

From: Board.Secretary

Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2015 8:20 AM

To: VTA Board of Directors

Subject: From VTA: Open letter addressed to Alum Rock area and businesses

VTA Board of Directors:

Attached for your reference is an open letter addressed to the Alum Rock area residents and businesses from Perry Woodward, VTA Board of Directors' Chairperson.

If you have any questions, please reply to this message.

Thank you.

Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority

3331 N. First Street

San Jose, CA 95134

408.321.5680

board.secretary@vta.org



September 29, 2015

An Open Letter to Alum Rock Area Residents and Businesses:

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority's (VTA) Alum Rock Bus Rapid Transit Project experienced an unprecedented and extremely challenging period of construction culminating in a safety shutdown in July 2015. The VTA board and staff sincerely apologize for the inconvenience and impact to your vibrant and well-established community and to the small local businesses in the area. It is unfortunate that this important transportation infrastructure project brought disruption to this vital East San José neighborhood. The purpose and intent of the project is to enhance the community with increased mobility and substantial long-term benefits.

A number of incidents and concerns led VTA to the difficult and unusual decision of halting work with the prime contractor constructing the project. Some of the conditions faced by VTA and its contractor included

- Unmarked utilities, some over 100 years old, during utility relocation and excavation,
- Wet, unsuitable soil conditions during repaving,
- Changes in design to include shelter and new curb and gutter, and
- Delays in materials, third party utility relocations, and procurements.

This week VTA resumed work in the project corridor. As we move forward in completing the project, VTA is taking new measures to mitigate and avoid as many unforeseen conditions as possible. We will continue our robust community outreach to keep the community informed of our progress and upcoming events. We are committed to delivering this project to the community by next Fall. The schedule is posted on our website, and we will update you regularly.

Again, we apologize for the unusual disruption and want you to know we will make every effort to minimize the impact on the community as we complete this important project bringing a major investment to East San José.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Perry Woodward", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Perry Woodward
Chairperson, VTA Board of Directors

From: Board.Secretary

Sent: Thursday, October 01, 2015 2:15 PM

To: VTA Board of Directors

Subject: Comments from Members of the Public In Response to the Open Letter to the Alum Rock Community

VTA Board of Directors:

Please see attached comments from Members of the Public in response to the open letter to the Alum Rock Area residents and businesses from Chairperson Perry Woodward (letter provided to the Board of Directors via e-mail on September 30, 2015).

Thank you.

Office of the Board Secretary

Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority

3331 N. First Street

San Jose, CA 95134

408.321.5680

board.secretary@vta.org

From: Davide Vieira
Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2015 6:13 PM
To: Podrasky, Kathleen
Cc: 'Joseph B. Vieira'
Subject: RE: Santa Clara-Alum Rock BRT Project: Letter to Alum Rock Area Residents and Businesses

Kathleen,

I don't have difficulty with the links, I have difficulty believing the bulleted "reasons".

The most egregious is the first bullet, which is refuted in this VTA memo:

Date: September 14, 2015
Current Meeting: September 17, 2015
Board Meeting: October 1, 2015

BOARD MEMORANDUM

TO: Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority Administration and Finance Committee
THROUGH: General Manager, Nuria I. Fernandez
FROM: Director of Engr. & Trans. Infrastructure Dev., Carolyn M. Gonot
SUBJECT: Amend the C831 Property Restoration and Completion Contract for Santa Clara-Alum Rock Bus Rapid Transit Project with George Bianchi Construction, Inc.

In the Discussion section, the memo states:

On July 13, 2015, VTA issued a safety shutdown for all field activities on the main civil/stations contract (C830) after the contractor, GTGC, struck a **marked gas line**. This was followed by a Notice of Default sent to GTGC on July 29, 2015. GTGC has denied that it is in default of the Contract. On September 10, 2015, VTA and GTGC entered into a Closeout Agreement for the resolution of the dispute and the prompt and orderly closeout and demobilization of GTGC from the Project.

So you see, Kathleen, I have a problem believing what VTA communicates to the community. The bullet could have truthfully said, "Marked and unmarked utilities..."

Regards,
Davide

All you leave behind are memories -- make them good ones

PLEASE NOTE: This message, including any attachments, may include privileged, confidential and/or inside information. Any distribution or use of this communication by anyone other than the intended recipient(s) is strictly prohibited and may be unlawful. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify the sender by replying to this message and then delete it from your system. Thank you.

From: Podrasky, Kathleen
Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2015 5:55 PM
To: Podrasky, Kathleen
Subject: Santa Clara-Alum Rock BRT Project: Letter to Alum Rock Area Residents and Businesses

Greetings,

The following message is being sent to you on behalf of Perry Woodward, Chairperson, VTA Board of Directors. To print or download the letter in a pdf format, please select the following of the two links below:

- [Letter to Alum Rock Residents and Businesses](#) (Spanish)
- [Letter to Alum Rock Residents and Businesses](#) (English)

If you have any difficulty with the links, please let me know and I will resend it to you as an attachment.

Thank you.
Kathleen



September 29, 2015

An Open Letter to Alum Rock Area Residents and Businesses:

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority's (VTA) Alum Rock Bus Rapid Transit Project experienced an unprecedented and extremely challenging period of construction culminating in a safety shutdown in July 2015. The VTA board and staff sincerely apologize for the inconvenience and impact to your vibrant and well-established community and to the small local businesses in the area. It is unfortunate that this important transportation infrastructure project brought disruption to this vital East San José neighborhood. The purpose and intent of the project is to enhance the community with increased mobility and substantial long-term benefits.

