



City of Malibu News

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City of Malibu Prioritizes Public Safety Along PCH, Urges Balanced Approach to Safety and Access

December 19, 2024 - Malibu, CA – The City of Malibu remains unwavering in its commitment to enhancing safety along Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) while ensuring public access to the area’s natural beauty and recreational opportunities. The City supports the ongoing efforts by Caltrans to address critical safety concerns but expresses deep concern over [recent comments](#) made at a Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy & Advisory Committee Meeting that appear to prioritize public access over public safety.

“Public access and public safety are not mutually exclusive. Both are critical and must be addressed with equal importance,” said Mayor Doug Stewart. “We cannot sacrifice lives for access. The City fully supports Caltrans’ efforts to create a safer, more sustainable PCH for everyone—residents, visitors, cyclists, and pedestrians alike.”

The call for increased safety comes in the wake of the tragic deaths of four Pepperdine University students and alarming statistics. According to Caltrans, over the last 15 years, [61 fatalities](#) have occurred along the 21-mile stretch of PCH. In 2023 alone, there were 220 crashes on PCH in Malibu, including 93 involving injuries and three that killed seven people. In response, Caltrans has proposed significant safety improvements to PCH, including:

- **Relocation of On-Street Parking in Key Areas:** This measure aims to reduce pedestrians crossing the highway at non-designated locations, a behavior that increases the risk of severe accidents.
- **Creating Bike Lanes:** New bike lanes will offer pedestrians a safer path while reducing conflicts between vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians.

The proposed improvements preserve parking on the side of the highway with the highest demand, typically the beach side, while relocating parking where it creates safety risks.

Balancing Safety and Access

The City acknowledges the Coastal Commission’s and MRCA’s goals regarding parking replacement and supports a balanced solution that prioritizes safety. To offset the removal of certain on-street parking spaces, Caltrans’ plan proposes innovative solutions, including:

- **Reverse-In Angled Parking:** This configuration doubles parking capacity compared to parallel parking, addressing high-demand areas such as Zuma Beach, Nicholas Canyon Beach, and the Malibu Pier.
- **Beach-Side Parking Gains:** Parking will be permitted in areas currently restricted, particularly in stretches where demand is higher.
- **Bicycle Access:** High-quality bike lanes and increased bicycle parking will promote safer, sustainable access to beaches and trails.

Safety as the Foremost Priority

The proposed changes reflect a thoughtful approach that balances public safety with public access. Malibu emphasizes that parking demand should never come at the expense of lives. [Caltrans' Pacific Coast Highway Master Plan Feasibility Study](#) demonstrates a clear commitment to addressing these dual priorities, with solutions that include:

- **Net Parking Gains:** While approximately 1,535 spaces would be relocated, approximately 740 new spaces would be added under Caltrans' proposed plans, with additional opportunities for off-street parking and shuttle services under consideration.
- **Improved Traffic Flow and Visibility:** Changes such as widened sidewalks and safer bike lanes further enhance safety for pedestrians and drivers.

A Collaborative Path Forward

The City of Malibu calls on all stakeholders—including MRCA, Caltrans, and the Coastal Commission—to work together to achieve a shared vision of safety and sustainable access. Malibu remains committed to ensuring that PCH is a safe corridor for all who visit, live, and travel along this iconic highway.

“We believe safety must come first. Access must be achieved in a way that does not put lives at risk,” said Stewart. “Malibu will continue to advocate for solutions that protect residents, visitors, and the environment while allowing access to the area’s natural beauty.”

The City of Malibu is dedicated to preserving its unique coastal environment and ensuring its residents’ and visitors’ safety, health, and well-being. Through proactive partnerships with local, state, and regional agencies, the City works to maintain sustainable access to its beaches, trails, and open spaces while prioritizing public safety.

For more details on Malibu's efforts to enhance safety, visit our [Pacific Coast Highway Safety page](#). There, you'll find comprehensive information about the City's initiatives to address the risks posed by dangerous, illegal, reckless, and distracted driving on PCH.

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