

## September 17, 2020, Planning Commission Item 4 Comments

These comments on a Newport Beach Planning Commission [agenda](#) item are submitted by:

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### ***Item No. 4. CIRCULATION ELEMENT UPDATE***

Recommendation 3 in the staff report is for the Commission to “*Consider the appointment, at this meeting or a future meeting, of a Planning Commissioner to work with Outreach Subcommittee of the Housing Element Update Advisory Committee.*”

It is not clear to me how this “bridge” (as it is described on page 3) is supposed to function.

If staff is proposing the PC assign a member to participate in a new joint committee between the PC and the HEUAC, that is fine provided both sides understand the Brown Act will require all the joint committee’s meetings to be noticed and open to the public.

If staff is recommending merely the appointment of a messenger who will attend and bring orders back to the PC from the HEUAC subcommittee without participating in their decisions, that seems problematic for at least two reasons: (1) the HEUAC subcommittee (which does not meet publicly) is an advisory committee to the HEUAC, tasked with bringing a recommendation about outreach back to the full HEUAC and it is not in a position to make decisions or issue orders on its own; (2) a staff person could equally well relay messages.

Beyond these procedural concerns, the idea of having the outreach controlled by a body other than the one relying on the outreach is troubling to me, as is the commitment to use Kearns & West to conduct the outreach. They have not done a stellar job so far.

Finally, the PC has a responsibility under our City Charter to review proposed General Plan amendments and make recommendations about them to the City Council. I have trouble seeing how the PC can conduct a meaningful review of the proposed modifications to the Circulation Element if it is the body that developed the proposal. Nor am I as confident as Chair Tucker of the HEUAC that the PC has greater expertise in transportation planning than the HEUAC.

I think it would be better for the HEUAC to complete the task assigned to them, or for the Council to create an independent citizens advisory committee to guide staff in developing a revised element. The PC can then review it with entirely fresh eyes.

As to the remainder of the staff report, it provides quite a lot to read, but curiously makes no direct mention I can find of SCAG’s recently adopted [Connect SoCal](#) regional transportation plan, which is a major driver behind the RHNA allocations which triggered the creation of the HEUAC, and with which our circulation is presumably expected to “connect.”