



STAFF REPORT

CITY OF OCEANSIDE

DATE: March 3, 2009

TO: Oceanside Historic Preservation Advisory Commission

FROM: Development Services Department - Planning Division

SUBJECT: **CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT COAST HIGHWAY VISION AND STRATEGIC PLAN**

SYNOPSIS

Staff requests that the Oceanside Historic Preservation Advisory Commission consider the proposed Draft Coast Highway Vision and Strategic Plan document and based upon the Commission's purview, forward its comments on historic preservation related issues to the City Council.

BACKGROUND

Coast Highway, Oceanside's iconic coastal corridor (also known as "U.S. Historic Route 101", or "Hill Street") traverses the City in a north-south direction a few blocks east of the beach and serves as a local roadway, as well as a pass-through arterial for Interstate 5 traffic. The roadway was officially commissioned as one of the original U.S. highways in the late 1920's. Through the 1920's, 30's and 40's, the car culture phenomenon encouraged the expansion of auto-related businesses along the then named Hill Street, lining its frontage with service stations, car dealerships, and auto supply stores, as well as hotels and restaurants that served travelers that were making their way through Oceanside. Today, Coast Highway is still lined by a significant number of car-oriented and drive-through uses, many of which retain a mid-20th century aesthetic and are in need of revitalization.

In July 2007, recognizing the eminent need to guide in a positive manner the future growth and development along this corridor, the City Council assigned top priority to the Coast Highway master planning effort. A request for proposals (RFP) was issued on December 31, 2007 initiating the "Coast Highway Vision and Strategic Plan" effort and on April 16, 2008 Torti Gallas and Partners Inc. was selected as the consulting firm to work with the City's project staff team on this master planning project. Research work commenced on May 1, 2008 and stakeholder interviews took place on June 11, 12, and 16, 2008. A community design charrette for the North Coast Highway area segment was held from July 28 thru August 1, 2008. A second design charrette with a focus on Mid and South Coast Highway was held from August 25 thru August 29, 2008. On

September 23, 2008 "The Coast Highway Revitalization Development Experts Forum" took place at the Civic Center and input on the draft vision plan was obtained from experts in the development field. Based on all input received to that date the draft Coast Highway Vision and Strategic Plan document (Attachment 1) was prepared for further public deliberation and comments from City Committees and Commissions prior to consideration by the City Council on April 15, 2009.

NOTE: On January 21, 2009 the City Council considered staff's decision to include Mira Mar Mobile Home Park area and the Harbor area as part of the Draft Coast Highway Vision Plan and direction was given to exclude said areas from the plan. Printing of the Draft Coast Highway Vision and Strategic Plan document preceded City Council's action. At this time all vision plan references (text and exhibits) related to the Mira Mar Mobile Home Park and the Harbor areas should be considered stricken out/removed from the draft document.

ANALYSIS

The Commission is charged to safeguard the heritage of the City by providing for the protection of historical sites and areas representing significant elements of its history. Staff is seeking input from the Oceanside Historic Preservation Advisory Commission on the Draft Coast Highway Vision and Strategic Plan on the plan's elements that fall within its purview.

The draft Coast Highway Vision and Strategic Plan project area encompasses approximately 485 gross acres of land (source: SANDAG), and extends about three miles from Oceanside Harbor in the north to the Buena Vista Lagoon in the south. It is divided into three Planning Areas: the North Coast Highway area around the San Luis Rey River and Oceanside Harbor stretching from Harbor Drive to Windward Street; the Mid Coast Highway Area, between Seagaze Drive and Oceanside Boulevard; and the South Coast Highway area from Oceanside Boulevard to the Buena Vista Lagoon.

The subject Vision and Strategic Plan is intended to serve as a blueprint for the revitalization and enhancement of the Coast Highway corridor. It is an advisory document that should be used to guide future development in the area and inform future planning efforts such as General Plan, Local Coastal Plan, and zoning ordinance changes pertinent to the project area, in order to achieve the vision set forth in the document. The primary components of the document are; the Vision and Illustrative Plan, the Implementation Strategy; and the Design Guidelines. It should be noted that the Illustrative Plan is conceptual in nature in that its purpose is to depict the primary ideas and key desirable development patterns and not to specifically plan or regulate every single site detail. It is meant to illustrate a revitalized Coast Highway: a great, prosperous, urban space with a memorable sequence of authentic and vibrant community places and tourist destinations where a mix of uses that celebrate and reflect the City's ocean-side location, culture, diversity and community spirit converge.

