



**Urban Land
Institute**

Orange County

Technical Advisory Panel Report City of San Juan Capistrano

ULI Orange County

Panel Date: Thursday, June 26, 2008

ULI Mission



The mission of the Urban Land Institute is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities.

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
About the Urban Land Institute	2
ULI Advisory Services	2
San Juan Capistrano Technical Advisory Panel	3
Overview of the Preparation and Process	3
Scope of Work	4
Existing City Aerial	5
Findings and Recommendations	5
Stakeholders Comments and Observations	6
Panel Recommendations	6
Aerials/Maps	8
Conclusion	12
Appendix	13
San Juan Capistrano Chamber of Commerce Letter	13
Additional Considerations	14
ULI Orange County TAP Panelists and Biographies	15

Introduction

About the Urban Land Institute

The Urban Land Institute is an international, non-profit research and educational organization that serves to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. The ULI is based out of Washington D.C., and is connected throughout the Americas, Europe and Asia by a network of district councils. In North America, there are currently 52 district councils, and in Europe, there are currently 14 district councils. The ULI Orange County is the one of the largest district council, with over 1,500 members. The ULI is funded by sponsors, programs, and its members. Over 40,000 members are active in the research and education of land use planning and development issues. ULI members have access to information such as publications, case studies, and community catalyst reports. The ULI also organizes special workshops and programs geared towards people who develop and redevelop neighborhoods, business districts and communities across the U.S. and around the world. Networking is one of the primary reasons to join the ULI as professionals seek to be connected and share best practices.

The members of the ULI Orange County are community builders. They represent a range of professions from academicians to economic development officials and designers to property managers. The activities of the ULI Orange County are geared specifically towards local land use issues, but also towards issues that affect the Southern California region and California statewide. In an effort to create a forum where professionals under 35 years old could network with their colleagues or meet seasoned professionals in the industry, in 2003, the Young Leaders Group was formed. Today, over 30 percent of the ULI Orange County membership is involved in the Young Leaders Group.

The mission and the principles of the ULI have withstood the test of time over the past 72 years. Founded in 1936, by J. C. Nichols, the ULI has been bringing together leaders from the private and public sectors in an open exchange of ideas and experiences to improve the quality of real estate and development decisions in regions throughout the world and in Orange County.

ULI Advisory Services

The Urban Land Institute is a leader in conducting research and providing information on all aspects of real estate development and land use policy. In order to maintain its status as a valued and objective source in the private and public sectors, the ULI seeks to bring together leaders from across the fields of real estate and land use policy to exchange best practices and serve community needs; foster collaboration within and beyond ULI's membership through mentoring, dialogue and problem-solving; explore issues of urbanization, conservation, regeneration, land use, capital formation, and sustainable development; advance land use policies and design practices that respect the uniqueness of both built and natural environments; share knowledge through education, applied research, publishing, and electronic media; and, sustain a diverse global network of local practice and advisory efforts that address current and future challenge.

Since 1947, ULI's Advisory Services Program has been assisting communities by bringing together panels of seasoned real estate, planning, financing, marketing, and development experts to provide unbiased pragmatic advice on complex land use and development issues.

At the local level, the ULI Orange County District Council provides Technical Advisory Services panels on specific issues, which are addressed in one or two days. To ensure objectivity, members of a District Council Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) cannot be involved in matters pending before or be working for the sponsor and cannot solicit work from the sponsor during the panel's assignment period. The panel consists of professionals, who are ULI Orange County members, with expertise relative to the scope of the project. All TAP panelists are volunteering their time and expertise to participate. Sponsors request TAPs, and the District Council assists the sponsor in refining the scope of the assignment and in organizing the panel's efforts. At the conclusion of the TAP, the panel issues a report with findings and recommendations to the sponsor. A fee is paid to the ULI Orange County for the TAP, which is used by the district council to further the Institute's mission to share best practices and provide educational services in local land use planning and real estate development.

San Juan Capistrano Technical Advisory Panel

Overview of Preparation and Process

On June 26, 2008, the ULI Orange County held a Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) for the City of San Juan Capistrano. The City asked for the panel's advice concerning a proposed highway interchange improvement near the downtown and how to mitigate the associated economic impacts.

ULI Orange County assembled a team of five land use professionals to study the site and make recommendations to the city on how best to address several questions related to the interchange proposal effects on San Juan Capistrano's downtown. Roger Mobley of Roger W. Mobley Consulting chaired the panel and led a team of high-level professionals with backgrounds and experience in traffic engineering, planning and design, mixed-use development, and city management. A list of the TAP panelists and their biographies are included at the end of this report.

The TAP was tasked with focusing on the impacts of a proposed highway interchange improvement and how the city can best prepare for the impending construction period. The city of San Juan Capistrano developed a scope of work that included four specific questions for the panelists to answer regarding the interchange and its potential effects. In the weeks leading up to the TAP, the panelists were given a tour of the district in order to be familiar with study area and to understand the circulation patterns. The city also prepared a thorough briefing book that was provided to all of the panelists.

During the first half hour of the TAP, city staff gave an overview presentation to the panelists and answered questions. The panelists then spent the rest of the morning interviewing 11 local stakeholders, who were a mix of property and business owners, local organization leaders and city council members:

- Eric Altman, Chamber of Commerce
- Joe Campbell, Ruby's Diner
- Don Denault, Denault's Hardware

- Laura Freese, Economic Development Committee
- Thomas Hribar, City Council
- Mechelle Lawrence- Adams, Mission San Juan Capistrano
- Mark Neilsen, Mayor Pro Tem
- Steve Nordeck, Swallow's Inn
- Ross Pollard, McDonald's Restaurant
- Gretchen Stroscher Thompson, Plaza Del Obispo
- Londres Uso, City Council

The five panelists then spent the afternoon focusing on the specific questions in the scope of work. At the end of the day, panelists presented their findings and recommendations in a PowerPoint presentation to the city staff and stakeholders.

