

August 1, 2002

The Honorable Rodney S. Melville, Presiding Judge
Santa Barbara County Superior Court
312-C East Cook Street
Santa Maria, CA 93456-5369

Mary Anne Harrison
2001/02 Grand Jury Foreperson
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

RE: Planning and Development Department Response to Santa Barbara County 2001-
2002 Grand Jury Final Report on Isla Vista-Who's In Charge

Dear Judge Melville and Ms. Harrison:

Planning and Development thanks the 2001-2002 Grand Jury for the opportunity to respond to the 2001-2002 Grand Jury Report and appreciates the Grand Jury's recognition of the significant opportunity presented by the three-agency commitment to preparation and implementation of a master plan for Isla Vista.

Very truly yours,

John Patton
Director of Planning and Development

xc: Ms. Gail Marshall, Chair, Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
Ms. Naomi Schwartz, Supervisor, First District
Ms. Susan Rose Supervisor, Second District
Ms. Joni Gray, Supervisor, Fourth District
Mr. Tom Urbanske, Supervisor, Fifth District
Mr. Michael Brown, County Administrator
Chancellor Henry Yang, UCSB
Dr. Duncan Mellichamp, Special Assistant to the Chancellor, UCSB
Mr. Derek Johnson, Executive Director, Isla Vista Park and Recreation District

Planning and Development Responses to Grand Jury Report: Isla Vista-Who's In Charge

Recognizing that the many of the problems in Isla Vista have persisted since at least 1969, the County of Santa Barbara, the University and the Isla Vista Recreation and Park District began investigating joint strategies to improve the community of Isla Vista in summer of 1998. Prior to this time each agency had worked individually to identify problems in the community or to improve it, but little change occurred for a variety of reasons, including lack of coordination between the agencies and a cash-poor redevelopment project area originally formed for the purpose of acquiring open space along the Del Playa bluffs.

In January 1999, a working group was formed, comprised of members from the County Planning and Development Department's Comprehensive Planning Division, UCSB's Office of Budget and Planning, and IVRPD to more fully review the options for addressing overcrowding, residential dwelling quality, adequacy of downtown services, architectural design quality, the UCSB/IV interface, parking, traffic, and other infrastructure issues. The three entities determined that Isla Vista needed a comprehensive approach to solve its complex problems. In June 1999, the working group suggested that a master plan be prepared for Isla Vista, which would be implemented through a variety of means, including an amended Redevelopment Plan. This long-range planning effort was estimated to occur over a period of four years, concluding in 2004.

In order to formalize the working group and each agency's commitment to the master plan process, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed in July 2000. This MOU clarifies the role, scope of planning efforts and the resource commitments of the County, District, and University in a comprehensive planning effort for Isla Vista.

Since the MOU was approved the three agencies have made progress toward the completion of the master plan. These milestones include:

- Completion of an international design competition to select a consultant to assist with the preparation of the Master Plan. The competition allowed the residents of the community to participate in reviewing and selecting the consultant.
- Election of a project area committee (PAC) that reviews and makes recommendations regarding amendments to the Redevelopment Plan. This committee was also appointed as a general plan advisory committee (GPAC) to provide input on the master plan.
- Kick-off of the master plan preparation with an eight-day design workshop. The workshop was open to the public and was focussed on identifying the problems in Isla Vista and the initial development of solutions.
- Publication of the findings and recommendations of the design workshop (attached).

While it is understood that the master plan will not be the panacea for all physical and social issues in the community, this is the first community improvement effort that has

included these three critical agencies. Working together the sponsoring agencies believe that a plan can be created that will include real solutions to these issues that have plagued Isla Vista.

FINDING 1: No single agency has been assigned the responsibility to address Isla Vista problems incrementally or collectively beyond the planning process.

Response to Finding 1:

Agree.

FINDING 7: County documents state that the cost of right-of-way limits the installation of sidewalks. The Jury's interviews indicated that several landlords would donate their right-of-way for sidewalk construction.

