

2/5/19 POST MEETING MATERIAL

RTC 19-155 STUDY SESSION

From: Elizabeth Elliott
To: Mayor and Council; Manuel Pineda; Manager
Cc: Lynn Garcia; Andrew Crabtree; Reena Brilliot; Lesley Xavier
Subject: 2/5/19 CC Meeting - POST MEETING MATERIAL/Study Session FW: VTA Comments on El Camino Real Specific Plan [SC1709]
Date: Monday, February 04, 2019 5:17:00 PM
Attachments:

Good afternoon,

Below is post meeting material received in the Planning Division this afternoon for the 2/5/19 CC Meeting, Study Session: El Camino Real Specific Plan.

Please forward to others in your department as appropriate.

Thank you.

ELIZABETH ELLIOTT | Office Specialist IV
Planning Division | Community Development Department
1500 Warburton Avenue | Santa Clara, CA 95050
O : 408.615.2450 Direct : 408.615.2474

From: Cerezo, Melissa [mailto:Melissa.Cerezo@vta.org]
Sent: Monday, February 4, 2019 5:05 PM
To: Lesley Xavier; Michael Liw
Cc: Reena Brilliot; Dennis Ng; Carol Shariat; Molseed, Roy
Subject: VTA Comments on El Camino Real Specific Plan [SC1709]

Lesley -

Thank you for the opportunity to engage in the City of Santa Clara's El Camino Real Specific Plan ("Draft Plan") through the Technical Advisory Committee, and for the proactive and ongoing coordination between City-VTA staff. The El Camino Real Specific Plan will help shape new growth and mobility options on the El Camino Real Corridor, which is VTA's most used transit corridor in the County, containing the Frequent 22 and Rapid 522.

The Draft Plan considers five right-of-way ("ROW") alternatives to advance the City and community's desired streetscape outcomes. VTA supports "Complete Streets" improvements designed with people in mind that are safe for walking, biking and transit, while still serving motorists. **VTA supports ROW Alternative 3A because it provides the most balanced multimodal approach, while meeting the City and community's desired outcomes, for the following reasons:**

- The proposed sidewalk is comprised of a path of travel buffered by landscaping, street trees and bulb-outs, providing a safer, lower-stress environment for pedestrians;

- The proposed bicycle facility is fully separated, eliminating potential conflicts between vehicles (autos and transit) and bicycles, and decreasing exposure time for pedestrians;
- The proposed bus boarding islands reduce transit vehicle dwell time (the amount of passenger waiting time at a stop or station) and improves overall travel speeds by providing an in-lane stop. Improving dwell time and travel speeds has a positive impact on ridership by improving the customer experience of transit.
- The proposed reduction in travel lanes continues to support the movement and operations of auto and transit vehicles, while improving conditions for all users.

VTA supports the transit-supportive bus boarding island features included in the ROW Alternatives (2A and 3A), which align with the draft principles of the forthcoming VTA Transit Speed Policy. VTA is currently developing a transit speed policy to address long-standing declines in transit speeds, particularly along VTA's highest ridership routes. The forthcoming transit speed policy acknowledges that making transit move faster will require close coordination and partnership with local jurisdictions to implement better street designs that will allow for the most efficient movement of people, while creating a positive impact on the transit experience to improve ridership. Moreover, improving transit speeds provides cost-savings to VTA that could be reinvested toward service improvements (such as increasing frequencies), versus deploying more buses to maintain the existing level of service. We think the Draft Plan is an ideal time to "seize the moment" and work together toward shared multimodal and mobility goals.

VTA specifically supports ROW Alternative 3A because it provides a complementary set of benefits for all users, in comparison to 2A, particularly a more optimal environment for pedestrians through additional landscaping street trees, and bulb-outs by utilizing additional street width. Furthermore, Alternative 3A represents the principles of the Grand Boulevard Initiative, an ongoing multijurisdictional project that supports El Camino Real as a multimodal, complete street that improves the mobility of people, including those on who walk, bicycle or take transit.

As the City moves toward a final proposal, which may include bus boarding islands, VTA is prepared to work closely with the City to ensure that bus boarding island designs and other street features meet VTA's standards for operational needs, passenger safety, Americans with Disabilities Act compliance, and other City-VTA mutual concerns.

