

Public Comments
BPAC Meeting April 24, 2024

From: Serge Bonte [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 21, 2024 4:05 AM
To: BPAC Communication <bpac@mountainview.gov>
Cc: Whyte, Brandon <Brandon.Whyte@mountainview.gov>; Lo, Ria <Ria.Lo@mountainview.gov>
Subject: re: 4/24/24 Meeting - Agenda Item 6.2 ATP Scoring Criteria

Dear BPAC members

Being out of the country, I will not be able to attend your meeting but wanted to comment on this agenda item.

First, I am confused with the many scoring formula the City uses for various plans (I think there was one already to rank corridors, another one establishing traffic safety corridors...it would be beneficial for the public to know how these scorings interact or if this latest one will supersede/combine all the others.

As to the one proposed for ATP

1. School Criteria: In my opinion 0.25 mile/5 mn walking distance/time is too short. Push it to 0.5 and maybe have another tier at 1 mile/. You might also want to consider adding points if a project improves safety on a major barrier on a route to School (crossing the tracks, crossing El Camino Real, Rengstorff, Shoreline. Also, make sure this covers schools located in Los Altos but attended by many Mountain View Kids (Almond, Blach, Egan,Santa Rita, Los Altos High School)

2. Frequency/volume of Community Comments scoring category. As a frequent commenter myself, it's fair to say our demographics don't represent a large section of Mountain View. My main issue with incorporating them with 10 points is that they can negate most of the top score in the "Supports lower income residents" rubrique (15 points). The map of comments frequency illustrates that point; high density of comments downtown (not an area with many lower income residents), the proposed scoring formula could offset the 15 points that an area like Del Medio or Ortega could get.

All these comments you receive are certainly useful for you to identify needed projects, in my opinion their geographic frequency should NOT be used in the scoring formula. As mentioned above it's simply not equitable.

Sincerely,

Serge Bonte

From: Chris Parry [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 22, 2024 8:58 AM
To: Whyte, Brandon <Brandon.Whyte@mountainview.gov>
Subject: Official Public Comment for April 24, 2024, BPAC Meeting

CAUTION: EXTERNAL EMAIL - Ensure you trust this email before clicking on any links or attachments.

Brandon,

Attached are comment letters from me regarding Items 6.1 and 6.2 on the Agenda for the April 24, 2024 BPAC Meeting.

Regards,

Chris

April 22, 2024

Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee
City of Mountain View
c/o Brandon.Whyte@mountainview.gov

Re: Official Public Comment for April 24, 2024, BPAC Meeting (Item 6.1 on the Agenda: California Complete Street Pilot Project)

Dear BPAC,

I am writing regarding Item 6.1 on the Agenda: The California Complete Street Pilot Project. I am thrilled to see that this project has been designed to test a variety of different vertical elements (Fig. 2). I would like to suggest that for Performance Metrics, the City should also include community feedback regarding these different vertical elements and the overall layout. This could easily be done by posting QR codes on California Street that link to an online survey.¹

Background

There is an often-cited study from Portland State University (PSU) finding that bicyclists with different experience levels often *perceive safety* differently when they encounter various forms of protected, buffered, and unprotected bike lanes.² In my own discussions with cyclists, I've heard a wide range of opinions on whether they prefer protected bike lanes with solid physical barriers to protect them from cars or vertical elements with no barriers (*i.e.*, flex posts alone). I've also found that novice and less experienced cyclists often key on features that would not concern more experienced cyclists.

One of Mountain View's goals is to create a bikeable city that is accessible to the entire community. However, today much of the community input on bicycling infrastructure comes from the most experienced cyclists (Strong and Fearless). The less experienced cyclists (the "Enthusied and Confident" and "Interested but Concerned") are often missing from the table.³

¹ These QR code links to online surveys have been used before. The City of Palo Alto posted signs with QR code surveys at the Wilkie Way Paseo when it was collecting feedback on different anti-skid surfaces.

² McNeil, Nathan et al., "The Influence of Bike Lane Buffer Types on Perceived Comfort and Safety of Bicyclists and Potential Bicyclists." Portland State University (2015) at p.12. https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cengin_fac/221/#:~:text=Findings%20suggest%20striped%20or%20painted,the%20Interested%20but%20Concerned%20demographic).

³ The PSU study defines four categories of bicyclists based on experience level and interest in cycling: (1) Strong and Fearless (roughly 5% of the population); (2) Enthusied

The PSU study recognizes that *intercept surveys* can be one of the most valuable ways to collect community feedback (e.g., asking riders for feedback immediately after they rode through the protected bike lane).⁴ I'm asking Mountain View to consider running its own intercept survey for the California Complete Street Pilot – by posting signs with QR codes that link to an online survey. This could be a useful way to collect feedback from the broader community of cyclists, including the “Enthused and Confident” and “Interested but Concerned.” I would be particularly interested in how the “Enthused and Confident” and “Interested but Concerned” perceive the different types of vertical barriers involved (e.g., planter boxes, flex posts, rubber curbs, armadillos).

