



Citizens Planning Association

COMMENT LETTERS & STATEMENTS

May 11 – June 30, 2009

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Sandman Inn Redevelopment Project (DEIR & Concept Review)

5/14/09 South County Land Use Committee statement to Santa Barbara Planning Commission

*Three-part statement presented by Paul Hernadi (CPA Board member),
Mary Louise Days (CPA Board member) & Naomi Kovacs (Executive Director)*

Good afternoon, Planning Commissioners:

I am Paul Hernadi, speaking today for the Citizens Planning Association's South Coast Land Use Committee. I will be followed by two of my colleagues, and the three of us will summarize the Committee's letter, submitted to you four days ago, on the recent Draft EIR addressing two versions of the Sandman Inn Redevelopment proposal.

In an earlier scoping comment letter, we argued at some length that the May 2008 Initial Study failed to reveal the proposed redevelopment's full environmental impacts. We find the present Draft EIR's approach to the original Project similarly flawed but are delighted that the applicant decided to propose a more attractive and far more sustainable alternative.

We trust that you, like the Architectural Board of Review, will state a strong preference for the Applicant's Alternative over the original Project. Accordingly, we will focus our present comments on that alternative. But if needed, we will submit by the May 22 comment deadline a detailed account of what we perceive as major flaws in the Draft EIR's approach to the original Project.

Here is an overview of our observations:

Our second speaker will highlight some of the reasons why the Draft EIR should have declared the Applicant's Alternative environmentally superior to the original Project. Our third speaker will in turn indicate why we believe that even the Applicant's Alternative could and should be improved further.

The problems associated with the Applicant's Alternative are, of course, far less troublesome than the problems associated with the original Project. In fact, we believe that most of the Alternative's problems stem from its overdevelopment of the 3-and-a-half-acre parcel which is to be actually occupied by the residences. In other words, the problems would not have arisen if the maximum allowable residential density had not been calculated on the basis of the 4-and-a-half-acre total area of two separate parcels which are to be respectively occupied by the redevelopment's residential and commercial components.

Our three-part presentation as a whole should make it clear that a residential component with fewer than the now proposed 21 units per acre might yield an attractive redevelopment welcome to its neighborhood and an asset to the entire city.

Good afternoon. I am Mary Louise Days, speaking for the Citizens Planning Association's South Coast Land Use Committee, I will highlight five aspects of environmental superiority that the Draft EIR implicitly attributes to the Applicant's Alternative.

1. The Applicant's Alternative significantly reduces the height and bulk of the original Project's commercial component. Thereby, it becomes more compatible with the neighborhood, avoids

obstructing existing mountain views, and removes the original Project's need to request a transfer of development rights from another location.

2. The Applicant's Alternative reduces the original Project's trip generation potential and parking needs by about 40 and 20 percent,, respectively. Thereby, it moderates the proposed redevelopment's adverse impact on mid-block congestion and on the number of U-turns associated with the right-turn-only egress and ingress.
3. The Applicant's Alternative features significant reductions in water and sewer usage, as well as in solid waste generation.
4. The Applicant's Alternative moves five residential units further away from State Street. Thereby, it reduces from 7 to 2 the number of units requiring closed windows and built-in air conditioning or mechanical ventilation for indoor noise mitigation. The same spatial rearrangement also exposes fewer residential units to the worst effects of traffic-generated air pollution.
5. The Applicant's Alternative avoids the construction of a large three-story hotel and the associated need for the underground parking of 111 cars. Thereby, it reduces the air quality, noise, and traffic impacts of the construction period by almost half a year (from 29 to 24 months).

Good afternoon, Commissioners. I'm Naomi Kovacs, Executive Director of CPA, speaking on behalf of our South County Land Use Committee as our third and last speaker today, in order to summarize our recommendations for making the Applicant's Alternative even better.

It's my understanding that Beatrice Rosales has donated her time to me, and while I will attempt to keep my comments brief, I appreciate you allowing me to use her time if need be.

Please consider the following three recommendations:

First, we support the Draft EIR's Single Driveway Alternative and urge that the single driveway access be located between the two presently proposed driveways because one of them is too close to the State/Hitchcock intersection and the other is too close to the driveway serving the AAA parking lot.

Our second recommendation is to reduce the likely number of car trips for recreational purposes, and we urge the provision of at least one small playground and at least one public basketball hoop (as far as possible from State Street traffic) and the transformation of one condominium into a community facility for friendly gatherings, child daycare, and after-school activities.

