

STAFF REPORT
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
June 25, 2012

ITEMS FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION:

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

Report prepared by: Charles W. Ebeling, Director
Department: Public Works


Signature

Reviewed by
City Manager:


Signature

ACTION **NON-ACTION** **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

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

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The Linden Avenue and Casitas Pass Road Interchanges Project consists of replacing both the Linden Avenue and Casitas Pass Road US 101 overcrossings, reconfiguring the northbound on- and off-ramps at Casitas Pass Road, extending the northbound Linden Avenue on-ramp replacing the US 101 freeway bridges over Carpinteria Creek and extending Via Real to Casitas Pass Road and to Linden Avenue. The project will also include new retaining walls, sound walls, traffic signals and drainage structures. Caltrans is the lead agency in proposing a joint City/SBCAG/Caltrans project to reconstruct the Casitas Pass Road and Linden Avenue Interchanges and construct an extension of Via Real as a continuous frontage road on the north side of US Highway 101. The project objectives are to improve access and operations at these two interchanges, improve operations on US 101, reduce the use of US 101 for local trips, and improve local vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian circulation.

The construction cost of this project is estimated to be approximately \$75 million. The project is now fully funded by the State Transportation Improvement Plan. City of Carpinteria permitting is expected to be completed by the Fall of 2013, right-of-way acquisitions are expected to be completed by the Fall of 2014 and construction is expected to begin in January to 2015 and be completed by December of 2018. Project information including a detailed description, project history, funding and schedule are included in this report.

II. BACKGROUND:

US 101 Corridor

The purpose of this staff report is to give a brief summary of the history of the Linden Avenue and Casitas Pass Road Interchanges Project, to review the current status of the project including recent progress, and to provide information on upcoming steps and future phases. The history of this project is presented within the overall context of the history of the US 101 transportation corridor. Details for this report were obtained from published documents such as those from the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments and from City of Carpinteria documents such as City Council staff reports.

The Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) is a regional transportation planning agency that represents the Cities in Santa Barbara County and the County. The governing board is made up of elected officials (mayors, council members and/or supervisors) from each of the member agencies. SBCAG serves as the region's state mandated regional transportation planning agency and as the federally mandated Metropolitan Planning Organization. State and federal funding for transportation programs and projects in Santa Barbara County must be programmed and directed through SBCAG. Additionally, as a regional planning agency, SBCAG has assumed responsibility for studying, planning and funding all types of transportation infrastructure in the County since the early 1990s.

1970s

Public concern regarding US 101 congestion in the Santa Barbara County area goes as far back as the 1970s. In 1974 the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) sponsored a study to examine the feasibility of widening US 101 from the Hollister Avenue overcrossing in the far western Goleta area through the City of Carpinteria to Ventura County. In 1983, SBCAG again studied the south coast US 101 corridor. SBCAG's study identified US 101 deficiencies and as a result of the study, Caltrans expanded US 101 to six lanes in the Santa Barbara and Goleta areas. All of the improvements to US 101 in the Goleta area were completed by 1992.

1980s – 1990s

In 1989 Measure D was passed by voters in Santa Barbara County. Measure D was a ½-cent sales tax. The funding from Measure D was restricted by the voters to only be apply to transportation programs and capital improvements. By 1993 \$85 million had been raised for widening US 101 from Santa Barbara through Carpinteria to Ventura County with the funds coming from both Measure D and the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Caltrans began preparing for the widening by releasing a Draft Environmental Impact Report that year. Caltrans met with substantial community opposition to the plan and, in response to local concerns, the project was not completed. SBCAG responded the public's concerns by

commissioning an alternatives analysis that examined the deployment of alternative solutions that did not require widening (adding lanes) to the freeway.

In 1995 the accumulated STIP funding was reallocated by SBCAG to a program of operational improvements that included 11 US 101 projects that were requested by the local agencies within the County including the City of Carpinteria. The City requested that the Linden Avenue and Casitas Pass Road Interchanges Project and the Via Real Extension Project be funded by the reallocated STIP funds. This funding, approximately \$16 million is still programmed for the Linden Avenue and Casitas Pass Road Interchanges project that has since been combined with the Via Real Extension project.

The operational improvements program approved by SBCAG also included regional commuter bus service, improvements in train service and improvements to local transit services. SBCAG further developed the program by adding Transportation Demand Management (TDM) services. The TDM services included assistance with creating carpools, working with employers to vary work hours to reduce peak hour demand and improving alternative transportation infrastructure such as bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

2000s

SBCAG recognized that operational improvement initiatives improved conditions but did not address the full extent of the congestion problem on US 101. SBCAG, the Cities of Santa Barbara and Carpinteria, the Air Pollution Control District, Caltrans and the Metropolitan Transit District participated in developing the South Coast US 101 Deficiency Plan. The Deficiency Plan proposed 34 short-term improvement projects which were implemented by the local cities and County in 2002. In the City of Carpinteria, the Plan again included the Casitas Pass Road and Linden Avenue Interchanges Project, transit improvements such as the Santa Barbara/Carpinteria Express Bus Service, and the Carpinteria Noon Hour Shuttle. The Noon Hour Shuttle service was eventually discontinued because of lack of ridership. To address the long-term US 101 congestion issues, the cooperating agencies recommended that a community consensus and implementation processes be developed to comprehensively address longer-term US 101 deficiencies.

