

Santa Monica Boulevard Transit Parkway Project
Santa Monica Blvd. Project Office
10350 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 160
Los Angeles, CA 90025

July 14, 2005

The coalition of homeowner associations listed below represent the associations which border the Santa Monica Transitway Project. The coalition hereby presents its combined concerns over the Project.

The Associations

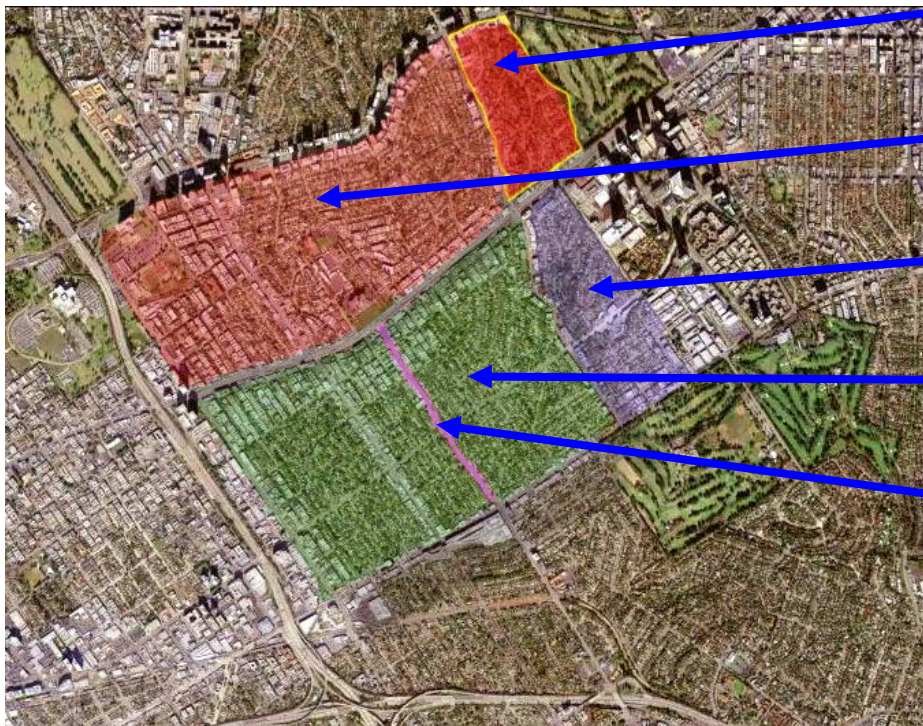
The Tract 7260 Homeowners Association runs from Pico to Santa Monica and from Beverly Glen to Century City. The group has been exceptionally involved in community safety issues and has donated time and equipment to the West L.A. division. The group's president sits on the CD5 regional traffic taskforce and is on the park advisory board for the Westside Recreation Center.

The Westwood South of Santa Monica Association (WSSM) runs from Pico to Santa Monica and from Beverly Glen to Sepulveda. The group's president sits on the Westside Neighborhood Council, has been involved with C-PAB, sits on the WNC Land Use Committee and is the new Chair of the Council's Public Safety and Traffic Committee

The Westwood Homeowners Association (WHA) runs from Santa Monica to Wilshire and from the country club to Sepulveda.

The Century Westwood Watch (CWW) group is a subset of the WHA that runs from Santa Monica to Wilshire and from the country club to Beverly Glen. This group was formed as a neighborhood watch, but in 1999 took on the task of protecting its area from the increase in cut-through traffic.

The Overland Avenue Community (OAC) group is a subset of the WSSM that covers homeowners who are residents of "Little" Overland Avenue between Santa Monica Boulevard and Pico Boulevard.



Century Westwood Watch

Westwood Homeowners Association

Tract 7260 Association

Westwood South of Santa Monica

Overland Avenue Community

Increasingly over the past year the above mentioned groups have been cooperating to accomplish both regional improvements and also improvements important to each group.

As you know the coalition of groups listed above has been encouraged to engage in good-faith negotiations with the city regarding the Project. Our concerns have ranged from designs/plans in contravention of the EIR to temporary mitigations to concern over misuse of mitigation funds. We have attempted to understand why designs and plans that had been so

carefully evaluated through the EIR process by the community were modified after the fact by the city, with seemingly no input from the community.

While project staff has certainly listened to our concerns, little of significance has been accomplished. During negotiations, the groups have become frustrated with not only the lack of progress on key issues, but also with the fact that several promises have been made and not kept.

Perhaps of the most concern has been several incidents which all but eliminated the trust that any two parties must have when conducting negotiations. One of these, the presentation of a false "option" given to the community with regard to having three lanes in each direction, stands out though there have been several others.

It has recently become clear to us that the negotiation process encouraged by the city has not resulted in any meaningful resolution of the issues. After months of attempting to overlook the trust issues that have developed, and seeing the problem project elements continue to be built as we negotiate, we feel we can wait no longer.

In short, we believe that it is better to build the project correctly the first time, rather than have to correct serious flaws after the fact at great expense and further inconvenience. The example of the Motor Avenue mitigations stands as a clear example of ill-conceived plans that had to be undone and redone after the fact – all at great expense to the community.