Third, we note that the project site is home for one of the very few "urban forests" in the uptown business district and urge the retention of many of the 210 trees with beneficial impact on visual aesthetics and air quality.

Implementing these recommendations for circulation, recreation, and tree protection would probably entail reducing the number of market-rate units. We note that such reduction could in fact be required by the Planning Commission if it insisted that the residential parcel's density be based on its actual size (which is 3-and-a-half acres) rather than on the 4-and-a-half-acre total area which is respectively

occupied by a residential and a commercial parcel. We can see at least three reasons for reducing the now-proposed residential density of 21 units per acre. Each of these reasons has to do with the strain of over-development on the city's natural and infrastructural resources.

First, market rate housing is a job generator with predictable adverse impact on our jobs/housing imbalance.

Second, the daily influx of tens of thousands of commuters and tourists should not have been ignored in the Draft EIR's cumulative analysis of our present and likely future demand for public facilities and public services including water supply, waste disposal, police and fire protection, as well as emergency services and road capacity for evacuations.

Last but not least, several recent developments affecting public health, welfare, and safety must not be ignored when determining allowable growth parcel by parcel. These developments include the decreasing availability of state water, the increased siltation of local lakes and reservoirs, and the increasing year-round wild fire danger.

To sum up: **Our committee urges you to reject the original proposed project and to steer the Applicant's Alternative toward greater environmental sustainability.**

Thank you.

PH;luc

Sandman Inn Redevelopment Project (DEIR)

5/21/09 South County Land Use Committee letter to Project Planner

21 May 2009

Allison DeBusk, Planner
Community Development Dept.
Santa Barbara, CA

Sent via email to: adebusk@santabarbaraca.gov

RE: Sandman Inn Redevelopment Project DEIR

Dear Ms. DeBusk,

The Citizen Planning Association's South County Land Use Committee appreciates this opportunity to submit the following comments on the April 2009 Draft EIR about the Sandman Inn Redevelopment Project.

A. Explicitly or implicitly, the DEIR presents ample evidence for the environmental superiority of the Applicant's Alternative over the original Project. For example:

1. Less impact on mountain views and neighborhood character.
2. Less water and sewage usage, as well as less solid waste generation, by the Alternative's commercial component –

Water:	7.44 acre feet per year versus 19.53 afy
Sewer:	6.63 afy versus 16.94 afy
Solid Waste:	18.98 tons per year versus 84.80 tpy

The respective total impact figures, which include the impact of the 73 residences as well, are of course much higher.

3. Less traffic congestion (about 40% fewer average daily trips and 20% fewer parking spaces for the two parcels).
4. Less exposure of the residents to traffic noise and air pollution (2 instead of 7 dwelling units requiring closed windows and air conditioning for indoor noise mitigation).
5. Less exposure of the public to air and noise pollution during the period of demolition and construction (24 months instead of 29 months).
6. Less risk of water run-off to other properties and of eventual discharge into two nearby creeks, as well as into the drinking water well located near their confluence. The resulting increase in the on-site retention of storm-water would help protect the floodplain south of Highway 101. This is especially important should conditions outstrip the "25-year storm event" referenced in the DEIR.

B. In view of the above selective list of significant differences we question why the DEIR stops short of declaring the Applicant's Alternative "environmentally superior."

We also note a few additional shortcomings in the DEIR. For example:

1. The DEIR lacks explicit analytical reference to the city's policy goal, expressed in numerous documents, of improving the jobs/housing imbalance. In particular, the job-generating potential of the 62 market-rate dwelling units is completely ignored. Furthermore, no comparison is offered between the predictably higher number of low-paying jobs generated by the original Project than by the Applicant's Alternative. Last but not least, we believe that the DEIR should have addressed the environmental desirability of transforming some of the market-rate condominiums into employer-supported rental housing for low-income employees of the 106-room hotel (original Project) or the 14,494 square feet of office space (Applicant's Alternative).
2. Several circumstances should not have been ignored when discussing the cumulative impact of growth on natural resources and public safety. The relevant factors include the decreasing availability of State Water due to last year's court decision about the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, the increased siltation of local lakes and reservoirs due to large fires, and the increasing year-round wild fire danger widely attributed to climate change.
3. The project's site-specific, block-specific, and larger-scale cumulative implications for traffic and traffic-related air pollution are under-explored because the DEIR overlooks or dismisses some pertinent observations, intersection turning movement counts, road segment and collision statistics, as well as longer-term predictions that conflict with the information it relies on. Some of the evidence in question was referenced in our 8-page scoping comments of June 24, 2008 – a document included in the present DEIR, but insufficiently considered by it. We will repeat or amplify some of last year's arguments should they still be relevant at the time when the Final EIR is submitted for certification.
4. The DEIR lacks explicit analytical demonstrations of policy consistency with the Municipal Code's applicable parcel-by-parcel density limits. In this respect we note that the applicant claims the combined area of the residential and the commercial parcels (4.58 acres) for the purpose of determining the allowable density of the residences proposed for the residential parcel (3.52 acres). Likewise, the DEIR fails to analyze the extent to which the SD-2 special district's height requirement has or has not been met "in compliance with all applicable regulations." Section 28.45.008 D3 of the Municipal Code reads as follows: "Building Height. Three (3) stories not exceeding forty-five (45) feet and not exceeding the total floor area of a two (2) story building (thirty (30) feet) which could be constructed on the lot *in compliance with all applicable regulations*" [*emphasis added*]. Yet the applicant's diagrams of the buildable lot area and the associated calculations address only the required set-backs and ignore the required open space and the indispensable space for pedestrian connectivity, driveways, surface parking, and the like.
5. The project site is not within the half-mile radius standard from a public park as recommended by the National Recreation and Park Association. Yet while the DEIR recognizes this fact, it does not address the issue of the high desirability of the provision of at least one playground and one or two basket ball hoops for the residents of the proposed 73 condominiums, 41 of which feature three bedrooms and can be expected to house children and adolescents.

6. The daily influx of tens of thousands of commuters and tourists should not have been ignored in the DEIR's cumulative analyses of our likely future demand for public facilities and public services (e.g., water supply, waste disposal, police and fire protection, emergency services, and road capacity for evacuations). In view of the recently increased gang violence, we call attention to the DEIR's disturbing silence about the following "base-line" situation, noted in *Santa Barbara General Plan Update 2030: Conditions, Trends and Issues* (August 2005), 152 of 350: "Currently the City of Santa Barbara operates with 1.58 [police] officers per 1,000 population – very close to the mean average for similar sized cities [as determined by the International City/County Management Association]. However, when the daily influx of 40,000 to 100,000 [tourists and commuters] is added to the resident population, the ratio of police officers per 1,000 is effectively reduced to between 1.1 and 0.75."

C. We find that the unusual bifurcated format of the DEIR lacks sufficient clarity and believe that the Final EIR should either focus more sharply on evaluating the Applicant's Alternative, preferred by ABR and Planning Commission, or engage in a more systematic and more conclusive comparison of the original Project and the Applicant's Alternative as each relates to the No Project Alternative.

The presentation of relevant data should be made more user-friendly by the inclusion of a number of tripartite tables comparing the existing conditions, the original Project, and the Applicant's Alternative in terms of such quantifiable impacts as the following: peak-hour trips, average daily trips, projected consumption of potable water, generation of sewage inputs, etc. Separate tables should compare the current Sandman Inn's building heights, setbacks, FAR's, and the number of its mature trees with the projected results of both versions of the proposed redevelopment so that better qualitative judgments about the preservation of mountain views and of the site's feel of naturalness and openness can be rendered. Last but not least, the consultant should clearly designate which analyzed land use variant constitutes the "Environmentally Superior Alternative," and upon what factors the designation is based.

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

Sincerely,

Naomi Kovacs
Executive Director

PH,GW;luc,nk

PXP (Tranquillon Ridge) / State Lands Commission
5/21/09 EDC Press Release on behalf of EDC, GOO & CPA

For Release: Immediate
May 21, 2009

Contact: David Landecker
(805) 963-1622

**E.D.C. Statement Regarding May Budget Revision Proposal
on PXP's Tranquillon Ridge Project**

The Environmental Defense Center, for itself and on behalf of our clients Get Oil Out! and Citizens Planning Association, recognizes and applauds the State of California's longstanding bipartisan support for a healthy coastal economy and an ongoing commitment to reduce or eliminate the environmental threats inherent in offshore oil drilling. It is precisely for that reason that we entered into a groundbreaking agreement with Plains Exploration and Production (PXP).