VTA appreciates the opportunity to engage in the El Camino Real Specific Plan process, and to provide our comments. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me with any questions.

Thanks,
Melissa

Melissa R. Cerezo, AICP
Senior Transportation Planner

Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
3331 North First Street, Building B
San Jose, CA 95134-1927
Phone 408-321-7572



2/5/19

STUDY SESSION
19-155

SAN FRANCISCO FAIRFIELD SAN JOSE SANTA ROSA WALNUT CREEK

CITY OF SANTA CLARA
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

GREENBELT ALLIANCE

2019 FEB -4 PM 3: 02

San Jose Office
75 E. Santa Clara St. Suite 600
San Jose, CA 95113
(408) 663-1735

February 4, 2019

Mayor Gillmor and Santa Clara City Council
1500 Warburton Avenue
Santa Clara, CA 95050

Dear Mayor Gillmor and City Councilmembers:

RE: El Camino Real Specific Plan

I am the South Bay Regional Representative for Greenbelt Alliance. For more than 60 years, Greenbelt Alliance has been dedicated to shaping how the Bay Area grows. We protect our natural and agricultural lands from sprawl development, and help our cities and towns become even better places to live.

The El Camino Real (ECR) Specific Plan process is an exciting time for our community to direct the future of Santa Clara. As we anticipate thousands of more jobs to be added to Santa Clara, we must confront the questions of: Where will these employees live? How will this impact our neighbors' ability to secure a home, or continue to live in the homes they are in?

Now is the time for you to invest in El Camino Real as a vibrant housing-rich and business community. With the current average apartment rent at \$3,000, we need more homes that are affordable across the income spectrum. This is critical for creating an inclusive and diverse city, and the ECR Plan is a perfect opportunity to incorporate that need.

There is also an environmental reason for caring about affordable homes. When employees cannot afford to live close to their place of work, they move to the outer regions of the community, placing sprawl pressure on our valuable open space. This results in longer commutes - with employees wasting time in their cars, while emitting greenhouse gases, worsening the already changing climate. Furthermore, selecting a housing future with a greater number of multi-family homes along the corridor can reduce water consumption by 40 percent compared to single story homes.

Additionally, the ECR must be a safer, more inviting place for us to walk, bike, and take public transit. It has been shown that the cities that increase access to multimodal transit, create vibrant corridors where businesses thrive, and neighbors of all ages, abilities, and incomes participate in the local community and economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the ECR Specific Plan. I look forward to continuing to work with you and participate in the ECR process.

Sincerely,



Kiyomi Honda Yamamoto, South Bay Regional Representative



**City of
Santa Clara**
The Center of What's Possible

AGENDA ITEM #: Study Session

AGENDA REPORT

Date: February 5, 2019

To: City Manager

From: Executive Assistant to the Mayor & City Council

Subject: Correspondence received regarding the Study Session- El Camino Real Specific Plan

From Wednesday, January 30, 2019 at noon, through Tuesday evening, February 5, 2019 at 5:00 pm, the Mayor & Council Offices have received the attached communications regarding The Study Session- El Camino Real Specific Plan.

Lynn Garcia
Executive Assistant to the
Mayor & City Council

Documents Related to this Report:

- 1) *Communications received*

L:\Agenda Reports & Memos\Communications Received Memos\02/05/19\ Study Session- Action on El Camino Real Specific Plan

POST MEETING MATERIAL

Lynn Garcia

From: Mayor and Council
Subject: FW: Land use, ECR Specific Plan

From: PILAR GONZALEZ-BUNT [<mailto:pilargb@hotmail.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2019 3:54 PM
To: Mayor and Council
Cc: PILAR GONZALEZ-BUNT
Subject: Land use, ECR Specific Plan

Dear Mayor and City Council,

I have lived in the neighborhood behind El Camino and Buchanan for 19 years since I arrived in the United States.

I live in a beautiful tree-lined neighborhood where children play ball on the streets. This is truly the American dream and I'm in fear of losing that dream.