As such, we present this list to the city in hopes that the coalition can avoid having to take further action to protect the interests of their respective residents. The associations reserve the right to modify this list in future correspondence.

Given the time constraints involved, we urge you to respond to this letter by end of business on Monday, July 18, 2005.

Several abbreviations are also used in the list. They are:

BG	Beverly Glen
SMB	Santa Monica Boulevard
LSMB	Little Santa Monica Boulevard
BSMB	Big Santa Monica Boulevard
WB, EB, NB, SB	West-, east-, north- and south-bound
CPW	Century Park West
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
DEIR	Draft Environmental Impact Report
FEIR	Final Environmental Impact Report
CMS	Changeable Message Sign

The list provided below has the following columns:

Issue	The area of concern.
Group	The group most impacted by the issue
Type	E signifies a change in contravention of the EIR. H,M and L indicate high, medium and low priority items.
EIR Support/Discussion	The section provides commentary and also documentary support for the coalition's position.
Request/Solution	This section provides the coalition's proposed resolution.

Issue	Group	Type	EIR Support/Discussion	Request/Solution
Fox Hills Island	7260	E	<p>The roadway configuration was changed to include an island which will encourage traffic to go into the tract.</p> <p>Image F shows the diagram for Fox Hills/SMB. Current plans represent a significant deviation from the EIR.</p> <p>The new configuration will direct traffic from the block between Benecia and Fox Hills into the Tract 7260 area.</p>	<p>Eliminate the island OR make Fox Hills one-way between the alley and Missouri with a physical barrier to prevent violation. Prevent the left turn from the alley onto Benecia SB. Re-pave the alley to make it a more attractive and more efficient path.</p>
Large Signs	All	E	<p>Section 6.11 aesthetics (and also Page 21 of the initial study) “Santa Monica Boulevard is designated as a scenic highway by the city of Los Angeles Department of city planning the corridor enjoys strong west to east vistas of Century City Mt. Baldy and other elements of a background skyline. The proposed project would not construct structures (overpasses, bridges, etc.) that would disrupt existing vistas. “</p> <p>The EIR, despite numerous opportunities, did not provide any mention of large freeway signs.</p> <p>Section 1. “Classic Boulevard. ...”This alternative evokes the great boulevards of Europe, and provides neighborhood protection from the main roadway. It would be similar to parts of San Vicente... in Los Angeles.”</p> <p>See Images A-C. The large signs are inconsistent with western San Vicente which is provided as an example in the EIR. Both San Vicente in Brentwood and San Vicente east of Beverly Hills are shown. San Vicente to the east of Beverly Hills only has large unattractive signage at La Cienega.</p> <p>Page 3 -- 28 “the key objective of the transit parkway concept is to improve the visual quality of the route. The classic Boulevard alternative would embody a variety of components that are intended to create the parkway image.”</p> <p>Large signs are not consistent with a parkway image.</p>	<p>Reduce the size of the large signs to the minimum required by law.</p> <p>Convert large overhead signs for Overland Avenue to road-side signs consistent with others along the project.</p>

<p>CMS Changeable Message Signs</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>E</p>	<p>CMS are designed to control and divert traffic: “The appropriate use of a CMS and other types of real-time displays should be limited to managing travel, controlling and diverting traffic, identifying current and anticipated roadway conditions, or regulating access to specific lanes or the entire roadway.”</p> <p>Section 3.3.4 There is no reference to CMS or two large freeway style signs.</p> <p>Page 4.7 – “... In addition the size and scale of the billboards is disproportionate to the established build form along the boulevard and the presence of the billboards is not consistent with the overall urban design concept. “</p> <p>The proposed size and scale of the freeway-style signs is disproportionate as well.</p> <p>The EIR, despite numerous opportunities, did not mention CMS. CMS are inconsistent with the language of the EIR with respect to aesthetic goals mentioned throughout the EIR.</p> <p>The CMS is designed to divert and control traffic. The only alternatives for traffic diversion will have a significant impact not studied by the EIR. As it was not part of the EIR, the community did not have an opportunity to evaluate the impact of the signs.</p>	<p>Eliminate both CMS</p>
<p>Frontage Road Textured Surface</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>E</p>	<p>The removal of textured surfaces from the plan represents a significant deviation from the EIR.</p> <p>The EIR promises textured surfaces as follows: page 3 -- 28 of the DEIR:” the frontage roads would be textured or scored concrete, and would provide access and metered parking for local businesses.”</p> <p>Page 2-33: FEIR” the frontage road will be designed as a slow -- moving roadways with on-street parking. The urban design component of the project includes an alternative pavement treatment on the frontage roads to emphasize that they are not equivalent to the through travel lanes on the boulevard.”</p>	<p>Return the textured surface to the frontage road – north and south.</p>

