

Meeting Summary

Stevens Creek Boulevard Corridor Vision Study

Stevens Creek Boulevard Corridor Steering Committee

December 18, 2024, 10:00 AM

Hybrid Meeting

City of Santa Clara - Council Chambers and Virtual

The Stevens Creek Corridor Steering Committee was created to provide guidance and oversee the planning work involved in the Stevens Creek Corridor Study, a collaborative effort between the Cities of San José, Santa Clara, and Cupertino, the County of Santa Clara, and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA). The Committee will improve transportation options along the corridor and increase the collaboration between the cities and agencies represented to bring our residents a more traversable and interconnected future.

Attendees:

Vice Mayor Rosemary Kamei, City of San José, Committee Chair

Supervisor Susan Ellenberg, Santa Clara County (alternate)

Mayor Lisa Gillmor, City of Santa Clara (alternate)

Vice Mayor Kitty Moore, City of Cupertino (alternate)

Absent:

Councilmember Hung Wei, City of Cupertino

Board Member Margaret Abe-Koga, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority

Supervisor Cindy Chavez, Santa Clara County

Councilmember Dev Davis, City of San José (alternate)

1. Introductions

- a. *Roll call of Steering Committee members.*
- b. *Committee Chair Vice Mayor Kamei of San José led the introduction of participating agencies.*

2. Steering Committee administration - For discussion and action: Approve last meeting minutes

- a. **Vice Mayor Kamei** noted that the previous Steering Committee meeting did not meet quorum, resulting in two sets of minutes—one for May 23rd and another for September 6th. She explained that because she was the only one in attendance



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for the September 6 meeting from the original Steering Committee, that there would be no action taken on the minutes, but that they would be available for Steering Committee members to review.

3. Review of community engagement to date

a. **Christian Ollano** (Winter Consulting) and **Sean T. Daly** (Iteris) delivered a comprehensive presentation on the 4 phases of community engagement efforts to date along with key findings from each stage. The engagement activities done across all four phases included:

1. Community Advisory Group
2. Working group Meetings
3. Steering Committee Meetings
4. Focus Groups
5. Listening Sessions
6. Surveys
7. Neighborhood Door Knocking
8. Bike Tours
9. Pop-up Tabling

b. **Steering Committee Questions and Comments**

- i. **Mayor Gillmor** expressed that despite being new to the committee and learning a lot, she appreciates the extensive engagement process.
- ii. **Vice Mayor Moore** asked about the thought process behind putting the implementation plan in front of this body without going to the cities for input first.
 1. **Sean T. Daly and Vice Mayor Kamei** explained that the implementation plan, presented at the last meeting, received input through the responses received from Engagement Phase Four survey. She also noted that the draft plan will be reviewed by each jurisdiction's council and agencies. The Steering Committee, formed for the Stevens Creek Boulevard Corridor Vision Study, is nearing the end of its consulting contract and any additional services would require Steering Committee approval and resources from each agency. The goal is a consensus on the vision, ensuring a seamless user experience across jurisdictions, even with differing priorities. Disagreements on implementation details will be addressed in future phases, aiming for a plan that is acceptable to all involved.

