

To:	County of Ventura Public Works Agency Transportation Department
From:	Kevin Cannon – Citizen Representative (CR)
Date:	22 March 2006
Subject:	Citizen Representative Review of <u>Scope of Work for Traffic Signal and Interconnect Design Services for Santa Rosa Road</u>

The following comments were received from Santa Rosa Valley (SRV) residents (the “Community”) during the formal review period (2/16/06 thru 3/21/06) on the Scope of Work (SOW) for Traffic Signal and Interconnect Design Services for Santa Rosa Road. An electronic version of the SOW issued by the Public Works Agency (PWA) was sent via a SRV email distribution by Rosemary Allison on February 16th and a presentation of the SOW was made to the public at the March 9th SRV MAC meeting. Community review comments on the SOW from the Community are required as part of the Plan for Installation of a Traffic Signal Synchronization Project on Santa Rosa Road (Task No. 5 “Review of SOW”) approved by the Board of Supervisors on February 7th and are hereby submitted. Please reply with responses to the comments and questions herein so I can pass them back to the Community after the Director PWA reviews and approves the final SOW.

SOW COMMENT # 1

With regard to the intersection at Santa Rosa Road and Moorpark Road:

A modification proposed for the existing traffic signal calls for the removal of the existing “No Right Turn on Red” (NRTOR) restriction and provides for a southbound right-turn overlap that includes a red arrow. The right arrow interval would be variable during the overlap phase (i.e., the time during which eastbound SR Road traffic is turning left on to Moorpark Road) so that the amount of green arrow during the overlap time can be varied. A “Right Turn on Green Arrow Only” sign would be posted and eastbound U-turns would be restricted.

While the proposed modification seems like a good compromise from the instant removal of the NRTOR restriction originally proposed by the PWA, the Community has some concerns.

- a) Removal of the NRTOR restriction has never been formally approved by the Board of Supervisors (BOS). It was indeed a point of discussion at the November 2005 BOS

meetings but no official Board position was established at that time (per Supervisor Parks). The Community's desire for the NRTOR was to provide gaps in traffic for safety reasons and they request that the PWA holds off on the removal of the NRTOR for a reasonable period of time to allow for monitoring the effectiveness of the new synchronized signals in providing safe gaps.

Response: The Statement of Work does not call for the removal of the existing no right turn on red restriction. This is a policy decision implemented by the Board, and may or may not be revisited by the Board at their discretion. PWA will not remove or otherwise modify the restriction without express direction from the Board.

b) Installation of a separate right turn arrow will allow the PWA the ability to vary the right turn overlap from 0% to 100%. Although the BOS has given ultimate authority to the PWA to program the timing of the synchronized system, the Community has the following safety concerns if the setting approaches 100% (i.e., full right-turn overlap) rather than retain a 0% setting during peak hours (i.e., equivalent to the current NRTOR) now in effect during weekday hours.

- A green right turn arrow will result in reduced “gaps” in westbound traffic on SR Road dependent on the percentage of green time allotted to the right turn movements.
- Reduced gaps in the westbound traffic between Moorpark Road and the Vista Grande signal at Santa Rosa school will cause ingress safety issues at unsignalized intersections at Andalusia Drive East and the new Santa Rosa Highlands tract.
- The current back-up during peak hours at the southbound Moorpark Road intersection will be shifted to become an even larger back-up at the Vista Grande signal at Santa Rosa school. The resulting larger back-up occurring directly on SR Road will create a negative psychological situation for morning westbound commuters coming from all directions and parents attempting to egress from Santa Rosa Road into Santa Rosa school for morning drop-offs.
- It is vital to the Community that optimal ingress and egress at Santa Rosa

school be maintained as much as possible and that safety is never compromised even if it means completely removing signals out of the synchronized system for set periods of time, e.g., during morning drop-offs.

- The Moorpark and SR Road Level of Service (LOS) standards have been recently lowered in the County General Plan update from LOS standard D to LOS E. This fact would seem to nullify the PWA's original reasoning for the need to create a free right turn lane (i.e., 100% setting) at this intersection which has been repeatedly opposed by the Community for safety reasons.
- The calming effect afforded by the current NRTOR designation at this intersection would be eroded with traffic turning in both directions during the overlap phase. It is unclear how drivers following the last car receiving the green right turn arrow may react if the arrow changes directly to red and a sudden stop occurs.

Response: The MAC's concerns are acknowledged. However they are not germane to the technical scope of work.

c) With regard to the proposed signage "Right Turn on Green Arrow Only":

- Is there a technical difference between "Right Turn on Green Arrow Only" and "No Right on Red"? The latter is used in conjunction with right turn arrows in at least three other locations within the County including Moorpark Road and Tierra Rejada Road. Is there a reason for the inconsistency?