<p>North-Eastern Frontage Road Entry Width</p>	<p>CWW</p>	<p>E</p>	<p>The frontage road width can be measured at no more than 15' by measuring project plans.</p> <p>The project informed the group that the width was supposed to be 14.71 feet per project plans via Email sent by Carl Nelson on July 7, 2005.</p> <p>“...I do not know and we have deferred to finding out the answer from the LADOT. The discussion of a “state mandate” was actually a discussion of what we call the Work Area Traffic Control Handbook (WATCH Manual) and may not have any relevance in the design criteria used when designing the roughly 14.71-foot width at that point.</p> <p>The matter of the hard improvements actually being 17-feet is alarming and will be double checked by the Inspector tomorrow morning. If the improvements are found to differ from the plans – they will be considered Non-compliant and it will need to be corrected by the contractor”</p> <p>Several community members were present when an engineer measured plan specs at 14.71 feet.</p> <p>Actual built width is 17 feet – a 16% variation.</p> <p>The increased width violates a significant traffic mitigation element for the local neighborhood.</p>	<p>Adjust the width to promised dimensions.</p>
<p>Transit Stop/Bench Advertising</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>The community has learned that transit stops with advertising are planned for the project.</p> <p>Per the EIR, SMB is designated as a “Scenic Highway.”</p> <p>The requirements for signage in a scenic highway is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Only traffic, informational, and identification signs shall be permitted within the public right-of-way of a Scenic Highway. ▪ Off-site outdoor advertising is prohibited in the public right-of-way of, and on publicly-owned land within five hundred feet of the center line of a Scenic Highway. 	<p>No advertising on bus benches or transit stops.</p>

No EB-BSMB to SB-BG turn movement	7260, WSSM	H	<p>The lack of any way for drivers to go south from BSMB will cause cut-through via Benecia to BG. Without this modification, any drivers wanting to go south on BG will be forced to cut through Tract 7260. Under the current plan, drivers would have to remember to transfer to LSMB at Overland if they wanted to make the right turn. This does not include those drivers who join EB-SMB east of Overland from the north. See the community's proposed plan to resolve this problem as Image I below.</p>	Allow the turn movement as described.
CPW U-Turn	7260	E	<p>The failure to provide a U-turn at CPW means that drivers will have to back-track to Avenue of the Stars to go west on SMB. This makes the likelihood of cut-through traffic far greater.</p> <p>The EIR states that a U-turn at CPW will occur as follows:</p> <p>Page 4.1 -- 48 "It would not be easy to merge across three eastbound lanes on Santa Monica Blvd., turn left onto northbound Beverly Glen Boulevard, so these movements would likely shift to one of three alternate routes. They could be made by exiting the frontage road west of Beverly Glen Boulevard and traveling east on Santa Monica Boulevard to Century Park West and making a U-turn..."</p> <p>Written responses page 2 -- 13 Response T2.... "Traffic attempting to exit the frontage road near Pandora Avenue and travel north on Beverly then will have difficulty merging over to the left turn lanes of Beverly Glen. To accommodate that maneuver a U-turn has been provided at Century Park West. "</p> <p>Image N shows an early design that depicts the U-turn.</p>	Return the U-Turn movement to CPW.
Stop signs on north frontage road	CWW	H	<p>Stop signs are necessary on the north frontage road in the CWW area to slow traffic.</p> <p>The EIR states: Volume 2, page 1 -- 5: "additionally, some design features such as chokers and stop signs have been identified for Clubview Drive, Warnall, Ensley, and Comstock avenues, north of Santa Monica Boulevard."</p>	Place stop signs at each N/S road.
Three lanes in each direction	All	E	<p>The failure to maintain the existing conditions as specified in the EIR has caused extreme hardship for the community.</p> <p>page 1 -- 19 "construction staging designed to keep existing number of lanes open at all times during daytime hours, through use of area on railroad it right -- of -- of way. Reduces likelihood that traffic would divert to alternate routes."</p> <p>Page 5 -- 2 "the construction staging of the classic Boulevard and design options</p>	Construct the project as promised with three lanes in each direction