Our agreement, for the first time, provides firm end dates for offshore oil production facilities, requiring cessation of all operations at Platform Irene (from which PXP will extract oil from the Tranquillon Ridge field) in 13 years and for the termination of all operations on three other platforms offshore Santa Barbara County (known as the Point Arguello project) in nine years. These platforms would otherwise operate indefinitely. The agreement also provides for removal of the two onshore oil processing facilities that serve those four platforms, offsets of all greenhouse gases generated by the project, payment for additional local air quality benefits, and for the conveyance of almost 4,000 acres of ecologically important land on the Burton Mesa and on the Gaviota Coast into public trust in perpetuity. The agreement represents an unprecedented opportunity to end oil development in not just one, but two locations off the Santa Barbara County coast and to close two major onshore processing facilities. It continues to have our strong support.

Nonetheless, we today join with many other environmental groups in expressing our grave concern about the May Budget Revision procedural proposal to legislatively overturn the decision of the State Lands Commission, which rejected the Tranquillon Ridge project proposal pursuant to its jurisdictional authority. We believe that the concerns raised by the State Lands Commission can and should be addressed. Once these concerns have been addressed, we believe that the Commission should reconsider its denial of the Tranquillon Ridge project.

California has a rich tradition of independent boards and commissions which continue to put California at the forefront of environmental innovation and protection. Our organizations have consistently defended their right to take action consistent with their duty to protect the natural resources of the State. We are confident that utilizing the established process will result in a project that furthers our ultimate goal eliminating oil development offshore of Santa Barbara County which can be approved by the State Lands Commission.

Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan (FEIR)

5/26/09 Comprehensive Planning Committee letter to Project Manager

26 May 2009

Derek Johnson, Project Manager
Planning & Development Department
Office of Long Range Planning
County of Santa Barbara, CA

Sent via email to: djohnso@co.santa-barbara.ca.us

RE: Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan—Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR)

Dear Mr. Johnson,

For 49 years the Citizens Planning Association and its members have been dedicated to sound community planning. As you know, we have been very supportive of comprehensive planning and the Community Plan process, and have provided input in the Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan (Plan) process over the past several years.

Our Comprehensive Planning Committee will submit comments on the Plan's FEIR prior to the June 3rd hearing in the south county. In the meantime, however, we wanted to at least make it known for tomorrow's hearing in the north county that **we support the Community Plan and staff's recommendation to adopt the Downzone Alternative**, which the FEIR correctly concludes will have fewer impacts and therefore is the environmentally superior alternative.

Sincerely,

Naomi Kovacs
Executive Director

Venoco Ellwood Marine Terminal Lease

5/26/09 EDC letter on behalf of CPA to CA State Lands Commission

See Consent Calendar Attachment A

1298 Coast Village Road

6/2/09 South County Land Use Committee letter & statement to SB City Council
Statement presented by Naomi Kovacs (Executive Director)

2 June 2009

Mayor Blum & Council Members
Santa Barbara City Council

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

Re: 1298 Coast Village Road – Appeal of ABR’s Preliminary Approval

Dear Mayor Blum & Council Members,

The purpose of this brief letter is to convey to you the Citizens Planning Association (CPA) South County Land Use Committee’s **support of the appeal** before you regarding the Architectural Board of Review’s preliminary approval of the project at 1298 Coast Village Road.

Unfortunately, several **serious issues remain unresolved with this project** in its current state.

We are dismayed, and would think that you would be, too, that neither staff nor the ABR actually responded to Council’s direction that there should be “substantial reductions” in this project’s size, bulk and scale. That has simply has not happened.

The impacts on traffic, views, and aesthetics remain substantial.

The project is still completely out of character with almost all of the commercial buildings on Coast Village Road and the village-like feel of the shopping area. It is also completely inconsistent with the semi-rural residential area that is immediately north of the project on Olive Mill Road.

We continue to oppose the rezone for this project. The original intent in zoning the northern parcel as R-2 was to provide a buffer to the residentially zoned properties to the north and west. The rezone would eliminate this buffer and extend the commercial zone up Olive Mill Road resulting in serious adverse effects on the long-existing residential uses to the north. Residents should be able to rely upon the city to maintain the existing zoning that buffers them from commercial uses. This 3-story project is completely out of character with both its commercial and residential neighbors. Rezoning would provide no public benefit and would set a dangerous precedent for future developments on Coast Village Road.