Response: Right turn on Green Arrow Only signage is generally used where a green arrow signal exists. No Right turn on Red signage is generally used where there is no green signal arrow. There is no apparent inconsistency.

d) The Community through the Santa Rosa Road Assessment District (SRRAD) is funding the major portion of the installation of 4 new traffic signals, interconnection with 4 existing signals, and the synchronization and/or system-wide optimization of all 8 signals. The Community recognizes the ultimate success or failure of the synchronization rests a great deal on the incoming traffic flow at both ends of the system. Concerns have therefore been raised about simultaneous system design modifications at the critical east end that might cause unpredictable negative impacts to the overall success of the new SR Road

synchronized system (see also Comment # 4).

Response: The MAC's concerns are acknowledged. The entire system does include all eight signals and there will be an iterative process to bring the entire system on line. PWA will ensure the work is accomplished with due regard to public safety.

SOW COMMENT # 2

With regard to protection for safe right turn egress at all SR Road intersections:

a) Multiple community members commented on the need for safer egress design features for the right turn lanes at each intersection. A hazardous situation exists for drivers who are slowing down but who do not have room to get out of the way of through traffic, particularly at night.

Response: Acknowledge the community's concerns, but this is not part of the defined project. Expanding the scope of work or expand the cost and time for accomplishment of the project. The final Engineer's Report for the District that was confirmed and approved by the BOS in November 2005 sets the scope for expending SRRAD funds on proposed improvements for installation of 4 new traffic signals, interconnection with 4 existing signals, and the synchronization and/or system-wide optimization of all 8 signals.

b) The Community is of the opinion that the right-turn channelizing striped islands marked with Botts dots are not enough to deter drivers who attempt passing on the right at widened intersections. They are also concerned the problem may become exacerbated with the initial introduction of the reduced 45 MPH speed limit. Please have the design consultant advise on what can be done to fully mitigate this concern including possibilities for installing newer types of ruggedized stanchions, creation of right turn only lanes, or other measures to increase the safety for traffic that slows to turn right.

Response: Acknowledge the community's concerns, but this is not part of the defined project. Expanding the scope of work or expand the cost and time for accomplishment of the project. The final Engineer's Report for the District that was confirmed and approved by the BOS in November 2005 sets the scope for expending SRRAD funds on proposed improvements for installation of 4 new traffic signals, interconnection with 4 existing signals, and the synchronization and/or system-wide optimization of all 8 signals.

SOW COMMENT # 3

With regard to relocating the existing “Prepare to Stop” warning system at Yucca Drive for westbound traffic and upgrading both systems to County approved specifications:

- a) A design consultant, Katz, Okitsu & Associates (KOA), retained by the PWA originally recommended a single extinguishable Prepare to Stop sign for eastbound traffic in advance of the SR Road and Yucca Drive intersection (refer to Feasibility Report for Improvements at the intersection of Santa Rosa Road/Yucca Drive dated November 21, 2002). Subsequent to this recommendation both eastbound and westbound Prepare to Stop signs were apparently installed and funded from the Norwegian Grade Trust Fund (NGTF). It’s unclear to the CR where maintenance funds for the existing signs is currently coming from.

Response: Maintenance funds for the existing signals are provided from the County Road fund. All funds in the Norwegian Grade trust Fund have been expended (as authorized by the Board), and the fund is closed.

- b) While it is widely agreed the Prepare to Stop signs are needed to improve traffic safety, the Community has raised a concern that SRRAD funds would be utilized to correct their original placement and the County specification deficiency. The final Engineer’s Report for the District that was confirmed and approved by the BOS in November 2005 sets the scope for expending SRRAD funds on proposed improvements for installation of 4 new traffic signals, interconnection with 4 existing signals, and the synchronization and/or system-wide optimization of all 8 signals.

Response: Acknowledge the community’s concerns. Only the west-bound sign will be relocated, as it will no longer be required after the four new signals are installed. Were it not for the project, this sign would not have to be relocated, and moving the west-bound sign is a logical expense of the project. Any upgrade or modification to the existing signs would be borne by the County Road fund.

- c) The PWA has also recently expressed budget concerns regarding this project and the Community has likewise concerns that District funds may fall short in trying to cover

percentage costs for required intersection improvements. Please advise if the current maintenance funds or County Road Funds can be utilized instead of SRRAD funds to relocate and upgrade the existing “Prepare to Stop” warning system signs. Also, as both the Yucca and Moorpark signals already exist, should this task really wait until 2008 for completion?