This could be a great opportunity to collect data from “Enthused and Confident” and “Interested but Concerned” cyclists that can be incorporated into future projects. Thank-you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Parry". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping tail.

Chris Parry
Mountain View resident

and Confident (27%); (3) Interested but Concerned (42%); and No Way No How (25%) (page 5).

⁴ *Id.* at page 5.

April 22, 2024

Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee
City of Mountain View
c/o Brandon.Whyte@mountainview.gov

Re: Official Public Comment for April 24, 2024, BPAC Meeting (Item 6.2 on the Agenda “Active Transportation Plan: Scoring Criteria”)

Dear BPAC,

I am writing regarding Item 6.2 on the Agenda: “Active Transportation Plan: Scoring Criteria.” The Scoring Criteria as drafted significantly underweights the value of improving the city’s All Ages and Abilities (AAA) bicycling network.

I. The Problem

I am concerned that the scoring criteria does not seem designed to achieve the goals described in the vision statement (at least with respect to cycling). The vision statement describes creating a “culture of ... cycling” and “a connected, low-stress, and inviting active transportation network” that will “encourage biking.”

Compare that vision statement with the bicycling situation today, as described in the draft “Existing Conditions and Needs Summary”:

The city ... has a varied network of bicycle facilities, some of which are well connected and some of which are separated by gaps or barriers

In some areas, the existing and planned/funded AAA network is robust, such as in the northern parts of the city, including North Bayshore and Shoreline Park. ***In other areas, such as the residential neighborhoods in the city's southern parts, bicycle facilities are sparse, disconnected,*** or create a bicycle level of traffic stress (BLTS) that is too high to meet AAA standards.

The Stevens Creek Trail provides a continuous AAA-quality connection between the northern and southern parts of the City for bicyclists. ***However, some neighborhoods have limited bicycle connections to the trail network.***

Mountain View Active Transportation Plan, “Existing Conditions and Needs Summary” October 2023 DRAFT at page 20 (emphasis added).

In Mountain View today, we have segments with great AAA cycling infrastructure (e.g., the Stevens Creek Trail). But all too often, the segments are separated and disjointed from each other, rather than forming a cohesive, integrated and continuous AAA network.

That is why Mountain View’s cycling mode share has been stuck in the single digit percentages. To entice the broader community (e.g., the “Interested, but Concerned”) to bicycle, we need to offer them a complete path from starting point to destination that meets

the AAA standards. It is not sufficient to give the “Interested, but Concerned” cyclists a safe *segment* if there are other portions of the route that feel unsafe to them.

Time and time again, we have seen that cities successfully increase bicycle mode share by focusing on creating a safe network of routes. For example, in 2005 Seville, Spain had a cycling network that looked much like Mountain View’s today – disjointed segments – and low ridership. In 2006, Seville began a project to quickly build a comprehensive cycling network. By 2011, the network covered much of the city, and Seville had increased its cycling trips by 452 percent.¹

Of course, Seville does not stand alone. Cities with active cycling cultures and the highest mode shares all have robust, extensive cycling networks – be it the Netherlands; Oulu, Finland; or the recent cycling gains seen in Paris.

To achieve the bicycling component of Mountain View’s vision statement, Mountain View needs a comprehensive AAA network.

II. Suggested Adjustment to Scoring Criteria

In the draft scoring criteria ***only 7.5 of the total 100 possible points are dedicated to the AAA network.*** This is far too low. There ought to be significant points awarded both for closing gaps in the AAA network and for extending the AAA network to underserved communities (*i.e.*, any neighborhood that is connected to the AAA network today).

In addition to awarding more points for closing gaps in the AAA network, there are other areas in the scoring criteria where the network can be emphasized:

Access and Equity: The current draft awards up to 15 points to communities with lower incomes (more than 28% of the population below 200% of FPL). It is certainly true that there are low-income communities that are underserved by the existing AAA network. But there are also underserved middle-class communities. E.g., Sylvan Park residents have long raised concerns about poor connectivity to Landels Elementary School and the Stevens Creek Trail. Working off a map, Mountain View should be able to identify *all* communities that lack connectivity to the AAA network. There ought to be priority (and significant points in the scoring matrix) for connecting all communities to the existing AAA network.

Separately, the criteria as currently drafted focus only on whether a project is located in an underserved community – not whether the project would connect the community to the network. Any project that would create an isolated segment – disconnected from the rest of the network – does not serve the community well.

