
RIO DEL MAR

Improvement Association

Fall 2023 Newsletter



RDMIA Semi-Annual Fall Meeting:
Rio Sands Hotel Meeting Room
Monday, October 16, 2023, at 6:30 PM

REMEMBER TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW FOR 2024
The annual Membership Fee is \$30 (Use the enclosed form or pay online)

Fall 2023 RDMIA Newsletter Highlights:

- Aptos Library Updates and Aptos History Museum Needs Your Help
- Rio Del Mar History Corner: "Round and Round We Go", by John Hibble
- Supervisor Zach Friend: Updates on Soquel and Highway One Corridor Work



Fall Newsletter

**The Semi-Annual meeting of the RDMIA will be held on
Monday, October 16**

Rio Sands Meeting Room, 6:30 pm. Doors open at 6:00 pm.

Speakers will include:

Zach Friend, Santa Cruz County Supervisor District 2

Zach will be on hand to take any questions related to county oversight of projects in District 2, including street and road repairs, storm recovery, etc.

Nolan Clark, Coastal Planner, California Coastal Commission

Nolan is the Santa Cruz-based planner for the Central Coast District and will provide an overview of the history and mission of the California Coastal Commission, including how our Local Coastal Plans evolve over time.

Lauren Kitayama, Outreach Coordinator, Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks

We are an operating and co-managing partner for the Santa Cruz California State Parks District working along the coast from Palm Beach in Watsonville all the way up to Half Moon Bay and into the mountains from Nisene Marks to Portola Redwoods. We support over 34 park units and do everything from staffing entry kiosks, funding transportation for Title 1 school field trips and running the Park Stores to restoring historic buildings and promoting Parks events.

The meeting is free to attend and open to all RDMIA residents, but you must RSVP.
Snacks and refreshments will be provided courtesy of Mangiamo Pizza!

Please RSVP to reserve seats: info@rdmia.org

Special thank you to Joyce Barnett!

The Officers and the Board of Directors would like to recognize Joyce Barnett for her endless gardening effort on our most visible landmark in Rio Del Mar, The Esplanade Roundabout.

Accordingly, the Officers and Board of Directors have proclaimed Joyce Burnett as a Life Member of the Rio Del Mar Improvement Association.



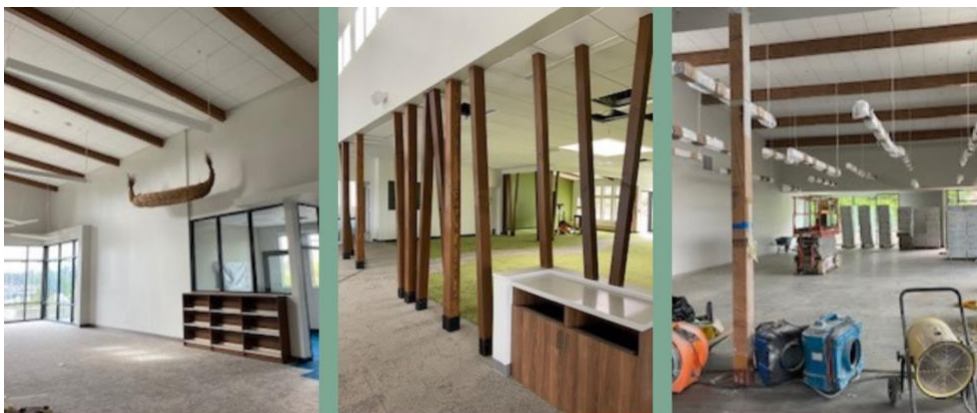
Special thank you to retired Director, Sam Nazzal!

The Officers and the Board of Directors would like to recognize Sam Nazzal for his years of dedicated service as Treasurer of the RDMIA Board of Directors. Sam is a Life Member and continuing contributor to RDMIA projects.



Aptos Library Update:

We are pleased to share that the new Aptos branch is shaping up wonderfully, and we are making significant strides towards its completion.