I support growth but I will not give in to greed. By allowing higher-density in this area, developers are given carte blanche to pack in as many high density units as possible without any regard for the neighborhood. It's easy for greed to win out over a good project for all.

Please support lower density for this area. Parking and traffic are our biggest concerns since denser parked neighborhoods with increased traffic aren't as safe, especially for children.

Please help in not diminishing our quality of life and our beautiful neighborhood.

Best Wishes,
Maria del Pilar Bonito

Lynn Garcia

From: Mayor and Council
Subject: FW: El Camino Real Specific Plan Right of Way options

From: Adina Levin [<mailto:alevin@alevin.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2019 3:49 PM
To: Mayor and Council
Subject: El Camino Real Specific Plan Right of Way options

Honorable Council Members,

This note regards the El Camino Real Specific Plan study session this evening.

One of the topics that is being considered is right of way options for the corridor. I am a member of the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition, and use bicycling and transit more often than a car for everyday transportation.

I would urge you to pursue the path recently followed by Redwood City City Council in their citywide transportation plan to support protected bicycle lanes on the El Camino corridor, to improve safety and convenience, which helps increase the number of people willing to cycle among all ages and abilities.

Cycling is a healthy way for people to take short trips instead of driving. However, only a small minority of people will cycle on higher speed, heavier volume roadways without protected lanes. Recently, new services for active transportation, including shared bikes and scooters, have become available. Santa Clara is currently working on policies to potentially allow these services and modes. This makes the availability of safe protected infrastructure even more important for residents and visitors.

El Camino Real is currently the site of many businesses and a growing number of homes, especially as Santa Clara and other cities fulfill the "grand boulevard" vision to redevelop aging sites with transit-accessible mixed-use housing and retail. With many places that people travel to and from, it is important to have convenient, direct, protected bicycle facilities to access these destinations. Alternative, circuitous routes do not meet the need for convenient routes that go where people need to go.

The city's studies show that many locations along the corridor have plentiful off-street vehicle parking. In Redwood City, staff did similar studies, and followed up with more detailed planning. For a few areas where the vehicle parking spaces are very important for local businesses and uses, the staff has looked carefully at the area and worked closely with parking users to identify viable alternative parking locations to provide convenient access for drivers, while allocating space for protected bike lanes to provide a high level of safety.

Given the benefits of healthy, sustainable transportation for a larger share of people, I strongly encourage you to support protected bicycle/micro-mobility lanes on El Camino Real.

Thank you for your consideration,
- Adina
Adina Levin
650-646-4344

02/05/19

Study Session

Lynn Garcia

From: Mayor and Council
Subject: FW: ECR Specific Plan Land Use

From: Richard Bonito [<mailto:rcbetc@comcast.net>]
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2019 2:56 PM
To: Mayor and Council
Subject: ECR Specific Plan Land Use

Dear Mayor and City Council Members,

Being a member of the El Camino specific plan committee, one of our goals is not to damage the existing neighborhoods. My concern is a higher density will negatively impact the 63 year old tree lined neighborhood located behind El Camino and Buchanan. This neighborhood is very diverse in terms of young, medium and older families of all backgrounds trying to raise a family in a little piece of suburbia that remains in Santa Clara.

Growth is important, but not while damaging the lives of our voting residents. Families pay a high price to locate in this area. Being in favor of people that won't even be able to live here for five to seven years is wrong.

As Santa Clara Urbanizes there are plenty of places this can be done without impacting our existing neighborhoods. Newer Rivermark like projects such as Santa Clara Square, and Tasman East are where the urbanizing should develop.

There's a lot of building going on without any kind of dashboard. It is important to know how many units are needed in the coming years, how many units are approved to be built in the coming years and how many are currently available, rather than just indiscriminate building without a plan.

There is a current project in play that would double the amount of front doors this neighborhood and only occupies about 10% of the land. This is overwhelming.

I have a concern as a member of the ECR Specific Plan committee being that it's comprised of many special interest groups that have less of a concern for the Santa Clara residents and have more concern for county and state issues.

Please help our neighborhood survive and support lower densities for the sanctity of our families and our neighborhood.

