

State of California
Business, Transportation and Housing Agency
Department of Transportation

POLICY MATTERS
Possible Relinquishments
Information item

Prepared by:
Robert L. Buckley
Program Manager
Design and Local Programs
(916) 654-3858

CTC Meeting: December 5-6, 2000

Agenda Item: 4.10

Original Signed By _____
W.J. EVANS, Deputy Director
Finance
November 27, 2000

**PRESENTATION ON ROUTE SEGMENTS SPECIFIED
IN STATUTE FOR POSSIBLE RELINQUISHMENT**

Streets and Highways Code (S&HC) Sections 73 and 75 in general give the Commission the responsibility to authorize what highways should be in and out of the State Highway System unless specific direction is provided by legislative enactment. This item provides a general background on relinquishments and lists recent legislative enactments related to relinquishments.

A route adoption action locates a highway in the State Highway System. A relinquishment approves transfer of ownership of a state highway to a city or county. With respect to relinquishments Section 73 says:

"The commission shall relinquish to any county or city any portion of any state highway within the county or city that has been deleted from the state highway system by legislative enactment, ..., (and) any portion of any state highway that has been superseded by relocation. Whenever the department and the county or city concerned have entered into an agreement providing therefor, ... the commission may relinquish ... any frontage or service road or outer highway, ... which has been constructed as part of a state highway project but does not constitute a part of the main traveled road-way thereof. The commission may also relinquish, ..., any nonmotorized transportation facility, as defined in Section 887, constructed as part of a state highway project."

The transfer occurs when a certified resolution has been recorded with the office of the recorder of the county or with the city clerk depending on where the highway is located. The Commission provides the certified resolution authorizing the relinquishment and therefor must act on all relinquishments despite the method of initiation, relocation or legislative enactment.

Relinquishments usually occur after the construction phase of a project. They most often involve a highway that has been superseded by relocation; that is a route adoption has moved the highway from the location to be relinquished. Since the relinquishment is due to relocation, the Department is required to bring the road to a state of good repair and to give the city or county 90 days notice of the Department's intent to relinquish. State of good repair is defined in S&HC Section 73 as maintenance, which is also defined in statutes, S&HC Section 27. The Department typically does everything possible to resolve issues like state of good repair rather than escalating the issue to the Commission. However, the Commission's role is to resolve disputes over state of good repair in the event the Department and the city or county can not come to agreement. Thus far the Department has resolve issues and has not

escalated a relinquishment to the Commission. The department presents from 40-45 relinquishments per year.

Relinquishments can also occur by legislative enactment; that is legislation was passed that says the Commission is authorized to relinquish, with conditions set by the commission, a highway to a city or county. As stated in S&HC Section 73 these relinquishments "become effective upon the first day of the next calendar or fiscal year, whichever occurs first after the effective date of the enactment and are not subject to the 90 days' notice requirement. They are also not subject by statute to the state of good repair requirement." The number of relinquishments initiated by legislative enactment varies in any given year. In the 1999-2000 session 9 bills were introduced that involved relinquishment of portions of Routes 19, 39, 47, 54, 101, 110, 144, 209, 217, 227 and 880.

Legislation normally authorizes the Commission to relinquish a route upon terms and conditions it approves. By using legislative enactment other interested agencies input may not have been fully considered and the Department may be required to make certain improvements. The Commission should take these situations into consideration when developing its terms and conditions for relinquishment. In addition, the legislation often says the relinquishment is effective immediately following the Commission's approval of the terms and conditions of the relinquishment.

The text of the 9 bills follows:

SB 803. Existing law requires the California Transportation Commission to relinquish to any city or county any portion of any state highway within the city or county that has been deleted from the state highway system by legislative enactment. This bill would authorize the commission to relinquish to the City of Downey the portion of **State Highway Route 19** located between Gardendale Street and Telegraph Boulevard within the city, upon terms and conditions the commission finds to be in the best interests of the state. The relinquishment would become effective immediately following the commission's approval of the terms and conditions of the relinquishment. The portion of State Highway Route 19 relinquished as specified would cease to be a state highway on the effective date of the relinquishment. The bill also would authorize the commission, upon its determination that it is in the best interest of the state and upon terms and conditions approved by the commission, to relinquish any portion of **State Highway Route 160** in Sacramento County from mile post 35.0 to mile post 47.0 to a city in which that segment is located, if the city has agreed to accept the relinquishment. The relinquishment would be effective on the day immediately following the date of the commission's approval of the terms and conditions of the relinquishment.

AB 2909, Committee on Transportation. (4) Existing law requires the California Transportation Commission to relinquish to any city or county any portion of any state highway within the city or county that has been deleted from the state highway system by legislative enactment. Those relinquishments become effective upon the 1st day of the next calendar or fiscal year, whichever first occurs after the effective date of the legislative enactment. This bill would authorize the commission to relinquish to the City of Covina a specified portion of **State Highway Route 39**, upon terms and conditions the commission finds to be in the best interests of the state. The relinquishment would become effective immediately following the commission's approval of the terms and conditions of the relinquishment. The portion of State Highway Route 39 relinquished as specified would cease to be a state highway on the effective date of the relinquishment.

SB 557. (1) Existing law requires the California Transportation Commission to relinquish to any city or county any portion of any state highway within the city or county that has been deleted from the state highway system by legislative enactment. Those relinquishments become effective upon the first day of the next calendar or fiscal year, whichever first occurs after the effective date of the legislative enactment. This bill would authorize the commission to relinquish to the City of El Cajon a specified

portion of **State Highway Route 54**, upon terms and conditions the commission finds to be in the best interests of the state. The relinquishment would become effective immediately following the commission's approval of the terms and conditions of the relinquishment. The portion of State Highway Route 54 relinquished as specified would cease to be a state highway on the effective date of the relinquishment. The bill would authorize the commission to relinquish **State Highway Route 144**, as described, to the City of Santa Barbara, upon a determination by the commission that it is in the best interests of the state to do so, and if the city has agreed to accept the relinquishment. The relinquishment would be made upon terms and conditions approved by the commission and would be effective on the day immediately following the commission's approval of those terms and conditions. (2) The bill would declare that it is to take effect immediately as an urgency statute.

