



CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

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March 7, 2013

MS CHRISTINA JAWORSKI
VTA – ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS & RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
3331 NORTH FIRST STREET
SAN JOSE CA 95134

CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW SCOPING COMMENTS TO THE VALLEY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (VTA) ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT/ ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE EL CAMINO REAL BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT) PROJECT

Dear Ms. Jaworski:

City of Mountain View (City) staff has reviewed VTA's Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Environmental Assessment (EA) for the El Camino Real Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project dated February 6, 2013. The Project proposes BRT improvements along 17.4 miles of El Camino Real, between the HP Pavilion in San Jose and the Palo Alto Transit Center, including exclusive BRT-dedicated lanes, mixed-flow lanes (lanes for BRT and vehicular travel), and 16 median or curbside BRT stations. The City requests the VTA fully analyze and address the following topics during its environmental review of the proposed BRT Project.

GENERAL

Executive Summaries. To facilitate review by each affected city along the Project, the EIR/EA should include an Executive Summary for each city along the BRT Project corridor, which includes localized Project information, summarizes project impacts, and lists proposed mitigation measures to each affected city in an easily accessible and readable format.

Alternatives Analysis. The EIR/EA should include an assessment of how each alternative would impact the City of Mountain View's future local preferences for the design and function of El Camino Real, including the El Camino Real and San Antonio Precise Plans. The EIR/EA should also evaluate all potential alternatives, including a fully dedicated lane option from Lafayette Street in Santa Clara to the Palo Alto Transit Center.

Mitigation Measures. The EIR/EA must identify mitigation measures where Project implementation is expected to have a significant impact. Mitigation measures should be fully discussed, including financing, scheduling, implementation responsibilities, and lead agency monitoring.

Infrastructure Impacts. The EIR/EA should analyze how the Project may impact existing City infrastructure systems (sewer, water, stormwater, etc.) and proposed and planned City Capital Improvement Program projects for these systems, and should identify appropriate mitigation measures.

BRT Stations and Facilities. The EIR/EA should identify how the planned designs for Castro Street and Showers Drive stations, and other BRT facilities, support bicycle and pedestrian accessibility, safety, and convenience through attractive Project elements such as station lighting, bike racks, and/or lockers. The EIR/EA should ensure that all improvements associated with the Project, including station signs and shelters, do not block people's view of Mountain View businesses along the ECR Corridor.

Project Ridership. The EIR/EA should provide information on how projected BRT ridership numbers for the Castro Street and Showers Drive stations compare to existing bus travel along the corridor in Mountain View.

Caltrans Coordination. The EIR/EA should provide information on how the BRT Project is being coordinated with Caltrans and the City of Mountain View, including the City's concurrence regarding the Project description, design, and environmental analysis.

LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION INTEGRATION

El Camino Real (ECR). The ECR Corridor is centrally located in the City, connecting to many intersecting side streets, and serving a wide variety of land uses, including retail stores, shopping centers, civic facilities, and many residential and office developments. The EIR/EA should identify and analyze the existing pedestrian, bicycle, landscaping, lighting, etc. conditions along the corridor and how the Project will contribute to improvements in these areas.

Land Use Growth Assumption. The EIR/EA should provide a concise and easily accessible methodology and data sources for its land use growth assumptions, including the City's 2030 General Plan growth assumptions, recently constructed projects, and projects in the planning stages along the Mountain View corridor.

Conflict with Plans. The EIR/EA should analyze if the Project conflicts with the City of Mountain View's 2030 General Plan, including "Change Area" goals, policies, and actions for the El Camino Real and San Antonio Areas, and other appropriate plans, including the Grand Boulevard Initiative. The EIR/EA should also review the scopes of work for the El Camino Real and San Antonio Precise Plans to ensure compatibility between these scopes of work and the BRT Project objectives.

Bike Plan, Pedestrian Master Plan, and Capital Improvement Program. The EIR/EA should analyze how the Project impacts may conflict with any City of Mountain View existing or planned bicycle routes or projects, and existing or planned pedestrian routes or projects.

Complete Streets. The EIR/EA should analyze how the Project complies with the intent of the Complete Streets legislation and the Project's impacts to vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian travel modes along and across the corridor, including Mountain View's Street Typology designation for El Camino Real.

TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION

Neighborhood Traffic Impacts. The EIR/EA should analyze the potential diversion of traffic from El Camino Real to other routes, including local neighborhood streets due to reducing capacity on El Camino Real or blocking access across El Camino Real.

