



# CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

## COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** January 25, 2011

**TO:** Mayor and Councilmembers

**FROM:** Planning Division, Community Development Department

**SUBJECT:** Request To Consider Amending The Chapala Street Design Guidelines To Remove The Sentence "Curb And Sidewalk Bulb Outs Shall Be Added At All Intersections"

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That Council consider the request from Councilmembers Francisco and Self regarding amending the Chapala Street Design Guidelines to remove the sentence "Curb and Sidewalk Bulb Outs shall be added at all intersections," and provide direction to Staff as appropriate.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### Background

In late 2010, the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) approved a commercial remodel/subdivision improvement project (Verizon Building) located at 101 W. Canon Perdido Street on the south-west corner of Chapala and Canon Perdido Streets. The project was required to comply with the Chapala Street Design Guidelines including a corner curb extension public improvement. The project HLC approval was subsequently appealed by a Chapala Street business owner whose objections focused on the curb extension aspect of the project citing concerns regarding the further narrowing of the street which in her opinion was "simply inappropriate." The main issues raised by the appeal centered on the safety of curb extensions, possible alternatives to curb extensions, and the manner for phasing of intersection curb improvements.

At the time, Councilmembers Francisco and Self also questioned the City requirement to impose a curb extension improvement for this project and had indicated that a reevaluation of this City policy may be necessary by Council given a recent decision to omit these extensions at another intersection location downtown.

The Verizon Chapala project appeal was subsequently withdrawn by the appellant after City Public Works staff agreed to postpone any street curb improvement requirement at this intersection until Council revisited the policy issue of curb extensions on Chapala Street.

A formal request from Councilmembers Francisco and Self was initiated last month regarding a possible change to the Chapala Street Design Guidelines to remove the sentence "Curb and sidewalk bulb outs shall be added at all intersections" (see Attachment 1).

This report provides a summary explanation on the original goals and objectives related to the creation of the Chapala Street Design Guidelines. Some background information is also provided on the policy basis for inclusion of the curb extension requirements in City design guidelines. If Council expresses a desire to have an in-depth discussion on the safety of curb cut extensions citywide at a later date, city staff is prepared to provide further information.

#### History of Design Guidelines and Curb Extension Component

In April 2003, Council authorized the City's Redevelopment Agency to execute a contract for development of the Chapala Street Streetscape Design Guidelines which would apply to Chapala Street between Carrillo Street and the terminus at the 101 Freeway (see map, Attachment 2). Developed jointly by city staff and a private consultant, (The Conceptual Motion Company), these Guidelines were intended to assist developers, business owners, merchants, city staff and the various design review boards in improving street frontages along this section of Chapala Street.

This section of Chapala Street was selected for the application of the Guidelines due to an increase in development application proposals for this part of the City and the expected additional projects anticipated to come forward in subsequent years. A steering Committee was formed consisting of representatives from the Fire, Public Works, Community Development and Parks departments. City staff was interested in streetscape enhancements such as additional landscaping, uniform sidewalk, intersection and street improvements as part of construction for any larger development projects. The primary goals for the guidelines were the following:

#### Goals:

- Maintain Chapala Street as an important, vehicular traffic route through downtown Santa Barbara
- Improve pedestrian safety at intersections and street crossings
- Preserve the unique character of Chapala Street
- Provide a unified theme, consistent with the City of Santa Barbara Urban Design Guidelines and the El Pueblo Viejo Design Guidelines, for the future development of Chapala Street

In 2003, the city's Redevelopment Agency conducted study interviews and outreach efforts with the public, community groups and key city staff to identify how the Chapala Street corridor could be improved. Chapala Street was identified by participants as being too wide, uncomfortable to cross, not pedestrian or bicycle friendly. Different solutions or ideas were considered to achieve the goal of improving pedestrian safety including the possible introduction of center landscape medians and widening of sidewalks. These street improvement proposals were determined to be infeasible and not widely supported due to concerns expressed that Chapala Street should be maintained at current roadway widths to provide fire department access as a primary emergency response route. Enhanced landscaping, curb extensions, brick crosswalks and colored concrete pavers for new sidewalks were selected as appropriate improvement features that could enhance the area.

