



**CITY OF SANTA MARIA  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES FOR REGULAR MEETING OF  
NOVEMBER 19, 2008**



Chairman Lopez called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Commissioners Adrian Andrade, Rodger Brown, Etta Waterfield, Michael W. Moats and Chairman Tom S. Lopez.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Planning Division Manager – Peggy Woods  
Senior Deputy City Attorney – Wendy Stockton  
City Engineer/Director of Public Works – David Whitehead  
Senior Civil Engineer – Shad Springer  
Recording Secretary – Kathleen Wilson  
Advance Planner – Brian R. Smith  
Planner III – Bill Scott

**APPROVED PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF OCTOBER 15, 2008, AS WRITTEN.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:** Nobody present wished to speak.

**ITEM 1 - CONSENT CALENDAR:** The consent calendar is approved with one motion. These items are read only on request of Commission members. Should anyone, including members of the public, wish to discuss or disapprove any item, it must be dropped from the blanket motion and considered as a separate item.

- a. **ONE YEAR EXTENSION OF TIME FOR THE SANTA MARIA VALLEY CONTRACTOR’S ASSOCIATION FOR AN OFFICE BUILDING, 200 BLOCK OF EAST ROEMER WAY, PD-2006-028, E-2006-099.** Review of a one year extension of time for a previously approved Planned Development Permit to allow the construction of a 5,142 square foot office building for the Santa Maria Valley Contractor’s Association on a 1.19 acre site located on the south side of the 200 block of East Roemer Way, approximately 450 feet east of North Broadway, in a PD/C-2 (Planned Development/General Commercial) zoning district, Assessor’s Parcel No.128-003-030. This project qualifies for a Class 32 Categorical Exemption. No further environmental review is required. (Project Planner: Bill Scott)

**ACTION:** By motion, approve an extension of time for one year.

**VOTE: 5-0** AYES: Commissioners Andrade, Brown, Waterfield, Moats and Chairman Lopez; NOES: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**ITEM 2 - CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR AERIS SPECIALTY GAS, 423 W. BETTERAVIA ROAD, U-2008-041, E-2008-048.** Review of a Conditional Use Permit to allow a medical and industrial gas storage and distribution facility in a CM (Commercial Manufacturing) zoning district,

on a 1.19 acre site located at 423 West Betteravia Road. Assessor's Parcel No. 117-340-075. This project qualifies for a Class 32 Categorical Exemption. No further environmental review is required. (Project Planner: Bill Scott)

**ACTION:** By motion, approved subject to the conditions as outlined in the preliminary draft of the Conditional Use Permit.

**VOTE: 5-0** AYES: Commissioners Andrade, Brown, Waterfield, Moats and Chairman Lopez; NOES: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None.

Bill Scott presented the staff report, outlining the details of the proposed project for a specialty and industrial gas storage and distribution facility in a CM zoning district. Bill reviewed the issues of the project, including conformance to the zoning ordinance and compatibility with the surrounding uses.

Bill Scott concluded the presentation by stating that the project will conform with all applicable fire, building and safety codes. The Santa Maria Fire Department has reviewed the project and determined that, as proposed, the project would impose no significant adverse impacts to the surrounding land uses. Therefore, staff recommends approval in accordance with the preliminary draft of the Conditional Use Permit, and is available to answer questions.

In response to Commissioner Andrade, Bill Scott commented on the requirement for storage, Condition #39 on page 8, "all storage inside building shall be 12 feet or less," stating that it is a standard Fire Department condition which has to do with spillage.

Peggy Woods added that the twelve foot requirement typically refers to shelving, and once the height of shelving exceeds 12 feet in height, the Building and Fire Code requires that the shelving be secured and strapped.

The applicant, Bill Orndorff, 925 S. McClelland, addressed the Planning Commission. Mr. Orndorff summarized that the applicant is basically asking for secured storage of the various settling tanks and oxygen tanks that will be on metal skids used by forklifts for loading and unloading.

In response to Commissioner Andrade, Bill Orndorff described the activity at the site.

In response to Commissioner Brown, Bill Orndorff spoke about an accident that occurred on the site when a tank tipped over, causing a leak, which resulted in an inspection. The outcome was the determination that a Conditional Use Permit should be obtained for the proper outdoor storage. The applicant has been at the site for 34 years, and that was the first problem.