Kind Regards,
Richard Bonito

02/05/19

Study Session

Lynn Garcia

From: Mayor and Council
Subject: FW: El Camino Draft Plan

From: Paul Bickmore [<mailto:paulbickmore@gmail.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2019 12:43 PM
To: Mayor and Council
Subject: El Camino Draft Plan

To the Members of the City Council,

I am optimistic about the future of El Camino Real after attending some of the workshops over the past year. However, given the momentous nature of a plan like this, my comments at those were not enough.

First, I have scolded the Council before on this issue, but I will do so again. Developers must be required to provide cross streets to El Camino and into the surrounding neighborhoods to provide pedestrian connectivity. The only way I have been able to get to the grocery store from off of Cabrillo and Morrison is by crossing San Tomas and taking Los Padres down. If we continue to allow development without good access to and from business and activity centers, people are stranded and corralled into the developments, the streets become dull, and people are still socially engineered to drive cars because they can't walk anywhere.

Second, as someone who has constantly used El Camino to bike to the grocery store from Los Padres and catches the bus off of Bowers, and even walked to (though not from) a surgery appointment on Scott, I favor bike lanes, and narrowing the travel lanes to slow the traffic that seems like it's actively trying to kill me. However, it is imperative that we leave the option to remove two traffic lanes for transit all up and down El Camino open. This means from San Jose to Palo Alto and beyond. The political will to make the hard decision to do this might not be there this year, but what about next year, or next decade?

Third, I like the Land Use plan's residential density and heights, though I indicated in the past that some of the residential lots adjacent to the strip malls should be included, as long as anyone displaced from market rate affordable housing is found a new place on the same terms as their current lease, at developer expense, in addition to moving costs. I also am somewhat partial to the commercial requirements in places like the Sprouts/Target shopping center, though we need to be prioritizing grocery stores and maybe other daily errand type businesses. Buildings can be taller in this spot, as well as the Lawrence area, given how large the areas are. Also, I wasn't able to communicate this in the meetings, but I think that if we allowed more street vending, this could help create street vitality just as well as required first floor retail.

Fourth, parking hasn't come up as much as things like building heights or the ROW, but I cannot stress the point enough that there are no excuses for imposing parking minimums. None whatsoever. I get around without a car, and the cost of free parking gets passed on to me in the form of higher rent, higher prices at retail stores, and the time it takes to traverse all of the land I'm not using. We must treat cars as any other form of polluting infrastructure, such as a coal power plant, and at the

02/05/19

Study Session

Lynn Garcia

From: Mayor and Council
Subject: FW: Comments for Study Session on ECR

From: sudsjain@zoho.com [<mailto:sudsjain@zoho.com>] **On Behalf Of** Sudhanshu Jain
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2019 10:55 AM
To: Mayor and Council; Manager; Teresa O'Neill
Subject: Comments for Study Session on ECR

Dear Mayor Gillmor and Councilmembers,

We, the undersigned, are asking for "smart growth" along El Camino Real (ECR) in Santa Clara, specifically:

1. Choose a street configuration option that removes street parking on ECR (Options 2A, 2B, 3A)
2. Provide separated bike lanes on El Camino Real
3. Adopt the high density residential option that has been presented by staff
4. Allow microunits along ECR with very reduced parking ratios (0.8 parking spots per unit)
5. Require at least one Class-1 covered and secure bike parking spot per housing unit, with outlets for electric bikes
6. For larger multifamily complexes (> 75 units), require some car-share (Zipcar) service
7. Unbundle parking
8. Require 6% of the parking spots be electric vehicle ready and an additional 9% be prewired for EV charging
9. Require parking corrals areas (corrals) for parking for bikes and scooters, particularly shared scooters and bikes (such as Lime, Bird)

Santa Clara is poised for a tremendous amount of residential and commercial development in the next 20 years. There are 29,000 housing units in various stages of planning. That means that we're expecting at least 50-60,000 new residents. On top of that, there are the people who will come to work at all the new office complexes that are planned. Already 47,000 people come to Santa Clara to work. The new residents will need to live near transit hubs or along transit corridors since there is simply not enough capacity on our roads to handle so many people if they drive alone to work and play. We need to provide attractive options to get people out of their cars.

