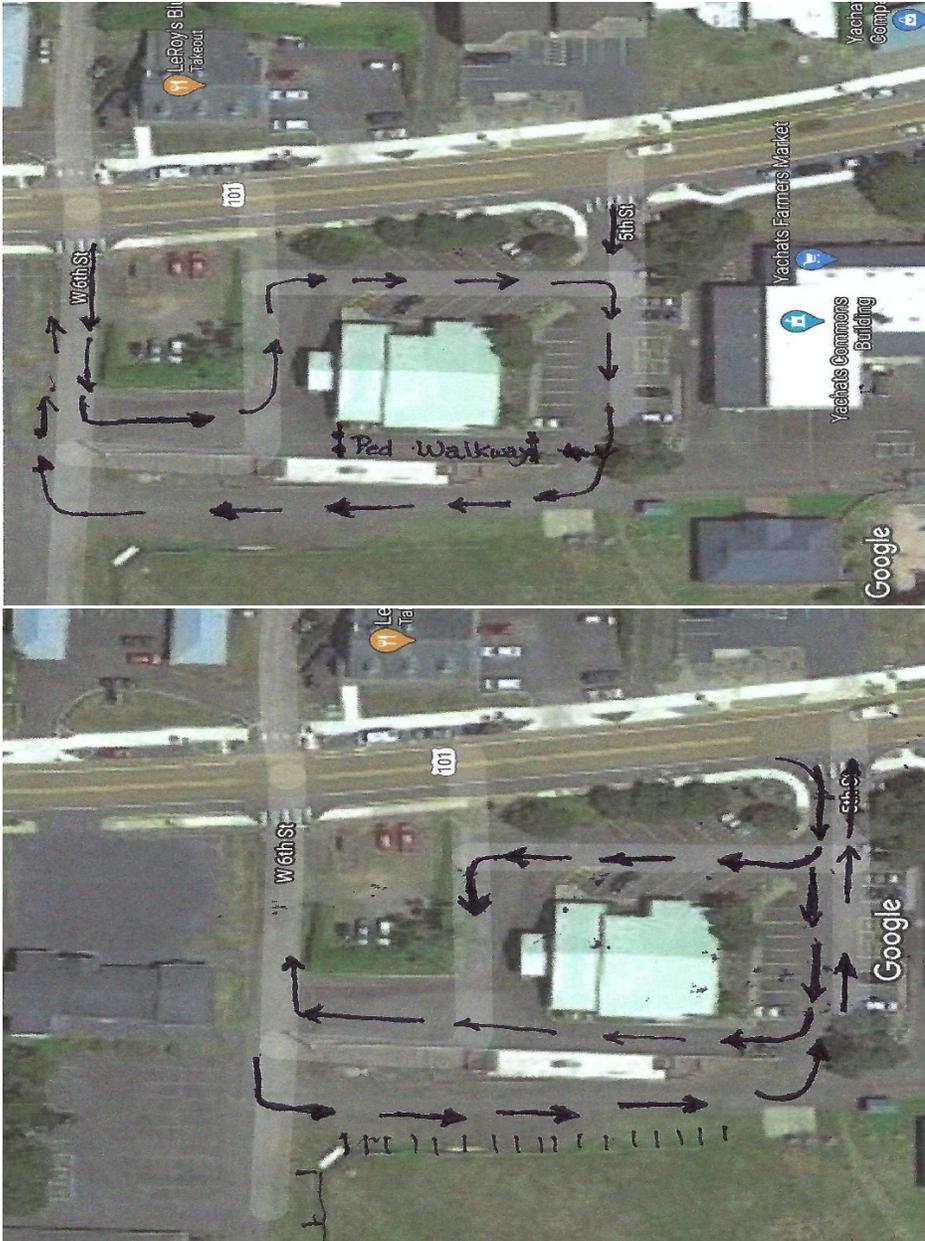
#1. Safety:

The amount of traffic that uses the right of way is minimal except during large events at the Commons which makes a one-way traffic flow safer, cars would follow a set path which would make it easier to park, back out and exit the Commons and 501 Bldg. If the area is designated as a one-way automobile access with a sidewalk on the skate park side (East) and graveled parking on the park side (West), it would meet the ODOT requirements for the grant and provide a safe and effective way for to traffic enter and egress the Commons parking and area.

According to J. Stemley, from the Institute of Transportation Engineers, "the advantages of a one-way street network over a two-way street pattern, particularly in a downtown area, fall into three broad categories: safety, capacity, and convenience." (Stemley, J.J., Aug. 1998)

"One-way streets are also safer for pedestrians to cross. It means they only have to watch for traffic coming in one direction." (Hartzel, M., Nov. 2013)

Suggested traffic flow options using a one-way access concept.