All members of the ULI Orange County TAP participate in writing the final report for the San Juan Capistrano TAP. Those comments are summarized in this report. The city was encouraged to follow-up with the panelists for additional elaborations on findings and recommendations.

Scope of Work

San Juan Capistrano (population 37,900) is located in southern Orange County, California. The city was created around the Mission San Juan Capistrano—a colonial Spanish church that was established in 1776 and now stands as the oldest structure in California. The mission draws thousands of tourists every year to the downtown. San Juan Capistrano is also known for its Cliff Swallows—flocks of migratory birds that arrive in the city each March and depart in October. The city holds an annual Swallow’s Day Parade, as well as several other festivities in and around the downtown.

San Juan Capistrano’s historic downtown core includes the Mission grounds, and then runs east to Del Obispo Street and its western border is formed by train tracks. The downtown contains distinctive examples of Spanish mission architecture and includes several historic adobe sites, museums, parks and a train depot. Most of the downtown buildings are historic, small-scale and contain boutiques and restaurants that cater to tourists and residents. However, many tourists visit the mission and then leave without spending much of their time or dollars in the downtown.

The TAP study area concentrated on the road networks surrounding the downtown core area (see Image A). Ortega Highway (SR-74), a major through route to the nearby Interstate-5 (I-5, also known as the San Diego Freeway), enters the downtown from the east and runs along the south side of the Mission. On either side of the Mission, Camino Real and Camino Capistrano intersect Ortega Highway. Both roads run south of Ortega Highway and wind through the downtown. Ortega Highway not only serves as a major traffic artery, but it provides the main entrance to the downtown. However, the Ortega Highway intersection with I-5 has become a significant choke point, where substantial delays and congestion occur.

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has determined that the Ortega Highway/I-5 intersection must be improved and is working with the city of San Juan Capistrano on ways of relieving congestion. Caltrans developed five possible roadway configuration scenarios. Scenario #3 (see illustration), which has become a locally preferred alternative, realigns Ortega Highway west of the I-5 southbound ramps

and widens the I-5 southbound off-ramp. Proposed improvements would realign Del Obispo Street and Ortega Highway so that the eastern branch of Ortega Highway curves into Del Obispo Street, which would form a new intersection south of the existing intersection. A new curved roadway would also be constructed, which would connect the current El Camino Real/Ortega Highway intersection with this new intersection. This proposed construction project would not only create a different entrance to the downtown, it could also disrupt local businesses. San Juan Capistrano’s downtown and road configurations have been studied for improvement numerous times in the past; however, many of the suggestions have yet to be implemented due to lack of political will and no sense of urgency. Now that the city must make this change, they want to know how best to leverage this opportunity and use it as a catalyst to improve the underutilized downtown. With these goals in mind, the panelists were asked to consider all proposed Caltrans alternatives and asked to answer the following questions:

1. Assuming option #3 is the preferred interchange alternative, evaluate the merits of realigning Ortega Highway with Verdugo Street versus reconnecting with existing Ortega right-of-way? Should the city’s downtown entry be reworked as part of the overall Interchange improvement effort?
2. Please address the questions raised in the Chamber’s letter (see Image D) to Caltrans, which include impacts on local retailers and traffic patterns on local streets.
3. How does the community deal with the economic impacts of the interchange project? What are the possible short-term and long-term impacts? How can the city/community mitigate them? What will be the economic impacts to the property owners and the tenants?
4. What should the community be doing to leverage the interchange for a positive gain? How should this project be marketed? What extent of cooperation can the city leverage from Caltrans?