Analysis should use measures such as Level of Service (LOS), existing versus projected traffic speeds and volumes, roadway capacity, delay and queuing, and should identify appropriate mitigation measures to address potential impacts. The EIR/EA should include and analyze traffic volume and/or speed studies to appropriately characterize the impacts on alternative routes, including small neighborhood side streets. The EIR/EA should include qualitative measurement criteria, including quality of life and impacts to the character of the affected local neighborhood streets.

El Camino Real Impacts. The EIR/EA should analyze the potential impact of the project to the signalized intersections along El Camino Real, especially Congestion Management Plan (CMP) intersections by using measures such as LOS. If the Project impact on a CMP intersection is significant, the Project shall prepare a deficiency plan for that intersection in accordance with VTA guidelines. The EIR/EA should also fully evaluate and mitigate the Project impact on accommodating existing unsignalized left turns on/along El Camino Real, providing safe pedestrian crossings on El Camino Real, minimizing the potential for increased traffic congestion on El Camino Real, and

impacts to the City's significant investment in landscaped medians along El Camino Real.

Parking Impacts. The EIR/EA should provide existing street parking counts along El Camino Real in Mountain View and the number of displaced street parking spaces resulting from the Project. The EIR/EA should analyze the impact of any street parking displacement on local Mountain View businesses along the corridor and identify mitigation measures.

Bike and Pedestrian Connectivity Impacts. The ECR Corridor currently creates a barrier to the north/south movement of pedestrians and bicycles and the Project must not further divide the community physically or visually. The EIR/EA should analyze how the Project impacts bicycle and pedestrian connectivity across the corridor and should identify appropriate mitigation measures to ensure the safe and convenient movement of pedestrians and bicyclists to enhance a connected community.

CASTRO STREET/DOWNTOWN AREA

The heart of Mountain View is a vibrant downtown with a successful multi-modal Transit Center on Castro Street. Castro Street is an important gateway into the City's downtown and a major north/south collector/access road for vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, and transit. The EIR/EA should analyze all impacts to the downtown area, including disruption of traffic flow and accessibility of the downtown core or other adverse impacts to downtown residents and businesses, and should identify mitigation measures to address any impacts. The Project should not adversely impact the existing vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian system in terms of access, safety, and convenience.

SHORELINE BOULEVARD/NORTH BAYSHORE AREA

Shoreline Boulevard is the main spine and gateway into the North Bayshore Area for vehicles, transit, pedestrians, and bicycles. The EIR/EA should analyze all impacts to the Shoreline Boulevard Corridor, including disruption of traffic flow and other adverse impacts to Corridor residents and businesses and should identify mitigation measures to address any impacts. The Project should not adversely impact the existing vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian system in terms of access, safety, and convenience.

CONSTRUCTION

Castro Street/Downtown. The existing multi-modal Downtown Transit Center and service are a vital component of the City's transportation system. The Center includes

stops for Caltrain, Caltrain Baby Bullet, VTA Light Rail, VTA buses, and private shuttles to major employers such as Google and Microsoft. The EIR/EA should analyze how to maintain the level of service at the Mountain View Transit Center during and after construction and include appropriate mitigation measures.

Project Construction. The EIR/EA should analyze how the Project construction impacts existing pedestrian, transit, bicycle, and vehicle travel (including emergency vehicles) and existing access to businesses and their operations along the corridor; identify plans to restrict, detour, or close existing routes during and after construction; and include appropriate mitigation measures and notifications to local businesses/residents.

AIR QUALITY/HERITAGE TREES

Air Quality. The EIR/EA should analyze how air quality conditions are affected along the corridor and to adjacent neighborhoods during construction and after the Project has been constructed, and include appropriate mitigation measures.

Heritage Trees. The EIR/EA should identify impacts to Heritage trees and other City trees, and should identify appropriate mitigation measures to the City's significant investment in landscaped medians along ECR.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The City requests the attached public comments addressed to the City of Mountain View be officially accepted, fully addressed, and published in the Project's EIR/EA document.

The City is submitting these comments to ensure the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review processes for the proposed El Camino Real BRT Project are conducted thoroughly with all potential environmental impacts and benefits of the Project within Mountain View fully and accurately analyzed and disclosed.

The City requests notification of additional opportunities to provide input into and review the Draft EIR/EA documents as they are being prepared.

Ms. Christina Jaworski
March 7, 2013
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Please contact Project Manager Helen Kim (helen.kim@mountainview.gov) or Transportation and Business Manager Linda Forsberg (linda.forsberg@mountainview.gov) to coordinate future City participation and input into the environmental processes for the proposed El Camino Real BRT Project.

