



MISSION VIEJO BUZZ

Keeping the California Promise

Week of February 17, 2007

The Patriot Post Founders' Quote Daily

"If men through fear, fraud or mistake, should in terms renounce and give up any essential natural right, the eternal law of reason and the great end of society, would absolutely vacate such renunciation; the right to freedom being the gift of God Almighty, it is not in the power of Man to alienate this gift, and voluntarily become a slave." -- John Adams (Rights of the Colonists, 1772)

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NON-COMPETE AGREEMENT NOT NEEDED FOR 241 TOLL ROAD EXTENSION



The OCTA is holding a series of meetings where various stakeholders attend group presentations and discussions about transportation planning through 2030. A meeting was held Jan. 24 regarding the South

Orange County Major Investment Study. This covers the area south of SR-55 to the San Diego County border.

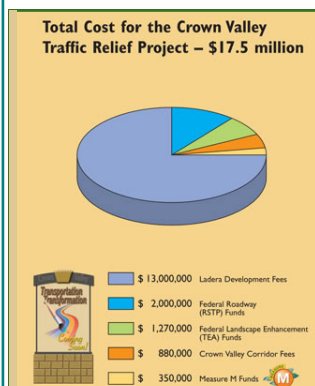
Various transportation plans were discussed, including more freeway lanes, more bus routes, more frequent trains and toll road expansion. Combinations of alternatives were presented with an eye toward seeing which mix might work best.

One of the things that piqued my interest was the discussion about the extension of the 241 to I-5 and the non-compete agreement that was being proposed by the TCA. It seems that we should learn from the debacle that SR-91 toll lanes inflicted on the users of the

adjoining section of freeway. Although the non-compete agreement with the toll lanes may have seemed innocuous at the beginning, congestion became so severe that OCTA was forced to buy the toll road from its operator, mostly to permit expansion of nearby road capacity.

Now it appears we are doing the same thing again with the extension of the 241. Who knows what may happen over the next 30 years as the southern part of Orange County and the northern part of San Diego County expand? I would expect the unexpected and realize that roads that will compete for traffic with the 241 will have to be built, resulting in payments to the TCA for the loss of that traffic, making those roads even more costly to develop.

To that end, we strongly urge the OCTA to not enter into a non-compete agreement with the TCA for the area covered by the proposed extension. If they can finance and build the road without a non-compete agreement, so much the better. However, if they cannot do so, then OCTA should consider building the extension itself using Measure M funds. That way, the capacity would be there and



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could be freely expanded as future, unplanned demand becomes evident. Another benefit to the OCTA building the extension would be that we could look at other alignments that might better serve the needs of Orange County than the currently proposed route that would mostly benefit San Diego County drivers because of the far-south nature of the 241/I-5 connection.



Also, by not agreeing to the non-compete payments, the OCTA will be keeping true to the spirit of Measure M that was passed by voters with the intention of money being spent on free roads, not in subsidizing toll roads used by a few. Toll roads are fine, as long as the users of those roads pay the entire cost of construction and operation. The 241 is a moneymaker in its current configuration and needs no financial help. If the OCTA built a connection between the I-5 and the 241, then the 241 operators

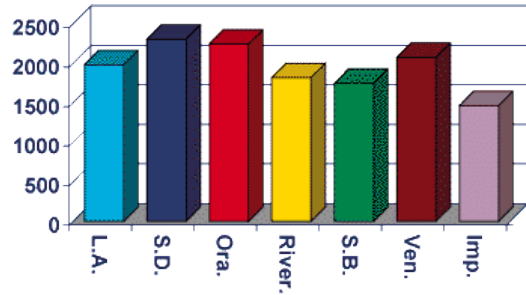
Toll road companies



would make money and the users of the roads would have more choices. Undeterred by tolls, more people would choose to use the free 241 extension and thus offload traffic from I-5.

One of the other areas the OCTA should address is that all proposed projects be evaluated to determine the subsidized cost per passenger mile and this information be made a part of the process used to rank projects by their cost-effectiveness. By doing this, we can ensure that the money entrusted to OCTA will be used to benefit the largest number of users. For example, it appears that light rail is about 100 times more expensive per passenger mile than private automobiles. While subsidized cost is not the only metric that should be used to evaluate if we should do something, I feel that it is one of the most important.

DRIVERS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



READER RESPONSE TO MISSION VIEJO NEWSBLOG BY DALE TYLER

Allan Pilger responded to the February 10, 2007 Staff Editorial:

The staff editorial of Feb. 10 mischaracterized my comments at the Feb. 5 city council meeting. In recognizing the 10th anniversary of the "Mission Viejo Revolution," I clearly stated the activists helped unseat the old regime. I then pointed out both positive and negative developments of the city council in the past 10 years, covering reserves, debt, redevelopment, corporate subsidies, and construction. In no way did I "indicate" activists influenced the Audi deal or any other council action. Since videos of the city council meetings are available on the city website, any blog reader can see my comments and decide for themselves. My comments did indicate the activists are divided.