A number of incidents and concerns led VTA to the difficult and unusual decision of halting work with the prime contractor constructing the project. Some of the conditions faced by VTA and its contractor included

- Unmarked utilities, some over 100 years old, during utility relocation and excavation,
- Wet, unsuitable soil conditions during repaving,
- Changes in design to include shelter and new curb and gutter, and
- Delays in materials, third party utility relocations, and procurements.

This week VTA resumed work in the project corridor. As we move forward in completing the project, VTA is taking new measures to mitigate and avoid as many unforeseen conditions as possible. We will continue our robust community outreach to keep the community informed of our progress and upcoming

events. We are committed to delivering this project to the community by next Fall. The schedule is posted on our website, and we will update you regularly.

Again, we apologize for the unusual disruption and want you to know we will make every effort to minimize the impact on the community as we complete this important project bringing a major investment to East San José.

Yours truly,

Perry Woodward
Chairperson, VTA Board of Directors

From: Bacalhau Grill & Trade Rite Market

Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2015 6:28 PM

To: Podrasky, Kathleen; peter Bacalhau Grill & Trade Rite Market

Subject: Re: Santa Clara-Alum Rock BRT Project: Letter to Alum Rock Area Residents and Businesses

" important project bringing a major investment to East San José." at the cost of the small business owners that have been losing customers for about 15 Months and counting.... this is the same message that we have been getting from VTA from the beginning of this project. We "small business owners" need assurance from VTA that we will be taken care of financially for lost revenue do to the lack of management from VTA on this project. DID VTA REALLY THINK FROM HE BEGINING OF THIS PROJECT THAT WE BUSINESS OWNERS COULD GO THIS LONG LOSING UP TO 30% OF OUR BUSINESS AND SURVIVE? Just asking....

Regards,

Luis Lourenco

Bacalhau Grill & Trade Rite Market

On Wed, Sep 30, 2015 at 5:54 PM, Podrasky, Kathleen wrote: _____

Greetings,

The following message is being sent to you on behalf of Perry Woodward, Chairperson, VTA Board of Directors. To print or download the letter in a pdf format, please select the following of the two links below:

* Letter to Alum Rock Residents and Businesses<http://vtaorgcontent.s3-us-west-1.amazonaws.com/Site_Content/Alum%20Rock%20BRT%20Letter%20Woodward_Spanish.pdf> (Spanish)

* Letter to Alum Rock Residents and Businesses<http://vtaorgcontent.s3-us-west-1.amazonaws.com/Site_Content/Alum%20Rock%20BRT%20Letter-Woodward.pdf> (English)

If you have any difficulty with the links, please let me know and I will resend it to you as an attachment.

Thank you.

Kathleen

[Description: Description: VTAhorz]

September 29, 2015

An Open Letter to Alum Rock Area Residents and Businesses:

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority's (VTA) Alum Rock Bus Rapid Transit Project experienced an unprecedented and extremely challenging period of construction culminating in a safety shutdown in July 2015. The VTA board and staff sincerely apologize for the inconvenience and impact to your vibrant and well-established community and to the small local businesses in the area. It is unfortunate that this important transportation infrastructure project brought disruption to this vital East San José neighborhood. The purpose and intent of the project is to enhance the community with increased mobility and substantial long-term benefits.

A number of incidents and concerns led VTA to the difficult and unusual decision of halting work with the prime contractor constructing the project. Some of the conditions faced by VTA and its contractor included

- * Unmarked utilities, some over 100 years old, during utility relocation and excavation,
- * Wet, unsuitable soil conditions during repaving,
- * Changes in design to include shelter and new curb and gutter, and
- * Delays in materials, third party utility relocations, and procurements.

This week VTA resumed work in the project corridor. As we move forward in completing the project, VTA is taking new measures to mitigate and avoid as many unforeseen conditions as possible. We will continue our robust community outreach to keep the community informed of our progress and upcoming events. We are committed to delivering this project to the community by next Fall. The schedule is posted on our website, and we will update you regularly.

Again, we apologize for the unusual disruption and want you to know we will make every effort to minimize the impact on the community as we complete this important project bringing a major investment to East San José.

Yours truly,

Perry Woodward
Chairperson, VTA Board of Directors

From: Board.Secretary
Sent: Monday, September 28, 2015 3:36 PM
To: erickrock
Subject: El Camino BRT Traffic Analysis

To Mr. Eric Krock, Keep Sunnyvale Beautiful:

The Board Chair has asked me to respond to your recent email on behalf of VTA. We received your question regarding the El Camino Real BRT Corridor project and would like to thank you for your interest in the project. As part of the traffic analysis, VTA did not perform a traffic micro-simulation of the kind you described in your inquiry. Traffic analysis was accomplished using a combination of the VTA Countywide travel demand model, implemented using the CUBE travel modeling software, and standard practice traffic level-of-service analysis software SYNCHRO. These analysis tools are considered to be modern and quite capable of identifying project level impacts and benefits suitable for preparation of environmental documentation and impact analysis. Subsequent to the release of the El Camino Real BRT Draft Environmental Impact Report, VTA authorized an independent third party review to provide assurances that VTA followed established practices in the development of the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the El Camino Real Bus Rapid Transit Project. This independent third party review was conducted by a Steering Committee of distinguished researchers and the private consulting firm Iteris. The Steering Committee concluded the following:

- The Steering Committee finds that the Draft Environmental Impact Report provided the necessary analysis for decision makers to make an informed decision on the project.
- The Independent Third Party review validated the assumptions incorporated in VTA's travel demand model and the projections produced by the model.
- The Independent Third Party review concludes that VTA's traffic analysis methodology is sound.
- The Independent Third Party review finds that the analysis for the El Camino Real Bus Rapid Transit Project is comparable to analyses conducted for other similar bus rapid transit projects around the nation and that VTA's analysis went above and beyond requirements in some areas.

