

Bayside Cutoff

Three weeks before the closing of the Bayside Cutoff, there was a fire on Jacoby Creek Road. It became apparent that when the Cutoff closed it would add minutes to the response time for “any” emergency. The Arcata Fire Department has calculated the closing will add approximately 3 ½ minutes to a call. Homes can go to flash in 3 minutes and lives can be lost during this critical time.

I have a proposal to reduce the added time by adding an “emergency vehicle only” U-Turn lane at what was the Bracut intersection, which is also now closed. Cal Trans has added a U-Turn lane at the new Jacobs Avenue light with a deceleration and an acceleration lane to keep traffic from going into Eureka so I know it can be done. This will save approximately 2 ½ minutes.

The closure of the Bayside Cutoff was necessary due to 85 collisions at that intersection over the last 10 years. However, it now exposes almost 700 residents in 313 households to critical added response time. The Arcata Fire Department says about 4% of their calls went through the Bayside Cutoff, which averages 12-14 calls per month. This is over 10 times as much exposure to loss of life, injury and property. Making one change to save lives and property should not drastically increase another.

Please review the YouTube video, “Why Seconds Count”. It shows what can happen in 3 minutes. Saving 2 ½ minutes with a U-Turn lane at Bracut could stop a home from going to flash or causing a major wildfire. With a cardiac arrest (heart stops), a 3 minute delay is very significant. Without CPR or a defibrillator, the chance of survival decreases by about 7%-10% for every minute that passes.

The simple solution is to add and “emergency U-Turn lane” and based on what I have seen, there is room to add the deceleration and acceleration lanes. Cal Trans removed what was a merging lane when the Bayside Cutoff was open and it could be the deceleration lane. The City of Arcata, CHP, Arcata Fire Department and Arcata-Mad River Ambulance Service are all in favor of this U-Turn lane. It “WILL” save lives, help with serious injuries and could save millions in property damage, including stopping a wildfire.

It is not too late to make an adjustment now that it is apparent a new larger problem has been discovered! Please help hundreds of us that live in the Bayside area. Thank You!

Sincerely,

Paul Nicholson
Bayside Resident