Response to Finding 7:

Disagree based solely on the fact that Planning and Development is not responsible for negotiating right of way acquisitions nor sidewalk installation in the county. See the Public Works Department's response.

FINDING 12: The existing parking demand in Isla Vista exceeds the parking space availability. This problem has been a recognized problem for at least 20 years.

Response to Finding 12:

Agree.

FINDING 14: Prior studies, by the County, of the parking problems in Isla Vista recognized that the problems resulted in "heavily congested streets with illegally parked vehicles causing obstructions to emergency vehicles, pedestrians, busses and other motorists and bicycles."

Response to Finding 14:

Agree.

FINDING 15: The Isla Vista Homeowners Association has repeatedly requested that the County undertake a program to facilitate parking for Isla Vista residents.

Response to Finding 15:

Agree.

FINDING 16: Present parking ordinances (quantity of parking spaces required based on the number of bedrooms or studios) cause many of the owners to make building changes without proper permitting.

Response to Finding 16:

Partially disagree. Planning and Development cannot speculate on why landowners alter their structures without permits. However, it is recognized that parking requirements are high for development and conversions in the medium and high density Student Residential (SR-M and SR-H) zone districts. In these zone districts, each bedroom is required to have an off-street parking place due to the common practice of 2 or 3 students sharing a bedroom. An overall parking plan for Isla Vista will be developed as part of the master plan process.

FINDING 17: The Isla Vista Housing Inspection Program was established in April 1998.

Response to Finding 17:

Agree.

FINDING 18: The Inspection Program office is not staffed or equipped for adequate Zoning Inspection in addition to Building Code and Safety inspections.

Response to Finding 18:

Disagree. The original office staffing of one building inspector and a half-time clerical position was adequate to respond to reported zoning violations and violations discovered during building permit inspections. In addition, a Zoning Enforcement officer in the Santa Barbara office is assigned to support enforcement efforts in Isla Vista. Since 1998, a number of violations have been abated through proper permitting or de-conversion of unpermittable construction. New construction inspectors are not staffed out of the Isla Vista office. Due to the reduced number of violations, the 2002-03 budget includes one building inspector to staff the Isla Vista office. Planning and Development is seeking to improve the computer services in the office to better assist the building inspector.

FINDING 19: The Inspection Program office computer does not have a broadband connection to the county's network.

Response to Finding 19:

Agree.

FINDING 23: UCSB pays little or no fees for community impacts of housing, schooling and parking facilities for the approximately 8,000 students that reside in Isla Vista.

Response to Finding 23:

Partially disagree. The University does not pay fees to mitigate impacts to the local public schools. However, the University did establish an Affordable Housing Fund as part of the 1990 Cooperative Relations Agreement entered into by the City and County of Santa Barbara, the University, Citizens for Goleta Valley, Citizens Planning Association and the Isla Vista Association. This fund is to be used by the University to fund affordable housing for staff, faculty and students. The contribution is based on the number of new bed spaces constructed on campus. The contributions to this fund will begin upon completion of Manzanita Village. The University is also attempting to gain approvals for faculty and married student units in the Ellwood-Devereux area and 972 beds for single graduate students in the San Clemente dorm on the north side of El Colegio.

With respect to parking, the University does not pay for the impacts of students and staff living outside Isla Vista who park in the community and then walk to campus. The University is participating in the Isla Vista master plan program to develop a comprehensive parking facilities and operations plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 4: Create incentive plans to encourage multiple unit rental owners to upgrade their properties.

Response to Recommendation 4:

The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented as part of the Isla Vista master plan, scheduled for completion in Fall, 2004. The purpose of the master plan is to identify a vision and implementation strategies for an improved Isla Vista. As discussed at the recent design workshop, improvements to existing rental property and incentives to encourage land owners to undertake such improvements will be a key component of the plan. Initial incentive strategies were outlined at the design workshop and will be more fully developed during the master plan process.