The draft guidelines were widely circulated for public input. Several public workshops were held in 2004 to review draft design guidelines and to gather input comments on the proposed Guidelines. Input from downtown business and property owners was also received. By the time the Design Guidelines were adopted by City Council in December 2004, several additional public hearings had been held at the Historic Landmarks Commission, Planning Commission and City Council (see Attachment 3).

Although the Guidelines were designed to be implemented on an incremental basis as private development occurs, there were two intersections where City Redevelopment Agency-funded streetscape improvements were utilized to enhance the Chapala corridor from both an engineering and an aesthetic standpoint. The proposed Agency-funded improvements occurred at the Chapala intersections of Gutierrez and De La Guerra Streets. Improvements for the Gutierrez intersection included the southwest corner curb extensions plus one crosswalk and two eastside corner bulbouts and three crosswalks. The proposed Agency-funded improvements for the De La Guerra intersection included the northwest corner curb extension plus crosswalk and two crosswalks across Chapala with minor improvements to the eastern sidewalk for complete intersection improvements. These locations were selected because the Agency-funded improvements to the public right-of-way, outside the scope of the private projects would allow for the entire intersection improvements (curb to curb) to be completed at one time.

#### Related City Policies

The inclusion of pedestrian improvements (such as curb extensions) for development projects is recommended in several City policy documents. Policy documents such as the City's Urban Design Guidelines, Circulation Element and Pedestrian Master Plan (PMP) all promote making improvements for pedestrians. The PMP was prepared, in part, as a result of Circulation Element Goal 5, Increase Walking and Other Paths of Travel. Policy 5.6 of the Circulation Element states "the City shall make street crossings easier and more accessible to pedestrians", and one of the implementations of this policy is to reduce the distance for pedestrians to cross a street. PMP Policy 1.3 states, "The City shall enhance pedestrian corridors."

There have been a number of projects involving curb extensions that have already been approved and constructed along the Chapala corridor as well as other areas of the city. Transportation staff has indicated that there has been no traffic related safety problems associated with these types of public improvements.

City staff and review bodies have heard safety concerns raised by members of the public regarding how curb extensions may impact automobiles and cyclists. Staff has responded to those concerns by explaining the purpose of curb extensions, and appropriateness in any given location. The curb extensions are a design feature that can contribute to a safe walking environment for certain streets, but may not be appropriate at some locations.

#### Possible Chapala Street Design Guidelines Amendments

Through the discretionary review process, the Chapala Design Guidelines gives discretion to the HLC, Staff Hearing Officer (SHO) or the Planning Commission, to trigger street improvements as a condition of project approval. The following excerpt from page 7 of the guidelines reads as follows:

*“Curb and sidewalk bulb outs shall be added at all intersections. The bulb outs provide more room for pedestrians to circulate near intersections and will significantly reduce the distance required to cross streets.”*

The Council may direct staff to revise the guidelines with respect to this standard as suggested by Councilmembers Francisco and Self or in another manner as deemed appropriate. Staff also suggests a minor errata update to the Chapala Street Guidelines to clarify that the concrete paver specification is no longer the standard for sidewalk improvements. Staff intends to update the design guidelines to provide the current colored concrete specification.

#### **BUDGET IMPACT:**

No significant expenditures are required. Some city staff work time is expected if design guidelines are amended.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Request from Councilmembers Francisco and Self
2. Chapala Street Area Map
3. Council Resolution 04-100 and Council Agenda Report dated December 14, 2004

**PREPARED BY:** Jaime Limón, Senior Planner II

**SUBMITTED BY:** Paul Casey, Assistant City Administrator/ Community Development Director

**APPROVED BY:** City Administrator's Office



**City of Santa Barbara**  
Mayor and Council Office

**Memorandum**

**DATE:** November 4, 2010

**TO:** Jim Armstrong, City Administrator

**FROM:** Dale Francisco, Councilmember  
Michael Self, Councilmember

**SUBJECT:** Request to amend an item regarding a possible change to the Chapala Street Design Guidelines (adopted December 14, 2004, Resolution 04-100). The change envisioned would be to remove the sentence "Curb and sidewalk bulb outs shall be added at all intersections." (p 13)

Pursuant to Council Resolution No. 09-097 regarding the Conduct of City Council Meetings, we request that an item be placed on the Santa Barbara City Council Agenda regarding a possible change to the Chapala Street Design Guidelines.

