

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Abe-Koga, Margaret](#); [Kamei, Ellen](#); [Hicks, Alison](#); [Lieber, Sally](#); [Ramirez, Lucas](#); [Matichak, Lisa](#); [Showalter, Pat](#)  
**Cc:** [City Council](#)  
**Subject:** 5/25 Council meeting, agenda item 4.8 (AccessMV)  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 25, 2021 10:26:56 AM

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To: Members of the Mountain View City Council  
From: Joel Dean, [REDACTED] North Shoreline Boulevard, MV  
Subject: AccessMV

Appended to this message is one I sent to the Council Transportation Committee before its April 20 meeting dealing with AccessMV. It comes as no surprise that this item has wriggled its way into the Consent Calendar and will probably be passed by the full Council without a flicker of discussion. Yet the Comprehensive Modal Plan has at least one egregious defect, exemplified by this paragraph on page xiv the Executive Summary: "Having prioritized corridors. individual projects were prioritized using project prioritization criteria. Mountain View's Pedestrian Master Plan did not include specific pedestrian project recommendations therefore this mode was not included in the analysis." One can hardly quarrel with the first sentence -- how else can you prioritize projects? But the second sentence speaks volumes. Pedestrian improvements only take place as appendages to bicycle and motor vehicle projects. Pedestrians are silent, invisible, unorganized, not part of a "community", and can be ignored.

Cycling and walking are incompatible and frequently antagonistic modes, just as they are vis-a-vis motor vehicles. Their speeds are too different for them to share underdesigned facilities without conflicts in which pedestrians are likely to be the losers. This is easily seen on the Stevens Creek Trail or (pre-pandemic) at the downtown Transit Center. Cyclists feel free to avail themselves of infrastructure meant specifically for pedestrians, such as sidewalks or the so-called "pedestrian walkway" on the Shoreline/Central Expressway overpass. Despite this deficiency, the City's major capital projects are designed to make matters worse for pedestrians. The aforementioned walkway is to be intersected by a ramp from Evelyn Avenue. The existing crossings at Moffett/Castro/Central are to be replaced by tunnels accessed by ramps shared by pedestrians and cyclists with no barriers to keep them apart, and cyclists will be "encouraged" to dismount. Fat chance of that working. The bicycle/pedestrian bridge over USW101 on Shoreline Boulevard will consist of two 10-foot bike lanes with no barriers between them and a 6-foot pedestrian lane, which would effectively operate as 26 feet of bike lanes. With improvements like that, who needs downgrades?

The Transportation Committee's input on AccessMV included (1) "Explor(ing) new ways to collect and analyze improved data on collision near-misses"; (2) "Further analyze the pedestrian experience, including the effects of shade trees and the creation of habitat corridors"; and (3) "addressing issues related to the use of assistive devices by seniors and people with disabilities". Regarding (1), I can supply the City with about 85 hours of traffic videos from the Shoreline Corridor which include plenty of near-misses, or condensed versions thereof with suitable musical accompaniment. If someone would lend me a GoPro camera, I would be willing to strap it on and record my experiences as a pedestrian. I would not be willing to do it with my hand-held cellphone camera, since navigating the streets on foot safely requires total concentration on the surroundings. To get footage from a wider area, spread the word that the City is interested in dashcam videos. Regarding (2), we love our shade trees when they keep us cool and soften the view of the Soviet-style architecture prevalent in much of Mountain View, and don't want them felled to make room for double left-turn pockets justified by falsified data. But in the wrong position, i.e., between sidewalks and traffic lanes too close to street crossings and driveways, shade trees are visual obstructions and hazardous to pedestrians. As for habitat corridors, pedestrian facilities do not interfere with them, squirrels and skunks can cross trails and streets wherever they fancy, and if they jaywalk and get squashed, it's their own fault. Regarding (3), I am a senior who does not use assistive devices. Ironically, the most likely reason I will need them some day is if I get clobbered by a car or cyclist while walking the streets of Mountain View. Based on what I have seen of disabled people trying to get around, that outcome would be dreadful. I encourage the City to pursue this subject further.

I ask you not to approve agenda item 4.8, AccessMV, until the needs of pedestrians are given more serious and

better-informed scrutiny.

Thank you for your attention.

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MESSAGE TO CITY COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE  
PRIOR TO ITS 4/20/21 MEETING

I ask you not to approve the staff's recommendation to OK the draft Comprehensive Modal Plan without further scrutiny. The time between when the Plan's 300-

plus pages was made available to the public and tonight's meeting is not sufficient for a thorough review. This is particularly important if your approval

sneaks into the consent calendar of the full Council, where it is likely to be overlooked. Staff repeatedly uses this tactic to avoid public input, for which

they have obvious disdain, and this should not be allowed to continue.

The staff memo included in tonight's agenda packet shows maps of Prioritized Bicycle Projects, Prioritized Vehicular Projects, and Priority Transit Projects,

while pedestrian plans are put off till later. That implies that pedestrians are lower on the priority scale than everyone else, and will wind up getting

table scraps, if that much. The Comprehensive Modal Plan is not comprehensive until it includes the Pedestrian Master Plan, and should not be approved

without it. Previous staff reports have lacked comprehension of the incompatibility of walking and cycling modes, so the Bicycle Plan ought not to become

chiseled in stone before pedestrians have had their say. I have had some communication with Council member Hicks on the subject of pedestrians' needs, which

I will be forwarding to you.