The VTA buses #22 and #522 which travel along El Camino Real are the lines with the highest ridership in the system. It makes sense to build housing along this route. El Camino Real is already congested with cars so the only way this is going to work is if we figure out how to get people out of their cars.

As you well know, public transit suffers from a chicken and egg problem. Transit is only "profitable" if there is a critical mass of people to ride it. Either mass transit or land development has to "go first". We believe El Camino Real is a great place to put more housing because we already have other services like restaurants and shopping on ECR. We also believe that ECR is a great place for affordable housing because low income people who can't afford a car or don't want to own a car have options for public transit and can bike and walk to services.

Transportation problems are created as much by failure to put housing near to jobs as by population growth in the city.

One of the main reasons why people don't use public transit is because it's too slow. Caltrain solved this problem by providing "baby bullet" service which skips stops. To further speed up its service Caltrain is electrifying and working on more grade separations. VTA's #522 bus does a similar thing by skipping stops but it's still too slow, mostly because it has to compete with all the moving and parked cars.

The main reason why people don't ride bikes is because they think it's too dangerous.

Thank you,

Santa Clara Community Advocates

Sudhanshu Jain, Santa Clara Resident

Gabriela Landaveri, Santa Clara Resident

Betsy Megas, Santa Clara Resident



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02/05/19

Study Session

Lynn Garcia

From: Mayor and Council
Subject: FW: Make bicycle lanes on ECR part of pavement maintenance and specific plan

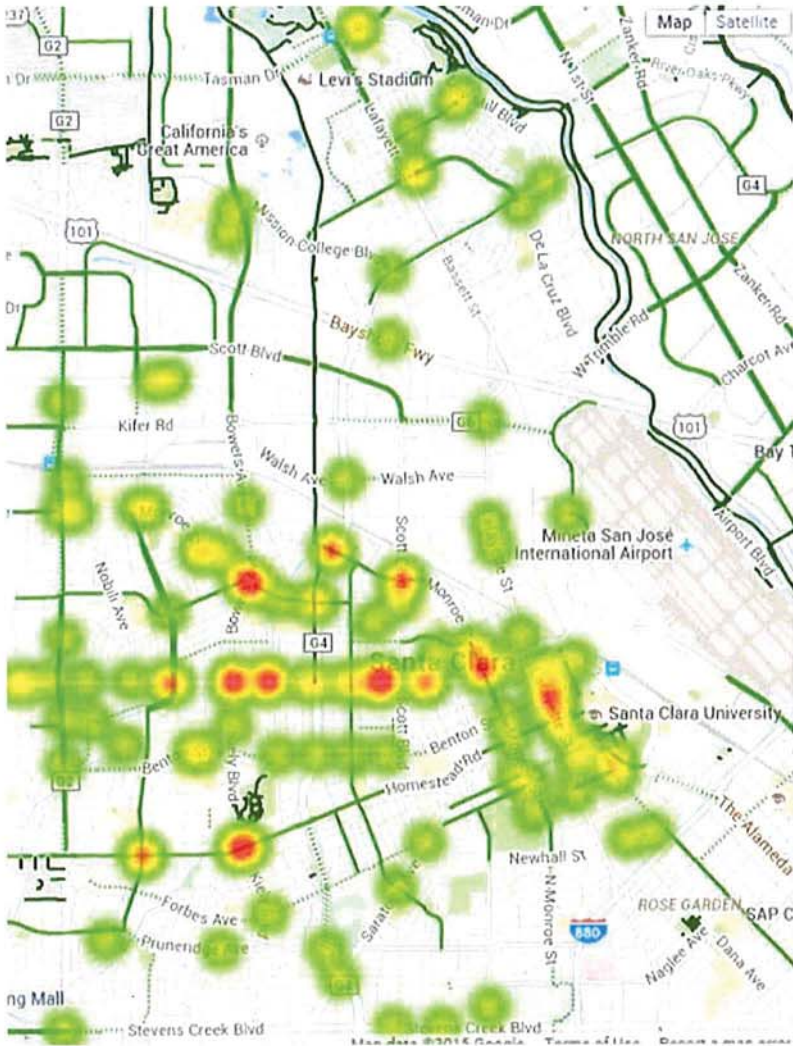
From: Betsy Megas [<mailto:dvortygirl@gmail.com>]
Sent: Monday, February 04, 2019 11:09 PM
To: Mayor and Council; Manager
Subject: Make bicycle lanes on ECR part of pavement maintenance and specific plan

To the Mayor and Council:

As we begin to refine the details of our El Camino specific plan, is it clear to you yet whether the pavement maintenance work slated to start on El Camino Real in April will include any provision for bicycle lanes?

