

"Some Notes on Increasing Awareness of Palmetto Avenue"

Victor Spano, November 16, 2015

Palmetto Avenue was once a "Main Drag" in old time Pacifica, connecting this area to Daly City and San Francisco prior to the construction of Highway One. It was the "Old County Road". Old pictures hanging at City Hall reveal a quaint business district once existed and extended between Francisco and Oceana. But since the highway was built in the 60s, the visibility of Palmetto has diminished and many in town do not know it is there save for the Fog Festival. What might enhance year round curiosity and explorations by passers-by?

Business Route

Former City Manager Steve Rhodes had a great idea to work with Caltrans in installing "Business Route" signage which would direct traffic onto the Paloma and presumably Clarendon off-ramps. Before he retired, he said that the timing of this signage would be dependent on Streetscape Improvements. I hope this idea is brought back, it was a good one. "Business Routes" are recognized by many travellers as places where they might find shops, services, lodging, etc. Designating Palmetto as a Business Route, and bubbling it into GPS systems will increase traffic onto Palmetto, and increase interest in the Pier, the promenade, the coming new Library, and other improvements along Palmetto.

Monument Sign for Highway One

Up until a few years ago, there was once a monument sign at the intersection of San Mateo Avenue and El Camino Real in San Bruno, which gave a "branding" to San Mateo Avenue. I'm reminded that Palmetto Avenue needs such a monument sign saying something like "Historic Palmetto Avenue...Next Exit" installed along the highway on the IBL Middle School property's eastern edge. (See photo).

Joint Marketing Program for Palmetto

During the early 1990s, I helped organized a joint marketing program along Mission Street, Daly City. We walked the street, visiting all merchants and recruited as many as we could to buy ads for a colorful map of Mission Street that was sent to all residents. It is a task to "herd the cats" of a bunch of merchants, but maybe this is something the Pacifica Economic Development Committee members could take on along Palmetto challenging some sort of joint advertising product which increases the awareness of Palmetto. A joint advertising campaign could also take the form of a Tribune ad or simple fliers listing and describing all Palmetto businesses.

Themed Directional / Informational Signage

One of my favorite experiences working in Economic Development was working a bit on the Daly City Top of the Hill Directional Signage project, also during the early 1990s. The design firm, Harry Murphy and Friends was very famous, he had designed many iconic San Francisco logos and interiors for retail stores, including Zim's Restaurants.

For Daly City he designed the white seagull on blue background motif, which was ultimately adopted for all the street signage. It was one of the last projects he would ever do, he passed away shortly after completion of the designs. You could not have met a nicer guy, he was a consummate post 60s/70s

Porsche driving friendly hippie. The signage he designed on Top of the Hill directs drivers to public parking, and other amenities. A similar Themed Directional / Information Signage project could direct people around "downtown Pacifica". It could feature the Mermaid logo or something equally catchy to Daly City's seagull to capture imaginations and draw people to Palmetto.