SB 798. (1) Existing law requires the California Transportation Commission to relinquish to any city or county any portion of any state highway within the city or county that has been deleted from the state highway system by legislative enactment. This bill would relinquish to the City and County of San Francisco (city) a specified portion of **State Highway Route 101** and would specify that the Department of Transportation retains jurisdiction over another specific portion of Route 101. The bill would require the city to utilize any proceeds from the disposition or use of excess right-of-way for the purpose of designing, constructing, developing, and maintaining the Octavia Street Project, as defined, until the city's share of the costs of that project are paid in full or funded from other sources. The bill would impose specific duties on the city and the department with regard to implementing the Central Freeway Replacement Project, as defined. Because the bill would require the city to undertake certain duties with respect to the Central Freeway Replacement Project, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program. The bill would require the department to follow certain procedures if an alternative to the Octavia Street Project is adopted by the voters in the general municipal election of November 1999. The bill would set forth certain related legislative findings. (2) The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement. This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

SB 1584. Existing law requires the California Transportation Commission to relinquish to any city or county any portion of any state highway within the city or county that has been deleted from the state highway system by legislative enactment. These relinquishments become effective upon the first day of the next calendar or fiscal year, whichever first occurs after the effective date of the legislative enactment. This bill would authorize the commission to relinquish to the City of Pasadena a specified portion of **State Highway Route 110**, upon terms and conditions the commission finds to be in the best interests of the state. The relinquishment would become effective immediately following the recordation by the county recorder of the relinquishment resolution containing the commission's approval of the terms and conditions of the relinquishment. The portion of State Highway Route 110 relinquished as specified would cease to be a state highway on the effective date of the relinquishment.

AB 1419. Existing law requires the California Transportation Commission to relinquish to any city or county any portion of any state highway within the city or county that has been deleted from the state highway system by legislative enactment. These relinquishments become effective upon the first day of the next calendar or fiscal year, whichever first occurs after the effective date of the legislative enactment. This bill would authorize the commission to relinquish **State Highway Route 209** to the City of San Diego upon terms and conditions the commission finds to be in the best interests of the state, if the commission and the city enter into an agreement providing for that relinquishment. The relinquishment would become effective immediately following the commission's approval of the terms and conditions of the relinquishment.

SB 532. Upon a determination by the commission that it is in the best interests of the state to do so, the commission may, upon terms and conditions approved by it, relinquish a portion of **Route 217** from the westerly end of both the East Goleta overhead and the Route 101-217 separation structures to the University of California, Santa Barbara property line to Santa Barbara County, in which that portion of the highway is located, if the county has agreed to accept it. The relinquishment shall be effective on the day immediately following the commission's approval of the terms and conditions.

SB 1404, Committee on Transportation. (4) Existing law requires the California Transportation Commission to relinquish to any city or county any portion of any state highway within the city or county that has been deleted from the state highway system by legislative enactment. These relinquishments become effective upon the first day of the next calendar or fiscal year, whichever first occurs after the effective date of the legislative enactment. This bill would authorize the commission to relinquish to the City of Arroyo Grande a specified portion of **State Highway Route 227**, upon terms and conditions the commission finds to be in the best interests of the state, including that the city maintain within its jurisdiction signs directing motorists to the continuation of Route 227. The relinquishment would become effective immediately following recordation by the county recorder of the relinquishment resolution containing the commission's approval of the terms and conditions of the relinquishment. The portion of Route 227 relinquished as specified would cease to be a state highway on the effective date of the relinquishment. (5) Existing law provides for the vacation of a public street, highway, or public service easement in accordance with specified procedures. This bill would correct a statutory cross reference set forth in those provisions.

SB 1645. Existing law requires the California Transportation Commission to relinquish to any city or county any portion of any state highway within the city or county that has been deleted from the state highway system by legislative enactment. These relinquishments become effective upon the first day of the next calendar or fiscal year, whichever first occurs after the effective date of the legislative enactment. This bill would authorize the commission to relinquish to the City of Oakland a specified portion of the former right-of-way of **State Highway Route 880**, upon terms and conditions the commission finds to be in the best interests of the state, including a requirement that the Department of Transportation and the city enter into a cooperative agreement to improve the portion of right-of-way that is to be relinquished in accordance with plans to be developed by the department, as specified. The relinquishment would become effective immediately following the commission's approval of the terms and conditions of the relinquishment.

Item 4.10



Office of the Assistant Chancellor —
Budget and Planning
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-2030
Tel: (805) 893-3971
Fax: (805) 893-8388

November 21, 2000

Mr. Robert I. Remen
Executive Director
California Transportation Commission
1120 N Street, Room 2233 (MS-52)
Sacramento, CA 95814

REC'D BY CTC
NOV 27 2000

Dear Mr. Remen:

Re: December 5-6, 2000 California Transportation Commission Meeting

In anticipation of the discussion of pending relinquishments at the December 5-6, CTC meeting, we respectfully request that copies of the enclosed materials be distributed to the CTC Commissioners prior to the meeting. Thank you for your assistance.

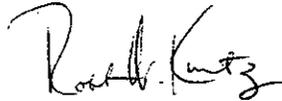
Enclosed Materials:

- Commentary from UCSB Professors Scott Cooper and Harry Nelson, Co-Chairs, UCSB Highway 217 Review Committee, entitled: "Stoplights No" The Independent, July 20, 2000.
- Commentary from Barton Myers, Professor of Architecture and Urban Design at UCLA, entitled: "Where is planning wisdom on Hwy. 217?" Santa Barbara News-Press, Sunday, August 27, 2000.
- Letter from Robert W. Kuntz, Assistant Chancellor, UCSB to Robert I. Remen, Executive Director, California Transportation Commission, October 16, 2000.
- Statement of UCSB Professor Harry Nelson to the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG), November 16, 2000.
- Letter from Jessica L. Winston, Internal President, UCSB Graduate Students Association to CTC Chairman James W. Kellogg, November 21, 2000.
- Letter from Matthew Tirrell, Dean, UCSB College of Engineering to CTC Chairman James W. Kellogg, November 20, 2000.



Mr. Robert I. Remen
November 21, 2000
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Kuntz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R".

