

COUNTY OF EL DORADO

330 Fair Lane
Placerville, CA 95667
(530) 621-5390
(530) 622-3645 Fax

JAMES S. MITRISIN
Clerk of the Board



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February 18, 2015

Donald C. Rushton, Chief Traffic Operations Branch
California Department of Transportation, District 3
703 B Street
Marysville, CA 95901-0911

Dear Mr. Rushton,

I am writing to you on behalf of El Dorado County (County). The intent of this letter is to express our opposition to the recent letters from California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) indicating an intent to increase speed limits on specific sections of State Highways 49 (in the Coloma and Cool areas) and 193 (in the Georgetown and Kelsey areas) and set forth the reasons therefor. As provided in California Vehicle Code (CVC) section 22354.5(b), on February 10, 2015 the County held a public meeting to discuss the proposed increase of the speed limits on sections of State Highways 49 and 193. As the result of that public meeting where the community expressed significant concerns, the County respectfully requests that Caltrans retain the current and subsequently does not increase the speed limits on those sections of State Highways located within the County.

We recognize that the CVC requires an engineering and traffic study be conducted at regular intervals to prevent "speed traps" and therefore make speed limit violations enforceable. In so doing, CVC section 627 which defines an "Engineering and Traffic Study" sets forth various factors to be considered including the prevailing speeds as determined by traffic engineering measurements; accident records; and highway, traffic and roadside conditions not readily apparent to the driver. This statute also focuses on the proximity of the speed limit increase to residences and businesses, which is further addressed below. Additional concerns arise due to the timing of the recent study, as we believe the study does not reflect an accurate portrayal of average speeds on each section of highway studied. Of greater concern is the increased safety risk posed to County residents, visitors, children, bicyclists, and other constituents due to the intended speed limit increases. These safety concerns are addressed in greater depth below.

To help ensure the safety and wellbeing of County residents and visitors alike, we believe that a comprehensive analysis of conditions should take place in conjunction with an engineering and traffic study. Of particular concern are issues as identified below:

- State Highway 49 – Coloma – As indicated through a letter from Mr. Jeremy McReynolds, Superintendent of Marshall Gold Discovery Park (attached), this stretch of highway is proximate to the Park which attracts a significant number of school children, pedestrians, bicyclists and commuters that require access and egress to and from the Park via Highway 49. Additional concerns arise from increased speed limits that may result in additional traffic

accidents with a corresponding increased risk of damaging historic buildings, and increased risks for wildlife hit and killed by motorists. This section of highway also has a significant presence of vehicles parked on the shoulder, where an increased speed limit could pose additional risks for pedestrians entering and exiting these vehicles.

- State Highway 49 – Cool - Recently the County completed work on a \$3.9 million dollar Class 1 bike path project along the west side of this stretch of Highway 49 from Highway 193 to Northside School (Cave Valley Road). This project recently won a regional award from the American Society of Civil Engineers A significant portion of this funding is tied to Safe Routes to School dollars that the County secured to provide school children a safe path to and from their school(s). Increasing speed limits would most certainly cause an increased risk of school children and path users being struck by vehicles travelling at greater speeds. This increased risk directly contradicts the intent of the bike path project and provides an unnecessary increased risk to any person utilizing the path, commuters on this stretch of highway, and wildlife.
- State Highway 193 – Georgetown/Kelsey – These areas of State Highway 193 are fairly heavily travelled with numerous bicyclists traversing the area. The proposed increases occur very near a Church (Kelsey) and local businesses/a downtown district (Georgetown). Increased speed limits could pose an additional risk of motor vehicle accidents within or near these sensitive areas along with further endangering wildlife crossing these highways.

The concerns above are certainly not exhaustive and simply intended to highlight issues that were not made evident as the result of the Caltrans' engineering and traffic study. As noted, safety is of paramount concern for the County, as we expect it is for CalTrans, and for this reason along with several others the County respectfully requests that Caltrans does not increase speed limits as intended. If other methods are available to accomplish these goals the County is open to dialogue on such approaches.

Further, the County believes in maintaining and enhancing a partnership with Caltrans in conducting studies and roadway improvements projects within County boundaries. To that end, we would like to assist Caltrans with such efforts by providing input and information at project or study onset to help make these endeavors more amenable to all parties involved.

Thank you for your consideration and please feel free to contact me should you have any questions or need to continue a dialogue on this subject.

