



City of Santa Barbara California

PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

REPORT DATE: July 1, 2005
AGENDA DATE: July 7, 2005
TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Planning Division, (805) 564-5470:
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Transportation Planning:
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SUBJECT: Outer State Street Traffic Conditions Discussion

Discussion regarding Outer State Street area traffic conditions. Information and topics of discussion will include: background on prior comprehensive traffic studies, level of service, fees and improvements; information on a number of pending projects; current traffic analysis information; public comment; and Commission discussion.

The purpose of the discussion is to provide background information and understanding of the conditions and policy framework for review of development proposals in the Outer State Street area, particularly related to traffic. Because each individual project review may not entail general or comprehensive information, Staff thought this approach would be a good introduction for the Commission, applicants and the public to have before hearings are held on a specific project. To that end Citizens Planning Association also appreciates the opportunity for this discussion (see letters attached).

The area being considered is usually referred to as Outer or Upper State Street. It includes State Street and the areas that feed into it, essentially between Highway 154 on the west and Alamar Avenue on the east, and between Foothill Road to the north and Highway 101 to the south (see map attached).

Some background information is provided as exhibits to this report. The primary report will be a presentation made at the meeting. This discussion is intended to be informational and does not have project specific conclusions with respect to pending projects. Applicants have provided the City with traffic and parking assessment information (see attached project descriptions and traffic information). In some cases additional information is still needed (i.e. turning movement studies, AM peak hour count verification, etc.). None of the applications have yet been deemed complete and the staff's environmental determinations have not been made.

Since the 1970's the City has studied and considered how traffic in the Outer State Street area should be addressed in future planning and project development. A list of the historical highlights and current policy framework includes the following:

- Special District SD-2 – Upper State Street Area Zoning Overlay
- Outer State Street Cumulative Traffic EIRs
- Traffic Fee Programs
- Highway 101 Improvements
- Street Improvements
- Outer State Street Design Guidelines
- Charter Section 1508 – traffic impact limitations
- Circulation Element Policies
- Housing Element Policies

The relationship between transportation and land use is important and the City addresses it in a variety of ways: through zoning, urban design guidelines, mixed use standards, requirements for pedestrian and/or bicycle amenities, traffic improvement fees, Charter provisions, etc. to name a few mechanisms.

The Downtown grid is very different than the linear street network of Outer State Street. The major connecting streets from Highway 101 into the area have always been considered in examining the capacity of the street system.

The issues explored in quantitative traffic assessments are more are only part of the full project consideration. The qualitative factors that shape sound community planning are critical and also relate to mobility issues. In some instances the traffic study may conclude no significant impact to a specific intersection and yet there is an expectation that in fact more traffic will be generated by the project. The comprehensive study of traffic and sound community planning looks not only at the specifics of one project, but at many things, including: cumulative pending projects; land use implications; how traffic generation differs among various land uses; linked trips; peak patterns; use of multiple modes; and the pedestrian environment. An overview of such traffic conditions and some highlighted information about pending projects will be the basis for this discussion with the Planning Commission.

Exhibits:

- A. Map of area
- B. Project Descriptions
- C. Cumulative Project List
- D. Trip Generation Information
- E. Level of Service – Traffic Conditions Over Time
- F. OSS Improvements List
- G. Letters to Planning Commission from CPA, dated 5-19-05 & 6-30-05 (see Note below)

Note: The CPA letter also raises concerns with regard to watersheds, vegetation, air pollution, and public safety. This Report and Discussion item are not responding to those concerns. Project reviews or other studies underway (i.e. Watershed study being done by Creeks Div.) are also an appropriate forum to address those concerns. It was staff's desire to focus this discussion on traffic related issues.