



February 13, 2009

Mr. Jim Hildenbrand
Hofmann Land Development
1380 Galaxy Way
Concord, CA 94520-4912

***SUBJECT: Avenue 62 Levee Crossing Relationship to The Isle Travertine
Specific Plan 94-026 Amendment No. 1***

Dear Mr. Hildenbrand;

Endo Engineering prepared the traffic study used by City staff to recommend the four new classifications for the roadways in General Plan Amendment 2008-112. Endo Engineering also prepared traffic impact studies evaluating the Enclave Specific Plan, the Coral Mountain Specific Plan, the Travertine and Green Specific Plans, and the currently proposed Isle of Travertine Specific Plan Amendment (SPA) No. 1. Our staff was not present at the public hearings related to GPA 2008-112. However, after reviewing the staff reports and meeting minutes, we concluded that two important questions had been introduced that may require further discussion and clarification. To facilitate the decision-making process, we offer the following additional information in an effort to more clearly address these concerns.

1. Will Avenue 62 have to be extended from Monroe Street across the dike to Madison Street sooner or later to accommodate future travel demands or provide adequate access to this area?
2. To provide adequate emergency access to this area, does Avenue 62 have to be extended from Monroe Street west across the dike to Madison Street?

Why Won't Avenue 62 Be Needed To Accommodate Future Traffic Demands?

The traffic study for GPA 2008-112 projected that upon build out of the General Plan (including the existing entitlements of the Travertine Specific Plan) Madison Street, between Avenue 60 and Avenue 62, would carry 19,400 vehicles per day with Avenue 62 extended west across the levee. Without Avenue 62 extended across the levee to Madison Street, the future traffic projection for this segment of Madison Street would increase to 21,130 vehicles per day. Since a four-lane Secondary Arterial can accommodate 25,200 vehicles per day at the upper limit of level of service D, City staff correctly concluded that if Avenue 62 is not extended across the dike from Monroe Street to Madison Street, the increase in future traffic on Madison Street would be sufficient to require a 4-lane roadway between Avenue 60 and Avenue 62. Based on that conclusion, some decision makers appeared to be under the impression that sooner or later Avenue 62 would have to be built over the dike to Madison Street.

This conclusion may be appropriate if development in this area occurs per the existing General Plan and at the maximum intensity permitted under the existing entitlements of the Travertine Specific Plan. However, this conclusion is not correct if the ultimate development of the Travertine Specific Plan site is substantially less intense than the existing entitlements. The proposed Isle of Travertine Specific Plan Amendment No. 1 is currently being reviewed by the City of La Quinta. Upon full development, this amendment of the Travertine Specific Plan entitlements would result in 900 fewer dwelling units and the elimination of a 10-acre commercial site. The proposed Isle of Travertine SPA No.1 would substantially reduce the number of trips generated in this area and the roadway network required to serve the future traffic volumes upon area-wide build out.

Effect of Less Intense Development

Once the Isle of Travertine SPA No.1 is approved, the circulation system proposed in conjunction with GPA 2008-112 will be able to accommodate all existing and anticipated future development in the area south of Lake Cahuilla and west of Madison Street without extending Avenue 62 west across the dike to Madison Street. Upon area-wide build out, the future traffic volume on Madison Street (between Avenue 60 and Avenue 62) is projected to be 13,940 vehicles per day, with Avenue 62 extended across the dike to Madison Street. Without Avenue 62 extended west to Madison Street, the future traffic volume on Madison Street north of Avenue 62 would be 14,650 vehicles per day. As a two-lane Modified Secondary Arterial-A, Madison Street could accommodate future daily traffic demands of this magnitude at Level of Service "C" with or without Avenue 62 extended west to Madison Street.

With or without the levee crossing by Avenue 62, there will be sufficient roadway capacity to serve the Isle of Travertine SPA No.1 development and all other existing, approved, pending, and anticipated developments in the vicinity, provided Madison Street is constructed between Avenue 60 and Avenue 62 as a two-lane Modified Secondary Arterial-A. This designation for Madison Street would provide for a two-lane divided cross-section but maintain a Modified Secondary Arterial-A right-of-way. Therefore, with the approval of the Isle of Travertine SPA No.1, it does not appear that the construction of Avenue 62 west across the dike would be justified on the basis of the future travel demand generated by development in this area.

