



SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

1523 PACIFIC AVENUE, SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA 95060-3911 (831) 460-3200 FAX 460-3215

September 15, 2005

SERVICE AUTHORITY FOR FREEWAY EMERGENCIES (SAFE)

Ken Hart
County of Santa Cruz Planning Department
701 Ocean St, 4th Floor
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RAIL/TRAIL AUTHORITY

RE: Initial Study for the Home Depot in Soquel on 41st Avenue

Dear Mr. Hart,

COMMUTE SOLUTIONS

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Initial Study for the Home Depot development to be located near the Highway 1/ 41st Avenue Interchange. As noted in the Initial Study, the proposed project location was formerly occupied by K-Mart.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY WORKSHOP

K-mart, in agreement with the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC), supported the use of approximately 5% of their parking spaces as available for weekday Park and Ride commuter parking. This allowed commuters to park in a limited number of parking spaces at a location facing 41st Avenue during a time on weekdays when those spaces would otherwise be empty.

BUDGET & ADMINISTRATION PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Availability of these spaces for Park and Ride use is listed in both the Commission's Park and Ride Map brochure and the 2001 Thomas Street Guide Directory for Santa Cruz County. Until recently, there was a sign designating these weekday commuter parking spaces. This partnership reflected the 2005 *Regional Transportation Plan's (RTP)* goals and policies which support projects that serve inter-county and intra-county travel needs including Park and Ride lot development.

INTERAGENCY TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Initial Study review for the proposed project did not consider the previous commuter Park and Ride use of the K-mart parking facility. SCCRTC staff would like to recommend that the County Planning Commission further consider the impact of a change in available commuter Park and Ride spaces at this location in light of the historical use. These particular Park and Ride spaces are a significant resource to the community considering the need for an array of commute options along the Highway 1 corridor.

BICYCLE COMMITTEE

ELDERLY & DISABLED TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The development of a Home Depot at this location is an opportunity for both entities to recognize the regional benefits of available commuter Park and Ride spaces at this location and the benefits of public-private

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partnerships. Caltrans rates Park and Ride lots as one of the most effective resources in efforts to reduce vehicle miles traveled. Caltrans may be able to provide liability insurance for designated Park and Ride spaces. Managers of retail establishments typically support weekday commuter Park and Ride spaces in the underutilized section of their parking lot for three reasons:

- to help mitigate area traffic congestion,
- to increase revenues from commuters who combine their commute trip with a trip to the associated retail establishment, and
- to strengthen a positive relationship between the retail establishment and the community at large.

Please consider working with the developer of the Home Depot to designate 5% of proposed parking spaces to be available for weekday Park and Ride commuters. Retail patrons would not be precluded from parking in designated Park and Ride spaces as needed.

If other large scale developments are pursued at or near the Highway 1/41st Avenue Interchange in the near future, the cumulative traffic impacts to the regional transportation network will need to be addressed. SCCRTC staff suggests that the County work with the applicants early in the project development process to include a pro-active mitigation for regional level transportation impacts, including designating 5% of the center's parking spaces as available for weekday Park and Ride use and contributing to appropriate regional level mitigation. SCCRTC would be happy to discuss the options with your staff.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions about the above comments, please contact Grace Blakeslee of my staff at (831) 460-3219.

Sincerely,

Pat Dellin
Acting Executive Director

CC: SCCRTC
Commissioner Jan Beautz
County Board of Supervisors
City of Capitola
Gregg Albright, Caltrans District 5 Director
Caltrans Development Review