

Neighborhood Community Conversation Notes

As of June 18, 2012

Numerous residents graciously hosted their neighbors in their homes for conversations on the Village Specific Plan and EIR. Sixteen conversations were scheduled between April 9, 2012 and June 23, 2012 and involved over 200 residents in the discussion. The following are comments discussed during these meetings. Similar comments have been combined and may be paraphrased for clarity.

Comments by Topic:

Traffic/Mobility/Camino del Mar/Roundabouts/Streetscape

- Why not keep Camino del Mar to one lane for its entire length, this should be studied from 4th to 9th as well as to Carmel Valley Road?
- How do emergency vehicles deal with roundabouts and one lane?
- Bird Rock seems too small for roundabouts and Tijuana and Boston rotaries seem too big for Del Mar.
- Change the alignment of Carmel Valley Road and Camino del Mar, move the stop sign to the east, create a T intersection and funnel traffic to Del Mar Heights.
- Have you considered a bike lane in the middle, instead of a median?
- Renderings show planted areas but doubt that there will be plants and as open.
- Santa Fe Drive roundabouts don't carry the same traffic volumes and are not a good comparison.
- Move the bike lane to Stratford.
- Don't the stop signs at 25th and 27th back up the traffic all the way through town?
- Traffic circles will not work and people will take alternate routes.
- Ocean Avenue is impacted by bypass traffic.
- Impressed by Bird Rock, it is very positive to see the change there and see how well it works.
- Semi-trucks can't turn at roundabouts.
- You can't make a U turn at a roundabout.
- Simulate roundabouts without building them so we can test it out.
- Encourage the train to go under Camino del Mar.
- Eliminate stop signs; they say "don't come here."
- You need stop signs to cross Camino del Mar. How can pedestrians cross at roundabouts? We need signals for pedestrians to cross. We need something better than the flashing pedestrian lights so it is more visible.
- We are the only alternative to Interstate 5, and when it reaches capacity, traffic comes over to Camino del Mar.
- Pedestrians will stop traffic on Camino del Mar with the roundabouts and this won't work.
- How does the police officer see those going around in the roundabouts, they won't be able to enforce?
- This streetscape proposal will incentivize traffic to leave I-5 and use Camino del Mar. 20% of our congestion is caused by I-5.
- Traffic goes where it can.
- We will have either a drive-through nightmare or a parking nightmare.
- Beach traffic has expanded, they just don't shop here.
- There needs to be a better beach connection to walk up to downtown.

- Continue with the narrowing of lanes from south of 9th Street and north of 15th and utilize that extra land for parking. This will make the traffic slow down.
- Safety needs to be increased and speed needs to be reduced on 14th Street.
- Roundabouts may not be pedestrian friendly; they need to be sited correctly.
- I like roundabouts but am concerned about the pedestrian traffic, we have so much.
- Don't be afraid of roundabouts, they are a piece of cake! They slow down the traffic and remove bottlenecks, and then people pay attention to the beautiful surroundings.
- The streetscape improvements will destroy our restaurants; we are directly impacted by traffic planning.
- We don't want the roundabout at 15th because of pedestrian traffic.
- We want to see evidence that roundabouts will work and not a computer simulation.
- Construction impacts are mostly borne by the retail and restaurants.
- Signals are preferred; it allows traffic to move faster, keeps traffic moving through and allows more traffic.
- Can 15th Street stay as a signal and only have roundabouts at 13th, 11th and 9th?
- Need to have better mitigations for the businesses during construction, including limiting construction from 10:00 PM to 7:00 AM so it won't impact businesses; do not do construction in July and August, do better signage; have a TV campaign that says the businesses are open during construction.
- Residents concern that there will be more traffic on Luneta, Crest and Stratford.
- Concerns with an increase in traffic. This plan emulates the 1936 diagonal parking plan. A traffic expert says that this will not work in an emergency. Angled parking is dangerous to back out into traffic. San Francisco eliminated angled parking.
- Where is the bike lane at the roundabout? We should keep the bike lane around the roundabout.
- Concern with a death that occurred at the Santa Fe Roundabout.
- Look at roundabouts in beach areas as an example, do they work?
- Roundabouts are quieter, less pollution and work with lots of pedestrians. They are more residential friendly. We should consider them in the beach area.
- Will the roundabouts have pedestrian crossing lights?
- What is the first priority project in this plan, I think it should be to fix the street first.
- Need to show justification on successful roundabouts, where they work and how they relate to our situation.
- Make sure restrictions on left turns from Camino del Mar are maintained with roundabouts. If the actual left turn restriction cannot be maintained because of the way roundabouts work, consider similar restriction to prevent traffic from diverting the Stratford.
- Do traffic management queues at both the south and north ends of town, using signals and in pavement detectors to regulate traffic and modulate flow.
- Extend traffic planning north to beach and south to Carmel Valley.
- Address the signal at Plaza/L'Auberge – will it work as a signal with the roundabouts? How does Sea View Avenue exit onto Camino del Mar if traffic is continuous and doesn't stop?
- No one signals or stops at our stop signs, we don't need a roundabout to keep traffic moving.
- Roundabouts work well in England and are very accepted.
- We don't want roundabouts in this town, Del Marians can't handle them; no one will get used to them.
- Move pedestrian crossings to mid-block crossings.