If Mountain View is to become as densely populated as some people whose neighborhoods won't be affected desire, it will require far better public transit

than it has now. VTA has been cited by three grand juries as possibly the worst-run transit operator in the country. It recovered 9% of its pre-pandemic

expenses from the fare box and subsisted on sales taxes paid by people who don't use its services. It eliminated the only service it provided to my

neighborhood and described that as an 'improvement'. In so doing, it insulted both the neighborhood and itself. The one useful VTA route in Mountain View is

the trunk route on El Camino. Other routes meander back and forth on open arcs with few connections to the trunk. VTA light rail has the same defect.

The Downtown Transit Center is the center of nothing, except to the 1% of Bay Area and 3% of North Bayshore commuters who use it. It can do very little to

relieve peak-hour congestion in Mountain View, most of which is caused by traffic to and from the San Jose corridor, for whom Castro Street is too far out of

their way to be of use. Now that the voters have been flim-flammed into approving a dedicated sales tax, Caltrain will join VTA in the parasite parade.

This leaves the Community Shuttle as the last line of defense for transit-dependent residents of Mountain View. Its schedules are truncated -- 10AM-6PM,

useless for commuters. It connects with the VTA trunk route fairly well at San Antonio Center, but awkwardly at Shoreline Boulevard or Sylvan Avenue. Its

buses are tiny and their capacity is cut by 50-75% with COVID restrictions. They are too underpowered to run the air-conditioning in hot weather, leaving the

passengers to suffocate. There is very little legroom, so an average-sized adult has to go to the rear of the bus to fit in. On a good day, the Community

Shuttle is better than nothing. On a bad day, as when the driver declines to stop and leaves a waiting passenger stranded, it is worse than useless.

**From:** [BRUCE KARNEY](#)  
**To:** [City Council](#)  
**Cc:** [Ramberg, Audrey Seymour](#); [Tom Myers](#)  
**Subject:** UBI  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 25, 2021 10:01:32 AM

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My first job out of college in 1974 was working as a Research Assistant on a HUGE study of what is now called UBI but was then called the negative income tax. The study was called SIME/DIME and was run by SRI International and employed dozens of economists, econometricians, sociologists, data analysts and junior personnel. You can find the copiously documented results here: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/report/overview-final-report-seattle-denver-income-maintenance-experiment>

As I recall -- 47 years after the fact -- the SIME/DIME experiment was designed to provide families with enough money to live on even if they had no earned income. If they did find a job, their benefit payment was reduced drastically. I recall that tax rates of 50%, 70%, and 80% were tested. At the time of the experiment, the federal tax rate on the highest income families was even higher -- 90%. The benefit reductions for SIME/DIME participants were similar or even harsher than the current tax rate on California unemployment benefits: for each dollar a UI recipient reports earning from temporary employment their benefit is reduced by 50 cents.

Why such high tax rates, you might ask?

It turned out that the "poverty line" in the late '60s wasn't terribly far below the median income. (This is probably still true in most of the US, but perhaps not in Silicon Valley.) The designers of the experiment did not want the program to provide financial support to families to the extent that their earned income plus SIME/DIME transfer payment exceeded the median income. Here's a numerical example, using very approximate figures from that era.

Suppose the poverty line for a family of 3 was \$12,000/year and the median income for a 3-person family was \$18,000/year.

If the family had no earned income their benefit would be \$12,000/year.

What simple tax rate would be necessary to insure that as the beneficiaries family income rose, the sum of their earned income plus the SIME/DIME benefit would not exceed the median income of \$18,000/year?

The answer is 66.7% -- a very high tax rate, that was seen at the time as a VERY strong disincentive for people to work.

Earned income	SIME/DIME benefit	Total
\$0	\$12,000	\$12,000
\$6,000	\$8,000	\$14,000
\$12,000	\$4,000	\$16,000
\$18,000	\$0	\$18,000

The major policy outcome of the SIME/DIME experiment was the creation of the Earned Income Tax Credit. It provides benefits to low income families -- but only those who are working and earning some income -- as described here:

<https://www.taxpolicycenter.org/briefing-book/what-earned-income-tax-credit>

In my opinion there are better ways for cities to help their poorest residents than limited-term, small monthly grants. In particular, I would suggest considering a program that would enable

low-income residents to borrow money from the city at zero interest to pay off high-interest debt from credit cards, payday loans, pawn shops, etc. A program of this kind could potentially help far more families and at very little cost to the city (only the cost of administering it and the bad debt from loans that were not repaid).

I also think that "case management" is a critical component of any small-scale poverty alleviation program. I don't recall if SIME/DIME included that, but certainly our local Community Services Agency has deep expertise in the kind of services that help families escape the poverty trap.

I'm sure that many of the senior researchers who worked on SIME/DIME are still alive and would be happy to answer questions about their work if City staff reached out to them.

Cheers,  
Bruce Karney