Robert W. Kuntz
Assistant Chancellor

Enclosures

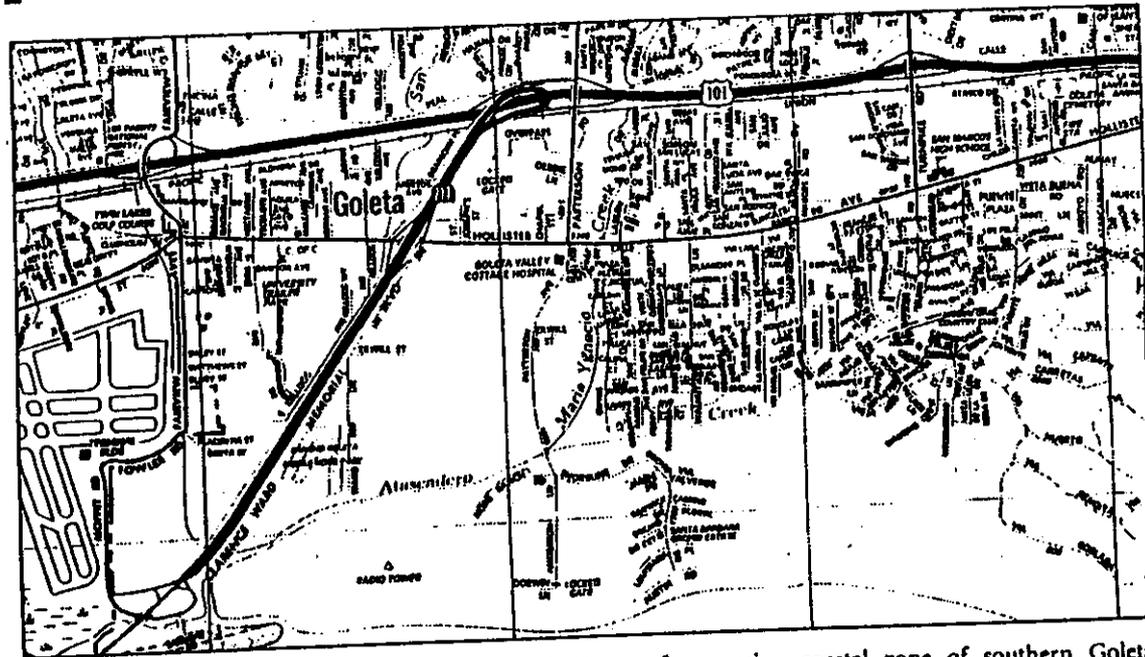
cc: Chancellor Henry T. Yang
Professor Scott Cooper
Professor Harry Nelson
Professor Richard Watts

voices

Highway 217: Stoplights No

To stop or not to stop? In the second installment of our two-part series on Clarence Ward Memorial Boulevard, a.k.a. State Highway 217, members of UCSB's 217 Review Committee look hard at the consequences of installing stoplights on Ward Memorial Boulevard, and county Planning chief John Patton explains how the stops will benefit commuters on Hollister Road, and Old Town Goleta, too.

BY HARRY NELSON and SCOTT COOPER, UCSB professors who serve on the university's Highway 217 Review Committee. Both reside in Goleta, and neither commutes to work on the 217.



our desire has always been to work together to solve this problem. There is a solution that will work for everyone.

State Route 217 is 2.6 miles long and connects Highway 101, between Patterson and Fairview, to the entrance of a state university, UCSB. When 217 was designed, Highway 101 still had intersections with stoplights. Roads like the old

101 had a death rate from accidents about 10 times greater than modern interstates. Indeed, in the 1950s, local advocates argued that Highway 217 should join the 101 at La Cumbre to keep UCSB travelers off the dangerous 101 longer. Highway 217 is designed like an interstate to keep travelers safe.

The county's goal is to stimulate industrial development in the coastal zone of southern Goleta Old Town. This goal is one part of the Goleta Old Town Revitalization Project. One new stoplight would be placed on 217 at Ekwil Street, just north of the News-Press Building, and a second would be placed at Fowler Street, just north of the Drive-In/Swap-Meet.

Upgrades to make Old Town more inviting

and livable have been touted, but they are a minor part of the whole revitalization project's cost. The stoplights and associated road projects for southern Old Town will cost \$19.7 million, or 65 percent of the revitalization budget. Early on, the county considered one full freeway interchange instead of two closely spaced stoplights on 217, but rejected the interchange as too costly at \$20 million.

Most people at UCSB support a more inviting and livable Old Town, but there are reservations about other parts of the project. Some worry that new industrial pollution will damage wetlands, creeks, and the ocean. Industrial use will diminish the adjacent habitat for endangered steelhead trout. The road projects will damage Old San Jose Creek wetlands. Others note that the county predicted that the industrialization of southern Old Town would eliminate 400 housing units, largely occupied by low-income, single-parent families. A county accounting quirk keeps that loss from qualifying as a reduction in affordable housing.

VOICES CONTINUED ▶

VOICES *continued*

All major faculty, staff, and student organizations at UCSB have focused on the direct impacts of Goleta Old Town revitalization on UCSB and have determined that stoplights on 217 at Ekwill and Fowler would have the biggest impact. All organizations voted overwhelmingly against the stoplights. These lights would make 217 more dangerous, doubling or tripling its fatality rate, according to federal statistics. More deaths also would occur among the traffic in and out of southern Old Town. Stopping 217 traffic would cause air pollution and traffic delays, including backups onto the 101, bringing substantial health and economic costs. The county, which already has large road maintenance backlogs, has no money to take over the maintenance of 217 from Caltrans.

UCSB would appear even more remote from South and Central Coast communities if stoplights were installed. A noted architect and urban planner, Prof. Barton Myers of UCLA, notes that UCSB's population size resembles that of downtown Santa Barbara. He states that access to UCSB from the 101 is inferior to access to downtown, and that other existing roads (e.g., Fairview) to UCSB should be upgraded to improve access. Myers calls stop-

lights on Highway 217 a "monumental mistake" with highly detrimental effects on UCSB.

