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March 21, 2021

To: Mayor Murillo and City Council

Re: Appeal of Historic Landmarks Commission's Decision to Deny the Westside Community Paseos Proposed Within El Pueblo Viejo Landmark District (Agenda Item #10, March 23 2021 Council Agenda)

Madam Mayor and Council Members,

Allied Neighborhoods Association appreciates the opportunity to comment on the above agenda item, and some planning and process issues.

1) Recommendation B. Having Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) volunteer recommendation for tree selection to minimize visual impacts to mountain views is a step in the right direction – along with recommendation for other landscape components and other project materials. Bringing on board a landscape architect is also a good recommendation.

2) The applicant stated they proposed mulch due to maintenance costs. HLC asked for an alternative to mulch, but the applicant came back with mulch again. A private property owner would not be allowed mulch as a landscape solution because of maintenance costs – and the City should not get special treatment.

3) The applicant requested a denial at the first review. HLC followed their standard practice of a continuance with comments. A continuance provides an opportunity for an applicant to respond to HLC comments.

4) The applicant told HLC, Council had already approved the project. Council adopted the Bicycle Master Plan (BMP) in 2016 and Chapter 7, "Recommended Bicycle Projects", includes 35 projects. It was stated projects would go through the design review approval process.

In Relevant City Goals and Programs (CAR pg. 6) is a discussion about design review, saying "… City's design review bodies who must struggle with predetermined projects which may be subject to particular

engineering requirements." Project 23 in the BMP is State Street Phase 3 (Mission to Calle Real). As discussed at the time at TCC it includes two roundabouts on State; roundabouts said to be needed because of traffic flow issues with State having a single traffic lane in each direction. Is this, for example, considered an already approved and/or predetermined project?

5) City Charter Section 817. Again, this charter section is being discussed. Now, in the space of some number of months, this charter section and specifically in 817(c) – that Council can determine for City owned or leased property, design review is unnecessary - is being brought up again. Most folks who have followed City planning for decades never remember this charter subsection discretion ever being used, before recently.

6) For decades it's been emphasized to the public and decision makers the importance of our downtown street grid system – including, to handle and disperse traffic.

Lately we're finding the downtown street grid being compromised and changed. As more and more changes happen to the downtown grid system, at what point is a review and analysis necessary?

It's not necessarily one project or change, but *the cumulative effect*. There's the closure of downtown State Street (which many like). But additionally, the proposed closure of the 00 block of E. De La Guerra, possibly the 00 block of W. Victoria, now traffic diverters on Sola (W. Sola and De La Vina which is already installed, and the proposed E. Sola and Santa Barbara Street location). Lane removals, such as lower De La Vina, recently a stretch of Anacapa Street below Mission, etc.

Transportation staff informed the public and decision makers years ago that the 101 Freeway widening project will increase traffic on our downtown streets, as additional traffic volume will come off the freeway offramps.

We appreciate your consideration of our comments and concerns.

Sincerely,
Allied Neighborhoods Association

Cc: Derrick Bailey
Irma Unzueta
Rebecca Bjork
Ariel Calonne
Paul Casey