

Potential community project for City Council funding support: Improvements at the corner of Samoa Boulevard and H Street

Over the past couple years, the corner of Samoa Boulevard (State Route 255) and H Street has attracted nuisance behaviors and the accumulation of dumped solid waste directly adjacent to a high volume travel corridor through downtown Arcata.

The corner is within the right-of-way of State Route 255 and is bordered by the fence line of the adjacent private property. Caltrans constructed improvements to this corner several years prior which opened up pedestrian space, installed a new utility box and created a ledge on top of a retaining wall which has attracted nuisance behaviors. As the location is within the state highway right-of-way, maintenance requests are sent to Caltrans District 1 which will only clean-up the location if no person is present. Caltrans staff have noted that improvements in the right-of-way to reduce pedestrian space and discourage nuisance behaviors will not be feasible.

In November 2023, the adjacent property owner reached out to the City with interest in rebuilding their fence line at this location to eliminate the retaining wall ledge. As the City has received dozens of complaints and inquiries about this location, City staff met with the property owner on site to understand their intended project and offer guidance for a Minor Use Permit which would be required for consideration of non-standard fence height and fence setback. A Coastal Development Permit (CDP) from the Coastal Commission will also be required as this location is within the state permitting jurisdiction. City staff have begun coordination with Coastal Commission staff and anticipate a CDP waiver may be granted.

The property owner has received quotes from local fence companies to construct a new fence at the corner and along their property perimeter in order to reduce nuisance behaviors and provide further security for tenants.

The City Council could consider funding support for the reconstruction of fence line on top of the retaining wall at this heavily travelled location in order to reduce nuisance behaviors and dumping.

As a separate effort to beautify this corner, the City has received a proposal to paint a mural on the utility box which may be completed this fall through the Art Around Arcata program or the 2024 Call for Art set for release later in April.