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July 10, 2017

The Honorable Wendy Bucknum
Mayor
City of Mission Viejo
200 Civic Center
Mission Viejo, CA 92691

RE: Proposed Toll Road Alignments

Dear Mayor Bucknum,

The San Clemente City Council is in receipt of your May 31, 2017 letter supporting the Transportation Corridor Agencies' (TCA) efforts to extend the toll road. We take objection to your claims that our City Council is obstructing the process and not participating constructively. Quite the contrary: Our city participated in the Mobility Working Group Meetings, seven of them, but we have a very different memory and opinion of the meetings than what is being portrayed.

San Clemente was told it was participating in a group that was formed as a direct result of the ascertainment study:

"A forum comprised of South County, city elected officials will have the greatest potential for garnering community support and successful problem solving."

"Elected officials are perceived by their respective communities as the most appropriate persons to develop solutions, make the difficult decisions on behalf of the community and are the best positioned to facilitate the exploration of a collaborative process."

The elected officials never got to problem solving. We listened to presentations and in only one roundtable discussion, we promulgated some ideas and then received preliminary traffic modeling. Elected officials never reached consensus that the traffic issues were simply an I-5 problem and we only gave this as a problem definition: "A regional transportation mobility problem exists that is: Most easily seen in I-5 congestion."

OCTA's representatives stated we can manage our congestion by finishing all the arterials in the Master Plan of Arterial Highways (MPAH), make possible new arterial connections, and control growth. More importantly, OCTA stated we cannot build our way out of congestion. Some of us

at the meeting agreed with this approach, but we never debated it or whether a toll road was the answer against the outcome of other possible solutions. We were there to brainstorm on solutions, and the opportunity to discuss the ideas or attempt to reach consensus on a solution never occurred.

TCA stated they needed consensus to move forward with a toll road extension. Contrary to recent TCA representations, there was no discussion and no consensus. At the beginning of the process, we were told we would be meeting for six months or maybe a year, so we never knew where the process was or when it would end. We began January 20th and August 22nd was our last meeting where we were dismissed and thanked for helping TCA “start a project.” Helping TCA start a project was not the stated purpose of our attendance.

San Clemente stated then and still maintains that it is much too early to plan such a drastic option as a toll road through developed cities when there are other OCTA projects that are not completed. The La Pata extension, which opened in 2016, and the widening of the I-5 will provide the added capacity and options motorists need at no toll fee to drive them. The impact of these two projects on traffic patterns should be evaluated because other solutions may be more optimal than a toll road. The Avenida La Pata extension has now completed an arterial solution that is redundant to I-5 all the way from Rancho Santa Margarita to San Clemente.

Steve Brown, P.E. of Fehr & Peers told our working group there was “a lack of redundancy” in the south. He referred to it as a “funnel effect.” That comment would point to TCA’s long-time justification for the toll road by having a completely redundant freeway to I-5. Connecting the 241 to San Clemente within our boundaries completely destroys the roadway being redundant and only moves more traffic into the funnel. It is not the solution.

This is what TCA had to say about the 16 ideas that came out of the mobility working group: “The 16 ideas identified in the April meeting were grouped into logical ‘packages’. While this helped to simplify the comparison, we acknowledge that the analytics are still complex.”

This was Mission Viejo’s traffic relief with the 16 packages:

- OSO PARKWAY (east of I-5)
 - 0-5% reduction with most packages.
 - Slight (2%) increase with new I-5 General Purpose Lane.
- CROWN VALLEY PARKWAY (east of I-5):
 - Slight increase (up to 5%) with most options, but slight decrease (5%) with Ortega connection to SR 74.

The initial 16 options, which included all the toll road options, do not provide enough benefit to your city or ours to construct a toll road through existing cities. Connecting Crown Valley Parkway in an Easterly directly to the 241 would provide more benefit to your city and possibly there are other arterial connections that could provide benefit. Our city has commissioned an arterial study for the entire south region. I hope you can agree that more thoughtful study of traffic solutions

for south county is necessary and our cities can work together to find real solutions than the currently proposed toll road extensions.

There are now 18 options since our mobility working group meetings. The toll road connection to San Juan Capistrano and Mission Viejo have been added. No traffic modeling for those two options has been offered by TCA in this process.

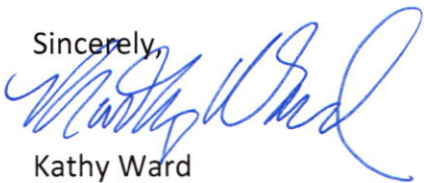
Though I deeply respect your desire to see Trestles, the California State Park and the San Mateo Watershed protected, I question at what cost to established communities like San Clemente? It is a fact that transportation planners are no longer building freeways through existing developed communities because they will damage a city, causing neighborhoods to become detached from one another, and economic hardship inevitably follows, along with pollution, noise, and visual impacts that could destroy the quality of life for residents.

The City of San Clemente has remained true to its mission statement in "guiding development to ensure responsible growth while preserving and enhancing our village character, unique environment and natural amenities". This has resulted in the City preserving 49 percent open space where an abundance of wildlife and native vegetation thrive. Our open space also consists of space for public enjoyment including parks, golf courses, trails, sports fields, playgrounds and beaches. As representatives of San Clemente, we have every right to explicitly oppose these routes that will drastically change San Clemente as we know it today.

At our City Council meeting on June 6th, we discussed inviting the Mission Viejo City Council Members to a meeting with our residents and the TCA. We are pleased to invite you and your fellow members to come meet with our community and we welcome your participation in a discussion of arterial solutions for mobility. We are not saying there is not a solution out there. We are saying that we cannot support the toll road solutions TCA has presented.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We look forward to your response. I can be reached at (949) 361-8322 or WardK@san-clemente.org.

Sincerely,



Kathy Ward
Mayor

cc: Congressman Darrell Issa
Senator Pat Bates
Assembly Member Bill Brough
San Clemente City Council
TCA Directors
South County City Council Members
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