

Community Development & Infrastructure Newsletter

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Building communities from the ground up. Striving to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public by providing essential services for daily life.

Pippin II Affordable Housing

Suzanne Ise, Principal Planner



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Last week, CDI staff issued permits allowing non-profit developer MidPen Housing to begin constructing 80 affordable apartments on a large parcel in the unincorporated area located between Atkinson Lane and Brewington Avenue. The site was acquired by MidPen Housing with a \$3.5 million loan of County Housing funds in 2019. Planning for housing, including affordable housing, in this location began much earlier, in 2006:

- In 2006, the Board of Supervisors approved the Housing Element Rezoning Program, adding the “R” combining layer and PUDs to certain properties to allow by-right development of housing at 20 units per acre. The site of Pippin II was within the “Atkinson Lane Area” of nearly 35 developable acres just outside Watsonville, an area being considered at that time for future annexation to the City of Watsonville.
- The City of Watsonville and County entered into an agreement to guide a joint City-County long-range planning process for the Atkinson Lane Area.
- In June 2009, the Board of Supervisors approved the Atkinson Lane Specific Plan and Planned Unit Development (PUD) ordinance for several unincorporated area parcels, including the Pippin II property, and certified the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared for that purpose.
- The County Specific Plan applied the R-combining overlay and a PUD to 10 acres within this plan area, allowing residential development of 20 units per acre, for a total of 200 units, to help meet the County’s RHNA goals for 2006.
- The PUD included standards for roadways, housing types and affordability levels, neighborhood concerns, environmental protection, and

development standards.

- Following litigation by the Farm Bureau against the City of Watsonville and the County about related planning matters, the Board certified an Addendum to the EIR in November 2013 to comply with the settlement agreement.
- MidPen Housing built Pippin Orchards, a 46-unit affordable rental project, on a portion of the 10-acre PUD. That project, completed in 2018, included 20 units on an adjacent City parcel, and 26 units on a 1.7 acre parcel within the County PUD. It was annexed into the City after completion.
- The remaining 8.7 acres in the original PUD included 3.2 acres of developable area as well as approximately 6 acres designated as riparian habitat and buffer area. Pippin II is being built on that 3.2 acres.
- Acquisition and development of the Pippin II site will allow one entity, MidPen Housing, to protect and maintain the existing riparian area from both sides (Pippin Orchards and Pippin II), consistent with the EIRs and conditions of approval, with support from volunteers with Watsonville Wetlands Watch and a donation from the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County.
- Pippin II includes 79 rental units for extremely low, very low, and low income households, nearly half of which are reserved for farmworker households, plus a manager’s unit. The property includes a remainder area within the designated agricultural buffer, which is entitled under the existing PUD for an additional 94 units. Those units can only be built after the privately-owned agricultural property on the other side of it is no longer being farmed.



2021 Favorite Executive

Questions by Michele Suttora/Answers by Kent Edler



What is your current position with Community Development & Infrastructure?

Assistant Director of Public Works - Special Services. The Special Services group includes Sanitation, Stormwater, Flood Control, Construction and Recycling and Solid Waste. Lately I've also been helping out with supervising the geology and soils group on the Planning side.

What duties did you perform at the Buena Vista landfill and have you performed these duties before?

I spent part of the morning in the scale house shadowing Nely Garcia and Adriana Gutierrez and just getting a feel for what they do. Then after lunch I spent time on the D7 dozer pushing garbage and then on the compactor. These duties were new to me; although I have operated heavy equipment before at a job when I first graduated from college many many years ago. However, I had never operated a dozer and had always wanted to.

What did you learn about the landfill that you hadn't known before?

I think mostly I learned how much you need to know when working at the scale house and interfacing with the public. There's so many things to be aware of as far as what can and can't go into the landfill to be buried, what needs to be recycled, and all the different fees.

What was your favorite part of being there?

Definitely getting to know the people who work out there was my favorite part. I knew ahead of time from talking with Albert Eslit and Robert Leporini that it's a great group out at the landfill, but seeing them work together and with the public was really impressive.

I was also in awe of how skilled Mike Speight, Don Smawley and Robert Ouse are at operating the equipment – they are so smooth!

I also really enjoyed learning about ideas to improve things. I view my role as supporting the work and the staff, and being out there and getting a better understanding of how and why things are done a certain way was really valuable to me. I'll be working with Kasey, Albert, and Robert to get some improvements started in the coming weeks.

What was your least favorite part of being there?

Well, it is a landfill, so I'd have to say the smell and the seagulls.

I'm also not a big fan of operating the compactor. I'll take a dozer over a compactor any day!

Do you have anything you would like to add about your experience?

Operating a landfill is really complicated. It's not as simple as just backing your truck up and dumping everything in a hole to get buried. There are tons of regulations with things like hazardous materials, recyclables, and organic materials; as well as stormwater compliance and landfill gas. Plus, new landfills are nearly impossible to get permitted, so we're trying to extend the life of the landfill as long as possible (note: the landfill has approximately 5-7 years left before we fully transition to a transfer station). It takes everyone working together to stay in compliance and meet our goals – and to do it safely.

