

TA

CORRESPONDENCE

as of 11-05-2020

From: Kelly Moran
To: [Public Comment](#)
Cc: [Board \(@smcta.com\)](#)
Subject: Public Comment letter - TA Board - Ped/Bike Cycle 5 Projects
Date: Thursday, November 05, 2020 3:52:09 PM
Importance: High

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

Dear Transportation Authority board members,

This letter provides additional information regarding the request 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. I write to provide clarifying information because City of San Mateo staff provided some unclear information at the CAC meeting, and it will not be possible to respond to that information and to provide our organizations' comments during the allotted two minutes for public comment.

Clarifications:

—Although it is just a design project, approving the bicycle portion of the grant functionally approves the dangerous routing for a bicyclists. The city has not proposed to examine other design options in the grant. To prevent the safety hazard, the TA should approve only the pedestrian portions of the project. It is essential that the city re-scope the entire project to address the larger study area that is necessary to account for the majority of the bicycle traffic being through traffic, and to eliminate (not mitigate) the dangerous driveway crossing.

—It is inappropriate to force everyone biking through the area into a safety hazard for the convenience of a small number of bicyclists seeking to use a ramp to the platform. Most of the bicycle traffic through this area will be through traffic, not heading to the train station. Very little will be accessing the train station. The lowest train station access volume will be from the west, which is low density housing.

—Buses will be exiting the dangerous driveway. The Caltrain station exit driveway that poses the severe safety hazard will certainly have buses exiting it. It was designed with two entries specifically to serve Samtrans busses. Although SamTrans is unlikely to serve the station right now with its low ridership, it is inevitable that in the long-term future the station will be among the busiest in the entire system and will almost certainly be served by SamTrans. It will also be served by private commuter buses, taxis, Lyft, Uber, and private car drop off/ pick up.

— Southside driveway poses minimal hazard for bicyclists. This driveway will have low volume because it access is a dead end parking lot. Site lines

for observation of bicycles upon entry and exit are good.

—The street that this project is on has been re-designated as a bicycle Boulevard, which means that bicycles do not need to be forced onto the northside path. The street is two lanes on both sides of the El Camino Real and the underpass. The new plans respond to the heavy activity crossing the street to access the neighborhood park on the east side the underpass, which have caused a rethinking of the traffic flows in this area.

—The inclusion of this concept in the city's bicycle master plan was conceptual and was done without regard to (and we believe without knowledge of) the Caltrain driveway. No expert would endorse this dangerous design.

—There is adequate width to provide a shared bicycle pedestrian path on the southside - only a very short distance at sidewalk would need to be widened. If the city's design priorities change to include the safety of bicyclists, the unspecified engineering constraints cited by city staff may very well be removed. It may be possible to narrow the street lane slightly. It may be possible to move the short distance of retaining wall slightly, particularly because the property owner has a long record of taking action to ensure the safety of the occupants of their office buildings and homes. If necessary, the city might need to consider reducing the number of lanes through the underpass, which is designed for four lanes, but the street on both sides of th underpass is only two lanes. The street was designed anticipating more traffic from the southside driveway more through traffic that is likely to occur due to the bicycle Boulevard designation and park associated pedestrian activity. Due to the change in the train station design, that driveway will have very light use because it is a dead end parking lot.

—When the underpass construction is complete there will be four underpasses in this area for vehicles. This will be the only crossing for bicycles for more than a mile in each direction. This makes designing the bicycle part correctly exceedingly important. Vehicles will have multiple options to travel through the area. All of the other streets are designed to handle more traffic than this one. Here accommodating bicycles can be the top priority.

—It is never "best practice" to have bicycles pop out from behind the wall into the flow of traffic from a driveway. City staff cited "best practices" and some unspecified example of means to mitigate safety hazards from this very dangerous situation the city proposes to create. Bicycle design experts, including your CAC members, emphasize that all alternatives must be explored because of the danger of this design. Therei s simply no best practice for mitigating the severe hazard other than routing bicycles elsewhere.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this additional information.

My personal thanks to you for your service to our county!

Kelly Moran
President, Bay Meadows Neighborhood Alliance

Written with voice dictation software that may cause errors, some of which may be humorous