

Coastal Mobility and Livability Working Group (CMLWG)

DRAFT Summary Notes

Meeting No. 5

April 25, 2017

5:30 – 8:30 pm

Council Chambers, Encinitas Civic Center

505 S. Vulcan Avenue

Encinitas, California 92024

A copy of the CMLWG meeting agenda and packet may be viewed by the public in the Planning and Building Department lobby during normal business hours and on the City's webpage at <http://www.encinitasca.gov/index.aspx?page=529>

1. **AGENDA REVIEW**

2. **CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL/ACCEPT MEETING #3 NOTES**

The CMLWG is comprised of thirteen (13) regular members. The CMLWG is also comprised of a representative from each of the City's Commissions to serve as ex-officio members.

Regular Members

1. Carris Rhodes, Leucadia 101
2. Brett Farrow, Cardiff 101
3. Tom Cozens, Encinitas 101
4. Jim Benedetti, Chamber
5. Richard Risner, Preserve Cardiff Rail Corridor
6. Jody Hubbard, Yes Rail Trail
7. Rahul Deshpande, Cardiff T.C.
8. William Morrison, Leucadia T.C.
9. Judy Berlfein, Bike/Walk Encinitas
10. Mikayla McFadden, Paul Ecke School

Ex Officio Commission Members

1. Greg Drakos, Planning
2. Peter Kohl, Traffic and Safety
3. Joy Lyndes, Environmental
4. Judy Thum, Arts
5. Gabriella Gjata, Youth
6. Kris Stewart, Senior
7. John Gjata, Parks and Recreation

11. Robert Hemphill, Engaged Citizen
12. Ron Dodge, Engaged Citizen
13. Carmen Barnard, Latino/Hispanic

At this meeting, 16 members that have been formally appointed were present. Four were absent, (Carmen Barnard, Joy Lyndes and Judy Thum).

3. PUBLIC COMMENT (15 MINUTES)

Three speaker slips were presented during the public comment agenda item by Chris Swanner, Julie Thunder and Ed Thielicke.

Chris Swanner from Preserve Cardiff Rail Corridor spoke in support of the west side Coastal Rail Trail (CRT) alignment. He stated that there is no debate on the location and that it has been settled through the City Council determination. He reminded people that the California Coastal Commission still needs to approve the alignment. He is speaking to ask that anyone that can attend go and speak in favor. He also asked that the CMLWG write a letter of support of City Council determination. He directed people to go to an online petition on the Preserve Cardiff Rail Corridor Facebook page.

Julie Thunder from Preserve Cardiff Rail Corridor spoke in support of the SANDAG west side Coastal Rail Trail alignment. She expressed that it would be an asset to the city and requested that the CMLWG show unilateral support. Her request was for the WG to write a formal letter to California Coastal Commission to vote yes. She further explained that if this alignment is approved then, efforts can be concentrated on other San Elijo improvements. Julie asked that the rail corridor not be destroyed from its original state and that the support for the CRT should be on the CMLS agenda.

Ed Thielicke reiterated the same sentiments as the previous two speakers. Ed stated that Coast Highway 101 is most appropriate location for the CRT. He stated that the City has a lot of skin in the game if the CCC does not move forward with the City's preferred alignment. He asked that people walk the trail in Cardiff and noted the bloom of the flowers is beautiful. He further stated that no one will walk through that and say let's take that away.

4. SAN CLEMENTE AUDIBLE WARNING SYSTEM/QUIET ZONE

Tom Bonigut, Deputy Public Works Director from the City of San Clemente presented on their efforts for the Quiet Zone and Audible Warning System along their rail corridor. He described what the conditions of the rail looked like prior to the process, which is similar to Encinitas in that it was an unrestricted rail corridor located right on the beach. The City includes five miles of coast line and of that, two and half miles are active heavy

public use, which later became their beach trail. There were only a few access points and people would cross the tracks unsafely.

Mr. Bonigut explained that the Orange County Regional Transportation Authority is the owner of the rail right-of-way (ROW) and Metrolink is the landlord. The ROW is approximately 50 feet wide.

In the late 1990s, San Clemente City staff decided to update their General Plan to include a coastal beach trail to increase safety and provide more access. The first plan was rejected back in early 2000s. Their staff conducted public workshops and hired consultants to come up with a new plan in 2003 and fully completed the trail in 2008 (built in two phases). After this process, the city began to deal with the train noise.
Cost: \$15 million

There was a minimalist environmental approach on design. Fifteen feet of rail centerline fence exists now, dictated by rail agencies. CPUC staff wanted an active signage program. Fencing was a big deal to agencies and the community. As part of a settlement agreement CPUC came up with three fence designs to choose from. The least visible was chosen to ensure ocean views preserved. Other types of fencing included as well but in high use areas they have the least visible fence choice.

Essentially a crossing was added to all coastal access locations identified in their land use plan. Four CPUC at-grade to 9 at-grade crossings and a total of 16 in a 2.5 mile stretch. The idea was that you would not have to go far to cross the tracks safely and get to a beach access. Clear direction from the community was that they did not want to go more than 300 feet. Two of the crossings at the northern most part of the city is a quiet zone. Most crossings were not eligible because they were pedestrian only. The pedestrian only crossings are operating under a waiver through the Federal Rail Authority with an Audible Warning System (AWS).

Federal train horn rule changed in 2006, train has to sound horn at every crossing. The federal and state agencies conflicted on who had authority to allow for the AWS. Bluffs and residential in most areas near tracks several hundred feet away. OCTA very cooperative and paid a large portion.

