



MEETING MINUTES

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION COMMITTEE (TCC)

David Gebhard Public Meeting Room
630 Garden Street, Santa Barbara, CA
Thursday, June 11, 2009 6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Pritchett called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM

ROLL CALL:

TCC MEMBERS

Mark Bradley
Keith Coffman-Grey
Edward France
Steve Maas
David Pritchett
David Tabor

Attendance

Present
Present
Present
Present
Present
Present

CITY STAFF PRESENT :

Browning Allen, Transportation Manager
Robert J. Dayton, Principal Transportation Planner
Kim Thaler-Strange, Administrative Specialist
Jessica Grant, Project Planner

LIAISONS PRESENT:

PLANNING COMMISSION

Charmaine Curtis-Jacobs Present
John C. Jostes Absent
Stella Larson Present
Bruce Bartlett Present
Harwood A. White Present
Addison Thompson Present
Sheila Lodge Present

OTHERS PRESENT:

Bill Delo, IBI Group
Gregg Hart, SBCAG
Fred Luna, SBCAG
Scott Eads, Caltrans

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

1. Mr. Dennis R. Woodson spoke about a request to consider a waiver from the 72-hour parking limit in some residential zones that have no posted limits, with the intent to remove vehicles from the transportation corridors to promote efficient use of the pollution reduction alternatives for individual and companies.

REPORTS

2. Las Positas/Mission Circulation Options Report (Improving access to Cottage Hospital)

Jessica Grant, Project Planner, gave a summary of the Las Positas/Mission Circulation Options Report (Report). This has been a ten-month process, with two public workshops to discuss the various issues and impediments to getting to and from Cottage Hospital, (Cottage) as well as various alternatives. The City and Caltrans have had several stakeholder meetings, since Caltrans is the ultimate reviewing body for the Project Study Report (PSR). The PSR will be used by staff to find funding for the project. Staff has also met with SBCAG, Cottage Executive Staff, MTD, and attended two hearings with the Planning Commission (PC) and Transportation and Circulation Committee (TCC) covering what was accomplished at the public workshops. Alternative 2B, a northbound hook ramp for Las Positas Road, to the west, was the most favorable. During those hearings, the importance of talking with Earl Warren Showgrounds (Showgrounds) was brought up. The Showgrounds are state-owned and overseen by the 19th District Agriculture Association. We have initiated conversations with the Showgrounds Manager. It is premature to meet with their board at this time, as the City does not have all of the information needed to answer any questions they might have regarding mitigation and impacts to their property. Mrs. Grant indicated that staff is going back to look at the option of a hook ramp east of Las Positas. This option was initially rejected by Caltrans; however, they have agreed to revisit it.

Mrs. Grant introduced Mr. Bill Delo, of IBI Group, the consultant for this project

Chairman Pritchett asked about the length of the presentation. There was a citizen wishing to make a public comment, who had to leave early. Mr. Delo said that his presentation would be about 10 minutes. It covered the findings and recommendations of the study as well as an overview of the last presentation with feedback from the workshops. The project's primary purpose is to improve access to Cottage, and this report will help set the stage for the City to complete the PSR. He reviewed each alternative:

- Alternative 1 would create a new overpass at Pueblo Street, with local street improvements. It would reduce traffic volumes on Las Positas Road and Mission Street, but would increase traffic volumes on Pueblo Street and Modoc Road. Traffic improvements would be necessary on Pueblo Street. There would be right of way (ROW) impacts on HWY 101, and the Pueblo Street off ramp would need to be relocated
- Alternative 2A puts in a new ramp that would cross over HWY 101 and intersect with existing off ramps (similar to Interstate 5 in Los Angeles). The benefit to this is that it would make Calle Real a two-way street; but HWY 101 southbound and the Las Positas Road on and off ramps would be impacted, possibly resulting in the onramp being widened.
- Alternative 2B would include a northbound hook ramp on west side of Las Positas Road, similar to the ramps at Hope Street. They would come together at a single intersection that would be reconfigured to provide access into the Showgrounds. There would be ROW impacts to Showgrounds property particularly the parking area. The City still needs to discuss this with them. This option would cost less than the other options.

Mr. Delo showed conceptual drawings to illustrate what the hook ramp would look like. The ramps would need to shift west to allow for queues of vehicles and avoid any

potential impact to overpass supports. The existing alignment of Calle Real would have to be moved north into the Showground's property.

- Alternative 2C is similar to Alternative 2A in design. The off ramp would remain the same, but vehicles would travel the equivalent distance eastbound on Calle Real, up and over the freeway, connecting at Junipero Street. The impacts with this alternative are also similar impacts to Alternative 2A, as the Las Positas Road overpass would have to be widened to maintain an acceptable Level of Service (LOS)
- Alternatives 3A/3B/3C combines the overpass and interchange. The benefit of the overpass is outweighed by making Calle Real a two-way street. There would also still be a need for Las Positas Road improvements.