Response: It is premature to speculate what funds will or will not be used to accomplish the project, or what decision the Board may or may not make should the project costs significantly exceed the original estimates and authorizations. However construction costs for traffic signal installations in general have increased 200 – 300 % in several southern California municipalities within the last few months, causing some municipalities to cancel, defer or modify their plans. This percentage of an increase is singularly unanticipated and unprecedented, even within the context of today’s highly volatile construction cost market. There is no “magic” pot of money to accommodate such unforeseen or project cost increases. This is a risk taken with any construction project, and this project is no exception.

d) Finally, the new location destination for the westbound sign was question by Community members who experience back-ups on the Norwegian Grade similar to those on southbound Moorpark Road. As both segments are similar in nature with downhill winding curves, would not the westbound Norwegian Grade approach also require a “Prepare to Stop” sign to meet current County approved specifications?

Response: The Norwegian Grade portion of Moorpark Road is within the jurisdiction of the City of Thousand Oaks, and if the City wishes to accommodate such a request, (and provide funding), PWA will be happy to request additional authorization from the Board. Adding additional elements to the project does increase the project cost and time for accomplishment.

SOW COMMENT # 4

With regard to exact beginning and ending of the synchronized system:

a) At this time the Community is assuming that all eight signals are part of the synchronized signal system and that westbound synchronization will start at the Moorpark Road / SR Road intersection and NOT at the Vista Grande signal at Santa

Rosa school. It is not clear from the SOW where the PWA intends to define the starting point for the design of the synchronized system for westbound travel. We all seem to be aware of the back-up on Moorpark Road, but there have also been reported problems of westbound traffic backing up the Norwegian Grade. The Community requests the PWA and/or design consultant provide clear traffic synchronization timing models delineating the starting intersection and the signal phases involved.

Response: The project scope includes all eight signals, and will commence at the intersection with Moorpark Road and end at the intersection of Yucca Drive. However vehicles approaching a signal at either end will not be approaching without any traffic signal control.

SOW COMMENT # 5

With regard to scope and final configuration of all road improvements:

a) The Santa Rosa Road Report on Potential Improvements March 2004 report authored by the PWA was indeed a landmark document. There is one statement in that report in particular that really stands out, namely:

“The most important and essential item in any transportation project is determining the scope and final configuration of road improvements early on.”

Although the scope of the current traffic signal installation and synchronization project is ultimately governed by the approve Engineer’s Report, it is vital to the Community that the design consultant be cognizant and take into account existing and future SR Road possibilities already undertaken or considered by the County, PVSD, SRV MAC, and the SR Trails committee. Our goal is to avoid unnecessary rework and costs.

Response: The scope of work was defined and described earlier as well as the adverse impacts both in terms of cost and time resultant from expanding the scope. Reasonable attempt will be made to accommodate future planned improvements, but the only known and authorized additional planned improvement on Santa Rosa Road is improvement to the intersection of Hill Canyon Road.

b) The recent County General Plan update now designates SR Road as a 2 lane road for planning purposes. The March 2004 report depicts a two-lane configuration all within the

existing County right of way of 94'. A typical section would allow for a 14' median, two 12' lanes, two 8' shoulders, and two 20' buffers. Any design plan for the traffic signal installation and synchronization project covered by the SOW should logically take into account a two-lane configuration and all pre-existing and future SR Road possibilities such as:

- Any pre-existing PVSD bus stops which may be located near a newly signalized intersection and could potentially require barriers and/or pull out lanes
- The pre-existing horse trail at the immediate northwest corner of SR Road and Moorpark Road as well as it's future connection to McCrea Park
- Special considerations at major equestrian crossings at certain intersections required to connect existing community neighborhood trails to the new County equestrian park at Hill Canyon
- Impacts to intersection design caused by the future potential of raised center medians and the potential for increased needs for safe U-turns
- Major intersection crossings that will provide for safe and continuous SRV east-west travel for non-motorized forms of transportation alternating on either side of the road within the north or south buffer sections

Response: The scope of work for this project was defined and described earlier as well as the adverse impacts both in terms of cost and time resultant from expanding the scope. The current adopted County road standard for two lane roadways does not include center median or the majority of the items described above.

SOW COMMENT # 6

With regard to additional signage requirements for the synchronized system:

- a) The background paragraph on page 1 of the SOW mentions that additional signage may be required to advise motorists of the synchronized pre-set speed; however this signage is not listed within the scope of services section. The Community feels

synchronized pre-set speed signage will be essential during the initial implementation phase.

