

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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W11b, 11c & 11d

ADDENDUM

April 13, 2021

TO: Coastal Commissioners and Interested Parties

FROM: South Central Coast District Staff

SUBJECT: **ADDENDUM TO ITEMS W11b, 11c & 11d, APPEALS NO. A-4-SBC-20-0065, A-4-STB-20-0078, and A-4-STB-20-0079 FOR THE COMMISSION MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 2021**

The purpose of this addendum is to clarify the appellant for appeal number A-4-SBC-20-0065 is Cars Are Basic (CAB) and to respond to public comments received since publication of the staff report. The correspondence received is included under the correspondence tab for this item on the Commission's website.

For appeal number A-4-SBC-20-0065, Cars Are Basic (CAB) is the appellant. Scott Wenz is the president of CAB and submitted the appeal on behalf of CAB.

I. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FROM APPELLANTS AND INTERESTED PARTIES; STAFF'S RESPONSE TO CORRESPONDENCE FROM APPELLANTS

On April 8 and April 9, 2021, the Commission received two letters, one from each appellant, Thomas Becker and Cars Are Basic, in opposition to the staff recommendation of no substantial issue for the three appeals for the Olive Mill and San Ysidro Roundabout Projects. The Commission also received four additional letters from interested parties expressing opposition to the staff recommendation of no substantial issue. Three of the letters, from Shelley Badat, Pamela Boehr, and Paulina Conn, were received on April 7, 2021. One letter from Harry Rabin was received on April 10, 2021. The Ventura office also received a phone call from Nancy Gram on April 12, 2021 expressing opposition to the staff recommendation.

The first point raised in the two letters from the appellants (Mr. Becker and Cars Are Basic) is that the 1993 Montecito Community Action Plan states that, in 1993, the Olive Mill intersection was operating at a level of service (LOS) A or B, and the San Ysidro intersection was operating at a LOS A in the AM¹. Staff assumes that the appellants are referring to the 1992 Montecito Community Plan, which is a component of the Santa Barbara County LCP. Commission staff is familiar with the 1992 Montecito Community Plan because it is certified as part of the Santa Barbara County LCP, but is not aware of a 1993 Montecito Community Action Plan. Mr. Becker's letter further notes that a 2017 intersection evaluation showed that the San Ysidro intersection will see substantial improvements in LOS when the offramp project at Hot Springs Road is completed and open. Mr. Becker has submitted a proposal which he purports will lower VMT compared to the roundabouts adopted by the applicant. Mr. Becker contends that his proposal, combined with the completion of the offramp project at Hot Spring Road, will reduce VMT through the intersection by 15% from 2014 levels, and the LOS may very well achieve a LOS C or better in 2040.

Commission staff would note that LOS is a metric that measures automobile delay at intersections and congestion on highway segments. There are six levels of service, A through F, which relate to driving conditions from best to worst; LOS A represents free-flow conditions with no congestion, and LOS F represents severe congestion with stop-and-go conditions. The 1992 Montecito Community Plan states that the San Ysidro and North Jameson Lane intersection was operating at a LOS E during PM Peak Hour and the 2030 buildout-without-improvement scenario would result in a LOS F. The Montecito Community Plan states that LOS C is generally the minimum acceptable level of service for County intersections and roadways, and LOS B has been selected as the minimum level of service for most Montecito intersections and roadways. Therefore, the intersection was operating at below acceptable LOS at the time that plan was completed.

Commission staff did not identify any data in the 1992 Montecito Community Plan that indicates what the existing LOS of the Olive Mill Road intersection was at the time that plan was prepared. However, the Montecito Community Plan identifies Olive Mill Road as an interchange in which improvements would be needed in the future. The City and County have also indicated that the Olive Mill Roundabout is expected to reduce traffic delay and improve the overall LOS at the intersection from LOS F (extreme congestion or considerable delays) to LOS C (minimal delays) according to the Traffic Operations Analysis Report by Omni Means dated November 2019.

Regarding Mr. Becker's alternative proposal that he purports will reduce VMT, his appeal stated that he submitted this alternative to the Highway 101 HOV and roundabout projects, which proposed instituting planning and development policies that would reduce VMT on Highway 101 and into the project intersections without needing construction. This issue is addressed in the staff report, and Commission staff did not receive any details about the proposal that would support the Mr. Becker's position that the appellant's alternative would reduce VMT through the intersection by 15% compared to 2014 levels.