In 2003 SBCAG began the "101 In Motion" study. The purpose of the 101 In Motion study was to develop an action plan for addressing US 101 congestion and the issues and concerns expressed in the South Coast US 101 Deficiency Plan. The objectives were to start with as wide a range of ideas as possible from the public, develop feasible alternatives, select a preferred package of solutions and then create an action plan. To prepare the study, SBCAG established a technical advisory committee and held numerous community workshops and presentations. The study also included extensive data collection such as traffic volumes, truck volumes, collision data and rates, population, employment, housing and land use data, economic data including goods movement, and air quality. SBCAG presented the 101 In Motion Study to the Carpinteria City Council in October of 2005. The 101 In Motion Study culminated with the production of a final report in 2006. The final recommended improvement plan to address transportation congestion in south Santa Barbara County included the following:

"The Lane and a Train Program"

Add a Lane and Train

- Add a carpool/high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane in each direction from Santa Barbara through Carpinteria to the County line

- Add commuter rail service from the Camarillo/Oxnard area to Goleta

Facilitate Transit and Carpool Use

- Designate new lanes south of Milpas as HOV carpool lanes
- Increase express services to North County
- Connect local bus and shuttles with rail and regional services
- Bus priority on selected streets through signal priority, queue jumps, bulb-outs at bus stops, etc.

Manage Demand

- Provide vanpool/carpool/trip reduction incentives
- Encourage telecommuting and flexwork/flextime
- Vary parking rates as feasible by jurisdiction
- Individualize marketing

Improve Operation and Communications

- Add capacity and install meters at selected ramps
- Use Intelligent Transportation Systems technology to inform the traveling public and smooth operations including:
 - Freeway service patrol
 - 511 phone and internet traffic and transit reports
 - Changeable message signs
 - GPS real-time of arrival information at bus stops

Phase Improvements North of Milpas

- Implement operational improvements required to address current congestion hot spots
- Proactively work to reduce peak period traffic through aggressive demand management and rideshare programs
- Monitor need for additional US 101 improvements following implementation of operational improvements, commuter rail, TDM and rideshare, ITS and General Plan updates
- Add auxiliary lanes and/or additional lanes if needed, funds are available, and there is community support

The “Lane and a Train Program” outlined above not only proposed new HOV lanes on US 101 and new commuter rail service but also demand management, operations and communications improvements. As of 2012, many of the elements of the 101 In Motion programs have been implemented or have been completed.

Linden Avenue and Casitas Pass Road Interchanges Project

On its own, the Linden Avenue and Casitas Pass Road interchanges project has been the subject of many City meetings and discussions since the 1970s. In 1975 the City submitted a request to Caltrans for Federal-Aid Urban funding to widen the Linden Avenue and Casitas Pass Road overcrossings. Later that year the City was notified that the funding was not available. Throughout the remainder of the 1970s through to the early 1990s both the Planning Commission and the City Council periodically received reports and discussed various potential improvements to the Linden Avenue and Casitas Pass Road freeway interchanges. From 1992 to 1998 the City Council carried out the following:

- Met to discuss the various studies and study methodologies associated with potential freeway and interchanges improvement projects
- Held public hearings to discuss potential interchange projects
- Included the Linden Avenue and Casitas Pass Road Interchanges Project in City's 1993 Master Facilities Plan (now called the Capital Improvement Plan)
- Discussed transportation demand management and other operational improvements to US 101 when the 1990's Caltrans US 101 Widening Project was discontinued
- Supported additional alternative transportation and operational improvement initiatives
- Requested that SBCAG program STIP funding for the Linden Avenue and Casitas Pass Road Interchanges Project in 1995 to initiate the project
- Combined the Linden Avenue and Casitas Pass Road Interchanges Project and the Via Real Extension funding requests into one project in 1996

The Linden Avenue and Casitas Pass Road Interchanges Project, including the Via Real Extension, was funded by the California Transportation Commission in the 1996 State Transportation Improvement Plan. The project got substantially underway in 1999 with the City reviewing preliminary Caltrans design alternatives. In 2002 the City included the project in the City's Capital Improvement Plan and in 2003 descriptions of rebuilding several of the US 101 interchanges within the City including Linden Avenue and Casitas Pass Road were included the Circulation Element of the City's General Plan/Local Coastal Plan. Also in 2003 the City and SBCAG again sought federal funding when the federal transportation bill, the Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century, was being considered. The project was again not included in the federal funding system. Throughout the rest of the 2000s, the City and Caltrans worked together to examine 17 project alternatives. The alternatives included many different interchange configurations. Eventually, four viable alternatives were chosen by the City and Caltrans to be studied in an environmental document.