The community meetings so far have shown that there is community support for one, and I believe there is a need, as well. El Camino Real sees collisions involving people on bicycles and on foot, far out of proportion to its few miles in our city. (The attached map of collisions with people on bicycles is from a 2015 county public health report [here](#). I doubt things have changed much since then.)

The high rate of collisions should tell us two things: first, that El Camino Real in its current condition is a dangerous place to walk or ride a bicycle; and second, that there is demand for pedestrian and bicycle access here. Benton and Warburton, the nearest parallel side streets, do not connect, and there's no way to get to things on El Camino without traveling on El Camino. No other street in Santa Clara has the density or diversity of destinations that El Camino does.



Eliminating underutilized on-street parking on El Camino will leave ample space for a protected bicycle lane. Even before such a lane is installed, removing parking will improve visibility for all road users entering, exiting, and crossing the many driveways along this corridor.

It will be least disruptive and least costly to include the bicycle lane, or at least space and provisions for it, in the pavement maintenance project, rather than to scrape fresh pavement and paint to rearrange later. However, making those provisions will require prompt action and coordination to catch the project before work begins.

We cannot design out all bad behavior, but we can create safe facilities which encourage safe transportation by all modes, and which prevent human errors from resulting in injury or death. Please take steps now to ensure that El Camino will be a safe and efficient place for everybody to travel.

Thank you,

Betsy Megaw
Santa Clara resident

02/05/19

Study Session

Lynn Garcia

From: Mayor and Council
Subject: FW: SV@Home Letter RE - Study Session: El Camino Real Specific Plan
Attachments: SVH Letter RE - ECR Specific Plan Study Session 020419.pdf

From: David Meyer [<mailto:david@siliconvalleyathome.org>]

Sent: Monday, February 04, 2019 7:14 PM

To: Mayor and Council; Lisa Gillmor; kwanatabe@santaclaraca.gov; Raj Chahal; Karen Hardy; Teresa O'Neill; Patricia Mahan; Debi Davis

Cc: Mathew Reed; Huascar Castro; Clerk

Subject: SV@Home Letter RE - Study Session: El Camino Real Specific Plan

Dear Mayor Gillmor, Vice Mayor Mahan, and Councilmembers Davis, Chahal, Watanabe, O'Neill, and Hardy:

On behalf of SV@Home and our members, we submit the attached letter to express our support for the city staff and Community Advisory Committee (CAC) recommendation for a housing-rich El Camino Real Specific Plan, which seeks to balance potential growth at key nodes. We would like to thank city staff as well as the members of the CAC for their hard work on developing a proposal that moves Santa Clara forward.

While we recognize that your meeting on Tuesday will focus on the recommended land-use option, and street alignments, we would like to highlight the importance of housing affordability to the future discussion of the ECR Specific Plan Area. **We recommend that Santa Clara set an overall goal of 20% of new homes built throughout the El Camino Real Specific Plan be restricted as affordable to households making below \$125,000 per year, or 100% of the current Area Median Income. As part of this goal, the city should ensure that a minimum of 15% of new homes are within reach of families with incomes below \$100,000 per year (which is 80% of the Area Median Income, or "Low Income"), with an additional 5% targeted to households below 100% of area median income.**

We would also like to note our alignment with the recommendations put forward by Greenbelt Alliance, the Silicon Valley Bike Coalition, and other members of an emerging coalition of Santa Clara citizens engaged around this planning process. When taken holistically, these recommendations will help us build complete neighborhoods accessible to people of all incomes and abilities.