The independent review and Steering Committee findings are available to the public. Both documents can be found at the following web address:

<http://www.vta.org/News-and-Media/Connect-with-VTA/Independent-Study-Validates-El-Camino-BRT-Project-Environmental-Analysis#.VgMdcctVhBc>

We welcome your review and comment on the independent review report.

Again, thank you for your inquiry and feel free to contact us if you have additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely

Jim Lawson

-----Original Message-----

From: Eric Krock

Sent: Sunday, September 20, 2015 6:26 PM

To: [perry.woodward](#); Chavez, Cindy; [ash.kalra](#); [Johnny.khamis](#); [magdalena.carrasco](#); [Rose.Herrera](#); [sam.liccardo](#); [richlarsen](#); [jasonb](#); [dwhittum](#); [jesteves](#); Yeager, Ken; [raul.peralez](#); [jbruins](#); [hmiller](#); [larry.carr](#); [mayorandcouncil@santaclara](#); Cortese, Dave; [VTABoardofDirectors](#)

Subject: El Camino BRT: have you done a modern traffic flow simulation, simulating the behavior of each car?

Dear Members of the VTA - After reading the El Camino BRT Traffic Operations Analysis Report (8/6/14), I'm concerned that your study methodology appears to have a fundamental flaw. It appears to be an "intersection/signal-centric" analysis methodology rather than a modern traffic flow simulation that individually simulates the actual behavior of thousands of cars, buses, and trucks flowing through the highway (not just at intersection points) with various driver behavioral profiles.

Did VTA in fact conduct a modern software simulation that defines thousands of virtual cars, trucks, and buses, defines multiple driver behavioral profiles, assigns the behavioral profiles to the virtual vehicles, and then simulates each individual vehicle's behavior and the interactions of all the vehicles with each other? Did VTA further perform a "Monte Carlo" simulation approach where the simulation is run numerous times and the results weighted and combined to attempt to average a real-world distribution of nonlinear outcome states?

Such a simulation is **not** the same as simply counting the number of transits and turns at each intersection and then modeling the effect of the proposed changes on the transit/turn "counts" for each intersection, which is what your staff appear to have done using Synchro as they describe in their report. (And to be clear, a simplistic driver behavior profile of the propensity to turn or not, which is all that the company describes on their web site, is also no substitute.)

No reference to such a modern traffic flow driver behavioral simulation is made in your report. If VTA has done such a simulation, please reply by the end of day Tuesday 9/22 and provide me with information about that simulation and its results, including answers to all of the following:

1. What software and/or consulting company was used for the driver behavioral simulation?
2. How many driver behavioral profiles were defined and what were the associated behaviors?
3. How many vehicles of each type were modeled?
4. What was the distribution of driver behavioral profiles across the simulated vehicles?
5. How many times was the simulation run, and what modifications were made to the starting conditions and simulation parameters for each run of the simulation?
6. How was each run of the simulation weighted to produce a weighted average estimate of the outcome?

As you are hopefully aware, traffic analysis and simulation research in the last decade has shown that the flow of traffic on a road is similar to the flow of water through a pipe. It is a chaotic system in which the system's behavior is nonlinear and can be heavily affected by small changes in starting conditions or seemingly small events. Moreover, driver behavior is not uniform. Drivers are not all rational maximizers. Some drive too close to nearby drivers, then brake sharply, propagating braking delays backward in the system. Some change lanes in attempts to get ahead; others remain within their lane.

Driver behavior also changes when they are stressed by factors like delivery vehicles stopped on the road blocking traffic, accidents, congestion, and traffic jams.

The only way to realistically assess the response of such a complex, nonlinear system to changes in its design (such as reassigning two lanes to be BRT only, forcing all remaining traffic into the remaining four lanes) is to model the system with a realistic simulation integrating a model of driver psychology and behavior.

Silicon Valley is the world capital of the software industry, including countless companies such as Google that are leaders in sophisticated simulation and analysis and who have a stake in seeing that traffic gets no worse than is avoidable. You could readily put together a public-private partnership to perform a realistic traffic flow simulation and, if you have not done so, should do so. It would be irresponsible to commit to spend \$234M of taxpayer money on a major modification to the El Camino Real artery without using readily available simulation software and methods to attempt to realistically model the outcome of this plan.

If you choose to move forward on this plan without performing such a realistic software simulation, then you will be running a \$234M simulation in the real world with all the drivers and riders of the South Bay and the taxpayers' money. Public transit projects, including those performed by VTA in the past such as light rail, are replete with examples of major projects that failed to have the expected effects. Any sane taxpayer would prefer to spend \$1-2M running a realistic simulation and finding out in advance with a realistic, valid methodology what the likely effects of this plan are before committing \$234M on a bet that it will work as hoped by its promoters. You are stewards of the taxpayers' money. Please act accordingly.