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2. **Vice Mayor Moore** expressed that it would have been helpful to gather input from fellow councilmembers before moving forward with the recommended adoption in the agenda packet, as they had not received any feedback from the council at that point.
- iii. **Supervisor Ellenberg** expressed interest in framing the plan as a list of recommendations rather than an implementation plan, as there is no authority, funds, or authorization to implement the proposals. She suggested that the wording be adjusted to make it clear that the document is not an actionable plan. Additionally, she recommended clarifying which jurisdictions would be responsible for each component in the Plan, such as identity and maintenance.
- iv. **Mayor Gillmor** noted she sees the document as a vision statement to be taken back to each city for discussion, particularly focusing on how it would affect their community, businesses, and residents. She expressed uncertainty about achieving consensus on the specifics of the plan, as it was designed to gather broad agreement across municipalities without delving into detailed, city-specific issues.
 1. **Supervisor Ellenberg** reaffirmed Mayor Gillmor's recommendation of transitioning the document from an implementation plan to a recommended list of tasks, with each jurisdiction reviewing it and determining which items apply to them.
 2. **Mayor Gillmor** agreed, stating she could see this as a next step.
- v. **Supervisor Ellenberg** inquired about the next steps for the project, specifically whether progressing to the next stage would require hiring additional external staff or a collaboration with existing jurisdictional staff.
 1. **Vice Mayor Kamei** stated that her staff has a good understanding of the project and will continue discussions with consultant staff through 2025 regarding potential future needs of the project.
 2. **Supervisor Ellenberg** indicated that having received the recommendations, it is now up to the municipalities to assess interest among their respective bodies to determine what is possible.
- vi. **Vice Mayor Kamei** acknowledged the challenge of limited resources, noting that even San José is facing budget deficits. However, she praised the cooperation among staff and suggested that, despite the challenges, there may be a way to maintain continuity going forward.
- vii. **Vice Mayor Moore** raised concerns on the language of the vision statement and implementation plan, suggesting it may shift focus from

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broader visions to specific actions, which can raise concerns among cities. She noted that the 20-year plan may require reevaluation due to challenges in prioritizing the Stevens Creek corridor over other high-traffic routes in the region. She questioned whether this project was the right focus for advocacy and funding, given the broader regional transportation challenges.

1. **Vice Mayor Kamei** expressed appreciation for the suggestions that were made regarding language of the plan and stated that the project team will modify the Plan given the Steering Committee comments received.
4. **Vision Statement and Implementation Plan - for discussion and action: Recommend adoption of Stevens Creek Boulevard Corridor Vision Study Implementation Plan by each agency**
 - a. **Sean T. Daly** (Iteris) provided a recap of the Vision Study's purpose, emphasizing the importance of addressing jurisdictional differences and establishing a unified vision and roadmap across all jurisdictions. He highlighted the consistent feedback from stakeholders and community members regarding the need for short-term goals. Sean then outlined the Implementation Plan, focusing on its six key components:
 1. Corridor Identity and Maintenance
 2. Bus speed, Reliability and Experience
 3. Enhance Corridor Walking and Biking Infrastructure
 4. Enhance Walking and Biking Connections
 5. Intersection and Crossing Improvements
 6. Separated High-Capacity Transit
 - b. **Steering Committee Questions and Comments**
 - i. **Vice Mayor Kamei** asked that Rod Diridon Sr. be allowed to make a comment during the presentation before his departure and before the general Steering Committee discussion.
 1. **Rod Diridon Sr.** reflected on the valley's growth, starting from the early 1970s when it was still agricultural and predicting its transformation into a major metropolitan area, much like New York or Tokyo. He highlighted the importance of the 1976 master plan, which was supported by voters and regularly updated, focusing on a rail-based transportation system. He expressed concern about deviating from this rail-focused plan, warning that relying on bus

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lines as interim solutions could prevent progress toward a more efficient, long-term rail system. He urged the committee to maintain a long-term vision to meet the transportation needs of a growing Silicon Valley.