Sincerely,



Brian K. Veerkamp, Chair
El Dorado County Board of Supervisors



Marshall Gold Discovery SHP
PO Box 265
Coloma CA, 95613

February 9, 2015

El Dorado County Board of Supervisors
330 Fair Ln.
Placerville CA 95667

Dear Board of Supervisors,

California State Parks understands the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) performed a traffic and engineering study of the speed limits and speed zones along State Highway 49 through Coloma, including the portion of the Highway that passes through Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park which is owned and managed by State Parks. Caltrans is recommending an increase to the speed limits along Highway 49 as it passes through the park unit: from 35 mph to 40 mph in the northern portion of the park unit (PM 23.99 to PM 23.4) and from 25 mph to 30 mph along Main Street in the center of the park unit (PM 23.48 to PM 22.82). State Parks disagrees with the proposed speed limit increases for those highway segments that pass through the park.

We believe there are other factors that need to be considered for this highway speed zone evaluation than speed traveled currently. Reasons for concern and additional evaluation needed are:

- Up to 1200 school children and pedestrians a day crossing Highway 49. Approximately 80,000 school children and 400,000 visitors total visit the park unit annually. These visitors are exploring historic features and attractions within the park unit on both sides of Highway 49.
- There are inadequate road shoulders for safe pedestrian and bike travel and there are no traffic control devices for cross walks on Highway 49. Having no traffic control devices makes it difficult for pedestrians to judge when to safely cross Highway 49.
- Increasing speed through park is not consistent with Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park General Plan. The Plan identified traffic impacts from Highway 49 as a key concern to the park unit including the impact of traffic vibration on historic structures, pedestrian and visitor safety and the visitor experience in the historic core of the park unit. The Plan recommended options to reduce traffic impacts, with the long term vision of eliminating traffic along Main Street and restoring the street to its historic appearance by means of a future

bypass road and re-route of Highway 49. Increasing speed through the park unit will serve to increase traffic impacts, not lessen them.

- Coloma should be considered a residential business district with 25 mph speed limit or less. The area is marked by Coloma Town population signs, 5 businesses including a post office and 10 residences on the highway.
- Higher speeds through the park unit could affect the preservation of historic structures, not only due to increased vibration, but increased risk of vehicles running into buildings causing greater damage. This happened at Coloma School House when a truck was unable to make the corner and went into the building.
- Higher speed limits diminish the historic park experience with vehicles traveling at higher speeds creating added vehicle and wind noise.
- Increased speed limit may increase number of wildlife hit and killed attempting to cross the Highway. We already see significant deer deaths in this area due to vehicle strikes.
- The relative lack of past traffic accidents indicates the safe speed through town has been working effectively, increasing speed could increase traffic accidents.

State Parks believes that reduced speed limits though the park unit and/or other traffic calming measures should be considered to reduce traffic impacts. State Parks would like to work with the County and Caltrans in identifying and implementing such measures.

It is State Parks opinion that the current speed surveys do not adequately evaluate all of these concerns to determine the appropriate speed for safe travel and protection of park resources. Attached excerpts from the park unit General Plan regarding traffic circulation and Highway 49 and the last known traffic survey from 1984 designating the current speed limits. Please contact me if you have further questions or concerns (530) 622-3027. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Jeremy McReynolds
Superintendent
Marshall Gold Discovery SHP

Cc Donald C. Rushton, Chief Traffic Operations Branch
California Department of Transportation, District 3

Circulation

State Highway 49

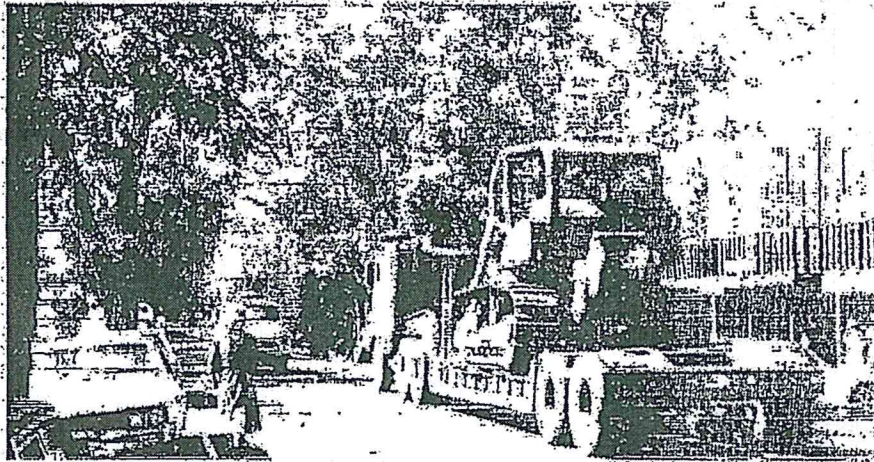
Traffic on Highway 49 through Coloma's Main Street is an increasing major threat to the historic environment, the structural stability of nearby buildings, and visitor safety. Visitor and nonvisitor automobile traffic through the park's historic area is compounded by the frequent flow of logging trucks and other heavy equipment. These vehicles not only create vibrations which can seriously weaken structures along the street, but often travel at high speeds, endangering visitor safety.