- Keep pedestrian signals.
- Bikes should be encouraged to be only on Stratford.
- I like roundabouts but am concerned about bicycles with all the traffic.
- Roundabouts can work, but need the time for construction and that will be difficult on the business community.
- Need monitoring of speed and crosswalks now. Make cyclists stop at stop signs. Can the Park Ranger be more present and visible in downtown to encourage better behavior and be a deterrent even if they can't enforce traffic violations?
- Israel has roundabouts every two blocks in and around Tel Aviv; they do work.
- Fear of staying in business during the construction, need help.
- Phase the construction carefully, do one area first to limit length of exposure.
- Set up a task force during construction, allow signage that is larger and build temporary sidewalks.
- What is driving the single lane, is it more parking, safety or what?
- Leucadia business owners do not want the roundabouts that are planned for Highway 101 in Leucadia.
- How does one enter the roundabout, say at 9th Street when there is so much traffic, there is no gaps. How do cars yield? Will it be too hard to enter from the side streets?
- If the line of sight is straight in a roundabout, then there can be a problem, they work better when they are a truer circle.
- We're not against a roundabout; just want to know if they can work. Can we do a trial first?
- Likes interventions that will slow down traffic on Camino del Mar, allows you to look around and see stores.
- Could bikes be just on one side of the street and not both?
- Could roundabouts also be done along Camino del Mar at Carmel Valley Road, 27th and at Coast Boulevard as well?

Parking

- The City should remedy parking first, do a Comprehensive Parking Plan.
- Parking should be paid for by parking revenue.
- Provide more parking now before any development.
- We need to vote knowing how the parking is solved.
- The perception is there is no parking; we have been talking about parking for 25 years.
- There should be a parking garage at the train station.
- Do a parking garage at the Post Office.
- Need a commitment on parking before proceeding with the plan.
- Do an underground parking structure.
- Parking drives everything, use Encinitas' parking program.
- The west side may be easier to develop with parking.
- The City should lead by example and build a parking structure.
- Have the Coaster stop here so we don't need as much parking.
- Provide a shuttle from the Solana Beach train station so people will use transit and not parking.
- Get rid of the parking enforcement people, we want to compete with a viable economic community, and parking tickets give us a bad reputation.
- Need better priorities – traffic control and parking is all that is needed, forget everything else.

- If you charge for parking, no one will come.
- Who will walk to a parking structure at City hall? It is bogus. If no one uses the meters, who will pay for it?
- Parking is an issue on 14th Street, retail parking stakes up too much space. Homeowners need an allocated spot.
- A parking structure at City Hall is too far to walk.
- The Post Office site is a good place to start with a parking structure. The Post Office should go, it has little value.
- Small parcels are hard to park, we need the parking structures and to share parking.
- It is a hassle to go to the beach. We would pay a premium for residential golf cart parking at the beach or downtown.
- Start to work on parking requirements, let outdoor dining go ahead without parking.
- I hate hearing on the radio "Parking is free, except in Del Mar." Why are Sundays and holidays not free parking here? It is not very business friendly.
- Why is the Market parking in the Plaza garage restricted for use even after the Market closes?
- The angled parking seems 'retro' and unattractive; it is too dangerous.
- Can we add other parking areas closer to restaurants? Can we use St. Peter's Church parking and do revenue share with the church.
- Will residences above retail shops park on site? They should be required to park on site.
- Provide scooter parking.
- Present scenarios, such as "if the parking demand goes to xx, then the parking structure moves forward."
- Can the side streets also have angled parking to increase the parking?
- Need a commitment from employers that their employees will park in designated areas of employee parking.
- Limit the number of motorcycle stalls because that will also limit the loud noise from motorcycles.
- Tie parking provisions to growth, so it is ensured that parking is in place as it is needed, not long after the fact.
- Can we rent the old gas station (Garden) site for parking, either permanently or temporarily during construction?
- Can we have better signage showing where the public parking is located?
- There are two plans here, one is to change the highway and one is to incentivize redevelopment. Downtown has an impossible parking ordinance and we need a fair parking standard. The Park Once solution just gives my parking to the public. To incentivize development increase the FAR and decrease the parking standards.
- Can we do the parking improvements without the roundabouts? Can we just change the parking ordinances without doing this?

