
From: Leo Wilson [mailto:leo.wikstrom@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Wednesday, January 23, 2008 5:11 PM
To: Wright, Mary
Subject: Morton's E-mail

Dear Leo

I wish to bring to CPC for their consideration and future vote, two important issues which have been and continue to engage the Torrey Pines Community Planning Board and which have the community greatly alarmed and agitated. These issues are also affecting our neighbors, Carmel Valley Community Planning Board and Torrey Hills Community Planning Group, but possibly in a different manner leading perhaps to some disagreements. The two issues are the planning for north-south connectors between SR-56 and I-5 and the planned widening of I-5 to accommodate four managed lanes and the lack of noise barriers on our freeways.

I would like to present the issues at the January meeting, allow the Chairs to take them back to their Planning Groups for thoughtful consideration and discussion, and perhaps get a position of CPC at the February or March meetings. **Both issues, especially the connectors, need rapid action by CPC to guide engineers and planners and the City.**

Issue #1: Planning of the SR56 – I-5 connectors (to/from the north) when combined with the proposed widening of I-5 by the addition of at least two more managed lanes, has led to a potential alternative for the connectors which could result in substantial harm to our community with the seizing of up to as many as 30 homes. If that would happen, perhaps another 200 to 300 homes would be affected by the physical gap resulting from the seizure of the properties and land, and the resulting roadway construction.

As such a seizure is several years away, hundreds of homeowners have been placed in limbo; their ability either to sell or invest in remodeling has reacted a great deal of angst. There is also the litigious issue that recent property purchasers had not been informed that such was being considered even after these possibilities were brought forward at the SR-56- I-5 Steering Committee meetings.

The TPC Planning Board has unanimously passed a motion opposing the taking of any homes from our community for either the connectors or freeway widening.

The issue is multi-faceted and not simply "take or not take" the homes. Connected with this issue is the fact that the City of San Diego has virtually little say in how the major arterials are developed within City limits, and the "Steering Committees" become little more than long-term mechanisms to exhaust opposition to what Caltrans and SANDAG have in mind all along. Therefore, as a starting point for discussion, I would ask/advise CPC to consider the following three motions.

- (1) No properties within the City of San Diego shall be seized for either the development of highway connectors or the widening of existing freeways unless (a) there are no reasonable alternatives that can be explored, and (b) both the City Council and the Mayor of San Diego fully concur with the decision.

Reasonable alternatives should include consideration of use, within limits, of sensitive areas within the City including areas set aside as open space. Caltrans engineers have refused to consider such mitigated intrusions due to opposition from some groups who oppose any intrusion on the environment and fear of engaging organized positions

including the Coastal Commission. Such a position to refuse to explore trade-offs is inconsistent with good planning for a highly urbanized area.

- (2) When the development may involve seizure of properties, this information must be disseminated immediately to the affected communities to enable full disclosure by sellers or lessees to buyers or renters.

It is unconscionable to undertake multi-year planning and draw to a conclusion that necessitates the seizure of selected subsets of homes. This shows a lack of long-term planning especially when the result is not the addition of new technology or a substantial improvement in the transportation corridors.

- (3) No properties should be taken from any community within the City of San Diego for a transportation corridor if the resulting change will not improve the communities' use of the transportation corridor, as such intrusions which only benefit other parts of the urban region must be shared in all ways possible, including financial.

One argument in support of Motion #3 is that an alternative to widening existing freeways is the construction of new parallel freeways and maintaining the existing width of current freeways. However, as potentially affected communities have blocked such parallel transportation corridors, other communities have been forced to assume the adverse impacts resulting from such expansion.

Issue #2: I offer the following 'tentative' motions related to the construction of sound walls and barriers to reduce environmental pollution from freeway traffic.

1. Caltrans, SANDAG and the City of San Diego shall install adequate sound walls and barriers to environmental pollution along all freeways within the limits of the City of San Diego that have, or will undergo widening, and that have homes and/or businesses of greater than 50 employees per business extend within 500 (tentative) feet of the freeway, and shall mandate that any new development that takes place within 700 (tentative) feet of the freeway have, as part of the development approval process, required construction of sound walls and environmental pollution barriers, or justification for not requiring such construction. Developers shall be required to either develop the appropriate barrier or provide the City, Caltrans and SANDAG with the equivalent costs to allow governmental construction of such environmental barriers.
2. The City of San Diego shall pursue Caltrans and SANDAG to undertake construction of appropriate sound and environmental pollution barriers in existing freeways where sound levels currently reach or exceed a continuous minimal level, e.g., 85 decibels (tentative) for at least two hours during any 24 hour period.

Related directly to the SR-56 connectors planning is the lack of planning to intervene in noise and associated environmental pollution stemming from greater freeway traffic resulting from the construction of new lanes or the widening of freeways. Caltrans and SANDAG are in the process of widening I-5 all along its stretch. Inspection of I-15 and SR-56 discloses that neither Caltrans nor SANDAG considered the impact of noise as they apparently failed to insist upon sound wall construction and/or mechanisms to reduce environmental pollution. Sound walls, so common today throughout the world, are lacking from the road projects that have been underway for several years and were apparently either not considered or planned for. Developers who built new communities were apparently not required to install appropriate sound walls (some of which could be

very environmental positive and physically attractive) to shield the communities from the impact of noise and pollution from the freeways.

The Torrey Pines Community Planning Board has been waging a campaign for several years against I-5 freeway noise which affects homeowners all along the eastern side of our community, without any real success. When minimal walls were installed along the Portofino corridor, homeowners were asked to assume the costs and taxation effects. The resulting walls are ineffective today, and certainly will be so if the freeway is widened.

It appears that our past actions as a Board have been totally ignored by both SANDAG and Caltrans, and efforts to engage the City Council and Mayor have been stymied by the fact that such issues fall within the domain of SANDAG and/or Caltrans.

The implications are profound and wide-ranging. For example, with the widening of I-5 the current noise levels (already greater than allowed by federal law and certainly harmful to health) will increase. Yet, one reason given by Caltrans and SANDAG for the widening of I-5 by the addition of two (making four) "managed lanes" is to allow Caltrans and SANDAG to charge for their use, presumably if "surplus" to transportation needs. However, as we see from I-15, being surplus is not necessarily the absolute criterion used to charge for access to the managed lane. Thus, financial gain will likely accrue to SANDAG and Caltrans through actions which can directly harm the health and development of children and would likely adversely affect adults especially the elderly, either directly or indirectly through heightened environmental stress.

I ask that CPC consider the elements of these two motions and assert a position that shall address both the concerns of our Community and those of all communities which sit astride the major freeway corridors of our City.

Morton Printz