With no further questions or comments, Chairman Lopez called for a motion. Commissioner Waterfield made the motion to approve the Conditional Use Permit for Aeris Specialty Gas, 423 West Betteravia Road, U-2008-041, E-2008-048, subject to the conditions as outlined in the preliminary draft of the Conditional Use Permit. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion, and it passed, 5-0.

**ITEM 3 - GENERAL PLAN CIRCULATION ELEMENT AMENDMENT TO DELETE A SEGMENT OF FUTURE UNION VALLEY PARKWAY WEST OF SOUTH BLOSSER ROAD, GP-2008-04, E-2008-053.** Review of recommendations to City Council regarding the certification of the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR), E-2008-053, SCH #2003101063, and General Plan amendment to delete a segment of future Union Valley Parkway, a designated primary arterial, between South Blosser Road and State Highway 1, from the Circulation Element. Should the General Plan amendment be approved, the future Union Valley Parkway would not extend west of South Blosser Road. The proposal to delete the proposed extension of Union Valley Parkway west of South Blosser Road was initiated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in order to avoid potential impacts to certain endangered species habitat. (Project Planner: Brian Smith)

**ACTION:** By **Resolution No. 2533**, recommended that the City Council certify the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) E-2008-053, make CEQA findings, adopt a statement of overriding considerations, and approve a mitigation monitoring program for the Union Valley Parkway Extension/Interchange Project.

**VOTE: 5-0** AYES: Commissioners Andrade, Brown, Waterfield, Moats and Chairman Lopez; NOES: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None.

and

**ACTION:** By **Resolution No. 2534**, recommended that the City Council amend the General Plan Circulation Element by deleting the segment of Union Valley Parkway west of South Blosser Road.

**VOTE: 5-0** AYES: Commissioners Andrade, Brown, Waterfield, Moats and Chairman Lopez; NOES: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None.

David Whitehead, Public Works Director and City Engineer, presented the staff report. The Union Valley Parkway (UVP) project is a shared responsibility and partnership between the City of Santa Maria, the County of Santa Barbara, Caltrans, and the Santa Maria Public Airport District. The UVP project is a major regional transportation infrastructure project, including an interchange with Highway 101, and will bring vehicles moving goods and services and people into the City of Santa Maria. UVP is a primary arterial roadway, one of the most significant transportation infrastructure facilities that can be built. The UVP project will connect major new industrial zoning districts in the Santa Maria Airport Business Park to regional highways and streets, and it will connect existing residential areas that do not have convenient access to regional highways. The goal is to begin construction in the summer of 2009. The action being requested is that the Planning Commission recommend to the City Council approval of the Final Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Assessment, and to recommend to the City Council approval of the General Plan Circulation Element amendment to remove a portion of the proposed UVP segment from South Blosser Road to Highway 1. Mr. Whitehead introduced the environmental planning consultant, Richard Daulton with Rincon Consultants, hired by the City to prepare the Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Assessment.

Richard Daulton, Planning Manager with Rincon Consultants, addressed the Planning Commission, and presented a PowerPoint presentation giving an overview of the project, as well as the needs and objectives, history, alternatives, features and benefits, and a summary of environmental review.

Richard Daulton concluded by requesting that the Planning Commission, by resolution, recommend that the City Council certify the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) E-2008-053, make CEQA findings, adopt a statement of overriding considerations, and approve a mitigation monitoring program for the Union Valley Parkway Extension/Interchange Project; and by resolution, recommend that the City Council amend the General Plan Circulation Element by deleting the segment of Union Valley Parkway west of South Blosser Road.

Richard Daulton clarified that until the Environmental Impact Report is certified and finalized, comments are accepted throughout the process, and until it is certified, it is still a living document and not considered final.

In response to Commissioner Waterfield, Richard Daulton explained that the right-of-way will be reserved for future expansion of the road to four lanes.

In response to Commissioner Moats, David Whitehead spoke about the proposed sound walls, and added that if a block wall exists there now, then it would need to be examined to see if it meets the criteria of an eight foot sound wall.

David Whitehead added that the City would not want two walls back to back for safety reasons, but if existing walls satisfy the requirements, then those existing walls would be integrated into the project.

In response to Commissioner Moats, Richard Daulton commented on a sound mitigation berm that is being proposed along the northern side of the existing county segment of the roadway, west of Bradley Road, north of Hummel Drive, which will be a 6 to 8 foot berm.

