

Ted Godshalk  
9.1

Public Comment from Mr. Ted Godshalk for item 9.1 on June 20, 2023.

Council and Mayor,

As you consider tonight's item to Update the city's Focused General Plan, I would like to make you aware of several inconsistencies with policies designed to make our community a safer place for all.

The issue I am referring to is the closure of 19th Street under I-5 and the change to two-way traffic on 18th street. The agenda item in front of you, if you are viewing it online (html version), is found by following the attachment #1 for item 9.1 called "Review of the Supplemental Environmental Impact Report...) Beginning on page 3 and continuing on page 4, you will see the section entitled: Transportation Element Update. On page 4 you will see the following:

In addition, the Transportation Element Update incorporates TODO Network recommendations, including:

- Road diets on 24th Street, 30th Street, and Hoover Avenue
- Closure of 19th Street under Interstate 5 (I-5)
- Conversion of one-way to two-way traffic on 18th Street under I-5
- Signal at National City Boulevard and 22nd Street

*Due to the unsafe conditions that will occur from closing 19th Street and going to two-way traffic in the other underpass, I am recommending that you make a finding that deletes from the Transportation Element and all maps and figures, the second and third bullet points above.*

I have given Council members tours of the site, I have spoken at all of the important meetings on this issue, I have contacted Caltrans, city staff, and its consultant, and it is now time for you to take action to protect pedestrians, motorists, bicyclists, and the neighborhood.

The two proposals should be removed from the Transportation Element and the Bicycle Master Plan because they are in **contradiction** with the following SECTIONS AND GOALS in the General Plan:

### MOBILITY FRAMEWORK

Goal T-5: A comprehensive circulation network that is safe and efficient for all modes of travel.

Policy T-5.7: Improve circulation for specific areas of the City such as Harbor Drive/Tidelands/Civic Center Drive Intersection and the area west of National City Boulevard, south of 22nd Street and north of Mile of Cars Way.

Policy T-5.9: Maintain a roadway circulation system with multiple alternative routes, to the extent feasible, to ensure mobility in the event of emergencies, and to minimize the need for capacity increases on particular streets.

Policy T-5.16: Prioritize safety for all users of the mobility system through the combination of design, enforcement, and education. Minimize harm through the development and implementation of a Local Road Safety Plan...

### PUBLIC TRANSIT

Policy T-3.2: Ensure that access, boarding, bus stop and shelter facilities meet the needs of transit users.

Conclusion: The bus service needs to be expanded to the west of I-5. Amazing that it hasn't been done, in light of all of the employees in the area. The bus route would most naturally connect under I-5 on the 18th/19th Street pair. We will need more space street for buses in the future if we follow Policy T-3.2. In addition, the design of a bike path should not be done at the expense of a circulation system that is currently safe and adequate. Please follow the recognized GOAL and POLICIES above. Lastly, plan now for new development but respect the needs of the current people who walk, drive, and bike in the area. Safety for all is paramount.

## NEW INFORMATION

First, the Focused General Plan Update includes a Tables T1 and T2 of the NC Transportation Element from Revised Appendix B. If you search hard enough you will find this table from the Attachments in your agenda item 9.1. These tables list over 30 recently completed pedestrian and bicycle projects in our community. Not a single one of these projects required a street closure to meet the goals. Closing 19th Street is not necessary, is unequal treatment for our neighborhood, and would be very unsafe.

Second, it has just appeared for our consideration two more new pieces of information that are very pertinent to this issue. In this Focused General Plan Update there is a section in Appendix Set A that I have attached below. The last letter in the Public Comments is from Mr. Maurice Eaton of the District 11 of Caltrans. As on April 3, 2023, Mr Eaton was communicating with the City of National City that his discretionary review was still required for the work under the freeway. I believe that the City can and should make the changes I have advocated because there is still time to get the approval for new plans. We should not be locked into an unsafe and not fully considered project.

The other new information concerns a project now at the Planning Department that involves the BNSF property at 18th and 19th Streets west of Cleveland Avenue. This project is called the **Fuel Transfer Facility**. Not to address this new increase in traffic now, as circulation is planned to be modified in the area by the City Engineer, would be a mistake. The fuel transfer facility, much larger than a gas station, with high volumes of fuel moved through our city daily, is a project that proposes to have no odors or fumes, and protective barriers for spills, however it will be located to the west of the McKinley Apartments and the sensitive young and old residents who live there.

One thing that is certain, is the applicant's projection for 115 trucks per day for seven days a week that will enter and exit this property. Some trucks are slated to move in the area during the night shift. These fuel trucks will be able to use the underpass to get to Wilson Avenue and the I-5 on ramps. If 19th Street is closed, the trucks will pass the apartments very closely on 18th and have potential noise, traffic conflicts, and other unforeseen risks. The trucks will share the two-way road if 18th Street is taken away.

I think I have shown you all that this "taking" in order to meet a State Grant that no one in the area wanted in the first place, is a *bad* idea. The hazards from these new fuel-laden vehicles on our streets is enough for you to reconsider the underpass plan.

To review, I am recommending the following change to the Focused General Plan proposed tonight:

*Due to the unsafe conditions that will occur from closing 19th Street and going to two-way traffic in the other underpass, I am recommending that you make a finding that deletes from the Transportation Element and all maps and figures, the second and third bullet points above and makes appropriate changes to the Bicycle Master Plan to meet the requirements of the State grant and to provide Class I or II bicycle path in both directions under I-5 while allowing traffic to continue to use one lane in both directions.*

Good evening,

Ted Godshalk

Jimmy Hurman  
PC 10.5

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, I want to address an issue that affects us all: the need for financial support to enhance the prosperity and well-being of our beloved National City, California. We have an incredible opportunity to secure funding from the state of California as well as the National programs, and I stand here to urge our community, mayor and city council to take action.