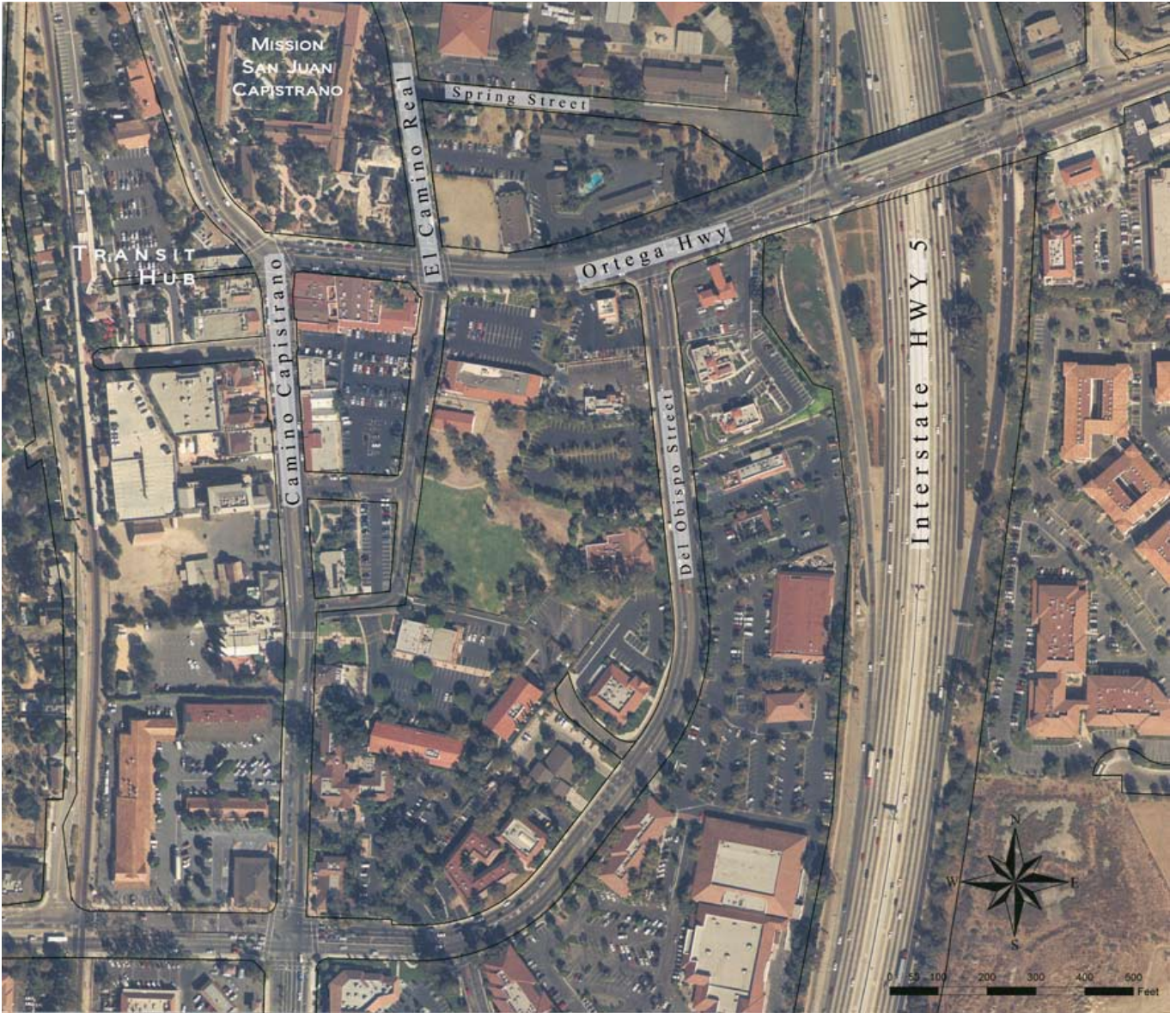


Image A : Existing Conditions

Findings and Recommendations

Stakeholder Comments and Observations

The panelists spent approximately two hours interviewing city staff, property owners, and elected officials on the morning of June 26. All five panelists met with groups of stakeholders over three different sessions. This allowed panelists to get a general understanding of different opinions among the community.

The TAP panelists used the following questions as guidelines with the stakeholders:

1. Will realigning the Del Obispo/Ortega interchange intersection help traffic flows?
2. How will street realignments help or hinder downtown businesses along Camino Capistrano?
3. Would it make sense to connect Verdugo Street to Del Obispo Street rather than Ortega Highway?
4. How can construction impacts on businesses be minimized?
5. How can the interchange re-construction be best used for community benefit?
6. How could the city best help to minimize the economic impact of the construction period?

An observation that was repeated by several business owners was that the city should do more to support reinventing the downtown. Specifically, many were concerned that there is not a unified marketing strategy in place. Many business owners market themselves separately and there is not a lot of outreach to potential tourists or surrounding communities. Additionally, almost 300,000 tourists visit the Mission each year but very few of them patronize downtown businesses. Many stakeholders believe the downtown businesses and the Mission, with the help of the city, need to collectively promote the San Juan Capistrano core. As a result, retail sales revenues are trending downwards. The creation of a consensus driven plan for the downtown is especially important if the area is to survive the reduced traffic flow during the interchange construction period.

Stakeholders acknowledged that the community writ large has fought change over the years and that is because so many of the plans to improve the area have not been implemented. NIMBYism and lack of political will were the main reasons given. However, the realignment is now a certainty and the community must adapt. A majority of the stakeholders preferred alternative # 3 and saw this “forced change” as an opportunity to create a better downtown. However, communication before and during construction needs to be as clear as possible in order to prevent misconceptions.

Stakeholders suggested building a better gateway into the downtown and use it to draw visitors off the thoroughfare and into the business core. Traffic, as it flows now, bypasses the downtown and many motorists use Ortega as a pass through to I-5. Improved traffic circulation, pedestrian access and signage could all be part of the new gateway project. Many stakeholders stated that overall access to the downtown core is not ideal and suggested improved sidewalks, crosswalks, parking, way finding features and perhaps a circulating trolley. Some were concerned about the effect of the new Ortega Highway running directly by the Mission and thereby diminishing the pedestrian environment.

Generally, the stakeholders believed that the train depot is an asset to the downtown, but were not sure how it could be best used to improve the downtown. It now runs Metrolink (regional commuter service), Amtrak and freight rail lines and is within a short walking distance of the downtown. The train could serve as an especially valuable way of getting tourists in and out of the downtown during the construction and, in the longer term, could be marketed as way to “beat the traffic” when traveling to San Juan Capistrano’s downtown.

Panel Recommendations

Question 1: Assuming option #3 is the preferred interchange alternative, evaluate the merits of realigning Ortega Highway with Verdugo Street versus reconnecting with existing Ortega right-of-way? Should the City’s downtown entry be reworked as part of the overall Interchange improvement effort?

The panelists examined the pros and cons of different alignment options concerning Ortega Highway. They determined that Ortega Highway should be connected with its existing right-of-way. This option (see Image B):

- creates a gateway opportunity at the Ortega Highway and El Camino Real intersection. Land uses in this area could be better maximized and visually upgraded, including the removal/relocation of the fast food restaurants now near the Mission;
- may reduce overall traffic flows in front of the Mission, which is a concern for stakeholders; a pedestrian environment could be reinforced with traffic calming methods, wider sidewalks and relocating tour bus idling areas away from the Mission;
- leaves the downtown in tact with fewer intersections and allows easier traffic flows around downtown; and
- creates sight lines (unobstructed, long views) in to the downtown, which enhances the overall visual experience.

Panelists identified the following drawbacks associated with the Verdugo Street connection scenario:

- When entering the downtown from the east, the sight line of the Mission would be lost; the city’s major icon would be difficult to see when entering the city from the east.
- This option would also deter vehicular access between Camino Capistrano and El Camino Real. However, pedestrian access could be improved in this area with additional parking offered at Ortega and El Camino. Panelists and stakeholders believed that pedestrian access in the downtown should be improved where possible.
- The panelists estimated that this connection would end up costing the city more in the long-term through acquiring rights of way and associated procedures.
- The turn in Ortega Highway required for this option would eliminate some of the parking in front of the Camino Real Playhouse. However, the parking would be increased by adding a possible parking structure.

