



# City of Santa Barbara California

## PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

**REPORT DATE:** March 26, 2009  
**AGENDA DATE:** April 2, 2009  
**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 *DK*  
Michael Berman, Project Planner *MB*

### DISCUSSION

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. Three updates have been provided, the last on February 7, 2008. The applicant has submitted a letter (see Exhibit A) that provides the Planning Commission with additional information on the required status and progress report.

The US 101 Highway Improvement Project has made substantial progress since its approval in late 2004 and the last update in February, 2008. City staff believes that CALTRANS continues to work diligently to meet the Coastal Development Permit conditions. Details regarding progress are documented in the attached Exhibit.

Exhibit:

CALTRANS update March 2009

**DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORTATION**

50 HIGUERA STREET  
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93401-5415  
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CITY OF SANTA BARBARA  
PLANNING DIVISION

*Flex your power!  
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March 10, 2009  
SB-101-KP 17.4/20.6 (PM 10.8/12.8)  
Santa Barbara Operational Improvements; EA05-447800  
CDP2004-00013

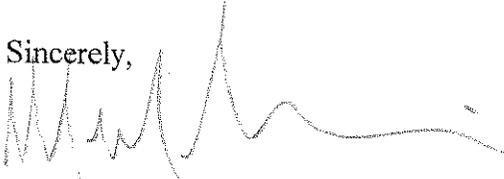
City of Santa Barbara  
Paul Casey, Community Development Director  
Community Development Department  
630 Garden Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Dear Mr. Casey:

The intent of this letter is to provide an annual progress report to the City of Santa Barbara as per the Conditions of Approval for the Coastal Development Permit (CDP 2004-00013) issued for the Operational Improvements project between Milpas and Hot Springs/Cabrillo on State Route 101. The Annual Progress Report is enclosed.

This item is scheduled for the Planning Commission meeting of April 2, 2009. If you have any questions or need any additional information prior to the meeting date, please contact me at (805) 542-4689 or via e-mail at: [michael\\_sandecki@dot.ca.gov](mailto:michael_sandecki@dot.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



Mike Sandecki  
Associate Environmental Planner  
Department of Transportation – District 5  
Central Coast Environmental Analysis Branch

cc: Michael Berman

Enclosure

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

**Coastal Development Permit CDP2004-00013**

**March 2009**

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 on February 7, 2008.

**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 for the last 9 months. Some significant achievements have been accomplished in the first year of construction, such as having completed the following:

- First stage of the Sycamore Creek Bridge
- Stage 1 paving on southbound Highway 101
- Construction of new southbound off-ramp at Milpas Street
- Construction of newly paved and widened southbound on-ramp at Milpas Street
- On-going construction at the Montecito Roundabout
- Construction of Tennis Stadium sound wall
- On-going construction at Cacique Street Undercrossing

**Budget and Funding**

In December 2008, construction projects that were being funded out of the Proposition 1B (passed in November 2006) funding pool were identified for possible suspension due to the lack of a State budget and the inability of the State to sell general obligation bonds. The Milpas Hot Springs project was one of 39 projects identified. SBCAG worked closely with Caltrans and its local partners to identify possible scenarios for providing interim funding for the project to avoid any suspension. The actions by the SBCAG board to consider loaning funds to the State to keep the project moving were instrumental in staving off suspension, which would have cost hundreds of thousands of dollars and would have caused tremendous public inconvenience. A state budget was passed in mid February 2009 and Caltrans has reported that sufficient funding will be available to complete the project.

**Community Relations**

Since our last update to the City Planning Commission, SBCAG and Caltrans completed all the pre-construction activities for notifying stakeholders the construction was to begin in the summer of 2008. This included a number of meetings in the spring 2008 and the development of a regular email update list,

a construction hotline (1-888-SBROADS, development of a project website ([www.SBROADS.com](http://www.SBROADS.com)) and the completion of an extensive (bilingual) construction brochure. The brochure was mailed to approximately 27,000 residents and around 3,000 businesses. Great response to the mailer was received and we have added a significant number of new stakeholders to our list of people wanting to receive our regular project updates, which currently numbers around 1,000 recipients. SBCAG and Caltrans are committed to continuing this effort through the remaining phases of construction.