Through a master design vision, a series of implementation strategies, and a set of design guidelines, the Vision and Strategic Plan is intended to foster high-quality design and stimulate economic investment by defining the framework and goals for future development. The Coast Highway Vision and Strategic Plan's objectives are to:

- Reflect the Oceanside Identity ("Brand") of economic and cultural diversity, coastal character, civic-minded tourism, artistic & artful, and environmentally conscious community;
- Promote environmentally and economically sustainable smart growth - transit, pedestrian, bicycle, multi-generational-friendly infill development;
- Enable corridor development by optimizing urban connectivity, capitalizing on transportation/ mobility options, and rationalizing parking;
- Maintain adequate regulatory flexibility to accommodate the community's emerging needs and safeguard the future prosperity of the reinvented district from economic market fluctuations; and
- Promote high quality urban and architectural design, sustainable development, synergistic land uses, and enhancement of environmental resources through incentives.

The draft Coast Highway plan re-envision the historic highway and its surroundings, based on Livable Communities and Smart Growth principles and transforms it into a pedestrian-friendly and transit-oriented place that attracts and serves both visitors and residents. The plan accomplishes this by introducing a series of activity areas, or 'Nodes,' along Coast Highway (Las Ramblas North "O" node, Transit Center node, Sprinter Station node and South "O" Village node) that are connected by generously-landscaped 'Avenue' segments. The Nodes are proposed to be urbane and town-like, with wide sidewalks and bulb outs at corners, mixed-use buildings adjacent to the sidewalk, and uses that are pedestrian- rather than auto-oriented. Each of the four Nodes is proposed to have a unique identity, whether as an entertainment, culture, and hospitality gateway in North Oceanside, a transit-oriented mixed-use center at both the Sprinter Station and the Oceanside Transit Center, or a neighborhood-serving retail street in South Oceanside. Unlike the Node areas, the design of the Avenue segments is less urbane and incorporates a center median, wide front yards, larger multi-family residential uses, and may accommodate auto-oriented uses that were historically hosted along Coast Highway.

In addition to the Nodes and Avenue areas, the draft Vision Plan includes a new District, the "Arts, Technology, and Environment District," and preserves an existing residential neighborhood, "Seaside". The Arts, Technology, and Environment District emphasize the City's identity as an eclectic and creative community and affirm the City's commitment to fostering innovative and arts-related businesses. The Seaside neighborhood, just east of Coast Highway is proposed to be sensitively preserved in recognition of this area's contribution to Oceanside's unique identity as a beach community.

To implement the Coast Highway vision, the Strategic Plan offers a three-pronged approach:

Catalytic Policy Initiatives - five key efforts the City should consider in order to lay the ground work for the future development and revitalization of the Planning Area. The initiatives include promoting mixed-use, reforming parking regulations, adopting quality of life performance standards, implementing a Transferable Development Rights program for building height, and introducing a comprehensive Incentives Program to reward development projects that are in keeping with the City's vision for Coast Highway.

Catalytic Projects - five site-specific conceptual plans and programs at key locations that could spur revitalization along the corridor. The five projects include a hospitality focused gateway area in North Oceanside, transit oriented mixed use developments at the two existing transit stations, an infill block site along Coast Highway, and a mixed-use/ eco-friendly resort along Loma Alta Creek.

Action Items - a series of recommended actions and associated estimated costs, responsible parties, funding sources, and potential timeframes for items necessary to implement the vision.

Implementation of the Coast Highway Vision and Strategic Plan is expected to occur incrementally and would likely extend beyond 15 years due to the magnitude of the area covered by the plan, diversity of land uses and property ownership and current challenging economic market conditions. Additional planning efforts would also be necessary to implement the plan in its entirety (e.g. Local Coastal Plan amendment to institute the Arts, Technology and Environment District, traffic analysis and design to determine feasibility of Coast Highway street design alternatives) however to a great extent many of the Vision Plan ideas can be implemented in the short term and could help to spur revitalization. Ultimately, it is anticipated that this comprehensive, bold and compelling vision and strategy will lead to the revitalization of Coast Highway and to the transformation of the corridor into Oceanside's foremost gathering place - a first class address to live, work, play, and visit.

FISCAL IMPACT

Does not apply.

CITY ATTORNEY'S ANALYSIS

Does not apply.

RECOMMENDATION

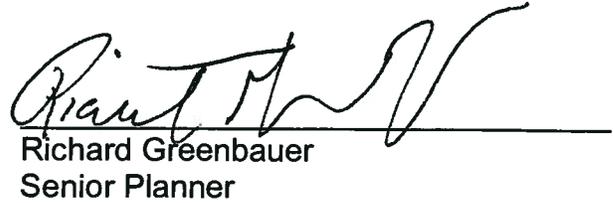
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PREPARED BY:

SUBMITTED BY:



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RG/AV/no

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Coast Highway Vision & Strategic Plan