¹ Manuel Calvo and Ricardo Marques “How Seville Became a City of Cyclists”
<https://medium.com/vision-zero-cities-journal/how-seville-became-a-city-of-cyclists-fba864b4be66>

Mobility and Connectivity: In the current draft, all of the distances seem to be stated in terms of walking distances. For a cycling projects, anything less than 2 miles should be considered a short distance. It ought to be straightforward to add the cycling short-distance equivalent for each of the items currently listed.

Safety and Comfort: Some of the segments on the current Safe Routes to School Maps do not meet AAA principles (a Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (BLTS) greater than 1).² There ought to be significant points awarded for projects that fix holes in the Safe Routes to School Network. If we want to encourage students cycling to school, then the complete path (start point to destination) needs to meet AAA standards.

Separately, portions of Mountain View’s existing bike boulevards have a BLTS greater than 1 (e.g., Stierlin Road). There ought to be points in the scoring matrix for projects that improve the safety of bike boulevards if they would meet AAA standards.

III. Pedestrian Projects

I recognize that the pedestrian network is also an important part of any Active Transportation Network. I emphasized bicycling in my letter because this is the area where there is the greatest mismatch between the City’s goals (building mode share) and the scoring criteria.

For the pedestrian network, the draft Existing Conditions and Needs report notes that Mountain View’s “sidewalk network is 96% complete.”³ The same report identifies specific problem areas that need to be addressed, e.g., obstructions in the sidewalk and unsafe intersections. The Scoring Criteria as drafted seems designed to target those problem areas.

Sincerely,



Chris Parry
Mountain View resident

² Access MV Mountain View’s Comprehensive Modal Plan May 2021 at pages 12 and 35.

³ Existing Conditions and Needs Summary (Oct. 2023 DRAFT) at page 18.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 23, 2024 9:45 PM
To: BPAC Communication <bpac@mountainview.gov>
Cc: City Council <City.Council@mountainview.gov>
Subject: 4/24/24 meeting agenda item 6.2 ATP Scoring Criteria

To: BPAC
From: Joel Dean, [REDACTED]
Subject: ATP Scoring Criteria

My first reaction to the proposed scoring criteria was that it was chasing too many hares and would catch none. If it is endorsed by City Council, it might promote rigid adherence in project selection and design rather than careful attention to details. It would add another bureaucratic brier patch to what is already a painfully slow process. On second thought, it couldn't be much worse than the current situation -- could it?

The City of Mountain View has blundered before by relying on questionable methods to justify an alleged pedestrian safety measure. Prohibiting left turns from northbound Castro Street onto Central Expressway was supposed to be necessary because "During the A.M. peak hour, approximately 60 pedestrians cross the west-side crosswalk and are in potential conflict with 148 left-turning vehicles from Castro Street as 12 trains cross the intersection." (Council Report, 5/15/18)

Not knowing what to make of that ambiguous statement, I recorded a one-hour video of the west crosswalk at Moffett & Central the morning of 7/30/18. The results: 18 bikes, 33 pedestrians, 1 scooter, 2 strollers, and 3 dogs north- and southbound, and 129 northbound left-turning vehicles, all totals for the entire hour. During 7 Caltrain preemption phases, the only times when there would have been potential conflict, 3 cars turned left from Castro and 2 bicyclists used the west crosswalk -- all of whom disregarded the traffic control warnings. No pedestrians, scooters, strollers or dogs were in the crosswalk during preemptions. This made the rationale for the left turn prohibition look a wildly exaggerated.

A couple of P.M. peak recordings bolstered that assessment: 19 people in the crosswalk vs. 2 left turns during preemptions on 8/7/18; 3 vs. 3 on 8/20/18. A much more serious potential for conflict occurred at the northwest corner, where west crosswalk occupants had the same green phase as right turns from Moffett. The results: 111 in the crosswalk vs. 110 right turns on 8/7; 89 in the crosswalk vs. 76 right turns on 8/20.

Eliminating lefts from Castro was part of a package of "Near-Term Improvements", which included significant and generally beneficial changes at the northeast, southeast, and southwest corners of the intersection. The northwest corner was essentially overlooked and has been left in its current perilous state.

It would be most interesting to see ATP scoring applied to Moffett at Central Expressway and whether the results jibe with reality. The "Hound of the Caltrains" cries out for that to happen. To give ATP scoring something to chew on, here is a link to a six-minute video of uncomfortable moments at Moffett & Central during a 45-minute span on a recent evening:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/oauINDaW6kgKgEUJA>

Unfortunately, it is only viewable on Windows devices. If anyone is interested, and City staff is willing to accommodate, I will try to waddle down to City Hall tomorrow night so you can view it.

Thank you for your attention.