#2. Wetland Preservation:

The study of the Yachats Wetland, prepared in March 2006, details the issues in preservation of our unique assets comprising the area West of the Commons. It is essential in planning any major construction to consider the impact to the buffer areas that act as swales and which include the field and the Sitka spruce grove, which is also dependent on the runoff from the field. Attached is a copy of the Wetland Restoration Plan for the Yachats Commons Park. Adamus & Holzhaus (March, 2006)

#3. Green Space:

The field located Northwest of the Commons is a buffer and natural bioswale for the Wetlands as well as an open green area for community. This area provides children, adults, and dogs a space to recreate. Enhancements to the area need to be looked at in perspective to the Wetland as well as the available open space that our community is gradually losing with the increasing population and related building.

“Nearly 40 years of studies confirms that nearby nature, including parks, gardens, the urban forest and green spaces, support human health and wellness.” (Wolf, K., Apr.,2017)

“Studies by environmental psychologists show that visual exposure to nature, in the form of trees, grass and flowers, can effectively reduce stress...” (Wolf, K., Apr.2017)

“Research shows that residents of neighborhoods with greenery in common spaces are more likely to enjoy stronger social ties than those who live surrounded by barren concrete.”(Frumkin, H., 2003)

Reduction of the field through paved parking, additional sidewalks and curbs degrades the field’s open space and reduces the field’s potential community health benefits.

I appreciate your consideration in regards to these important issues.

Sincerely,

Mary Fisler Aebi

References

- Adamus, P. & Holzhauser, N. (March 2006). “Wetland Restoration Plan for the Yachats Commons Park”
- Frumkin PhD, Howard, (Sept. 2003), “Healthy Places: Exploring the Evidence,” American Journal of Public Health. No.9: 1451.
- Hartzell, M.(Nov. 2013) “What are the benefits of one-way streets in urban areas”,
- Stemley, J. J., Aug. 1998,” One-Way Streets Provide Safety and Convenience “. Transportation Research Board, <https://trid.trb.org/view.aspx?id=635854>
- Wolf PhD, Katherine L. ,(April, 2017)” The Health Benefits of Small Parks and Recreational Areas”, National Parks and Recreation Magazine, <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2017/april/the-health-benefits-of-small-parks-and-green-spaces/> .
http://cloud.tpl.org/pubs/benefits_HealthBenefitsReport.pdf

TO: Mayor Moore and Yachats City Council
RE: Driftwood Project
DATE: August 29, 2020

Thank you for considering input on the Driftwood paving project and reconsidering the original plan. Given the concerns I've heard from residents, I urge you to do enough to get the roadway paved and keep the grant but to refrain from expending any cash out of pocket.

I do not see that paving parking adds any points to the scoring system. And technically, you are not adding parking, you are paving existing parking. Per the measurements made by the Planning Commission, there are 22 standard 9'x18' spaces to the west and 2 standard spaces to the east that exist right now.

Keep the project simple. The scoring system gives up to 10 points each for types of modalities and ramps. One sidewalk with appropriate ADA ramps should generate up to 20 points. The road itself can generate 100 points. I know from my years of getting research grants, the granting agencies are more than happy to talk to you. Ask them for the Yachats scoring sheet and see if they think the one sidewalk and ramps will get you to the magical 118.5 points. The max score of any project was 152 and Yachats received 145. The city can lose 26.5 points and keep the grant.

Most importantly, **please conduct an evaluation of the impact on the wetlands.** I learned on the Parks & Commons walk through the wetlands that the Sitka Spruce grove in this type of wetlands in a rainforest climate is rare around the world and should absolutely be protected. The spruces in this type of grove are interconnected, and damaging or removing a few trees can destroy the whole forest. They must retain adequate water supply.

Please read the history of the wetlands park written by Joanne Kittel and on the website. <https://www.yachatsoregon.org/DocumentCenter/View/73/Yachats-Community-Park-Wetlands-History-PDF>. You will see that in 2005-ish, a group of dedicated volunteers and several professionals got a grant for \$75,000 and added a match of \$50,000 from themselves to restore the wetlands. They received another \$27,000 from the Department of Land Conservation and Development to finish the boardwalk. It would be criminal to have all of that effort go to waste.

A wetlands analysis and delineation by Laverna Wilson in 2005 indicated that the ball field served as a critical buffer and water source to feed the wetlands. Diverting runoff from the Driftwood roadway to the storm drain system on W 6th Street would carry that water to the outlet at the north end of the wetlands, thus cutting off water that would actually go into the wetlands. Please do not divert or limit this water supply before you have an expert analysis to indicate that the impact would not lead to significant water supply to the Spruce grove. Betty Bahn had indicated there was an evaluation done to put in the existing pavement, but not for the concrete in the skate park.

The federal government established wetlands protections. NOAA has identified Coastal Zones and guidelines to protect the resources in those zones. Keeping the pavement to a minimum in this area fits with many of their recommendations, especially #6 (see <https://coastalsmartgrowth.noaa.gov/elements/preserve.html>)

Just gravel the parking area. People in Yachats know that our winters are wet and dress accordingly (not mud-phobic). The only time that parking area gets full is for events at the Commons. The parking

on the west end of 4th Street is seldom used. I do not believe people will use this parking area to shop downtown. And \$67,000 for 17 parking spaces is very expensive (2 of the 19 spaces on the engineering drawings are for the electric vehicle charging station).

