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Subject: [External] Agenda item #3 for Feb. 26th BOS meeting
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Attachments: [Roadrunner Feb 14 2024.pdf](#)

Dear Board of Supervisors,

The residents and business in Valley Center do not support the Final proposed
“VALLEY CENTER ROAD CORRIDOR CONCEPT PLAN”

I have followed and attended meetings on the Corridor Concept plans since 2019.
The take away from all the meetings I attended was the same. The residents and
business owners in Valley Center do not support this plan, in fact either does the
Valley Center Community Planning Group.

Rather than explain all the reasons residents do not support this plan I have attached
an article from our local newspaper explaining how the VCCPG was forced into a vote
after long hours of debate.

A few things not mentioned in the article:

The lanes width will be decrease to make room for the bike Lanes and new curbing
The medium strip will prevent left turns into businesses along the Corridor.

Many business owners talked about the medium strips and how it will negatively
impact their business.

What concerns our community most is what will happen in an evacuation. Will
people in a panic to escape a fire yield the right of way: A process necessary to make
a roundabout successful. **As a community we would prefer another exit route be
built instead of bike lanes, curbing and roundabouts.**

This Concept plan will bring years of construction on Valley Center Road similar to
the construction when it went from a 2 lane road to 4 lanes. **Frankly that is the
problem.** I would rather see the money fund RT 76 to become a 4 lane highway from
the 15 to Valley Center Road. This will take much of the pass through traffic off Valley
Center Road and onto the highway rather than through town.

I would like to thank the BOS for the new Traffic light at the corner of Mirar De Valle. It
has reduced speeds on Valley Center Road and we have less serious accidents as a
result.

Thank you,
Donna Hein
Valley Center Resident

Valley ROADRUNNER

Hometown Newspaper of Valley Center, Pauma Valley, Pala, Palomar Mountain & North Escondido since 1974

VALLEY NEWS

Deeply divided planning group opts for one roundabout option

By David Ross

on February 14, 2024

By DAVID ROSS

Like the Super Bowl the night before, Monday's planning group meeting went into enhanced overtime and ended with a lot of movement back and forth— but very little to show for it. It even had a listless half time show (i.e. a short break brought on by the total exhaustion and full bladders of all participants). And that, reader, is the only sports metaphor you're going to get out of me all year!

In the end—after months of debate, a deeply divided Valley Center Community Planning Group Monday night voted 8 to 6 to recommend Option A, amended to remove the proposed roundabout at Woods Valley. That means the group recommended a single roundabout for the Miller Road intersection.

This vote could have long term implications whether the County is able to obtain a grant to build its ambitious road plan. No funds are allocated at this time and any would have to be applied for.

This vote now moves all decision-making to the County; first the Planning Commission, followed by the Board of Supervisors probably next year. But in reality, since the planning group's recommendation was so tepid, with one foot in roundabouts and the other foot out of them, it wouldn't be surprising if the County largely ignored it.

The final vote came after a truly marathon session of more than four hours that ended shortly after 11 p.m. The first half was devoted to a staff presentation led by Kevin Johnston, the project manager, that definitely had the "I've heard that song before," feeling. This was also true of the many public statements, where advocates and opponents largely repeated arguments they have been saying for years.

One presentation that broke this mold was by Murali Pasumarthi, Public Works manager, who said that it was important, whatever their decision, that the group reach a decision. "You need to put your hat in the ring or you will get no money." He spoke from 35 years of experience. "I know how to move people." He called Valley Center, "my second home."

Pasumarthi said that so far, the County, "has been putting Band-aids" to slow down traffic on VC Road. This includes getting the California Highway Patrol to enforce a 45 mph speed limit.

For something more permanent, "There has to be tools in place to make motorists behave. What can we do to modify driver behavior?" VC should be in line to get some grant money. "What has been holding us back all these years? Money and priority." To get some of that money, Valley Center needs a plan. Adopting one of the A,B or C options provided by the County, would create that plan, he said. "You need to acknowledge the need. This will give the Board of Supervisors a reason to allocate funds and compete for grants."

There were a few original comments from the audience. One youngish man declared, "Roundabouts don't work in the real world. As one of the youngest people up here, I will have to endure the decision you make the longest!"

Zee Ryken declared, "We want fewer fatalities and more safety," so local businesses don't suffer. "Most importantly, we want to save lives."

Patrick Malloy, a resident of Park Circle, said, "Roundabouts are not designed to inhibit traffic but to improve safety."

Aaron Chambers said of roundabouts: "They do not function in the textbook manner. They don't work in the real world."

James Chambers, speaking for roundabouts, declared, "Those of you that have the clarity to see, I applaud you."

Others complained that it is hard to get other motorists to grant you the right of way to enter a roundabout.

Lisa Stehly, a 40-year resident, said, “It’s time for everyone to face reality. Businesses will be minimally impacted by roundabouts. Most of the cost will come from state and federal grants.”

Al Stehly, a longtime grove manager, and former fire board member, said that large trucks that carry his citrus crop cross roundabouts without difficulty. “They have no problem with the roundabout a Hwy 76 and Valley Center Road,” he said.