Recommendation 11: The Isla Vista Redevelopment District should develop a plan for a remote low-cost parking facility.

Response to Recommendation 11:

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented as part of the Isla Vista master plan, scheduled to be completed in Fall, 2004. The solution to the

parking problem must be comprehensive and include a number of components, including integration with UCSB's parking rules. Initial concepts involve developing a parking permit program to reduce commuter parking in Isla Vista, improving the convenience of transit service and providing a remote parking facility for students and residents who only occasionally need to use their vehicle. While the master plan is not scheduled for completion until 2004, the sponsoring agencies will move forward with proposals for a parking district or authority prior to plan adoption. All parties, including the Grand Jury, should be aware that any parking permit program will be controversial.

Recommendation 12: Assign a part-time Zoning Enforcement Planner to assist the present Building Inspector.

Response to Recommendation 12:

This recommendation has not been implemented, but may be implemented in one year as part of the 2003-04 budget. Planning and Development's budget for FY 02-03 does not include a part-time zoning enforcement planner. However, Planning and Development does agree that creation of this position is a useful suggestion and will consider this position in developing the proposed budget for FY 03-04.

Recommendation 13: Connect the PC workstation in the Isla Vista office to the County network via a broadband system.

Response to Recommendation 13:

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented within six months.

Recommendation 14: Revise the parking ordinances in relation to the actual availability of existing parking.

Response to Recommendation 14:

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented as part of the Isla Vista master plan, scheduled to be completed in Fall, 2004. The existing parking requirements on rental and commercial property under the zoning ordinances will be reviewed and revised as appropriate during the master plan process. One way or another, rental and commercial properties need to participate in a parking facility plan. One idea discussed at the design workshop is to allow these types of properties to "cash out" of parking requirements by paying fees to a local parking authority which would develop a menu of parking options for tenants and others.

Recommendation 16: The County needs to work with the University to expedite the revision of the west campus so that Pardall Street becomes a major entrance to the University.

Response to Recommendation 16:

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented as part of the Isla Vista master plan, scheduled to be completed in Fall, 2004. The term "west campus" generally refers to University property west of Isla Vista. For purposes of responding to this recommendation it is assumed that the Grand Jury is referring to the area of the campus adjacent to Ocean Road. Planning and Development is working closely with the University on their west campus development plans and will help to expedite those improvements where appropriate. The Master Plan will address the University's relationship to Isla Vista, particularly along Ocean Road. Recommendations from the design workshop included major improvements to the Pardall intersection. Whether this will remain a pedestrian and bicycle access or will at some point be open to vehicles will be determined in the master plan.

Recommendation 17: The County should approach the University to consider payment of impact fees as any other large employer or developer.

Response to Recommendation 17:

The recommendation as stated has been implemented. When the University's Long Range Development Plan was developed in the late 1980s, the County approached the University about payment of impact fees to mitigate off-campus effects on the community. After extensive negotiation, a Cooperative Relations Agreement (CRA) and Mitigation and Implementation Agreement were entered into in 1990 by the City and County of Santa Barbara, the University, Citizens for Goleta Valley, Citizens Planning Association and the Isla Vista Association. These agreements called for mitigation of housing and traffic impacts. The CRA established an affordable housing fund that requires contribution from the University that must be used by the University to develop affordable housing for their staff, faculty and students. The Mitigation Implementation Agreement set out a plan for the University to financially contribute to future roadway and intersection improvements in Goleta as a way mitigate traffic impacts associated with growth on campus.

These agreements do not require payment of impact fees on the same basis as any other large employer or developer, but they do provide for meaningful mitigation of some of the effects of University development. In cooperation with the City of Goleta, Planning and Development will continue to work with the University to address impacts on housing, traffic and parking associated with campus growth during the upcoming LRDP update and the Ellwood-Devereux Plan.