Sincerely,



Michael A. Fuller
Public Works Director

MAF/HK/7/PWK
905-02-20-13L-E

Enclosure

cc: City Council

CM, CDD, APWD—Solomon, TBM, PM—Kim, PP, TE, Chron/File

Kim, Helen

From: Kim, Helen
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2013 3:07 PM
To: 'Jaworski, Christina (Christina.Jaworski@VTA.Org)'
Subject: ECR BRT_public comment (Mark Lerner)
Attachments: VTA.PDF

Hi Christina - I am forwarding this comment on the ECR BRT project. I informed Mr. Lerner that VTA will be addressing all comments as part of the project's environmental review process. See you Thursday 2/28.
Helen

From: Mark Lerner
Sent: Monday, February 04, 2013 9:54 PM
To: , City Clerk
Subject: VTA plans to close lanes on El Camino Real

Mountain View City Council Members:

VTA is planning to remove 1 lane in each direction of El Camino and make it Bus only.
This will affect the section of El Camino from Palo Alto to San Jose (including Mountain View)
Unfortunately for most people, taking the bus to work is not practical.
The only result of this lane closure will be to

- a) Cause congestion on El Camino
- b) Cause traffic to be diverted to other streets generating commute traffic in residential areas.

Anything you can do to prevent this lane closure would be appreciated.
The attached document provides details of the plan along with Public meeting dates and locations.

Thanks

Mark Lerner

COPIES TO COUNCIL, CM, CA & ACM, PWD, BTM Forsberg, PM Kim

From: Kathleen Stukenborg
Sent: Wednesday, February 20, 2013 11:37 AM
To: , City Clerk
Subject: Proposed Change to El Camino for bike and bus lanes

To the Mountain View City Council,

My name is Kathleen Stukenborg and I'm a resident of Mountain View. I am writing to oppose the proposed change to El Camino for the addition of bike lanes and bus lanes while reducing car lanes. While I am pro-bike lanes and pro public transit, I do not think that this proposal is the right way to solve our traffic, smog and safety problems.

I'm hopeful that we can hold out for a better solution that will both allow for better commuting in addition to allowing for improving traffic for an already horrible commute along El Camino. I would not support anything that makes traffic worse and that would force people to actually start using more residential streets for their commute. Other solutions that would take out the on-street parking, rather than taking out the actual extra lane of traffic would be a better solution.

Thank you for your support.

Kathleen Stukenborg

From:
Sent: Wednesday, February 20, 2013 4:58 PM
To: , City Clerk
Subject: about reducing lanes on El Camino

Hi

I am a long time resident of Mountain View and graduate of LMV. I like this city a lot and generally like the decisions that the city makes.

I am concerned about reducing lanes on El Camino.

My concerns:

1. There are days that with the current number of lanes, traffic is very backed up all along El Camino in Mountain View.
2. I could support this if bus ridership were good and/or rising, but most busses do not look full and I do not feel they warrant their own lane in our city.
3. I have worked in different locations in the bay area and none of them would have been supported by a bus route. I do not see others who commute using the busses and reducing the lanes on El Camino would make that part of the commute that much slower. (This is just one small part of a leg of a longer commute--so it would add up). I have commuted using Caltrain, so I am not opposed to alternative means of commuting.
4. When Los Altos reduced the number of lanes on El Monte approaching Foothill Expressway (from two lanes to one!)--this greatly impacted commute time and the number of cycles of lights that drivers need to sit through to cross Foothill (especially during school crossing hours which overlap with commute hours). I can see the same impact with this El Camino lane reduction. Already going south (and probably north, too) on El Camino, it can take several cycles of lights to cross Calderon and Grant--and this is with three lanes of traffic. Admittedly, the busses slow down traffic in the right lane, but at least it is still available to use.

I appreciate if you can take my concerns into account when deciding on this.

Sincerely,

A concerned resident and supporter of the city of Mountain View.

From: Lea Hallert
Sent: Thursday, February 21, 2013 11:49 AM
To: , City Clerk
Subject: Traffic on El Camino and all of hte new development

Hello;

I have been a voting MV resident for 15 years. I am emailing to express my frustration with the current state of traffic and development in my city.