			<p>alternatives will be designed to keep the existing number of through lanes open at virtually all times during daytime hours, through the use of the area on the abandoned railroad right of way. This would reduce the likelihood that traffic would divert to alternate routes around the construction area in comparison to the no project and TSM alternatives.”</p> <p>Page five -- 19 “because three lanes will be maintained at all times it is unlikely in the travel speeds along Santa Monica Boulevard will be reduced to the extent that there be significant pollutant emissions.”</p> <p>Page 2 -- 30: “the no project and TSM alternatives represent the rebuilding of the existing roadways in their current locations, so there will not be any temporary or permanent new lanes on the roadway median for existing traffic to be detoured during the daytime to maintain three lanes in each direction, as with the classic Boulevard and design options alternatives.”</p>	
Misuse of \$700,000 mitigation fund		E	<p>The use of \$5000 for stop signs before before/after counts is a clear violation of the EIR and the community’s trust.</p> <p>The pre-allocation of \$196K for mitigations before before/after counts is a clear violation of the EIR. Westholme was identified as a street needing mitigation before the end of the construction (FEIR page 2-27 to 28, item I7.1.) Any use of the \$700,000 post-project fund for items pre-identified is improper.</p> <p>The EIR describes the process for fund usage as follows: “The project budget will allocate \$700,000 for neighborhood traffic management. This will be used to monitor traffic conditions and mitigate ...the significant traffic impacts identified on residential streets. LADOT, working together with neighborhoods north and south of the Boulevard and two council district offices, will determine how and where to allocate these funds. The mitigation monitoring program specifies that all residential streets in the area bounded by Sepulveda on the west Wilshire Boulevard on the north Club View Drive and Moreno on the east and Olympic Boulevard on the south be included in the monitoring area. Traffic counts will be taken in advance of the start of construction of the project and after completion of the project and locations to be determined by LA DOT, to determine if the Santa Monica Boulevard transit Parkway project has resulted in any traffic diversion which results in a significant impact, based on the city of Los Angeles criteria for determination of significant impact on residential streets.”</p>	<p>Restore the \$700,000 fund.</p> <p>Provide a transparent process consistent with the EIR for allocating the funds which is acceptable to the community.</p> <p>Immediately provide a list of pre-constructions traffic counts.</p>
EB/WB stop signs at Pandora on LSMB	WSSM	E	Draft EIR FIGURE 3.3-9 shows 4-way stop at LSMB and Pandora. See Image L below.	Add stop signs on EB and WB LSMB at Pandora

EB-LSMB to EB-BSMB extra cut-out	WSSM	E	<p>The extra merge lane from EB-LSMB to EB-BSMB was not in the original plans. See Image H.</p> <p>The merge lane at Pandora will encourage cut-through traffic from Pandora to EB-BSMB.</p> <p>Left turns to the merge lane across oncoming WB traffic will create a hazard especially if U-turns are not allowed at CPW.</p>	Adopt the community's alternate plan shown as Image I.
Stop Signs/south frontage road	WSSM	M	Stop signs are needed to discourage speeding along LSMB.	Add stop signs at Fairburn, Prosser & Manning
Overland/LSMB right arrow	WSSM	H	While the EIR did not fully specify the allowed turn movements at this intersection. Current DOT design allows too much free flow onto SB-Overland.	Add a right turn arrow with both red and green arrows at signal phase 8 at EB-LSMB to SB-Overland
Overland/LSMB	WSSM	E	Single westbound LSMB lane in Final EIR Map L-6, but DOT design shows dual WB lane, one dedicated left and one dedicated right. See Image K.	Remove the dedicated left turn lane on WB-LSMB between Overland and Manning and return to a single westbound lane per the EIR
Merge lane from LSMB to BSMB between Manning/Parnell	WSSM	H	This lane is needed to reduce landlock for WSSM residents between Westwood and Overland needing to access eastbound BSMB. Absent this merge lane, residents would have to backtrack to Overland, or travel on LSMB and exit near Pandora and make a dangerous left turn on LSMB, plus jogging across three BSMB lanes for those wanting to go north on Beverly Glen.	Add a cut-out lane from EB-LSMB to EB-BSMB between Manning and Parnell to resolve landlock issues.
10 Freeway signage	WSSM	H	<p>Using Overland as a path from Santa Monica Blvd to the 10 is without merit. Traffic should use SMB to access the 10 via the 405.</p> <p>The EIR states: "The goal of the neighborhood traffic management plan will be to orient non-local traffic to the major and secondary highways in the corridor area."</p> <p>It also states that : "Although a collector street, Overland Avenue is also a residential street and residents have expressed concerns about the volume and speed of traffic on overload. "</p>	Direct traffic to use the 405 to access the 10 instead of using Overland using appropriate signage elements.
Through Lane – north frontage road Beverly Glen to Club View	CWW	E	The elimination of a through lane on the frontage road increases the likelihood that drivers will cut through the CWW area to get to Beverly Glen or to Wilshire. See Image E	Return to the plan for a through lane from Club View to Beverly Glen to encourage use of Beverly Glen for northbound travel. This includes any bump-outs or bulges at Comstock.

Egress-Only lane from north frontage road to WB-BSMB between Warnall/Comstock.	CWW	E	Drivers will not have an opportunity to exit the frontage road until it is too late or dangerous to cross BSMB to head SB on BG, or head EB on BSMB. An opening was included in the draft EIR for this purpose. At that time the median between BSMB and the frontage road was a very narrow curb which also allowed easy ingress to Comstock. To reduce ingress for cut through traffic, CWW requested and the MTA agreed to eliminate this opening. In the current design, all medians are very wide and many ingress only and egress only lanes have been added to improve safety over the original EIR design. Equal safety treatment should be accorded the CWW residents and motorists using the businesses on that frontage road.	Add a merge lane on the north frontage road between Warnall and Comstock. See Image M.
Local street signs	All	M	Per agreement with LADOT (Glenn Ogura) each group will make a request on HOA stationery to have local street signs removed from the boulevard and to have DOT respond to complaints by referring complainants to the HOAs. The format for the letter was to have been provided by Mr. Ogura. We are still awaiting the format definition. An example would be the Fox Hills/Benecia sign as shown in Image J.	