III. DISCUSSION:

Timeline of Recent Project Milestones to Date

Exhibit A explains the framework used for the planning and execution of major public infrastructure projects, including description of the Linden-Casitas project execution activities within that larger framework. The discussion below describes the major milestones accomplished for the project since the release of the Draft Environmental Review Document, which typically signals the commencement of City involvement preparatory to the initiation of discretionary review.

December 2008

The Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the project is published for public review.

May 18, 2009 (Council)

Special Meeting of the City Council to discuss Draft EIR and to recommend a Preferred Alternative to the Caltrans Project Development Team (PDT), which includes representatives from City of Carpinteria, SBCAG and Caltrans. Council resolved to:

Recommend that the PDT select Alternative 3 as the Preferred Alternative with the caveat that this recommendation is made with information available at this time and may be reconsidered if and when additional information on feasible alternatives is developed.

June 29, 2009 (Council)

Special Meeting of the City Council as a Traffic Workshop. The purpose of the Traffic Workshop was to provide the Council and the public education on basic transportation planning principles, and then to explain the relationship of traffic and roadway circulation to the project preliminary design and expected future roadway and intersection operating conditions. The Council resolved to:

Recommend the PDT pursue a three-lane configuration for the Linden Avenue overcrossing, assuming such could be determined to be feasible based upon further traffic and structural engineering evaluation (the Linden Avenue overcrossing was proposed in a four-lane configuration under Alternative 3).

Recommend the PDT continue to refine the design of the Via Real Extension to minimize impacts identified during the environmental review and address concerns expressed by California Coastal Commission staff.

November 2009

Caltrans conducts value engineering and further traffic studies for the Linden Overcrossing structure in response to Council direction. A 3-lane overcrossing is determined to provide adequate capacity to meet Caltrans standards and City circulation policy requirements. Caltrans revises the Linden Overcrossing proposal to include 3 travel lanes.

July 2010

The Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the project is approved by the Caltrans District Director.

September 30, 2010 (ARB)

Caltrans comes before the Architectural Review Board (ARB) for an initial round of review and input (Conceptual Review). Caltrans staff requested feedback on the general shape of the columns for the bridges and design of the overcrossing structures, whether the City desired thematic design elements for the major, the general color and surface treatment(s) for bridge façade, retaining walls and sound walls, and feedback on the conceptual landscape plans.

ARB members asked Caltrans to investigate lowering the elevation of the overcrossings, stated a preference for a limited number of colors and textures to be used for the project structural elements, a preference was stated for rectangular support columns over rounded, and direction was given for a higher degree of California native plants in the landscape plan.

October 2010

City Public Works and Caltrans staff collaborates to develop an alternative alignment for the Via Real extension which places it immediately adjacent to US Highway 101. Preliminary comparison of impacts concludes this alignment would reduce impacts to riparian habitat, mature trees, and park/recreation resources.

December 16, 2010 (ARB)

Caltrans returns to the ARB for continued Conceptual Review. Caltrans engineers were able to redesign the profile of the overcrossings to achieve an elevation that is two to four feet lower;

the ARB commented that a vertical retaining wall on the north side of the overcrossings is acceptable as a means of minimizing the deck elevation for the overcrossing structures, and they were also not opposed to using a vertical retaining wall on the south side of the overcrossing structures for symmetry. The ARB found a round support column would work well with the curved retaining wall design, and also preferred columns be perfectly smooth, or to include a reveal with stone or brick pattern (not entirely clad in faux stone or brick); they would like an open rail barrier (Type 80) used for the bridge structures, with bike rail where necessary; they understand the overcrossing structures need to employ a solid type barrier, but on top of that solid barrier, the ARB would like to see a trellis style structure similar to that employed on new City bus shelters, with a mesh between the trellis upright elements.

March 2011

Initial meetings are held between Coastal Commission, Caltrans, Carpinteria and SBCAG to discuss Amendment of the Carpinteria Local Coastal Plan (LCP) necessary to accommodate the project; project as proposed conflicts with agriculture and wetland protection policies of the LCP.

October 24, 2011 (Council)

Special Joint Meeting of the City Council, Planning Commission, and Architecture Review Board as a Design Workshop. The purpose of the Design Workshop was to provide the Council, Planning Commission, and public with a summary of the design issues pertinent to the project. A synopsis of the project development process and City review of the project to date were given, and the Council was asked to authorize and appoint members to a Design Review Team (DRT). The DRT, including representatives from council, planning commission, ARB, and the public, is charged with providing advisory direction to the Caltrans PDT regarding the aesthetic aspects of the project.

