

Date: January 29, 2016

Re: Concerns About Current City Efforts To Improve The Menlo Park Bike Network

To: Menlo Park City Council Members & Transportation, Planning and Bike Commissioners

For the past year I have closely followed the City's efforts to improve our community bike network, in particular, proposals to add bike lanes to El Camino Real, and more recently, an east-west bike corridor on Oak Grove Avenue. An avid cyclist, I greatly appreciate your attention to the need for safer and more convenient Menlo Park bike routes for all kinds of bike riders. Last August I explained my opposition to El Camino bike lanes (my rationale is presented in detail on the Re-Imagine Menlo Park website*), and I am now concerned about the Oak Grove project as it could be a suboptimal use of city resources. It would also negatively impact motorists by reducing street parking by more than 100 spaces and increasing motorist-bicyclists accidents and conflicts by encouraging many more bike riders to share vehicle lanes on downtown Santa Cruz Avenue.

In December I submitted a proposal** for a Menlo-Ravenswood Bike Corridor to the Bike Commission. The design creates a centrally located bike corridor that would greatly improve the safety and comfort of both the motorists and bicyclists who currently use this popular route and likely attract many more bike riders, especially pre-teen and teenage students. In January the bike commission rejected my proposal citing cost, complexity and the political environment as insurmountable obstacles. Unfortunately, no reasoning, facts or assumptions were provided. Copies of my request and the response I received can be viewed on my website.*** **I am now appealing directly to all city commissions and City Council to fairly evaluate my proposal alongside the Oak Grove proposal.** A comparative analysis is available on my website****.

I believe Menlo Park residents deserve the best possible understanding of major bike network projects before significant funds are spent on actual field trials and permanent installations. This means the City should evaluate the likely impacts that changes will have on ALL street users including motorists, bicyclists, public safety providers, businesses and property owners. Impact estimates and success criteria should be clearly defined and communicated to all residents, and trial results compared to expectations. Otherwise, **these projects could easily become extremely divisive and resident blowback could constrain badly needed progress.**

Too often bad decisions are driven by intuition supported by platitudes rather than facts, sound assumptions and persuasive logic. I hope our city constantly strives to avoid this happening with our bike network investments, and admit I am concerned by the lack of rigorous impact analysis. A professional bike network consultant like

Alta Planning + Design would reduce the risks of any major bike project, and I recall this firm helped Menlo Park develop its 2004 Comprehensive Bike Development Plan and has also assisted many Peninsula cities.

My objectives for Re-Imagine Menlo Park remain to encourage residents to understand where City initiatives that would significantly impact Downtown and El Camino Real stand, support our city with fact-base studies, and encourage all to actively participate in our civic democratic processes.

I welcome your feedback and am available to discuss my proposal at your convenience.

Best regards,



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- * <http://mpcdforum.com/el-camino-bike-lane-proposal/>
- ** <http://mpcdforum.com/menlo-ravenswood-bike-corridor-proposal-2/>
- *** <http://mpcdforum.com/menlo-park-bike-commission-feedback-on-menlo-ravenswood-bike-corridor-proposal/>
- **** <http://mpcdforum.com/comparison-which-east-west-bike-corridor-would-best-serve-menlo-park/>