Blog staffers disagree they "mischaracterized" the reader's February 5 public comments, which they believe were consistent with the theme of his public messages over a period of years. However, it is true that Mr. Pilger did not state in a single sentence, that "CIG influenced the council on the Audi deal." He did mention the Audi deal by name. In reviewing the February 5, 2007, council meeting videotape, bloggers continue to believe the speaker was giving a 10-year history of activism and its impact, successful or unsuccessful, on the council and making references to specific events to clarify his points.

From the February 10 NewsBlog editorial: "At the February, 5, 2007, council meeting, a former

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CIG member again made reference to the Audi redevelopment deal, indicating CIG members were involved in the decision-making process.”

The key word is “indicating.” Pilger’s reference to city history wasn’t a single statement that now should be parsed for specific words. He spoke for approximately three minutes. When viewed in totality, his remarks contained his opinion about the 10-year period of activism in which he participated and its impact on council decisions. In the view of blog staffers, that was the point of Pilger’s three-minute public comments. It was not a review of council decisions occurring in a vacuum.

Blog staffers generally agree with and support Pilger’s views about city issues. An exception, however, is his reference to the city council’s July 2003 decision regarding the \$600,000 Audi subsidy.

Pilger has publicly written and spoken many times, claiming the CIG activist group influenced city council decisions. Beginning with the July 18, 2003, issue of Saddleback Valley News, Pilger’s letter stated: “Clearly the Mission Viejo Committee for Integrity in Government was instrumental in saving the city \$1.5 million by spearheading the grassroots opposition.” The letter heralds the expenditure of \$600,000 as a “savings” of \$1.5 million because the Audi dealer asked for \$2.1 million, which the council twice rejected. The amount on the table was never \$2.1 million and after two votes the amount on the table was zero. If one subtracts \$600,000 from zero, the result is either an expenditure or a loss. Pilger made similar remarks in a letter published in the July 25, 2003, OC Register, referring to the Audi deal, “The Mission Viejo Committee for Integrity in Government, of which I am a member, spearheaded grassroots opposition.”

What’s disturbing to blog staffers is how the CIG’s opposition to redevelopment became misrepresented as CIG support for the \$600,000 subsidy, including the claim the CIG saved the city \$1.5 million. It didn’t happen. CIG as a club never took a formal position on the

Audi deal prior to the July 7, 2003, council meeting, mainly because everyone in CIG appeared to be adamantly against a subsidy in any amount. There was no consensus on the Audi deal by CIG members after the July 7 council meeting.

At the CIG meeting that was held on July 15, 2003, the meeting minutes reflect that there was significant disagreement about the way a few of the members appeared to turn their back on CIG’s longstanding opposition to redevelopment funding by supporting giving \$600,000 to Audi.



On the agenda for the Feb. 19 council meeting is an item regarding use of the Potocki Center, located off La Paz on Potocki Conference Center Drive. Formerly the World Cup Center, the building became the brunt of jokes for its questionable



space design, shortage of parking and inability to generate revenue as a city-owned facility. The building currently is used for art classes, and various art groups and supporters would like to keep it that way. Despite the drive among some residents for an art center, city staffers have continued trying to market the building for other uses.



The arts have a hard time competing with business, and the arts in Mission Viejo are a worthy example of non-profit endeavors that benefit the public. Mission Viejo’s annual chalk festival is a popular event, partly because the city is funding some of its expenses. If the council doesn’t support an art center, Mission Viejo probably won’t have one. If council members

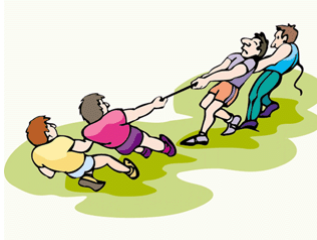
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favor leasing the Potocki Center to a non-art entity, it will be a setback for the fledgling effort among residents who want to promote the arts.



If anyone doubts the need for art education in Mission Viejo, consider the tug-of-war over the city's message board at La Paz and Marguerite. At least two council members have pushed for a large and garish electronic sign despite residents' arguments to keep the antiquated but unobtrusive existing one. The council recently discussed the topic of funding for an electronic sign.



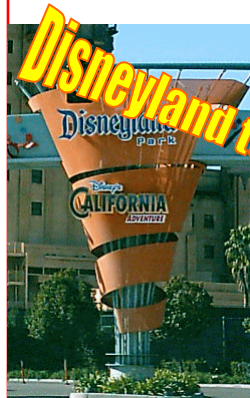
The Buzz lately has received numerous comments from readers about letters in Saddleback Valley News. Four SVN letter-writers are sending in letters nearly every week, slamming everything and everyone. Referring to the SVN letter-writers, one blog reader asked, "What's wrong with these people? I'm amazed the newspaper continues to print letters from people who are so angry and hostile they're scary."



Some of the city's longtime activists have lost interest in city politics. One of them commented recently, "After years of my involvement, I saw no positive change. We worked hard to dethrone two housewives [Sherri Butterfield and Susan Withrow] who were ruining our city by catering to developers and special interest. What do we have now? All five council members are ruining our city by catering to developers and special interest. All that's left is for them to start naming buildings after themselves."

And that will be next!

the end



Disneyland to be renamed!