

September 20, 2004

Juliana Regabliatia
City of Santa Cruz
Redevelopment Agency
809 Center St, Room 206
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Coast Hotel and
Conference Center

Dear Ms. Rebagliati:

Thank for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Coast Hotel and Conference Center. The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC) serves as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for Santa Cruz County. Staff would like to offer the following comments for your consideration:

1. Staff recommends provisions for secure bicycle parking at the proposed project site, including bicycle lockers and bicycle racks for use by employees and visitors. Please see the enclosed guidelines from our bike secure program regarding space requirements and specifications. This recommendation is consistent with the *2001 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)* goals and policies 2.1.1, which considers the needs of the non-motorized travelers in all construction and project development activities.
2. The *2001 RTP* goals and policies 1.5 and 3.4.3 acknowledge the importance of preserving the existing transportation corridors and providing alternatives to automobile commutes by linking land-use decisions with commute alternative investments. To ensure consistency with the later goals and policies, staff recommends the proposed project applicant work with City of Santa Cruz to provide a seamless connection to the Beach St. Bikeways which will provide contra-flow bike lanes traveling east and west on Beach Street, from Pacific Ave to the Railroad trestle over the San Lorenzo River.
3. To mitigate conflicts between autos, bikes and pedestrians, staff recommends that all plans for intersection improvements respect

pedestrian mobility and bicycle access and include, when appropriate, bicycle signalization and signage at intersections and through bike lanes at intersections where right hand only lanes exist for automobiles. This is consistent with *2001 RTP* goals and policies 1.4.1, 1.6.9 and 2.4.4.

Staff also recommends that the project applicant specifically address pedestrian access and safety from the West Cliff Drive contra-flow bike lane to the West Cliff Drive Trestle and at locations where vehicles exiting the parking garage cross the sidewalk and bike lane.

4. In addition to the Pedestrian Hazards noted in the DEIR, staff recommends the proposed project applicant ensure the sidewalk in front of the hotel is sufficient width to minimize potential pedestrian hazard given the volume of pedestrians that will be traveling from the parking garage to the beach, wharf and boardwalk area.
5. The Transportation/Traffic section 3.5 of the DEIR indicates that four of the nine intersections impacted by the proposed project will operate at an unacceptable Level of Service (LOS) during PM Peak Hours and five of nine intersections impacted by the proposed project will operate at an unacceptable Level of Service (LOS) during Design Day Peak Hour. LOS standards are established by the City of Santa Cruz. Therefore, impacts to local traffic should be based upon the LOS standards listed in the City of Santa Cruz Beach/South of Laurel Area Plan consistent with *2001 RTP* goals and policies 2.4.3.
6. Staff recommends that the applicant of the proposed project pay its “fair share” to the City of Santa Cruz for all impacted intersections requiring mitigation to maintain LOS standards. This is consistent with the *2001 RTP* goals and policies 5.2 and 3.3.4 and Mitigation Measure 3.5-1 listed in the DEIR.

In addition, staff recommends that the same policies and mitigation measures noted above be applied when addressing mitigation measures for Cumulative Traffic Impacts that include additional improvements as identified under 4.4.3 Discussion Cumulative Traffic Impacts in the DEIR. However, a feasible improvement for each intersection has not yet been agreed upon. Staff recommends that prior to the implementation of any mitigation measures the project applicant, City of Santa Cruz, the Regional Transportation Commission and Caltrans analyze the options and agree upon the proposed improvement projects.

7. Staff supports reducing the number of single-occupant vehicle (SOV) trips made by employees to the Coast Hotel and Conference Center by replacing SOV trips with transportation alternatives including, but not limited to, carpooling, transit, bicycling,

walking and telecommuting. Please work with our Commute Solutions Program to implement transportation demand management strategies that work towards this goal through implementing solutions such as; carpool ridematching, employee vanpools and preferential parking for carpools and vanpools. Staff also encourages the Coast Hotel and Conference Center to join the Santa Cruz Area Transportation Management Association that provides additional transportation demand management strategies to employers for employees. This is consistent with *2001 RTP* goals and policies 1.3.1, 1.3.2 and 2.3

8. The City of Santa Cruz has previously shown a commitment to providing a Beach Shuttle Service. Historically, difficult economic times have jeopardized the level of service. Staff recommends that the City of Santa Cruz commit to funding the Beach Shuttle as part of the proposed project plan for minimum of the first 10 years of the life of this project. This is consistent with *2001 RTP* goals and policies 2.5.1.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this project. If you have any questions about the above comments, please contact Sean Co of my staff at (831) 460-3204.

Sincerely,

Linda Wilshusen
Executive Director

Cc: Commissioner Kennedy
Commissioner Reilly
Supervisor Wormhoudt