The UCSB community has clearly and consistently voiced opposition to stoplights on 217. In January 1997, 95 people wrote comments to the county, which were included in the draft EIR, opposing stoplights. The county then told UCSB officials that more opposition would jeopardize funding for the entire Old Town Revitalization Project. The 3rd District supervisor assured us that the county's goal was Old Town access to 217, and that stoplights were simply placeholders until a solution was found. UCSB received repeated, documented assurances that it would be included in designing any changes to Highway 217. Most recently, in a letter on April 14, 1999, 3rd District Supervisor Gail Marshall stated, "I want to reinforce my commitment that the county will involve UCSB every step of the way as we move forward on the transfer of Route 217 and the Old Town Revitalization Project."

Funding arrived late in 1999, and UCSB discovered that stoplights were hard-wired into the county's plan for 217. All campus groups spoke out, and Chancellor Henry Yang formed a committee representing the students, staff,

and faculty at UCSB to study this issue again. Our committee has now met more than 30 times, reviewed numerous documents from UCSB and the county, and met with many stakeholders. It surprised us that county documents omitted impacts like new traffic deaths on UCSB, but addressed extensively the interests of developers of the Old Town coastal zone. We assembled a paper trail documenting UCSB's consistent opposition to stoplights on 217. Our analyses suggested that the Fowler Road stoplight brought modest benefits that didn't seem to justify its costs.

We have assumed that county assurances of UCSB participation in Highway 217's redesign remain valid. In February, our traffic consultants produced our first design for Old Town access to 217 (reproduced on our Web page, www.instadv.ucsb.edu/217/) which involved two ramps and an underpass beneath the 217 for Ekwill Street. Unlike the county's plan, our design connected the west segment of Ekwill with the east segment, where there are high-tech businesses. Our design tackled two of the problems raised in the county's Old Town reports: First, parts of Old Town divided by 217 were joined; second, east-west traffic flow was improved.

The county rejected our design, arguing that better east-west traffic flow was actually unacceptable because it encouraged development east of 217. We are working with our consultants on new alternatives to relieve congestion on the 101 and on Hollister in Old Town better than stoplights do.

County staff have made it clear that they view stoplights as the only solution to Old Town access and are moving forward with their plans. For example, on Friday, June 16, the UCSB team met with the county, including Supervisor Marshall and Director of Public Works Phil Demery, to discuss 217. One day earlier the county set up a crucial vote on the design contract for 217 for the county Board of Supervisor's meeting on Tuesday, June 20. The county did not mention that vote to UCSB in spite of earlier agreements to notify UCSB about it.

The academic year at UCSB ended on Sunday, June 18, and few students and faculty were available when UCSB discovered that this crucial vote was planned. Nevertheless, dozens from the UCSB community appeared at the June 20 supervisors' meeting to voice their concerns about the proposed stoplights. As a result, for the first time ever, there is a member from UCSB on the county's design

group for 217. At UCSB, the fact that the county both failed to notify UCSB and scheduled a crucial vote during UCSB's break, spoke volumes about the county's regard for the UCSB community.

Our committee is intent on solving the problem of access to 217 with innovation, sound engineering, and cooperation. The emotion of the moment won't get to us, and we will stick to UCSB's clear and consistent policy: Access to the 217 for Old Town is desirable, but stoplights are unacceptable. The revitalization of Goleta Old Town need not impede traffic flows on Highway 217. There is a solution that will work for all of us.

Independent Voices is a forum for community opinion open to all readers. The sentiments expressed are those of the writer, and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of The Independent. Articles should be from 2 to 4 typed, double-spaced pages, or 700-1,300 words. Shorter articles and ones related to Santa Barbara are preferred. Do not submit articles submitted or printed elsewhere. Include name and phone number, and send to: Voices, The Independent, 1221 State St., #200, Santa Barbara, CA 93101 or e-mail edit@independent.com. attn: Voices.

Where is planning wisdom on Hwy. 217?

Santa Barbara County has plans to put stoplights on Highway 217, downgrading a freeway to an expressway/arterial road. The county's objective is to achieve access to new potential developments in Goleta Old Town and to alleviate congestion on Hollister Avenue, the only east-west arterial south of Highway 101.

The University of California at Santa Barbara, while it supports the county goals for Old Town revitalization,

commentary

Barton Myers

opposes
the stop-
lights
and pro-
poses an alterna-

ive system of overpasses and ramps, which would link 217 to Old Town but retain freeway access to the university, Isla Vista and the Santa Barbara airport.

In mid-July, after nearly five hours of detailed testimony by county planning staff and their consultants, the Planning Commission allowed the university to make an appeal for accommodation of their concerns and cooperation in finding an alternative which would satisfy the goals of all.

At that hearing, I requested:

- Postponing the vote for conceptual approval of the Goleta Old Town Infrastructure Improvement Program to calm the dissension building over the 217 issue and show good faith.

- Directing the county planning staff to work closely with UCSB representatives and consultants to bring back a solution which meets the county's transportation objectives but maintains freeway access to the campus — to work as a team and



not separate, competing agencies.

- Appropriate representatives from the county, the Planning Commission and UCSB meet to begin discussion of a partnering for Old Town revitalization and, equally important, the county and UCSB working together for a much-needed Comprehensive Regional Development Plan. Current plans for Old Town/217 should be considered in the context of a comprehensive regional plan.

I hoped that within a very short time both parties would be on the way to a partnership that would bring positive benefits to the Goleta Old Town, the county, UCSB, the airport and the entire region, and that UCSB's recommendations would be welcomed by the Planning Commission. Instead, I was shocked and

disappointed when the commission voted 5-0 to accept staff recommendations for stoplights on 217, with consideration of the university's alternative at a later date during the EIR process. Thus, stoplights continue to be the primary design pursued by the county. Public expenses continue to build, and valuable time, which should be spent in cooperative effort, is lost.