Alternative 2B with a sub-option to replace the original hook ramp location to the east of Las Positas Road was recommended. There would also be a redesign of Calle Real to include two-way traffic lanes, bike lanes and sidewalks, and improvements to the southbound Las Positas Road off ramp. The intersection would be widened by one or two lanes. Other projects were also suggested including the northbound and southbound off ramps on Mission Street, as well as auxiliary (aux) lanes on HWY 101 between La Cumbre and Las Positas Roads and Mission Street. In the future, staff will talk to Caltrans about improvements to Mission Street as a separate PSR.

The third set of suggestions cover local street and alternative transportation improvements, including the extension of two-way traffic on De La Vina Street, with a signal modification on Mission Street at the Castillo Street and Bath Street intersections. There could also be a modification to MTD lines 6 and 11, sidewalk and bike lanes at Calle Real, new commuter rail for Amtrak and a shuttle to Cottage, as well as extended bike lanes on Castillo and Bath Streets (from Mission Street to Pueblo Street). Staff was looking for a motion recommending that they go to Council to present these findings and finalize Phase 1 of the Report and initiate the PSR.

PUBLIC AND COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Chairman Pritchett opened the floor to the public for comments

Beth Bailey supports all the hard work that is being done to improve access to the hospital. There is a clear need to review zoning around hospital. The 500 block of West Junipero Street needs review. This is the only non-medical block on the street. Junipero Street is the primary entrance to the emergency room and construction entrances on Junipero Street and Oak Park. There is only one medical office. Traffic on this street is bad, and the zoning needs to be looked at now. Ms. Bailey pointed out that traffic will increase when two-way traffic on Calle Real begins. It makes no sense to zone those areas residential.

Judy Orias commented that the Report is excellent. There are a lot of current projects proposed for the Las Positas Valley and unknown projects for the school property and the Parks property. We are dealing with a Level D intersection. She expressed concern that improvements may not be able to absorb traffic. There are two big retirement homes and they need to have ability to evacuate and/or have easy accessibility to Cottage, if necessary. Ms. Orias expressed hope that we don't get ahead of options. The current residents need that security. The economy is bad and we need the money on hand to do the projects. Do we have the money? If not, then the projects that are being recommended need to be reviewed carefully.

Ralph Fertig, President of SB Bicycle Coalition attended the workshops and expressed concern for bicyclists. He is in favor of extending the bike lanes and the one-way couplets, on Castillo and Bath Streets, to Pueblo Street. Bike lanes are safer for cyclists. People voted at earth day that additional bike lanes would improve bicycle safety. Currently, cyclists will go onto the sidewalk to avoid being hit by cars or are afraid of being hit by cars. This impacts safety of pedestrians. We don't want that kind of conflict. He would like to see the City, proceed with couplets and has expressed doubts about making De La Vina Street two-way due to space. If lanes are taken away, cyclists will be in the roadway to avoid being hit by car doors. This will impact cyclist and motorist safety.

Mr. Fertig also said that the rail depot should be placed by the Oak Park Bridge, allowing residents the option of walking or biking across the bridge. If it is placed across Las Positas Road or Mission Street, it could be too far for walking or cycling.

John Devore, resident of the Samarkand area has been following this process with interest over the past year. Residents have been impacted by one-way traffic on Calle Real. We support Alternative 2B because that would turn Calle Real back into two-way street. Samarkand residents would prefer the hook ramp at the Showgrounds instead of the Leslie Drive area. There are concerns that neighbors on Leslie Drive would see more pollution and more noise from idling cars. He is pleased to see that there are pedestrian improvements included. There are a couple dozen homes and two schools in that area. It would be homicidal to have child walk along Calle Real right now. Getting to the bus stop at Treasure Drive is also dangerous. If the pedestrian improvements can be done sooner, it would be good. He expressed appreciation for the work of staff and the boards.

Bruce Burnworth, Engineer provided written comments that were distributed to staff with aerial photos. Mr. Burnworth also attended workshops. He pointed out that everyone supports making Calle Real into a two-way street. Residents felt the best way to do this is with a hook ramp at Las Positas Road. The impact to the Showgrounds could make this difficult, and if the idea of a hook ramp at the Showgrounds does not work, for whatever reason, staff needs to have a fallback. The fallback could be the sub-option to 2B, or something else. Mr. Burnworth suggested that as a second sup-option, the northbound off ramps at Pueblo Street and Las Positas Road could be combined into one ramp at Pueblo Street. The section of Calle Real, from Pueblo Street to Junipero Street would then be made into a one-way street, going to two lanes at Las Positas.

Mr. Burnworth supports aux lanes. There are lots of accidents between Las Positas Road and Mission. The rail station is great idea; however, he is not holding his breath.

Chair Pritchett asked for further comments and then read comments from Justine Sutton via email – Ms. Sutton resides on De La Vina Street below Pueblo Street. Her vehicle made contact with a bicyclist riding on sidewalk, and pointed out that the bicyclist should not be on sidewalk. Also, the fence is too tall near sidewalk and street, and obscures the view of the street. He also read commentary from Courtney Dietz of COAST – Ms. Dietz is the Santa Barbara Walks Program Coordinator and would like the sidewalks on Calle Real, and supports one-way couplets on Castillo and Bath Streets.