In response to Commissioner Moats, Richard Daulton and David Whitehead spoke about the multi-purpose trail that is proposed.

In response to Commissioner Brown, Richard Daulton spoke about the proposed traffic signals in the first phase at Highway 135 and UVP, Orcutt Road and UVP, and then later when UVP becomes four lanes, each intersection, except for Blosser Road, would become signalized.

Richard Daulton added that the signalization of Bradley Road will be a separate project, and will happen with or without this project.

In response to Chairman Lopez, David Whitehead spoke about the projected speeds along the UVP, and explained how speed limits are set.

In response to Commissioner Waterfield, David Whitehead stated that Santa Barbara County currently maintains Union Valley Parkway outside the City limits, and the City would be responsible for the segment within the City limits.

Chairman Lopez stated for the record one written communication from Jonathan Bradley and Debra Brandt, claiming that their comments were not addressed in the EIR.

Wendy Stockton clarified for the record that the comments from Mr. Bradley and Ms. Brandt were included in the Planning Commission packet, as well as Staff's response to that letter.

Chairman Lopez opened the public hearing.

George Cajun, 4750 S. Blosser, Space 331, Orcutt Ranch Mobile Home Park, spoke in a neutral position. Mr. Cajun cited his concern about traffic to their area, stating that the entrance to their mobile home park is off of Blosser Road, and traffic is fast. Mr. Cajun stated that he would like to see the UVP go through to Highway 1.

Mertie Walker, 728 Loma Way, Orcutt, spoke in favor of the Union Valley Parkway from Highway 101 to Highway 135, adding that would help alleviate some of the truck traffic off of Clark Avenue.

Chris Hastert, General Manager of the Santa Maria Airport District, Terminal Drive, Santa Maria Public Airport District, addressed the Planning Commission in favor of the project. Mr. Hastert introduced himself as the new airport manager, and expressed support for the recommended actions and appreciation to City staff for apprising him of the issues.

Laurie Tamura, resident of Orcutt, spoke in favor of the project, stating that this particular infrastructure has been on City and County plans since 1963. Every City and County zoning map, information document and reference materials, including the Orcutt Community Plan, Airport Specific Plan, City General Plan, all show the Union Valley Parkway. Ms. Tamura stated that the UVP is a beneficial project for Orcutt by reducing traffic on all major roadways in Orcutt, reduce noise impacts, and reduce traffic impacts at the nearby intersections. Ms. Tamura called the UVP project one of the last missing pieces of quality of life for Orcutt residents, and added that all

residents deal with traffic in the community; and the Foxenwood community should share some of that traffic.

James Pepper, 1045 Old Mill Lane, spoke in opposition to the project. Mr. Pepper commented that the original purpose of the UVP was to connect Highway 1 and Highway 101, and now that cannot be done, so it has failed the purpose. Mr. Pepper stated that ending UVP at Blosser Road does nothing; it serves no purpose, and there is no justification for it.

Kathleen Phelps, 4604 Appaloosa Trail, spoke against the project, citing concerns about traffic coming off the UVP onto Solomon Road to use as a shortcut to Highway 1. Ms. Phelps stated her first preference is for the UVP to go through to Highway 1, because that would solve the traffic problems in Orcutt. Ms. Phelps also requested stop signs to slow traffic on Solomon Road, and decrease its use as a raceway and short cut.

In response to Ms. Phelps, Commissioner Brown stated that Solomon Road is not in the City limits, but is in the County of Santa Barbara; therefore, the Planning Commission does not have any control over that area.

Patricia Culley, 919 Clubhouse Drive, spoke against the project, contending that the draft and final EIR fails to meet CEQA standards. Mrs. Culley stated that her comments, dated September 11, 2008, along with countless other comments and legal opinions, were virtually ignored. To not demonstrate good faith and respond to EIR public comment is clearly not what CEQA guidelines intended.

Jack Cole, 4312 Boardwalk Lane, spoke in opposition to the project, and expressed his concern about when the interchange project will start, because he is trying to sell his house and people are asking when the freeway will go through.

Jon Bradley, 1301 Foxenwood Drive, spoke against the project, stating that he had submitted timely comments to the EIR, which were not included in the final EIR. Mr. Bradley asked that the Planning Commission not recommend approval of the EIR because all the responses have not been received, and they need to all be treated equally. The public should be able to review them.