If I do not receive a reply from you by Tuesday 9/22 with whatever information you are able to provide about the parameters and outcome of such a modern driver behavioral simulation, I will have to assume that VTA has in fact performed no modern behavioral traffic flow simulation and is therefore flying blind on the actual likely effects of the proposed \$234M BRT plan, relying on an out-of-date intersection/turn-centric simulation methodology, and I will have no choice but to attempt to make the widest possible audience aware of the apparent limitations of VTA's current modeling approach. I await your response.

Sincerely,

Eric Krock
Keep Sunnyvale Beautiful

From: MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Sent: Saturday, September 26, 2015 8:59 PM

To: Board.Secretary

Subject: Please support Bus Rapid Transit on El Camino Real

VTA Board Members

I urge you to support Alternative 4C for the El Camino Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project.

Efficient and reliable public transportation, better bike lanes, and safer sidewalks for walking along El Camino Real will give us an alternative to sitting in traffic and help address the rising cost of living and the escalating threat of climate change.

We cannot afford to continue with the unsustainable status quo of one person per car, especially with a half a million more people expected to call Santa Clara County home by 2040. A recent audit proves that 900 cars per lane would no longer use El Camino Real if BRT were an option.

The proposed El Camino Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project is an opportunity to move people with fewer cars, make better use of our roads, and offer us all better ways to get around.

As the recent independent review of VTA's traffic analysis shows, BRT with transit-only lanes will cut travel times by bus by an impressive 40 minutes from Palo Alto to San Jose! That's a far cry from opponents' claims that it will "slow traffic to a near standstill."

As a voter with roots in Santa Clara County, I have seen firsthand the difficulties of getting around today especially without a vehicle. We can easily do better.

Now is the time for your bold leadership to support world-class transportation options. I urge you to champion BRT with transit-only lanes along El Camino Real.

Thank you for your work to make Santa Clara County a better place for us all to live, work, and get around.

Sincerely,

** The correspondence above was received from the following individuals. Additional comments in the email, if any, are included below the individual's name. Senders are from various jurisdictions as noted. The comments were copied and pasted as is; no edits were made.

Calley Wang
Cupertino, CA

As a voter with roots in Santa Clara County, I have seen firsthand the difficulties of getting around today especially without a vehicle. We can easily do better.

John Holtzclaw
San Francisco, CA

Nritkaar Dhesi
Berkeley, CA

Lindi Ramsden
San Jose, CA

Megan Moran
San Francisco, CA

Kaitlin Walker
Santa Clara, CA

When I moved to Santa Clara, I was committed to biking or taking transit for most trips. I've gradually given up as traveling with a young child is so much harder in so many ways without a car. BRT solves many of these problems and would lead me to use transit for more than half my trips. People with children need dependable transit and frequent transit, as well as easy and safe boarding, because kids are unpredictable and impatient. Please do everything you can to make BRT happen in order to reduce car trips, improve our air quality, and improve the daily lives of everyone who depends on transit daily.

Vrinda Manglik
Oakland, CA

Michelle Rousey
Oakland, CA

Lee Reis
Berkeley, CA

Lauren Benetua
Mountain View, CA

Pat Schwinn
Oakland, CA

Jeremy Caves
Palo Alto, CA

Hitesh Soneji
San Francisco, CA

Jonathan Evans
Oakland, CA

Jennifer Willis
San Francisco, CA

Paul Bendix
San Francisco, CA

Kelly Snidet
San Jose, CA

Don't cave to the NIMBYs, who believe open auto lanes are a "right" granted to them when they bought their ranch House direct from the builder, in 1968. We must be bold for the 21st-century, and design forward-looking community with real transportation options, that gets us out of our isolating, congestion get, smog producing cars.

Tyler Wood
Oakland, CA 94612

Kaj Rekola
Mountain View, CA

Tim O'Brien
Belmont, CA

Bruce Dughi
Castro Valley, CA

Grant Grundler
Mountain View, CA

Eileen Menteer
Mountain View, CA

Let's become a real city. Let's have dedicated bus lanes and lanes for bikes. It's not the suburbs now.

Dan Leaverton
Berkeley, CA

Risa Jensen
Redwood City, CA

Rajeev Negi
Brentwood, CA

Stella Yip
San Francisco, CA

Jenn Gross
San Francisco, CA

Max Sadrieh
San Jose, CA

Kenneth Rosales
San Jose, CA

Karl Sveinsson,
Life-long San Jose Resident, Transit User, Landscape Architect and Urbanist
San Jose, CA

I'm in Berlin, Germany as I write this letter in support of Alternative 4C for the El Camino BRT project. Here, in a city of over 3.5 million people, most major thoroughfares have bus only lanes, separate bike paths (not lanes in the street), wide sidewalks, beautiful street trees, parking and central planted medians - the reason this is possible is because they don't waste space on individuals driving to work.

Think about the place, not the project. We want mixed use buildings with affordable apartment homes over retail lining bustling and beautiful streets in beautiful, affordable and sustainable neighborhoods. The only way this vision works is with fast, frequent and reliable transit: BRT, street cars, light rail or subways.

This project, to bring real (dedicated lanes) BRT to the El Camino Real, must be about people walking, supporting local retail and relying on transit and not about moving the same amount of cars through a given area at speeds similar to today.

Sue Harrison
Sunnyvale, CA

Charles Malarkey
Vallejo, CA

Rita Welsh
Sunnyvale, CA

As a person who commutes from Sunnyvale to Stanford, three times a week and as an older adult who would like to not drive as much, I urge you to support Alternative 4C for the El Camino Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project.

