



Citizens Planning Association

BOARD CONSENT CALENDAR

August 8 – September 7, 2009

This document includes:

- a. **436 Corona Del Mar** (City of Santa Barbara)
8/4/09 South County Land Use Committee letter to City Council
This item was accidentally left off the August CPA board report.
- b. **Upper State Street Guidelines** (City of Santa Barbara)
8/10/09 South County Land Use Committee letter to Architectural Board of Review
- c. **Plan Santa Barbara** (City of Santa Barbara)
8/24/09 South County Land Use Committee letter & 8/27/09 statement to Planning Commission
- d. **Regional Transportation Plan** (Santa Barbara County)
8/30/09 Comprehensive Planning Committee letter to SBCAG

436 Corona Del Mar (Appeal)

8/4/09 South County Land Use Committee letter to SB City Council

4 August 2009

Mayor Blum & Councilmembers
Santa Barbara City Council
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Sent via email to: *Marty Blum <mblum@ santabarbaraca.gov>*
 Dale Francisco <dfrancisco@santabarbaraca.gov>
 Iya Falcone <ifalcone@santabarbaraca.gov>
 Roger Horton <rhorton@ santabarbaraca.gov>
 Grant House <ghouse@ santabarbaraca.gov>
 Helene Schneider <hschneider@santabarbaraca.gov>
 Das Williams <daswilliams@ santabarbaraca.gov>

RE: Support of Appeal of 436 Corona Del Mar Appeal

Dear Mayor Blum & Councilmembers,

The purpose of this letter is to voice the Citizens Planning Association's South County Land Use Committee's support of the appeal before you today regarding the project proposed at 436 Corona Del Mar.

The proposed project does not merit a modification and is too tall and incompatible with the surrounding neighborhood. Furthermore, we are concerned with setting a precedent for 3-story homes in the area.

Mr. Tony Fischer's letter on behalf of the appellant outlines very clearly the reasons why your council should deny the requested modification and uphold the appeal before you today, which we urge you to do.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Naomi Kovacs
Executive Director

Upper State Street Guidelines

8/10/09 South County Land Use Committee letter to SB City Architectural Board of Review
Statement delivered by Paul Hernadi (LUC & Board member)

August 9, 2009

Chair Manson-Hing & Board Members
Architectural Board of Review
City of Santa Barbara, CA

Hand-delivered

RE: August 2009 Revised Draft of the Upper State Street Area Guidelines

Dear Chair Manson-Hing & Board Members,

The Citizens Planning Association's South County Land Use Committee welcomes the August 2009 revision of the Draft Upper State Street Area Guidelines. Thanks to the careful work of staff and the subcommittee, several of our previous concerns about the June draft have been allayed. Some others, however, remain and are expressed below.

(A) We continue to believe that the legislative intent of the SD-2 ordinance should be explicitly stated and reaffirmed, as well as vigorously deployed, in the final version of the Guidelines. As you will recall, the intent of SD-2 requirements was "to prevent the volumes of traffic on State Street from exceeding acceptable limits and to limit increased air pollution, due to vehicular traffic." The much more recent Upper State Street Study fully embraced two of the SD-2 requirements (building height limitations and front setback distances) but also stressed at least two related development standards (mountain view preservation and generous landscaping). All four considerations are especially relevant to many current and future projects due to the increased financial feasibility of large-scale underground parking which was not envisioned by the framers of the SD-2 ordinance. In our opinion, the finalized Guidelines should specify that a considerable segment of any project's building area which is no longer needed for surface parking shall be used as landscaped open space. In the absence of such a requirement, the intent of the SD-2 ordinance would be thwarted by dense overdevelopment leading to increased traffic and air pollution.

2. Air pollution is a very serious concern if we want to increase the number of people walking, biking, and residing along Upper State Street. This transit corridor features congested mid-day and PM peak hour traffic in four travel lanes and up to three additional turning lanes. The potential health gains due to working, shopping, and living in walkable urban centers must not be compromised by greatly increased risks to the respiratory system of "sensitive receptors" including children. We do not want to fight overweight and obesity and at the same time ignore asthma which is, according to the American Lung Association of California, "the

number one cause of hospitalizations among children, with 160,000 in California alone." The Revised Guidelines deserve praise for conveying several health-related insights about landscaping,

creeks, setbacks, and other open spaces. It would be appropriate to summarize the widely scattered pertinent remarks into a forceful general statement about the need to improve air quality in the Upper State Street area.