Response: Any required signs will be installed prior to any new signals being energized or the synchronization effort commenced.

b) The Santa Rosa Valley Traffic Calming Committee formed in 2002 developed a list of 19 recommendations. PWA recommendations based on review of the top 5 items from the list were delivered to the BOS on July 16, 2002. The PWA recommendations at that time included a direction to staff to procure and install two “dynamic speed signs”, and upgrade existing school zone signs in the vicinity of Santa Rosa school using NGTF monies. These signs also referred to as “radar speed advisory signs” are pole-mounted variable message signs with radar actuated speed sensors that advise drivers how fast they are going.

Response: The Board of Supervisors rejected the installation of dynamic speed signs on Santa Rosa Road. Until the Board modifies this position, PWA may not reconsider it. It is also not within the scope of work of the project.

c) The July 2002 PWA recommendation to procure and install dynamic speed signs was based on their consideration that such signs, in conjunction with high visibility school warning signs, might increase the awareness of motorists around the school zone area. The aforementioned Nov 2002 KOA feasibility report also discusses their proven effectiveness in sensitive areas such as school zones, where the speeds exceed 25 MPH. In addition, the KOA reports states an application of this type of measure could also be a useful tool in higher speed applications, as it only targets those motorists who exceed the speed limit.

Response: See previous.

d) Given all of the above, it seems logical that a dynamic speed sign, in conjunction with high visibility fixed signage advising motorists of the new synchronized pre-set 45 MPH speed zone, could yield obvious benefits to both commuters and residents alike. Note that the signs can have multiple modes of operation, e.g., the capability of displaying “SPEED LIMIT 45”, switching into a display of the actual speed of a vehicle (XX), to “YOUR SPEED IS XX” when it detects a vehicle exceeding 45 MPH.

Response: See previous.

e) The Community has noted the city of Moorpark has installed a radar speed advisory sign on a residential stretch of Tierra Rejada Road and would like the County to reconsider deploying two along SR Road in conjunction with synchronized pre-set speed high visibility advisory signage. By integrating them into the design of the synchronized system at the outset, it will undoubtedly increase our chances for success when the additional signals are activated and the 45 MPH speed zone is introduced.

Response: See previous.

Additional non-SOW comments to consider:

NON-SOW COMMENT # 7

With regard to the Plan for Installation of a Traffic Signal Synchronization Project on Santa Rosa Road spreadsheet:

- a) Can we add the required annual assessment continuation process tasks to the schedule timeline for years beyond FY 2006/2007? The following annual tasks are required per the approved Engineer's Report (page 4):
- creation of a budget for the upcoming fiscal year
 - updated assessment roll and proposed assessments
 - updated Engineer's Report
 - noticed public meeting for preliminary approval
 - publication in a local newspaper
 - noticed public hearing prior to the Board's decision to continue the assessments.

Response: No. This is a scope of work for the design of the installation of four new traffic signals and the synchronization of these signals with the four existing signals. The work described immediately prior is a different engineering specialty, and should be accomplished by a firm such as Shilts and Associates. I believe Supervisor Parks' office will be contracting for these services directly.

NON-SOW COMMENT # 8

With regard to Task No. 15 “Design Waiver” on the Plan for Installation of a Traffic Signal Synchronization Project on Santa Rosa Road spreadsheet:

- a) Although the PWA has already explained to both Supervisor Parks and the CR the inapplicability of Warrant 6 from the 2003 edition of the MUTCD, the Community respectively requests a written update of that analysis from the design consultant who will be tasked to evaluate the lessons learned and experiences from other locations that are as similar as possible to SR Road.

Response: Respectfully, I decline. The responsibility to perform the Engineering Study required under the California Vehicle Code 21400 to justify the installation of a traffic control device rests with PWA. Likewise PWA has the responsibility to determine when additional technical or professional consultants are required to support that decision or recommendations to the Board.

NON-SOW COMMENT # 9

With regard to the accounting of funds and actual expenditures:

- a) The Community has requested a bi-annual accounting of actual project costs covered by SRRAD funds in order to avoid any surprises during the annual audit required by the Engineer’s Report. Please advise the CR on who at the County can provide this financial data on a regular basis for the purposes of reporting back to the Community.

Response: The County Auditor/ Controller’s office annually reports to the Board the status of all Trust funds maintained by the County. This report is available to the MAC or the public in general via the County Internet web site, or via Supervisor Parks’ office. Should the MAC desire more detailed or frequent reporting, it may be requested from the Auditor/Controller’s office.