### **Right of Way**

All the rights of way necessary for the project were secured to allow for construction to be awarded in 2008. However, on-going negotiations, some of which involve condemnation suits, continue on several properties which have not reached a final settlement. SBCAG and Caltrans are working closely to resolve these issues to minimize impacts to project funding.

### **Landscaping Project**

As required by State policy, due to the size of the landscaping portion of this project, a separate landscaping contract will be prepared, advertised for bid and administered. This allows for the highway contractor's bonding not be tied for an extended period of time for the plant establishment that is required with the landscaping. Caltrans is preparing the landscape contract documents now and will be bidding the project in 2010 with construction being started in 2010. This work will be going on concurrently with the remaining highway construction work and will be coordinated by the Caltrans construction team.

### **Wetland Mitigation**

The preferred wetland mitigation site identified in the project CDP required coordination between Caltrans, County Flood Control, City Parks, City Streams Restoration, and the ABR/HLC. The project also required an additional CDP from the Planning Commission. The wetlands CDP was approved on December 7, 2006 and a Notice of Final Action was recorded on February 8, 2007. The wetland mitigation site was constructed in fall 2008.

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

SBCAG's Traffic Solutions division has taken a leadership role in developing the Curb Your Commute program specific for the Milpas Hot Springs project to provide TDM solutions to commuters and employers during the construction time period of this project. An event was held in February 2008 called the Curb Your Commute Breakfast Symposium at which nearly 120 businesses made pledges to look at ways of providing improved commute programs or to personally change their commute habits.

In anticipation of the construction beginning in the summer of 2008, Traffic Solutions launched the following programs during the Spring/Summer of 2008:

- 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

Traffic Solutions has moved into a next phase of programs this year. The following events have been launched or are planned:

- Carpool for Cash was launched in February 2009 with a public awareness campaign including television ads
- A second phase of employer outreach was initiated with a lunch presentation to the Santa Barbara Human Resources Association in February 2009
- Commuter Challenge is scheduled for May 2009 with media campaign and registration beginning on March 31, 2009

### **Cabrillo Pedestrian and Bicycle Access**

The approved project included an extension of the multipurpose path from Los Patos Drive, under the railroad structure at Cabrillo Boulevard and Highway 101. Over the years a number of alternatives have been evaluated to provide this improved access, ranging from a tunnel to complete bridge replacement of the railroad structure. SBCAG and its consultant design team have taken the lead on this feature and have met with UPRR officials several times over the last year to identify a preferred alternative that would be carried through detailed design. At this time last year, SBCAG had indicated that 2 alternatives were being considered. However, due to ongoing discussions with UPRR and after a field review in November 2008, the list was expanded to 4 alternatives for the time being. One of the added alternatives would provide for increased vertical clearance over Cabrillo Blvd without changing the railroad profile, the other alternative would bring back the tunnel option (not jacked) to provide a lower cost option. Though UPRR has allowed for the design team to consider new alternatives, no decision has been made on which alternative would be most acceptable and feasible to UPRR. UPRR's primary consideration for an alternative relates to which option would limit/minimize impacts to the current structure during construction and would minimize impact to passenger and freight operations. Some of the other issues the design team is considering include: proximity of improvements to Highway 101 for future improvements, visual impacts, and minimum span length over Cabrillo.

SBCAG is currently funding the design with funds in its regional Measure D fund balance. It is SBCAG's intent to fund the remaining detailed design work with revenues it receives from the reimbursement of funds the City owes for a jointly owned parcel near Haley Street. The construction funding for this project is only partially funded. SBCAG has secured around \$900,000 in funding from the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) and there is another \$200,000 pledged from the City of Santa Barbara.

SBCAG, Caltrans and the City of Santa Barbara are working on a cooperative agreement to define the detailed design and right of way phases for the project which will address the funding commitments as well. A separate cooperative agreement will be needed for construction. The construction of this part of the project will be advertised and bid separately. It is still anticipated that the construction could begin in late 2010 toward the final stage of the Milpas to Hot Springs Operational Improvements.