This item meets the following criteria as explained below.

- A. A substantive outline or summary of the information that will be presented to the City Council:

Bulb outs have been one of the more controversial Public Works innovations of recent years. Information will be presented on why such traffic constrictors are particularly inappropriate on major commercial delivery and emergency services corridors.

- B. A concise statement of the specific action the City Council will be asked to take on the item:

That the Council adopt a Resolution removing the requirement for bulb outs on all intersections within the Chapala Street Design Guidelines project area (Chapala from Parker Way to Carrillo Street).

- C. A statement of the reasons why the requesting party believes it is appropriate and within the jurisdiction of the City Council to consider this subject matter and to take the requested action.

It is appropriate for the City Council to consider this matter because there are potentially twelve separate bulb outs that could be subject to individual appeals, and because this a matter of general policy that should be resolved at the council level.

cc: Mayor and Councilmembers  
Steve Wiley, City Attorney



RESOLUTION NO. 04-100

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF  
SANTA BARBARA ADOPTING THE CHAPALA STREET  
STREETSCAPE DESIGN GUIDELINES

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANTA BARBARA DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

WHEREAS, on April 29, 2003, the City Council authorized the Executive Director of the City of Santa Barbara Redevelopment Agency to execute a contract with Conceptual Motion (formerly known as Lenny Yates VanHoy Associates) for development of the Chapala Street Streetscape Design Guidelines; and

WHEREAS, a Steering Committee consisting of representatives of the Engineering and Transportation Divisions of the Public Works Department and the Planning and Housing and Redevelopment Divisions of the Community Development Department has been assisting Conceptual Motion in development of the Chapala Street Streetscape Design Guidelines; and

WHEREAS, in February 2004, and October 2004, Conceptual Motion held public workshops at the Center Stage Theater to receive input from interested persons and review the Chapala Street Streetscape Design Guidelines; and

WHEREAS, on April 14, 2004, July 7, 2004, and July 21, 2004, the Historic Landmarks Commission held public hearings and reviewed the Chapala Street Streetscape Design Guidelines and on November 10, 2004, approved and recommended to the City Council approval of the to the Chapala Street Streetscape Design; and

WHEREAS, on September 9, 2004, the Planning Commission considered the proposed Chapala Street Streetscape Design Guidelines, conducted a public hearing, and voted to forward the Guidelines with their comments to the Council for their action; and

WHEREAS, the City's Environmental Analyst reviewed the Chapala Street Streetscape Design Guidelines and determined that pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15302(b) the project is categorically exempt as a project concerning the replacement and reconstruction of existing structures and facilities; and

WHEREAS, on December 14, 2004, the City Council held a public hearing concerning the proposed Chapala Street Streetscape Design Guidelines. The Council considered the Planning Commission's comments, the Staff Report and heard testimony from Staff and members of the public.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANTA BARBARA AS FOLLOWS:

1. The Chapala Street Streetscape Design Guidelines, dated as of November 12, 2004, and attached hereto as Exhibit A, are adopted;
2. The Chapala Street Streetscape Design Guidelines shall be applied by the Historic Landmarks Commission, Planning Commission, or City Council on appeal to development applications for which public right-of-way improvements are required by the Public Works Department and are located on Chapala Street in the 300-900 blocks (as depicted on the attached map labeled Exhibit B); and
3. The Chapala Street Streetscape Design Guide adopted herein shall be applied to all development applications for which public right-of-way improvements are required by the Public Works Department that have not received final building permit issuance by the date of City Council adoption.



# CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

## COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** December 14, 2004

**TO:** Mayor and Councilmembers

**FROM:** Housing and Redevelopment Division, Community Development Department

**SUBJECT:** CHAPALA STREET STREETScape DESIGN GUIDELINES

### RECOMMENDATION:

That Council adopt, by reading of title only, A Resolution of the Council of the City of Santa Barbara Adopting the Chapala Street Streetscape Design Guidelines.

### BACKGROUND:

The Redevelopment Agency Board approved a contract with LYVA, now known as Conceptual Motion, on April 29, 2003, to develop the Chapala Street Streetscape Design Guidelines which will apply to Chapala Street between Carrillo Street and the terminus at the 101 Freeway. This section of Chapala Street was selected for the application of the Guidelines due to the large amount of new development activity occurring in this area.