There appears to be a failure in the process that has gotten the county and the university to this impasse and a lack of recognition of some important fundamental planning principles:

Accommodation: Cities are a collective endeavor. The interests of many people

See **UCSB on G2**

Time to resolve Highway 217 dispute

UCSB

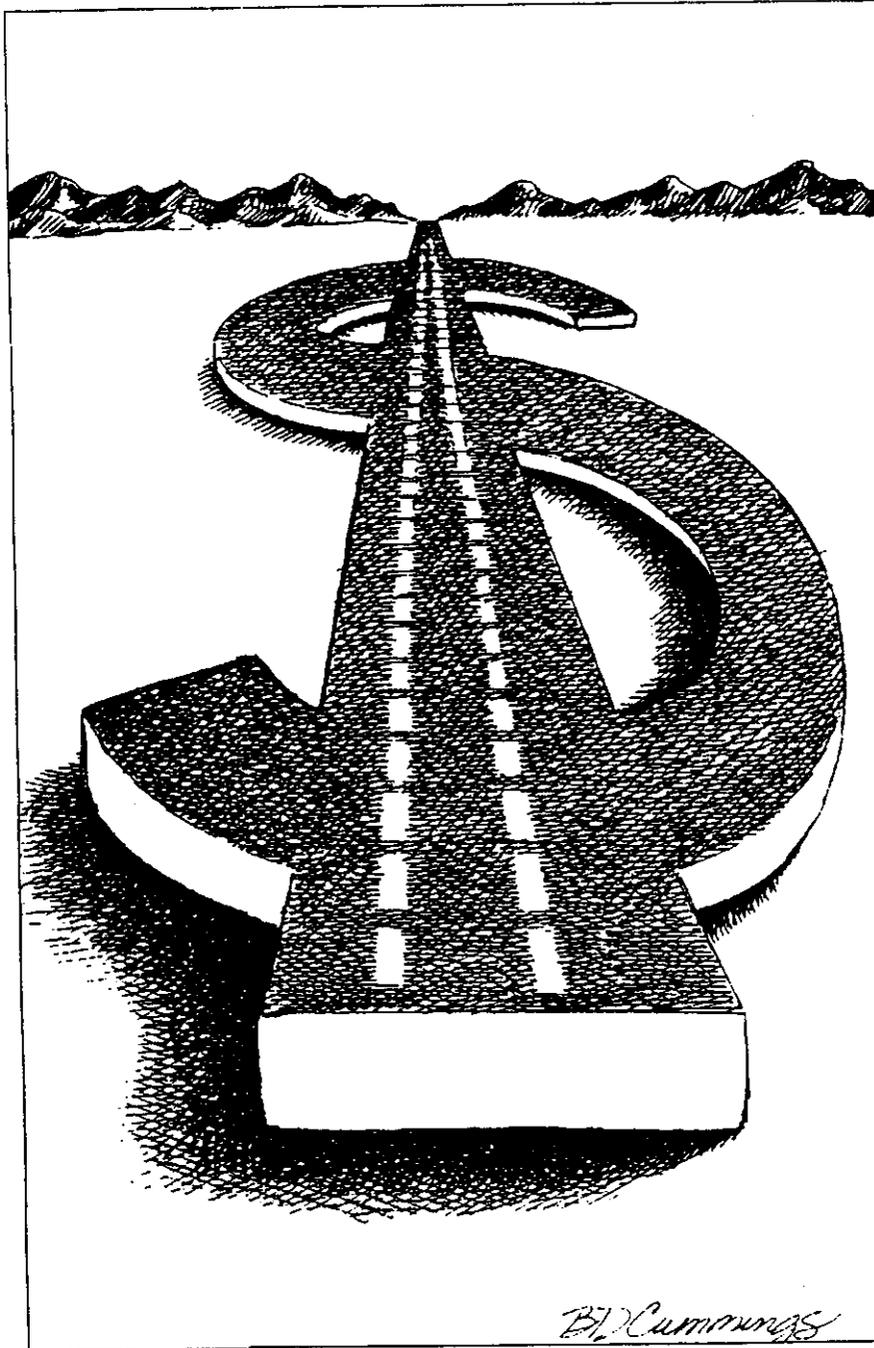
Continued from Page G1

must be accommodated, and this is what makes the planning process so challenging and so rewarding when it works. University concerns should have been identified early in the process and should have been part of the plan's objectives. Instead, UCSB's desire to maintain freeway access has been ignored. Given the university's position on this issue and the university's importance as the major academic/research, cultural and economic engine on the South Coast, this is an enormous oversight.

Imagine the city of Los Angeles undertaking a revitalization of Westwood without UCLA as a major player, or in the neighborhoods around USC without USC as a major force. In both cases, partnerships were developed. Westwood revitalization is under way, and USC is Time Magazine's "College of the Year" for its role in neighborhood redevelopment.

The potential for collaboration with UCSB on the revitalization of Goleta Old Town and the entire area is exciting. For instance, decentralization of continuing education facilities, as UCLA is doing in Westwood; building mixed use retail/housing/office space as the University of Cincinnati is doing in the neighboring Calhoun District. American universities are generating huge biotechnology-related developments, i.e. both UCI and UCSF have joint ventures with the private sector building large biotech campuses. UCLA and Stanford have generated silicon val-

Reliance: As used in planning, reliance implies that factors which are considered critical to a particular development can be relied upon to remain permanent. Some 40 years ago, the state of California established a major university on the then-isolated site of an abandoned Marine airfield three miles south of the major transportation corridor through the Goleta region, Highway 101. Recognizing the site's isolation, the University of California's need to be readily accessible and the superior safety of freeways, the state invested millions of dollars in the construction of Highway 217, designed as a freeway spur from 101, and



versity, Santa Barbara Airport and the Goleta Beach Park. Relying on the perpetuity of the freeway approach to alleviate its isolation from Santa Barbara, the university has constructed over 5 million square feet of facilities, an investment of over \$1 billion. The current daytime population of over 25,000 is projected to significantly increase by 2010. Factor in Isla Vista, with 18,000 people, and you have the highest concentration of development on the South Coast.

Nearly all major California universities are dependent on freeway accessibility, including UC Davis, UC San Diego, UC Riverside and UC Irvine — very similar campuses to UCSB in their isolation from urban centers.

sity directly related to transportation accessibility. New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Montreal and Toronto, for instance, have extremely high densities related to fixed rail and freeway accessibility. Western cities, automobile-dependent, rely entirely on freeways; thus Dallas, Houston, Denver and Los Angeles concentrate their densities around freeway interchanges.

Downtown Santa Barbara has six freeway exits and Goleta Old Town is well-served with two.