He then closed the public hearing and moved on to Committee and Commission discussion and comments. He said that the task is to decide if the PC and the TCC are ready to make recommendations to Council about the PSR and the suite of options for local circulation improvements, including bus routes and rail, as items to be handled separately. He said that the City has the purview to do those. He started at the end of the table.

Committee Member Tabor asked why Caltrans was not supportive of the hook ramp east of Las Positas Road earlier but is supporting it now. Mr. Delo replied that at the initial meeting, their concern was that the hook ramp would not meet their current design standards, and require design exception. They were concerned about whether or not the ramp would be able to operate acceptably with the queues at Las Positas Road. Staff showed that it would operate if it were moved closer to Leslie Drive.

Mr. Tabor replied that staff was dealing with construction in a built environment rather than a clean slate environment. Mr. Dayton replied that Ms. Grant covered that in her introduction. Staff wants to make sure that the PC and TCC understand that we are dependent on the Showgrounds. They have to give their permission. Staff is in an uncomfortable position right now, and wanted another option. Staff encouraged the analysis, though Caltrans said no, to see what was there before. The old ramp was at Bettie, and we will need to move it back. Mr. Dayton also pointed out that the neighborhood has not seen this alternative yet. If staff has to move to the sub-option, it needs to be taken to the neighborhood for their feedback and input.

Commissioner Bartlett asked what changed since last time. When this was last reviewed, the hook ramp to the west of Las Positas Road was more centered between the ramps beyond and before it. He wanted to know if the Bath Street off ramp was eliminated. He expressed his appreciation that there was an alternative. The Junipero Street off ramp is the one in question.

Mr. Bartlett asked if there was now enough distance between the Mission Street off ramp and the proposed off ramp. Mr. Dayton replied that this is not a Mission Street off ramp; this is a Las Positas Road off ramp. Caltrans issue was that if cars got backed up at the Calle Real and Las Positas Road intersection there would be an impact to traffic and the ramp would have to be moved further away, towards Leslie Drive.

Committee Member France had two questions about space. He wanted to know if there was enough room for Calle Real to be bi-directional, with bike lanes and a pedestrian walkway. Mr. Delo replied that there is enough room to fit bike lanes and sidewalk. There may only be sidewalk on north side near residents, but none on the south side of the street, which would help with width issues. There is enough room for all the elements and staff would be advancing design and identifying bike lanes and sidewalks as part of the PSR.

Mr. France also asked about making De La Vina Street bi-directional. There isn't much room on De La Vina Street, and it is not the most favored option. Mr. Delo answered that the next step would be a preliminary design to measure out how everything would fit, and whether or not there would be an environmental impact or an impact to on-street parking. This option needs to be studied in more detail. There is strong support for the bike lanes on Castillo Street and Bath Streets.

Commissioner Jacobs expressed that she was happy to see the Report. Her only question was how staff will proceed with the Showgrounds. She commented that it was nice to see a concrete drawing, but wonders if there is money to make a rendering to show the Showgrounds what a terrific new presence they could have; to show them a clearer picture and vision. Mr. Delo replied that staff is envisioning the PSR advancing the specific design of Alternative 2B and how it will fall within the Showground's property. When staff has more advanced designs and an understanding of the impacts and possible solutions, they will go to the Showgrounds. This will be done early, as part of the PSR process.

Commissioner White asked if Mr. Delo or Mr. Dayton could speak to Mr. Bartlett's comment about combining the off ramps and why that option was discarded. Mr. Delo pointed out that was an option that was brought up to Caltrans. There is an option that is similar in the Report under Interchange Improvements (Option I1). Caltrans dismissed this option initially out of concern that combining the volumes from two ramps into one ramp could provide back up issues onto the freeway and, with its proximity to the Mission Street onramp, could cause traffic flow issues. In their written feedback they didn't feel that the option was viable. It may still be discussed when the PSR is initiated.

Committee Member Bradley pointed out that we have a complete report in terms of forecasts of LOS. He mentioned that some travel models also predict travel time. He asked what the time savings would be, compared to what it is now, for a vehicle traveling HWY 101 to the ER. Mr. Delo replied that the LOS has been looked at but specific time savings have not been examined. Distance wise, it would save half a mile or so, potentially 5 to 10 minutes, versus getting off the freeway at Mission Street and backtracking or going through the residential areas.

Mr. Bradley suggested that it might be good to have some numbers for people to relate to, and notes as to whether or not there are any origin/destination pairs where travel time gets worse. It's a problem if there are several of those. He also asked if staff wanted to do a separate PSR for other improvements as well as the aux lanes and if there was a ballpark estimate of what capital costs for those improvements are, relative to Alternative 2B. Mr. Delo replied that the improvements have not been costed out. He believes that cost might be a little less because the improvements are focused at an existing off ramp, whereas the Las Positas Road improvements involve the construction of a new off ramp. From a capital standpoint, it would probably be less to construct the Mission Street improvements. Mr. Bradley asked if it was a project along the same magnitude, to which Mr. Delo replied that they are both of a similar magnitude.