3. Concerning building heights, we wish to repeat a recommendation from our June 8 letter to the Planning Commission, also distributed to ABR. The SD-2 ordinance provides that a three-story building be only permitted if it does not exceed the total floor area of a two story building “which could be constructed on the lot in compliance with all applicable regulations.” In our opinion, the final version of the Guidelines should insist on subtracting from the hypothetical two-story structure’s buildable lot size both the square footage of all required open spaces and the square footage of the sidewalks and driveways needed for adequate internal circulation.
4. A final word regarding the very brief final section of the Guidelines about “Modification Approvals.” For further illumination, this two-sentence section refers to Guideline 4, which addresses the specific topic of “Front Setback Modification Considerations,” and to Guideline 24, which is not concerned with modifications at all. The preamble to Guideline 24 specifies that “proposed structures over two stories and allowed by zoning are expected to include benefits for the community at large, provided in quantity and quality beyond customary requirements” (emphasis added). For clarity’s sake, it would be desirable for a general stipulation along those lines to be included in the finalized section about “Modification Approvals” so that the meaning of the phrase “substantial community benefits” becomes clear as demanding non-routine, extraordinary benefits for the community at large as a prerequisite for approval.

We thank you in advance for your consideration of our input.

Sincerely,

Naomi Kovacs
Executive Director

PH:nk

Plan Santa Barbara

8/24/09 South County Land Use Committee letter & 8/27/09 statement
to SB City Planning Commission

Statement delivered by Paul Hernadi (CPA Board member) & Naomi Kovacs (Exec. Director)

24 August 2009

Chair Larson & Commissioners
Planning Commission
City of Santa Barbara, CA

Sent via email to: PCSecretary@SantaBarbaraCA.gov

RE: Plan Santa Barbara Work Session

Dear Chair Larson & Commissioners,

The Citizens Planning Association's South County Land Use Committee is very pleased that you have acted favorably on our July request and are continuing the work session this week. We also appreciated that several of you have echoed some of the concerns expressed in the July 20, 2009, letter to you by CPA's General Plan Update Committee. Rather than elaborate on a number of issues already raised by our sister committee, this letter addresses what we believe is the gist of each of the three large topics you plan to focus on next Thursday: (1) the MODA, (2) density and unit sizes in commercial and multi-family zones, and (3) the progress to date on the General Plan Land Use Map.

(1) The MODA concept and some benefits of superseding it

If there is to be a Mobility Oriented Development Area (MODA), it is important that its boundaries be drawn in a way that promotes residential and mixed-use development near jobs and other traffic magnets without significantly interfering with our city's established character. We were glad to hear Mr. Ledbetter reaffirm that the production of additional affordable housing should be accompanied by the pursuit of other community goals, such as "preserving the City's small-town character, open space, mountain views, etc" (quoted from the minutes of the July 23 work session, p. 2). But we question whether the MODA is the best way to achieve a meaningful reconciliation of those seemingly disparate objectives. Indeed, various arguments voiced at the work session by staff, public speakers, and several commissioners have persuaded us that the city should consider replacing the MODA concept by a different approach to density in all commercial and multifamily zones subject to the Variable Density Ordinance.

Our proposal, largely based on previous CPA comments and suggestions, is outlined in the next section. But we want to make two general observations about it at this point:

- The proposal does not make the mistaken assumption, implied by the recent Feasibility Study, that a density of 60-unit per acre might be acceptable to the community even if more than half of the units in question would sell at market-rate prices starting, roughly, at one million dollars.
- The proposal could distribute new affordable housing in generously landscaped clusters within a larger area of the city and thereby avoid imposing MODA's increased respiratory and

circulatory health risks of undispersed air pollution on people who walk, bike, and/or reside near freeways and along congested city streets lined by tall buildings without sufficient setbacks and other open spaces.

5. Variable density limits based on unit sizes could improve our jobs/housing balance and should be coupled with increased support for public transportation

It is widely recognized that the Variable Density Ordinance is ripe for a major overhaul. We support the general direction in which the pertinent discussion is going, namely, the replacement of bedroom counts by unit size standards. In particular, we favor revising the Variable Density Ordinance in a way that carefully balances the larger density allowance for smaller units with lower density allowance for larger units. Such balancing should aim at a residential growth of 2,800 new dwelling units over the next 20 years, which is the number being analyzed by the Plan Santa Barbara EIR as the Plan Santa Barbara Project.

The differential(s) between two or more sets of standards should be sufficiently large to encourage most new units to be affordable by law and/or design. For example, the standards for the highest allowable density could be 1,000 square feet for three-bedroom units, 800 square feet for two-bedroom units, and 600 square feet for one-bedroom units. By contrast, luxury units whose demand for additional service workers deteriorates our current jobs/housing imbalance should be discouraged by restricting their maximum allowed density to the city's traditional zoning standard of 12 units per acre.

