

July 12, 2002

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

Re: Public Works' Response to the 2001-2002 Grand Jury Report on Isla Vista- Who's in Charge

In accordance with the California Penal Code Sections 933 (c) and 933.05, we are responding to the applicable Grand Jury Findings and Recommendations contained in the 2001-2002 Grand Jury Report on Isla Vista- Who's in Charge.

Finding 5: *In many areas the sidewalks have yet to be constructed, although it was an action item in the 1990 Redevelopment Plan.*

Public Works partially agrees with this finding. However, sidewalks have been constructed at various locations since the inception of the 1990 Redevelopment Plan (see attachment #1- project history & plan). As funding becomes available through the Board of Supervisors approval process, additional sidewalks have been constructed. In consultation with 3rd District and the Community, Public Works has prioritized sidewalk construction in the areas with the most pedestrian/vehicular traffic. Additionally, these sidewalks were in-filled in areas where the necessary road right-of-way existed, mainly the Embarcadero Loop and portions of Camino Pescadero. Current project priorities include various locations in the area southwest of the loop, which would provide a continuous sidewalk path for pedestrians. With limited funds available, due to Public Works \$110 million unfunded backlog of road maintenance needs, we are using innovative methods to construct more sidewalks. The Public Works Department is currently working with the 3rd District, Isla Vista Recreation and Parks District (IVRPD) and the community in areas of the highest priority.

Finding 6: *The absence of sidewalks has allowed parking in front yards of residential facilities to be a common occurrence.*

Public Works disagrees wholly with this finding. Whether new sidewalks have been constructed or not, there is a high demand for parking and vehicles park wherever space is available in Isla Vista. The use of enforcement to cite vehicles on a regular basis which are parked on sidewalks, blocking driveways and in areas they should not be parking will help relieve this condition in the future.

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.*

Public Works agrees with this finding, that the cost of right-of-way limits the installation of sidewalks but there maybe landlords willing to donate property for sidewalk construction. Public Works is working with landowners in Isla Vista as well as IVRPD who are willing to donate right-of-way for sidewalk construction in the priority locations. Should there be a list of perspective donors available, the County would appreciate receiving a copy of that list in order to plan accordingly.

The Public Works Department has worked with the Third District Supervisor's Office on Resolution 02-031, which was adopted by the Board on January 22, 2002 (attachment #2). This resolution established compensation in the amount of \$20 per square foot of right-of-way conveyed to the County. This set cost was derived from the fact that in most if not all cases the easement areas will be located in setback areas that have relatively fewer practical uses other than for sidewalk improvements. Also, the property owner will benefit from the installation of said improvements at the County's cost.

Property owners that are willing to donate right-of-way frequently do not own adjacent properties. Therefore, this compensation has resulted in a more positive response to sidewalk construction on contiguous properties.

Finding 8: *The IV Redevelopment District does not have sufficient funds to complete construction of sidewalks while at the same time it has funded \$366,500 for the purchase of El Encanto Apartment Housing site. This site is not within the district's boundary.*

Public Works is not responsible for the Isla Vista Redevelopment District. Please refer to Isla Vista Redevelopment District's response.

Finding 9: *Most of the streets have streetlights installed on only one side and many of the existing lights exceed the County Department of Public Works standard for spacing. For example, the four blocks on Camino Pescadero, north of Sabado Tarde have only five existing streetlights.*

Public Works agrees with this finding. However, the current standards were adopted for new development in 1987. All development requiring streetlights in Isla Vista occurred prior to 1987. Ordinarily, streetlights were positioned on one side on residential streets as opposed to both sides. While new streetlights have been installed at a few individual locations, a capital improvement program does not exist to redesign the whole town. County revenues collected for streetlights in Isla Vista are used to pay Southern California Edison for energy and maintenance costs of their lights. These revenues are derived from benefit assessments in County Service Area 31.

Finding 10: *Some of the existing streetlights are 70 Watts.*

Public Works agrees with this finding. All residential streets, throughout the County, except at intersections, have a minimum requirement of 70 Watts (5,800 Lumens). Therefore, development would generally have installed 70-Watt luminaries.

Recommendation 5: *Install new streetlights in areas that exceed Santa Barbara County Public Works standard spacing. Install these new lights on the side opposite the existing ones to improve the overall lighting.*

Public Works has implemented a portion of this recommendation in consultation with 3rd District, Edison and the Community. The current street lighting program is only intended to fund electricity and maintenance costs of the existing Edison owned infrastructure. Current revenues are insufficient for a substantial amount of new luminaries. The county has added new luminaries to existing wood power poles on a case by case basis and will continue to do so based on available revenues. Increases to existing revenues for electricity and maintenance would require passage of a Proposition 218 ballot proceeding. However, an attempt to adjust rates by marginal increase failed in 1999.

Recommendation 6: *Increase wattage of new streetlights to a minimum of 100 Watts to improve public safety.*

Public Works has implemented a portion of this recommendation. The county (Public Works staff, 3rd District's office) in coordination with the Community and the Edison Company, have been implementing a plan to upsize all 70-Watt luminaries to 100 Watts. As time permits, Edison has conducted the upsizing (bulb and ballast replacement) at specific/strategic locations and as lights go out and need to be replaced. Project replacement is expected to be complete by the end of 2002.

Recommendation 7: *County PW Dept continue to construct as many new sidewalks as the annual budget allows, while working with property owners to resolve the right-of-way for sidewalk construction.*

Public Works has implemented this recommendation. Public Works currently is working with the 3rd District, and interested parties, residential landowners as well as IVRPD, to find innovative ways to address the sidewalk construction issue. Recently, Public Works had an MOU approved by the Board of Supervisors (attachment #3), which allowed the IVRPD to construct sidewalks and then be reimbursed the costs associated with that sidewalk which would normally be constructed as part of a County project. As the Board of Supervisors makes funding available to the department, in-fill sidewalk projects will be initiated and constructed. The current Road Maintenance Annual Plan for fiscal year 2002/2003 has included an additional \$200,000 for sidewalks (attachment #1).

Respectfully submitted,

Phillip M. Demery, Director
Department of Public Works

cc: Bill Andersen, Grand Jury Foreperson, 2002-2003 Santa Barbara Grand Jury
Michael Brown, County Administrator