

SAVE CIVITA

FREWAY CONNECTORS DO NOT BELONG WITHIN THE WALKABLE COMMUNITY OF CIVITA

The City of San Diego proposes construction of a 4-lane connector at Franklin Ridge and Phyllis Place to connect Mission Valley with Serra Mesa and the I-805 entrance/exit. If this happens, two streets in Civita, Via Alta and Franklin Ridge, both 2-lane residential streets are slated to serve as a primary freeway connector.

Last month the City recirculated 2016's Draft EIR proposal (Environmental Impact Report). This second report still indicates that traffic volume within Civita on Via Alta and Franklin Ridge will be more than doubled. Projecting 34,117 ADT (Average Daily Trips) of regional traffic through Civita's residential district.

The City is accepting public comment on this EIR until the **deadline on May 30th, 2017**. Email: PlanningCEQA@sandiego.gov. Subject: Reject Serra Mesa Community Plan Amendment Roadway Connection Project No. 265605 SCH No. 2012011048

If the Draft EIR proposal were solely intended to connect the divided communities of Mission Valley and Serra Mesa, the residents of Civita would warmly invite the connector. The reality is this is a proposal to alleviate regional traffic congestion within Mission Valley by introducing new freeway interchange collector streets to the I-805.

At what cost? At the degradation of Civita, an Urban Land Institute award winning planned walkable village with 4,500 dwelling units and 1.2M sf of retail and office. Civita will be impacted by heavy volumes of non-stop regional traffic diminishing the community's walkability, pedestrian safety, village character, and environmental quality.

- The City has said to accommodate future growth, residents need to live in highly dense communities. Civita was designed for that purpose and the residents bought into the concept. But the City is also pushing to turn the streets in Civita into high volume freeway connectors. **This community cannot successfully serve two diametrically opposed purposes. It cannot be a safe walkable dense urban village and a conduit for freeway traffic at the same time.**
- Civita residents are not NIMBY's. They are the ones that bought into the City's progressive plan of communities for the future.
- When Civita owners bought their homes,
 - the official Civita map showed a dead end at the top of the hill where Via Alta and Franklin Ridge connect. There were no indications on the map of the intention to connect the roads to Serra Mesa.
 - the home builder's sales agents downplayed the possibility of the freeway connector. Buyers were told the connector "likely won't happen."
 - the disclosure indicates, that the connector was a "possibility" not a definite. The 1985 Community Plan included the freeway connector as an "option" not a definite.

Save Civita

- The City has already factored this connector into their traffic studies for future growth in Mission Valley. It is apparent the City has planned for this connector all along, but Civita home owners were not informed of the City's true intention.
- Via Alta is a thriving growing neighborhood with a parade of residents exercising, walking their dogs, pushing strollers, carrying babies in pouches, holding toddler's hands, etc. There is constant movement, up and down the street.
- There are no pedestrian crossings along Via Alta other than at Civita Blvd and the top of the ridge at Franklin Ridge. Continuous traffic will make it dangerous for residents to cross the street safely. Cutting off access for over 1,000 residents to Civita Park, Rec Center and future elementary school.
- There are few options to slow traffic and allow crossings on these streets. Because of the steep grade of Via Alta and Franklin Ridge cross walks are not allowed and because of access for emergency vehicles, speed bumps not allowed.
- Residential units line both sides Via Alta from the base of the hill all the way up to the ridge. The home's front doors, porches, balconies, and bedrooms are no more than 10 to 15 feet from the street.
- Other connector streets for Mission Valley are in primarily non-populated areas. Except for commercial or residential located only at the base or top of the ridges, these connectors are surrounded by open canyon land on the sections leading in and out of the Valley. Those existing connections are Mission Village Road, Mission Center Road, Texas Street, and Bachman Place.
- The high traffic on the streets of Murray Ridge in Serra Mesa, Texas Street in North Park, and Mission Village Road in Serra Mesa have diminished the quality of life for those residents. If we have learned in the past that heavily used roads in and out of Mission Valley are not conducive to residential neighborhoods, why would we consciously and intentionally make a primary residential street a freeway connector and subject its residents to the same problems these other streets are experiencing?
- GPS programs will indicate that cutting through Civita is the shortest route for cars from Mission Valley up to the 805. Drivers will not care they are going through a residential area.
- Easy ingress/ egress to Civita in multiple directions will increase the crime rate.

Freeway connectors do not belong within the residential district of Civita ...
preserve the character and vision of Civita as San Diego's next walkable village
by opposing the freeway connector.

Technical Comments and Questions about the Draft EIR for the Serra Mesa Community Plan Amendment Street Connection:

1. The Draft EIR classifies Via Alta and Franklin Ridge Road, North of Civita Blvd, as 2-lane collectors with a traffic volume LOS threshold equivalent to a 2-lane collector (continuous left-turn lane). Each of these roadway segments are 2-lane roadways with a divided median and multi-family residential zoning continuously on either side.
 - a. Why are Via Alta and Franklin Ridge Road roadway segments, North of Civita Blvd, classified for purposes of the EIR as 2-lane collectors (continuous left-turn lane) versus 2-lane collectors (multi-family) which would more appropriately fit their physical built character?
 - b. When left-hand turn traffic on Via Alta and Franklin Ridge Road roadway segments encounter the high-volume of long-term traffic predicted, will the median turn pockets provide adequate queuing capacity? If the left-hand turn pockets back-up beyond their design capacity, what is the additional impact to the LOS of these roadway segments?
2. Did the Draft EIR address the impact of increased traffic and pedestrian safety for the future school site planned at the northeast corner of Civita Boulevard and Via Alta? If not, why not?
3. Via Alta and Franklin Ridge Road segments will have limited pedestrian crossings with significant distance between crossings. There is a 0.4-mile lineal distance along Via Alta between pedestrian crossings at Civita Blvd and Franklin Ridge Road. There is a 0.5-mile lineal distance along Franklin Ridge between street crossings at Civita Blvd and Via Alta. Continuous and heavy long-term traffic projections show Via Alta and Franklin Ridge operating at a LOS (level of service) C and LOS F, respectively. Heavy and continuous traffic will present pedestrian danger.
 - a. Did the Draft EIR review the projected volume of pedestrian traffic within the walkable community of Civita?
 - b. Did the Draft EIR review pedestrian crossings on Via Alta and Franklin Ridge Road?
 - c. Did the Draft EIR review the distance between accessible pedestrian crossings on Via Alta and Franklin Ridge Road?
 - d. Did the Draft EIR address the safety of pedestrian crossings for access to Civita Park, Civita's recreational facility, Civita's Bark Park, and Civita's proposed grade school?
 - e. How does the Draft EIR address pedestrian safety within the walkable community of Civita?
4. The Draft EIR states the connector road will "relieve" traffic from Mission Center Road and would provide a convenient surface-road link from Mission Valley to Serra Mesa, and could help relieve traffic on Mission Center Road that connects the two communities.
 - a. Why would the Draft EIR argue that traffic needs to be diverted from Mission Center Road, a four lane, largely non-populated, canyon frontage street containing only one set-back small residential complex at the base of the street?
 - b. Why would the Draft EIR suggest that traffic should be diverted through Civita, a master planned walkable community with wholly residential streets, a park, a planned school, and dense residential complexes all, of which, closely abut against the street with very little or no setback?
5. The Mission Valley Community Plan Update is currently in progress. The Mission Valley Community Plan Update will include a comprehensive Mission Valley mobility plan, including:
 - Potential new public transit corridors to reduce vehicles;
 - Potential new Riverwalk trolley station and relocated trolley station at Mission;
 - Valley Center to increase ridership;
 - Potential new skyways to UCSD and University Heights;
 - Planned and potential new walking multi-use paths;
 - Planned and potential new cycling paths;
 - Recommendations for roadway and connectivity improvements;
 - Recommendations for new freeway interchanges and improvements;

Continuation of Technical Comments and Questions about the Draft EIR for the Serra Mesa Community Plan Amendment Street Connection:

Why is the City advancing the Serra Mesa Community Plan Amendment Street Connection DRAFT EIR ahead of the Mission Valley Community Plan Update which should serve as the Community's guide to the future development of Mission Valley?

6. The Mission Valley Community Plan states on page 55, "Streets serving new development should be connected to the road network, and not to major streets serving residential areas on the mesa." The proposed connector roadway introduces new streets connecting through residential neighborhoods located on the hillsides of Mission Valley and the mesa of Serra Mesa. Why does the DRAFT EIR not address this statement within the Mission Valley Community Plan and the impacts to residential neighborhoods on Mission Valley hillsides and at the ridge of the Serra Mesa?

Additional comments as to why the Serra Mesa Community Plan Amendment Street Connection will undermine the City's vision for Civita as San Diego's next walkable village:

- The connector proposal encourages ~34,000 ADT of regional traffic through Civita's residential district;
- Via Alta and Franklin Ridge Road, North of Civita Blvd, are residential neighborhood streets – regional freeway traffic should not be encouraged by design to trespass through residential neighborhoods;
- High traffic streets adjacent to residential has been shown to diminish quality of life;
- High traffic streets adjacent to residential has been shown to diminish property values;
- Impacts safe access to Civita Park;
- Impacts safe access to Civita's future grade school;
- Impacts safe access to Civita's future community center and dog park;
- Easy vehicular ingress/ egress in multiple directions increases crime rates;
- Proposed regional traffic impacts residential neighborhoods;
- Proposed regional traffic negatively impacts property values;
- Proposed regional traffic impacts tranquility, peace and quiet;
- Proposed regional traffic impacts nature, air quality and biology;
- The Civita community was intended to be a pedestrian friendly, family-oriented, smart-growth, mixed-use community with access to transit. Freeway connectors through this community's residential neighborhoods undermines the very vision of the community as a Smart Growth village focused on walkability and limited vehicle trips.
- Via Alta, one of the proposed main route to/from I-805 via Phyllis Place, is a wholly residential, narrow, two-lane road with bike paths on both sides, further narrowing the road. This street will purportedly feed into/out of a four-lane, major connecting road that will funnel non-stop traffic through our neighborhood to/from I-805. It is currently used primarily for walking, cycling, dog-walking, and getting to/from our homes. It will become unsafe for anything but vehicular traffic.
- Instead of a cohesive community, this road connector will virtually slash Civita into three separate parts dominated by significant traffic, safety, congestion, noise, pollution, and disruption. It will no longer be a walkable community.
- Via Alta (and eventually Franklin Ridge Road) will become dangerous, congested, polluted, noisy thoroughfares.
- Why hasn't the Draft EIR proposed better solutions? The so-called connector road was initially placed into a 30-year-old plan when Civita was nothing more than a rock quarry and it made sense then. However, the quarry is now developing into a vibrant, planned, residential community with lovely parks, walking trails, a community center, a school, community events and concerts....in short, everything the City of San Diego should be encouraging and supporting instead of destroying, which is exactly what approving the Connector Road would do. It would gut this community for the sake of what? ... perhaps cutting one or two minutes from someone's commute (and even that is debatable).

FREEWAY CONNECTORS DO NOT BELONG WITHIN THE WALKABLE COMMUNITY OF CIVITA