Chairperson Larson commented that the Report is terrific, and she appreciates the information. She disclosed that she had a conversation with a business owner, located at Calle Real and Pueblo Street, about his concerns. She is also thinking ahead to things like the environmental impact, with the creek nearby, and certain assumptions that the Cancer Center has made concerning traffic, and Cottage with their main entry idea going forward, and the possibility of one-way traffic being extended when their construction is not based on the same assumption. She expressed her confidence that staff would figure it all out, but is concerned about assumptions made and how we proceed with expensive givens.

Commissioner Lodge is interested in what the Showgrounds will say. The PC and TCC decided that Alternative 2B was best of all the alternatives.

Committee Member Coffman-Grey remarked that most of his questions were answered. He clarified that the Junipero Street off ramp would still be there and that there would be two off ramps between Mission Street and Las Positas Road. Mr. Delo replied that the existing off ramp would stay

Mr. Coffman-Grey also commented that he was thinking about the southbound exit of Las Positas Road and the plan to widen the queue to three lanes. He remarked that the hill is rather steep; and inquired as to whether it would be cost effective. Would lots of dirt have to be moved or is there enough width on the off ramp for three lanes. Mr. Delo replied that it is a design issue that will be looked at with the PSR along with what types of improvements will be needed and potential costs it may have

Commissioner Thompson asked if staff had looked at scheduling and funding. He commented that it would be an expensive exercise if anything had to be redone. Browning Allen, Transportation Manager, stated that the reason we are doing the PSR is to put the City and SBCAG into a position so that when and if state or federal monies become available, we will have a project ready to submit for that funding. Staff cannot do this project with the funds currently available; it would use up all of the Measure A money we receive. Mr. Dayton commented that if we were already done with the PSR and the Environmental reports, we would be in a position to get any available funds right now.

Committee Member Maas stated that at the public meeting and the previous PC and TCC meetings, there were members of the public that spoke of low-cost pedestrian improvements, where there are gaps in pathways that are used by pedestrians. He acknowledged that staff was taking notes, and hopes that staff moves forward with those. He also remarked that it is interesting to see talk of aux lanes and wondered if this was the beginning of a plan to eight-lane the freeway, or just to add aux lanes. Mr. Delo answered that we are recommending aux lanes to help cars merge on and off of the freeway.

Mr. Maas said that a resident who was not present at the meeting asked him to about local street improvement L4, which will reduce through lanes on Mission Street, and create two travel lanes, a turn center lane and bikes lanes from HWY 101 to De La Vina. The resident wanted to know why this option was not discussed. Mr. Delo replied that this option was explored, but it would make the LOS for the Castillo Street and Bath Street intersections Level E or F or worse. It was decided to focus on signal modifications instead.

Chairman Pritchett clarified that aux lanes meant auxiliary lanes. He asked if the new alternative could be called Alternative 2D instead of the sub-option to 2B. Mr. Dayton replied that staff decided not to do that because they did not want this sub-option to look like it was one of the alternatives that was discussed during the public process. This option has not been fleshed out, and staff wanted that to be clear.

Chairman Pritchett indicated that it should be designated as something. Mr. Dayton replied that the best way to do that is to leave it as a sub-option to Alternative 2B. If Alternative 2B become no longer feasible, we can look at renaming it then.

Mr. Pritchett asked if the sub-option and the other hook ramp are similar. He referred to the traffic flow model. Mr. Delo replied that they are very similar in that each off ramp can operate at an acceptable LOS. The main difference is in terms of how the Las Positas Road and Calle Real intersections would operate, and how the lane configuration would be. If the off ramp is west of Las Positas Road, there would need to be improvements to the eastbound approach on Calle Real approaching Las Positas Road, because traffic would shift. There would need to be additional lanes; but either way, it would operate at an acceptable LOS.

Mr. Pritchett stated that the way the process works is through a PSR. It's known that the local circulation improvement options will be done separately by the City, but would they would be part of a package through a PSR that could be funded when we get Federal Stimulus Part 3 next year. Mr. Delo replied that the PSR is a Caltrans document and is focused on improvements that are specific to the Caltrans ROW. The local improvements such as Las Positas Road and Calle Real are included because they are directly related to the ramp improvements. The PSR is not the best avenue to pursue those items because the City will have more approval over them if they are separate.

Mr. Pritchett asked if the PSR contains enough analysis to be equivalent to an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Mr. Delo answered that although there is an environmental component to the PSR, its closer to an Initial Study than an EIR.

Mr. Pritchett was curious to know what the schedule for the analysis and approval of the PSR would be if it went to Caltrans later this summer. He also inquired if the EIR is part of the funding allocation. Mr. Delo said that the PSR process will take about a year from initiation to approval. This includes the design elements and Caltrans review cycles in various departments. Once the document is approved, it would be available for the City and SBCAG so that both entities could pursue funding opportunities.