A San Vicente approaching Barrington – no large signs.



San Vicente approaching Wilshire – no large signs



B San Vicente at 26th – no large signs.



San Vicente at Gale – no large signs

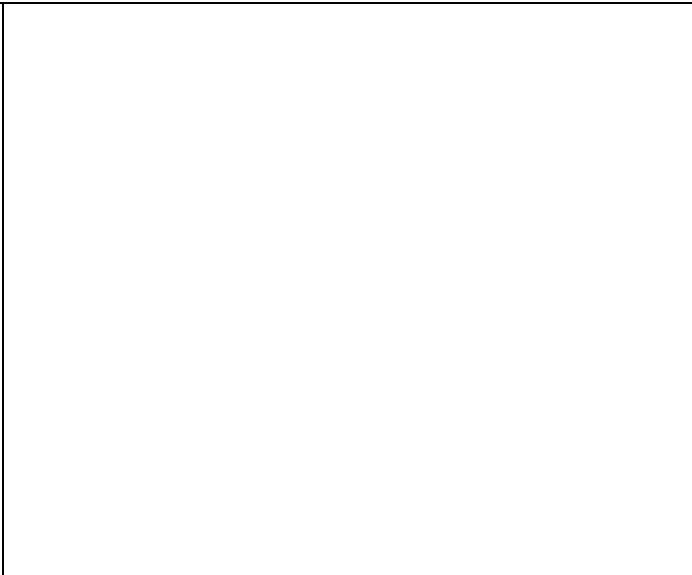
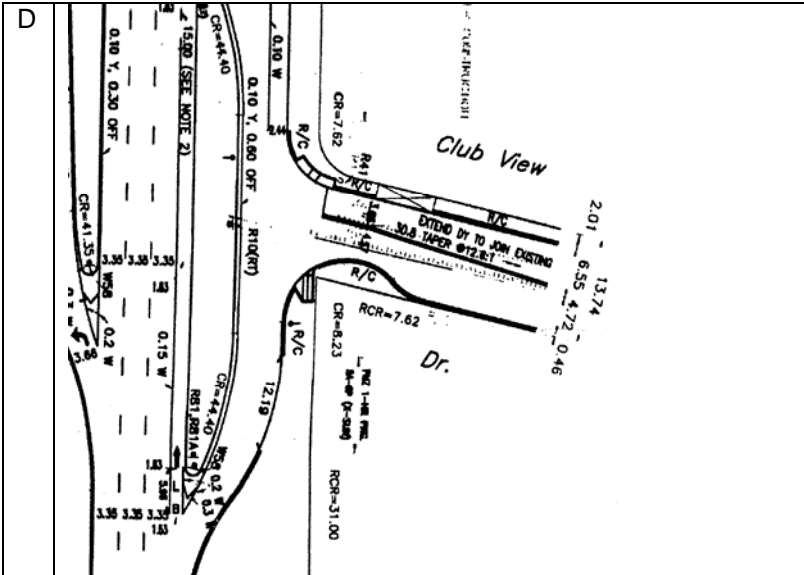


C San Vicente at Bundy – no large signs

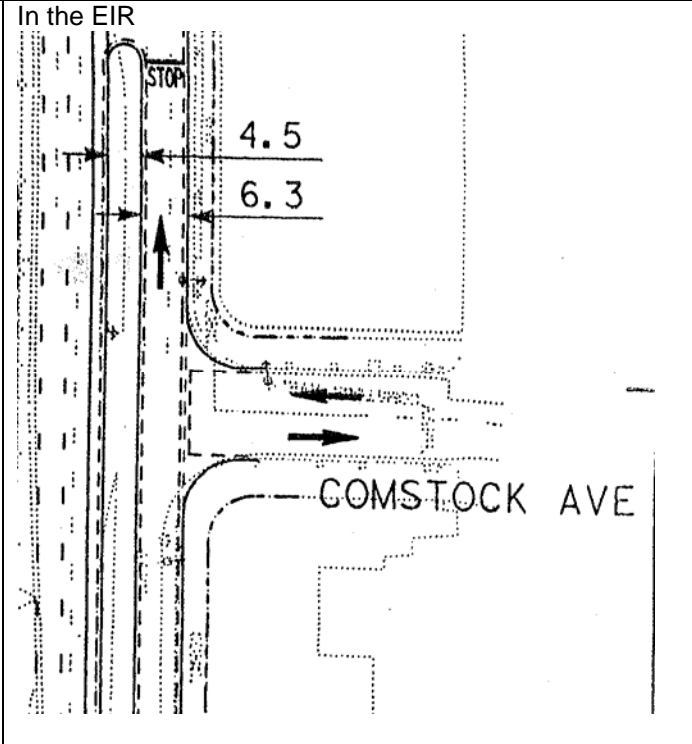
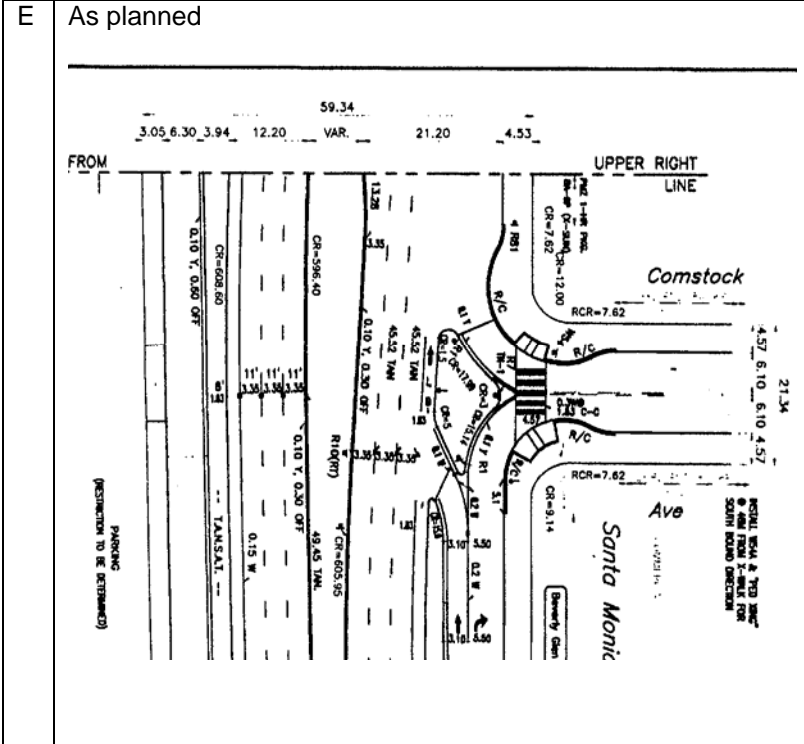