Anjali Mehta
Milpitas, CA

Todd Pierce
Mountain View, CA

David Beezer
San Francisco, CA

Emma Shlaes

Ed Maurer
Santa Clara, CA

As someone who has lived and worked in Santa Clara County for many years, I urge you to support Alternative 4C for the El Camino Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project. I live less than one mile from El Camino Real, yet avoid the businesses there because safe walking and biking facilities in that corridor are so lacking.

Terry Higgins
Mountain View, CA

After reading the independent report, I believe Alternative 4C is the best option for the El Camino BRT project. The same option gives both the best trip time and the lowest operating cost.

Lowest trip time means more people choosing to use the service, diverting them from their cars. Fewer cars means safer pedestrian experience, and more foot traffic for businesses. People shopping by bus are also more free to get off at one stop, and walk by other businesses on their way to the next, since they don't have to return to the same for-customers-only parking lot.

Lowest operating cost means more money left to add related improvements, to mitigate diverted traffic, or to increase service levels. Increasing service levels would divert more car trips onto buses, making the route more attractive to pedestrians and maybe someday safe enough for bikes.

Businesses pay enough rent to operate on El Camino that they should expect better frontage than this pedestrian-hostile highway.

From: Christyldc

Sent: Friday, September 25, 2015 4:25 PM

To: perry.woodward; cindy.chavez; ash.kalra; Johnny.khamis; magdalena.carrasco; Rose.Herrera; sam.liccardo; findrichlarsen; jasonb; dwhittum; Esteves, Jose; Ken.Yeager; raul.peralez; jbruins; hmiller; larry.carr; mayorandcouncil@santaclaraca.gov; dave.cortese; VTA Board of Directors
Subject: El Camino BRT proposal

I would like to express my disapproval of the BRT proposal for El Camino Real, specifically the one reducing auto traffic lanes and dedicating them to the bus.

We live within three blocks of El Camino, in Sunnyvale. We make many local trips on El Camino each week, perhaps several in any given day. The grocery store, the gym, the library, the dog park, my friends' houses, the community garden, are all local trips my husband and I take that involve short or medium length trips on El Camino. I also operate a small business and El Camino figures in deliveries to many of my customers.

Few or none of these trips are feasible by bus now or will ever be. I am not going to walk five minutes to El Camino to wait ten or fifteen minutes for a bus to take trip that can be completed by car in 10 minutes total, especially if I have four bags of groceries to lug home. Certainly I can't deliver my small business' product to my customers by bus.

The idea that removing a lane each way on El Camino will not adversely impact traffic is ludicrous to those of us who use it frequently for local trips. Traffic backs up into the intersection at the corner of El Camino and Hollenbeck on any given weekday evening around 5:30, even with three lanes each way.

The proposal appears to disregard local community needs and concerns while attempting to speed up long-distance bus rides between San Jose and Palo Alto. We have a perfect alternative for that commute already in Caltrain.

Sincerely,
Louise Christy
Sunnyvale

From: Serge Bonte

Sent: Sunday, September 27, 2015 5:36 PM

To: jbruins; Siegel, Lenny; cory.wolbach; supervisor.simitian; jamie.matthewst; David Whittum; Pierluigi.Oliverio; supervisor.yeagerg; Board.Secretary

Cc: Inks, John; McAlister, John; mprochnow; Zanardi, Kristine; liz.kniss

Subject: ECR PAB 9/30/15 Meeting - In favor of transit priority "lanes" for all transit users

(my apologies for resending this email, some recipients informed me that the body of my email didn't come across)

Dear Charrperson Bruins

Dear ECR PAB Members

I am very concerned with VTA's blind and Pyrrhic insistence on pushing - over many objections- the costliest, most disruptive and most decisive alternative for the ECR BRT project; median traffic lanes exclusively dedicated to one and only one express bus line: 522.

My concern is foremost for my community (Mountain View has a lot on its plate, ECR BRT has become a huge distraction with questionable benefits) but also for the Envision Silicon Valley tax measure (*).

I am also frustrated because despite all the divisions displayed in public meeting after public meeting, there is plenty of documented consensus to build upon.

Virtually everyone supports the mixed-flow alternative. There also seems to be a common sense consensus that emergency vehicles and other (non BRT) transit users would benefit from less congested lanes on El Camino Real

Why not start from there? And propose an HOV type lane (possibly restricted to transit at rush hour) opened to all transit. with enhanced boarding at select stops and enhanced signalization.

That alternative would not provide the projected travel time improvements for VTA's favored bus line (522) but it would enhance travel times for ALL ECR transit users (Express and local, public and private shuttles, even carpools...). And if it were to use the right lanes of travel, that alternative could be implemented much faster, incrementally, at a fraction of the cost and without many of the negatives the community is rightfully concerned about (spill-over traffic in

neighborhoods, left-turn elimination, multi-year construction, under-utilization of 2 lanes of traffic....).

Please don't be afraid of consensus and select a priority transit right lane for all as your preferred alternative.