Heathyr Knowles, Highway 1350 Country Hill Road, spoke in opposition to the project, expressing concern about three issues not given consideration in the EIR: lack of a walkover on UVP for school children; lack of closing Boardwalk Lane would make it a major thoroughfare, which is currently a major walking route for children to school; and noise mitigation has not been properly evaluated at the proposed interchange site.

Dave Stockdale, 1139 Foxenwood Drive, president of the Foxenwood Tennis & Swim Club, spoke against the project. Mr. Stockdale stated that based on current traffic and developments in progress, linking Highway 101 to the Orcutt Expressway is clearly needed, and he would support Alternative #4, the reduced extension. Mr. Stockdale stated his belief that continuing UVP further west is a waste of money, and added that, while he appreciates the optimism of the City Manager and City Council for their approval of the Airport Specific Plan, that is a lot of civic optimism. Mr. Stockdale commented on the economy of California and Santa Barbara County, disputed the comment that Foster Road is overly used, and concluded by asking to wait on building the UVP until the airport demonstrates that they can bring jobs.

In response to Commissioner Brown, David Whitehead commented that the drawback to ending the Union Valley Parkway at Highway 135 is that the traffic study has indicated that area intersections will degrade at build-out, resulting in significant traffic impacts.

Richard Daulton concurred with David Whitehead, adding that the intersection at Foster Road and Highway 135 are currently showing to be at the verge of failure. An extension only to Highway

135 would dump northbound traffic onto Highway 135 at the Foster Road intersection which would degrade to an unacceptable level of service in the near future.

In response to Commissioner Brown, David Whitehead spoke about the effect that Union Valley Parkway could potentially have on traffic on Blosser Road near the mobile home park, as well as on Solomon Road, citing the exhaustive traffic study for the project. Mr. Whitehead also noted that currently there are two interchanges at Highway 101 and Santa Maria Way and Clark Avenue that serve the entire Orcutt area. This project would provide a third interchange with the highway at Union Valley Parkway. Mr. Whitehead also spoke about traffic heading west to Highway 1 as likely using the off ramps that lead directly to that road instead of using a circuitous route via the proposed new interchange.

Richard Daulton responded to a statement made by a commenter speculating on traffic forecasted for Solomon Road at build-out by stating that the number put forth is still well within the capacity of the roadway.

Commissioner Waterfield commented that having a third interchange off the Highway 101 to service the Orcutt area would be great, and asked about the idea of a cul-de-sac on California Boulevard.

In response to Commissioner Waterfield, David Whitehead spoke about potential circulation issues that could be associated with a cul-de-sac on California Boulevard, adding that as City Engineer, he would have a hard time recommending a cul-de-sac because of the potential circulation issues.

In response to Commissioner Waterfield, David Whitehead stated that the current configuration envisioned within the document includes a signalized intersection at Union Valley Parkway and California Boulevard, but added that there are many configurations that could potentially go there.

Richard Daulton added that in the short term with the proposed two lane road of Union Valley Parkway, there would be a stop sign, and once the road was expanded to four lanes, it would be signalized. Mr. Daulton added that the idea of a cul-de-sac was not formalized as to where it would be located, either north or south of the Union Valley Parkway.

In response to Commissioner Waterfield, David Whitehead commented that a cul-de-sac on either side, or both, of Union Valley Parkway would definitely reduce circulation, cause inconvenience to the public, and lower levels of service at other intersections in the area.

In response to Commissioner Brown, David Whitehead stated that if the cul-de-sac was on the north side of UVP, it would be in the City, and if it was located on the south side of UVP, it would be in the County.

In response to Commissioner Waterfield, David Whitehead spoke about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service finding that there is critical habitat located in the segment between Blosser Road and Highway 1, properties significant for the California Tiger Salamander and Red Legged Frogs. If the City wanted to continue to pursue the extension from Blosser Road to Highway 1, it could, but there would be no chance of that happening; or it would be so expensive and time consuming that it wouldn't be feasible.

In response to Commissioner Waterfield, David Whitehead spoke about the feasibility of moving habitat.

In response to Chairman Lopez, Richard Daulton explained how the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service categorize an endangered species, and the formal legislative process for delisting a species if it has been shown to recover. Mr. Daulton added that the California Tiger Salamander is considered an evolutionarily distinct species in Santa Barbara County, which means that they

cannot breed with other breeds, so they have highest of protection as an endangered species. The probability of them being delisted is extremely low.

