



# City of Santa Barbara California

## PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

**REPORT DATE:** April 15, 2010  
**AGENDA DATE:** April 22, 2010  
**PROJECT ADDRESS:** Highway 101 from Milpas Street to Hot Springs (MST2004-00691)  
 Highway 101 Operational Improvements Project  
**TO:** Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Planning Division, (805) 564-5470  
 Danny Kato, Senior Planner  
 Michael Berman, Project Planner

### I. INTRODUCTION

The Planning Commission approved a Coastal Development Permit for the Highway 101 Operational Improvements Project in December 2004. The Conditions of Approval were adopted by Resolution #059-04 (available upon request) and require that annual updates be provided by the applicant to the Planning Commission on the progress and status of the project. Four updates have been provided, the last on April 2, 2009. The applicant has submitted a letter (see Exhibit A) that provides the Planning Commission with additional information on the required status and progress report.

### II. PROJECT STATUS

In July 2008, construction began on the project and has continued since then. Substantial progress has been made since construction began. Details regarding progress are documented in Exhibit A, attached. In summary, since the last update the following items have been completed:

- Coast Village Road Roundabout, sidewalks and landscaping
- Much of the sound walls along Highway 101
- Milpas Street on and off ramps
- Southbound third lane between Milpas St. and ½ mile past Hot Springs Rd.
- Northbound on-ramp improvements at Cabrillo Blvd.
- Southbound off-ramp improvements at Hot Springs Rd./Cabrillo Blvd.

Many other aspects of the project are under construction.

### III. CONCLUSION

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The US 101 Highway Improvement Project has made substantial progress since its approval in late 2004 and the last update in April, 2009. City staff believes that CALTRANS continues to work diligently to meet the Coastal Development Permit conditions.

Exhibits:

- A. CALTRANS update April 2010

Santa Barbara 101 Operational Improvement Project  
Milpas to Hot Springs/Cabrillo  
Annual Project Update to the Planning Commission

**Coastal Development Permit CDP2004-00013**

**April 2010**

The following is an update of the progress toward fulfillment of the Conditions of Approval for the Coastal Development Permit for the Operational Improvement Project on State Route 101, between the Milpas and Hot Springs/Cabrillo Interchanges (CDP2004-00013). The last annual update for CDP2004-00013 was presented to the Planning Commission in March 2009.

**CDP Extension**

The original CDP for the project was issued on December 16, 2006. The second extension of the CDP, to December 16, 2008, was approved by the Community Development Department in a letter dated December 18, 2007.

**Construction**

In July 2008, construction began on the project and has continued steadily since that time. During the 1-1/2 years the project has been in construction many significant achievements have been accomplished such as having completed the following:

- Montecito Roundabout and Old Coast Hwy Sidewalk & Farkway
- Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the Sycamore Creek Bridge
- Stage 1 of the Milpas St Bridge
- Opening of new SB 101 Milpas St Hook off-ramp & Improved SB 101 on-ramp
- Sound Wall at Tennis Stadium
- Sound Walls from Salinas to Milpas St
- Construction of NB 101 Auxiliary Lane from Cabrillo to Salinas St
- Sycamore Creek Mitigation
- Stage 1 construction at Cacique Street Under-crossing & improvements to NB 101 off-ramp at Milpas St.
- Improvements to SB 101 off-ramp at Hot Springs Rd./Cabrillo Blvd.
- Improvements to NB 101 on-ramp at Cabrillo Blvd.
- Construction of the Hwy 101 SB third lane between Milpas St. and ½ mile past Hot Springs Rd., including new safety barriers and drainage improvements in the median and shoulder areas

**Community Relations**

Since our last update to the City Planning Commission, SBCAG, Caltrans and the City of Santa Barbara staff have continued a cohesive team partnership for coordinating construction activities. Main efforts during construction have focused on regular (weekly and sometimes more frequent) construction updates that have been well received by subscribers and community members. Weekly updates are posted to the project website [www. SBROADS.com](http://www.SBROADS.com), hotline at 1-888-SB-ROADS, and on AM 1610 Highway Advisory Radio specific to the project. SBCAG also, in the summer of 2009, released a one-year update of construction with detailed project information that was mailed to residents and businesses between Santa Barbara and Carpinteria.

SBCAG continues to add new stakeholders to our list of people wanting to receive our regular project updates, which currently numbers 1,000+ recipients. SBCAG and Caltrans are committed to continuing this effort through the remaining phases of construction.

Special efforts have also been undertaken during periods of intense construction operations that generate noise, such as pile driving or result in changes to traffic patterns. Ongoing weekly media outreach and coordination with key interest groups remains a key priority.

A new improvement completion event was held October 21, 2009 for the Montecito Roundabout. The event was well attended and covered by local and regional news media. Participants included the Montecito Association, Coast Village Business Association, elected officials, and community members.