Respectfully

Serge Bonte
Mountain View CA

(*) That tax measure has already plenty of headwind as it is:

- North County's lackluster return on political and financial investment from past tax measures.
- Lassitude over yet another regressive sales tax increase... pushed once more by a business organization whose members don't typically produce anything subject to the sales tax, have a full department devoted to tax optimization/avoidance and are responsible for a large portion of the County's transportation needs.
- Concerns over the perceived performance of some past projects: Light Rail and just recently the BRT segment in Alum Rock (1.5+ years late and over budget). See: <http://www.sanjoseinside.com/2015/09/24/vta-fires-contractor-over-safety-issues-on-east-side-bus-route/>

From: Eric Krock

Sent: Sunday, September 20, 2015 6:26 PM

To: perry.woodward; Chavez, Cindy; ash.kalra; Johnny.khamis; magdalena.carrasco; Rose.Herrera; sam.liccardo; findrichlarsen; jasonb; dwhittum; jesteves; Yeager, Ken; raul.peralez; jbruins; hmiller; larry.carr; mayorandcouncil@santaclaraca.gov; Cortese, Dave; VTABoardofDirectors@vta.org

Subject: El Camino BRT: have you done a modern traffic flow simulation, simulating the behavior of each car?

Dear Members of the VTA - After reading the El Camino BRT Traffic Operations Analysis Report (8/6/14), I'm concerned that your study methodology appears to have a fundamental flaw. It appears to be an "intersection/signal-centric" analysis methodology rather than a modern traffic flow simulation that individually simulates the actual behavior of thousands of cars, buses, and trucks flowing through the highway (not just at intersection points) with various driver behavioral profiles.

Did VTA in fact conduct a modern software simulation that defines thousands of virtual cars, trucks, and buses, defines multiple driver behavioral profiles, assigns the behavioral profiles to the virtual vehicles, and then simulates each individual vehicle's behavior and the interactions of

all the vehicles with each other? Did VTA further perform a “Monte Carlo” simulation approach where the simulation is run numerous times and the results weighted and combined to attempt to average a real-world distribution of nonlinear outcome states?

Such a simulation is **not** the same as simply counting the number of transits and turns at each intersection and then modeling the effect of the proposed changes on the transit/turn “counts” for each intersection, which is what your staff appear to have done using Synchro as they describe in their report. (And to be clear, a simplistic driver behavior profile of the propensity to turn or not, which is all that the company describes on their web site, is also no substitute.)

No reference to such a modern traffic flow driver behavioral simulation is made in your report. If VTA has done such a simulation, please reply by the end of day Tuesday 9/22 and provide me with information about that simulation and its results, including answers to all of the following:

1. What software and/or consulting company was used for the driver behavioral simulation?
2. How many driver behavioral profiles were defined and what were the associated behaviors?
3. How many vehicles of each type were modeled?
4. What was the distribution of driver behavioral profiles across the simulated vehicles?
5. How many times was the simulation run, and what modifications were made to the starting conditions and simulation parameters for each run of the simulation?
6. How was each run of the simulation weighted to produce a weighted average estimate of the outcome?

As you are hopefully aware, traffic analysis and simulation research in the last decade has shown that the flow of traffic on a road is similar to the flow of water through a pipe. It is a chaotic system in which the system’s behavior is nonlinear and can be heavily affected by small changes in starting conditions or seemingly small events. Moreover, driver behavior is not uniform. Drivers are not all rational maximizers. Some drive too close to nearby drivers, then brake sharply, propagating braking delays backward in the system. Some change lanes in attempts to get ahead; others remain within their lane. Driver behavior also changes when they are stressed by factors like delivery vehicles stopped on the road blocking traffic, accidents, congestion, and traffic jams.

The only way to realistically assess the response of such a complex, nonlinear system to changes in its design (such as reassigning two lanes to be BRT only, forcing all remaining traffic into the remaining four lanes) is to model the system with a realistic simulation integrating a model of driver psychology and behavior.

Silicon Valley is the world capital of the software industry, including countless companies such as Google that are leaders in sophisticated simulation and analysis and who have a stake in seeing that traffic gets no worse than is avoidable. You could readily put together a public-private partnership to perform a realistic traffic flow simulation and, if you have not done so, should do so. It would be irresponsible to commit to spend \$234M of taxpayer money on a major

modification to the El Camino Real artery without using readily available simulation software and methods to attempt to realistically model the outcome of this plan.

If you choose to move forward on this plan without performing such a realistic software simulation, then you will be running a \$234M simulation in the real world with all the drivers and riders of the South Bay and the taxpayers' money. Public transit projects, including those performed by VTA in the past such as light rail, are replete with examples of major projects that failed to have the expected effects. Any sane taxpayer would prefer to spend \$1-2M running a realistic simulation and finding out in advance with a realistic, valid methodology what the likely effects of this plan are before committing \$234M on a bet that it will work as hoped by its promoters. You are stewards of the taxpayers' money. Please act accordingly.

If I do not receive a reply from you by Tuesday 9/22 with whatever information you are able to provide about the parameters and outcome of such a modern driver behavioral simulation, I will have to assume that VTA has in fact performed no modern behavioral traffic flow simulation and is therefore flying blind on the actual likely effects of the proposed \$234M BRT plan, relying on an out-of-date intersection/turn-centric simulation methodology, and I will have no choice but to attempt to make the widest possible audience aware of the apparent limitations of VTA's current modeling approach. I await your response.

