

TA

CORRESPONDENCE

as of 11-02-2020

From: Bay Meadows Neighborhood Alliance
To: [Public Comment](#)
Cc: [Williams, Jennifer](#)
Subject: Public Comment letter - CAC and Board - Ped/Bike Cycle 5 Projects
Date: Monday, November 02, 2020 10:04:04 AM
Attachments: [San Mateo TA Grant Application-opposition letter from BMNA.pdf](#)

These comments are in regard to both the Nov. 3 San Mateo County TA CAC Meeting (item 5 b) and the Nov. 5 San Mateo County TA Board of Directors Meeting (item 10 b)

The Bay Meadows Neighborhood Alliance requests that the TA not approve funding for the Hillsdale Caltrain Station Bicycle Access Gap Closure Project (City of San Mateo) because it would create a dire safety hazard just east of the project area that could result in injury or deaths to bicyclists.

While we agree that the El Camino Real crossing in this location needs to be completed, the specific design proposal would force cyclists into a highly dangerous situation just east of the Project area. Specifically, the city proposal would put bicyclists onto a path that intersects a blind driveway leading from the Caltrain parking lot. (This driveway, which is under construction, will be just east of the railroad underpass). Samtrans buses and cars will be using this driveway. Busses and cars exiting won't see eastbound cyclists, who will be hidden behind the underpass wall prior to reaching the driveway. Bicyclists won't see the buses, because the wall will block visibility. Bus drivers will be looking west - away from eastbound bicyclists that the city's proposal would force into this dangerous crossing - to make the turn onto the street. This is the most dangerous possible bicycle-vehicle crossing design, as it is completely blind.

The city's proposal to install signage and paint would not provide adequate protection for children and this multilingual community. Children and non-English speakers are unlikely to understand or comply with paint and signage. Further, the lack of visibility will likely cause bicycles and buses to discount the danger posed by the project design. Instead, bicycle traffic should be routed on the south side of the road, where sight lines are adequate to prevent collisions.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Bay Meadows Neighborhood Alliance Board

Michael Goff, Wendy Malabuyo, Jennifer McAdam, Kelly Moran, Vanessa Sewell, Soheila Taghikhani, Eran Zawadski

Enclosure: Bay Meadows Neighborhood Alliance letter of opposition to the Hillsdale Caltrain station bicycle access gap closure project

BAY MEADOWS NEIGHBORHOOD ALLIANCE

Residents★Businesses★Owners

Jennifer Williams
San Mateo County Transportation Authority
1250 San Carlos Avenue
San Carlos, CA 94070
Submitted via email to williamsj@samtrans.com

RE: Oppose due to safety hazard - City of San Mateo grant application - Hillsdale Caltrain Station Bicycle Access Gap Closure project - Pedestrian and Bicycle Program Cycle 5 Call for Projects

Dear Ms. Williams,

On behalf of the Bay Meadows Neighborhood Alliance, thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the San Mateo County Transit Authority's review of the City of San Mateo's grant application for the Pedestrian and Bicycle Program Cycle 5 call for projects. Regrettably, we must oppose this project, because it would create a safety hazard that would threaten our families, particularly our children. We would support the project if it were amended to have a design that eliminates the safety hazard. We seek safety through design – not signage – because signage would not protect the lives of our children and all members of our diverse multi-lingual community.

The Bay Meadows Neighborhood Alliance (BMNA) represents residents and property owners in San Mateo's Bay Meadows transit-oriented development neighborhood, which abuts the Hillsdale Caltrain station. Our family-filled neighborhood is home to thousands of residents and workers, with about 750 homes (to grow to 1,200 homes in the next few years) and dozens of businesses. Bay Meadows was designed to be pedestrian, bicycle, and transit friendly. Bay Meadows residents take advantage of all of those modes of transportation; consequently, we have a much lower trip rate than other San Mateo residents.

