



# City of Santa Barbara

Public Works Department

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May 7, 2013

Ms. Aileen K. Loe Deputy  
District Director Planning and  
Local Programs Caltrans -  
District 5  
50 Higuera Street  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-5415

SUBJECT: State Route 225 Relinquishment

Dear Ms. Loe:

On April 19, 2013, we held a conference call with you and some of staff to discuss how to proceed with the SR 225 relinquishment process given the outstanding issues that had been identified by City staff. During that conference call, City and Caltrans staff reached an understanding of how the previously identified outstanding issues will be addressed in order to move forward with the relinquishment process. The purpose of this letter is to memorialize this mutually agreed-upon understanding between Caltrans and City staff. Below is a summary of the previously identified unresolved issues and how City and Caltrans staff have agreed to resolve each issue.

## 1. Draft Relinquishment Agreement

- a. **Issue:** Las Positas Retaining Wall Repair – Although Caltrans has agreed to repair the existing 195-foot long retaining wall along the west side of Las Positas Road, that is in need of structural rehabilitation as identified in previous documents, no language had been included in the Draft PSSR or Draft Relinquishment Agreement to clarify responsibility for those repairs.

**Resolution:** Caltrans will exclude the wall from the relinquishment by easement. Caltrans will quitclaim the easement and the City will take ownership of the wall upon satisfactory completion of the repairs.

- b. **Issue:** Traffic Collision Data and Identified Safety Improvements – Neither the Draft PSSR or the Draft Relinquishment Agreement addressed additional traffic collision data provided by the City to Caltrans or any proposed safety improvements, which City staff has determined to be necessary based on the collision history along the

corridor. Caltrans has stated that they will not complete their review and analysis of the traffic collision data until July 2013.

Resolution: Based on their preliminary assessment of the data, Caltrans does not anticipate that the crash data will meet State criteria for action. If, upon completion of a full analysis in July 2013, Caltrans determines that a project is warranted, Caltrans will complete improvements at no cost to the City. If Caltrans determines that no improvements are warranted, the City would have to identify funding for the identified improvements upon relinquishment of SR 225 to the City. Caltrans Operations staff is working with the City Engineer and Traffic Engineer and Caltrans has agreed to address several minor, low-cost safety improvements along the corridor.

- c. Issue: California Transportation Commission (CTC) Approval Language – The Draft Relinquishment Agreement included language that stated that the City would "accept and assume full maintenance ownership, responsibility, control and liability...in exchange for the payment of \$819,000 *or some other allocation made by CTC* deemed to be in the best interest for..." City staff was concerned that this language would bind the City to accepting the relinquishment even if the CTC did not approve the full agreed-upon payment amount of \$819,000.

Resolution: Caltrans staff has assured City staff that, based on historical actions, the CTC intends to approve the full agreed-upon payment amount of \$819,000. If, for any reason, the CTC does not approve the full funding amount, Caltrans has assured City staff that the City will have the opportunity to opt out of the relinquishment. City and Caltrans attorneys will discuss a consensus regarding language to be included in the Relinquishment Agreement.

- d. Issue: Contamination Sites- Because the relinquishment is subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Caltrans has completed its CEQA review with a Categorical Exemption. Included as part of the Categorical Exemption is a memorandum dated March 15, 2013, disclosing potential contamination sites along the SR 225 corridor. The Draft Relinquishment Agreement did not address future liability for existing contamination upon relinquishment of SR 225 to the City.

Resolution: Caltrans and City attorneys will discuss a consensus to clarify liability after relinquishment.

## 2. Freeway Maintenance Agreements

- a. Issue: Las Positas Road Overcrossing – As part of the SR 225 Relinquishment to the City, the Las Positas Road interchange will become an overcrossing of a City street through State Highway 101 right of way, which triggers the need for an FMA. The State will retain maintenance responsibility of the two structures associated with the interchange: 1) Highway 101 overcrossing through State Highway 101 right of way and 2) Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) overhead through UPRR right of way. The State's maintenance responsibilities will include the structure below the deck surface, while the City will be responsible for maintaining the roadway surface, drainage system, lighting, as well as traffic service facilities (sidewalks, signs, pavement markings, etc.). City staff is working with Caltrans staff to clarify responsibility for the bridge rails and requested that language be added to clarify City maintenance responsibility. City staff also requested that language be added to state that the City's maintenance responsibility for Las Positas Road will not commence until Caltrans has brought the pavement surface up to a state of good repair.
- b. Resolution: Caltrans has agreed to complete pavement resurfacing on the Las Positas overpass and other adjacent areas within the State right of way that need pavement maintenance, including pavement work on Modoc Road just east of Las Positas Road. Language has been included in the FMA to clarify that maintenance responsibility for the railroad overhead structure remains with the State upon relinquishment of SR 225 to the City.
- c. Issue: Castillo Street Underpass – As part of the SR 225 Relinquishment to the City, the Castillo Street interchange will revert to an undercrossing of a City street through State right of way, which triggers the need for an FMA. Due to existing structural failures and ongoing problems with groundwater intrusion at this underpass, City staff had significant concerns about accepting maintenance responsibility for any portion of the underpass.

Resolution: Caltrans has agreed to revise the FMA to reflect that the City will be responsible for graffiti removal only on the Castillo underpass.

Public Works staff is making every effort to finalize the Relinquishment Agreement and FMAs prior to the next requested Council action scheduled for May 21, 2013; however, in the event that the agreements are not finalized before that time, City staff requests that Caltrans provide a letter to City staff confirming that this letter memorializes the understanding reached with City and Caltrans staff.

Please let me know if this letter's summary of the issues and mutually agreed-upon resolutions differs from your understanding.

The City of Santa Barbara appreciates the effort Caltrans' staff has put forth on this relinquishment effort, and we look forward to continuing this rapport.

Sincerely,



Christine F. Andersen  
Public Works Director

ASing

cc: Mayor Helene Schneider  
James L. Armstrong, City Administrator/Clerk/Treasurer  
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