

Gualala Downtown Enhancements Project Update
Mendocino Council of Governments
October 7, 2019

The purpose of the Gualala Downtown Enhancement project is to improve traffic flow and create safe and comfortable facilities for pedestrian and bicycle travel through downtown Gualala. The project is also intended to improve Gualala's visual character.

The draft environmental document proposed reconfiguring SR 1 into two 11-foot-wide travel lanes; a 12-foot-wide, two-way left turn lane; two 5-foot-wide Class II bicycle lanes; and 6-foot-wide sidewalks winding within an 8-foot-wide strip of right of way on both sides of the street resulting in a 60-foot wide streetscape. Three side street crosswalks and five mainline crosswalks would be incorporated to highlight the pedestrian right-of-way. Additionally, median islands were proposed to be installed at selected locations to improve pedestrian safety.

During the circulation of the draft environmental document, Caltrans received more than 80 letters commenting on the project with a clear majority opposed to any streetscape plan that would result in the removal of on-street parking because of the negative impact that it would likely have on local businesses. Additionally, a change.org petition was initiated and resulted in approximately 1200 signatures opposing any streetscape plan that would result in the removal of on-street parking because of the negative impact that it would likely have on local businesses.

In response to the community's concerns, MCOG and Caltrans worked with the Gualala community to form a working group made up of local business owners, property owners and residents to find a compromise to the project alternatives proposed in the draft environmental document. This collaborative working group was assigned the specific task of providing recommendations to modify one or both current project alternatives in response to concerns by many in the community over the loss of on-street parking.

Although Caltrans received numerous emails from community members from Sea Ranch and Gualala indicating that they did not want to see any changes in Gualala, most community members were looking for a compromise to ensure a project that benefits the entire community that they could agree on and get funded and built.

The working group mostly supported a 64-foot streetscape width which would be sufficient to retain on-street parking on both sides of the highway and allow the option in the future to restripe the highway for a continuous two-way left turn lane (TWLTL) or left turn pockets with minimal disruption to the downtown area. The initial 64 feet wide streetscape section would have two 12-foot travel lanes, two 5-foot bike lanes, two one-foot buffers between the bike lanes, two 8-foot parking lanes and two 6-foot sidewalks. Possible future restriping for a TWLTL or turn pockets could result in one 12-foot wide TWLTL or turn pockets, two 11 foot traveled lanes, two 5-foot bike lanes, one 8-foot parking lane on the west side of the highway and two 6-foot sidewalks. Due to impacts to off-street parking along Surf property frontage from a 64-foot wide streetscape, two buildings on Surf properties (Video store and previous carpet store) would need to be cut back 6 feet to preserve Surf Market off-street parking.

The working group was in support of not having on-street parking north of Ocean Drive to allow for a left turn pocket for southbound traffic along Highway 1 turning left onto Ocean Drive.

A clear majority of Gualala and Sea Ranch residents who attended the October 1, 2019 public meeting supported a 64-foot wide streetscape width that would retain on-street parking on both sides of the highway.

Caltrans has updated the estimates for capital and support costs for Right of Way and Construction components. Below is also a tentative schedule to deliver the Gualala Downtown Enhancements project. These estimates are rough since we have not refined the highway centerline alignment based on the 64-foot streetscape width.

- The total current construction cost is \$3.3M for the 64' wide alternative. Construction Support estimate is \$1.3M
- MCOG's portion for construction cost is \$1.8M (current) and \$2.2M escalated. MCOG portion of construction support is \$700K (current) and \$850K escalated. MCOG funds are needed for pavement widening, sidewalks, radar feedback signs and pedestrian activated flashing signs.
- SHOPP funds will be requested for the overlay, drainage and pavement delineation.
- Right of Way Capital cost estimate is \$600K. Right of Way Support cost estimate is \$800K (current) and \$960K escalated. MCOG portion for Right of Way capital is \$325K (current) and \$390K escalated; Right of way support is \$425K (current) and \$510K escalated.