



**CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
COUNCILMEMBER SHERRI S. LIGHTNER  
DISTRICT ONE**

**MEMORANDUM**

DATE: May 27, 2010 DTID: SL 1005-12  
TO: Elizabeth Maland, City Clerk  
FROM: Councilmember Sherri S. Lightner   
SUBJECT: Ballot Measure to Amend Proposition M of 1998

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*Background*

The communities of Carmel Valley, Torrey Pines, and Pacific Highlands Ranch have been harmed by the Proposition M ballot measure that was passed by voters in 1998. Proposition M requires the construction of certain freeway ramps between SR-56 and I-5 before the community of Pacific Highlands Ranch can be completed.

It has become clear that these freeway ramps may never be built. If they are ever built, it will not be for at least a decade. Meanwhile, Pacific Highlands Ranch residents do not have basic amenities (grocery stores, schools, parks) because their growth is artificially capped by Proposition M. Pacific Highlands Ranch residents are forced to share Carmel Valley's amenities, which adds to Carmel Valley's traffic woes.

At the same time, Torrey Pines residents oppose new freeway on-ramps because they will be noisy and will intrude onto their property. This pits Torrey Pines residents against their Carmel Valley and Pacific Highlands Ranch neighbors, who regard the construction of freeway ramps as their only hope for ever building amenities in Pacific Highlands Ranch. The communities of Carmel Valley, Torrey Pines, and Pacific Highlands Ranch have united and would like to see Proposition M amended, so that basic amenities can be built in Pacific Highlands Ranch, regardless of whether or not the SR-56/I-5 freeway ramps are built.

The Carmel Valley Community Planning Board and the Torrey Pines Community Planning Board have requested the City Council sponsor a ballot measure to amend Proposition M to allow the completion of the Pacific Highlands Ranch community, which is represented by the Carmel Valley Community Planning Board.

Per Council Policy 0-21, I submit this proposal on behalf and at the request of the community, and I respectfully request that this item be docketed at the June 16 meeting of the Rules, Open Government and Intergovernmental Relations Committee.

### *Action*

The Pacific Highlands Ranch Sub-area Plan was approved by the City Council in 1998 and ratified by the voters as Proposition M in November 1998. In approving Proposition M, the voters of the City of San Diego directed a phase shift of urban reserve lands from Future Urbanizing to Planned Urbanizing, permitting development in the phase-shifted area of Pacific Highlands Ranch to proceed, subject to numerous conditions.

The action for this ballot measure, as found in the Carmel Valley Community Planning Board Prop M Exploratory Committee Report (See *Attachment 1*) is as follows:

1. Amend Proposition M, approved by voters in November, 1998, to delete the following language: "Development within the phased-shifted area of the Pacific Highlands Ranch Subarea Plan shall not exceed 1,900 dwelling units until such time that ramps for westbound SR-56 connecting with I-5 North and I-5 South connecting with eastbound SR-56 are constructed and operational." (See *Attachment 2: strikeout version of the original ballot ordinance O-18568.*)
2. The measure should "become effective upon, but not until, the occurrence of the following events:" The City Council acts on:
  - 1) A Phased Development Program with permit issuance for new housing tied to providing facilities per threshold requirements, and
  - 2) A revised Public Facilities Plan for Pacific Highlands Ranch.

### *Discussion*

According to the Community, the amendment to Proposition M is needed for the following reasons:

1. Pacific Highlands Ranch is approaching the 1,900 du development cap, while the required SR-56 and I-5 direct connectors project remains under environmental study and many years from construction. The interchange project is currently planned to occur in 2020 in SANDAG's Regional Transportation Plan.
2. The community of Pacific Highlands Ranch will remain incomplete if this restriction remains in place. This situation places burdens on its residents and those of surrounding communities, which support the needs of Pacific Highlands Ranch residents.
3. SR-56 and I-5 are major regional freeways that accommodate (and in the future, are projected to accommodate) more traffic than can be attributed to development in Pacific Highlands Ranch. Traffic studies by Caltrans for the I-5/SR-56 connector project show that less than 10% of the future traffic will be from the fully built-out community of Pacific Highlands Ranch.
4. The City's General Plan requires public amenities based on population. The community's population will remain insufficient to trigger the additional planned public facilities and schools in Pacific Highlands Ranch, because the 1,900 du threshold condition is dependent upon I-5/SR56 connectors. Residents of Pacific Highlands Ranch pay a substantial Community Facilities District assessment (Mello-Roos tax) for these future schools that may not be built until after 2020.
5. Residents of Pacific Highlands Ranch must drive outside of the community to shop, attend public schools (except one high school and one elementary school serving only a portion of Pacific Highlands Ranch) and recreate. The nearest of these facilities and amenities are located within Carmel Valley, causing traffic and facilities impacts on Carmel Valley. The Pacific Highlands Ranch community has made clear that its first retail need is for a grocery store. However, retail development is limited to 50,000 square feet with the 1,900 du threshold. A population of approximately 5,000 living in the 1,900 du is unlikely to support retail development.
6. The 1,900 du restriction in Prop M has created an unintended impact to the Torrey Pines community, immediately west of I-5, between Carmel Valley Road and Del Mar Heights Road. The specific language of the restriction makes clear that only direct connector ramps will meet the threshold condition. The Torrey Pines community, through its Community Planning Board and individuals, strongly opposes this option in the ongoing I-5/SR-56 connectors planning process.

The Carmel Valley and Torrey Pines communities strongly believe that the 1,900 du restriction was a mistake. The prudent development of Pacific Highlands Ranch can be guided by existing tools, such as the Community Plan and the Public Facilities Financing Plan.

If my office can be of further assistance, please contact us immediately.

SL:mm

Cc: Council President Ben Hueso  
Whitney Benzian, Rules Committee Consultant