Mr. Pritchett also wondered if the rezoning consideration along Junipero Street could be on the menu for local improvements. Mrs. Grant replied that she has talked with Ms. Bailey and has voiced her concerns to the Plan Santa Barbara group, specifically John Ledbetter. It might be more appropriate for the Plan Santa Barbara group, as they break out into smaller groups and go into the community to discuss neighborhood issues, to cover this. Mrs. Grant pointed out that part of the rezone through the EIR process is land use. Generally, rezones could be initiated by a homeowner through a Land Development process or driven by the City. There are many different avenues to accomplish a rezone. Mr. Pritchett clarified that Mrs. Grant was saying that it should not be connected with this menu of local street improvements. Mrs. Grant felt that is was more appropriate that way.

Mr. Pritchett opened the floor up for commentary and deliberation, and discussion of what the PC and TCC think the next step should be.

Committee Member Maas had no further questions or comments.

Commissioner Thompson had no further comments.

Committee Member Coffman-Grey commented that the Report a great document and included all public comments and notes from the last meeting. He believes that Alternative 2B is the way to go, but he understands why we have the sub-option. He remarked that adding a signal could create more stalled traffic, and with the off ramp west of Las Positas Road it's possible that more cars would be stalled. He believes that the original Alternative 2B is the way to go, and looks forward to seeing this PSR progress.

Commissioner Lodge concurred with Mr. Coffman-Grey.

Commissioner Larson indicated that she already gave her comments.

Committee Member Bradley agreed that the PC and TCC should recommend that this go forward for the PSR process and that the local improvements be studied separately by the City. He expressed particular concern with Alternative 2A and De La Vina Street. He does not think that the City can take away bike lanes with the current economic climate and the government calling for sustainable alternative transportation. He has no problem with De La Vina Street going from one-way to two- way, if the bike lanes remain.

Commissioner White acknowledged Commissioner Jostes who, in conjunction with Mr. Dayton, helped make this happen and gave staff the tools to move forward. He indicated focus need to be on the issues that were raised at the various meetings about emergency services. He noted that we are spending a lot of money on emergency services and getting people to the hospital in a timely fashion. He commented that the half-mile/change of time becomes a huge value.

Lastly, he acknowledged Mr. Dayton's comment about concerns with the Showgrounds, and indicated that if staff makes it a win-win situation, as per Ms. Jacobs' earlier comment, it will be easier to make it happen.

Commissioner Jacobs commended staff for a great job and encourages moving forward to be shovel ready, as any delay could defer funding. She commented that the Showgrounds are very lucky as this could give them an increased and enhanced presence, and with a commuter rail station, there is a lot of potential. She cautioned staff to be sensitive to their feelings about their parking lot, but to present it as a win-win. She agrees that Alternative 2B is the one we want to go with, as we have promoted it to various entities, which will help. She reminded staff that when this idea was initially developed, times were different. There were three hospitals, but now the City has one. It is a unique hospital that benefits the central coast as a whole. She believes that this fact will help gain support as project moves forward.

Committee Member France echoed his appreciation for Ms. Jacobs comment. He compared what the Showgrounds will look like to what the entrance to UCSB (Henley Gate) from the 217 looks like. He indicated that Calle Real is the main issue, and that Alternative 2B is the way to go. He noted that there is a four block separation between Calle Real, Castillo Street and Bath Street. He believes that this could open up a cycling route which would be a better option than bike lanes from Modoc Road to Mission Street. He suggested that there be some sort of bicycle boulevard joiner in the PSR. He is in favor of splitting the pedestrian improvements out of the PSR so that they can be explored as soon as possible.

Commissioner Bartlett is encouraged that there are two options that seem to work. It gives staff flexibility. While Alternative 2B works better for Showgrounds by giving them a new entrance and enhancements for the community, it forces traffic back to Las Positas Road. It will also focus traffic at the Showgrounds. With the sub-option, the ramp will be closer to Cottage which benefits the hospital and splits the traffic more evenly. His other concern is that the two or three block extension of De La Vina Street's two-way lanes is problematic, unless there is a way increase the ROW. He commented that it necks down at Constance and something, possibly parking will have to give, which could create conflict.

Committee Member Tabor commented that there are not too many processes that become clear through extended review. He appreciates that there has been extensive public input into this project, which is both appreciated and expected. He agreed with Mr. Bartlett that more traffic at the Las Positas Road interchange could be problematic, with the ramp being placed to the west. He thanked the people who were there tonight. He indicated that he was not ready to jump into rezoning of Junipero Street because it seems that the character of that street is changing back to the way it was before, with the pedestrian and car improvements that will be needed to keep the neighborhood happy. That needs to be part of the focus in the next stage. He was glad to see an initial sketch of the Showgrounds. He also commented that one thing he learned from the Airport planning process was to get people out there. The Showgrounds parking lot is empty 99% of the time but when it's full, it's really full. Alternative transportation planning would be beneficial, and he would like to see it done the right way.