January – June 2012 (DRT)

The DRT meets at least once per month beginning in January 2012. There is one final meeting scheduled for July 2012. Once the DRT process has concluded, the package of recommendations would be brought to the Council for consideration.

City Review Process Overview

The Carpinteria Municipal Code (Section 14.62.030, Conditional Uses) requires that public improvement proposals such as the Linden Avenue / Casitas Pass Road Interchanges and Via Real Extension Project obtain a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). Because the project is located within the Coastal Zone, a Coastal Development Permit is also required. Both of these permits are discretionary in nature, with the Planning Commission having decision making authority. Decisions of the Planning Commission are appealable to the City Council; the Council's decision is appealable to the Coastal Commission.

Coastal Commission and City of Carpinteria staff has also concluded the Carpinteria Local Coastal Plan (LCP) must be amended in order to accommodate the proposed project. Authority to approve an Amendment to the Carpinteria LCP is held by the Coastal Commission.

Caltrans submitted the CUP/CDP application in 2009, however, City staff has not yet commenced formal project review. Further design work on the project and preparation of a Local Coastal Program Amendment to modify wetland protection and agricultural preservation

policies will be necessary before the project can be determined to be “complete” for permit processing. The following describes the remaining steps in the discretionary review process for the project.

Accept the Project Design

The project is located wholly within the City of Carpinteria, and the City is a partner in the project design development process. As such, the Council needs to formally accept the project design from Caltrans to initiate discretionary review of the CUP/CDP. The City formed a DRT in order to provide direction to Caltrans during final design, although the DRT is advisory in nature and holds no authority to render binding decisions regarding the project. Once the DRT process is concluded, however, the package of recommendations created by the DRT should be reviewed and accepted by the Council. If the Caltrans design is not consistent with DRT recommendations, or for other reasons, the Council may decide to request further alterations to the project prior to initiating review.

Prepare Amendment to Local Coastal Plan

City planning staff will prepare a proposed amendment to the Local Coastal Plan to modify the language regarding agriculture resources and wetland resources to permit necessary encroachment of project improvements in a limited manner into areas containing these sensitive resources. Because the project would be inconsistent with existing protection policies for these resources, the Coastal Act requires not only complete mitigation for the resources impacted (such as creation or restoration of degraded wetlands to offset those lost), but also mandates that a finding be made the overall LCP amendment will “on balance” be more protective of coastal resources overall.

In order to make the finding the project would result in a net benefit to coastal resources, Coastal Commission staff have indicated the project must include as integral components such features as development of bikeway or multiple use trails to close gaps in existing regional trails systems providing direct access to beaches and other coastal recreation opportunities.

Coastal Commission staff and City staff have identified the following two important trail system improvements which will likely need to be included in the Linden-Casitas Pass Interchanges Improvement Project and/or the South Coast HOV project.

- Rincon Trail – Proposed bike path extending from the eastern terminus of Carpinteria Avenue to Rincon Point Park. This path would link the bikeway along Carpinteria Avenue with the new Class I Bike Path being constructed with the Ventura/Santa Barbara HOV Lane project, eliminating the need for cyclists to use the shoulder of US 101 in this segment.
- Extension of Santa Claus Lane – Proposed bike path extending from the eastern terminus of Santa Claus Lane and connecting to the western terminus of Carpinteria Avenue. This segment would link to Santa Claus Lane, closing a substantial gap in the California Coastal Trail system.

Staff Level Planning Review/Environmental Review

Planning staff will review the proposal for consistency with general plan and local coastal plan policies, zoning ordinance, and municipal code. The proposal will also be evaluated to determine if the current project components have been adequately addressed in the Caltrans

EIR/FONSI, or if subsequent environmental review would be required. If subsequent environmental review is required, the draft document would be circulated for public review.

ARB Preliminary Review

ARB provided conceptual review of the original Caltrans proposal. A DRT was then formed to provide additional recommendations during the Caltrans final design process. DRT will provide their recommendations for consideration by the Council, and after acceptance, to the ARB. As part of the review leading to Planning Commission consideration of the project, ARB must grant preliminary approval of the Caltrans design. Preliminary review can entail multiple meetings, if the initial designs do not meet local policies and objectives, or are not detailed enough.

Planning Commission Review

Once staff level planning review and environmental review have been concluded, the project will be presented to the Planning Commission for discretionary review of the request for Conditional Use Permit (CUP), Coastal Development Permit (CDP), and Local Coastal Plan Amendment (LCPA). The CUP and CDP decisions by Planning Commission are appealable to the City Council.

City Council Review

The City Council holds the local approval authority for the LCPA. Consequently, the City Council must conditionally approve the LCPA, subject to final approval by the Coastal Commission. The Council would also hold a public hearing on the CUP and CDP, if these Planning Commission actions are appealed.

