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SanRafaelPatch

SAN PEDRO MEDIAN BEAUTIFICATION VOTE TO BE SET

Ballots would be mailed to residents in 2011.

By [Nancy Isles Nation](#) | [Email the author](#) | 6:00am

Residents of the Point San Pedro Peninsula have raised money to have medians beautified [Nancy Isles Nation](#)

Residents and commercial property owners along the Point San Pedro corridor will have the opportunity to vote on whether to create an assessment district to pay for landscaping and maintaining medians that have become eyesores in recent years.

The mail-in ballot was made possible by the work of the Point San Pedro Medians Committee, a citizen's group that has been working methodically for about two years to put together a comprehensive plan to work with city and county officials to beautify the roadway.

"We didn't introduce it to the community until May 1st," said Andrew Perry, chairman of the committee. "We came up first with designs and costs estimates, and worked with city, the county and the water district to do a very thoughtful project. Some of the best feedback we have gotten back from the community and also city and county is how well prepared we are."

Once the measure was taken to the community, the committee began a fund-raising drive to collect the \$50,000 necessary to conduct the vote under state Proposition 218, a measure that made it possible to create benefit assessment districts. These districts use special tax money for specific projects. It cannot be used for any other purpose and cannot be taken by city, county or state governments.

The vote is set to take place in spring 2011 but the number of households that will be asked to vote on the mail-in ballot has not been determined. According to the Point San Pedro Medians Committee, there are 2,600 homeowners on Point San Pedro Road as well as 15 commercial properties.

As of this week, the committee has collected \$57,394 from 205 neighbors to fund the measure. Part of the committee's strategy was to get as many residents to contribute instead of getting large donations from a few individuals, businesses or organizations.



"We wanted it to be a community project," Perry said. "Once someone gives they are invested in the project."

Surplus donations help to bring down the cost of the assessment.

The formation of the special assessment district includes the costs of an engineering study, legal work, public meetings, community education and the distribution and administration of the ballot.

If it is approved, the special assessment district would dedicate the necessary funds to improve and maintain the medians within the four-and-a-half-mile stretch of roadway through the Point San Pedro peninsula community. The special assessment would pay for the landscaping, irrigation and maintenance of the medians and would be funded for the next 30 years.

The cost is expected to be about \$68 per year, or \$6 per month, Perry said, adding that everyone in the community will get to enjoy the results of the improvement work.

"It is almost an equal benefit across the board," Perry said. "Everybody has to use San Pedro to get to and from their homes."

The medians have deteriorated since irrigation water was turned off for three years following a 1976 drought. The water was turned on again in 1979 but the system was in need of repair and the city and county watered the area using trucks until funding was dropped for that.

There are 27 medians on San Pedro Road between Union Street, where Whole Foods and Montecito Shopping Center are located, and China Camp State Park. About two-thirds are owned and maintained by the city and the remaining third are owned by the county.

An effort to create an assessment district failed in 1998 but beautification supporters say residents have seen that the city and county are not in the position to step in and landscape

Under the assessment district, the city would work with a private contractor to provide services. Sir Francis Drake Boulevard has been beautified and maintained through a similar district in Greenbrae and Kentfield. Tamalpais Drive in Corte Madera is also kept up through a special district.

If the assessment is passed, work could begin by the summer of 2011.

Perry, who lives in the Country Club neighborhood, said the efforts of the committee align closely with the work he does in creating sales and marketing strategies for high-tech start-up companies.

"Coordinating this effort is not too much different," Perry said. "But I have never done a project like this where you have to motivate your neighbor, and no one is getting paid but you have things that are deliverable.

"It is our responsibility to leave this place better than we found it," he said.

Supervisor Susan Adams, whose district includes the area, said what the Point San Pedro Medians Committee has done is a model for getting things done in the current economic climate.

"It's just not a priority with the city or county when we are looking at other services and projects that are on the chopping block," Adams said. "In a time when people are feeling down about the direction things are going these people are working together to solve problems."