A view of the Champs de Elyse – No large signs



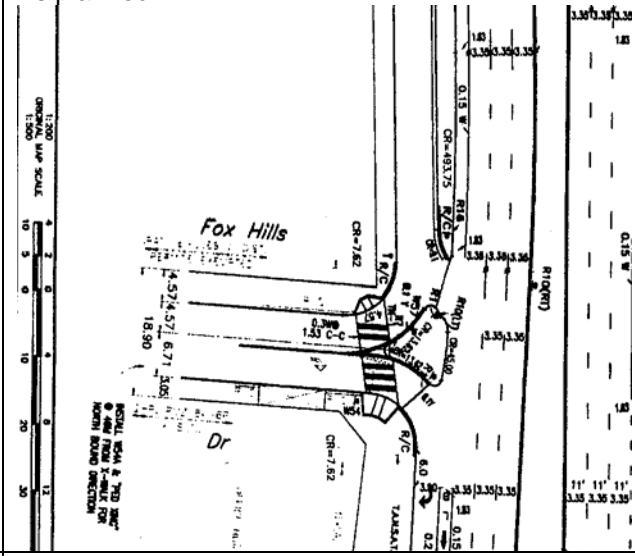


Blow-up of north frontage road entrance. Measured distance is inconsistent with a 17' opening. Compare to the 4.67 meter opening of Club View.