Coastal Commission Review

Once the City approves the CUP and CDP, and conditionally approves the LCPA, the LCPA and CDP are submitted to the Coastal Commission for review. The Coastal Commission will hold their own public hearing on the LCPA and CDP request, and either approve, deny, or conditionally approve the requests. If the requests are approved with additional conditions added by the Coastal Commission, the City Council must decide whether to accept the conditions and ratify the approval, or to challenge the conditions through additional proceedings with the Commission.

ABR Final Review

Once the LCPA, CUP, and CDP approvals are completed, but before permits are issued to Caltrans, ABR will review final design plans to ensure conformance with the preliminary design approvals granted for the project.

Conceptual Schedule – Major Project Milestones Going Forward

While the City performs discretionary review for local permits, Caltrans will continue to work on engineering design, right-of-way acquisition, and contract documents to support eventual construction of the proposed project. The following is a very conceptual schedule of the major milestones anticipated for the proposal.

| Timeframe | Milestone |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| July 2012 – Spring 2013 | City Conducts LCPA/CDP/CUP Review |
| Summer / Fall 2013 | Coastal Commission Reviews LCPA/CDP |

| | |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| Summer 2014 | Right-of-Way Acquisition Complete |
| Fall 2014 | Construction Bid Ready to Advertise |
| December 2014 | Construction Contract Awarded |
| January 2015 | Construction Commences |
| December 2018 | Construction Complete |

Public Comment

Since 2008 public notice has been provided, and an opportunity for the public to provide comments has occurred, for the three (3) City Council, two (2) ARB, and eight (8) DRT meetings held to date on the Linden-Casitas Interchanges Improvement project.

Future public meetings on the required Local Coastal Plan Amendment (LCPA), Conditional Use Permit (CUP) and Coastal Development Permit (CDP) will be held before the City’s Planning Commission. At that time, the public and the Commission will have the opportunity to review staff analysis, any subsequent environmental document and the proposed project at a more fully developed stage in the design process and offer comments. The LCPA will also be reviewed by the City Council in a public hearing, and if appealed, Council will also hold a public hearing on the CUP and CDP requests.

The project will also be subject to review by the Architectural Review Board at noticed public hearings wherein staff and the public can discuss the aesthetic treatments of the bridges, railings and sound walls, and also review the proposed landscape plan for the corridor. During the permit review process, there will be opportunities for decisionmakers to consider minor changes to the proposed project that can be effectuated through conditions of approval.

IV. POLICY:

As previously mentioned, the project was included in the 2003 (current) City of Carpinteria General Plan/Local Coastal Plan. The plan included descriptions for rebuilding several of the US 101 interchanges within the City including the Linden Avenue and Casitas Pass Road were included the Circulation Element of the City’s General Plan/Local Coastal Plan. For the this project, the Project Development Team, including Caltrans, the City of Carpinteria, and SBCAG, identified five project objectives as part of the initial planning efforts of the project.

- Improve access to and operations at the Linden Avenue and Casitas Pass Road Interchanges;
- Improve operations on US 101;
- Reduce the use of US 101 for local trips;
- Improve local vehicular circulation, including connectivity on Via Real;
- Improve local bicycle and pedestrian connectivity.

These project objectives are consistent with the City’s Objective C-1 and Policy C-3f in the Circulation Element which state:

Objective C-1: *To improve the community’s ability to access US 101 and areas north of the freeway through improvement of interchanges.*

Policy C-1a: Continue coordination and collaboration with the County of Santa Barbara and Caltrans through SBCAG to improve freeway accessibility and to resolve circulation problems in inland areas.

Policy C-1b: The City shall strive to improve vehicular and pedestrian over crossings of the freeway and the various creeks while respecting their habitat value and sensitivity.

Policy C-1c: The City will endeavor to work with Caltrans to resolve freeway access, interchange development and noise attenuation problems as they affect the community.

Policy C-1d: The City shall work closely with Caltrans to assure improvements to freeway interchanges and overpasses compliment the small town quality and charm of the City. Conventional methods for improving level of service such as widening of overpasses for independent turning lanes and signalization of intersections should be avoided if possible in favor of improvements consistent with the existing small town character and charm. Improvements required as a result of a development project shall also be consistent with this policy.

The General Plan, in consideration of the above policies for all of the US 101 interchanges within the City, proposes the following for the Linden Avenue and Casitas Pass Road Interchanges:

- *Reconfiguration and reconstruction of the Linden Avenue/US 101 Interchanges, including the addition of southbound on-ramps and northbound off-ramps, installation of traffic signals and widening of the overpass.*
- *Reconfiguration and reconstruction of the Casitas Pass Road/US 101 Interchange, construction of turn lanes, installation of traffic signals and upgrades of the on- and off-ramps.*

In addition to the General Plan/Local Coastal Coastal Plan objectives and policies regarding freeway corridor improvements, Policy 3-Cf discusses improvements to travel characteristics of the City's circulation plan by directing the consideration of a continuous and direct east/west surface street route north of and parallel to US 101 to improve the efficiency of local traffic circulation. The Plan goes on to state that a westerly extension of Via Real to Casitas Pass Road and from Vallecito Road to Linden Avenue should also be considered.