Part of the city's reasoning behind connecting Ortega to Verdugo was that it would create direct vehicular access to the train depot. However, the panelists believed that Ortega Highway could be slightly extended across Camino Capistrano into the train depot parking lot. If Verdugo Street remains in tact, it creates a better pedestrian linkage to the down-

town, leaving vehicular access to the train station via Ortega Highway.

Question 2: Please address the questions raised in the Chamber of Commerce's letter (see appendix) to Caltrans, which include impacts on local retailers and traffic patterns on local streets.

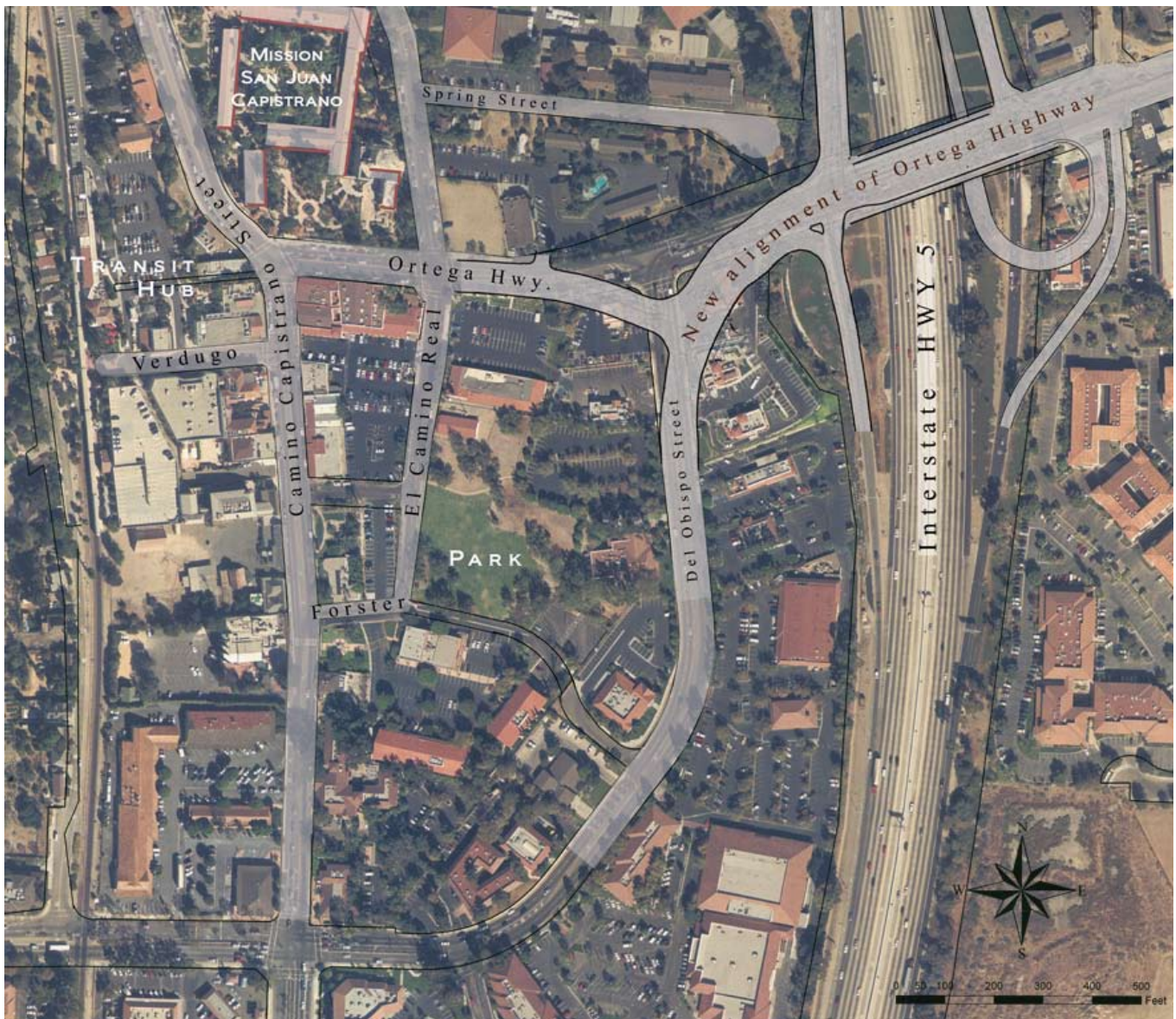


Image B: Proposed Ortega Highway Alignment -Option #3

Image C: Downtown Framework



- | | | | |
|----------|---|-----------|--|
| A | PUBLIC PLAZA | 1 | PUBLIC PARKING STRUCTURE AND STOREFRONTS |
| | WAY FINDING | 2 | DESTINATION HOTEL RESORT AND STOREFRONTS |
| | VEHICULAR ACCESS | 3 | ICON BUILDING (POSSIBLE VISITOR CENTER) |
| | DOWNTOWN GATEWAY MONUMENTATION | 4 | PUBLIC PARKING STRUCTURES WITH STOREFRONTS AND MIXED USE |
| | GATEWAY MONUMENTATION | 5 | MIXED USE |
| | CAMINO CAPISTRANO MAIN STREET WITH ANGLED PARKING | 6 | INTENSIFICATION WITH PUBLIC PARKING, STOREFRONTS AND MIXED USE |
| | EL CAMINO REAL WALK PEDESTRIAN ORIENTED WITH LIMITED VEHICULAR ACCESS | 7 | INTENSIFICATION WITH STOREFRONTS |
| | RETAIL / RESTAURANT STOREFRONTS | 8 | PUBLIC PARKING STRUCTURE WITH STOREFRONTS |
| | MIXED USE COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL | 9 | INTENSIFICATION WITH STOREFRONTS AND MIXED USE |
| | | 10 | PUBLIC PARKING STRUCTURE |

Based on the materials in their briefing books and the Chamber of Commerce letter (see Image D), the panelists recommend that city officials review the comments made by Caltrans in the Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) and then make sure that they agree with the statements therein. If the EIS/EIR did not address the city's concerns, the panel recommends a further detailed traffic impact study to adequately respond to these questions.

