



PHOTO BY DALE H. LASTER

SANTA MONICA CANYON CIVIC ASSOCIATION

July 5, 2007

Eugenia Chusid
City of Santa Monica
Civil Engineering and Architecture
1437 4th Street, Suite 300
Santa Monica, CA 90401

Re: California Incline Bridge Replacement Project - Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment - State Clearinghouse No. 2006041147

Dear Ms. Chusid,

The Santa Monica Canyon Civic Association was incorporated in 1946 and represents an area within the City of Los Angeles immediately adjacent to Santa Monica, extending from Adelaide Drive to Chautauqua, the Pacific Ocean to the Riviera Country Club, the Amalfi Plateau and all of Rustic Canyon. Approximately 1400 families live in this area. We find that traffic issues originating outside the canyon often create gridlock on our narrow canyon roads, virtually trapping people in their homes. A fire in Topanga or Malibu, an accident on the 405 or even a routine traffic stop on Palisades Beach Road has an immediate impact as commuters seek an alternate route. It is well known that persons working in Santa Monica commute from these areas and further. Thus, we take keen interest in any activity in your city that has the potential to exacerbate our traffic situation. The coming closure of the Santa Monica Incline certainly has our attention and we appreciate the opportunity to respond to the reference Draft EIR/ES.

We have communicated our concern with the traffic impact of police activity on Palisades Beach Road to your City Council and discussed this with your Police Department. We again urge the immediate removal of vehicles involved in traffic stops, accidents or other emergency incidents to the nearest City parking lot or appropriate location instead of the normal practice of blocking one or two lanes on the highway. Implementation of this sensible measure will increase public safety and reduce gridlock on the highway and ultimately in our canyon. Please include a response as to how this will be handled during the upcoming bluffs and Incline construction.

In June 2006 you were sent a list of suggestions for the Environmental Process, jointly prepared by SMCCA and adopted unanimously by the Pacific Palisades Community Council. These include a few specific traffic mitigation measures that do not appear to have been considered in the reference draft. The list is again attached for your convenience.

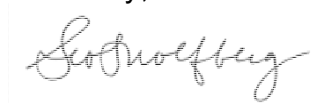
We have reviewed the EIR/EA document, most particularly the Traffic Assessment Technical Memorandum. We offer the following additional comments / suggestions:

- The statement that the project will not have any significant adverse traffic impacts should be clarified to refer to the anticipated situation once the project is completed.
- The statement that no slope stabilization work is anticipated at the Incline was contradicted at the public workshop on June 20 and should be corrected and analysis made of how this will impact the extent and length of the Incline closure.
- To assure the most up-to-date construction methods are incorporated into the construction phase, please consider the following:
 1. Utilize a “design – build” methodology rather than a “design – bid – build” methodology for the overall project.
 2. Designate a Project Manager for this project, who will be assisted by a Construction Manager.
 3. Incorporate a Management Reserve (or management contingency) of 10% for this project. In addition, the Project Manager will have authority to utilize these funds without prior approval from the City Council or other entities.
 4. Require that a Critical Path Analysis be performed to verify the validity of milestone dates and scheduling of construction to achieve this critical path.
 5. Require a thorough Risk Analysis be performed to identify inherent risks to on-time completion of this project.
- City of Santa Monica limitations on construction work hours should be suspended for the duration of the project and 24/7 round-the-clock construction required as was done with the major sewer project in Palisades Beach Road several year’s ago. Financial incentives for early completion should be offered.
- The Traffic Study Area does not incorporate all the planned detours. It should be expanded to 26th Street and, at a minimum, include all the area between West Channel Road / Entrada Drive to Pico Blvd. New traffic counts should be made, as the 2002 counts are clearly out of date. There are foreseeable impacts easily as far North as Sunset Blvd. and intervening streets in the City of Los Angeles, so ideally the study area should include these streets. Third Street (Mall) should be removed from the map unless it is planned to restore vehicle traffic to this street. Adelaide should be shown on the map. Extended outreach and public input should be incorporated through a transparent process for the final Traffic Mitigation Plan.

- Reconfiguration of the Moomat Ahiko Way and Ocean Avenue intersection to accommodate two right turning lanes shall be accomplished prior to closure of the California Incline for construction. Upon closure of the Incline, traffic control personnel shall be assigned to this intersection to facilitate the movement of extended rush hour traffic through said intersection. If new studies show that two right turning lanes create traffic backup at certain times of the day because of high demand for left turns, consider time of day controls with red and green arrows, and advance warning, to accommodate variations in peak demand.
- Incline construction shall not commence until completion of the Bluffs Improvement.
- Temporarily eliminate the Lot 1500 right turn access to PCH and the cones placed on PCH, which create unnecessary traffic turbulence.
- Temporarily open Appian Way to through traffic for the duration of project to provide local access to the area between the pier and Pico Blvd.
- Reconfigure intersection of California Incline and Palisades Beach Road to restore right turns to reduce U-turns on Westbound vehicles attempting to access Santa Monica.
- Temporarily suspend overnight parking restrictions in the area between the Los Angeles City border at Adelaide and San Vicente to promote and encourage residents of the adjacent canyon to park and walk down the public stairways or sidewalks during periods of unusually heavy traffic, such as happened as recently as the afternoon of July 3, 2007, when there was a traffic accident on Palisades Beach Road near the McClure Tunnel. Resident parking passes for canyon residents would provide an acceptable alternative.
- Install anti-gridlock measures at all affected intersections on 7th Street / Entrada / West Channel Road as necessary.

We have received copies of responses / correspondence regarding the subject project from Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, LA City Councilman Bill Rosendahl, LADOT, the Pacific Palisades Community Council, and the BOCA Neighborhood group and state our support for their comments and suggestions. We specifically support the proposal for a working group to deal with project issues and recommend that this body be implemented for the duration of the project to deal with any unexpected issues that may arise. Thank you for your consideration of the specific suggestions of our association on behalf of the 1400 families in our canyon.

Sincerely,



George Wolfberg
President

c- Honorable Zev Yaroslavsky
Honorable Bill Rosendahl
Ron Kosinski, CalTrans
Steve Healow, FHA

attach

RESOLUTION of Pacific Palisades Community Council ADOPTED June 8, 2006

Whereas, the impact on the Pacific Palisades and particularly Santa Monica Canyon, of the proposed 10-month closure of the California Incline is potentially very detrimental to the local residents and could exacerbate existing traffic congestion and traffic safety issues; and

Whereas the PPCC understands that traffic will be routed via PCH to Entrada and West Channel Road where both intersections are already rated at the worst category ("F") for traffic congestion; and

Whereas, the PPCC believes there are steps in the design and construction of this important project that can provide relief from the significant, anticipated, negative impacts of this project. These include design parameters, configuration of detour routes and expedited construction.

Now, Therefore, the PPCC Resolves that the following matters should be considered in mitigation of the negative aspects of this project and that Councilman Bill Rosendahl's office be requested to make the amelioration of the negative impacts of this project a high priority of the City of Los Angeles in its dealings with the City of Santa Monica with respect to this project:

1. The PPCC recommends that the following be included in the design and implementation of this project:
 - Require around-the-clock construction effort [24/7] by the contractor with bonus for early completion and substantial penalties for preventable delays, such as was done with the Santa Monica Freeway reconstruction after the earthquake damage in the vicinity of La Cienega Blvd.
 - Provide enhanced signage to direct traffic away from Santa Monica Canyon, including signs in Santa Monica, at a minimum on the following Streets at Ocean Ave, and elsewhere, as appropriate:
 - California,
 - Wilshire Blvd.,
 - Santa Monica Blvd., (SR-2)
 - Colorado,
 - Broadway, and
 - Arizonadirecting traffic with arrows toward the pier/ramp to PCH with text: "All Beach Traffic" and "Construction Detour / California Incline Closed." Signs on Eastbound PCH should similarly direct traffic towards the pier/ramp/Lincoln Blvd. off-ramp, and NOT Santa Monica Canyon.
 - Develop a contingency plan to be implemented should Entrada Drive traffic back up to San Vicente Blvd. to divert traffic at 26th Street and other alternatives as identified by a thorough traffic study and implemented using programmable message boards, temporary signals, manual traffic control personnel or other necessary and appropriate measures.
 - Design the new incline to permit Right turns to reduce U-turns by tourists and visitors who realize they have passed the last opportunity to turn toward the City of Santa Monica.
2. RESOLVED FURTHER, that the Chairman of the PPCC is hereby authorized and instructed to write a letter to Councilman Rosendahl enclosing a copy of this duly adopted Resolution of the PPCC and to take whatever additional steps the Chairman may believe are necessary or appropriate to further the intent of this resolution.

Dated and Adopted: June 8, 2006