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The Honorable Leslie Vaaler
Mayor, City of Yachats
501 Highway 101 N
P.O. Box 345
Yachats, OR 97498

VIA email: leslie@yachatsmail.org

Subject: *Pedestrian Safety Along US 101 North of the Bridge*

Dear Mayor Vaaler:

I write to you to express my concern about the unsafe conditions confronting pedestrians who traverse between the business area of town and the residential section located just south of the bridge.

The only feasible route for pedestrians lies along the west edge of US 101, where there is no sidewalk--only a swath of paved shoulder of variable width that narrows at some points to as little as nearly three feet. Many southbound motorists exceed the 25 m.p.h. speed limit along that stretch of poor visibility, and those who do so also commonly “cut” the sharp turn by veering over the fog-line onto pedestrians' only corridor within the tight channel along the adjacent earthen wall. At some earlier time, the danger posed to pedestrians by these conditions was significantly mitigated by the installation of raised safety-dot pavement markings along the west-side fog-line, but these have long since been worn away or otherwise removed.

I have communicated my concern to the state Department of Transportation and urged that the safety dots be replaced. In response, agency officials have explained both why they have not previously addressed the conditions I have described and why, as they rather delicately put it, “it does not appear this location will qualify or compete well for any improvements.” They did, however, mention the existence of a “wider conversation the City and ODOT will . . .

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continue to have regarding the City's transportation system plan and need for appropriate facilities for all users."

It is the latter reference by ODOT that now moves me to bring my concerns directly to your attention. I am hopeful that I might learn whether the City shares my concerns about pedestrian safety in the area I have identified, and whether there is any prospect that either (a) the City can persuade ODOT to give the matter more immediate attention than they are currently inclined or, (b) given that replacing the missing safety dots would entail relatively little cost, the City might come to regard that effort as one it should undertake itself.

Very truly yours

/s/
Ronald S. Matthias

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