We believe that the annual production of about 140 modestly sized units could be achieved by a combination of the following types of endeavor:

- re-sale restricted affordable projects supported by public funds and nonprofit organizations;
- re-sale restricted affordable projects supported by employers wishing to offer subsidized rental or ownership housing as tools for recruitment and retention; and
- affordable-by-design projects by private sector developers utilizing such cost-effective models as were suggested at the July work session by architects Gil Barry (Scenario 5) and Thomas Bollay (Scenario 6).

Even so, the impact of the initially adopted new standards for Variable Density should be annually monitored as part of the adaptive management program and they might be adjusted later as long as the adjusted standards keep us safely within environmentally acceptable limits.

We recognize that our proposal is no magic bullet. After all, any attempt to reduce the number of long-distance commuters to our area is seriously handicapped by the world-wide desirability of real estate in and near Santa Barbara. But we submit that appropriately scaled dual or multiple density standards would result in producing a much larger proportion of new housing that is affordable to low, moderate, and middle income households by law or by design than any of the scenarios that were explored in the recent Feasibility Study. Our alternative to MODA would thus bring us as close as our city can possibly come to realizing the dream of many young people at the beginning of their careers, namely, to both work and live in Santa Barbara. Needless to add, thousands of people employed on the South Coast will continue to commute as a matter of choice or necessity. It is, therefore, ecologically and socially imperative to couple any housing policy with increased public and employer

support for convenient and affordable public transportation both among South Coast destinations and between the South Coast and such cities as Lompoc, Ventura, Oxnard, and Santa Maria.

(3) Progress to date on the General Plan Land Use Map

We are disappointed that the public has not been provided information about the Land Use Map's progress, if any, since the inclusion of two tentative maps as Exhibits G and H to the staff report for the Planning Commission meeting of June 18, 2009. We hope that any new maps distributed for review at Thursday's work session or thereafter will remedy the three major omissions pointed out in the July letter of CPA's General Plan Update Committee referenced above. As you may recall, the letter points out that the El Presidio de Santa Barbara State Historic Park is not shown as a Park in the "Working Draft" (p.38) and that neither the El Pueblo Viejo Landmark District (EPV) nor the Upper State Street Area (S-D-2) is identified among the City's "special districts" listed in the legend to "PlanSB Concepts" (p.39).

As always, we thank you for your hard work on Plan Santa Barbara and especially thank you in advance for considering our input once again.

Sincerely,

Naomi Kovacs
Executive Director

PH;nk

Regional Transportation Plan

8/30/09 Comprehensive Planning Committee letter to SBCAG

August 30, 2009

SBCAG
260 North San Antonio Road, Suite B
Santa Barbara, CA 93110

Re: Draft Amendment for the SB County RTP (July 2009)

Dear Mr. Powers:

We have a few comments on the “Induced Traffic” section of this amendment.

We do not feel that this amended/supplemental section does justice to the issue. Citing references that mainly attest to the difficulty of measuring the impact of highway capacity increases on VMT (vehicle miles traveled) does not allow one to conclude that there would not be a significant impact, which the amendment does (p 4.1-38).

And noting that observed traffic increases often result from trip diversions from local arterials should have been accompanied by a discussion of relevancy for our South Coast environment. While there are minimal route alternatives for commuters from the Summerland/Carpinteria area, there are none at all for travelers from Ventura, Oxnard and points south. The question that should be asked is whether an increase in capacity (between Carpinteria and Milpas) will induce more traffic from points further south (where there would be no explanation in terms of trip diversions.) It may well be that there is no relevant literature here (and the inadequacy of the SBCAG modeling is acknowledged on this issue), and that should point to more creative approaches to data gathering (e.g., interviews of employer Human Resource people and employees).

The section titled “evidence from local data” is, unfortunately, of dubious relevance. In the case of the 1988 freeway widening (Castillo to Fairview), there were numerous “arterials” and diversion from these to the freeway was not surprising, but of little predictive value for the RTP’s southbound widening where arterials are minimal. And it is similarly unsurprising that the redesign of the La Cumbre/101 southbound interchange mainly diverted traffic from numerous alternative routes: rarely would an interchange redesign be consequential enough to overall traffic flow to induce new trips.

This is a difficult issue to get a handle on. But our environment in Santa Barbara where there is extreme economic pressure for employees to live outside the area (Ventura/Oxnard or Lompoc/Santa Maria) provided that commuting times are “manageable” is exactly where one would expect to see induced traffic with highway improvements that reduced commuting time. More creativity in assessing this is needed.

Sincerely yours,

Kalon Kelley
CPA Comprehensive Planning Committee