



Public Works Commission

**Special Meeting of the
PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION**

Minutes

Thursday, May 13, 2004
1947 Center Street, 4th Floor

CALL TO ORDER: 10:05 a.m.

Present: Commissioners Dacey, Broderick, Holland, Perry, Prevo, Shumer, St. John

Vacant: Councilmember Olds' and Shirek's appointments

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Daniella Thompson, 2663 Le Conte Avenue, requested that the design element of the Foothill Bridge does not get "short shrift." She referred to the Design Review Committee's recommendation. She suggested that the decision on the bridge be based on consideration of a "wider spectrum" of issues.

INFORMATION ITEM: Working Session on U.C. Foothill Bridge Proposal

A. The following points were made during preliminary discussion:

"Hardscape" mitigations are felt to be most appropriate, as opposed to those such as education on use of public transit, for example.

It would be desirable to establish the value of the actual air rights. Research could be undertaken on similar situation in other cities. Cities with colder climates will probably have the most applications. If this proves to be difficult, then specific public right-of-way projects should be performed. In any event, payments should not simply be deposited in the City's General Fund.

Will building the bridge actually negatively impact property values in the neighborhood?

The Commission would like to obtain a copy of the original Foothill Housing Project EIR from 1988.

The bridge does not appear to address general pedestrian safety. Is this in fact U.C.'s highest overall pedestrian safety priority?

If approved, the encroachment may set an important precedent.

Approval of the encroachment should have been obtained from the City before constructing a student housing project that relied on the bridge for accessibility compliance.

It should still be possible to explore the tunnel alternative.

It is not understood how the lack of a bridge over the street necessarily means that the shortest path of travel is over a half mile long, via the Greek Theater. Why can't other accessibility improvements be made on the campus to shorten this path?

It seems especially untimely to make a substantial gift of public property when the City is in a serious budget crisis.

The Commission should consider different scenarios for a permit, rather than a mere yes/no vote. This could include restitution to the adjacent neighborhood.

A reservation was expressed as to whether the entire scope of issues being discussed is within the Public Works Commission's purview.

It was pointed out that the permit is discretionary and that an applicant does not have an absolute right to a permit even if all conditions are met.

If an annual fee to lease the air space is charged, inflation should definitely be included.

It was pointed out that U.C. made it clear that this would be their last attempt at permit approval, and therefore they are apparently prepared to go without it.

Commissioner Prevo has been appointed to a U.C. committee on communications and stated that there is a strategy being developed to improve relations with the community, starting with the Long Range Development Plan.

It was agreed that various Commissioners would develop answers to the following questions as a basis for our analysis to the City Council:

1. Safety concerns of all pedestrians.
2. Are there other alternatives that would serve this purpose better?
3. What are the ramifications of setting such a precedent with this encroachment?

4. Why is the City responsible to bring the project into ADA compliance?
5. What criteria should the City use for major encroachments such as leasing air rights?
6. Is there a design that would make the bridge acceptable to the community?
7. What is the value of losing air rights?
8. Where should any funds collected go? Should they be direct and specific to the neighborhood impacted?
9. Are there ADA satisfying alternatives such as a tunnel or surface improvements?
10. How do alternatives available today compare to those at the time the project was planned?

ADJOURNMENT: 12:18 p.m.