UCSB brings in \$100 million a year in external research support; \$200 million in capital improvements is planned, a boon to the construction industry; UCSB is the largest employer in the county. UCSB is, in fact, a city and needs to be treated as such.

The current UCSB/Isla Vista/Goleta community requires a better regional infrastructure framework — now — and this framework would be degraded by stoplights. Highway 217 will be even more necessary in the future.

It seems to me that UCSB's arguments on reliance — the concept that factors which are considered critical to a particular development can be relied on to remain permanent, i.e. freeway access via Highway 217 — are correct and reasonable, and to downgrade Highway 217 with stoplights, particularly when the university has a good alternative, would be a monumental infrastructure mistake as well as opening up questions of planning legalities.

It's time to mend what could be a very negative and harmful dispute over Highway 217. I support UCSB's appeals to the county Board of Supervisors to:

- Stop design of stoplights on 217.
- Instruct staff to join forces with UCSB to find a solution acceptable to both that does not involve stoplights.
- Begin immediate partnership discussions with UCSB dealing with large, long-term regional planning ideas.

Barton Myers is an internationally recognized architect and urban designer, professor of Architecture and Urban Design at UCLA, and a consultant to UCSB. He resides in Santa Barbara



Office of the Assistant Chancellor —
Budget and Planning
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-2030
Tel: (805) 893-3971
Fax: (805) 893-8388

October 16, 2000

Mr. Robert I. Remen
Executive Director
California Transportation Commission
1120 N Street, Room 2233 (MS-52)
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: California Transportation Commission Proceedings with respect to Streets
and Highways Code Section 517.1

Dear Mr. Remen:

As Assistant Chancellor of UC Santa Barbara, I am writing on behalf of the University of California, to request that the California Transportation Commission (the "CTC") assume oversight and direction of the proceedings now being undertaken by various agencies in anticipation of the CTC's actions pertaining to California Streets and Highways Code Section 517.1. Section 517.1 was one of the myriad bills, which was included in an omnibus bill adopted last year. Section 517.1 directs the CTC to evaluate whether it would be "in the best interests of the state" to relinquish a portion of Route 217 from the State Highway system and, if so, to determine under the terms and conditions associated with such a relinquishment.

Route 217 was constructed by the State of California to provide regional freeway access to the UC Santa Barbara campus. Preserving and enhancing regional freeway access to all of the University's campuses is a significant long-term State interest. Section 517.1 was introduced at the request of the County of Santa Barbara. The County would like to be granted ownership of the freeway in order to downgrade it to a local arterial, so that it can introduce at-grade signalized or other intersections. The County's objective is to facilitate redevelopment activities and particular private development projects in the south Goleta area.

Although UC Santa Barbara is generally supportive of area redevelopment, the University is opposed to the County's proposal to downgrade Route 217, and believes that access and improvements for the County's redevelopment project can be provided without

compromising the State's interest in ensuring continued regional access to the UC Santa Barbara campus over the long-term.

The University is charged with the responsibility of being the leading provider of higher education in the state, a mission which includes being on the forefront of education, research and public service across the state. The University discharges this responsibility through its integrated operating network of nine campuses (with a tenth campus in the planning process). The University's mission reaches beyond each campus to other public and private institutions throughout the State and around the world. Each University campus also operates as a regional center with respect to its cultural programs, vast extension programs, satellite campuses, and partnerships with community colleges and the California State University system.

Enhancing and maintaining regional access to each of the University of California campuses is of primary concern to the University and the citizens of the State. Only this year the State Legislature and Governor allocated \$40 million to construct a new regional access road to the proposed tenth campus of the University of California at Merced. Similarly, the State has also committed substantial funds to construct regional access to the California State University Channel Island campus. Moreover, lack of direct access to the State Highway system has given rise to serious conflicts, environmental impacts and operating constraints at existing University campuses such as UC Berkeley, UCLA, and UC Santa Cruz. At present the University is struggling to provide adequate facilities, housing, and programs to accommodate the top 12.5% of California's graduating seniors. The University's responsibilities will increase over the long-term, not decrease.

The County, other agencies, and private parties are prematurely moving forward with various processes, programs, allocations and expenditures which assume that the CTC will authorize the relinquishment and down-grading of Route 217.¹ The CTC, however, has yet to initiate any proceedings pertaining to Route 217. Section 517.1 directs CTC to objectively and independently evaluate whether the County's relinquishment request is in the State's best interest. The Commission's own regulations also obligate the CTC to act as "lead agency" with respect to the preparation of an environmental impact report for potential

¹ In advance of any CTC proceedings pertaining to Route 217, the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments ("SBCAG") has obtained \$19 million in State Transportation Improvement funds towards the County's proposed improvement program for Route 217. SBCAG has used some of the funds for the planning and design of the County's proposed Route 217 improvements. The County of Santa Barbara is preparing its own EIR to implement intersections along Route 217. In addition, certain development projects are now being planned on the assumption that that Route 217 will be relinquished and downgraded.

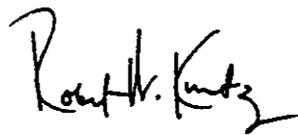
Mr. Robert I. Remen
October 16, 2000
Page 3

detachments from the State highway system.² The premature activities that are currently occurring prejudice the CTC's ability to fulfill these responsibilities.

The CTC's responsibilities cannot be delegated, especially given the real possibility the CTC may be called upon to balance local economic interests and requests with the question of long-term State interest. The University has engaged experts and has expended substantial funds to work with the County to identify a set of access improvements capable of facilitating the County's redevelopment objectives without compromising the State's long-term interest in maintaining regional freeway access to UC Santa Barbara. Despite the University's cooperative efforts, the County is now moving forward with its proposed improvement program over the University's objection. The University has voiced its concerns to district Caltrans representatives, who are trying to schedule a local meeting between interested parties, but who have apparently not received direction from the CTC as to how the CTC plans to conduct its Section 517.1 proceedings.

For all of these reasons, it is important that the CTC initiate its evaluation under Section 517.1 at the present time, assume its role as lead agency, and to notify all interested agencies that local programs that are dependent on relinquishment should be deferred until the CTC has completed its own primary proceedings. The University remains committed to working with local agencies and parties to identifying and implementing area improvements (including improvements to Route 217) without impairing Route 217's function to provide freeway access to the UC Santa Barbara campus. We look forward to working with the Commission and its Staff on addressing this important issue.