In 2011 a north beach quiet zone was achieved. 24/7 quiet zone and it works well. Good for five years and recently renewed for another five year period. Quiet zone could not be extended any further. Looked at options to book end the entire city if you have a vehicle public crossing but the other end was Surfrider/Camp Pendelton which would create a 16 mile quiet zone and that was not favorable. Then they analyzed the pier location crossing on making that a public crossing but it was problematic. Local state representatives to sponsor legislation but was too tough. Finally, AWS was pursued. CPUC was thought to have the authority for AWS but there was a legal challenge and it

was determined that FRA approval was needed for AWS. FRA, Charlie Hagood, saw what the beach trail was doing and was working. There were not as many illegal crossings and it allowed the waiver process because of it. Working with OCTA came up with three options, Quiet Zone for 2.5 miles, created diagnostic studies, plan b was to use AWS (modified wayside horn with lower sound), third option, allow quiet zone at pedestrian crossing. FRA approved AWS at 7 crossings. As a condition of the waiver, they had to demonstrate the AWS would be safe. FRA wanted more fencing to close gaps. Extended fencing and had to run it by Coastal Commission. North from Riviera along the 2.5 mile stretch there is fencing. People were happy that the train noise reduced that they didn't mind the fencing. \$23 million cost, beach trail \$15, Safety upgrades required and rider on insurance policy (\$70k a year for a quiet zone coverage). Maintenance costs not too expensive.

Working well and people overall happy and noise is localized but way better than the train noise. Pier station and Amtrak station, if train stops too long then the signal hasn't reset and the train still sounds the horn. Besides that overall works well.

Questions from Working Group:

Before this process, did the City have many suicides? Yes. Has the suicide rate reduced since adding fencing? No, not on suicides, but we have not had any preventable accidents. Very low incidents have occurred in trespassing.

Are dual train tracks planned for San Clemente? Single tracks right now and hoping they will not get dual track. No known plans.

How many trains per day? Approximately 50 plus or minus trains come through the City, mostly passenger trains.

What is the City of San Clemente Population? Approximately 68 thousand people.

You discussed three options to FRA, do you think they learned something from San Clemente and do you think they would be more open to allowing other jurisdictions Quiet Zones at pedestrian crossings? Possibly, he does see some change in mindset because of the proof that shows people are using the crossings and even the train operators are seeing a change. Last year FRA was soliciting comments on the train horn rule.

Does the beach rail trail fulfil the Coastal Rail Trail requirement? He guesses it does. Never the intent but supposes it is. Coastal conservancy grant was received to assist in construction.

Is the beach trail for bikes and pedestrians? Does it have a classification? Yes, it is a multi-use path. The trail is very popular and congested. Trail rules and operating hours

are in place. How wide and narrow is the trail? Narrowest is 8 feet of actual trail and widens 10 to 12 feet because it becomes part of dg trail.

Is the trail lit? Some high use areas are lit but not much to respect the night sky.

Were many retaining walls required? We did not have too many throughout. The problem area was Mariposa Point. There just so happened to be just enough room to fit the trail without walls.

Is the trail located within the railroad right-of-way? Yes, the trail is within the railroad ROW. The City of San Clemente received a license agreement with a 20 year lease with OCTA if the City will maintain it.

5. VERDI CROSSING LOCATION

Parsons Brinckerhoff and City staff presented three concept alternatives and draft siting criteria to the Working Group. Feedback received included making sure the consultant utilize curved lines in their design, do not focus on existing conditions for siting (ex. If no sidewalk exists, do not let that discourage the location if it is known that it is a heavily used location), follow the natural crossings that are occurring today and focus on those locations, aesthetics and cost are the two highest importance in the decision making, place the entrances to the trail to the undercrossing between Verdi and Montgomery so that members of the public from either side can be funneled to the undercrossing, and all preferred to flip the ramp to the south side.

6. DRAFT GUIDING THEMES

The draft Guiding Themes for rail, active transportation, parking and overarching categories was discussed. Overall, the working group did not have issues with the rail themes. One concern was raised on whether or not we have to accept double tracking within the City of Encinitas limits.

The working group agreed that the active transportation guiding themes were misrepresented. The way they were written did not feel the focus was on active transportation, rather it sounded more car centric, not weighted and felt that safety for walkers, bikers and trail users was not emphasized enough. It was discussed that perhaps a circulation section be separate to address the automobile, parking and transit. A question was raised on why the parking comment was not under the parking section. There was concern that accessibility to bus stops was not included. The working group discussed that the first three Highway 101 Corridor themes could possibly be grouped into one overall theme and that the fourth bullet had many critical items within it that needed to be more weighted. The way the themes were written was

too specific. Lastly, questions were raised on how the themes were put together and whether or not everything was captured.

The parking themes needed to cover a parking structure topic to some extent and when the consultants do; carrying capacity and congestion etc. should be studied in determining implementing more parking. The first theme was not clear enough. For example, possibly modify it to state “too much time to locate a parking spot” or similar. Shuttle use to reduce parking need should be addressed and finding intercept parking spots.

The overarching themes could possibly include mobility for transit, electrical vehicle use and shuttle systems.

7. DESIGN GUIDELINE PALETTE

The CMLWG established a Subcommittee to develop design guidelines for the CMLS. The following members volunteered to be on the Subcommittee:

Robert Hemphill
Jim Benedetti
John Gjata
William Morrison
Richard Risner
Brett Farrow

8. NEXT STEPS

Staff discussed the possibility of the next working group meeting to be on May 15, 2017 as well as in June 2017. At the time of the meeting, it was anticipated that two meetings plus an open house were planned for the remainder of the project.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT CONTINUED

No other public comments were received.

Meeting concluded at 9:00 PM.