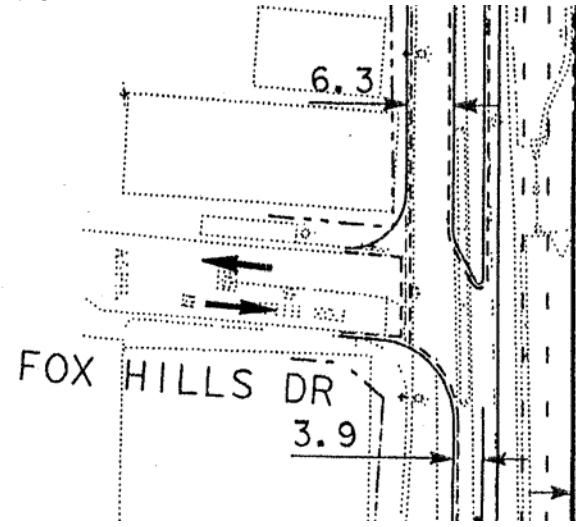


Comstock design change

F As planned

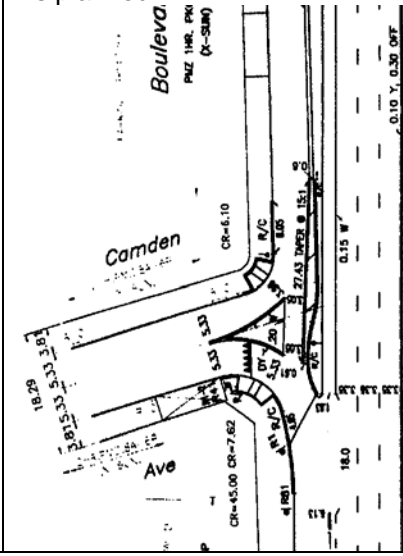


In the EIR

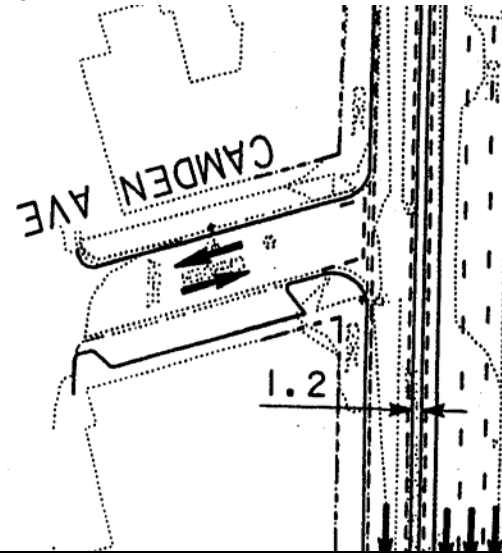


Fox Hills design change

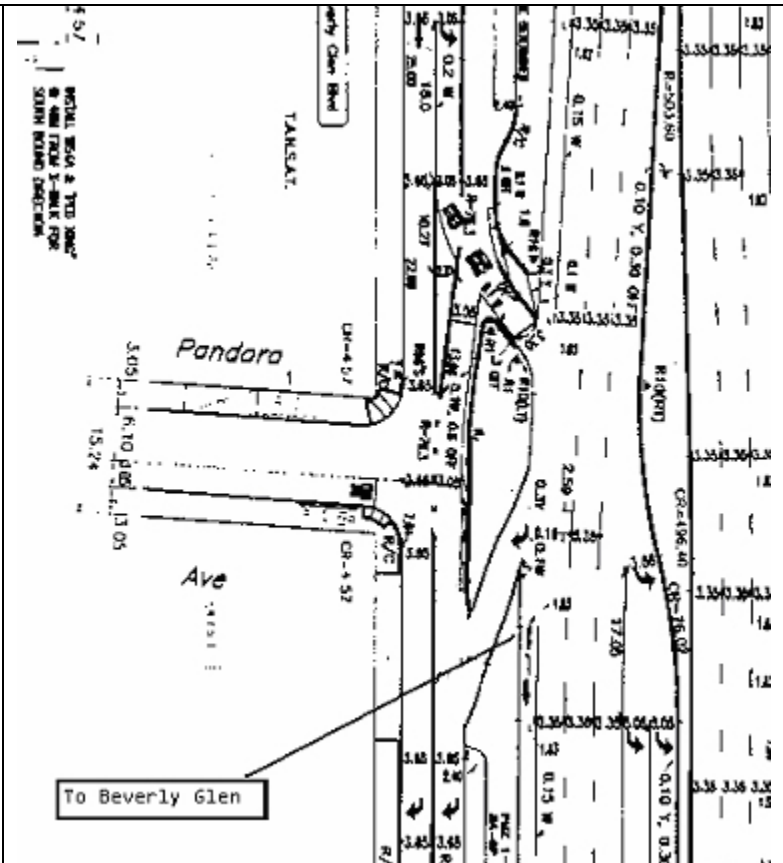
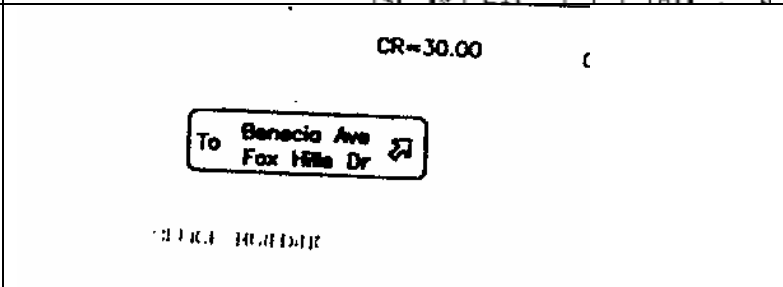
G As planned