### **Right of Way and Utilities**

Caltrans secured the necessary rights from all property owners in order to begin construction in 2008. However, this required in some cases, filing condemnation suits that are on-going. In other cases, the right of way contracts negotiated with owners had provisions that require on-going coordination during construction to limit disturbance, impact and access. Caltrans and SBCAG continue to coordinate on these issues, in particular since SBCAG is responsible for funding all right of way capital and utility costs. One particular case, in which the State condemned on an owner, is still in litigation as the respondent has filed an appeal to the just compensation settlement.

On the utility front, most relocations have been completed. Many were relocated prior to construction, however a significant number of utilities had to be coordinated during construction operations. Remaining utility work is in the area of the Cacique Undercrossing which involves both private utilities and City utilities.

### **Landscaping Project**

Caltrans, as required by State policy, separated out the landscaping elements of the project (except for those near the Montecito Roundabout) and prepared a separate design and bid package. This allows for the roadway contractor's bonding not to be tied up for the extended plant establishment period (up to 3 years) and provides for a more finite scope of landscaping work that could potentially foster a more competitive bid environment.

The bid package for the landscaping elements was completed in early 2010 and advertised for bids. Bids will be opened in May 2010 with the project beginning in late summer 2010. This is a unique arrangement that allows planting work to begin before the roadway contract is completed, accelerating the start of landscape mitigation which includes vine planting on the soundwalls.

### **Wetland Mitigation**

SBCAG and Caltrans reported last year the wetland mitigation site identified in the project CDP had been installed as a first order of work of the construction in the fall 2008. Since that time, the mitigation site has been well established.

## **Cabrillo Pedestrian and Bicycle Access**

The Milpas Hot Springs project description included an element of the project to provide an extension of the multipurpose path from Los Patos Drive, under the railroad at Cabrillo Boulevard and Highway 101, and up Cabrillo to Coast Village Road. Because of the need to cross under the railroad and the need to coordinate and get approval from Union Pacific, progress lagged on reaching a solution for this improvement such that it was decided that the multipurpose path connection should be implemented as a second phase. Meanwhile the main elements of the \$53 million Milpas to Hot Springs project were completed and advertised for bids in early 2008.

During the preliminary design phase of the Cabrillo project, it was anticipated that a tunnel alternative located on the west side of the undercrossing would be the preferred option. SBCAG, through consultant services, undertook the detailed design of this feature and has over the last 5 years looked at a number of options, including the tunnel as well as bridge replacement, based on feedback from Union Pacific Railroad. In response to Union Pacific's resistance to the tunnel concept, SBCAG funded a special geotechnical study and construction methodology approach to establish the viability of the tunnel alternative. Even after this report was provided to Union Pacific, in March 2010 Union Pacific provided written comments that state they do not support and would not approve a tunnel.

Even before the tunnel option was formally denied, SBCAG evaluated several bridge replacement alternatives to understand what the cost and impacts would be. The results showed that the cost for a bridge replacement would be around \$8 to \$10 million, which far exceeds what all parties anticipated this improvement would cost and would result in significant environmental issues (loss of skyline trees between Route 101 and the railroad; change in visual/historic character).

SBCAG has funded preliminary design and detailed design efforts to date to investigate alternatives. Some of the funds used for this effort came from revenues SBCAG received as a result of sharing lease revenues from property jointly owned by the City and SBCAG near Haley Street. The funding plan for the project provided for using revenues from the sale of that property to fund the design in addition to another \$200,000 pledged from the City of Santa Barbara that was originally slated for improvements at the Cabrillo Ramp Interchange.

Except for \$900,000 in funding from the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) and reserving up to \$2 million from future STIP-TE programming capacity (earliest time available would be FY 13/14) no other provisions for funding construction have been made. SBCAG has met with both City and Caltrans representatives to inform them of the latest information from UPRR, and we have discussed continuing to look for options to complete the multipurpose path.

### **Traffic Management Plan: Curb Your Commute**

SBCAG's Traffic Solutions division developed a project specific demand management program called "Curb Your Commute" to provide solutions to commuters and employers during the construction time period of this project. The program was launched in February 2008 when nearly 120 businesses made pledges as part of the initial event to look at ways of providing improved commute programs or to personally change their commute habits.

Since the beginning of construction, Traffic Solutions launched the following programs and/or implemented the following services:

- Trip Rewards in March/April 2008 which was the employer commuter benefit matching program
- Premium Vanpool Service was launched in August 2008
- The Commute Challenge was held in August and September 2008, with a media event at the Santa Barbara Train Station

- Wifi was added to the Coastal Express Buses in August 2008
- Carpool for Cash was implement twice in 2009, in the early Spring and later in the Fall
- Commuter Challenge was implemented during May and June 2009