Sincerely,

David

David Meyer
Director of Strategic Initiatives
david@siliconvalleyathome.org
(408) 462-1572

sv@home

350 W Julian St. #5, San Jose, CA 95110

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Leslye Corsiglia
Executive Director

TRANSMITTED VIA EMAIL

February 4, 2019

Honorable Mayor Gillmor and Members of the City Council
City of Santa Clara
1500 Warburton Avenue
Santa Clara, CA

Dear Mayor Gillmor, Vice Mayor Mahan, and Councilmembers Davis, Chahal, Watanabe, O'Neill, and Hardy:

On behalf of SV@Home and our members, we write today to express our support for the city staff and Community Advisory Committee (CAC) recommendation for a housing-rich El Camino Real Specific Plan, which seeks to balance potential growth at key nodes. We would like to thank city staff as well as the members of the CAC for their hard work on developing a proposal that moves Santa Clara forward.

Santa Clara, like many of its neighbors, has supported tremendous job growth without building enough housing to offset the dramatic increase in demand. This has created housing costs that have priced out many of the working people in our communities and destabilized the important balance in our City.

While recently Santa Clara has made important progress on commitments to building housing, it has continued to add job-creating office space as well. Every day many more people commute into Santa Clara, many over great distances, than live and work here. Our traffic problems are caused as much by our inability to produce local housing that keeps up with job growth, as it is by our population growth.

While we recognize that your meeting on Tuesday will focus on the recommended land-use option, and street alignments, we would like to highlight the importance of housing affordability to the future discussion of the ECR Specific Plan Area. We recommend that Santa Clara set an overall goal of 20% of new homes built throughout the El Camino Real Specific Plan be restricted as affordable to households making below \$125,000 per year, or 100% of the current Area Median Income. As part of this goal, the city should ensure that a minimum of 15% of new homes are within reach of families with incomes below \$100,000 per year (which is 80% of the Area Median Income, or

"Low Income"), with an additional 5% targeted to households below 100% of area median income.

We urge the Council to include meaningful incentives to achieve this targeted affordability level and to create opportunities for the many in your community with incomes well below even these levels. Addressing the range of housing needs will require that city staff continue to pursue opportunities to support new developments that are 100% deed-restricted affordable. These developments can achieve deeper levels of affordability including providing homes for the members of the community who are experiencing homelessness.

High density housing options along El Camino Real, that include significant affordable options for our neighbors with a range of incomes and abilities, offer the promise of a vibrant mixed-use corridor and will be critical to addressing both housing and transportation needs in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David K Meyer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" being more prominent than the last name "Meyer".

David K Meyer
Director of Strategic Initiatives

02/05/19

Study Session

Lynn Garcia

Subject: Concerning Feb. 5, 2019 Agenda item "Study Session: El Camino Real Specific Plan"
Attachments: 20190205_ElCaminoPlan-StudySession.pdf

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

From: Susan Hinton [<mailto:suewalt@comcast.net>]

Sent: Saturday, February 02, 2019 6:37 PM

To: Mayor and Council

Subject: Concerning Feb. 5, 2019 Agenda item "Study Session: El Camino Real Specific Plan"

Please read the attached PDF letter to the Mayor and Council Members.

Thank you,

Susan Hinton

3066 Hazelwood Avenue
Santa Clara, CA 95051

February 2, 2019

City of Santa Clara Mayor and Council Members
1500 Warburton Avenue,
Santa Clara, CA 95050

Dear City of Santa Clara Mayor and Council Members,

Regarding the upcoming February 5, 2019 Council Meeting Study Session: El Camino Real Specific Plan, I offer a few considerations for review. Though the topic is huge, I will try to keep my thoughts short.

There are two (2) main review topics, the first being what sort of buildings and landscaping will house or surround future residents, businesses and community amenities, and the second being the configuration of the actual street, El Camino Real. These are reflected in study session agenda attachments 1. Draft Land Use Plan (graphic only, no text) and 3. Right-of-Way Alternatives (graphics only, no text).