Effect of Regional Through Traffic

Riverside County has considered designating Avenue 62 (east of Monroe Street) and Monroe Street (north of Avenue 62) as the South Valley Parkway Corridor. It has been estimated that up to 2,000 vehicles per day (associated with regional through traffic using the South Valley Parkway Corridor) may travel on Avenue 62, between Monroe Street and Madison Street. With four through lanes, Monroe Street is more likely to attract regional through traffic than the two-lane parallel segment of Madison Street. If Avenue 62 is not extended from its existing terminus across the dike to Madison Street, the 2,000 regional through trips will utilize Monroe Street to travel north of Avenue 62. Upon build out of the *2002 La Quinta General Plan*, this section of Monroe Street is projected to have an excess capacity of 12,900 vehicles per day. This would be more than enough capacity to accommodate 2,000 additional regional through trips per day at acceptable levels of service. Therefore, it appears that Avenue 62 need not be constructed across the dike to Madison Street to provide additional capacity for regional through traffic.

If Avenue 62 Isn't Needed, Why is it Shown in the General Plan?

When the Travertine site was initially being studied to generate the Specific Plan, Avenue 62 was not shown in the 1992 *La Quinta General Plan* extending west of Monroe Street or crossing the dike to Madison Street. Similarly, Madison Street was not shown in the 1992 *City of La Quinta General Plan* extending south of Avenue 58 or Avenue 60. The city-wide traffic modeling for the 2002 La Quinta General Plan update, which was designed to provide adequate access for this area, utilized a roadway network that only included Jefferson Street and Avenue 62. Madison Street was added to the Circulation Element map between Avenue 60 and Avenue 62 as a Secondary Arterial segment after the city-wide traffic modeling was completed. Based upon the future level of development anticipated for this area by the General Plan, adding this segment of Madison Street provided a roadway network with a substantial amount of excess unused arterial capacity.

The city-wide traffic modeling addressed the existing entitlements of the Travertine Specific Plan. Although the model did not include the segment of Madison Street between Avenue 60 and Avenue 62, it did include the Jefferson Street connection to Avenue 62 and projected 19,100 vehicles per day on Avenue 62 at the dike. If Avenue 62 is not extended across the levee, but Madison Street is added between Avenue 60 and Avenue 62, the traffic assigned by the model to Avenue 62 at the dike would divert to Madison Street. This would be consistent with the City staff conclusion that without Avenue 62 extended across the dike, development per the existing Travertine Specific Plan entitlements would require Madison Street to be constructed as a four-lane roadway. However, with the lower trip generation associated with the Isle of Travertine SPA No.1, Madison Street could be constructed as a two-lane divided roadway, even if Avenue 62 is not extended west to Madison Street.

Based on the findings of the recent traffic study identifying the future traffic demand that could be generated by this area, the City initiated a General Plan Amendment to reclassify four roadways. The new classifications downgrade the circulation system, in an effort to provide a better fit between the future circulation system and the anticipated level of development. Logically, if a new secondary arterial with four through lanes is added to a street network that was previously designed specifically to serve the land uses in the General Plan, then that network would have at least four lanes of excess unused capacity that could be removed. Once the future land uses to be served are reduced sufficiently through approval of the Isle of Travertine SPA No.1, our analyses indicate that Madison Street can be constructed as a two-lane divided roadway, even if Avenue 62 is not extended across the dike to Madison Street.

Why Isn't Avenue 62 Needed For Adequate Emergency Access?

Like all areas in the City of La Quinta, future development in the area west of Madison Street and south of Lake Cahuilla will require adequate emergency services to ensure the public health and welfare. Throughout Riverside County and the City of La Quinta, the provision of at least two access routes to a development with a five-minute emergency response time is generally accepted as adequate for emergency access.

The existing Travertine Specific Plan entitlements assure adequate access by connecting to a Secondary Arterial to the north and to the east. The two Secondary Arterial access routes that will be provided to facilitate access to the area for emergency service personnel and equipment will include: (1) Jefferson Street to Avenue 58 to the north, and (2) Jefferson Street to Madison Street to the east. Avenue 62 could provide an alternative emergency access across the dike. However, as a Modified Collector Street, Avenue 62 would not be constructed to the same design standards as the other two arterial access routes. It would not provide a shorter or faster route to the study area than the other two routes. Therefore,

the expenditure required to construct Avenue 62 across the dike to Madison Street does not appear to be justified for the incremental improvement in emergency access to be gained for this area. Since this area will already have two Secondary Arterial access routes, it would not appear to be a cost-effective use of scarce infrastructure improvement and maintenance funds to extend a Modified Collector Street across the dike to the same area that could be accessed more quickly by using Avenue 60 and Madison Street.