Chairman Pritchett summarized that there are two leading alternatives on the table; and that analysis could show that one is better than the other. He asked Mr. Dayton how staff would deal with PSR and necessary outreach if this document has two leading options. He asked if another meeting would be necessary, and indicated that if the sub-option was going to be treated as they other alternatives, it needed to be treated equally. Mr. Dayton replied that staff needs to evaluate what type of public process will be needed if Alternative 2B falls through with

the Showgrounds. If that happens, staff and the PC and TCC will have to reconvene and meet with the neighbors to explore the sub-option and solicit their feedback.

Commissioner Lodge left at 7:32

Mr. Pritchett asked if the sub-option will be in the PSR, if this goes to Council and they approve proceeding with the PSR. Mr. Dayton replied that the sub-option will be in the PSR and that staff would be working with Caltrans. Mr. Delo indicated that Caltrans will designate the preferred project as part of their approval process, but that they like to see alternatives. He answered Mr. Pritchett's question about City involvement and public outreach by stating that the PSR will start the analysis and dialogue with Caltrans in terms of these two options. If the sub-option that puts the ramp east of Las Positas Road becomes the preferred option, staff will do public outreach. At this time, we don't know if it will be the preferred alternative.

Mr. Pritchett also asked if additional analysis of the sub-option will still be paid out of City funds. Mr. Delo replied that the PSR and analysis are paid out of the same fund. Mr. Pritchett responded that Caltrans will tell staff if they like the new options.

Mr. Dayton indicated that the City would move through the PSR process, and meet with the Showgrounds and present the win-win scenario. He reiterated that if they do not approve the City's suggestion, staff would move to the sub-option, which could also be rejected. The ramp was there before and there are ways that neighbor's concerns can be mitigated, but we need to understand what their concerns are.

Mr. Allen assured Mr. Pritchett that the City will know early on what the impact on the Showgrounds and the improvements will look like, and should have an answer fairly quickly.

Mr. Pritchett inquired as to the next step for meeting with the Showgrounds. Mr. Dayton answered that the City's approach is important. Staff wants to understand what can be given, and what will be taken, and a good idea of what the mutual benefit will be.

Mr. Pritchett confirmed that the PSR process must be started to make the good impression. Mr. Dayton commented that without this alternative, the City is uncomfortable with the process.

Mr. Pritchett asked staff when they will be going to Council. Mr. Allen replied that staff is looking at a Council date in late July or early August, under recommendation from both the PC and TCC. He indicated that because there are two Committees here, two motions would be necessary. He assured the committees that this will not be the last time they hear of this. Staff will continue to report back to both bodies with status reports and the results of our meeting with the Showgrounds. He reminded the PC and TCC that this was a Condition of Approval set forth by the PC for Cottage.

Chairman Pritchett called for a motion from the PC, hearing no more discussion.

Motion 1: PC to make a recommendation to the City Council that the Las Positas Road/Mission Street Circulation Options Report be forwarded with PC support for Alternative 2B and Sub-option1; and we would like to see it move forward in the PSR process, and that the additional pedestrian and street improvements be put forward on a separate track to go forward at same time.

Motion made by Commissioner Jacobs and seconded by Commissioner Bartlett

Ayes: 5 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 2 – Motion Carried

Chairman Pritchett asked for a motion from the TCC.

Committee Member Bradley wanted clarification. He asked if the recommendation was that two PSRs go forward. Is staff expecting any recommendations on the aux lanes and improvement going through separately? Mr. Allen replied that with the funding available at this time, staff is only seeking a recommendation for a PSR for Alternative 2B. The aux lanes would be a separate option, require a separate report, and staff would need to find funding.

Chairman Pritchett called for the motion from the TCC.

Motion 2: TCC to make a recommendation to the City Council that the Las Positas Road/Mission Street Circulation Options Report be forwarded with PC support for Alternative 2B and Sub-option1; and we would like to see it move forward in the PSR process, and that the additional pedestrian and street improvements be put forward on a separate track to go forward at same time.

Motion made by Committee Member Coffman-Grey and seconded by Committee Member Tabor.

Committee Member Bradley wanted clarification whether or not the City will be studying the local options. He wondered if there is funding to do so. Mr. Allen replied that most of the work would be done internally by staff, making it a low-cost option. If staff needs to hire a consultant, then they look to the Capital Budget for the funds to do the initial analysis.

Chairman Pritchett inquired about what would keep the ideas for circulation improvements, including Junipero Street, and opportunities for one- and two-way streets moving. Mr. Allen answered that staff will look back at notes, review the Report, and look at the City's options such as the timing of the Mission Street traffic signals, the couplets on Castillo and Bath Streets and the Junipero Street improvements in house. Calle Real will be part of the Caltrans project. There are no City funds to do the sidewalks; staff will need to look at regional funding. De La Vina Street will be looked at internally. Dru Van Hengel, Supervising Transportation Engineer was at both public workshops and is aware of these issues. Mr. Allen added that this will probably come back to the TCC in October.

