



Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning and GreenSpacesMV
c/o Aaron Grossman



Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition
96 N. Third Street, Suite 375
San José, CA 95112

April 26, 2023

City of Mountain View Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (B/PAC)
City Hall, 500 Castro Street
PO Box 7540
Mountain View, CA 94039-7540

Re: El Monte Avenue Corridor Study, Project 19-61

Dear Chairperson Kuszmaul and B/PAC members:

The Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning (MVCSP) appreciates the opportunity to comment on this agenda item you will be discussing at your meeting today.

We have reviewed the agenda item materials, and we have the following comments we would like to share with you.

To start, we commend Staff for all their work on this effort over time, and we look forward to seeing all of the project elements in place that will make the corridor safer for and more inviting to active transportation users.

In general, we like Alternative 3 the best. Specifically, some details we want to call out for your attention here:

- The intention to eliminate the free right turn onto El Monte from eastbound El Camino (and to create a small park connected to the existing redwoods).

- Establishment of fewer lanes, which lead to lower speed and fewer road conflicts.
- Inclusion of marked crosswalks at all intersections, including a high visibility crosswalk at Hollingworth (as currently the only crosswalks are at El Camino, the shopping center and at the Springer / El Monte "Y" intersection), which will provide increased safety for kids, seniors, etc.
- Inclusion of a safe way for cyclists to make left turns to/from El Monte, which helps support safe routes to school from Gemelo to Graham and Bubb.
- Removal of remaining street parking in key locations, which will reduce risk of dooring, and provide more room for cyclists.

That said, we do have some comments for your consideration for recommendations to the Council Transportation Committee and City Council:

- While Alternative 3 seems to be the best choice overall, it lacks any refuge islands. Why can't these be included in areas not needing left turn lane space?
- Even though the Staff Memorandum says "As shown in Table 1, the key community concerns identified were vehicle speeds and safety of pedestrians and bicyclists.", there is no discussion on lowering the speed limit to, for example, 30 mph.

Generally, for target motor vehicle speeds* greater than 26 mph, to make the road safe for "all ages and abilities," [NACTO recommends](#) protected bicycle lanes or reduced speed.

The NACTO chart recommends protected bike lanes on a street such as El Monte for both: 1) target speed of 30 mph, and 2) because the average daily traffic on El Monte is ~ 14,000. Speed and volume are separate, independent reasons to protect the bike lanes. Even at lower speeds, the volume justifies protected lanes.

We understand that speed limit changes might need to be considered after road diet and other measures are implemented at this stage of the project.

- The Staff Memorandum and appendixes do not show travelway width dimensions. This is crucial for helping us compare the three alternatives, so we would like to see them called out in future documentation on this project. Among other reasons, we would like some assurance that the bikeway widths are as wide as possible, and that the vehicle lane widths are appropriate for the lower speed limits we are advocating for.
- For the eastbound right turn onto El Camino, we would like to see a no right turn on red restriction there.
- For the center median at the north end of El Monte at El Camino, can that include landscaping or at least mulch for future planting options? This will help serve city goals related to biodiversity, carbon emissions reductions, and green complete streets.
- For the bike lane buffers, we strongly prefer that the bikeways be raised to the height of any included buffer structures with landscaping included, both for safety and to advance the city's green complete street and biodiversity strategy goals. This has been done, for example, on parts of Charleston Road in North Bayshore:



Note that [NATCO provides suggestions](#) for deploying raised cycle tracks.

And the Santa Clara County Active Transportation Plan [Bikeway Selection Guide](#) includes a reference to a US Department of Transportation publication with guidelines for when there should be separated bike lanes (as opposed to buffered). For an average daily traffic measure of 14K, the Department of Transportation also recommends separated lanes (see page 23).

- Regarding curb cuts for driveways along the corridor, and if the bikeways were designed as noted in the previous point, the sloped section would need to be outside of the bike lane in order to keep the bike lane level. The curb ramps in the buffer zone could be placed to effectively create continuous sidewalks and bike lanes, which would help compel vehicle drivers to slow down when entering them.
- For lighting improvements, please be mindful of anticipated dark sky ordinances work by the City in the months to come. We note that any lighting changes need to be appropriate for the location, and taking both dark sky policy and safety into account.
- The [Los Altos High School Safe Routes to School brochure](#) indicates that the stretch of El Monte from El Camino Real to Pilgrim Avenue / Jardin Drive is included as a suggested route to school for Los Altos High School. This alone would be a good reason the City should consider protecting the bike lanes there to provide a physical barrier between the faster moving vehicular traffic and students on bicycles. We note that this stretch of El Monte is largely a commercial district. To the extent that the plans omitted protected bike lanes on El Monte out of concern for obstructing residential driveways, that should not be an issue on the stretch from Pilgrim to El Camino. We also note that, In practice, children coming from North of El Camino on Escuela often go through the Petco shopping Center to Clark and then to Jardin from there. This is a much safer route than they might take otherwise.

- We would like to point out that destinations adjacent to the corridor matter as well. For example, the El Monte Shopping Center is a popular destination for the neighborhood and for teens in particular.
- Finally, we have some concerns about limited public outreach where project impacts affect others beyond the immediate area. This is a general comment, though certainly applicable in this case.

Assuming you agree with the Alternative 3 choice, in the interest of not seeing the project further delayed, we urge you to expedite the work as much as you can so the community can experience the benefits from it sooner rather than later.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Bruce England

for the Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning, GreenSpacesMV, and the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition Mountain View local team

cc:

Darwin Galang, Senior Traffic Engineer

Lorenzo Lopez, City Traffic Engineer

Edward Arango, Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer

Dawn S. Cameron, Public Works Director

Kimbra McCarthy, City Manager

Heather Glaser, City Clerk

Shiloh Ballard, Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition Executive Director

Anthony Montes, Community Organizer

About Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning

The Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning is a local volunteer-based organization dedicated to making Mountain View as beautiful, economically healthy, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian accessible, and affordable as possible. MVCSPP member interest and expertise covers areas such as housing, transportation, the environment, the economy, and beyond!

For more information, see <http://www.mvcsp.org>.

To contact us, send email to mvcspp.info@gmail.com.

About GreenSpacesMV

Our focus is on biodiversity, native, drought-tolerant, and pollinator-friendly landscaping, complete green streets, parks and other open spaces, including Privately owned, publicly accessible (or POPA) park spaces, and so on.

For more information, see <https://www.facebook.com/GreenSpacesMV>.

To contact us, send email to GreenSpacesMV.info@gmail.com.

About Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition

Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition is a non-profit, membership-based organization that works to create a healthy community, environment, and economy in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. SVBC coordinates the Mountain View Local Team of residents who are passionate about bicycling and making change in their community.

For more information, see <https://bikesiliconvalley.org/> and <https://bikesiliconvalley.org/local-teams/>

To contact us, send email to advocacy@[bikesiliconvalley.org](mailto:advocacy@bikesiliconvalley.org)