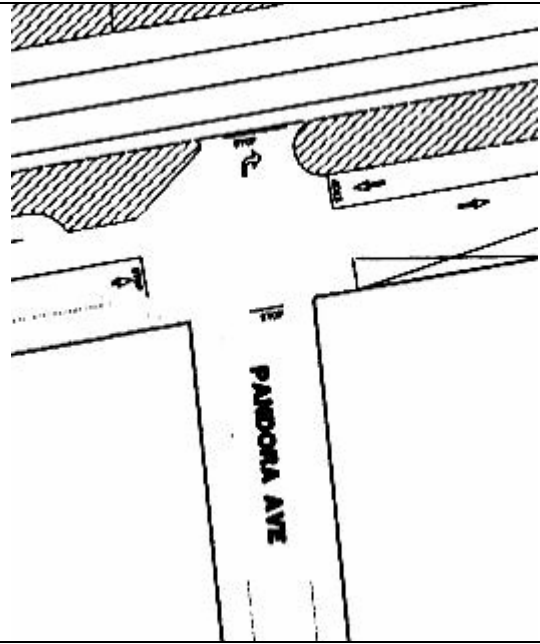
In the EIR



Camden design change

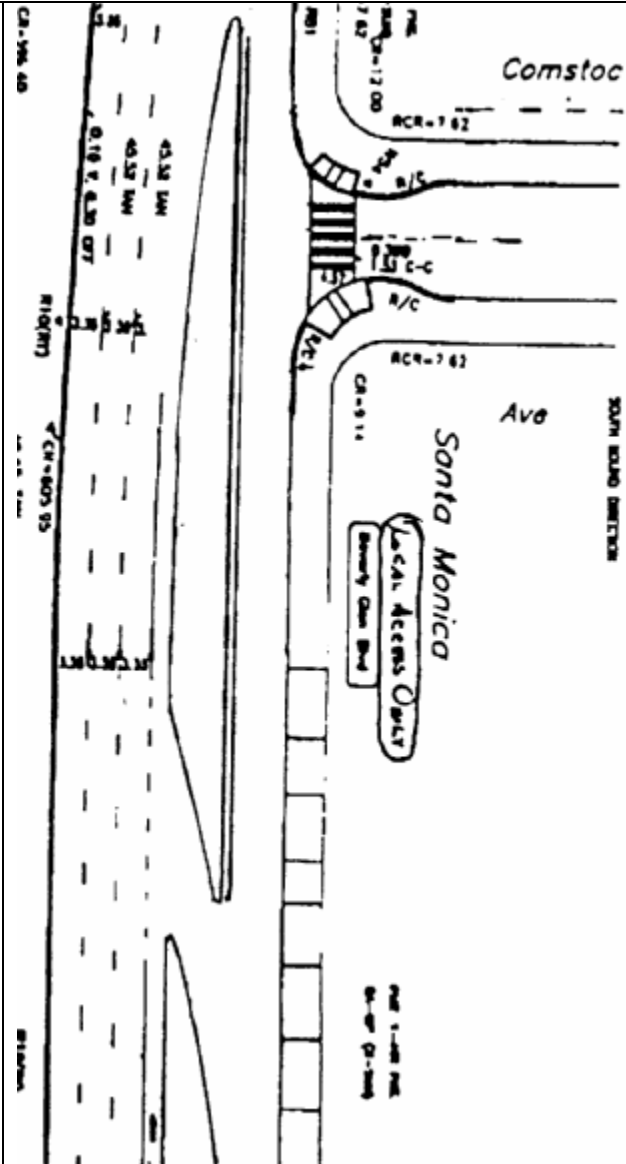
			<p>As proposed by the HOAs. A merge lane from BSMB to LSMB allows drivers to get to SB-BG from BSMB. Access to WB-LSMB is eliminated in favor of dual right turn lanes onto SB-BG.</p>
J		<p>The resident's concern is that signs pointing to local streets, especially where the project design is faulty, will provide motorists with an invitation to seek alternate routes through our neighborhoods.</p>	<p>Example of local street sign to be removed by request of the relevant HOA.</p>
K	<p>As planned</p>	<p>In the EIR</p>	<p>Additional lane design change. Left has 2 WB lanes on LSMB, right is the desired FEIR design with one single WB lane.</p>

L



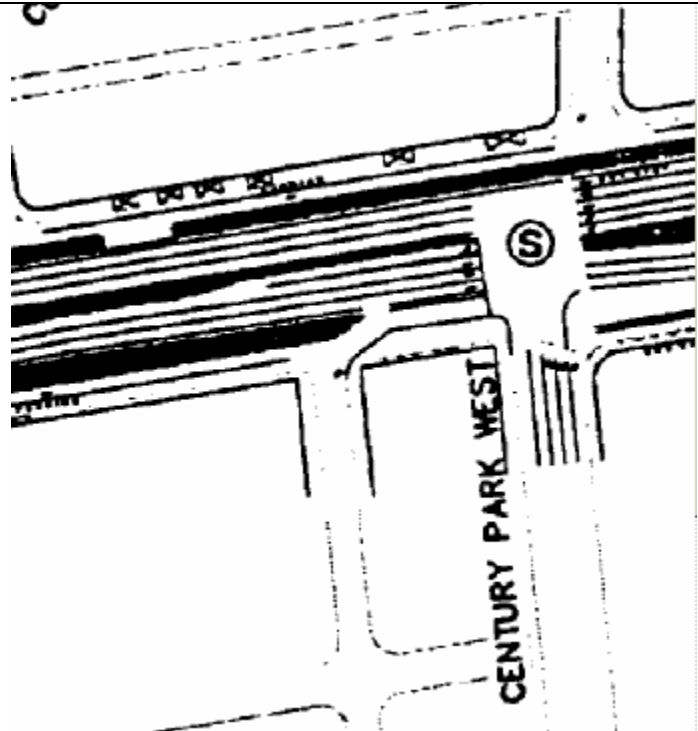
EIR map showing a 4-way stop at LSMB and Pandora

M



Suggested modification to the north frontage road between Beverly Glen and Club View – specifically adding an egress only lan, allowing for through traffic at Comstock and eliminating the Comstock island.

N



Shows the promised U-turn at Century Park West – from the DEIR.