

Clairemont Community Planning Group

Minutes of the Special Meeting of
June 6th, 2018
Alcott Elementary School Auditorium

P Naveen Waney - Chair P Nicholas Reed – Vice Chair P Margie Schmidt - Secretary P Delana Hardacre- Treasurer	P Harry Backer A Kevin Carpenter P Cecelia Frank A Chad Gardner	P Richard Jensen A Gary Christensen P Ryan Rolla P Jason Young	P Daniel Smiechowski P Lynn Adams P Susan Mournian P Billy Paul
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P – Present A – Absent L-Late

Item 1. Call to Order / Roll Call

Chair Naveen Waney called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.. Roll call was taken and a quorum present.

Item 2. Non-Agenda Public Comment – Issues that are not on the agenda and are within the jurisdiction of the Clairemont Community Planning Group. **NOTE:** 2-minute time limit per speaker.

Public:

Alan Resner requests information on Balboa station. Referred to balboastationplan.org.

Committee Members:

Richard thanks Ryan for CCPG minutes. Suggests establishing a subcommittee for Homelessness.
 Harry thanks all for participation and attendance; thanks Lynn for excellent work on subcommittee.
 Margie thanks George Henderson for extensive, clear review of Balboa Station PEIR.
 Nick also thanks Glen Schmidt for valuable participation.
 Naveen thanks entire Balboa Station Subcommittee.

Item 3. CCPG Balboa Ave. Station Plan PEIR Recommendation Letter – PTS:586601 (Harry Backer, chair & Lynn Adams, vice chair Balboa Station Area Specific Plan Subcommittee)

Naveen summarizes that subcommittee has reviewed the Balboa Station Area Specific Plan Program Environmental Impact Report (BSASP- PEIR) and has drafted a letter in response. This meeting is to review, revise, and finalize the response letter in order that it can be submitted to the city within the extended response period.

Lynn provided background and presented the draft letter.

Modifications suggested by CCPG board members, subcommittee members, and public in attendance discussed. Final version of BSASP-PEIR response letter created.

Motion made by Billy to accept and send response letter (see [attached](#)), second by Nick.

VOTE: 13-0-0. Motion passes.

Adjournment at 8:05 PM

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 19th, 2018, 6:30pm at Alcott Elementary School.

June 6, 2018

Rebecca Malone, Environmental Planner
City of San Diego Planning Department
9485 Aero Drive, MS 413
San Diego, California 92123

RE: Response to the Balboa Station Specific Plan Draft Program Environmental Impact Report

The Clairemont Community Planning Group (CCPG) Balboa Station Ad Hoc Subcommittee appreciates the opportunity to submit the following comments regarding the Balboa Station Specific Plan Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) dated April 2018. Our comments refer to the PEIR, and also to the Balboa Station Area Specific Plan (BSASP).

Transportation/Circulation, Air Quality, Noise (Mitigation)

In regards to the section, Transportation/Circulation, the PEIR concludes that the traffic gridlock as a result of the BSASP is significant and unavoidable. We disagree with this conclusion, as this is a foreseen and unacceptable result, and there should be a mitigation plan included in the Alternatives. Unfortunately, we saw the same conclusions in the sections on Air Quality and Noise, that the significant introduction of air pollutants was significant and unavoidable, and the significant increase in noise decibel was significant and unavoidable. In all three areas, these results are foreseen and unacceptable. A fully funded mitigation plan must be inserted into the Alternatives to lessen the impact to the residents of our communities.

Transportation/Circulation (Connection of the Community Village to the Trolley Station)

The primary area of concern in the PEIR is the removal of the pedestrian and bicycle connection between the Balboa Station and the Community Village and Mission Bay areas to the west. The bridge offers a significant benefit to the residents of our communities, and a gateway to the Mission Bay and beach areas. The opinion of the CCPG is the determination of impacts in the PEIR related to the Balboa Station Specific Plan are predicated on the completion of a "Shared-Use Pedestrian and Bicycle Connection" from Morena Blvd across or under the Interstate 5 freeway to the Community Village area to the west, which was once a defining element of this specific plan (see attached details).

The City's Climate Action Plan and SANDAG's Regional Transportation Plan target a concentration of efforts in Transit Priority Areas (TPA), such as the Balboa Station. The TPA is an area within one-half mile of a major transit stop. The BSASP, 7.1, provides this definition "A majority of the Specific Plan is within the TPA, defined as an area within ½ mile walking distance from a major transit stop which makes use of public transit a viable option." Without the pedestrian/bicycle bridge across Freeway 5, the planned high-density development in the Community Village and Mission Bay may be out of compliance. In addition, the PEIR does not address the additional mitigation need to account for possible density bonuses allowed under the Municipal Code, or compounded impacts caused by proposed density increases in vicinity of the Morena Corridor specific plan. Decisions regarding construction of a two-way Class IV Bicycle Track on Morena Boulevard will be addressed as part of mobility discussions during the Clairemont Plan Update Process.

It has been noted that the Metropolitan Transit System staff have been absent from all public meetings and discussion of the BSASP. Their absence gives us reason to question the assumptions used in the PEIR's Traffic study. The issues outlined in this letter has resulted in the CCPG concluding the City has not achieved its stated goal; the Balboa Trolley Station would remain disconnected from the "Transit Oriented" Village because of the absence of a pedestrian/bicycle bridge. Transit success depends on regional plans and visions that guide the integration of land use and transportation.