However, the city should be aware that EIS/EIR do not address economic impacts. The panel recommended that the city commission (through an RFP) a separate analysis by a professional planning or market analysis firm. This will allow the city to go beyond what Caltrans information and see an actual prediction of the economic impact of the changes to the downtown. Traffic circulation alone will not make or break the success of the core area—there are several elements that the city will need to focus on before, during and after the construction. An additional study, by a qualified firm, will help determine the various organizing studies such as product demand analysis, parking requirements, traffic analysis, way finding features, connectivity zones, merchandising/leasing assumptions, pedestrian counts, and possible tenants.

The remaining questions in the letter are answered throughout this report.

Question 3: How does the community deal with the economic impacts of the interchange project? What are the possible short-term and long-term impacts? How can the city/community mitigate them? What will be the economic impacts to the property owners and the tenants?

The realignment project will most certainly cause traffic delays in and around San Juan Capistrano's downtown. This will cause frustration among local residents and visitors and, in turn, lead to decreased visits to the downtown. Moreover, businesses, which have already seen a downturn over the past decade, may see a further decrease in business. The panelists identified several ways in which the city and local businesses can work together to mitigate negative economic impacts and adjust public perceptions during the construction period.

As a first step, identify an ombudsman:

The panel recommended that the city identify a lead person (or ombuds-

man) to work closely with the community, Metrolink and Caltrans during the construction period. The city should consider past successful public relations campaigns of its own or those in other similar cities and map out a strategy. The lead person must be able to effectively liaison with Caltrans and diplomatically answer questions that the community may have as problems arise. This will lead to not only the city getting the most out of the relationship with Caltrans, but it will serve to clear public misconceptions about the downtown, such as access issues and dates of completion. The more the public is informed and guided through the process, the more likely they are to visit downtown.

Way finding:

Another means of providing clarity and assisting downtown businesses would be for the city to create, perhaps in conjunction with Caltrans, a thorough directional signage (including a way finding system) program. Signs indicating detours and direct routes should go beyond just the I-5 interchange and extend into downtown. Local residents and tourists will benefit from the posting of way finding signs at each ingress and egress point of the downtown. Ideally a signage program would stay in place after the construction period and contain graphics related to San Juan Capistrano's history and architectural elements.

Open during construction:

The city, working within its public relations strategy, should reach out to the community and ask them to support local businesses during the construction period. This will not only help increase traffic to the downtown, but it will also help maintain or increase sales tax revenue. If sales decrease in the downtown, so will the city's sales tax revenues. The city could post signs or create graphics to use in local publications that demonstrate residents' tax dollars are "working" to improve the downtown. The city of Pasadena, for example, placed stickers on their parking meters stating, "Your meter money makes a difference: clean streets, security, landscaping." Once people know that public money is being spent to improve their quality of life, they are willing to support the cause. In the panel's opinion, local business owners must come together and find a unified voice. This can be accomplished through the chamber of commerce or by forming a Business Improvement District (BID). Merchants should meet regularly and brainstorm about ways to attract

customers during the construction period. Coordinated sales efforts could include promotional events and customer outreach over a three-year period. If the city chooses to hire a consulting firm to conduct a market analysis, this information should be readily shared with the downtown business community so that they can prepare outreach strategies. The panel also suggested that the city, through its redevelopment agency, work to develop assistance programs for local businesses during the construction period.

Historic Preservation:

Due to downtown San Juan Capistrano's historic and architectural importance, the panel recommended that the city become involved in the National Trust for Historic Preservation's (NTHP) Main Street program. Established by NTHP in the 1970s, it a preservation-based revitalization program aimed at historic downtowns. The Main Street approach advocates community self-reliance, local empowerment, and the rebuilding of traditional commercial districts based on their unique assets: distinctive architecture, a pedestrian-friendly environment, personal service, local ownership, and a sense of community. The National Trust's Historic Main Street Center (located in Washington, DC) provides technical assistance to historic communities that are going through similar transitions and could provide helpful information before, during and after the construction period. See www.mainstreet.org for more information.

All aboard:

The city's train depot is an important feature that could not only relieve traffic congestion but could also serve to increase pedestrian traffic in the downtown. The city may want to implement a partnership with Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) on finding ways to promote train ridership and how to boost activities around the train station. Promoting the city's train station also serves to market the downtown and draw in new visitors. Additionally, the high price of gasoline is causing record numbers of people in the Los Angeles region to take public transportation. The city could capitalize on this trend and publicize that the train station is with walking distance to shopping and dining; travelers could be encouraged to "leave their car at home/dump the pump" and walk to the downtown area. This strategy would also alleviate some of the parking demands in the area.

Question 4: What should the community be doing to leverage the interchange for a positive gain? How should this project be marketed? What extent of cooperation can the city leverage from Caltrans?

The Ortega Highway project is a unique opportunity for the city of San Juan Capistrano to make needed changes and improvements in the downtown. In order to best leverage the project, the panel recommended that the city work closely with Caltrans. As an immediate step, Caltrans could be asked to fund "alternative route" exit signage for the San Juan Creek/Camino Capistrano (south of downtown) and Junipero Serra Road (north of downtown) off-ramps. This would keep commuter traffic away from the downtown and help ease congestion during construction. Directional signage at these exits could point tourists to the downtown. This should be accomplished sooner than later, so as to alert commuters to the impending changes and clear the way for construction. Additionally, the city should work with Caltrans to streamline the road alignment approval process. This would help the project to be completed in a timely and cost efficient manner.