Sincerely,



Robert W. Kuntz
Assistant Chancellor

Enclosures

cc: w/o enclosures
Chancellor Henry T. Yang
R. Gregg Albright

² Cal. Code Regs. tit. 21, § 1504.5. requires that the "Commission will be the Lead Agency for the purpose of adopting or rescinding State Highway routes and new public road connections to freeways and expressways."

Mr. Robert I. Remen
October 16, 2000
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Mark Chaconas
Phillip Demery
Matt Dobberteen
Scott Cooper
William F. Derrick
Harry Nelson
Highway 217 Review Committee Members

Statement of Prof. Harry Nelson to SBCAG

11/16/00

Good Morning, and thank you for inviting the University to present an update on its recent activities concerning Highway 217.

I speak as Co-Chair of the University's Highway 217 Review Committee. Our committee was formed in late 1999 to analyze the impacts of the Goleta Old Town Revitalization Plan on the University, and the committee consists of representatives from all groups on campus - staff, students, and faculty. We will have our 50th 90-minute meeting tomorrow. Our proceedings are open, and all our correspondence is available on the internet at <http://www.instadv.ucsb.edu/217/>.

The campus community supports aspects of the Revitalization Plan. The part of the plan that would place traffic interruptions on Highway 217 creates the principal impact on the University community, and all campus groups, through their elected campus representatives, have overwhelmingly expressed opposition to the placement of stoplights on Highway 217.

Sentiment of the University community has been uniformly and consistently communicated to Santa Barbara County. In 1997 95 individuals from the campus community signed letters of comment on the Revitalization plan EIR that did not support changes on the 217.

Our principal concern is connectivity. The University is intended to be an interactive – perhaps the most interactive – State institution. In addition to teaching and research, community activities at the University range from basketball games and screening of movies to continuing education and public lectures by recent Nobel Laureates. However, our Santa Barbara campus is surrounded on three sides by water, and its isolation is compounded by the Airport on the Goleta Slough side.

Highway 217 connects the principal thoroughfare of our County to the University, which is the County's largest employer. The daytime population of the University peninsula is comparable to that of downtown Santa Barbara. We view the 217 as an umbilical cord to our South Coast region and to our State.

The University of California has existed for 132 years, and when we consider changes to the 217, our vision extends at least 100 years into the future. Our sister campuses that lack freeway access have experienced related difficulties in their ability to carry out their mission for our State. Indeed most of the younger campuses, like ours in Santa Barbara, have direct freeway access so that they may wax, on a 100-year time scale, to their fullest promise of excellence and distinction for our State.

We are also greatly concerned with the safety of travelers, many of whom are under 25 years of age. At its opening on August 14, 1963, then Caltrans Director Robert Bradford dedicated Highway 217 to safety. Data from the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration indicate that fatalities on the 217 would triple if it were downgraded to a high-speed arterial with stoplights.

Our Committee was formed last year when the real possibility of intersections on the 217 became widely known. We promptly commenced a series of meetings with the County to work out a solution that would be acceptable to all parties. The first of these meetings occurred on March 16, 2000, and further meetings were held on April 20, June 16, August 22, and September 19. A partial description of this joint effort should be available in today's staff report for agenda item 13.

I would like to recount a specific aspect of that joint work, omitted in the staff report. This is mostly a technical matter. It is central to understanding the University's actions.

A principal focus of the joint work we started with the County was the preparation of traffic congestion studies for the EIR on the Ekwill and Fowler Road projects. The University agreed to undertake and pay for those studies, and the County agreed to undertake the environmental evaluations.

As you know, traffic modeling consists of two parts. In the first part, traffic flows are estimated using a regional traffic model. Completion of the first part took some seven months, and was largely obligatory even without University involvement.

In the second part, Levels of Service (LOS) are estimated – these are the grades that run from A, best, to F, worst, mostly for intersections.

A County Transportation Division Staff member (Jeff Knowles) instructed the University, in the joint meetings and through e-mails, to estimate Levels of Service in a particular way, a way that had been used in parts of the EIR for the Old Town Revitalization Plan. County Transportation Division Staff gave us input files and computer software to carry out their instructions.

University consultants performed the Level of Service analysis in the manner specified and approved in advance by County Transportation Division staff between early July and the August 22 joint meeting. The results surprised everyone – the introduction of intersections on the 217 had little significant effect on traffic congestion in the Hollister corridor.

Late at that August 22 meeting, County Planning Staff informed us the particular Level of Service (LOS) analysis was inconsistent with County Policy. I'm no expert on County Policy, after all, I'm a Physics Professor. But the written County Policy I've seen allows Transportation Division Staff to designate in advance the method of LOS analysis, which is what happened here. In any event, the University promptly made the additional studies requested by the County Planning Staff, and the results changed, as we reported at the September 19 meeting. The differences can be as much as 2 levels of service. An intersection assigned a 'C' LOS under the first method specified by the County can be assigned an 'E' LOS under the second method.

These differences are significant in this case. The first method indicates that there is no significant congestion relief provided by new intersections on Highway 217. The second method indicates that a single intersection on Hollister Avenue gets significantly less congested.

We have studied the nature of the discrepancies, and conducted traffic counts at some of the relevant intersections. We have a reasonable understanding of the origin of the discrepancies.

However, at the meeting on September 19, and in a subsequent letter of October 18 of Supervisor Marshall, the County unconditionally dictated that the second method of LOS analysis shall be used in the County's EIR.

Our committee could accept any form of the traffic analysis that was verified to be accurate. Our own traffic counts and studies of the issue indicate that the method now dictated by the County is not accurate.

It is the view of our committee that these unilateral actions by the County, the subsequent initiation of the EIR and dictation of a timeline, terminated joint University-County collaboration on solving the challenge of Highway 217. It is not the case that the University arbitrarily "...elected not to concur with the established timeline...". The County's unilateral actions caused the University to seek assistance from Caltrans and the CTC.

We have proceeded to design, based on the first LOS analysis, area improvements that we believe will result in superior traffic congestion relief. We have met with stakeholders including the Page Hotel, the Airport, and the Airport Plaza, and we believe our improvements meet their requirements.