Traffic is particularly hazardous because park facilities are located on both sides of Highway 49. Because nearby trees shade their cars and the highway is close to day-use areas, visitors park along the shoulders of the highway. They often cross the road without using either of the two existing crosswalks.

To eliminate these traffic problems and restore Main Street to its historic appearance, the development of alternative transportation routes will be necessary. Two distinctly different concepts have previously been proposed: (1) a realignment of Highway 49, and (2) a Coloma bypass road.

A proposed route for a realignment of Highway 49 from Placerville to Coloma was adopted by the California Highway Commission in 1964. This route would eliminate a significant amount of nonvisitor traffic through the park. However, to eliminate all vehicles from Main Street, the construction of an additional bypass road will be necessary.

The "Coloma bypass road" concept, initiated in 1969 by the Department of Parks and Recreation, would provide for local transportation to and from areas near the park. At that time a potential alignment was identified for a future bypass road to relieve the park of through traffic. Since then, a considerable increase in both visitor and nonvisitor traffic has made this proposal even more necessary.



Traffic on Coloma's Main Street is an increasing major threat to the historic environment

This plan recommends that a Coloma bypass road be developed to satisfy the following goals and objectives for the park:

- (1) Reduce the impact of motor vehicles in the park, specifically, in the Zone of Primary Cultural Interest
- (2) Improve the existing circulation system and visitor control throughout the park
- (3) Improve access to the park and private lands, for their future management, protection, and development
- (4) Enhance the visitor's experience and the visual quality of the historic areas
- (5) Provide additional protection for environmental, recreational, and cultural resources in Coloma

Potential routes for the Coloma bypass road are identified on the map titled "Potential Circulation Routes." The alignment for Route "A" would require crossing the river at two points, as an extension of Sacramento Street and as a connection to Highway 49 at the park's north boundary. Route "B" would eliminate the north bridge crossing, requiring traffic to continue further around the river. This map intends only to show the concept for potential circulation routes, and cannot propose these or any other specific routes outside existing state ownership. Since this road would either be a state or county route, efforts for its construction must be coordinated with the Department of Transportation, El Dorado County, the State Transportation Commission, and other related public agencies.

This plan considers the possibility that this road may not be built in the near future and proposes that "no parking zones" be established along Main Street as a temporary measure to help eliminate the current problems of visitor safety and resource protection. Parking should be prohibited on the narrow shoulders of Highway 49 near the museum and picnic area. A restricted time zone would be required near the post office until this service is discontinued. Although this plan recommends that no parking be allowed outside designated parking areas, temporary parking could be allowed in areas where the shoulders of the road are exceptionally wide. The long-range proposal is to eliminate all vehicle traffic and restore Main Street to simulate its historic appearance during the gold rush period.

County and Park Roads

With the exception of Highway 49, Monument Road (State Highway 153), and the park road from Marshall's Monument to High Street, all roads bordering the park are owned and maintained by El Dorado County. On completion of the acquisition program (see Potential Park Additions, p. 83), three of these roads - Mt. Murphy Road, High Street, and Church Street - will be in the park.

Although traffic control along these roads is adequate now, increasing visitor attendance may soon make more regulation of street parking and automobile access necessary. If traffic increases to a point where it interferes with pedestrian circulation, then through traffic may be eliminated on High Street and Church Street. Once the Coloma bypass road is completed, the segment of Mt. Murphy Road from Carver Road to Main Street should be restricted to pedestrian, service, and nonmotorized vehicle use.