Furthermore, this project requests an LCP amendment. The highest priority of the Coastal Act is to provide visitor services, not residential uses (which is the lowest priority). Therefore, approving the rezone for this project would be to act contrary to the stated intention/priority of the Coastal Act.

For these and other reasons provided to you by the appellants, **we urge you to uphold the appeal before you.**

Sincerely,

Naomi Kovacs
Executive Director

Plan Santa Barbara

6/16/09 General Plan Update Committee letter to SB Planning Commission

from **Paul Hernadi** <hernadip@english.ucsb.edu>
to Community Development PC Secretary <pcsecretary@santabarbaraca.gov>
cc Naomi Kovacs <naomi@citizensplanning.org>,
Mary Louise Days <mldays@cox.net>
date Tue, Jun 16, 2009 at 11:47 AM
subject Plan Santa Barbara at Planning Commission on June 18, 2009

Re: Plan Santa Barbara at Planning Commission on June 18, 2009

Dear Chair Larson and Planning Commissioners:

Please find attached the EIR scoping comments of February 12, 2009, submitted to Barbara Shelton by **CPA's General Plan Update Committee**.

We considered sending you the scoping comments prior to your May 9th meeting which was to address staff's EIR status report. That meeting was cancelled due to the raging Jesusita fire. But the concerns expressed in the attachment are also relevant to your agenda for June 18th.

Since the cancelled meeting would have elaborated on the proposed Adaptive Management program as well, we want to direct your attention especially to the following sentences in the attached scoping letter's section on **"Benchmarks for adaptive management goals"**:

We urge that the EIR propose environmentally sound benchmarks for the "adaptive management" of various growth scenarios. Both the annually permissible new commercial square footage and the annually permissible number of new market rate dwelling units can then be calculated according to the progress made or not made toward such goals as improved jobs/housing balance and enhanced social equity. Particularly important is to monitor the respective shares of new housing affordable to our very low, low, moderate, and middle income workforce and to other city residents with special needs. [...] The monitoring of growth should be coordinated with the monitoring of changes in resource availability -- for example, whether sufficient funds have been appropriated to enhance public transportation, increase sewer capacity, or improve the quality of recycled water.

We believe that Plan Santa Barbara should include powerful tools for adaptive management along the lines suggested above and thank you very much in advance for considering our input.

Paul Hernadi
for CPA's General Plan Update Committee

Paul Hernadi
hernadip@english.ucsb.edu

 **2009-02-12 GPUC letter re EIR scoping.pdf**
44K [View](#) [Download](#)

Plan Santa Barbara

6/17/09 South County Land Use Committee letter & 6/18/09 statement to SB Planning Commission
Statement presented by Cathie McCammon (South County Land Use Committee member)

The following was sent via email on 6/17/09 to the Planning Commission,
with cc to Paul Casey, John Leadbetter, Bettie Weiss, Beatrise Gularte and the City Council.

Citizens Planning Association's South County Land Use Committee

June 17, 2009
Planning Commission

RE: Plan Santa Barbara, June 18 Agenda

I am conveying this to you on behalf of Citizens Planning Association's South County Land Use Committee. At our meeting this week, the Committee voted to ask you to continue this item for at least two weeks. They wanted more time to fully understand the Staff Report and its Exhibits, because they believed that this material was very important and needed to be studied and grasped more fully. Some of this report is hard to follow, because it is not always a simple this language is to be replaced by this language. In some cases the replacement language is not spelled out.

However that being said, the Committee did focus on two items that are clearly important. On Exhibit C, Page 1 of 7, they feel very strongly that the language under Live Within Resources "The City shall live within its resources by balancing development with available resources and maintaining the established character of the City." needs to be retained and should not be replaced. This language more clearly mirrors the language in the Charter and says exactly what many people want. It is much less ambiguous than the proposed Policy Preference LUGM Goal. The Committee believes strongly that it is important the language of the General Plan be clear, understandable and straightforward. So, we urge you to retain the existing General Plan language.

On Page 3 of 7, Under City Character and Quality goals, they wish to retain "Maintain the character of Santa Barbara primarily as a low-density residential community." Here the words are important in that they address the character of the whole City. This in part reflects the mind-set of many people. They do not want the idea of a low density city to be lost. They do not believe that low density should just apply to single family residential areas. It is somewhat unclear what the sentence "We are now characterizing as "small town character." refers to. If it is to only apply to single family residential areas then this is not acceptable. Small town character should apply city-wide.

Cathie McCammon