Commissioner Jacobs suggested that the work done on these projects would be appropriate to include in the General Plan, especially in the Sustainable Neighborhood Plan, to ensure that it will continue to move forward.

Chairman Pritchett called for any last discussion items and called the vote.

Ayes: 6 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 0 Motion Carried

3. Highway 101/High occupant vehicle (HOV) Lane Environmental Report

Chairman Pritchett informed all present that this was an informational briefing.

Mr. Dayton, Principal Transportation Planner introduced this item, and noted that the Highway 101/HOV Lane Environmental Report was requested by both SBCAG and Caltrans. They are just releasing their notice of Preparation for the EIR. Mr. Dayton and Daniel Gullett, Project Planner, are involved with SBCAG and Caltrans on the Project Development Team, which meets monthly, as well as on the Public Communications Subcommittee and the Technical Subcommittee, that discusses traffic modeling and other technical aspects of the freeway. Both bodies have been very responsive to comments on how the City would like to see the traffic modeled, City impacts and the Highway Design Guidelines that staff put together. The project that is in construction on the 101 now went through many meetings and many workshops and planning sessions prior to construction. He acknowledged Mr. Gullett for an excellent job on the staff report. Mr. Dayton introduced Gregg Hart and Fred Luna of SBCAG, and Scott Eads, the Caltrans Project Manager.

Mr. Hart showed map of the Route 101 Corridor Projects. He commented that the voters approved Measure A by resounding levels and that the public is ready for transportation investments. The top project on the list is the Highway 101 widening. Phase One, which goes from Milpas Street to Hot Springs Road/Cabrillo Boulevard, has been under construction for one year. There are three years left on the project, but there has been a small hiccup with state's budget crisis. Staff is being conscious of a potential lapse in funding and another budget crisis. SBCAG is trying to prepare for and prevent this potential lapse.

Phase Two will start in 2011, and will cover the segment of HWY 101 from La Conchita and Mussel Shoals to the Carpinteria Creek Bridge. This segment is funded by Proposition 1B, and is secured because of voter mandate. SBCAG anticipates that the money will be available, but is currently trapped within the State's budget crisis. The EIR is rather far along in the process and staff is optimistic that the construction schedule will be met.

Phase Three covers the Linden and Casitas interchanges. They are sufficiently wide enough now to push for a third lane. However, at Casitas Pass, there is an issue with height. The freeway grade will have to be raised to accommodate a greater culvert in Carpinteria Creek. This is a \$70 million project and we only have \$40 million at this point. We will be seeking state and federal funding. The City of Carpinteria has been looking at design alternatives. This phase is scheduled to start 2012.

Phase Four will create the HWY 101/HOV lanes covering a 10 mile stretch from Cabrillo Boulevard/Hot Springs Road to Carpinteria, Linden and the Casitas Pass interchanges. This project will cost \$425 million. There is \$140 million in Measure A funding available; however, there is a funding gap that needs to be worked around. SBCAG is working on a Measure A Strategic Plan that will take all the projects and prioritize them.

Phases Two through Four will deal with HOV lanes. Phase One will be fixed later. Through 101 in Motion, staff is looking at ways to make this sustainable over time. The infrastructure can be flexible, starting as a two-person carpool lane during prime hours, and developing from there.

This effort is being guided by budget. SBCAG does not imagine getting more than \$425 million for this project. One of the biggest questions is whether or not there is funding to do ROW acquisition. Currently, there is no funding. There are two other options: disturb the outside

landscaping and leave the median landscaping alone, or disturb the median landscaping and maintain the outside landscaping. SBCAG is proposing a hybrid between these two options, mile by mile, looking at the most valued landscaping, and adjusting as needed. The EIR process, for this phase, is just starting.

There will be a public scoping meeting on July 7, 2009 in Carpinteria at Canallino School, and on July 8, 2009 at the Montecito Country Club. There will be a huge public notification to property owners and other interested parties so that we can get the public's view on what the concerns and impacts are. Staff wants to be thorough in their research, and will be doing many studies on biological and architectural resources, noise, wetland habitat, etc. This will be a challenging project that will require a lot of permits and a lot of teamwork.

Chairman Pritchett asked if there was public comment. There was none, he closed the public hearing.

Committee Member Maas commented that all four phases total \$680 million and asked if that was in today's dollars. Mr. Hart confirmed that it is.

Commissioner Thompson had no comment.

Committee Member Coffman-Grey wondered whether or not the Ventura project is in its design phase and if there would be cross traffic in La Conchita and Mussel Shoals. Mr. Hart replied that the median will be closed. La Conchita residents wanting to go south will have to go to Bates Road and turn around. Mussel Shoals residents will have to go to Seacliff and turn around if they want to go north. It is unsafe to go across the median. Mr. Hart did point out that one big improvement was the pedestrian access way under the freeway.

Commissioner Larson commented that this is funded by Measure D and RIP which stands for the Regional Improvement Program.

