



50567B Quailbush Road, Johnson Valley CA 92285 www.hvccsite.org

August 15, 2021

Noel Castillo
Assistant Director
San Bernardino County Department of Public Works
825 E. Third Street
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0835

RE: Letter of Support for Local Roadway Safety Plan

Dear Mr. Castillo,

The Homestead Valley Community Council (HVCC) is made up of representatives from the community associations in Landers, Johnson Valley, Yucca Mesa and Flamingo Heights. These unincorporated communities located along Hwy 247 lie in the area mapped in the San Bernardino Countywide Plan as the Homestead Valley.

HVCC, through public comments at our monthly meetings, as well as our campaign to have Hwy 247 achieve State Scenic Highway status, is well aware of serious traffic safety problems on this two-lane country highway.

You can count on HVCC for:

- Continued feedback and collaboration on roadway safety concerns,
- Input on implementing potential solutions through joint-messaging, and
- Promotion of safety events and activities in our meetings and newsletters.

We support the recommendations in the LRSP. We emphasize the following projects for grant funding, as we direct travelers on Hwy 247 and visitors to our Community Centers into or through these intersections:

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SR-247 & Linn Road: A quick glance at a satellite view shows that northbound travelers on Hwy 247 have made their own right turn lane offroad, avoiding the acute-angle intersection and a hazardous traffic slowdown. A left turn lane for southbound drivers would also alleviate this problem.

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SR-247 & Reche Road: This acute-angle intersection has been improved already. However, Reche Road is a major artery for the entire Landers area.

The Landers Post Office (which also serves Johnson Valley), the community center in Belfield Hall, the popular Moose Lodge and Homestead Valley Park events, and the entire residential area all the way to the border of the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center create traffic on Reche Road. A left turn lane for the southbound 247 drivers should definitely be a primary goal for considerations of safety on this major local roadway.

(We know the Marine Corps takes an interest in Hwy 247, as its western access. Any improvements that could ease congestion and promote safety in times of emergency would certainly be well received.)

Note: Hwy 247 is the *only* highway access between Lucerne Valley and Yucca Valley, with innumerable unmarked dirt road intersections, not county-maintained, but having a large effect on local road safety.

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SR-247 & Pipes Canyon Road: HVCC is particularly aware of problems involving Pipes Canyon Road and vicinity.

A well-designed curve on Hwy 247 leads into the steep downhill grade into Pipes Wash from the north. Even traveling at legal speeds, an unwary southbound driver may run into problems as a vehicle ahead slows down to make the right turn onto Pipes Canyon Road.

Highway improvements gave us a left turn lane that leads the northbound traveler into Pipes Canyon Road. However, a generous-sized turnout lane to take southbound traffic onto Pipes Canyon Road would take those vehicles off the highway before causing slowdowns, impatient passers, and fishtailing trailers.

Not on the list but very hazardous in Pipes Wash: northbound traffic approaching Aberdeen Ave. at PM 4.5 may suddenly be facing traffic pulling uphill out of Pipes Wash with the intent to make an immediate left turn onto Aberdeen. They cannot see each other till the last minute, nor can following traffic foresee the turn.

Of course, a warning sign and a left turn lane on the highway would help, but a turnout for northbound traffic, not only to make a safe right turn, but also as an escape area, would be a great help.

49

SR-247 & Larrea Road in Johnson Valley.

In 2004, the County paved Larrea Road from Hwy 247 up to the Community Center, the only paved road in Johnson Valley. It follows a straight

downhill slope in a former gully, about four miles. It acts as a chute in the slightest rainfall, flooding Hwy 247 over the crown out into the desert.

This presents a major hazard for vehicles which splash right into this flood. A pile of sand washes down and lies hidden underwater. It can spin even big trucks out of control; we have sighted a small car upside down on the opposite side of the road.

Locals drive around it if possible, to make the turn, as "Lake Larrea" has flooded the pavement many times since 2004.

Southbound traffic moves over into the northbound oncoming lane.

Caltrans pushes the sand up onto the roadside and puts up "flooded" signs, but more rain brings back the hidden sandbar.

Before the County road was paved we saw plans that also included a turnout lane, a northbound left turn lane and drainage, but these never came to pass.

Now is the time?

HVCC and its member organizations look forward to continued partnerships with San Bernardino County that aim to prioritize safety and eliminate traffic related deaths and serious injuries on County-maintained roadways. If you should have any questions, please contact me at (760) 364-2646 or by email at ranchotaj@gmail.com.

Sincerely,



Betty Munson
Secretary HVCC