Neighborhood Protections

- Need to address traffic on side streets: discourage bypass traffic.
- Businesses have not been willing to work with residents. Can we have time restrictions on big delivery trucks waking up the neighbors? Trucks should not be allowed to make deliver before 7:00 AM, and this needs enforcement.
- Can we prevent anything but local traffic?
- We do not want permit parking in the neighborhoods.

- Do something for residents so we can park in our neighborhood.
- We are a residential community and this should highlight what is in it for residents.
- Nothing in the Plan will divert traffic from the neighborhoods.
- There is no protection from bulk, mass, noise or alley impacts.
- What is the benefit for the people who live here? I enjoy downtown as it is now. I won't use the downtown retail.
- Instead of this Plan, fix up what we have now, sweep the streets, and keep it better maintained.
- Stratford Court needs street sweeping.
- The City needs to address the side streets and by-pass traffic.
- We would consider making Luneta one way southbound for a block between 11th and 12th, in order to reduce by-pass traffic.
- Add a stop sign at Luneta and 11th.
- Before the City does anything, the City should get money to repair the streets, especially Orchid Lane.

Development Regulations: Building Height Limits/Building Massing/FAR

- If the height limit is raised, will it look like a canyon?
- Allow more variety in height.
- Why do we need a second story?
- Why limit the FAR to 1.0? Consider higher.
- Keep the intermittent views along Camino del Mar.
- Give more variety at the "build-to" line, so there is more changes encouraged, especially for courts, open areas and activity areas.
- Set FAR cap at 1.0; don't disadvantage late comers.
- Keep FAR at 0.45 and offer incentives to 1.0; keep it an enforceable cap at .75 to 1.0 FAR.
- Doubling the FAR is a big benefit for property owners. Substantiate the revenues so it can be validated.
- If new residential is built on the east side of CDM, will they have view protection?
- City can immediately take on the FAR issue, even without a Specific Plan. The City should do more to help people through the DRB process.
- FAR of 1.0 is too restrictive, don't limit it, let it go higher.
- The east side should be 3 stories and the west side 2 stories over Camino del Mar.
- Third story will have significant view blockage.
- Confirm that 50% rule for remodel is referenced, and if not, reference it to DMMC.
- Consider limiting the FAR on the second story by a percentage
- Look at having a setback on the second level.
- Require roof articulation within the 26-foot height and not move up to 30 feet, even for articulation.
- Exceptional public benefits (EPBs) may be too generous, FAR of 1.5 is too big compared to .45 existing.
- Consider a lower base FAR than 1.0 (0.9 or 0.8 or 0.75) may give more room for EPBs.
- Keep trees below 25', otherwise they will block views too.
- It is very dark at night and not safe for pedestrians. We need pedestrian scale lighting along the street, this will also help keep the businesses open later, if pedestrians are walking.