The panelists identified three potential gateways surrounding the downtown area (see Image C). These gateways should be prominently marked entryways that reflect the historic nature of San Juan Capistrano. Caltrans could be asked to contribute funds to the gateway redesigns that include way finding features, new landscaping, wider sidewalks, traffic calming and improved pedestrian crossings. The city could engage the community by sponsoring a design contest for the new gateway entrance. By involving the community, the city will lessen confusion and some of the negative perceptions associated with the construction. The panel recommended that this be accomplished through an overall public relations outreach campaign.

The panelists also suggested that the city, to increase its profile, consider using architectural elements along its I-5 exits. For example, towers or pillars that include architecturally appropriate design features could be placed along the freeway and serve to advertise the downtown. Ideally they would be consistent with the scale, charm and character of the city.

Conclusion

The panelists believed that San Juan Capistrano has many of the elements of a successful and thriving downtown: history, culture, walkability, proximity to transportation and an attractive setting. The city is encouraged to look beyond the interchange project and view it as part of larger strategy for the improvement of downtown. San Juan Capistrano, with the right amount of planning, has the ability to be a thriving model urban village with characteristics that many consumers now seek. In order to accomplish this, the panelists strongly encourage the city to bring together the disparate groups that are the downtown's stakeholders (property owners, business owners, residents, and local leaders) and work on developing a master plan or a "road map" for the area. These planning exercises usually ease community resistance as stakeholders can have their ideas heard, identify mutual interests, develop solutions to problems and decide on common goals. This can be achieved through a community-wide charrette, which is a multi-stage, transparent collaborative process involving stakeholders and allows for feedback from the community.

For more information contact the National Charrette Institute (www.charretteinstitute.org). In addition, the panelists recommended that the city keep the following ideas in mind during the downtown planning process:

- Consider connecting Forster Street and Forster Lane between Camino Capistrano and Del Obispo Street. This would improve circulation around the downtown, offer additional development opportunities and provide more on-street parking spaces. A larger mixed used development offering enhanced public areas and plazas could serve as a "bookend" to the Mission and could be built in this vicinity. (see graphic)
- Offer a blend of dining and shopping options that attract new-to-the-market tenants, sophisticated locally owned concepts, rather than national chain retailers. Consumers are increasingly seeking unique and authentic places. Orange County contains very few walkable and historic downtowns of this scale and with this potential. This should be capitalized upon.
- Plan retail that is appropriate for the local and regional market, rather than the tourist market. If residents appreciate and patronize the downtown, the tourists will be attracted.
- Opportunities exist for expanding the street front shopping and dining options through adding storefronts on El Camino Real between Forster and Ortega Highway. Increasing the storefront count and adding square footage will create the critical mass needed to be a viable shopping alternative in the future.
- Plan for seamless integrated approach in the design of buildings and complementary public spaces. Draw inspiration from the cities of Santa Fe, Santa Barbara, and La Jolla. These cities similar in scale, with their respective visitors core, have used their histories to create architecturally unified yet unique places.
- Place a high value on the social experience within the master plan. Each development should have physical elements that provide for social interaction and connection to the community and enhance the quality of the human experience.
- Focus not only on vehicular traffic but also on pedestrian traffic. Plan for a high quality pedestrian experience and "complete streets" that are safe for those who are walking, cycling and using public transit.
- Devise a comprehensive parking plan that includes street parking, surface lots, and parking garages and a well-thought out fee structure. Parking garages are a necessity in the downtown area but they should be low profile, ringed with a viable use (retail, office, residential, etc.) where possible at the street level to link each block and fit with San Juan Capistrano's design aesthetic.
- Plan for an amenity drive hotel with a professional conference and meeting space that is within a short walking distance from the core.
- Attract train passengers into the downtown core area by maximizing the use of the properties adjacent to the train station. Residential, retail and office uses near the train depot will not only help increase ridership, but they will also offer an increased clientele base for the downtown area.



SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO Chamber of Commerce

BOARD OF DIRECTORS Executive Board

Eric Altman
President

Mark Campaigne
1st Vice President

Neil O'Connor
2nd Vice President

Larry Thomas
Treasurer

Laura Freese
Secretary

Director

Michael Ball, LVN
Eric Bergstrom
Duane Cave
Steve Freygang
Cindy Holmes
Mechelle Lawrence
Monica Mukai
Neil O'Connor
Kelley Peeden
Michael Swan

Director Ad Hoc
Patricia Bates

CHAMBER STAFF

Karen Richesin
Executive Director

Natalie Miller
Administrative Assistant

April 24, 2008

Smita Deshpande,
Environmental Branch Chief
CALTRANS District 12
3337 Michelson Dr., St. 380
Irvine, CA 92612-0661

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing in response to the Draft EIR addressing the proposed I-5/ Ortega Highway project that was developed by CALTRANS, and is currently under consideration by your body. While there are a wide range of impacts that will result from the project that will alter San Juan Capistrano forever, we are especially concerned about those which will affect the local business community. Of particular note is the realignment of Ortega Highway at Del Obispo. Both of the CALTRANS preferred options (# 3 and # 5) have nearly identical impacts on existing buildings on the east side of the freeway without much room for variation. On the west side, however, there is a chance to use the future alignment of the Ortega Highway to address a wide spectrum of local circulation, economic, and social needs.

Chamber of Commerce request:

Within the evaluation of the EIR and the ultimate project design, we, the Economic Development Committee of the Chamber of Commerce, request that the analysis respond to the following. Specifically:

- Study must address traffic impacts on local feeder streets such as Ortega Highway, El Camino Real, Del Obispo and Camino Capistrano.
- Study must evaluate the economic impacts of west side streets alignments, both short term (during the construction period) and long term (after completion of the interchange).
- Study must address how to provide improved access to the downtown ensure its long term economic sustainability.
- Study must identify and address the adverse impacts of the street alignments on the downtown.