Aug. 2023: Aptos Project Update

Library Updates: https://www.santacruzpl.org/measure_s/updates/171/

Aptos History Museum Update:

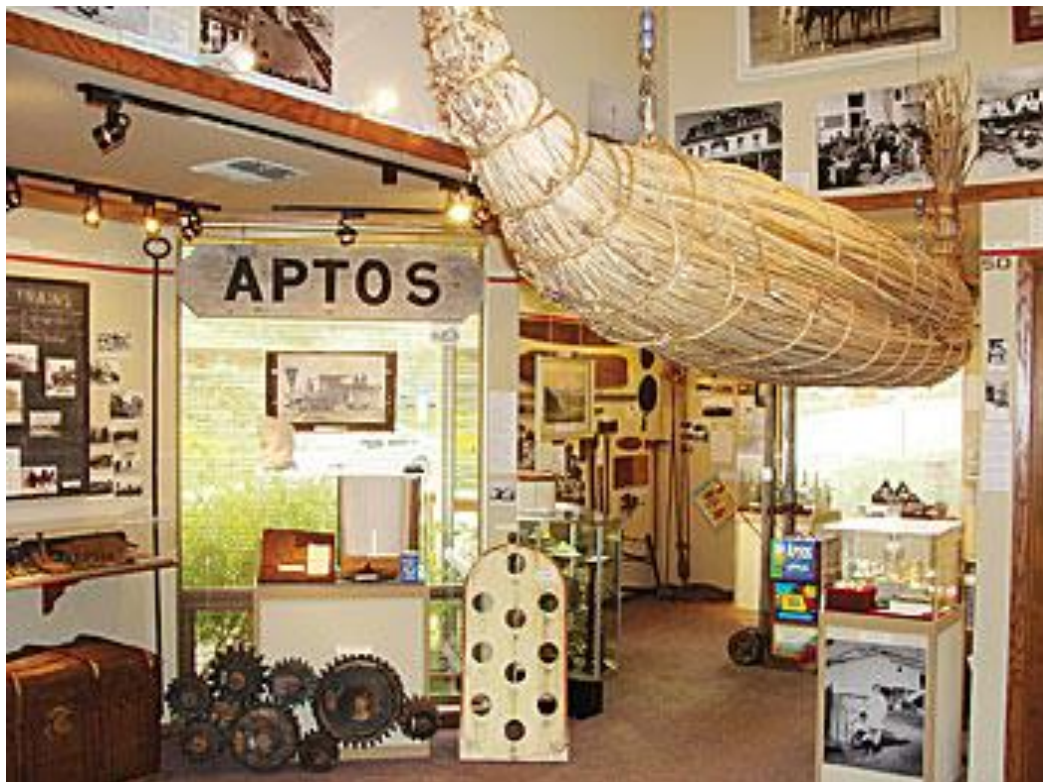
The History Museum will have displays inside the new library, the Museum will remain at its current location at 7605 Old Dominion Court until such time as we find a new permanent home.

Please consider becoming a member of the Aptos History Museum to help defray rising costs for rent, utilities, and staff to keep the Museum open! The Museum is a valuable resource for students, teachers, residents, and visitors. The stories are amazing!

Membership benefits (individual and family):

- Previews of local history articles
- Special event notifications
- Access to historical archives & library
- Discounts to Museum events.

Become a member today: https://aptoshistory.org/?page_id=27





Rio Del Mar History Corner

Courtesy of the Aptos History Museum

Round and Round We Go

By John Hibble

The traffic circle/roundabout at the foot of Rio Del Mar Boulevard was the solution to the problem of four roads and a parking lot converging at a single point. The intersection is now able to deal with nine lanes of travel that must also accommodate fire trucks and buses. This was not always the case.

When development began in Rio Del Mar, in 1926 the Aptos Creek estuary was leveled and raised 7 feet. The creek was channelized. A concrete dam was built in 1928 in order to create the “world's largest freshwater swimming pool”, complete with a bathing pavilion. In 1929, the first class, Spanish style Hotel Don Rafael de Castro opened on the bluff overlooking Monterey Bay, exactly where the condominiums at 260 Rio Del Mar Blvd stand today. Traffic was not an issue and there were no traffic control devices at the intersection. Traffic became even less of an issue as the depression and World War II undermined tourism.



After the war, Aptos began to grow, slowly at first and then by the 1960s the Esplanade intersection needed some form of clarification. In 1966 a trial installation of the traffic island was first delineated by cinder blocks. The Rio Del Mar Improvement Association paid for striping the parking spaces, with the assurance that, after a test period, permanent markers would be installed.



In March 1967, the Improvement Association asked the Board of Supervisors for an emergency allocation to restore traffic controls in the Esplanade area before the beach became inundated with Easter vacationers but there was no money in the budget.

Next, legal issues ensued between the county and the State Beach but were eventually resolved and by June 1968 permanent traffic islands were installed.

