



September 26, 2017

Ms. Melissa Reggiardo
San Mateo County Transit District
P.O. Box 3006
1250 San Carlos Avenue
San Carlos CA 94070

RE: Dumbarton Transportation Corridor Study Comments

Dear Ms. Reggiardo,

Please find attached the City of Menlo Park's comments on Dumbarton Transportation Corridor Study.

The City appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Study and looks forward to SamTrans' continued leadership regarding the importance of this Corridor for transportation purposes in the mid-peninsula. Ongoing traffic congestion and limited mobility options for residents and commuters along routes approaching the Dumbarton Bridge impacts quality of life for all users of these roadways. In particular, the area bounded by Willow Road, Bay Road, and Marsh Road including the Belle Haven, Willows, Lorelei Manor, Flood Triangle, and Suburban Park neighborhoods of Menlo Park, are most directly impacted by congestion on Willow Road and Bayfront Expressway.

Therefore, the City's comments on the attached pages focus on strategies that can improve both access to these neighborhoods, improve quality of life, and reduce regional through traffic using Willow Road and University Avenue. The City looks forward to these issues being addressed in the Final Study.

We further appreciate SamTrans hosting a meeting on the Study at the Menlo Park Senior Center on Monday, September 25, 2017. Through that community dialogue, it is apparent that a major concern of the Belle Haven community is with buses operating on the Dumbarton right-of-way, adjacent to residences, schools, churches, parks and the Hamilton Avenue retail center. While the City recognizes the regional transportation value of running buses on a dedicated right-of-way free of other traffic, we also understand that such buses would potentially increase noise, pollution and traffic in closer proximity to the community than occurs today. There is a delicate balance needed to both move a large number of people through the region and address the community values and quality of life concerns raised by Menlo Park

neighborhoods. Therefore, the City is supportive of allocating the space needed to accommodate a bicycle/pedestrian multi-use pathway instead of providing bus and rail service along the Dumbarton right-of-way between Marsh Road and Willow Road. More information is included in the attached comments.

Thank you for considering these comments. Please contact Nikki Nagaya, Assistant Public Works Director at 650.330.6770 with any questions on the attached.

Sincerely,

Kirsten Keith
Mayor

The City supports alternatives that:

- A. Improve quality of life, especially those that would provide multi-modal transportation options for local residents
- B. Provide a balanced approach to reducing congestion and reducing single occupant vehicle (SOV) travel in the Corridor
- C. Could be implemented as soon as possible, such as transit signal priority, expansion and improvement of bus service and improved/expanded park-and-ride facilities in the East Bay to encourage carpooling on the Highway bridge

The following comments are organized by travel mode, as identified at the outset of each comment:

1. **Pedestrian/bicycle trail:** The City is strongly supportive of the addition of a multi-use pathway along the peninsula right-of-way. Through the City's ConnectMenlo Circulation Element Update, a multi-use pathway was identified as desirable through a series of many community meetings and thousands of hours of input by residents. Such a pathway would provide a critical connection for commute and recreational trips, especially for the Belle Haven neighborhood of the City and would allow improved access to services. The City requests that SamTrans explore opportunities to:
 - a. Reduce the required widths to operate rail and bus service in order to provide space needed for the pathway.
 - b. Provide off-peak access to the bus lanes to allow bicycle and pedestrian use.
 - c. Allow bus lanes to be shared with bicycles and provide a separated pedestrian pathway.
 - d. Consider one-way bus lanes in the peak direction, and using surface streets in the non-peak direction.
2. **Highway improvements:**
 - a. The City supports the alternatives that encourage vehicular traffic connection at US 101/Marsh Road interchange to reduce travel demand on Willow Road and the impact on the Belle Haven neighborhood, including Express Lanes on Bayfront Expressway, Marsh Road and US 101 (Alternatives 4, 5 and 10)
 - b. The City does not support the Express Lane option that increases peak direction Bridge capacity, as it would lead to additional congestion on Willow Road and further degradation of travel time and quality of life in Menlo Park.
3. **Transit improvements:**
 - a. The City supports reactivation of the Dumbarton right-of-way for rail service, especially alternatives that would result in this service being activated on the Peninsula as soon as possible (such as a rail spur operating from Redwood City to Menlo Park and East Palo Alto).
 - b. In the mid- to long-term, the City supports efforts to provide electrified rail service along the right-of-way, across the Rail Bridge and to the East Bay.
 - c. The City supports the addition of Express and bus lanes on Bayfront Expressway with a connection to Marsh Road at US 101.
 - d. As proposed, the City does not support the addition of bus service along the Dumbarton Rail right-of-way between Marsh Road and Willow Road in addition to rail service.
 - e. The City does not support elimination of the bicycle lanes on Willow Road in

- order to accommodate bus only lanes on Willow Road
4. Long-term, the City supports improvements that would capitalize on the regional rail connections with ACE, Capitol Corridor and Caltrain service.
 5. The City supports buying out the Union Pacific freight service rights along the rail right-of-way.

Other comments:

6. The City requests additional information on the following topics:
 - a. Grade separation concepts at Willow Road and University Avenue and Bayfront Expressway and the Henderson Crossing/Railroad bridge interchange concept, including an estimate of the height of any bridge structures that could be constructed with such alternatives.
 - b. At-grade crossing proposal for Chilco Street, including commitment to keep the street open and maintain vehicle access.
 - c. Provision of bus stop locations that could serve the Belle Haven neighborhood in Alternatives 2, 4, 5, 6 and 10.
7. Chapter 10 of the Study includes a summary of assumptions built into the travel demand forecast development. In Section 10.2, Socio-economic forecasts, the Study describes that job-related growth in the cities of Mountain View, Menlo Park, Palo Alto, Redwood City and Stanford have been accounted for, consistent with pending development applications. Specifically in Menlo Park, the Study references that pending applications by Facebook to expand through conversion of existing industrial properties has been accounted for in the 2020 and 2040 forecasts. Additionally, the Study included a “high-growth” scenario that further increased employment-related growth according to current trends. However, the Study does not describe assumptions made relating to job or housing growth anticipated in Menlo Park, outside of Facebook’s pending application. Specifically, the City’s recent ConnectMenlo General Plan Update includes the provision for up to 4,500 housing units near the Dumbarton Corridor, which would generate potential ridership but with different travel patterns and needs than a wholly employment-based growth scenario. Similarly, the City of East Palo Alto has adopted the Ravenswood Business District Specific Plan that includes mixed-use growth plans. How these growth scenarios are currently addressed in the modeling should be clarified in the Study. If this growth is not currently accounted for in the modeling efforts, the City requests that the assumptions be revised.
8. The City requests that future efforts to continue to advance these alternatives should address environmental impacts at the next stage of project development, environmental review per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and NEPA. Issues that should be addressed include the potential impacts to wetlands adjacent to the Dumbarton Corridor and Willow Road and sea level rise.