Committee Member Bradley commented that sometimes there is federal money available for mitigation of construction impacts on traffic. Is it possible that there is funding available to set up rail, bus service or other modes of Transportation? Mr. Hart answered that Phase One had funding for MTD service and that this project should have some sort of similar mitigation.

Commissioner White left at 8:05

Commissioner Jacobs had no questions or comments.

Committee Member France asked if Phase One addresses the most significant concerns of congestion. Has it knocked down most of the congestion that the City has been dealing with? Mr. Hart replied that when Phase 1 was initially planned, there was hope that it would be a more permanent solution for the congestion. Since then, traffic volumes have expanded. However, it will go a long way towards the rest of the project. One big issue is that northbound traffic won't have a full lane. Motorists get off on Salinas, get back on at Salinas and get off at Milpas. Once the other phases are complete, the Salinas situation will be resolved.

Mr. France asked what changes were involved with Phase Two. He pointed out that the Pacific Coast Bicycle Route goes down that way, and wondered if Phase Two would address the joint between Bates and La Conchita. Mr. Hart pointed out that there will be new Class 1 bike path

on the ocean side that is separated from the traffic lane by a wall. The parking along that strip of the freeway will be relocated to allow for the bike lane.

Commissioner Bartlett pointed out that this project comes out to \$8,000 per linear foot of vehicles, not including the bridges. Mr. Hart said that the figure includes the nine bridges.

Committee Member Tabor noted that staff had not mentioned anything about trains and asked Mr. Hart to elaborate on that. Mr. Hart mentioned that SBCAG met with the Rail Subcommittee, Supervisor Carbajal, Councilman Bennet from Goleta, and the County and City of Santa Barbara staff. The subcommittee is pursuing the City of Santa Barbara's ONTRAK proposal for the retiming of trains, which is the best alternative in the short term. They expect Caltrans Division of Rail to reply with their thoughts on retiming by early fall.

Chairman Pritchett inquired about the nexus between Caltrans and Amtrak on retiming of the trains. Mr. Hart answered that Caltrans contracts with Amtrak to run the trains. Caltrans is the money source and therefore controls the train timing. It would be of benefit to have a train arrive from Los Angeles during peak traffic hours so that there are less cars on the road. The potential conflict is with passengers that want to leave Los Angeles at a reasonable time. To get to Santa Barbara by 10 am, a train would have to leave Los Angeles by 5 am. Amtrak is worried about a potential loss of revenue from discretionary vacationing passengers who would not really want to leave that early. There is \$25 million in Measure A funds so any potential loss of revenue could be subsidized. There is also a potential conflict with the Metrolink trains.

Mr. Pritchett wanted to know if the idea of starting with two people per car during some hours and then gradually working up to three or four people per car for longer hours was a traffic management tool to control speed. Mr. Hart replied that the point of a carpool is time savings. If there is as much congestion as there was prior to putting the lane in, its purpose is defeated. The idea is to raise the bar by putting more people in fewer cars.

Mr. Pritchett asked if this has been done in other areas and if this was on the supply or demand side. Mr. Hart replied that other communities do this. Mr. Pritchett then pointed out that in Los Angeles and Orange County, the carpool lanes are for two people per car every day at all hours, while in the Bay Area, it is only for a couple of hours during the day and night. Is that enough regulation to be effective? Mr. Hart answered in the current situation we have pronounced enough peaks that it would only need regulation during peak hours. As traffic volumes increase, it may need readjustment.

Committee Member Maas pointed out that early on in process, this HOV lane was called a hot lane (or high occupancy toll lane) for single occupancy vehicles to pay a fee. He wondered if that idea had been considered. Mr. Hart answered that the option was explored, but would not generate enough revenue. Generally toll gates are used as a revenue source. In this case, it would only add congestion.

Chairman Pritchett asked if there were any other questions.

Committee Member France asked what the throughput during a peak hour was. Mr. Hart said that one lane moved 2,000 cars and a carpool lane is moving 2,000 to 4,000 people.

Mr. France then asked how much traffic went north or south. Scott Eads, of Caltrans, replied that it varied by section. The highest volumes are in the six-lane section in Downtown Santa Barbara between Las Positas Road and Mission Street. The highest volumes are closer to

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Milpas, which is why this part of the freeway is being completed first. It will have the most effectiveness in the short term. Mr. France asked for numbers, and Mr. Eads replied that about 100,000 cars pass through there.

Mr. Hart mentioned that Phase Four will be done in three phases. It cannot be done in one phase. Mr. Pritchett remarked that could be possibly five or six years from now.

Chairman Pritchett asked for other questions and hearing none, adjourned at 8:16.

Committee Members: **Mark Bradley (Vice Chairman), Keith Coffman-Grey, Edward France, Steve Mass, David Pritchett (Chairman), David Tabor**

Commissioners: **Bruce Bartlett, Charmaine Curtis-Jacobs, John Jostes, Stella Larson (Chairman), Harwood A. White, Addison Thompson, Sheila Lodge**

Liaisons: **Roger Horton (Council Liaison), Addison Thompson (Planning Commission Liaison)**