In the summer of 1999 volunteers from the Aptos Chamber helped to clean up the Esplanade. The traffic island was weeded, the curbs were painted, a small memorial to Realtor Bob Bailey was dedicated and a new Rio Del Mar sign was installed. The labor for the sign was donated by Steve Hosmer of Stokes Signs and Café Rio owner, Pat Duggan, paid for the redwood slab and the lettering. Gwen Kaplan of Lomak Properties arranged for an encroachment permit and got the permit fee waived.

Nothing happens quickly. The newest incarnation of the traffic island had been in the works for a decade. Bill Comfort from the Rio Del Mar Improvement Association and the Aptos Chamber Community Enhancement Committee had been shepherding this project through the county with the assistance of former Supervisor Ellen Pirie. Supervisor Zach Friend secured the final piece of funding through an air quality grant.

What is the difference between a traffic circle and a roundabout? Although they both use a circular design, they operate very differently. Traffic circles are large and are designed for higher speeds. They often have stop signs at their entry points. Roundabouts are designed as small as possible and operate at lower speeds. Roundabouts require drivers to slow and yield to circulating traffic before entering and limit drivers' circulating and exit speeds. The current design also helps prevent drivers from making left turns into oncoming traffic as sometimes happened in the past.



The roundabout features a 14-foot metal sculpture of a seagull in flight known as the Whaley Memorial. It was located on the traffic island at Clubhouse Drive and Rio Del Mar Boulevard. Designed in 1976 by Joseph Spencer, it commemorates Tom Whaley, a retired highway engineer and dedicated Rio Del Mar Improvement Association director who worked on traffic issues and was a tireless worker on behalf of the community. It was originally installed among several small magnolia trees that eventually obscured it.

The project was built by Earthworks Paving Contractors and was completed in 2014.



If you enjoy stories about Aptos history, please visit the Aptos History Museum and consider purchasing a membership to help keep our doors open. www.aptoschamber.org



Update on Soquel Drive Corridor and Highway One Projects

By Supervisor Zach Friend

Work is beginning on the largest investment in improvements on Soquel Drive in decades. The Soquel Drive Buffered Bike Lane and Congestion Mitigation Project began this month and will continue until next winter. The project is part of a larger set of traffic and transportation improvements planned along Highway 1 and the Soquel Drive corridor between State Park Drive and La Fonda Avenue with major investments for mid and south county. The funding comes from an over \$100 million grant from the California Transportation Commission (CTC) for multi-modal improvements to our local transportation network.

The funding was awarded from a grant application from the local Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) and is a result of funding from Senate Bill 1: the Solutions for Congested Corridors Program and Local Partnership Competitive Program. Our county's competitiveness for these programs was due in large part to our passage of Measure D in 2016, which provides a local match for these major transportation projects.

The funding works to address a number of issues that are particularly acute in the mid and south-county areas. First, Highway 1 congestion. Congestion on the highway impacts everyone including those simply trying to get to work or return home, emergency vehicles, buses and delivery vehicles. The second issue is cut-through traffic. As a result of the highway congestion, many vehicles exit the highway and create safety issues on local side streets. The third issue is bike and pedestrian safety. Our area is the fifth worst in the state for bike collisions so there is a need for better bike and pedestrian safety facilities, and the increased vehicle usage of Soquel Drive and other side streets is a contributing factor to these increased collisions.

Significant improvements on Soquel Drive, include 5 miles of buffered, protected bicycle lanes, 46 green bike boxes for left turn movements, new sidewalks that connect to existing sidewalk facilities, ADA improvements, 96 crosswalk upgrades, crosswalk warning devices at 10-mid block locations. Installation of adaptive traffic signal control with transit prioritization at 23 intersections will improve bus transit time. Many of these were requested by the community to improve access to local schools and major job centers. For example, near Mar Vista Elementary and Cabrillo College, new buffered bike lanes and sidewalks are planned that will

connect to existing sidewalks and improve pedestrian access to schools. The project will also improve drainage and add retaining walls and/or hardscape where required to improve safety in the area. The Soquel Drive project will require some lane closures between 8:30 am-4:30 pm in the specific area the crews are Bicycle Green Box Design Example Roadway on Soquel Drive to receive connected sidewalks Seacliff Improvement Association Summer 2023 Page 3 working at that time. While this will create some delays in the specific construction areas, the improvements will be significant for our community once completed. For information on the Soquel Drive corridor project, visit: <https://www.soqueldrivebufferedproject.com>.

This project will harmonize with work currently underway on Highway 1 that will bring three new sets of auxiliary lanes between Soquel Drive and State Park Drive. The first phase of that work, between Soquel and 41st Avenue, is currently underway. This will create the first 5.75 miles of a 7.5-mile hybrid bus-on-shoulder/auxiliary lane facility so transit buses can travel in the auxiliary lane between intersections and on the shoulders at intersections to bypass traffic improving transit travel times.