- ii. **Supervisor Ellenberg** inquired whether the financial constraints faced by the municipalities had been considered when developing the vision statement.
 - 1. **Sean T. Daly** responded by stating that the vision statement represents a long-term goal for the corridor, and the Implementation Plan incorporates practical aspects critical to the consideration of the Plan.
 - 2. **Supervisor Ellenberg** commented that the Plan should be presented to the community as more aspirational rather than a set-in-stone plan, emphasizing the importance of managing expectations.
 - 3. **Sean T. Daly** responded by explaining that near-term solutions are discussed in more concrete terms during engagement, as funding has already been committed to these solutions. He acknowledged the point about the messaging of the overall vision, emphasizing its importance for future work on the project.
- iii. **Vice Mayor Moore** asked about Cupertino's resolution and its request for an option to route transit along I-280. They noted that based on the map, any transit option would need to navigate a sharp turn—greater than 270 degrees—at the intersection of SR-85 and I-280.
 - 1. **Sean T. Daly** explained that it is a high-level question, but it does seem like that would be a challenge based on the alternatives analysis.
- iv. **Vice Mayor Kamei** acknowledged the value of the vision statement as a stand-alone document but suggested rephrasing the Plan to a "Recommended Plan" rather than an "Implementation Plan" to reflect the need for an intermediate step. She proposed a simple adjustment to label it as the "Vision Statement and Recommended Plan" before opening the floor for public input.
- v. **Vice Mayor Moore** asked for an explanation of Table 11 in the Plan, which outlines preliminary capital cost estimates for high-capacity transit systems.
 - 1. **Sean T. Daly** described a preliminary analysis of various transit options ranging from existing conditions to more advanced

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configurations, such as business access lanes, at-grade side-running and center-running transit lanes, elevated transit lines, and an underground transit line. He noted that each option was detailed with descriptions, cost estimates, travel times, and ridership projections, emphasizing that larger investments typically lead to quicker travel times and increased ridership influenced by travel efficiency and station locations.

c. Public Comment

- i. **Harry Neil** (in-person) emphasized the critical importance of the Stevens Creek corridor, highlighting their frequent use of the corridor and the need for efficient, climate-smart mobility, sustainable housing and commercial development, and enhanced safety. They noted that the corridor experiences over 180 crashes annually, underscoring safety as a top priority and advocating for reduced car dependency to improve safety conditions.
- ii. **Jennifer Griffith** (in-person) expressed frustration that their city council has not addressed the corridor study over the past two years. They opposed the idea of a dedicated bus lane, citing safety concerns, especially near the Stevens Creek and Foothill Boulevard intersection, where it narrows to one lane in each direction. They also strongly opposed tree removal in Cupertino, reflecting a commitment to preserving the area's character.
- iii. **Tracy Johnson** (in-person) emphasized the importance of sustained focus on the corridor's issues, suggesting that consistent discussion and prioritization could lead to action. They expressed hope that Santa Clara's Planning Department would use the document as a reference or benchmark for evaluating future projects along Stevens Creek or El Camino.
- iv. **Kirk Vartan** (in-person) expressed opposition to dedicated bus lanes on Stevens Creek advocating instead for autonomous vehicles for transit solutions. They underscored the importance of considering population density and noted that unlike denser cities like Paris or New York, large-scale transit projects in less dense areas could struggle in finding ridership. They recommended focusing on job centers and utilizing expressways for dedicated transit lanes, highlighting that key job hubs are not located on Stevens Creek, and current transit services there are underutilized.

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- v. **Mei Ling Stephen** (In-person) raised concerns about the potential impacts of implementing dedicated bus lanes, citing the example of VTA's Alum Rock project, which reportedly led to business closures and required substantial compensation to affected businesses. They requested data from VTA on the outcomes, costs, and performance metrics of previous bus lane implementations. As a resident of Sunnyvale, they expressed relief that their city council did not approve dedicated bus lanes, preserving El Camino Real. They also criticized the vagueness of the discussions, emphasizing the need for more concrete details.
- vi. **Calley Wang** (In-person) expressed support for the recommended Implementation Plan, noting its potential to offer safe, high-quality transportation options for all ages and abilities. They highlighted the Plan's potential to enhance suburban communities and local businesses, aligning with Cupertino's efforts to develop an attractive downtown area. Wang also noted the growth of transit, pointing out that VTA is carrying more bus riders than before COVID and emphasizing the importance of investing in local transportation options like the Silicon Valley Hopper.
- vii. **Chris Giangreco** (In-person) emphasized the importance of prioritizing the voices of residents and businesses in the core corridor for decision-making. They noted the Innovation Zone, established as a priority by former Vice Mayor Chappie Jones, has not been fully utilized. Giangreco advocated for improved collaboration between San José and Santa Clara, suggesting the Innovation Zone as a model to integrate safety technologies. They also referred to a recent roadway fatality, clarifying that the transport rig was not the primary cause of the accident.
- viii. **Anthony Montes** (In-person) expressed his gratitude for the meeting and emphasized the importance of focusing on the needs of young people, particularly those commuting to college. They acknowledged that the Plan is high-level but urged the committee members to advocate for the vision within their communities, with a particular focus on ensuring pedestrians have safe and adequate time and facilities to cross Stevens Creek.
- ix. **Scott Joby** (In-person) expressed concerns about the limited awareness of the vision study, noting that they only learned about it recently and lack of direct communication with relevant stakeholders. They own two car automotive dealerships on Stevens Creek and questioned the integrity of the data and survey results. They also highlighted concerns about the corridor's travel time, stressing that improvements should focus on