In fact, using the above policies, the City has been able to work with Caltrans to evolve the project design in a manner that ensures greater consistency with the goals and objectives of the General Plan. Some of the important revisions brought about in the project design thus far are summarized below.

Linden Avenue Overcrossing

In response to concern expressed regarding the need for a four-lane overcrossing structure at Linden Avenue, Caltrans moved forward from the Traffic Workshop to more fully investigate traffic and circulation, alignment and connection with existing roadway facilities, and constructability for a three-lane configuration of the Linden Avenue overcrossing. Caltrans was able to conclude that a three-lane configuration for the Linden Avenue overcrossing would be feasible, and would meet traffic and circulation performance standards adopted by the City (level of service "C"). Staff finds the three-lane configuration to be more in keeping with the

small town character of Carpinteria and does not foresee significant traffic growth on the Linden Avenue Overcrossing given existing land use patterns and zoning and Coastal Act restrictions that constrain development and therefore future traffic growth in the area. Also, Linden will not become a full-service interchange and will still only provide one northbound ramp (on-ramp) and one southbound ramp (off-ramp).

Via Real Extension

The originally proposed alignment for the section of the Via Real extension between San Roque Mobile Home Park and Casitas Pass Road was located a substantial distance north of the US Highway 101 corridor. Due to impacts upon riparian resources (Carpinteria Creek), agriculture (former Whitney parcel), and parks and recreation (Carpinteria Creek Park), City and Coastal Commission staff requested that this segment be further evaluated for potential re-alignment in order to possibly reduce impacts to these resources. The Public Works Director and Caltrans engineering staff worked collaboratively to identify an alternate alignment for this segment which relocates the roadway much closer to the US Highway 101 corridor. Preliminary review of the comparative environmental effects indicates the new alternative alignment would reduce the level of environmental impacts upon most resources. Staff supports the new alignment.

Elevation of Freeway Overcrossing Structures

Linden Avenue and Casitas Pass Road Overcrossings do not currently meet minimum vertical clearance standards for vehicles traveling along US 101, and must therefore be reconstructed with greater vertical clearance. The original design for these overcrossings was of concern to the community, in terms of increased visibility and change in character when viewed from the local roads to which these connect. Working with the direction from the ARB, and comments by the public, Caltrans was able to reduce the maximum height of the proposed overcrossing structures for Linden Avenue and Casitas Pass Road, as compared to the original design concept presented in the EIR. Staff finds the lowering of the overcrossing structures elevation to be more in keeping with the character of the community.

Via Real Sound Walls

The noise studies performed for the EIR concluded that residents along portions of Via Real would be exposed to project-related freeway noise that merits installation of a sound wall. The location of the sound wall presented in the EIR was generally along the north side of Via Real (between Via Real and the rear yards of residences adjacent to Via Real). This configuration requires openings at residential street intersections with Via Real, reducing the overall effectiveness of the sound wall. Some residents inquired about the possibility of moving the wall location between US 101 and Via Real; Caltrans was able to determine a sound wall at this alternate location would be feasible. Staff believes the sound wall location along the freeway right-of-way would be more appropriate, with regard to acoustic performance and reduction in visual effects to individual property owners.

Traffic Signal Structures

At least one circulation element policy stipulates that highway interchange improvement projects should avoid conventional methods of increasing capacity such as widening for independent turn lanes and signalization, in favor of methods that preserve the charm of the City. A roundabout has been incorporated into the northern side of the Linden Avenue overcrossing/interchange as a "non-conventional" means of improving traffic flow between the overcrossing structure and the connecting local streets. The traffic study for the project does indicate traffic signals are required at the following project intersections: 1) Linden Avenue southbound off-

ramp/Linden Avenue; 2) Ogan Road Extension/ Linden Avenue; 3) Casitas Pass southbound on/off-ramps at Casitas Pass Road; 4) Northbound on/off-ramps at Via Real; and 5) Casitas Pass Road/Via Real. The signals, in part, assist to minimize the number of total travel lanes required on the overcrossing structures.

Casitas Pass Road Overcrossing

The initial configuration for the Casitas Pass Road overcrossing structure included a total of six travel lanes, along with a bike lane and sidewalk in both travel directions. City staff provided feedback to the project development team that a 6-lane overcrossing would be highly undesirable. Caltrans performed intersection sensitivity analyses, and was able to reduce the number of travel lanes to a total of 5 for this overcrossing. However, concerns over the scale of this structure have continued to be made by the public and members of the DRT, and the need for 5 travel lanes continues to be questioned.