Land Use

- Do more small hotels.
- Do we really want retail downtown? We go to malls and Home Depot.
- Why do we have mixed use allowed at City Hall property?
- We don't want to be a "nail salon alley" where there is no merchandise.
- Increase hotels; decrease retail.
- Control size of hotels, should be less than 20 rooms.
- Make it a destination spot that supports restaurants.
- Can a hotel be built on the Garden site?
- Residential makes new development viable, we have to make changes.
- Retail use is not supported by the community.
- What is "affordable housing" and how does that relate to crime? Affordable housing will bring in the wrong element.
- We don't want to lose our younger population; affordable housing would allow young people, working people the opportunity to be able to afford to live here.
- Are living areas above the stores beneficial to the community? Can one do a retirement home in downtown?
- Can we develop a theme or style for architecture, for example like "Country Downs" (1302 Camino del Mar), not 'Disneyesque' but with style, rhythm and pattern. Keep the rhythm of the smaller lots and don't allow wide facades.
- Encourage design elements to emulate the old.
- Incorporate City hall into this Specific Plan and carry on with a new City Hall.
- Make downtown dog friendly.
- Where would public restrooms be? Need to show where public restrooms would be located on the plan and encourage additional public restrooms. Can there be public restrooms in the parking structures?
- Real Estate offices could be allowed in ground floor spaces if it was only for display and reception, but not the full width of a building.
- Plaza grocery store has morphed into a wine shop, indicating we don't support a grocery store. We can only provide the shell and the incentives and then the market conditions will fill in the retail.
- Real estate signs are an eyesore.

Revitalization

- Will property owners jump on board with this program? Should there be an incentive? Should a sunset clause be utilized?
- Did the train kill our downtown? Did removing the stop cause downtown to fail? No one came on the train to shop; they just came to use the beach.
- The Plaza is dead from the competition. They cannot even have fire pits.
- This proposal is "fantasy-land".
- City Hall property should be done before the Specific Plan, but City Council said to do this stupid Specific Plan first.
- There are no guarantees that this will ever happen.
- Why aren't we proud of our City Hall?

- We want our city to be beautiful and our downtown looks dump.
- How do we do a new downtown?
- Merchants are hobby merchants and don't do a good job merchandising. Our stores need to be improved; but it is not our responsibility as residents to do this.
- If buildings are sold, the rents go up. If FAR is increased, we can't get affordable businesses.
- Retail needs to be addressed, this is a problem. Cost of retail space is still an issue.
- Now people can change downtown, if there is a grass root's downtown champion. The south end of downtown is dying; it is our turn to work with the businesses.
- If the town loses more businesses, we lose value in the town, including the property values.
- Bird Rock did not change their zoning, so revitalization can't happen with only roundabouts. Need to do both.
- The business owners don't matter in Del Mar, it is all about the residents.
- Businesses are struggling with competition. We businesses are risking our livelihoods.
- We are fine with doing nothing; we make money now, why should we risk our livelihood on government plans.
- Our status quo is not sustainable, we need to do something.
- This used to be an artist community with good music; Del Mar should offer good music.
- Del Mar has never been business friendly.
- Let's make Camino del Mar as vibrant and as good looking as Little Italy, or a cross between Cedros and Prospect.
- It's about time that we give back the property to the property owners and revoke Town & Country parking.

Public Financing & Implementation

- The plan has miniscule financial analysis.
- Developer impact fees won't help.
- Raise money by charging for beach parking, but don't charge ourselves.
- Sell City Hall property and move to another property.
- We have no guarantee that development will pay for this; taxpayers will need to pay for these improvements.
- CLUE report says to do an economic plan, where is that?
- Need to better understand phasing.
- Need a parking structure first before anything.
- The City should do things immediately for the businesses. The City should say "yes" to what the business community wants to do rather than "no" to everything.
- We need to see an economic impact study on the effect this traffic plan will have on businesses, both long-term and short term.
- If this Plan is adopted, where does the money come from?
- How is the debt financing attributed to the residents?
- If Del Mar has a revenue problem it should unincorporated; it never should have been a city in the first place.

Process

- Can we vote on parts of this rather than the whole thing?
- Will the Design Review Board have control on both views and development?
- Alter the Design Review Ordinance
- Don't do nothing.
- City Council has gone forward with their own direction; we need to get all opinions in the room.
- There is so much resistance to change, how do we get this vote?
- How soon can this go ahead?
- Create a legal, non-conforming amnesty program for businesses so we can move forward.
- We don't have a choice, we need to do something better with our downtown.
- What can the City do now to jump start the process?
- Residents said "don't do this piecemeal" so now we have a comprehensive plan.
- The plan is so big, it is overwhelming.
- Developers want predictability, narrow DRB scope to only view blockage assessment.
- DRB should watch out for the subjective analysis in the DRO. The DRO is not business friendly.
- Dealing with the City is a headache, is the City's approval process changing with this Specific Plan?

End of comments.