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enhancing throughput. They called for increased awareness and engagement with the project.

- x. **Betsy Megas** (In-person) expressed gratitude for the efforts put into the Study. They emphasized the need for high-quality, safe sidewalks, physically protected bike lanes, and fast, reliable transit along the corridor. They highlighted that the current traffic is due to the difficulty of traveling by other means and urged the adoption of the vision for a more environmentally friendly, equitable, and safe corridor. They stressed the importance of moderating car volumes and speeds to enhance place-making efforts, reduce noise, and decrease emissions.
- xi. **Carlin Black** (In-person) expressed concern about the lack of discussion regarding the source of support for the envisioned high-transit, walkable, and bikeable street on Stevens Creek. They pointed out that people from nearby areas like San José and Santa Clara struggle to access the corridor due to lack of connectivity and density. They also stressed that to support such development, the Stevens Creek corridor needs increased density and mentioned the potential for transforming it into a vibrant, high-development area, likening it to a "miracle mile" in San José.
- xii. **Katherine Hedges** (online) emphasized the importance of improving bus travel times on Stevens Creek to enhance ridership and advocated for physically separated bike lanes, citing personal experiences of unsafe and inconvenient transitions between bus and bike. They also called for safer pedestrian crossings and improvements to bike-ability on the corridor to ensure better safety and accessibility.
- xiii. **San R** (online) expressed strong opposition to any changes impacting vehicular traffic on Stevens Creek Boulevard, including lane reductions, dedicated transit lanes, transit priority signals, median islands, and various types of bike lanes. They specifically opposed the removal of street parking and right turns on red among other modifications affecting motor vehicle traffic. However, they supported improvements such as shade trees, beacon-activated crossings, painted crossings, artwork, and maintained sidewalks.
- xiv. **Babu** (online) expressed strong opposition to the project, noting that Cupertino, Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale have different priorities. They argued that the study and consultants were unnecessary, and called for increased public engagement, particularly outside of office hours, to better involve residents in the decision-making process. They advocated

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for greater community participation and suggested that Cupertino be excluded from the project entirely.

xv. **Ngan Nguyen** (online) expressed support for the project, particularly for the inclusion of protective bike lanes and dedicated bus lanes that would benefit people with disabilities, students, children, and seniors. Nguyen shared their experience of finding commuting with cars dangerous and stressful and expressed excitement about the prospect of alternative travel modes for the future.

xvi. **Diane Harrison** (online) expressed support for having bike lanes, sidewalks, and separated bus lanes throughout the Stevens Creek corridor. They believe these improvements would make buses a better option for transit users until more advanced transit systems are developed. She expressed gratitude for the project efforts and hopes it can be completed.

xvii. **Charlene Liu** (online) expressed strong support for the Stevens Creek Boulevard Corridor Vision Study, particularly for protected bike lanes and reduced car speeds. They shared that although she regularly bikes near Stevens Creek Boulevard, she avoids it due to safety concerns. They also endorsed the idea of dedicated bus lanes, which would help improve access to neighboring cities, business, and other activities. Liu emphasized her concern for the environment and community health, believing the proposed recommendations would contribute positively to both.