As the graphic for land use does not especially help to envision the corridor, I offer for your inspection an overlay of the land use graphic over a Google map:

Draft Land Use Plan

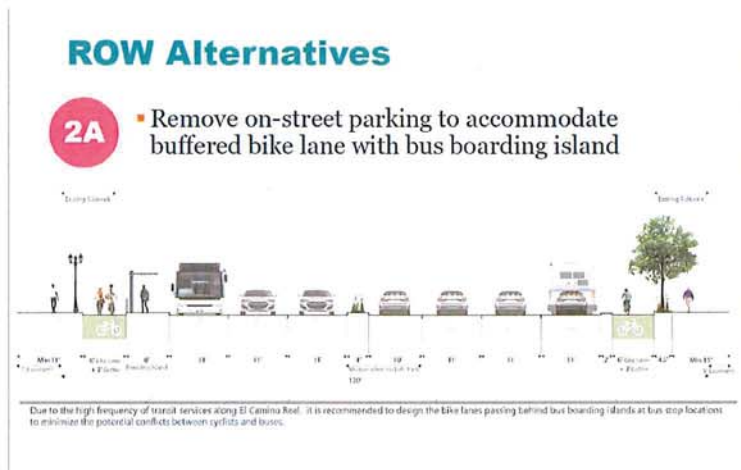


- Purple represents buildings 5-6 stories tall, high density housing (55-100 du/acre) with some commercial activity
- Red represents buildings 4-5 stories tall, medium-high density housing (35-65 du/acre), no commercial activity required except where there are blue dots (zoom in) representing mandatory ground floor commercial activity
- Yellow represents buildings 3-4 stories tall, medium density housing (16-35 du/acre), no commercial activity required

When you zoom into the above overlay it is clear that 3-6 story buildings will abut single family housing. It's likely that these existing residents will want their district council members to ensure there is a decent buffer between the unprecedented height of buildings along the corridor and their houses. Plus existing residents will want to say something about the aesthetics of the new buildings, accompanying vegetation, and they will wonder about how schools will accommodate new residents, etc.

Furthermore, current residents will wonder where all of the new residents will be parking their cars. It's not enough to say "everyone will take Uber or a bus."

As for the Right-of-Way Alternative illustrations, again, these do not adequately help to envision the actual street, and so I offer you a reality check. Here, for example, is the plan preferred by bicyclists who attended the December 13, 2018 community meeting on the El Camino Real road alternatives:



And here is a Google map picture of El Camino Real at Kiely/Bowers as seen from above, looking to the west:



Though there is room for the envisioned plan, one can reasonably wonder whether, even with a bump-up barrier of concrete between parallel traffic and a bike lane, casual bicyclists will feel safe enough to

travel along this route. My personal guess is that major intersections, as seen above, will actually be safer than intersections like those below, at Bowe or Buchanan or Las Palmas, where a bicyclist going too fast to properly stop might run into a car turning right onto El Camino Real. (I'm thinking of the description of San Jose Mayor Liccardo's accident.) When traffic is low, bicyclists sometimes do not bother to stop at lights or stop signs and, whether or not this might make an accident their fault, they would also be the people most injured.



Leaving the street configuration aside, for the moment, and returning to building placement and height. Note that in these Google pictures nearly all of the buildings are one (1) story tall. Now imagine them being 3 to 6 times taller. That's a lot of shadow-throwing concrete.

If the Council hopes to encourage existing residents to get on-board with a more urban atmosphere it would be wise to include plenty of planned vegetation, preferably drought tolerant vegetation that would attract birds and pollinators, comfortable out-door sitting and activity areas, reasonable set-backs, planned gaps for light so that shadow will not rule the street, planned maximum noise levels, and other aesthetic regulation. (Recall that on the first El Camino Real city survey, there was more enthusiasm for "more trees" than for nearly anything else.)

Finally, regarding automobile traffic, it is true that people need alternate transportation. However it's unlikely most people will jump onto a bike. In the near term it's more likely – though not especially safe – that people will try electric scooters. And when gasoline prices go up, as they will inevitably, people will first turn to smaller, perhaps electric, cars. So there will still need to be a place to park cars. It's possible people might turn to public transportation however there is a huge BUT – but a public mechanism (bus, rail, underground turbo-thingy, whatever) must 1) take people where they want to go (so ... maybe ask people "where do you want to go"), 2) in a timely fashion, 3) for a reasonable cost. Right now only rail somewhat accomplishes this, if one wants to head/from San Francisco or to/from Oakland.

Sincerely,
Susan Hinton
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