

**City of Carpinteria
City Council Minutes
Special Meeting
Council Chambers
Monday, June 25, 2012**

ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Al Clark at 4:08 p.m.

Councilmembers present:

Councilmember Carty
Councilmember Reddington (arrived at 4:20 p.m.)
Councilmember Armendariz (absent)
Vice Mayor Stein
Mayor Clark

Staff members present:

Dave Durlinger, City Manager
Peter Brown, City Attorney
Fidela Garcia, City Clerk
Charles Ebeling, Public Works Director/City Engineer/Traffic Engineer
Jonathan Leech, Contract Planner

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All present were led in the salute to the flag by Mayor Clark.

The City Council will meet for the following purpose:

1. Project History and Status Update for the Linden Avenue Casitas Pass Road Interchanges Project

Recommendation: That the City Council receive and file this project history and status update for the Linden and Casitas Pass Road Interchanges Project.

Charles Ebeling, Public Works Director/City Engineer/Traffic Engineer, provided introductory comments and introduced Greg Hart from Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG).

Greg Hart spoke regarding the history of the widening of the Highway 101 freeway to address traffic congestion; community involvement in seeking options; "A Lane and a Train" which involves widening the freeway with a new carpool lane from Santa Barbara to Ventura County and investing in a commuter rail system; investing in additional bus

transportation; working with employers to develop alternative work schedules; and SBCAG's traffic solutions division working with employers to encourage people to carpool and vanpool and utilize the Vista bus service. He stated that the first phase of the project was completed in the Montecito area. He also stated that construction had begun for Phase 2 at the project area from Carpinteria Creek to Mussel Shoals, which is scheduled to be completed in 2015. He further stated that Phase 3 would be to widen the freeway underneath the Casitas Pass and Linden Avenue bridges in addition to providing local transportation benefits. Lastly, he stated that Phase 4 would widen the freeway from Carpinteria Creek to Hot Springs Cabrillo Interchange in Santa Barbara.

Mr. Ebeling provided a PowerPoint presentation of the project history and status including: project component and purpose, the City's objectives and policies (General Plan and Local Coastal Plan), project history, project progress, funding and schedule, and next steps.

Councilmember Reddington stated that she and members of the Design Review Team had requested a three dimensional model and she inquired whether this was forthcoming. Mr. Ebeling responded that it was his understanding that Caltrans does not have the ability in-house to produce this type of model. Councilmember Reddington suggested that the City work with Caltrans to contract out this work. Mr. Ebeling responded that he would pursue this question with Caltrans. Councilmember Reddington inquired when the traffic workshop for Casitas Pass would be held. Mr. Ebeling responded that Caltrans was planning to bring this workshop forward later this summer.

Councilmember Carty stated that he was pleased to see the photograph of the bridges from the PowerPoint presentation and inquired how the photograph could be released to the public. Mr. Ebeling responded that a copy would be posted in the City Hall foyer and a reduced copy could be posted on the website. Councilmember Reddington suggested posting a copy in the library.

PUBLIC COMMENT CONCERNING THE AGENDIZED ITEM FOR THIS SPECIAL MEETING

Mary Pat O'Conner, 5750 Via Real, member of the Design Review Team (DRT), stated that she was surprised to learn that this special meeting was being held today. She also stated that she believed the DRT should have been encouraged to attend because information in the staff report and discussion by the City Council would be pertinent to the DRT. She expressed concern that Caltrans' design plans and the staff report contained discrepancies regarding measurements because the southbound off-ramp wall at Linden Avenue was originally presented at nine and one-half feet high and it was now represented as 22 feet high. Additionally, the length of the proposed Casitas Pass Bridge shown on Caltrans map was 200 feet; however, the staff report indicated it was 176 feet. Further, the Linden Avenue Bridge shown on Caltrans' map was 230 feet; however, the staff report indicated it was proposed to be 221 feet. She noted that the Caltrans map indicated it was not to scale; however, the City Council believed it had accurate

dimensions and made decisions based on inaccurate information. She stated that the Casitas Pass Bridge was being drawn to be seven lanes with five traffic lanes, two bicycle lanes, and two sidewalks; however, City staff would be studying an alternative four lane configuration. She noted that the DRT had questioned the needs and wants of the community and Caltrans indicated that one of the needs for this project is to heighten the bridges for truck traffic. She also noted that the staff report indicated that the current bridges are 14 feet 11 inches and 15 feet 6 inches; however, the Bailard Bridge is 14 feet 9 inches and the Santa Monica Bridge is 15 feet. She stated that the DRT requested a walk-through of the project to visualize the impact to the community and that she hoped the City Council would consider participating in this walk-through. She requested that story poles be installed to demonstrate a seven-lane bridge on Casitas Pass and the cloverleaf off-ramps being proposed. She asked the City Council to consider the following: maximum increase to the Casitas Pass Bridge be three traffic lanes; not approve the cloverleaf style for the on and off-ramps at Casitas Pass; direct Caltrans to build direct on and off-ramps to protect the environment and to stay within the goals of Carpinteria's General Plan; take into consideration that this construction project and the HOV project will simultaneously take place beginning in 2016 and continuing for several years; and that one project be completed before beginning another.

Councilmember Reddington expressed concern that the proposed Casitas Pass Bridge would be too large. She stated that the traffic models utilized were from 2007, the economy had changed since that time, and the model was based on certain professionals commuting. She suggested that three lanes be considered for Casitas Pass Bridge instead of four lanes. She stated that she agreed with Mrs. O'Conner regarding the cloverleaf style for the on and off-ramps in that they seemed grandiose and environmentally destructive. She also stated that she agreed with the installation of story poles. She questioned if the purpose of the project was to heighten the bridges then why were the bridges at the opposite ends of town not being raised.

Vice Mayor Stein stated that that rationale for installation of story poles was a good idea and that he would assume they would be installed after the final design. He also stated that he could see where the size of the bridges could be reduced; however, these would be addressed at a future meeting.

Mayor Clark stated that he was pleased that the City would take the effort to look at four lanes as opposed to five lanes. He also stated that he agreed the economy had changed since 2007 and that job growth and population had decreased. He noted that in June 2009 a staff report indicated that the demand for this project came from projects that were approved for outside the city limits. He stated that he was interested in hearing more about the conversion of agriculture land and the development of greenhouses. He noted that he contacted Supervisor Carbajal's office who indicated there had been no conversion of agriculture lands since that time and none were being planned. He stated that much of the data for the assumptions came from the City's General Plan and that a draft of the plan recommended a number of annexations. He also stated that these recommendations were shut down by the Coastal Commission and he questioned whether this recommendation

was taken from the draft General Plan rather than the final General Plan. He further stated that Supervisor Carbajal's office was unable to provide information regarding whether greenhouses had been developed or were planned. He questioned an assumption made with respect to traffic on Casitas Pass Bridge related to land use decisions made by other jurisdictions and whether this was in reference to the General Plan or from land use decisions in Ventura and Santa Barbara that affects traffic through Carpinteria. He indicated that he would assume that once both bridges are rebuilt that more people will use the Linden Avenue Bridge. He stated that the voters approved Measure A which included mass transit components. He suggested that Caltrans revisit the assumptions, particularly the socioeconomic data. He stated that he could not support a five lane project at this time based upon the early assumptions.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m. by Mayor Clark.

Al Clark, Mayor

ATTEST:

Fidela Garcia, CMC
City Clerk