xviii. **Jennifer Shearin** (online) expressed support for the Study. They emphasized the need for the Implementation Plan to remain aspirational, noting that it does not mandate immediate changes and that further approvals are required. They highlighted two key points: first, the importance of physically protected bike lanes over simple separated or buffered lanes, as the former provides a barrier to prevent cars from encroaching on bike and pedestrian space. Second, she advocated for the consideration of a green center median, which could improve safety, including safer pedestrian crossings.

xix. **Serena Meager** (online) expressed support for the Stevens Creek Boulevard Corridor Vision Study's implementation Plan. Drawing from her unpleasant experiences commuting by car along the corridor, she advocated for the Plan's implementation. As a biologist, they emphasized the urgency of addressing climate change, noting its current impact and advocating for the creation of walkable cities. They highlighted the need to reduce car dependency and promote public transportation, walking, and biking.



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xx. **Jordan Maldow** (online) expressed strong support for the implementation plan, particularly advocating for separated bus lanes, fully protected bike lanes, and shorter, safer pedestrian crossings. They emphasized that the current design of Stevens Creek has prioritized cars for the past 70 years because it is the only option for the roads. He advocated for a shift away from a car-centric infrastructure to provide safer, more sustainable options for people, which would benefit the environment, safety, and equity. They also noted that reducing car traffic benefits car drivers by easing congestion.

xxi. **Sarah Harker** (online) expressed her support for the Plan, citing their personal dislike of traffic and their preference for taking public transit (523 and 23) whenever possible. Although they do not ride their bike due to safety concerns, particularly the lack of physically protected bike lanes, they advocate for reliable public transit, green spaces, and improved safety. They believe that enhancing transit reliability will encourage more people to use it, and she supports efforts to beautify the area and lower temperatures with green spaces.

xxii. **Brandon Black** (online) expressed strong support for the Implementation Plan. They acknowledged being a car driver for all his trips and emphasized his desire to change that and promote multimodal transportation for the county's growth. They believe that investing in automobile transportation will not meet future needs and reiterated their support for most aspects of the vision.

xxiii. **Seema Swami** (online) expressed concerns about the limited space on Stevens Creek and the existing imbalance between cars and bikes. They highlighted general support for biking but cautioned against lane reductions or the addition of concrete barriers, which could worsen traffic bottlenecks. They advocated for a more balanced approach that allows buses and cars to share lanes, like other cities, without worsening traffic.

xxiv. **Daniel Strokis** (online) expressed strong support for the proposed changes, highlighting the need for a safer environment for everyone, particularly for those who do not commute by car. They advocated for equal transportation rights for all, regardless of car ownership, highlighting the current challenges of supporting local businesses along the corridor due to safety and convenience issues for pedestrians and cyclists.

d. Steering Committee Questions and Comments:

i. **Vice Mayor Kamei** encouraged those who had not yet fully shared their thoughts to submit additional comments via email or chat. She



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recommended adopting the Vision Implementation Plan and indicated that the next steps would involve presenting the findings to relevant entities for further review and consideration in 2025.