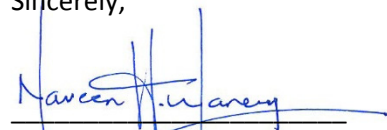
Visual Effects/Neighborhood Character

If a bridge was still in the plan, it would need to be tall enough to clear the freeway, railroad tracks and span approximately 300 feet across the freeway. This would create a significant visual impact that would need to be mentioned in Section 5.16 of the PEIR, Visual Effects and Neighborhood Character, and studied as it is within an important view shed overlooking Mission Bay Park. Yet there is no mention of a bridge alternative in Section 5.16. This clearly illustrates the City has no intention of pursuing construction of the bridge.

Conclusion

The CCPG strongly believes that the impact assumptions of the PEIR are flawed and inaccurate, that the impact analysis includes a planned connection across Interstate 5, yet the connection is not concretely included in the BSASP or the PEIR. For the PEIR to be accurate and defensible, and the Balboa Station to be successful, the city must commit to constructing a shared pedestrian and bicycle connection across the freeway between the Balboa Station and the Community Village and Mission Bay Park to the west. We do not endorse a tunnel for multiple reasons. We ask the city to coordinate with MTS and SANDAG to plan and construct this connection and include this in the BSASP and the PEIR. Our analysis leads us to conclude the city has no intention of building the bridge, however, many of the impacts calculated in the PEIR are assuming that this connection will be constructed. The PEIR presents three alternatives, 'Preferred', 'Medium Density' and 'No Project'. In our opinion, a viable alternative has not been presented as an option, however, the CCPG is willing to work with the Planning Department to develop a reasonable alternative that meets project goals.

Sincerely,



Naveen Waney, Chair

Clairemont Community Planning Group (CCPG)

cc: Michael Prinz, Senior City Planner, City of San Diego,
Harry Backer, Chair, CCPG Balboa Ave. Station Ad-Hoc Subcommittee,
Lynn Adams, Vice-Chair, CCPG Balboa Ave. Station. Ad-Hoc Subcommittee,
Nicholas Reed, Vice-Chair, CCPG,
CCPG Balboa Station Subcommittee Members,
CCPG Board Members,
Councilwoman Barbara Bry, District 1, City of San Diego, Councilwoman Lorie Zapf, District 2, City of San Diego,
Councilman Chris Ward, District 3, City of San Diego, Councilwoman Myrtle Cole, District 4, City of San Diego,
Councilman Mark Kersey, District 5, City of San Diego, Councilman Chris Cate, District 6, City of San Diego,
Councilman Scott Sherman, District 7, City of San Diego, Councilman David Alvarez, District 8, City of San Diego,
Councilwoman Georgette Gomez, District 9, City of San Diego

Detail – Transportation/Circulation – Connection of the Community Village to the Trolley Station

The BSASP, Section 3.1.4 currently includes, “*Support SANDAG and MTS to consider a bicycle and pedestrian access between the Balboa Avenue Station and the Specific Plan via a connection across I-5 from the Balboa Station to the area east of Mission Bay Drive within the vicinity of Magnolia Avenue and Bunker Hill Street. This connection could include a bridge, aerial skyway, or other means with potential connections to Mission Bay Park*”. The PEIR does not include a current or future planned bridge connection in text, rather alludes to it in a vague manner in illustrations. Beginning with PEIR Project Description, Figures 3-3, 3-4, Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities; dotted ovals that span the area of the station over the Freeway 5 and into the Village/Mission Bay area are labeled “Shared-Use Pedestrian and Bicycle Connection”. In Section 5.15.4, Alternative Transportation Modes, and Figures 5.15-5, -6, -7, -8, all include the dotted oval, “Shared-Use Pedestrian and Bicycle Connection”. The Pedestrian Analysis and Bicycle Analysis **do not include an explanation of the ovals in text or plans to build a bridge in the future**. Supporting our assumption that the city does not plan to build a connection is the wording “to consider” in the BASASP which does not obligate the city to pursue the connection. In addition, there are multiple disconnects in the BSASP that de-emphasize the connection.

The formation of the CCPG Balboa Station ad hoc subcommittee occurred in January 2016. The first mention of a pedestrian bridge was at a Pacific Beach Community Planning Group meeting on December 7, 2015 where the CCPG was also invited. Presentations by the City Planning Department included the pedestrian bridge across Freeway 5, **both in text and display** on 12/7/15, 5/10/16, 5/24/16, 11/2/16, 7/19/17. A clear connection across the freeway was shown on numerous maps and boards as well as a very detailed computer simulation illustrating a bridge at the eastern end of Bunker Hill Street with an elevator to allow access across the freeway and tracks. On December 14, 2017 the bridge was included in a presentation to the PB Planning Group, along with the village and increased density, however, on January 18, 2018 in the presentation to the CCPG, only ovals were visible, the bridge was absent, and only identified as ‘Issues Identified Through Outreach’ – an issue being Pedestrian Bridge connecting Balboa Station to Mission Bay. No explanation was provided on why the bridge was eliminated.

The Balboa Station sub-committee and community members have been extremely clear from the onset the pedestrian/bicycle connecting bridge was necessary for the BSASP to be successful, and the impact analysis clearly support the need for the bridge, however our comments and suggestions have not made it into the PEIR, nor have been addressed.

In comparing Figure 5.15-1 Existing Pedestrian Walkshed and Transit Stops to Figure 5.15-5 Future Planned Pedestrian Network and Station Walkshed, it clearly illustrates that the walkshed expands in the future to the Community Village areas all the way to Rosewood Street. This expansion of walkshed will only be possible once the implementation of the crossing connection across the freeway and tracks has been constructed. If this connection is not constructed, the impacts to Air Quality, Traffic/Transportation and Circulation, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, as well as Cumulative Impacts are inaccurate.