### DISCUSSION:

#### Goals:

- Maintain Chapala Street as an important, vehicular traffic route through downtown Santa Barbara.
- Improve pedestrian safety at intersections and street crossings.
- Preserve the unique character of Chapala Street.
- Provide a unified theme, consistent with the City of Santa Barbara Urban Design Guidelines and the El Pueblo Viejo Design Guidelines, for the future development of Chapala Street.

These Guidelines, similar to the State Street Landscaping Guidelines, will assist local developers, business owners, merchants, and the various design review boards in improving street frontages along this section of Chapala Street. The Guidelines include text and corresponding renderings of the desired design theme for this portion of Chapala Street. They will be available in an electronic format. It should be noted that the Guidelines are not intended to be a City or Redevelopment Agency capital project; the implementation of the Guidelines will be on an incremental basis as private development occurs.

REVIEWED BY: \_\_\_\_\_ Finance \_\_\_\_\_ Attorney

Agenda Item No. \_\_\_\_\_

**Process:**

Conceptual Motion was aided in their development of the Guidelines by a Steering Committee comprised of members of City staff representing the Public Works Engineering and Transportation Divisions, as well as representatives from the Community Development Planning Division and Housing and Redevelopment Division.

There was extensive public input into the drafting of the Guidelines. Conceptual Motion obtained information about Chapala Street through interviews with stakeholders, two public workshops and several meetings with design review boards. Conceptual Motion also received input from Metropolitan Transit District (MTD), the City Fire Department, the Downtown Organization, and Paseo Nuevo Shopping Center. Conceptual Motion also presented design options to the Agency Board on December 3, 2003, and the Board gave direction to add curb and sidewalk bulbouts at all intersections and to widen the sidewalks in the 400 block of Chapala Street south of Haley Street, where the traffic counts indicate that significant surplus traffic capacity exists to make such a treatment practical.

The Guidelines have received Final Approval and recommendation from the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC), the Street Tree Advisory Committee, the Transportation and Circulation Committee, and the Parks Commission. The Guidelines provide a realistic balance to the diverse needs of Chapala Street by automobiles, pedestrians, delivery vehicles, MTD and other users. The Guidelines propose changes to the street and sidewalks which will improve the pedestrian environment without altering the vehicular capacity. Upgrades to the sidewalks will include bulb outs to decrease the distance required to cross the street at crosswalks, mid-block seating areas, and larger landscaped areas with more canopy and palm trees.

The Guidelines were also reviewed by the Planning Commission on September 9, 2004. While the Commission was generally in favor of the Guidelines, they did have three major areas of concern. The Commission would like to see the Guidelines create a more friendly pedestrian experience by widening the sidewalks the full length of the Guidelines area in order to allow for more landscaping and more room for pedestrians. They would also like to see a bicycle lane added, the Guidelines applied to the intersection of Carrillo and Chapala Street, and the Guidelines applied above Carrillo Street.

It should be noted that the Guidelines were a product of extensive traffic and public safety analysis, and the optimal location for sidewalk widening is in the 400 block of Chapala Street. The MTD/Greyhound site is currently under discussion for a new capital project, and the Guidelines could be applied to the intersection of Carrillo and Chapala Street and northward if appropriate.

**Chapala Street Development Status:**

There are two new development projects which will soon be entering the construction phase. They are the Chapala One project (mixed use development with 46 condominiums) located at 401 Chapala and the Paseo Chapala project (mixed use development with 29 condominiums) located at 721-739 Chapala. These developments have agreed to substantially comply with the Guidelines, based on the draft Guidelines. It may be appropriate for the Agency to consider funding the installation of certain

streetscape improvements adjacent to these two developments that were not made the responsibility of the projects, given that the Guidelines had not been adopted prior to the subdivision process for these developments. Staff will provide a consideration of those improvements in the Agency's upcoming fiscal and capital projects special meeting.

On November 22, 2004, Councilmembers received a memorandum conveying a draft of the Guidelines for information. Conceptual Motion will provide a presentation of the Guidelines for your review.

**PREPARED BY:** David Gustafson, Housing and Redevelopment  
Manager/Assistant Community Development Director/LL

**SUBMITTED BY:** Paul Casey, Community Development Director

**APPROVED BY:** City Administrator's Office