Two new Highway 1 bicycle/pedestrian overcrossing at Chanticleer Avenue and the long-awaited Mar Vista Drive project, are also part of the ongoing work with Chanticleer's bridge part of this first phase. The timeline for the highway project, and more information, can be found on the RTC's website at: <https://sccrtc.org/projects/streethighways/hwy1corridor/> where you will see the Highway 1 Corridor Investment program with information about the highway project. Additional information on the Highway project can also be found at <https://cruz511.org/>

Measure D Update As you may have noticed, several roads have been paved in Aptos this summer as a result of Measure D road funding. As always, I appreciate any feedback you may have on this or any other County issue.



I maintain regular updates on social media at www.facebook.com/supervisorfriend and you can always call me at 454-2200.

RDMIA Appreciates New Members and Renewals!



Thank You to those who have already paid their 2023 dues 😊

Current Board members:

- President: Dan Rothenbush
- Vice Pres/ Membership: Jerry Cannella
- Treasurer: Patricia Perry
- Secretary: Christina DeLapp
- Website / Social Media: Barry Scott
- Communications: Joseph Foster
- Director: Linda Neuman

Renewal time is upon us for members to contribute for 2024!

Dues enable RDMIA to maintain area landscapes, improve local parks and engage in community interests.

2023 RDMIA highlights in the community.

- *Improved solar lighting.*
- *Tree trimming for solar lighting enhancement.*
- *Continued landscape care – renovated median landscapes.*
- *Ongoing communication and outreach*



Thank you, Business Sponsors!



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Thank you, Aptos Chamber of Commerce & Aptos History Museum!



<http://aptoschamber.com/>



<https://aptoshistory.org/>

Rio Sands HOTEL

- Spacious king rooms with patios
- 24/7 Guest Services/Business Center
- Year-round heated swimming pool
- Complimentary WiFi and HBO

100 steps to the beach...

FREE ON-SITE PARKING

ALLEN PROPERTY GROUP, INC. 116 Aptos Beach Drive | Aptos, CA 95003 | riosands.com | Reservations: **800.826.2077**

RDMIA is extending our gratitude to the many sponsors who grace our newsletter with their advertisements. It is a win-win for all. The community learns of our supportive businesses in the area and the community will, hopefully, return the favor by supporting those partners. In the past, it has been customary to ask for a donation from those businesses that advertise in the newsletter.

During Covid, we waived sponsor fees as a showing of support as we knew that all businesses were impacted. As we return to a more traditional model with costs associated with meetings and the work we do in the community, we are reinstating the sponsor fees of \$100 per year, which includes ad space on our website and in this newsletter.

We look forward to a continued partnership!

**Rio del Mar
Improvement Association**
PO Box 274
Aptos, CA 95001-274



Annual Membership: \$30

Please complete this form and mail to RDMIA, P.O. Box 274, Aptos, CA 95001-0274 along with your payment. Your contact information is used solely for newsletter and RDMIA communications and is not shared with any other member or 3rd party.

RDMIA annual membership per household is \$30 by check or \$32 by PayPal (including \$2 PayPal fee).

A \$500 Lifetime "LEGACY MEMBERSHIP" is eternal: membership can be passed to a resident family member!

Ways To Join:

- Complete membership form online at www.rdmia.org and pay via PayPal (\$30 + \$2 = \$32)
- Complete the membership form online at www.rdmia.org and mail a check payable to RDMIA (\$30)
- Print and complete this membership form and mail it to RDMIA, P.O. Box 274, Aptos, CA 95001–0274.

Membership Information Please print legibly – thank you.

Name _____

Mailing Address: _____

Rio del Mar Address (if different) _____

Primary Email _____ Secondary Email _____

Telephone number _____ I have no computer access.

Please Email my newsletter to save printing and postage

New Member Renewing Member Referred by _____

Get Involved?

I want to volunteer or contribute time or funding for RDMIA projects. Please call or email me.

I am interested in becoming a RDMIA Board member.

What do you value most about RDMIA? (please check all that apply)

Community Outreach

RDMIA newsletter membership General membership semi-annual meetings

RDMIA website Presenting interesting speakers

Community Advocacy

Interfacing with local government Updating RDMIA Facebook

Information concerning local issues such as transportation, water, and community events.

Beautification

Public area landscape improvements and maintenance

Helping to maintain our beaches