The second issue raised by the appellants' letters is that the Olive Mill and San Ysidro roundabouts are specifically intended to support increases in traffic volumes and VMT, and

¹ A LOS analysis for an intersection studies its capacity during the AM and PM peak hours when traffic flows are heaviest during the day to evaluate the intersection's service levels.

that City and County proposed the roundabout designs after developing a planning strategy that would intentionally increase development in the South Santa Barbara area. They contend that this will substantially increase traffic volumes and VMT in the coastal zone of southern Santa Barbara County. It is unclear from the letters if the appellants are referring to the Highway 101 HOV lane (from Carpinteria to Santa Barbara) project, or the preferred scenario identified in the Draft Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) Connected 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) that were included as attachments of the appellants' letters, or both.

Regarding the Highway 101 HOV lane project, the Olive Mill and San Ysidro Roundabouts were identified in the 2017 Highway 101 High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Project Revised Environmental Impact Report (REIR) as mitigation measures for intersection impacts that would occur as a result of the Highway 101 HOV project between the City of Carpinteria and the City of Santa Barbara by improving the level of service at the two intersections. As discussed in the staff report, while the roundabout projects will help to mitigate intersection impacts created by the Highway 101 HOV project, that is not the sole purpose of the intersections. The two roundabouts are also needed independent of the Highway 101 HOV project as the San Ysidro Roundabout has been operating at unacceptable service levels since 1992 and the Olive Mill Roundabout was found to be operating at LOS F (extreme congestion or considerable delays) according to the Traffic Operations Analysis Report by Omni Means dated November 2019. Furthermore, the Coastal Commission previously approved a Santa Barbara County LCP Amendment (No. LCP-4-STB-18-0071-2-Part A) in 2018 to allow for various transportation and public access improvement projects along the U.S. Highway 101 corridor along the south coast of Santa Barbara County between the City of Carpinteria and the City of Santa Barbara, including adding HOV lanes in each direction along Highway 101 and the subject San Ysidro Roundabout and Olive Mill Roundabout projects. Nevertheless, the decision before the Commission is the substantial issue hearing for the Olive Mill and San Ysidro Roundabouts project coastal development permits that were approved by the City and County, not the Highway 101 HOV project, for which there will be a separate permit that will be acted on by the County at a later date.

Regarding the preferred scenario identified in the Draft SBCAG 2050 RTP that the appellants reference, the excerpt includes a discussion that the preferred scenario that is identified in the Draft 2050 RTP "results in more congestion on the South Coast essentially because, in order to reduce vehicle miles traveled and vehicle emissions region-wide, it distributes more population growth to the South Coast than would occur under the future baseline scenario". Part of the preferred scenario involves directly addressing regional jobs/housing imbalance by providing more housing on the jobs-rich South Coast and more jobs in bedroom communities in the North County. The goal is to ultimately shorten trip distances and reduce vehicle miles traveled County-wide. SBCAG acknowledges in the Draft 2050 RTP that the preferred scenario would result in more local South Coast trips and worse local congestion conditions than the business as usual scenario. However, the preferred scenario will reduce overall vehicle miles traveled by 16% County-wide. Therefore, although the Draft 2050 RTP will increase trips and congestion in the South Coast, on a County-wide scale, it will decrease VMT by 16%. Commission staff would note that the Draft 2050 RTP chapter that is currently available to the public does not mention either of the two roundabout projects or the Highway 101 HOV project from Carpinteria to Santa Barbara. Therefore, staff does not believe that the roundabout projects are related to the Draft 2050 RTP plans to increase VMT in the South Coast area of the County. However, based on the analysis above, even if the subject roundabout projects are to support Draft 2050 RTP plans to increase VMT in the South Coast, when viewed at a

County-wide level, the preferred scenario identified in the Draft 2050 RTP plans will decrease County-wide overall VMT by 16%. This aligns with the spirit of the LUP policies regarding minimizing VMT, which are meant to minimize VMT on a region-wide and statewide scope.