Transformational Changes Coming to Soquel Drive

Russell Chen, County Traffic Engineer

The Traffic Engineering Section of Community Development and Infrastructure is excited to implement the Soquel Drive Buffered Bike Lane and Congestion Mitigation project. Commuters escaping the congestion on Highway 1 often use Soquel Ave./Dr. as an alternate route. With operational improvements to Highway 1 in the works, the focus of this project is to enhance safety for bicyclists and pedestrians and improve travel time reliability for bus riders and automobile throughput. This project provides a suite of improvements along 5.6 miles of Soquel Ave./Dr. from La Fonda Avenue to State Park Drive. The improvements address the community's concerns for congestion and the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians.

Community Engagement

The Project Team along with County Supervisors in District 1 & 2 hosted two virtual community workshops in January 2022 that presented project details and the anticipated construction schedule. The meetings were attended by over 110 community members.

Project Improvements

Project improvements include resurfacing the roadway, new striping and the development of 5.1 miles of buffered and protected bike lanes within the existing curbs. The project upgrades 22 intersections with Adaptive Traffic Signals (ATS) and Traffic Signal Priority (TSP) for the Santa Cruz METRO #71 bus route. For pedestrians, the improvements close 2,500 feet of sidewalk gaps, enhance pedestrian crossings at 10 mid-block crossings (7 existing and 3 new) with the installation of Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB), and upgrades approximately 100 ADA ramps to current standards.

Project Need

Because Soquel Ave./Dr. is parallel route to Highway 1, it has become increasingly congested with commuter traffic. In addition, the route

serves as a critical thoroughfare for Santa Cruz METRO buses, pedestrians, and bicyclists accessing residences, jobs, schools, businesses and medical services. Enhancing safety and access is the primary goal of the project as the corridor serves destinations such as Dominican Hospital, Sutter Health Center, Cabrillo College, Harbor High School, Soquel High School, Green Acres Elementary School, Main Street Elementary School, Santa Cruz Montessori School, Mar Vista Elementary School as well as shopping, commercial businesses and restaurants.

Project Benefits

The Project is a key component of the Watsonville-Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program (WSC-MCP) which provides a coordinated approach to improving north-south travel through Santa Cruz County. The project will:

- ⇒ Enhance safety
- ⇒ Improve transit travel times
- ⇒ Encourage bicycling, walking and the use of public transit
- ⇒ Reduce emissions including greenhouse gases
- ⇒ Reduce congestion for cars and trucks
- ⇒ Improve access for emergency services
- ⇒ Promote sustainable economic growth
- ⇒ Improve access to housing, jobs, schools and healthcare
- ⇒ Promote sustainable development and livable communities

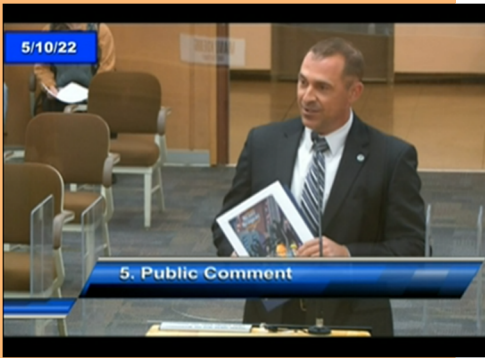
Project Funding and Construction Schedule

Funding for the project is provided by the California State Solutions for Congested Corridors Program (SCCP), Regional Surface Transportation Program - Exchange (RSTPX), Senate Bill 1 (SB 1) and local funds. The delivery of the project is being led by the Division of Public Works Traffic Engineering Section and is anticipated to go to construction in fall 2022.



CLASS IV CYCLE TRACK

CDI UPDATES



NEW EMPLOYEES

Miguel Magana

Sanitation Maintenance Worker I

Darcelle Pruitt

Resource Planner III

Jacob Langdon

Public Works Maintenance Worker I

Mark Sanguinetti

Associate Civil Engineer

Gabriel Vasquez

Public Works Maintenance Worker I

Steven McGee

Heavy Equipment Mechanic I

Mario Ruiz

Sanitation Maintenance Worker I

Jorge Jaramillo Regalado

Public Works Maintenance Worker I

Fernando Fernandez

Public Works Maintenance Worker I

Leslie Hernandez Espinoza

Cashier Disposal Site - Extra Help

Angelica Diaz

Secretary

Steve Guiney

Zoning Administrator

PROMOTIONS

Blanca Martinez

Office Assistant III

Cesar Vizcaino

Public Works Maintenance Worker II

Victor Vega Canizal

Sanitation Maintenance Worker II

Bret Toohey

Assistant Public Works Superintendent

Robert Newey

Public Works Supervisor

August Waltrip

Assistant Public Works Superintendent

Rosa Ortiz

Assistant Departmental Administrative Analyst

Michael Rible

Electrical Instrumentation Supervisor

Matthew Penick

Public Works Supervisor

Magdalena Cornejo Medina

Accounting Technician

Scott Dimig

Public Works Supervisor

Erica Boss

Accountant II

RETIREEES

Paia Levine

Steve O'Donnell

Porfirio Cervantes

Maury Galipeaux

David Galvan

"It always seems impossible until it is done"

-Nelson Mandela