Create accessible parking spaces (handicap) on the east side at the north end. There is plenty of room between the fire hydrant and the skate park fence for two spots. People using those spaces could then use the sidewalk by the skatepark to get to the Commons area.

In short, conduct an analysis to see what the impact on the wetlands will be, keep the project cost under \$100,000, gravel the parking area, and add two accessible parking spaces at the northeast end (just south of the fire hydrant).

All the best for a successful outcome for this project.

Helen H. Andersion, Ph.D.
77 E 8th Street
Yachats

To: Mayor John Moore and the Yachats City Council

Date: August 30, 2020

Re Driftwood Paving Project

I am writing this as a resident of the Yachats community in regards to the Driftwood paving project which impacts both the wetlands and the green space otherwise known as the Yachats Community Park.

The present plan for the paving project takes away much needed green space for the road, sidewalks, and parking. A one way road makes a lot more sense with a sidewalk on the east side. A one way road also is safer for both vehicles and pedestrians, especially with the skateboard park. The one way road could also be extended to 5th and 6th Streets and by the 501 building. The Presbyterian Church would have access to the Commons without the need to go out on the Highway.

Parking on a gravel base not only makes sense, but also saves money. If we could keep this project to the \$100,000 grant, we would not have to dip into other funds at this highly unpredictable time. In my observations, the only time the parking by the green space fills up is when there is a major event. I walk daily on the access road between 5th and 6th Streets and usually see only a few cars parked. Vehicles have no problem with the parking on 4th St. which is gravel.

I am especially concerned about the green space and the ecology of the wetlands. The field provides a buffer and water source to the wetlands which we don't want to lose. The Sitka Spruce grove behind the Commons is very special and depends on this water in order to survive. The field as it is now has provided more than adequate water to the wetlands. We don't want to lose this buffer.

On the walk around the green space I learned that there are various portals to the "field" or green space. I have seen many more people using this green space this summer with the Covid. Families are picnicking, children are playing and pets are exercising. Visitors are drawn to the park and the green space. A main entrance with map and information is adequate for now. People want to see what's in the park for their family to do while they are here visiting. Picnic tables, a children's play field (soccer, volleyball etc.) and a dog park would not only entice visitors to our unique community, but would also benefit those who live here too. The children's playground is already an asset to the park as is the Pavilion. There have been several groups bringing forth ideas for the green space. Yachats does not have much green space left and it is vital to preserve what we have and utilize it appropriately.

Rather than attempting to use up grant monies in a haphazard way, it is important that we take our time and fully investigate our choices in order to make the best decisions for our community to grow in a thoughtful manner that would benefit all.

Carita Edson
645 Radar Rd.
Yachats

John Moore - Mayor
Shannon Beaucaire City Manager
John Purcell - P&CC Chair

As the City Council will be discussing this project on September 3rd, I would like to put forth a couple of opinions and observations. First, I believe the sketch plan by Jacqueline Danos and David Purcell has a lot of merit. Many of their suggestions represent what our community stands for and strives to achieve. Whereas I believe many of their ideas can be included in the improvement project, I would like to offer the following considerations:

I believe that the proposed bike lane is not appropriate for this location, as there is not much bicycle traffic along that corridor. The bike lane would be appropriate along Hwy 101, but would probably be little used in the proposed location and would take up considerable space east-west. Also, the proposed bollards would pose a hazard to those backing out of the parking spaces. They certainly would require constant repair. The proposed removable bollards at each end of the drive I believe are a good idea to block that area off when needed, much like the existing ones blocking access to the paved area west of the Commons Building.

I believe the project would be better served by providing a sidewalk along the east side, next to the skate park, rather than the bike lane. That would serve not only as a protected path of travel, but also protection to the skate park and those using it.

If the sidewalk is substituted for the bike lane, the proposed boardwalk would not be needed. In the sketch plan, I believe the boardwalk would intrude further into the green space than the sidewalk in the current Driftwood plans. Since many of the citizens have commented that they would prefer not to have much intrusion into the current green space, this may help that aspect. Comments previously made about a boardwalk's construction, cost, safety issues, access, and maintenance are appropriate.

I offer the following technical comment: I am sure the engineers would know this, but (handicap) accessible parking spaces require a loading zone off to the side of the space, making them much wider than a standard parking space. That loading zone is required to have an accessible path of travel to the edge of the development, at a minimum. The only realistic location for one accessible parking space is the last space to the south, next to the charging stations, where it can connect to an accessible sidewalk.

Also, I agree with Jacqueline and David that this project will be somewhat of a "gateway" to the Commons area, and should be nicely landscaped, and possibly with the suggested picnic tables as an amenity.

The City's consideration of these comments is sincerely appreciated.

LOREN DICKINSON
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