1. I find it hard to believe that we're considering taking El Camino from 3 lanes to 2 in MV for buses. If it were an expressway like Central, I could understand, but it ALREADY moves slowly. Mass transit doesn't work for most middle and upperclass residents (ie, the ones of us who pay GIANT property taxes) because they aren't close to our houses and don't take us to work in fewer than 60 minutes. Aren't there other solutions we could explore?
2. The lack of transparency and planning in the development of traffic and SCHOOL plans for 1300+ housing units in development is a shambles. That I have to find out about it via the MILKPAIL's FB posts linking to the MV voice is brutal. But more importantly, how can MV actually consider NOT putting in schooling that doesn't require crossing El Camino for the 600 kids that already cross AND the thousands that will come into the school system from all of these new units? Can MV at least offer LASD a site to put a school, since it is clearly necessary?
3. Traffic is a nightmare at El Camino and San Antonio from 5-7 pm. Where is the plan to address that, in light of possibly 3-4K more people trying to get there during traffic? Not to mention what traffic looks like in the AM at 8:25.

I sincerely hope to hear back from the Council - you guys / woman are taking a BEATING in social media. The MV Voice comments alone are tough to read. I would be glad to post any useful and thoughtful responses to my FB and share it w/ the Milkpail.

Sincerely,
Lea Hallert

From: MV Kiwanis
Sent: Sunday, February 24, 2013 7:04 AM
To: , City Clerk
Subject: Concern over Caltrain Final Design

Dear City Council,

Please take a moment to view this short news video from another metropolitan area that upgraded it's rail line through a densely populated area.

Pardon the advert at the beginning.

My concern is the above-ground versus below-ground crossings and station configurations.

Is this what we really want?

<http://boston.cbslocal.com/video/8206706-mansfield-commuters-raise-concerns-over-speed-of-acela-train/>

Thank you,

Frank Zajac
Secretary
Kiwanis Club of Mountain View

All our contact info, programs, scholarships and grants are located
at <https://www.facebook.com/KiwanisMV>

From: Gwen Byard
Sent: Sunday, February 24, 2013 10:01 AM
To: , City Clerk
Subject: Proposal for bus lane on El Camino

Dear Mountain View City Council,

I saw a mailer and have read in the newspaper about a proposal to reserve lanes on El Camino for buses only. This seems like a very poor idea and I hope that you oppose it passing through Mountain View.

I drive on El Camino every day to get to 101 to go to work, and it is already very congested. It would be even more congested with removing two car lanes, and would only move car traffic onto other side streets. My work is not close to El Camino, and I don't see myself ever using an El Camino bus service. It seems to me that not many people are using the buses, and I don't think a 30% bus travel time improvement from Palo Alto to San Jose would compel a lot more people to use the buses. Also, we already have Cal Train going along a similar corridor.

I am OK with timing the lights for the buses and making El Camino more pedestrian friendly. You can do this without reducing the number of car lanes available.

Please do not vote in favor of this plan - I am usually in favor of adding public transportation options, but this one appears to be very ill-conceived and not provide much benefit.

thank you,

Gwen Byard

From: Serge Bonte m]
Sent: Thursday, March 07, 2013 8:24 AM
To: ECRBRT@vta.org
Cc: community.outreach@vta.org; Council - Inks; Bryant, Ronit; Council - Kasperzak
Subject: Public Comments on El Camino BRT Environmental Studies Scope & Content

I attended the 02/28/2013 evening meeting in Mountain View and wanted to submit my public comments.

1. re: Project Alternatives - Ridership and Cost slide

1.1 I would like to see for each alternative an estimate of SJ-PA commuting time as it's a key factor in determining the cost/benefit of each alternative

1.2 I would like two additional options added:

1.2.1 Super Long Dedicated Lane (all the way to Palo Alto Traffic Center). During the meeting, it was said that this option was discarded as not being cost effective, the public ought to know the data that led to this decision.

1.2.2 "Priority Lane" where instead of a central dedicated lane, buses would ride in the foremost right lane that could be reserved for all VTA buses, shuttles, corporate buses, VTA vans, school buses, even taxis....

2. I wouldn't bother studying the long dedicated lane, it's really not cost effective to the tune of 74M for an additional 1,000 additional BRT riders. Also, while having dedicated lanes "might" improve the BRT lane, it WILL negatively affect any other mass transit since city wide shuttles, non rapid VTA lanes, corporate buses... would also lose one lane of traffic. Should you decide to study this option, make sure you study the impact on the other mass transit (existing and future) using El Camino.

3. Mixed flow has my preference because it seems really cost effective and would improve ALL mass transit on El Camino not just BRT. Maybe complement it with priority lanes for ALL buses (VTA, corporate, community shuttles, school buses...)?

Sincerely,

Serge Bonte

PS: I copied the members of the Mountain View Transportation Committee.

