



CITY OF SANTA MARIA
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

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August 25, 2009

The Honorable Judge J. William McLafferty
Superior Court
1100 Anacapa Street, 2nd Floor
P.O. Box 21107
Santa Barbara, CA 93121-1107

Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury
Attention: Foreman
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Honorable Judge McLafferty & Grand Jury Foreman:

The 2008-09 Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury recently released its report entitled *SBCAG – A ROAD NOT TAKEN*, “*If you don’t know where you’re going, you might wind up someplace else.*” As Mayor of the City of Santa Maria, I am required to respond to the applicable findings and recommendations within 90 days of the report issuance. Consequently, this correspondence shall serve as my response as well as the City of Santa Maria’s response to the aforementioned report, as summarized below.

RESPONSE TO THE GRAND JURY FINDING REGARDING *SBCAG – A ROAD NOT TAKEN*, “*If you don’t know where you’re going, you might wind up someplace else.*”

Finding 1a: Santa Barbara County Association of Governments has authority to do regional land use planning through its Joint Powers Agreement.

Response: The City agrees with the Grand Jury finding.

Finding 1b: The staff has developed recommendations for regional land use planning approved by Santa Barbara County Association of Governments.

Response: The City agrees with the Grand Jury finding.

Finding 1c: The regional land use planning recommendations adopted by Santa Barbara County Association of Governments have not been implemented.

Response: The City disagrees partially with the Grand Jury's finding as some of the regional land use planning recommendations, adopted by SBCAG board, have been implemented.

Recommendation 1: That Santa Barbara County Association of Governments and each respective jurisdiction implement already adopted recommendations that deal with regional land use planning. For instance, the City regularly utilizes the land use planning recommendations from SBCAG's Regional Growth Forecasts and Regional Housing Needs Assessment.

Response: The recommendation has been partially implemented, as some of the recommendations regarding regional planning adopted by the SBCAG board have been implemented. One example being that local agencies have used the growth forecasts prepared by SBCAG to consistently evaluate their jobs housing relationship and address imbalances.

Finding 2: Santa Barbara County Association of Governments has not developed a fully integrated regional plan coordinating jobs, housing and transportation that includes all the County's jurisdictions.

Response: The City agrees with the Grand Jury finding.

Recommendation 2: That Santa Barbara County Association of Governments develop a fully integrated regional plan.

Response: The recommendation will be implemented as the State's regional land use planning requirements imposed by SB 375 will require that an integrated regional plan be prepared. Specifically, SBCAG's Work Element #3010 requires the preparation of a Sustainable Communities Strategy, concurrent with the update of the Regional Transportation Plan.

Finding 3: Santa Barbara County Association of Governments refused to apply for State funds for comprehensive regional planning.

Response: The City disagrees partially with the Grand Jury's finding as funds for the Regional Blueprint Planning Grant Program were first included in the 2005-06 State budget. However, on March 16, 2006, the SBCAG board considered and unanimously rejected the recommendation to include the development of a Regional Blueprint Plan in the SBCAG 2006-07 Overall Work Program. Board members expressed concerns about regional and state agencies becoming involved in local land use planning. And while the above transpired in March 2006, following a subsequent discussion of the Blueprint work in San Luis Obispo County, in October 2006, the SBCAG Board unanimously agreed to sign a letter of support for an application for State Blueprint Planning Grant funds in 2007 by the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG), for a pilot study of the Santa Maria Valley. The grant was awarded and the study is now underway (SBCAG Work Element #2035). SBCAG is a subcontractor to SLOCOG on the grant.

Recommendation 3: That Santa Barbara County Association of Governments aggressively pursue funding for comprehensive regional planning.

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be with the new regional planning requirements mandated by the State under SB 375.

The above concludes the City's response to the Grand Jury's Report on SBCAG – A ROAD NOT TAKEN, "If you don't know where you're going, you might wind up someplace else." The City would like to recognize the efforts of the Grand Jury for their diligence in the preparation of this report. On behalf of myself and the City of Santa Maria, we respectfully submit this response to the Grand Jury and thank you again for all your efforts associated with this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Larry Lavagnino". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Larry" and last name "Lavagnino" clearly distinguishable.

LARRY LAVAGNINO
Mayor of Santa Maria