AGENDA ITEM
NO. 4

CITY OF MORGAN HILL

MEMORANDUM

To: PLANNING COMMISSION

Date: March 13, 2007

From: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Subject: CALTRANS FENCING AT COCHRANE ROAD/HIGHWAY 101

RECOMMENDATION

Discussion item.

BACKGROUND

In July 2006, the City submitted a formal request to Caltrans for the removal of the cyclone fence at the Cochrane Road/Highway 101 Southbound Off-Ramp. The request was in direct response to the Planning Commission's concerns that the cyclone fence creates an eyesore at a prominent gateway into Morgan Hill and conflicts with the City's General Plan policies to promote and encourage exceptional design of our gateways. After no response from Caltrans, a follow-up letter was mailed later that year.

CASE ANALYSIS

On February 12, 2007, Staff received a letter from Caltrans denying the City's request for the fence removal (letter attached for the Commission's reference). Caltrans states the fencing of a State Highway is a mandatory requirement. Highway fencing provides access control and delineates right-of-way for Caltrans maintenance responsibilities. If alternative fencing (e.g. decorative wrought iron) is proposed, the City of Morgan Hill would be responsible for the cost to construct and maintain the fence. In addition, the City would need to obtain an encroachment permit from Caltrans and enter into a Freeway Maintenance Agreement with the State, outlining the City's responsibility to maintain the new fence.

Monies needed to purchase, install and maintain a decorative fence would fall under the City's Capital Improvements Program (CIP). At this time, the CIP does not have funds set aside for this type of project. Therefore, should the Commission choose to pursue the alternative fencing, the Commission would need to forward a request to the City Council to include the proposed fencing in the CIP.

Attachments

1. February 2007 Letter from Caltrans

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
111 GRAND AVENUE
P. O. BOX 23360
OAKLAND, CA 94612
PHONE (510) 286-5900
FAX (510) 286-5903
TTY (800) 735-2929

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Date:

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PLANNING DEPT.
FEB 12 2007
CITY OF MORGAN HILL

February 7, 2007

Rebecca Tolentino
Senior Planner
City of Morgan Hill
17555 Peak Avenue
Morgan Hill, CA 95037

Dear Ms. Tolentino:

I am responding to your letter, dated December 7,2006, regarding the request to remove a segment of cyclone fencing at the Cochrane Road/Highway 101 Southbound Off-Ramp in Morgan Hill as mentioned in Mr. Benich's July 11, 2006 letter.

We have to deny your request for fence removal because fencing of State Highway is a mandatory requirement. Highway fencing provides access control and delineates right of way for Caltrans Maintenance Department's responsibilities.

In regards to your second request, of an alternative fencing with more decorative design, this type of fencing is not consistent with Caltrans' standard practice. It would be difficult for our Maintenance Department to maintain different fence types throughout the region. However, if the City of Morgan Hill insists to replace the existing cyclone fence by a more decorative one, the City has to pay for the costs of constructing and maintaining it. A Freeway Maintenance Agreement between the State and the City, outlining the City's responsibility to maintain the new fence, has to be executed prior to issuance of the Encroachment Permit.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 510-622-0754 or Mr. Hassan Nikzad of my staff at (510) 622-0767 for further assistance.

Sincerely,

Paul P. Mai

PAUL P. MAI
District Office Chief, Design South – Santa Clara