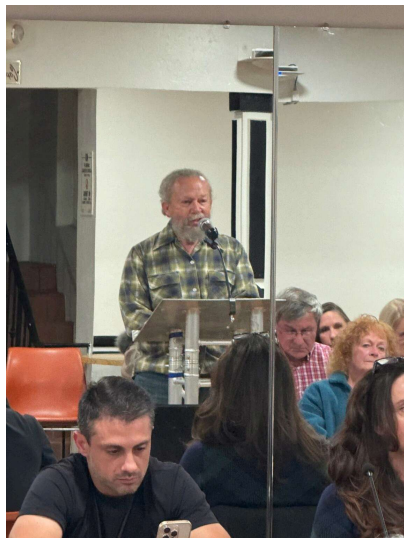
John Vick, assisted by Susan & Chuck Rosenberg—staged a dialogue where they made fun of reasons Dori Rattray and Dee Chavez-Harmes have given for opposing roundabouts. They teased them by using their own quotes against them. They noted that surveys and multiple letters have been submitted supporting roundabouts.

Although a majority of those who attended the packed meeting at VC Community Hall supported either Options A or B, that had at least two roundabouts, the support at public meetings has see-sawed over the months, with meetings where opponents of roundabouts predominated, or vice versa.

LaVonne Norwood quoted from a letter VC Fire Chief Joe Napier had written several months ago. “He stated in July that two lane roundabouts do their jobs and he wouldn’t have to put any staff to monitor one during an evacuation.” He said that fire trucks would be able to enter at a slow rate. “But we want every second to count,” she said. The chief also said that “design is crucial for safety and we don’t even have a design. We may have a rendering and we don’t know if this will ever be built or where the money comes from.”

Norwood also mentioned a truck driver of an 80,000 pound tractor trailer, who says it’s difficult for big trucks to turn in a roundabout. “They don’t stop on a dime and people next to them are not as attentive as they should be,” said Norwood.

Dori Rattray, the vice chairman of the group, argued that although supporters wrote many letters of support, social media surveys on The Valley Roadrunner website and social media showed support for roundabouts low. She noted that more than 1,000 responded to the Roadrunner survey, which showed 23% for roundabouts and 74% against.



Resident speaking during public comment.

She would rather see the money spent to create another emergency evacuation route to complement the three that current exist in and out of town. “We need another way out!” she said.

She argued, and Chavez-Harmes later repeated, that Valley Center’s Community Plan Update doesn’t call for roundabouts. She added, “We’re trying to avoid urbanization.” She obtained accident statistics from the CHP, and said fatalities in VC are not that high.

Kevin Smith, a longtime advocate of roundabouts, said the evidence is that a large number of residents, if not a majority, support roundabouts—and their wishes should be respected. “We are providing input to the County “on what the community prefers,” he said. “We are not here to design a road. We should let the supervisors know what we want.” As representatives they should selflessly forward the public’s preference, even if they personally don’t agree. “A large portion of the community supports roundabouts. Are we to ignore them?” asked Smith.

James Garritson said he has always opposed roundabouts. “These arguments make me even more against them.” He prefers adding lanes to the road to address congestion and speed. “I see the money being spent to expand the road.” He said a signal light, not a roundabout, is needed next to the McDonalds at Mirar De Valle.

Others agreed that this intersection “is a nightmare.”

Lisa Adams said, “We are not here to vote our individual emotions,” and said they should rely on the “experts. “We are not experts.” She said voting against roundabouts was an emotional response, and not based on facts. “Our job is to do what the community wants.”

Oddly, although many arguments for and against roundabouts rested on public safety, Valley Center’s dean of public safety, Fire Chief Joe Napier, wasn’t called on to give his opinion—even though planning chairman Delores Chavez-Harmes said he would be before the vote.

After the meeting she told *The Roadrunner*, “I did plan on calling him and then it just escaped me. When I went up to him, he said ‘Lavonne [Norwood] said everything I was going to say.’ ”

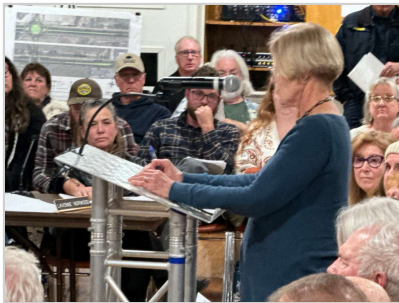
Planning Group Chairman Delores Chavez-Harmes pronounced herself dissatisfied with incompleteness of the vote: “Option A does not get the job done. We needed a hybrid of option A with option C which would be a concept of a roundabout at Miller Road with the option of signals. The corridor plan is a concept. We have not seen actual models of any of these plans other than on paper. Now we don’t have the opportunity to say this roundabout is not going to work, we need to put in a signal. She added, “It’s interesting that Jon Vick and his wife Lael Montgomery have spent so many years lobbying for roundabouts. Montgomery first brought the concept of roundabouts up in 2009 when she was the chair of the VC Design Review Board and Vick was a member of the planning group. They have been campaigning for roundabouts ever since. It begs the question, why is this so important to them? Is their legacy more important than public safety?”



Resident speaking during public comment.



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Residents speaking during public comment.

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VC Planning Group to take a second shot at electing officers

The Valley Center Community Planning Group will take another crack at electing a chairman at its February 10 meeting—which...



Dori Rattray elected planning group chair

Editor—Monday’s planning group agenda was long, and we will have a more complete article next week. Dori Rattray had urged...



Split recommendation for roundabouts

Valley Center obviously remains divided on whether traffic calming measures along VC Road should include roundabouts in the 2.5 miles...

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