Sincerely,

Eric Krock
Keep Sunnyvale Beautiful

From: Board.Secretary
Sent: Monday, September 28, 2015 3:36 PM
To: Eric Krock
Subject: El Camino BRT Traffic Analysis

To Mr. Eric Krock, Keep Sunnyvale Beautiful:

The Board Chair has asked me to respond to your recent email on behalf of VTA. We received your question regarding the El Camino Real BRT Corridor project and would like to thank you for your interest in the project. As part of the traffic analysis, VTA did not perform a traffic micro-simulation of the kind you described in your inquiry. Traffic analysis was accomplished using a combination of the VTA Countywide travel demand model, implemented using the CUBE travel modeling software, and standard practice traffic level-of-service analysis software SYNCHRO. These analysis tools are considered to be modern and quite capable of identifying project level impacts and benefits suitable for preparation of environmental documentation and impact analysis. Subsequent to the release of the El Camino Real BRT Draft Environmental

Impact Report, VTA authorized an independent third party review to provide assurances that VTA followed established practices in the development of the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the El Camino Real Bus Rapid Transit Project. This independent third party review was conducted by a Steering Committee of distinguished researchers and the private consulting firm Iteris. The Steering Committee concluded the following:

- The Steering Committee finds that the Draft Environmental Impact Report provided the necessary analysis for decision makers to make an informed decision on the project.
- The Independent Third Party review validated the assumptions incorporated in VTA's travel demand model and the projections produced by the model.
- The Independent Third Party review concludes that VTA's traffic analysis methodology is sound.
- The Independent Third Party review finds that the analysis for the El Camino Real Bus Rapid Transit Project is comparable to analyses conducted for other similar bus rapid transit projects around the nation and that VTA's analysis went above and beyond requirements in some areas.

The independent review and Steering Committee findings are available to the public. Both documents can be found at the following web address:

<http://www.vta.org/News-and-Media/Connect-with-VTA/Independent-Study-Validates-El-Camino-BRT-Project-Environmental-Analysis#.VgMdcctVhBc>

We welcome your review and comment on the independent review report.

Again, thank you for your inquiry and feel free to contact us if you have additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely

Jim Lawson

-----Original Message-----

From: Calley Wang

Sent: Saturday, September 26, 2015 8:59 PM

To: Board.Secretary

Subject: Please support Bus Rapid Transit on El Camino Real

VTA Board Members

I urge you to support Alternative 4C for the El Camino Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project.

Efficient and reliable public transportation, better bike lanes, and safer sidewalks for walking along El Camino Real will give us an alternative to sitting in traffic and help address the rising cost of living and the escalating threat of climate change.

We cannot afford to continue with the unsustainable status quo of one person per car, especially with a half a million more people expected to call Santa Clara County home by 2040. A recent audit proves that 900 cars per lane would no longer use El Camino Real if BRT were an option.

The proposed El Camino Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project is an opportunity to move people with fewer cars, make better use of our roads, and offer us all better ways to get around.

As the recent independent review of VTA's traffic analysis shows, BRT with transit-only lanes will cut travel times by bus by an impressive 40 minutes from Palo Alto to San Jose! That's a far cry from opponents' claims that it will "slow traffic to a near standstill."

As a voter with roots in Santa Clara County, I have seen firsthand the difficulties of getting around today especially without a vehicle. We can easily do better.

Now is the time for your bold leadership to support world-class transportation options. I urge you to champion BRT with transit-only lanes along El Camino Real.

Thank you for your work to make Santa Clara County a better place for us all to live, work, and get around.

Sincerely,

Calley Wang

From: MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Sent: Tuesday, September 29, 2015 10:52 PM

To: Board.Secretary

Subject: Please support Bus Rapid Transit on El Camino Real

VTA Board Members

I urge you to support Alternative 4C for the El Camino Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project.

Efficient and reliable public transportation, better bike lanes, and safer sidewalks for walking along El Camino Real will give us an alternative to sitting in traffic and help address the rising cost of living and the escalating threat of climate change.

We cannot afford to continue with the unsustainable status quo of one person per car, especially with a half a million more people expected to call Santa Clara County home by 2040. A recent audit proves that 900 cars per lane would no longer use El Camino Real if BRT were an option.

The proposed El Camino Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project is an opportunity to move people with fewer cars, make better use of our roads, and offer us all better ways to get around.

As the recent independent review of VTA's traffic analysis shows, BRT with transit-only lanes will cut travel times by bus by an impressive 40 minutes from Palo Alto to San Jose! That's a far cry from opponents' claims that it will "slow traffic to a near standstill."

As a voter with roots in Santa Clara County, I have seen firsthand the difficulties of getting around today especially without a vehicle. We can easily do better.

Now is the time for your bold leadership to support world-class transportation options. I urge you to champion BRT with transit-only lanes along El Camino Real.

Thank you for your work to make Santa Clara County a better place for us all to live, work, and get around.

Sincerely,

** The correspondence above was received from the following individuals. Additional comments in the email, if any, are included below the individual's name. Senders are from various jurisdictions as noted. The comments were copied and pasted as is; no edits were made.

Elias Zamaria
San Francisco, CA 94117

JoAnne Lauer
Castro Valley, CA 94546

From: Cindy Meek
Sent: Tuesday, September 29, 2015 6:27 PM
To: VTA Board of Directors
Subject: BRT on El Camino

I urge to vote no on the dedicated lane proposal on El Camino. Transit via Caltrains is the best viable option for people commuting from San Jose to Palo Alto. The problem is lack of transit options from caltrains to places of employment. There is more value in looking towards using Caltrains as the commute option instead of focusing resources and money on dedicating lanes on El Camino.

I was born and raised in South San Jose and now live in

Sunnyvale. Cindy Meek

Sent from my iPhone

-----Original Message-----

From: Neela Srinivasan
Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2015 12:33 PM
To: Board.Secretary
Subject: Please support Bus Rapid Transit on El Camino Real

VTA Board Members

I urge you to support Alternative 4C for the El Camino Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project.