Casitas Pass Road is one of the few full freeway interchange facilities within Carpinteria, and will provide on-ramp and off-ramp access for US 101 in both the northbound and southbound directions. Because of this, capacity of the overcrossing must be provided for projected growth not only on the Carpinteria roadway system, but also on the regional freeway system. In the traffic studies completed for the project design, Caltrans determined that 5 lanes would be necessary to meet traffic and circulation performance standards adopted by the City (level of service "C").

Because of the level of concern that remains regarding Casitas Pass Road Overcrossing in a 5-lane configuration, City staff will be studying an alternate 4-lane configuration to determine if such a configuration would be capable of meeting City circulation performance standards. If the 4-lane configuration would not be capable of meeting such standards, staff would identify necessary exceptions or revisions to policy necessary to accommodate a 4-lane configuration, for consideration by Council.

Bikeway and Pedestrian System Improvements

The project as proposed includes enhancements to the bicycle and pedestrian circulation system within Carpinteria. Enhancements include:

- Bike lanes (5 foot width) on both sides of Linden and Casitas overcrossing
- Sidewalk (8 foot width) on both sides of Linden and Casitas overcrossing
- All-weather bike path along Carpinteria Creek, under US 101
- Bike lane along the north side of the Via Real extension

All of the above enhancements would benefit residents of Carpinteria and substantially improve local access via alternative transportation means from areas north of US 101 to the downtown and beach areas of the City.

However, Coastal Commission staff has indicated the project must provide meaningful enhancement for regional access to coastal resources and recreation opportunities, in order to approve an Amendment to the Local Coastal Plan that would permit project-related impacts upon wetlands and agriculture. Wide sidewalks and bike lanes on the overcrossings and along Via Real extension will ensure pedestrians, cyclists, and mobility impaired individuals will enjoy improved access to coastal resources within the Carpinteria community, but do not address regionally important access improvements.

In order for the proposed project and LCPA to meet provisions of the Coastal Act for balancing resource impacts with public benefit, the following improvements will likely need to be included in the Linden-Casitas Pass Interchanges Improvement Project and/or the South Coast HOV project.

- Rincon Trail – Proposed bike path extending from the eastern terminus of Carpinteria Avenue to Rincon Point Park. This path would link the bikeway along Carpinteria Avenue with the new Class I Bike Path being constructed with the Ventura/Santa Barbara HOV Lane project, eliminating the need for cyclists to use the shoulder of US 101 in this segment.
- Extension of Santa Claus Lane – Proposed bike path extending from the eastern terminus of Santa Claus Lane and connecting to the western terminus of Carpinteria Avenue. This segment would link to Santa Claus Lane, closing a substantial gap in the California Coastal Trail system.

V. ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: List of Major Project Components, Table of Overcrossing Dimensions and Project Map

ATTACHMENT A

Current Project Description – Major Components

Linden Avenue Overcrossing

- Three vehicle travel lanes
- Bike lane both directions, striped at edge of pavement (5 foot width)
- Sidewalk both directions (8 foot width)
- Reconfigured southbound off-ramp (direct connection to Linden)
- Reconfigured northbound on-ramp incorporating round-about
- No southbound on-ramp, no northbound off-ramp
- Traffic signal at southbound off-ramp and at round-about connection to Linden

Casitas Pass Road Overcrossing

- Five vehicle travel lanes
- Bike lane both directions, striped at edge of pavement (5 foot width)
- Sidewalk both directions (8 foot width)
- Reconfigured northbound on-ramp/ off-ramp (connects to Via Real extension)
- Existing southbound on-ramp/off-ramp configuration preserved
- Traffic signal at southbound ramps, northbound ramps (Via Real), and eastern end of overcrossing

Via Real Extension

- Two vehicle travel lanes
- Sidewalk and bike lane on northerly side
- Connection to all-weather replacement bike lane along Carpinteria Creek under US 101
- New bridge structure over Carpinteria Creek, adjacent to northern US 101 R-O-W
- Connects with new NB on-ramp/off-ramp for Casitas Pass, south of Casitas Pass
- Connects with new round-about for Ogan Road and Linden Avenue NB on-ramp

Current Project Description – Overcrossing Dimensions

Linden-Casitas Pass Interchanges
 Project
 Comparison of Bridge
 Dimensions
 All dimensions in Feet

| Bridge Name | Length | Bridge Depth | Min. Vertical Clearance | Min/Max Deck Elevation on Centerline | Widths (looking north) | | | | | | | | | | Total Width |
|-------------------------|--------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|-----------|----------|-------------|
| | | | | | Side walk | Bike Lane | Lane | Lane | Lane | Lane | Lane | Bike Lane | Side walk | Barriers | |
| Casitas Pass (existing) | 110' | 2' | 15'-6" | 50.4/50.9 | 5' | | | | 13' | 13' | | | | 4' | 35' |
| Casitas Pass (proposed) | 176' | 3'-9" | 16'-11" | 53.0/55.8 | 8' | 5' | 12' | 12' | 12' | 12' | 12' | 5' | 8' | 3' | 89' |
| Linden (existing) | 128' | 4' | 14'-11" | 41.5/41.9 | 5' | | | | 13' | 13' | | | | 4' | 35' |
| Linden (proposed)* | 221' | 5'-6" | 17'-3" | 45.3/46.2 | 8' | 5' | | | 12' | 12' | 12' | 5' | 8' | 3' | 65' |

