



City of Santa Barbara Planning Division

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

May 31, 2012

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Lodge called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M.

I. ROLL CALL

Chair Sheila Lodge, Vice Chair Mike Jordan, Commissioners Bruce Bartlett, John P. Campanella, Stella Larson, Deborah L. Schwartz, and Addison Thompson.

Commissioner Jordan arrived at 1:09 P.M.

STAFF PRESENT:

Danny Kato, Senior Planner
N. Scott Vincent, Assistant City Attorney
Rob Dayton, Principal Transportation Planner
Dan Gullett, Associate Planner
Julie Rodriguez, Planning Commission Secretary

II. PRELIMINARY MATTERS:

A. Requests for continuances, withdrawals, postponements, or addition of ex-agenda items.

None.

B. Announcements and appeals.

Mr. Kato announced that the appeal of the Planning Commission's decision on 1085 Coast Village Road will be heard by the City Council on June 26, 2012.

C. Comments from members of the public pertaining to items not on this agenda.

Chair Lodge opened the public hearing at 1:01 P.M. and, with no one wishing to speak, closed the hearing.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL HEARING:

ACTUAL TIME: 1:01 P.M.

SOUTH COAST 101 HOV LANES PROJECT DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT. Previously scheduled May 10, 2012.

The purpose of the environmental hearing is to receive comments from the Planning Commission on the adequacy and completeness of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the South Coast 101 HOV Lanes Project. Caltrans proposes to modify Highway 101 to provide a new, part-time, continuous-access High Occupancy Vehicle lane in each direction on Highway 101 extending from Carpinteria Creek in the City of Carpinteria to Cabrillo Blvd. in the City of Santa Barbara. The portion of the project within the City of Santa Barbara's jurisdiction is between Sycamore Creek and the Olive Mill Road bridge. Written comments on the Draft EIR, incorporating concerns raised by the Planning Commission will be prepared by City staff and submitted to Caltrans prior to the close of the comment period on Monday, July 9, 2012. **No action on the Draft EIR or the project will be taken at this hearing.**

Case Planner: Dan Gullett, Associate Planner
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Phone: 805-564-5470, ext. 4550

Dan Gullett, Associate Planner; and Rob Dayton, Principal Transportation Planner, gave the Staff presentations.

Gregg Hart, Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG); and Scott Eades, Caltrans Project Manager, gave the South Coast 101 HOV Lanes Project presentation.

Commissioner Schwartz left the dais at 2:44 P.M and returned at 2:48 P.M.

Scott Vincent, Assistant City Attorney, left Council Chambers at 2:51 P.M. and returned at 2:54 P.M.

Chair Lodge opened the public hearing at 2:59 P.M.

The following people provided public comment:

1. June Pujo, Hermosillo Save Our Village Neighborhoods, read and submitted a letter into the public record.
2. Sybil Rosen, Save Our Village, agreed with Ms. Pujo.
3. Carla Tomson, Save Our Village
4. Tom Siegel, concerned with potential traffic impact.
5. Bob Short, Montecito Association, felt document did not comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements.

With no one else wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed at 3:21 P.M.

The Commissioners made the following comments:

1. Commissioner Schwartz felt that we must not sacrifice Santa Barbara values, such as traffic circulation, safety, visual aesthetics, economic health, biological health, and safe access to recreation, all of which have not been addressed in the EIR. Prefers the parkway model over a ribbon of concrete. The relationship between freeway users and local users is missing in analysis. Before a single configuration is considered, Staff was asked to consider subsequent opportunities to review a re-circulated and more detailed EIR that will address all that is legally, regulatory, and aesthetically required.
2. Commissioner Jordan wants incorporation of city standards in the EIR, including where Caltrans differs. Felt that the Commission would have limited input to a final decision. Would like a concept review after the certification, but before the application for the Coastal Development Permit.
3. Commissioner Larson wants to see Caltrans move forward in a collaborative manner. Wants emergency preparedness considered. Would like consideration for sandstone k-rail. Concerned with creation of unhealthy environment by exacerbating roadway, such as with a closure Los Patos.
4. Commissioner Bartlett felt aesthetics is the biggest impact. Concerned that recent improvements to roundabout would give way to Caltrans proposed changes. Would like a concept review before everything is solidified. Concerned with proximity to historic structures, such as the old railroad trestle. Loss of landscape medium is a surprise.
5. Commissioner Thompson commented that the: City's General Plan references are out of date. The local Coastal development plan needs to be included in order for the Commission to make Coastal Development Permit findings. Recent improvements to 101 have degraded local city traffic. Need more local traffic analysis to make an informed decision. Key to making the whole interchange improved is the railroad under crossing. Need Union Pacific onboard and funding to work together to fix bridge over Cabrillo so that we can get at least two lanes southbound. The EIR contains mitigation measures that focus on costs which is not appropriate in an EIR document. Several items brought up today that are missing and needed to make an informed decision on the EIR. Suggested another hearing on concepts would be appropriate to give input to the District Director before a decision is made.
6. Commissioner Campanella agrees with comments made by other commissioners. Would like to see Mr. Dayton's knowledge of the local area incorporated into EIR. Would like to see analysis, in cooperation with City Transportation Staff, of flow of traffic that impacts neighborhoods now and how improved with Caltrans design proposals.
7. Commissioner Lodge agrees with majority of comments made by the Commission and public. Data about then impact on Coast Village Road intersections is buried and does not compare with having all five alternatives in one place and should be included in the EIR. Would like EIR expanded with an analysis of replacing the railroad bridge over Cabrillo and solving the problems of pedestrian and bicycle

crossing and right turn lane issues. What is proposed will not solve these problems. This solution has to work for the city, and not just highway 101.

8. If the EIR is certified and not circulated, and Caltrans comes up with selecting a preferred alternative, then the Commission would like another meeting.
9. The Commission wants the opportunity to comment on the five alternatives.

The commission took a break at 3:57 pm. And reconvened at 4:15 P.M. Commissioner Larson did not return to the dais.

Staff recommendation is to have a hearing on June 14, 2012 to get big picture input on the five configuration options. After the close of public comment period, Caltrans will respond to all the comments. Then the project development team will get together and refine all to make a recommendation to the District Director. City Staff can come back to the Commission for input on their recommendation to the District Director as an advisory role.

Commissioner Jordan left the dais at 4:24 P.M. and did not return.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Lodge adjourned the meeting at 4:30 P.M.

Submitted by,



Julie Rodriguez, Planning Commission Secretary