



City of Santa Barbara
Public Works Department

Interoffice Memorandum

DATE: October 23, 2014
TO: Transportation and Circulation Committee (TCC), City of Santa Barbara
FROM: Browning Allen, Transportation Manager
SUBJECT: Mission Canyon Corridor Community Consensus Proposal

Recommendation:

That the Transportation and Circulation Committee recommend to City Council that the Mission Canyon Corridor Community Consensus Proposal is consistent with the Circulation Element of the General Plan.

SUMMARY:

The Mission Canyon Corridor Proposal is a grant-funded partnership between the County of Santa Barbara (County) and City of Santa Barbara (City) to prepare concept level community consensus improvement plans in this historic and highly scenic corridor. The planning process has focused on the Mission Canyon Corridor from the intersection of Laguna Street and East Los Olivos Street at Mission Santa Barbara (in the City) to the intersection of Mission Canyon Road and Foothill Road (in the County) (Attachment 1).

Although many staff and community proposals to “fix” various aspects of the corridor have surfaced in the past, few ideas are ever implemented because of controversy. County and City staff joined efforts to see if a community consensus exists, and to prepare concept level plans for any such consensus. Having explored community insights, County and City staffs are now in the process of reviewing the concept designs with the Boards and Commissions. The concept level planning phase will conclude with County and City Planning Commissions, County Board of Supervisors, and City Council review by February 2015. The goal is for the boards and commissions to find that the community consensus proposal is a “doable” project. If found doable, Staff would propose that the Board of Supervisors and City Council agree by resolution to seek project approval, funding, and construction of the consensus project.

Public Participation

Public participation is crucial to the success of any project in this sensitive corridor. Public input has thus far been provided through outreach and two public workshops. At the first “listening” workshop, participants provided feedback on what works well in the corridor and what needs to be fixed. County and City staff used the public feedback to determine a minimum community consensus proposal and drafted conceptual/feasibility plans for further community feedback. The concept plans were presented at a second workshop to see how the project matched community sentiments. The outcome of the workshop vote confirmed overwhelming support for what is now the community consensus proposal.

Although the conceptual project was derived from the community outreach process, special recognition should be given to the *Mission Heritage Trail Foundation* (previously: *Concerned Citizens for Safe Passage Working Group, Safe Passage*), which is a diverse interest group consisting of institutional, civic, and neighborhood associations, and private property stakeholders who are interested in improving pedestrian circulation in this area.

CONCEPTUAL PROJECT PROPOSAL:

Setting

The project area is heavily used by residents, tourists, and school children visiting Mission Santa Barbara, Mission Historical Park, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, Rocky Nook County Park, and the Santa Barbara Woman's Club. Existing pedestrian access through the corridor requires using substandard paths, navigating several intersections with no crosswalks, and walking in the road in places where the path is too narrow to accommodate pedestrians. Bicyclists use a striped Class II bike lane up to the bridge over Mission Creek and then share the road with vehicles up to Foothill Road. In the first public workshop, the community expressed consensus for a continuous pathway from the Mission to Foothill Road, and improved bicycling facilities.

There are multiple historic resources with the City's jurisdiction near or adjacent to the project site including Mission Santa Barbara, Mission Historical Park (includes the City-owned park and all Mission period structures within it), and Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. Within the County's jurisdiction, the project is directly adjacent to County Landmark 15 (known as Glendessary), which faces Mission Canyon Road off Glendessary Lane. Other potentially historic resources in both County and City jurisdictions include Saint Mary's Retreat House (505 East Los Olivos Street), Mission Creek Bridge, Santa Barbara Woman's Club (Rockwood, 670 Mission Canyon Road), and the sandstone walls fronting the area between the Mission and the Museum of Natural History.

Conceptual Project Description

The proposed conceptual project is for multimodal streetscape improvements along the Mission Canyon corridor in the City of Santa Barbara and the Mission Canyon Plan area. Based on community input, the City and County conceptually designed a continuous pathway that includes the following components:

- Establish a consistent path on the west side of the Mission Canyon Corridor. Material yet to be determined. It will be ADA compliant and consistent with the historical setting;
- Existing stone walls shifted and breached in one location to accommodate a pedestrian path on the west side;
- New detached pedestrian bridge parallel and west of the existing stone bridge over Mission Creek. Bridge material and structure yet to be determined; it will be appropriate to the setting;
- Portions of the road shifted to the east to accommodate a west side pedestrian path;
- Bike lanes extending up to Puesta del Sol transitioning into bike areas in the County's jurisdiction where the road narrows.

Circulation Element Consistency

Currently, no continuous sidewalk or pedestrian facility exists through the Mission Canyon Corridor. Although a few non-ADA facilities exist at various points, the lack of a continuous facility makes walking in the area challenging if one is unfamiliar with the area and difficult for those that are.

Numerous policies and implementation strategies from the Circulation Element support making and/or improving walking connections such as represented by the Mission Canyon Corridor Community Consensus Proposal. The Mission Canyon Corridor is also specifically identified in the Pedestrian Master Plan as a sidewalk infill project. Staff recommends that enough policy support exists to find the consensus proposal to be consistent with the Circulation Element.

The challenge for the project is that the Mission Canyon Corridor is one, if not the most, historical parts of the community. With this in mind, the conceptual project was designed to avoid adverse effects to sensitive archaeological and historic resources as much as possible. However, staff has contracted consultant services to produce a Historical Resources Report which HLC has required in order to evaluate if the project can be found "doable."

RD/kts