Traffic will be eliminated on the park road from Marshall's Monument to High Street. This route will be used for pedestrian and service traffic only.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DISTRICT 9
P.O. BOX 911, MARYSVILLE 95901

Telephone (916) 741-4362



June 4, 1984

03-ED-49
Coloma
Speed ZoneMr. Kirby Morgan
Marshall Gold Discovery Area
P.O. Box 265
Coloma, CA 95613

Dear Mr. Morgan:

Attached for your information and files is a copy of the latest Speed Zone Survey through Coloma.

This survey is to be repeated within the next year to assess the effects of the latest changes, as well as to gauge the impact of radar enforcement in the area.

This Traffic and Engineering Survey satisfies the requirement for a five-year check where radar is used for enforcement.

Very truly yours,

W. R. GREEN
District Director of TransportationBy
R. M. Nelson, Chief
Traffic Operations Branch A

Attach.

MARSHALL GOLD

JUN 06 1984

DISCOVERY AREA K
R.M.

ORDER DECREASING 55-MILE SPEED LIMIT ON STATE HIGHWAY

The Department of Transportation, pursuant to the provisions of Section 22354 of the Vehicle Code, having determined, upon the basis of an Engineering and Traffic Survey, that a speed of 55 miles per hour is more than is reasonable and safe upon the portion of State highway hereinafter described, and that the speed limit hereinafter specified lower than 55 miles per hour is appropriate to facilitate the orderly movement of traffic and is reasonable and safe thereon; it is accordingly

ORDERED, that a speed limit of 25 miles per hour be and the same is hereby determined and declared on and for State Highway Route 63-ED-49, beginning at PM 22.82, a point approximately 250-feet south of the Junction 153/49 and extending north to PM. 23.48, a point approximately 4,450 feet south of Marshall Grade Road, a total distance of approximately 0.66 miles.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that appropriate signs giving notice of the said speed limit and that said speed limit shall be effective upon the placement of such signs.

This order is made pursuant to current delegations of authority from the Director of Transportation, through the Chief Engineer to the undersigned Director of Transportation.

Dated 5-30-84

W. R. Green
for W. R. GREEN
District Director of Transportation

ORDER DECREASING 55-MILE SPEED LIMIT ON STATE HIGHWAY

The Department of Transportation, pursuant to the provisions of Section 22354 of the Vehicle Code, having determined, upon the basis of an Engineering and Traffic Survey, that a speed of 55 miles per hour is more than is reasonable and safe upon the portion of State highway hereinafter described, and that the speed limit hereinafter specified lower than 55 miles per hour is appropriate to facilitate the orderly movement of traffic and is reasonable and safe thereon; it is accordingly

ORDERED, that a speed limit of 35 miles per hour be and the same is hereby determined and declared on and for State Highway Route 03-ED-49, beginning at PM 23.48, a point approximately 4,450 feet south of Marshall Grade Road and extending north to PM. 23.99, the south end of BR. 25.21, a total distance of approximately 0.51 miles.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that appropriate signs giving notice of the said speed limit and that said speed limit shall be effective upon the placement of such signs.

This order is made pursuant to current delegations of authority from the Director of Transportation, through the Chief Engineer to the undersigned Director of Transportation.

Dated 5-30-84

W. R. Green
for W. R. GREEN
District Director of Transportation

ORDER DECREASING 55-MILE SPEED LIMIT ON STATE HIGHWAY

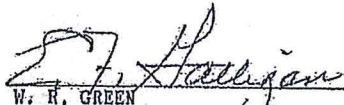
The Department of Transportation, pursuant to the provisions of Section 22354 of the Vehicle Code, having determined, upon the basis of an Engineering and Traffic Survey, that a speed of 55 miles per hour is more than is reasonable and safe upon the portion of State highway hereinafter described, and that the speed limit hereinafter specified lower than 55 miles per hour is appropriate to facilitate the orderly movement of traffic and is reasonable and safe thereon; it is accordingly

ORDERED, that a speed limit of 45 miles per hour be and the same is hereby determined and declared on and for State Highway Route 03-ED-49, beginning at PM 23.99, the south end of BR, 25-21, and extending north to PM. 24.80, a point approximately 500-feet north of Marshall Grade Road, a total distance of approximately 0.61 miles.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that appropriate signs giving notice of the said speed limit and that said speed limit shall be effective upon the placement of such signs.

This order is made pursuant to current delegations of authority from the Director of Transportation, through the Chief Engineer to the Undersigned Director of Transportation.

Dated 5-30-84

for 
W. R. GREEN
District Director of Transportation