In response to Chairman Lopez, David Whitehead defined "APE limit" as "area of potential effect."

In response to Chairman Lopez, Richard Daulton commented on the proposed sound wall east of California Boulevard, stating that the sound wall wasn't warranted by the analysis, but it is included because there was an expectation to have a sound wall there. It is not required for mitigation, but it is just part of the project.

David Whitehead spoke further about sound walls and their primary purpose to mitigate increase in sound. Block walls can also serve for security and visual blocking, and it was believed to be beneficial to the residents to install an eight-foot block wall for security and visual aesthetics. David Whitehead added that if the residents don't want the wall, the City won't put it there.

In response to Commissioner Andrade, Richard Daulton explained that traffic studies typically do not consider market conditions, because conditions can change rapidly, and because a planned use is a planned use. Mr. Daulton stated that the need for this project goes beyond the Airport Business Park, citing the intersections that are on the verge of failure. Mr. Daulton stated that this project has been in the works for a very long time, and while the current economic situation is a valid concern, we need to look at the project in a broader context.

In response to Commissioner Andrade, Richard Daulton spoke about growth inducement, and commented on the importance at looking at the overall volume of a project and also the rate at which it will occur, adding that the circulation system needs to be able to address future build out.

In response to Commissioner Moats, David Whitehead spoke about the funding of the project and the associated time limits, and added that staff has worked with planning organizations to extend that funding for another year, so that the funding is not in jeopardy.

In response to Commissioner Moats, David Whitehead spoke about the wide variety of funding sources available.

In response to Commissioner Andrade, David Whitehead explained the difference between a collector road and an arterial road, and cited Thornburg Street as an example of a collector.

In response to Chairman Lopez, Richard Daulton reviewed the proposed phasing of the project, and added that there is no firm time frame for when the two lanes would be expanded to four lanes.

In response to Commissioner Moats, David Whitehead explained that the UVP/Highway 101 interchange is included in this EIR in order to include an analysis of the complete project; however, the interchange is Santa Barbara County and Caltrans' project. The project design, funding, and schedule will all be determined by the County and Caltrans, and the UVP extension project is overseen by the City and Caltrans.

With no further questions, Chairman Lopez closed the public hearing and called for discussion with the Commissioners, or for a motion.

Commissioner Moats remarked that he used to live in Foxenwoods, and knew about the UVP 20 years ago. Commissioner Moats added that he was generally in favor of the project.

Commissioner Andrade stated that he concurred with Commissioner Moats, adding that this plan has been in place for a long time, and the longer the project is delayed, the more expensive it will cost to build. Commissioner Andrade stated for the record that he is in favor of Alternative #2, and in support of this project.

In response to Commissioner Brown, Richard Daulton reiterated the phasing of the project, stating that the first phase will be between Highway 135 and Blosser Road. The time lag between the first and second phase is anticipated to be fairly short.

Chairman Lopez stated his disappointment about deleting the segment to Highway 1, and added that he can see the value of building the UVP now. Chairman Lopez also cited his concern about the noise, and stated that alleviating the congestion at the other intersections to the Highway 101 will serve the residents better. Chairman Lopez stated that he would support the project with Alternative #1.

Commissioner Waterfield made a motion by **Resolution No. 2533**, recommend that the City Council certify the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) E-2008-053, make CEQA findings, adopt a statement of overriding considerations, and approve a mitigation monitoring program for the Union Valley Parkway Extension/Interchange Project. Commissioner Andrade seconded the motion, and it passed, 5-0.

and

By **Resolution No. 2534**, recommend that the City Council amend the General Plan Circulation Element by deleting the segment of Union Valley Parkway west of South Blosser Road. Commissioner Andrade seconded the motion, and it passed, 5-0.

Wendy Stockton explained the next step of the process for the members of the audience.

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**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at **8:48 p.m.** to a Study Session on November 20, 2008, at 10:00 a.m. in the Community Development Department Conference Room, 110 S. Pine Street, Santa Maria.

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Next study session: November 20, 2008

Next regular Public Hearing: December 3, 2008

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Peggy Woods

PEGGY WOODS, ASSISTANT SECRETARY  
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION