

PROBLEM

Why are the medians so deteriorated?

When the drought started in 1976 the water was turned off for three years. When the water was turned on in 1979, the irrigation system had deteriorated. The medians were watered by trucks until the County and then the City ceased funding the watering.

How many medians are there?

There are 27 medians on San Pedro Road between Union Street, where Whole Foods and Montecito Shopping Center are located, and Biscayne Drive.

Who owns the medians?

Two thirds of the medians are owned by the City of San Rafael.

One third of the medians are owned by the County of Marin.

Why doesn't the City or County do something?

Neither the City nor County now have the funds to landscape or maintain the medians. There is no expectation that the City or County will have the funds to landscape or maintain the medians in the foreseeable future.

What happens if I don't support the process?

The medians will continue to deteriorate for the foreseeable future.

What happened to the previous median improvement effort?

The effort to create an assessment district in 1998 failed by a 40 to 60 vote. Creation of the district was opposed by an outside taxpayer organization and opposed by some of the businesses within the San Pedro Road community. Voter turnout among residential landowners was modest. Whatever expectations existed in 1998 that the City and County would step up to landscape and improve the medians are now gone. Only a cohesive, community effort will improve the Point San Pedro community.

GOAL

What is the landscaping goal?

The goal is an appealing median of trees, shrubs and plants that are drought-tolerant, hardy, low maintenance and

consistent with the environment. Visit www.medianbeautification.com to see the proposed design.

What about the design?

Two local landscape architects that have extensive experience in road median landscaping have donated their time and expertise to create a preliminary, attractive design for the median. Visit www.medianbeautification.com to see their design.

What does it mean to have hardy, low-maintenance plantings?

The plant selection has been limited to those which thrive locally and do not need pruning. Trees that are vulnerable to disease, such as some types of oak, will be omitted from the design as built.

Who makes the final determination on trees, shrubs and plants?

The City will provide oversight of final plan development and must approve the final design. Given the City's prior use of the architects used for the preliminary designs, it is expected that the final design will be based on the preliminary plans developed under the guidance of the Medians Committee.

What about the line-of-sight safety issue?

A clear line of sight for turning on and off San Pedro Road will be provided by installing pavers or very low growing plantings in the median for an appropriate distance on either side of each intersection to assure line-of-sight safety.

What about maintenance?

The City will contract with a private contractor to maintain the entire length of the median.

Will the improvement of the medians extend to the sidewalks?

Weed control and landscape maintenance in some City- and County-owned areas will be included as part of the district responsibility. Sidewalk-landowners along San Pedro Drive will be encouraged to improve weed control and maintenance as part of the project.

Will the improvement of the medians include the power poles?

PG&E has been approached regarding

the replacement of the wooden poles with metal poles. A representative of the San Rafael Department of Public Works has also contacted PG&E about the poles and has filed a request for action on the matter. Burying the power lines is not part of this project due to the considerable cost entailed in doing so.

When would construction start?

If the ballot is conducted in the Spring of 2011, the work on the medians should begin in the fall of 2011.

PROCESS

Why have an assessment district?

City and County funding is not available. State and federal funding is not available. An adopt-a-median program would not provide a sustainable basis for improvements and maintenance. An assessment district provides a stable and equitable basis for raising the needed funds.

What is an assessment district?

An assessment district can be created under Proposition 218. The taxes from an assessment district are used to finance a bond for the support of the initial landscaping and to provide on-going funds for irrigation and maintenance.

How is an assessment district created?

An engineering study is conducted when an assessment district is proposed. The engineers refine the scope of the district, determine who benefits from the district, and calculate the weighting of votes and the assessment (the amount of additional taxes per parcel) for commercial landowners and residential homeowners in the district.

What is needed to have a ballot to create an assessment district?

Two hundred fifteen homeowners and businesses have raised more than \$68,000 to fund the balloting process and the engineering study. It is unlikely that the City and County will contribute additional hard funds to the district formulation process, although they will support the process with "in place" resources.

Who votes to create an assessment district?

All residential and commercial landowners in the assessment district will vote. There are approximately 3,000 homeowners on

Point San Pedro. There are approximately 15 commercial landowners in the proposed assessment district. The exact number of households and businesses that will be part of the district will be determined by the new engineer's study.

How are the votes counted?

The engineer's study will determine the weighting of the votes in a new election. In the prior 1998 election, each homeowner was allocated one vote and commercial landowners had up to 20 votes.

How is the vote conducted?

The vote will be conducted by mail. It is extremely important that you vote when you receive your ballot in the mail. Only ballots that are timely mailed are counted. More than fifty percent of the ballots must be "yes" votes to create the district.

When will the vote occur?

The vote will occur in early 2011. Work should start in the fall of 2011.

Who counts the votes?

The ballots are returned to City Hall and sequestered by the City Clerk. When the ballot period is over, all ballots will be opened and counted by the City Clerk and staff.

What vote is needed to create the assessment district?

A simple majority of votes is required to form a benefit assessment district. The majority is determined by the votes actually cast, not by the number eligible to vote.

What commercial properties will be included in the assessment district?

The commercial properties included in the assessment district are projected to be those along San Pedro Road starting at Union Street and extending to Biscayne Drive at Peacock Gap.

Will absentee property owners be contacted?

Ballots will be sent to the owners of all properties in the proposed assessment district based on the tax records.

Can apartment renters participate?

Apartment renters can support the project but are not eligible to vote.

Can businesses outside the assessment district support the effort?

Business friends of the projects who are outside the assessment district can support the project by making contributions at www.friendsofsanrafael.org.

FUNDING – THE BALLOT MEASURE

Why was \$50,000 in donations needed to start the process?

The \$50,000 was needed to pay for the engineering study, educate the community and pay for the ballot process.

Are contributions still needed?

Yes. While the minimum goal necessary to have a ballot was reached, donations are still needed to educate the community and turn out the vote.

How can contributions be made?

Contributions can be made specifically for the median improvement process through the Friends of San Rafael. The Friends of San Rafael is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that accepts contributions to support City-related activities.

Is it important to make contributions to support the proposed assessment district?

Yes. Without your support, there will be no ballot to support the assessment district.

Are contributions tax deductible?

Yes. Your contributions to a 501(c)(3) corporation are tax deductible. You will receive a receipt from the City of San Rafael for your contribution.

Will there be any refund of the initial funds that were raised?

In the event the cost of creating the assessment district is less than the funds raised, the surplus will be used to improve the medians. If for any reason the process of forming an assessment district should not go forward, any funds not spent on the effort will be used by the City of San Rafael to improve and maintain the medians.

FUNDING – THE IMPROVEMENTS

What is the projected cost?

The Medians Committee consulted with the community and landscape architects and came up with a design which has a cost of approximately \$75 per year per parcel for residential homeowners. The per parcel amount is higher for businesses. These amounts have been confirmed by the current engineering study.

How are the costs calculated in advance of the actual bidding for the work?

The costs are estimated by the landscape architects based on general standards and the costs of improving medians in other nearby communities. The Medians Committee believes that these cost estimates are very realistic and achievable. Please see Construction Cost estimates and Project Cost Estimates at www.medianbeautification.com for the details.

What happens if the bids for the landscaping are higher than expected?

The landscaping will be done pursuant to a fixed cost contract that requires the contractor to complete all work within the amount of the contract. If the bids exceed the estimated cost, the scope of work under the contract will be modified as necessary to result in a total cost that adheres to the project budget. This will ensure that the funds correspond with the scope of work to be done.

Does funding for the District come out of my existing property taxes or will it be an additional tax?

The funding for the district is an addition to the existing property tax you currently pay. The tax will be divided into two line items on your tax bill. One tax is to pay the bond used to fund the improvements, the other tax is to pay for maintenance costs. At this time, the Committee estimates that the tax for the improvements will be \$46 per year and the initial tax for maintenance will be \$22 per year. The total is now estimated to be an average of \$69 per year per homeowner.

How are the taxes converted into the funds necessary to pay for the improvements?

The assessment district will sell a bond to provide funds for the initial landscaping. The taxes from the assessment district will be used to pay off the bond. The City of San Rafael will administer the process of selling the bond. The tax for the bond that funds the landscaping will not increase in the future. Maintenance is a separate assessment from the bond assessment. The tax for maintenance will increase over the years by approximately the annual rate of inflation.

What tangible return will I get for the taxes I pay?

The value of homes in any community is influenced to some extent by the general condition of community common areas. The first impression of our community is the drive on Point San Pedro Road. Ask your neighborhood realtor about the benefits of an improved median.

Will the City and County contribute to the assessment district?

The City and County have to contribute if determined by the engineering study to be general beneficiaries of the district. In the 1998 proposal, the City would have contributed 8% and the County would have contributed 4%.

Can the funds from the assessment district be used for any other purpose?

No. Funds raised by an assessment district are controlled by Proposition 218 and can only go to the purpose for which the funds are raised.

Who administers the funds?

The City of San Rafael is expected to administer the funds and project for the entire length of the road under an agreement with the County. The County will forward the funds it receives to the City for administration.

Who will do the maintenance?

The City of San Rafael will contract with a private firm to do the maintenance. The maintenance contract will be competitively bid to ensure that it is cost effective.

Will the maintenance of the medians include replacement of trees that die or trees hit by automobiles?

Maintenance of the medians will include some provision for replacement of trees or plants that die. Claims can be filed for reimbursement of damage caused by drivers.

Who will be responsible for paying for future irrigation?

Because the Marin Municipal Water District water meters in the medians are owned by the City and County, water will be provided under their allocation. Funds from the assessment district may be used to pay for the actual water consumed.

Will businesses which operate in the assessment district be asked to support the project?

All of the businesses in the proposed district will be contacted by members of the Medians Committee to ask for their support. In addition, other businesses that provide service to our community such as realtors will be contacted and asked for initial financial support.

HELP

What can I do to help now?

Contribute today at www.friendsofsanrafael.org to support the ballot measure. Contact your homeowner's association and ask them to support the project.

What can I do to get my neighbors involved?

Ask them to look at the www.medianbeautification.com. Give them the flyers that are downloadable from www.medianbeautification.com. Most important, ask them to contribute at www.friendsofsanrafael.org.

What can I do in the future?

Show your support by attending meetings of the Medians Committee. Volunteer to assist with the Medians Committee's efforts to educate the community. Volunteer to be a neighborhood captain when it comes time to vote on the ballot.

215 of your neighbors raised the funds to give you this opportunity

Your YES vote is needed to landscape the medians

PROBLEM

The median on South Point San Pedro Road is an overgrown, weed-strewn eyesore, a safety problem and a fire hazard. It is a sad introduction to what should be the proud residential and commercial community of Point San Pedro.

GOAL

Fill the median with attractive, hardy, drought-tolerant, low-maintenance plantings that will provide an appealing introduction to the Point San Pedro residential and business community.

PROCESS

Raise the funds to conduct the ballot needed to have an assessment district. Use the funds from the assessment district to fund the landscaping, irrigation and maintenance of the median.

VOTE

Your vote is needed to create the tax assessment district. Once created, the tax assessment district will provide the funds to landscape, irrigate and maintain the medians for 30 years.

HELP

What can I do to help? Read more...

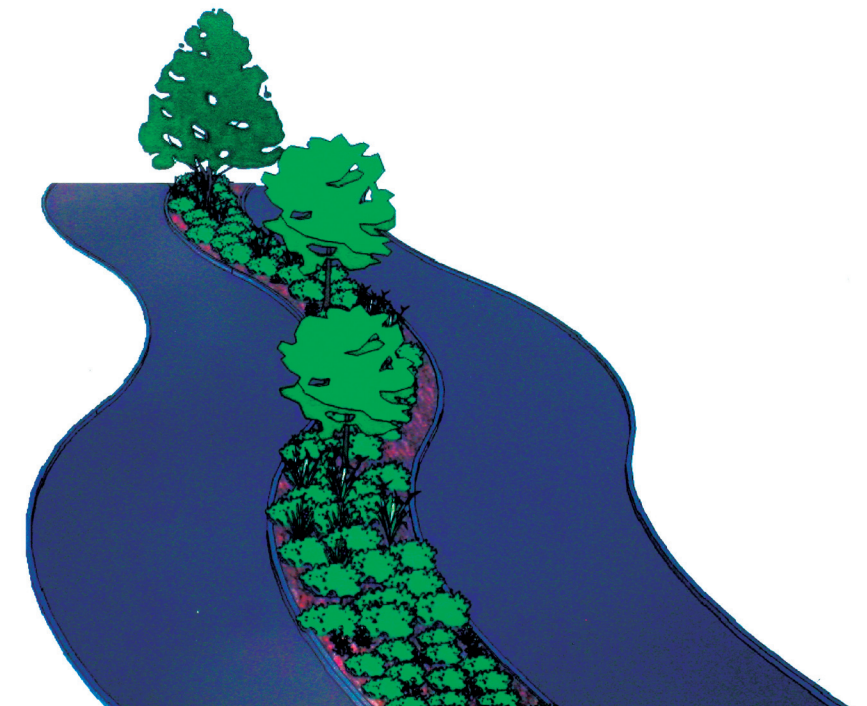
Support your neighborhood - vote YES for new medians

Support the beautification of the Point San Pedro Road medians
Learn more, contribute and participate at www.medianbeautification.com

Point San Pedro Road Median Committee

VOTE YES!

Grab your ballot out of the mail and vote YES to beautify the San Pedro Road Medians



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