Sources:

Existing: As-built plans (1952)

Existing deck elevations: Survey mapping

Existing vertical clearances: As posted

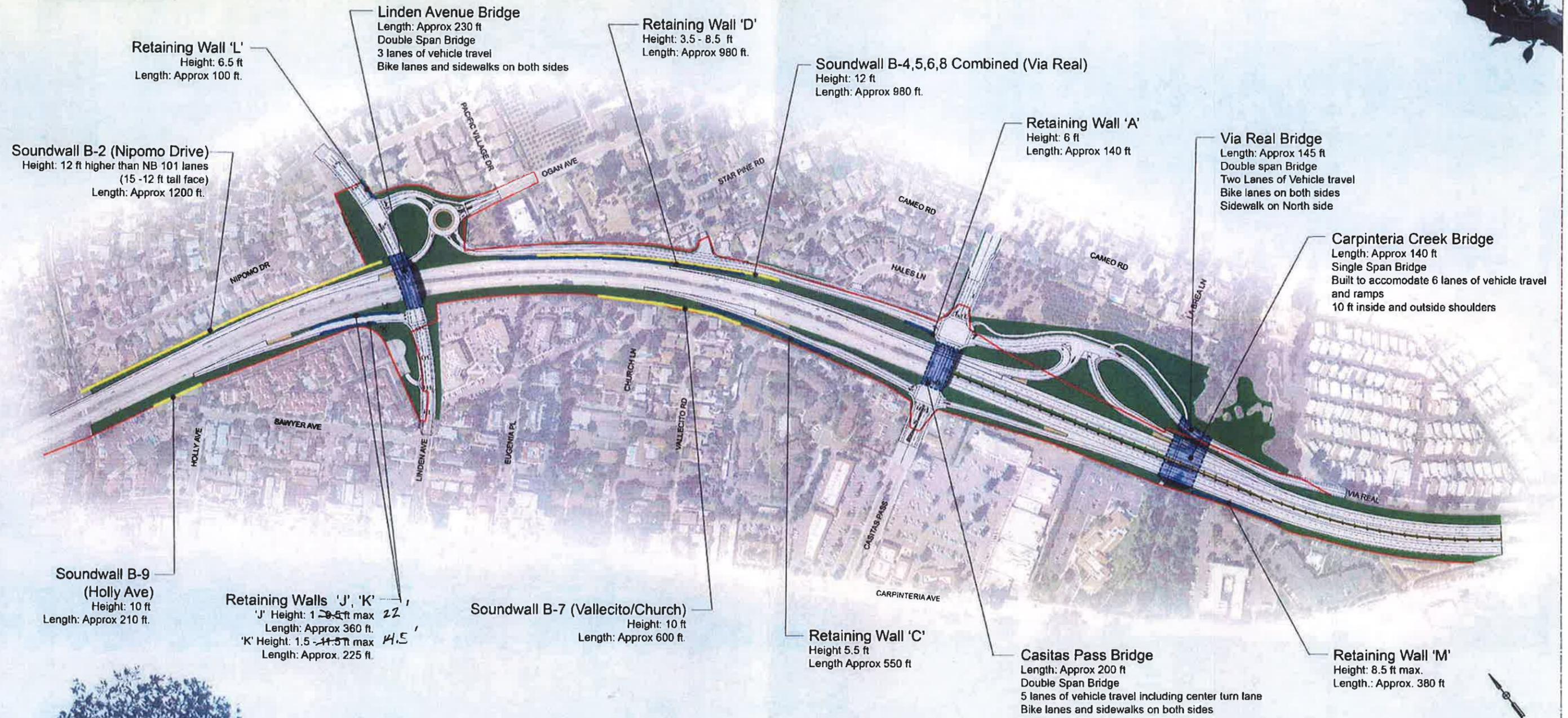
Proposed: Draft General Plans (July 2011), Linden elevations revised April 2012

Revised
 4/18/2012.

Current Project Description – Map of Project

LEGEND

-  Caltrans Right of Way
-  Proposed Soundwall
-  Proposed Retaining Wall
-  Proposed Concrete Median Barrier
-  Proposed Roadway
-  Proposed Structure
-  Contrasting Paving
-  Proposed Landscaped Area (may include mitigation plantings)



LINDENCASITAS

Interchanges Project

Wall Overview