- ii. **Supervisor Ellenberg** clarified that the Plan's adoption depended on the amendments clarifying it as a recommendation and seconded the motion while querying the recommended timeframe for presenting the Plan to their respective bodies. The supervisor inquired whether they needed to determine that now or if they should regroup in 2025 to decide when it would make sense to meet again.
 1. **Vice Mayor Kamei** expressed a desire to gather feedback from others, noting the need to present the Plan to their respective bodies before reconvening. She suggested a follow-up meeting in Q1 or Q2 of the following year and emphasized the importance of allowing sufficient time to review.
- iii. **Vice Mayor Moore** noted differing opinions in Cupertino concerning the Plan and mentioned Cupertino's ongoing implementation of Vision Zero and an active transportation plan, including efforts to secure grant funding. Vice Mayor Moore appreciated the chart showing satisfaction by mode by segment and noted that in Cupertino, west of Lawrence Expressway, driving conditions were generally very comfortable and convenient, but transit, biking, and walking were only somewhat comfortable for most, and individuals in wheelchairs found these areas uncomfortable to very uncomfortable. They highlighted a particular area in need of a complete rebuild to ensure safety. They asked whether the contract included support for presenting this information to their city councils or if they were expected to independently provide all the necessary details.
 1. **Sean T. Daly** explained that in the coming weeks, efforts would focus on supporting staff extensively. In response to Vice Mayor Moore's earlier question, he mentioned plans to refine the agency list at the document's end to be more city-specific, creating distinct versions for Cupertino, Santa Clara, San José, and the county. This adjustment aims to highlight relevant agencies for each city, simplifying review and comprehension for city representatives.
 2. **Vice Mayor Moore** expressed concerns about the timeline and cost estimates for the Plan, noting the projected timeline extends to 2025 and highlighted potential cost increases, drawing parallels to the escalating costs of the BART extension. She requested updated

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cost estimates and a detailed cost breakdown specific to Cupertino. Additionally, she critiqued the graphic of the area west of I-280 for its lack of clarity, suggesting the depiction of a monorail lacked vehicles and was vague about specific locations. She recommended a more detailed graphic for the area of Tantau and Stelling to clarify the impact on trees, medians, and other features. She also requested a per-mile cost estimate for underground features, recognizing their high cost but noting their relevance for Cupertino planning.

3. **Mayor Gillmor** expressed appreciation for the efforts on the plan and, as a new committee member, voiced support for its aspirational vision, indicating comfort in presenting it to their city. She suggested that discussing the Plan in the second quarter would allow sufficient review time due to its complexity. She highlighted the transformation of the corridor and the dynamics in Santa Clara, emphasizing the protection of small legacy businesses, support for financially significant car dealerships, and management of neighborhood centers and the mall. Noting the heavy traffic on Stevens Creek Boulevard, she called for a collaborative approach among municipalities, acknowledging varying solutions between cities like Cupertino and Santa Clara, and supported a draft Plan that allows for local customization while pursuing a shared vision.
4. **Vice Mayor Kamei** expressed gratitude to the members of the Community Advisory Group, staff from various cities, the VTA, and all consultant staff. Acknowledging the participation of new members on the Steering Committee, she supported a review of the document and proposed organizing a study session tailored to the needs of each jurisdiction—such as Cupertino, San José, Santa Clara, and the county—to enhance understanding and collaboration. She suggested April as a potential timeframe for jurisdictions to complete their study sessions and reconvene, keeping the timeline flexible to accommodate budget season and other schedules. She confirmed that a motion had been made and seconded and suggested proceeding by consensus.
- iv. **Vice Mayor Kamei** called for a vote to approve the amended plan, changing the name of the Plan from Implementation Plan to Recommendation Plan. This motion was unanimously approved by all Committee Members present.

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5. Next Steps - for discussion: Standard agency resolution approach; for action: Future Steering Committee meeting dates/locations (if needed)

- a. Christian Ollano asked for clarification regarding the next steps agreed upon by the Steering Committee.
 - i. Vice Mayor Kamei affirmed the next steps, suggesting collaboration with staff to determine if April would be an appropriate time for the committee to reconvene. She noted that this timeline would depend on each city's ability to conduct a study session beforehand.

6. General Public Comment

- a. Harry Neil (in-person) addressed the Committee, noting the submission of a petition signed by nearly 350 residents from the three cities involved which supported the previously approved staff recommendation. They emphasized that this action would save lives along the corridor and contribute to a more sustainable future, expressing gratitude on behalf of all signatories.
- b. A petition against Bus Lanes on Stevens Creek signed by 15 residence of the area was received.

Adjournment at 12:20 pm

Note:

Please direct correspondence and questions to:

**City of Santa Clara
Department of Public Works
Michael Liw**



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Assistant Director - City Engineer

mliw@santaclaraca.gov | Tel: 408-615-3002