Efficient and reliable public transportation, better bike lanes, and safer sidewalks for walking along El Camino Real will give us an alternative to sitting in traffic and help address the rising cost of living and the escalating threat of climate change.

We cannot afford to continue with the unsustainable status quo of one person per car, especially with a half a million more people expected to call Santa Clara County home by 2040. A recent audit proves that 900 cars per lane would no longer use El Camino Real if BRT were an option.

The proposed El Camino Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project is an opportunity to move people with fewer cars, make better use of our roads, and offer us all better ways to get around.

As the recent independent review of VTA's traffic analysis shows, BRT with transit-only lanes will cut travel times by bus by an impressive 40 minutes from Palo Alto to San Jose! That's a far cry from opponents' claims that it will "slow traffic to a near standstill."

Now is the time for your bold leadership to support world-class transportation options. I urge you to champion BRT with transit-only lanes along El Camino Real.

Thank you for your work to make Santa Clara County a better place for us all to live, work, and get around.

Sincerely,
Neela

Neela Srinivasan

-----Original Message-----

From: Christine Hlavka

Sent: Thursday, October 01, 2015 5:05 PM

To: Board.Secretary

Subject: Please support Bus Rapid Transit on El Camino Real

VTA Board Members

I urge you to support Alternative 4C for the El Camino Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project.

Efficient and reliable public transportation, better bike lanes, and safer sidewalks for walking along El Camino Real will give us an alternative to sitting in traffic and help address the rising cost of living and the escalating threat of climate change.

We cannot afford to continue with the unsustainable status quo of one person per car, especially with a half a million more people expected to call Santa Clara County home by 2040. A recent audit proves that 900 cars per lane would no longer use El Camino Real if BRT were an option.

The proposed El Camino Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project is an opportunity to move people with fewer cars, make better use of our roads, and offer us all better ways to get around.

As the recent independent review of VTA's traffic analysis shows, BRT with transit-only lanes will cut travel times by bus by an impressive 40 minutes from Palo Alto to San Jose! That's a far cry from opponents' claims that it will "slow traffic to a near standstill."

Now is the time for your bold leadership to support world-class transportation options. I urge you to champion BRT with transit-only lanes along El Camino Real.

Thank you for your work to make Santa Clara County a better place for us all to live, work, and get around.

Sincerely,

Christine Hlavka

From: aldeivnian On Behalf Of Adina Levin
Sent: Sunday, September 27, 2015 6:00 PM
To: Board.Secretary; Board Operations
Subject: Expressway corridor management and mode shift

Dear Supervisors and Board Members,

Thank you for actively pursuing the goal to address congestion on the County's Expressways. In the process of community review of the Expressway proposals and the planning for a ballot measure, there have been some enlightening conversations that suggest opportunities to refine the planning and investment process.

Friends of Caltrain is a nonprofit with over 5,000 participants on the Peninsula Corridor from San Jose through San Francisco, supporting sustainable transportation in the region. We have been participating actively in the Envision Silicon Valley process to plan transportation investments for Santa Clara County.

An example of a potential opportunity is the Palo Alto City Council dialog regarding the options for Page Mill Road. The Expressway Plan proposes expanding the roadway and potentially adding an HOV lane. The substantial majority of the car traffic on Page Mill is travelling to and from Stanford Research Park, a major employment center with about 23,000 employees. To support the City's land use and transportation goals, City Council has requested Stanford - which has been able to achieve a drivealone rate under 50% for employees at Stanford University - to develop plans to address congestion to Stanford Research Park.

Regarding the Expressway plan, Stanford has corresponded with Palo Alto City Council, commenting that they expect TDM initiatives to reduce solo driving to be a more effective strategy to address the traffic congestion than widening the roadway.

When the Expressway plan was reviewed by Palo Alto City Council, Council members asked Expressway staff whether they might be able to help address the congestion with measures other than widening the roadway. The senior staff on the County Expressway team replied that the only tools that team had at its disposal to address congestion involved changes to the roadway capacity increase. The Expressway plan calls for nearly \$100 Million to be spent on the Page Mill corridor, and all of it must be spent on roadway capacity.

At the same time, in the Call for Projects, the VTA has submitted a new program that would support partnering with cities and jurisdictions to address congestion by reducing vehicle trips.

There appears to be a gap between the overall goals of greenhouse gas reductions, the programs in the works by VTA, cities, and private partners to address congestion via trip reduction, and the scope of the Expressway program, whose only available tool is roadway capacity expansion, which runs the risk of increasing vehicle miles traveled and GHG via induced demand.

Looking at the goals - reduced congestion and reduced greenhouse gas emissions - it is not clear how, within the organizational capabilities of the County, VTA, cities, and private partners, there

might be improved coordination to enable the consideration of a variety of options, including vehicle trip reduction and mode shift.

It seems reasonable that, trip reduction and mode shift strategies might be reasonable to consider for more than one corridor in the expressway plan. Looking at the congestion issue with multiple tools, it might be possible to identify additional opportunities for cost-effective and environmentally friendly congestion relieve with means other than roadway capacity expansion.

We hope that the various partners are able to consider these options and identify organizational opportunities to work together to consider mode shift strategies for congestion relief.

Thanks and best,

- Adina

Adina Levin
Friends of Caltrain
<http://greencaltrain.com>