A five-minute emergency response time is generally accepted as adequate throughout Riverside County and identified as such in the 2002 *City of La Quinta General Plan/Master Environmental Assessment*. As stated therein, the average response time for the Riverside County Sheriff's Department and all six existing Riverside County Fire Department fire stations serving the area throughout the City of La Quinta is currently five minutes. A seventh fire station was approved in conjunction with the Coral Mountain Specific Plan Amendment Number 1. As currently planned, that fire station will be located in the immediate vicinity of the intersection of Monroe Street and Avenue 60.

With this closer fire station, the average response time in the future in the study area should improve. From the intersection of Monroe Street and Avenue 60, an emergency response team could proceed west on Avenue 60 and south on Madison Street (two miles along secondary arterials) to reach the entry to the Travertine development at the intersection of Madison Street and Jefferson Street. The extension of Avenue 62 across the dike would not reduce this distance. Emergency vehicles routed south on Monroe Street then west on Avenue 62 would also need to travel two miles to reach the Travertine entry but half of that distance would be traversed on a Modified Collector Street. Therefore, the construction of Avenue 62 across the dike to Madison Street would not significantly improve the response time for emergency services.

Conclusions

Some roadways, like Madison Street, are designed primarily to accommodate through movements at higher speeds, with access to abutting land uses as a secondary function. Other roadways, like Avenue 62, may be designed to accommodate lower speed local flows and facilitate direct access to abutting parcels.

The Bureau of Reclamation dike functions like a topographic edge, limiting roadway and multi-purpose trail crossing opportunities. Constructing a roadway crossing the dike at Avenue 62 will be costly and difficult, since the right-of-way for embankments is limited along Avenue 62. It may not be desirable to construct a two-lane undivided roadway over the dike at Avenue 62 with the potential to attract 2,000 regional through trips each day. Avenue 62 may function better without crossing the dike, as a means of providing direct access to abutting parcels and the levee.

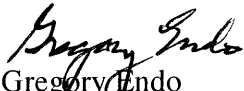
Based on our coordination with developers in this area and City staff, there appears to be common ground with respect to objectives and consistency in the technical analyses used to identify the future travel demand of this area. All of the interested parties want adequate access for future development and emergency services as well as adequate roadway capacity to serve future development at acceptable levels of service. No one wants to vacate right-of-way that may be needed in the future. No one wants to construct or maintain expensive roadway infrastructure that is not cost effective because it provides more capacity than necessary to serve future development in the area. Everyone agrees that it is in the public interest to minimize environmental impacts by constructing only those circulation improvements that are necessary to support the future development expected to occur in this area. The State of California recently enacted legislation designed to minimize the carbon footprint of new developments throughout California.

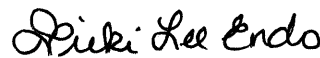
The existing entitlements of the Travertine Specific Plan will be substantially reduced once the proposed Isle of Travertine SPA No.1 is approved. Perhaps any decision regarding whether or not Avenue 62 should be extended from its existing terminus across the dike to Madison Street should trail the processing of the proposed Isle of Travertine SPA No.1. However, the other provisions of GPA 2008-112 should precede the approval of the Isle of Travertine SPA No.1 so that the proposed Isle of Travertine Specific Plan Amendment No.1 is consistent with the Circulation Element of the 2002 *City of La Quinta General Plan*. Regardless of the timing of these approvals, Madison Street will provide ample capacity as a Modified Secondary Arterial-A to accommodate the reduced travel demand associated with the proposed Isle of Travertine SPA No.1 and other developments in this area without Avenue 62 extended west across the dike.

We trust that the information herein will be of value to you and to the City of La Quinta in your continuing efforts to size the roadway network appropriately in the vicinity of the Travertine site. Should you have questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact our offices by telephone at (949) 362-0020, by facsimile at (949) 362-0134, or via e-mail (at endoengr@cox.net). We look forward to discussing this further with you.

Sincerely,

ENDO ENGINEERING


Gregory Endo
Principal



Vicki Lee Endo, P.E., T.E.
Registered Professional
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