We find that there is no need for impairment of the freeway connection that links the University to the South Coast region and to the State.

Recently the County has proposed, in a letter to the CTC, and in the staff report to item 13 of today's agenda, re-establishment of joint workshops to resolve the challenge of Highway 217. It is likely that the Highway 217 Review Committee will be happy and perhaps eager to participate in any process that maintains as the principal goal that there will be no impairment to the freeway connection provided by Highway 217.

However, not a single University goal is listed among the six objectives contained in the County's recent written proposal. Our Committee has directed me to indicate that we are therefore unable to participate in that specific new process as described by the County. A revised process might be acceptable, however. Indeed, at today's meeting, Public Works Director Demery verbally proposed revisions to the County's proposal. It may be that our Committee could agree to an initial meeting focused solely on reaching a clear consensus to define the true goals of the proposed 217 modifications.

Our position is that an unimpaired freeway connection to the Santa Barbara Campus is in the vital long-term interest of the University, the South Coast Region, and the State of California.

Thank you.



Graduate Students Association
University Center, Room 2502
University of California at Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara, California 93106

(805)893-3824
fax (805)893-2383
gsa@gsa.ucsb.edu
<http://www.gsa.ucsb.edu>

21 November, 2000

Mr. James W. Kellogg, Chairman
California Transportation Commission
1120 N Street (MS-52)
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Honorable Chair:

As the Internal President of the Graduate Students Association (GSA) at the University of California, Santa Barbara, I am writing to you regarding the future of Highway 217. Because of this highway's importance to the safety and efficiency of the students I represent, I request that the CTC not consider relinquishing Highway 217 to Santa Barbara County unless the University and the County have jointly agreed on a final set of improvements and permanent conditions to protect the freeway.

The GSA is the graduate student government at UCSB and represents over 2,400 students. Many students on this campus live throughout Santa Barbara County, from Lompoc to Carpinteria, and some commute from Ventura County. Highway 217 is the principal thoroughfare used by students to access the Santa Barbara campus and is integral to our ability to commute to school (in our own cars, as members of carpools and as riders of the local bus service). The road also provides an important link between UCSB and other UC campuses, allowing us to interact with faculty and students at other campuses with relative ease.

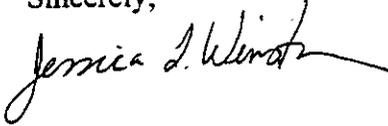
Because Highway 217 plays such a vital role in our lives, the Graduate Students Association at UCSB has consistently opposed any attempt to downgrade this road. In 1997, the GSA passed a resolution opposing the conversion of this freeway into an arterial road. In May 2000, the Internal President of the GSA sent a letter to Ms. Susan Rose, Chair of the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors, opposing the proposed degradation of the road, after an advisory vote in which 77% of the voting graduate students opposed stoplights on 217. In fall 2000, the GSA General Council recognized the detrimental effects that stoplights on 217 would have for UCSB's connections to the larger community, when it passed its yearly Issues Agenda.

The principal interest of the graduate students at UCSB in 217 revolves around maintaining this critical link between UCSB and our homes, and between the campus and other UC schools. Students also have expressed concerns about other aspects of the proposed degradation of Highway 217, including the impacts of the County's proposed changes on the safety of the many students, faculty, staff, and visitors who use this highway. The importance of this freeway link will only grow as the UCSB campus and surrounding region matures.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mr. James W. Kellogg
November 21, 2000
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Sincerely,



Jessica L. Winston
Internal President, Graduate Students Association

cc: Chancellor Henry T. Yang
Professor Scott Cooper, Chair, UCSB Highway 217 Review Committee
Mr. Robert I. Remen, Executive Director, California Transportation Commission

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OFFICE OF THE DEAN
COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA 93106-5130

November 20, 2000

Mr. James W. Kellogg, Chairman
California Transportation Commission
1120 N Street (MS-52)
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Honorable Commissioner:

I am writing out of concern for the plans of Santa Barbara County to convert Highway 217 from a freeway to an arterial highway.

I am the Dean of the College of Engineering at the Santa Barbara campus of the University of California. Our College is relatively young, but since our founding in the 1960's, we have achieved a phenomenal ascent to excellence.

Recently, we have been excited to welcome Shuji Nakamura to our faculty. Professor Nakamura is the inventor of the blue light emitting diode (LED), a technology which has the potential to change the type of lighting used on streets throughout the State. Indeed, the replacement of the existing red incandescent stoplights with red LEDs has been underway for the past few years, resulting in substantial energy savings for public agencies. The breakthroughs of Professor Nakamura could lead to the eventual replacement of all street lighting with LEDs.

We are also delighted that the 2000 Nobel Prize in Physics was awarded to our Professor Herbert Kroemer.

To continue our ascent, we must accept that all research and education is becoming increasingly cross institutional and interdisciplinary. Our connections to the industrial base in the South Coast Region, Southern California, and to institutions such as UCLA and Caltech are crucially important.

Santa Barbara County has developed plans, as part of an effort to revitalize a nearby urban area, to put stoplights or introduce "roundabouts" on the freeway that links our Santa Barbara Campus with the South Coast Region. The studies of our Highway 217 Review Committee

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November 20, 2000
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indicate there are several alternatives to downgrading Highway 217 from a freeway. From a technical perspective, all of the objectives of the County can be achieved without need for the stoplights or any downgrading Highway 217.

I am sure that an excellent outcome will eventually result from a County-University partnership. However, given the failures in the process up to the present time, I request that the California Transportation Commission only consider relinquishing Highway 217 if and when the County of Santa Barbara and the University have jointly devised a mutually acceptable solution.

Sincerely,



Matthew Tirrell
Richard A. Auhl Professor and Dean
College of Engineering

cc: Chancellor Henry T. Yang
Professor Scott Cooper, Chair, UCSB Highway 217 Review Committee
Mr. Robert I. Remen, Executive Director, California Transportation Commission

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REC'D BY CTC

NOV 27 2000

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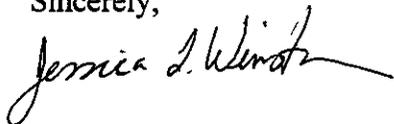
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