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<http://bikesiliconvalley.org>

December 16, 2014

Yolanda Rivas
Caltrans Office of Environmental Analysis
Via email

Re: US 101/SR 84 Initial Study/Environmental Assessment

Dear Yolanda Rivas:

I am writing as the Executive Director of Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition, a member-based non-profit of over 2,000 members with the mission to create a healthy community, environment, and economy through bicycling for people who live, work, or play in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Initial Study/Environmental Assessment (IS/EA) for the US 101/SR 84 (Woodside Road) Interchange Improvement Project.

- The *Purpose of the Project* section of the IS/EA should include a goal to **increase safety for bicyclists and pedestrians** crossing Highway 101 on Woodside Road, and to accommodate greater numbers of bicyclists and pedestrians in accordance with the Circulation Element of the Redwood City General Plan (2010), the San Mateo County Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (2011), as well as Caltrans Complete Streets Directive (2008/14).
- If multiple alternative designs are considered, the **relative safety for each mode of travel** (motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, and persons with disabilities) should be assessed for each of the designs using both qualitative and quantitative measures. It is not sufficient only to know that the proposed designs are safer than the existing interchange. To make a well-informed decision, the relative safety of each of the proposed designs compared to each other must be known.
- To be safe for bicyclists, the interchange design must **not include any high-speed on-ramps or off-ramps**. There is no way for bicyclists to cross these ramps safely. Multiple bicycle fatalities have occurred at nearby interchanges with high-speed ramps, including a 2010 fatality at 280-Alpine Rd. on a high-speed ramp that is similar to what is proposed for the northbound 101 onramp in Alternative 3A.
- **Preferred consideration should be given to Alternative 3**, since it does not include any high-speed ramps. Alternatives 3A and 8B both include high-speed ramps that create unsafe vehicle-bicycle conflict points. Those alternatives should either be modified to remove the high-speed ramps or eliminated from consideration.
- The interchange design should implement **Pedestrian Enhanced Design (PED)** in accordance with Policy BE-25.5 of the Circulation Element of the Redwood City General Plan (2010). High-speed ramps are not compatible with Pedestrian Enhanced Design.

Policy BE 25.5: Continue to implement Pedestrian Enhanced Designs (PEDs), especially on streets with projected excess vehicle capacity, to reduce either the number of travel lanes or the roadway width, and use the available public right-of-way to provide wider sidewalks, bicycle lanes, transit amenities, or landscaping.

- All vehicle turn movements that cross the path of bicyclists should be controlled by traffic signals and be **as near to 90 degrees as possible**. This is the safest configuration for both bicyclists and pedestrians.
- **Bike lanes should be at least 6' wide with a 2' striped buffer (8' total)**. Bike lanes that are only 5' wide do not provide adequate separation when adjacent to fast-moving vehicle traffic, such as on Woodside Rd.
- Vehicle travel lanes do not need to be 12' wide for the posted speed limit. There exists sufficient width under the 101 underpass to provide 8' bicycle lanes (6' bike lanes with a 2' buffer) if **travel lanes are reduced to 11' or 10'**. Narrower travel lanes also decrease pedestrian crossing distance, in accordance with Pedestrian Enhanced Design.
- A wide (6' with a 2' buffer) bike lane plus a sidewalk is the preferred alternative over a narrow (5') bike lane plus a separate Class 1 bike/ped path. Having **continuous, wide bike lanes through the entire intersection is the most important feature** for bicyclists. A separate Class 1 bike/ped path is very desirable in addition to a wide bike lane, but not if it requires the bike lanes to be made narrower than 6' with a 2' buffer.
- **The number of conflict points for bicycles and pedestrians** should be reported for each design alternative. In a prior public presentation, it was stated that Alternative 3A has fewer conflict points than Alternative 3, but this referred only to vehicle conflicts. Alternative 3A actually has a larger number of bicycle conflict points than Alternative 3 and is less safe. Safety for each mode of travel should be assessed and reported separately for each design alternative.
- **The US-101/UPRR under-crossing is a key element of all of the alternatives**. It provides a fully separated facility for bicycles and pedestrians to cross US-101. This facility will significantly improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity and will increase bicycle and pedestrian trips to the Port or Redwood City, Seaport Center, Pacific Shores, and Redwood City's inner harbor area (with corresponding decrease in Vehicle Miles Traveled). However, since the railroad undercrossing is not immediately adjacent to Woodside Rd., it is also important to have continuous on-street bike lanes and sidewalks from Woodside Rd. to Seaport Blvd. through the interchange.
- Bicycle and pedestrian safety during reconstruction of the interchange should also be considered. By **constructing the railroad under-crossing first**, a safe route for bicyclists and pedestrians can be created that will minimize risk associated with the construction phased of rest of the project.

Please contact our Policy Manager Emma Shlaes at 408-227-7259, ext. 228 or emma@bikesiliconvalley.org for more information. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Corinne Winter
President and Executive Director