National City is a city rich and diverse in history, culture, and potential. However, we face challenges that require additional resources to address effectively. By reaching out to the state government, we can tap into funding programs and initiatives designed to uplift communities like ours.

First and foremost, we must emphasize the unique attributes and needs of our city. National City is a vibrant hub of economic activity, with diverse industries and a thriving small business sector. By highlighting our strengths and potential for growth, we can make a compelling case for investment in infrastructure, job creation, and entrepreneurship programs.

Additionally, it is crucial that we demonstrate our commitment to improving the lives of our residents. We can align our goals with state priorities such as affordable housing, education, healthcare, and sustainable development. By presenting well-researched proposals that address these critical areas, we can capture the attention and support of state officials who are eager to make a positive impact.

Furthermore, collaboration is key. We must rally together as a community, leveraging the power of grassroots movements and advocacy groups. By joining forces, we can amplify our voices and demonstrate the widespread support for funding initiatives that will benefit National City.

When it comes to funding crime-fighting initiatives, particularly in addressing gang violence, there are several state and federal programs that National City can explore. Here are a few examples:

#### State Funding Programs:

**California Gang Reduction, Intervention, and Prevention (CalGRIP):** This state program provides grants to local communities for gang prevention and intervention efforts. It aims to support comprehensive strategies that address the underlying causes of gang violence.

**California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP):** CalVIP offers funding for evidence-based violence prevention programs, including those focused on gang violence. It supports community-based organizations and law enforcement agencies to implement strategies that reduce violence and provide opportunities for at-risk individuals.

#### Federal Funding Programs:

**Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation (BCJI) Program:** Administered by the U.S. Department of Justice, BCJI provides funding to communities to develop and implement innovative strategies to combat crime, including gang violence. The program supports multi-disciplinary approaches involving law enforcement, community organizations, and social services.

**Community-Based Violence Prevention (CBVP) Initiative:** The CBVP Initiative, also led by the U.S. Department of Justice, provides resources for comprehensive violence prevention efforts in high-crime areas. It aims to reduce gang involvement, promote community engagement, and enhance law enforcement partnerships.

## Community Development Block Grants (CDBG):

The CDBG program, administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, offers funding to support various community development projects. National City can explore the allocation of CDBG funds toward initiatives targeting crime prevention, neighborhood revitalization, and support services for at-risk populations.

It's important to note that the availability and specific requirements of these programs may vary over time. Therefore, it is recommended to stay updated with state and federal grant announcements, consult with relevant agencies, and work collaboratively with community organizations, law enforcement agencies, and local officials to develop competitive grant proposals that align with National City's crime-fighting priorities.

By actively seeking out and leveraging these funding opportunities, National City can strengthen its efforts in combating gang violence and creating safer communities for its residents.

In conclusion, securing financial support from the state of California is within our reach, but it requires united efforts and a compelling case for investment. Let us highlight our city's unique strengths, align our goals with state priorities, and stand together to make a difference. National City deserves the resources necessary to thrive, and by engaging with the state, we can unlock the funds needed to create a brighter future for all.

I would also like to advocate for a simple yet significant change that would greatly benefit our community as well as create the extra \$400,000 that the city council members would like for their respective constituencies. I propose extending the operating hours of marijuana lounges, allowing them to open at 3 PM instead of 9 PM on weekdays and as early as 10 AM on weekends.

Why, you might ask? It's about meeting the needs and preferences of the people who enjoy recreational cannabis responsibly. By expanding the hours of operation, we are providing them with a safe and regulated environment to socialize and unwind.

Firstly, let's consider the working professionals who rely on cannabis as a way to relax and de-stress after a long day at the office. By opening the lounges at 3 PM, we offer them an opportunity to enjoy a cannabis experience that enhances their evening activities, fosters creativity, and promotes a sense of well-being. This flexibility allows them to explore different strains, engage in conversations, and build connections with like-minded individuals.

Secondly, our proposal recognizes the importance of weekends in our lives. Many individuals look forward to unwinding during their days off, and by opening marijuana lounges as early as 10 AM on Saturdays and Sundays, we provide them with the chance to start their weekends in a relaxed and enjoyable manner. It offers an alternative to traditional brunches or afternoon gatherings, allowing individuals to engage in a unique experience while respecting the rules and regulations surrounding cannabis consumption.

Moreover, extending the hours of operation supports the growth of local businesses and the economy. By accommodating the preferences of cannabis enthusiasts, we create opportunities for entrepreneurs, cultivators, and retailers to thrive. This increased demand will generate jobs, boost tourism, and contribute to the overall prosperity of our community.

Lastly, let's not forget the importance of responsible consumption and harm reduction. By offering safe and controlled environments for cannabis enthusiasts, we reduce the likelihood of people turning to unsafe or unregulated sources. Licensed lounges allow for proper education on dosage, responsible usage, and potential health effects, ensuring the well-being of our citizens.

In conclusion, extending the operating hours of marijuana lounges to 3 PM on weekdays and as early as 10 AM on weekends is a progressive step for our community. It aligns with the evolving needs and preferences of responsible cannabis users, supports local businesses, and promotes harm reduction. Let's embrace this change and create a vibrant and inclusive environment that caters to the diverse interests of our community.

Thank you.