The proposed project is at the western border of our neighborhood. San Mateo's 28th Ave., the street where the project is proposed, is one of the main streets in our neighborhood. While our neighborhood is pedestrian and bicycle friendly, its immediate surroundings have many gaps in the bicycle and pedestrian network. BMNA has been actively seeking improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in San Mateo so that we can access all of the community's destinations without getting in our cars.

The City's proposed Hillsdale Caltrain Station Bicycle Access Gap Closure project was intended to fill a gap in the bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure serving our neighborhood and our Caltrain station. Currently, there is no crosswalk on the north side of 28th Ave. at El Camino Real, where the Caltrain station will soon be located. There is a crosswalk on the southern side of the intersection. The lack of a crosswalk on the north side of East 28th at El Camino reduces accessibility to the train station from the west and inhibits connection between our neighborhood and the local commercial district on W. 25th Ave.

Our neighborhood strongly supports completion of the crosswalk on the north side of 28th Ave. at El Camino Real. Regrettably, we must oppose the City's proposed project because it also includes a plan to route bikes headed east onto the north side of 28th Ave. This creates a very dangerous condition when those bikes reach the east side of the train station, where a poorly placed driveway for buses and cars, just east of the view-blocking overpass, creates a dire safety hazard for anyone heading east on the north side walkway.

When bicyclists head east on the north side of 28th Ave., immediately after they pass under the overpass, bicyclists will cross a driveway that will be the sole exit driveway for all buses and drop off traffic for the busy Hillsdale Caltrain station. Because of the overpass structure, buses and other vehicles exiting the train station will not see eastbound bicyclists or pedestrians until they're actually in the driveway, right in front of vehicles. Exacerbating this is that drivers will be looking away from eastbound bicycles and pedestrians because they will be looking for vehicles coming from the east on the street before they make their right turn onto 28th Ave. Due to lack of visibility created by the underpass, crossing eastbound on the northside is far more dangerous than crossing eastbound on the south side of 28th Ave.

It design fix for the safety hazard must be part of this project. There are multiple options potentially available to design safe through passage for pedestrians and bicyclists. For example it might be possible to relocate the Caltrain driveway exit to Delaware or to widen the brief narrow part of the walkway on the south side (east of the underpass before Delaware) to eliminate the gap in a pathway that otherwise will be wide enough from El Camino to Delaware to accommodate shared bicycle and pedestrian travel.

Because this project creates a safety hazard, it does not meet the stated goal of the grant program, which are to:

- Help reduce traffic congestion by **safely** connecting communities and neighborhoods with schools, transit, and employment destinations
- Fill gaps and cross barriers in the existing bicycle/pedestrian network, and **safely** cross barriers such as major roads, rail corridors, and highways
- Improve existing facilities to make them **safer** and more accessible for cyclists and pedestrians
- Make walking and bicycling **safer** and more convenient for a wide range of ages and abilities

The safety hazard the city's proposed design would create would discourage our families from bicycling to destinations west of El Camino Real. It could actually increase driving as compared to the alternative where the crosswalk is placed without further modifications, because parents would be more likely to drive their children to these destinations to prevent their children from potentially getting hit by a bus unable to see them approaching when biking past the underpass on the path they would be forced to use under the City's design.

We greatly regret the need to send this letter of opposition. We attempted to work with staff to resolve the safety conflict when we learned about the project (which was only shortly before the application deadline), but were unsuccessful. We encourage the City of San Mateo to pursue a revised project with a broader geographic scoping area, recognizing that design changes at the 28th Ave. and El Camino Real intersection have safety implications for the entire route that pedestrians and bikes are directed into. Any project should make safety by design the top priority.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. If you have questions please do not hesitate to email us at bmneighborhoodalliance@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Bay Meadows Neighborhood Alliance Board

Michael Goff, Wendy Malabuyo, Jennifer McAdam, Kelly Moran, Vanessa Sewell,
Soheila Taghikhani, Eran Zawadski