

What It Takes To Make Menlo Park Truly Bike-Friendly. (It's Not El Camino Real)

Menlo Park City Council

Your public review of the El Camino Real Corridor Study on August 25 is an especially important milestone for you and all Menlo Park residents as both the results of the feasibility phase and what future actions should be taken (and funded) will be considered. I believe the additional spending required to estimate potential bike usage, prepare an environmental report, and develop both plans and a budget for the implementation of one of the bike facility alternatives was included in an earlier budget and estimate that more than \$200,000 remains unspent. I continue to oppose the addition of dedicated bike facilities on El Camino and propose the City shifts its attention to investing in solutions that address more critical problems in our community bike network, ones clearly identified in the city's comprehensive bike plan (2004) and the Specific Plan (2012). These are the need for greater east-west connectivity and downtown access, rather than a north-south bike corridor of questionable value, appeal, and safety. I have published research and analyses on the design of safe, convenient and low-stress bike networks (www.reimaginemenlopark.com) that support my position and have enclosed a proposal for an alternative solution that would benefit many more cyclists than bike facilities on El Camino, could be implemented much sooner; depends less on Caltrans' support, budgets and schedules; and would likely attract greater community support and less resistance. It is noteworthy that I have already performed the potential cyclist usage analysis that W-Trans would provide and determined that few adult cyclists would choose El Camino over less stressful alternatives, and it would remain unsuitable for elementary and middle school children, the largest group of bike riders.

I believe the arguments offered in support of bike facilities on El Camino are extremely weak and encourage you to carefully evaluate the actual value and trade-offs that exist rather than rely on popular platitudes. Unsupported claims about significant increased bike usage, reduced vehicle traffic, and less emissions are unacceptable substitutes for persuasive facts, reasonable assumptions and sound logic. Unfortunately, these essential elements of rational decision-making have been painfully absent in the workshops and planning sessions I have attended.

I again invite you to discuss, at your convenience, all my findings and recommendations and note that surprisingly my prior offers have generally been ignored by the City Council.

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Editor
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