Sincerely,

The Economic Development Committee SJC Chamber of Commerce
Eric Altman, Bruce Tatarian, Ken Friess, Laura Freese

Location: 31421 La Matanza St.
Mailing Address: P.O Box 1878, San Juan Capistrano, California 92693
Phone: (949) 493-4700 • Fax: (949) 489-2695
Email: info@sanjuanchamber.com • Website: www.sanjuanchamber.com

Additional Considerations

All great pedestrian areas offer a “multitude” of experiences that create the desire that will lead to a repeat visit. Although Dana Point’s Town Center Plan is moving forward, south Orange County today lacks any “real” village or urban center. San Juan Capistrano has the opportunity to secure its place in the future as a genuine small town village (La Jolla, Carmel, Santa Fe, etc.) that can offer the appeal not found in new urban towns. San Juan Capistrano has history in which to build a story and development plan and that needs to be nurtured. Establishing the essence of the development in broader and more historical terms will add to its local and regional appeal. The development plan can be viewed as a “higher civic purpose” effort locally and addresses San Juan Capistrano’s place in the region well into the future.

The much needed renewal of this community will not come from business alone, or from government alone. Rather, it mostly will come from the civic and nonprofit sector where business, government and community leaders cooperate to forge a new and lasting political consensus about community life. Creating an overall plan with community input and establishing mutual interest that define the overall goals of the plan, will be required to launch any substantive effort.

It is imperative to keep the charm and character that defines San Juan Capistrano. Intensification of mixed-use properly placed and designed does not have to be out of “character.” Development should be sensitive to find the right balance so that a visit does not feel forced and contrived but, well integrated and seamless as if it were always there. At the same time that aesthetics are carefully considered for buildings; uses, activities and designs need to be studied to see how these spaces would actually work. Adding storefronts within a carefully crafted merchandising and leasing framework can distinguish San Juan Capistrano from anything existing in the market or, planned in the future.

The panel recommends as part of that intensification that residential market studies be done to confirm demand as this use will act as a positive element to the overall plan. It will be truly one of the best integrated living experiences in all of Orange County and add immediate footsteps on site that will help fuel retail and restaurant demand. It will also act

as a buffer along with retail and office adjacent to some of the required parking garages. Mixed-use developments with residential near Transit Hub’s in the future will continue to be in demand for commuters particularly, those that are surrounded generally by an affluent population and integrated with shopping, dining and entertainment, like San Juan Capistrano.

There is a significant opportunity that should not be missed to enhance the community by creating a pedestrian plaza that could be the rallying point for various events as “town squares” represented in years past. Great places offer more than just bricks and mortar. Great places seem to strike an emotional cord within each community as a result of where memories and traditions occur.

The panel understands the public park that lines El Camino Real has some historical significance and needs to remain however, not in its current configuration. Expanded community events by its very nature will require that this park be considered for enhanced design and development to meet the needs of the future and have the ability to become a regional gathering place. It has the opportunity to be the “centerpiece” of the community.

The panel believes that San Juan Capistrano has the inherent benefits to establish itself as a social destination for both business and pleasure. Depending on the plan, it has the opportunity to attract reputation retailers, regional favorites and new local concepts. It can be a bustling retail, dining and entertainment district offering modern offices and residences, as well as an amenity driven hotel. With inviting public areas such as promenades, plazas and parks, it can at the same time act as that in-town oasis not to be forgotten. With its location next to a transit system, this downtown destination can thrive with a blend of history, architectural style, retail energy and accessibility not seen anywhere in Orange County.

Panelists

TAP Chair:

Roger W. Mobley, AICP
Principal
Roger W. Mobley Consulting
58 Hemingway
Trabuco Canyon, CA 92679
(949) 266-7548 p
rwmobley@cox.net

Public Sector - City Management:

Ramon "Ray" Silver
City Manager
City of Westminster
8200 Westminster Blvd.
Westminster, CA 92683
(714) 898-3311 p
rsilver@ci.westminster.ca.us

Private Sector - Urban Planner:

David J. Gilmour, AICP
Partner and President of Planning
Newman Garrison Gilmour + Partners
20401 SW Birch Street Suite 200
Newport Beach, CA 92660
(949) 756-0818 p
dggilmour@nggpartners.com

Public Sector - Traffic Engineer:

James A. Lizzi, P.E.
Senior Transportation Engineer
City of Irvine
Public Works
One Civic Center Plaza
PO Box 19575
Irvine, CA 92623
(949) 724-7355 p
jlizzi@ci.irvine.ca.us

Mixed-Use Developer/Advisor:

Edward A. de Avila
Chief Executive Officer
Village Partners
850 E. Chapman Avenue
Suite D
Orange, CA 92866
(714) 288-4020 p
ed@villagepartners.com

ULI Orange County

Co-Vice Chairs, Technical Advisory Panels:

John McKenna
Senior Associate/Director
FORMA
3050 Pullman Street
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
(714) 673-6200 p
johnm@formacompanies.com

Roger W. Mobley, AICP
Principal
Roger W. Mobley Consultants
58 Hemingway
Trabuco Canyon, CA 92679
(949) 266-7548 p
rwmobley@cox.net

Project Staff:

Phyllis Alzamora
Executive Director
ULI Orange County District Council
c/o Hobbs Institute
Chapman University
One University Drive
Orange, CA 92866
(714) 628-2856 p
phyllis.alzamora@uli.org

Ali B. Taghavi, MA, MPA
Director, Community Outreach
ULI Orange County District Council
c/o Hobbs Institute
Chapman University
One University Drive
Orange, CA 92866
(714) 628-2856 p
ali.taghavi@uli.org

TAP Report Writer:

Jennifer LeFurgy
Pasadena, CA
jlefurgy@gmail.com

Biographies

Edward A. de Avila

Edward A. de Avila is CEO of Village Partners, a company focused on the development of distinctive pedestrian oriented mixed-use projects, including multi-family residential, retail and complementary office. They will break ground this summer on a pedestrian friendly village center located on 15-acres in Brea comprising approximately 150,000 s.f. of commercial space with 150 multi-family residential units above. With nearly 25 years of experience in planning, design, development and leasing, Ed has been responsible for creating & managing multi-disciplinary project teams on various mixed-use developments. Mr. de Avila is also Principal of Core Retail Advisors, a company providing cities, land owners and developers, strategic positioning, planning, development services. He has been involved in some of the most notable street-front mixed-use developments in the country, including the repositioning of Kansas City's historic 15-block Country Club Plaza (Developed by ULI Founder J.C. Nichols), America's first master planned shopping district, & Reston Town Center, one of the nation's first urban inspired street-front developments built in the suburbs. He has been instrumental with the concept design & retail planning at Victory Park, in Dallas, a 72-acre urban district, & now Tivoli Village at Queensridge, an 11-block, 53-acre street-front village comprising 1.4 million s.f. of mixed-use in Las Vegas.

David J. Gilmour, AICP

Partner / President of Planning

David Gilmour serves as President of Planning for Newman Garrison Gilmour + Partners, where his responsibilities include the national and international administration and marketing of NGG+P's urban and community planning services. His experience includes working at and functioning as the head of planning for Orange County's most prestigious architectural and planning firms since 1978. Dave has also worked for the Planning Commission for the City of Philadelphia and the City and County of Beaufort, South Carolina as a staff planner. Dave

received his Bachelor of Science in City and Regional Planning from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, and Master of City Planning from the University of Pennsylvania. His professional affiliations include American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), the American Planning Association (APA), ASLA, and the Urban Land Institute (ULI).

James A. Lizzi, P.E.

After receiving his Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from Virginia Tech in 1981, Mr. Lizzi moved to southern California to begin his career with a consulting firm specializing in private sector development. His work involved traffic impact analyses, office/retail site design and parking lot design.

Mr. Lizzi moved to the public sector, to work for the City of Irvine, in 1990, where he began working as the lead staff liaison to the Eastern Transportation Corridor Agencies, a Joint Powers Authority responsibility for building toll roads in Orange County. His involvement then branched out to work on major construction projects that had regional oversight, such as the Smart Street program and the "El Toro Y" expansion project in conjunction with the new Bake Parkway/I-5 interchange.

The last ten years have been spent in the realm of traffic operations, where Mr. Lizzi heads up the Neighborhood Traffic Engineering section within Public Works. He has had oversight of the traffic management center, and continues involvement with Public Safety staff, school districts, PTA's and homeowners associations, on the subject of signing, striping, school zone safety, parking districts and accident investigation. Mr. Lizzi lends his time for public speaking engagements to various business and community entities interested in promoting traffic safety.

Roger W. Mobley

Mr. Mobley has a broad planning and management background in both public and private sector planning organizations, giving him a well-rounded combination of experience in public policy planning, planning program implementation, planning design, engineering, and environmental assessment.

With career experience of more than 35 years in both the public and private sectors, Mr. Mobley's private sector experience gives him a good understanding of client relationships and needs and the dynamics of the real estate development process, while his public sector experience gives him a good understanding of public administration dynamics and the governmental decision-making process. This blend of experience includes management, technical and practical experience.

His broad experience ranges from planning large-scale master planned communities and preparing policy documents to implement those plans, to preparing site-specific design studies to demonstrate residential product yield. Mr. Mobley has also been active in tourism planning for projects in Australia, Taiwan, Hawaii and the Middle East as well as tourism strategies for communities in California.

Mr. Mobley's focus is on seeking out creative planning solutions that will meet client objectives and serve the public interest. He firmly believes that the most successful projects are those that support public policy direction, are soundly conceived both financially and fiscally, and through high design build community character. Planning that meets these criteria creates both successful development projects and community assets. Mr. Mobley has held key management positions with planning, architectural and engineering firms, in addition to his public sector experience where he served as a municipal Planning Director. He holds a Bachelors degree in Geography, a Masters in Business Administration and a Certificate in Environmental Planning.

His professional activities include lecturing at various colleges and universities, instructor in the UC Irvine Certificate Program for Light Construction & Development Management, and participating in land planning workshops at the National Association of Home Builders conferences and at the Los Angeles Building Industry Seminar. He is a charter member of the American Institute of Planners (AICP) and a Full Member of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) where he is active in the Orange County District Council.

Ramon "Ray" Silver

Ray Silver currently serves as the City Manager for the City of Westminster. Before his current position Mr. Silver worked as a Director at the RSG, Inc. economic development consulting firm. He has previously served as the City Manager for the cities of Huntington Beach, Coronado and Upland. He has also served as the Director of Planning and Land Use for the County of San Diego and the Director of Administrative Services for the City of Coronado.

Mr. Silver is a member of the Urban Land Institute, Orange County Chapter, Executive Committee and serves as a co-chair of the Public Sector Committee. He is also a current member of the University of California, Irvine Urban Planning Graduate School Advisory Committee. He is a past President of the City Managers' Department of the League of California Cities, past Chairman of the Board of the Alba 80 Scholarship Foundation and the Chair of the County of San Diego Telecommunications Task Force.



Urban Land Institute

Orange County

Address:

c/o Hobbs Institute
Chapman University
One University Drive
Orange, CA 92866

Phone: (714) 628-2856

Fax: (714) 744-2196

Staff:

Phyllis Alzamora, *Executive Director*
E-mail: phyllis.alzamora@uli.org

Ali B. Taghavi, *Director, Community Outreach*
E-mail: ali.taghavi@uli.org

ULI Address:

ULI - the Urban Land Institute
1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.
Suite 500 West
Washington, D.C. 20007

Phone: (202) 624-7000

Fax: (202) 624-7140