

Comment I-201 Donna Poppenhagan (2)

From: d.poppenhagan@comcast.net
To: supervisor.simitian@bos.sccgov.org; assemblymember.fong@ca.gov; [85expresslanes](#)
Subject: SR 85 Expansion
Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 8:58:40 AM

Hello All;

I am writing to express my deep concerns and opposition to the expansion of two added Express lanes to SR 85 as proposed by VTA/Caltrans for the following reasons:

I-201-1 1. The additional lanes will add more traffic without addressing the current bottleneck at 280/85, nor any of the other points of severe congestion along the corridor. Furthermore, it does nothing to ease the congestion north of 280 which is a parking lot during commute hours.

I-201-2 2. No EIR with alternatives has been scheduled. VTA says one is not necessary. With the projected increase in traffic and the resultant noise/air/light pollution, this statement is absurd.

I-201-3 3. At 67 dB., the noise levels on SR 85 are already above acceptable state and federal levels and this project will greatly increase those levels. This must be fixed!

I-201-4 4. There is a VALID Performance Agreement that states that SR 85 is to be a 6-lane (not 8-lane!) freeway with the median reserved for light-rail. This could be basis for a law suit.

I-201-5 5. The citizens of the small cities along the 85 corridor voted to tax themselves rather than accept Federal monies so trucks would be prohibited from using 85. According to VTA's own admission, they are considering two (2) sources of Federal money, meaning we could not keep heavy, diesel-spewing trucks off the freeway. This is not acceptable.

Please don't allow VTA/Caltrans to go forward with this illegal, ill-conceived project which will only further pollute the environment and fill VTA's coffers without easing traffic congestion or reducing our carbon footprint.

Thank you,
Donna Poppenhagan
12487 Fredericksburg Dr.
Saratoga, CA 95070
408-867-2615

Responses to Comment I-201

I-201-1

The commenter's concerns are noted. The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at choke points along the project corridor, as described in Master Response TR-2.

I-201-2

California Public Resources Code Sections 21080(d) and 21082.2(d) require the preparation of an EIR for projects with significant environmental effects. The determination that the proposed project would not have significant environmental effects was based on a detailed and comprehensive review of each technical study area, including traffic, noise, air quality, and visual resources. Refer to Master Response GEN-3 regarding preparation of an EIR. Also refer to Master Responses TR-1 regarding traffic, N-1 regarding noise, and AQ-1 regarding air quality, and IS/EA Section 2.4.1 regarding lighting.

I-201-3

The comment states that noise levels are already above State and Federal standards. There is no absolute State maximum numeric threshold for freeway noise levels. The comment appears to refer to the Federal noise abatement criteria (NAC) of 67 dBA, which are shown in IS/EA Table 2.2.7-1. It is important to note that the NAC values are used to determine whether noise abatement must be considered, and do not represent levels to which noise must be abated. Master Response N-2 provides additional information about noise abatement evaluated for the project.

The project would increase existing noise levels by 0 to 3 dBA, depending on the location. This level of increase would not be significant, as discussed further in Master Response N-1.

I-201-4

The comment does not specify which agreement is cited. See the responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding the agreements. Light rail in the median of SR 85 was not carried forward because it was determined not to be reasonable or practicable, as described in Master Response GEN-2.

I-201-5

The use of federal funds will not have any effect on the existing truck restrictions on SR 85. Refer to Master Responses TR-1 regarding traffic and AQ-1 regarding air quality impacts.

Comment I-202 Caroline Prasad

State Route 85 Express Lane Project

Caroline Prasad [carolineprasad@yahoo.com]

Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2014 1:58 PM

To: 85expresslanes

Cc: ctclerk@saratoga.ca.us; elo@saratoga.ca.us; jhunter@saratoga.ca.us; hmiller@saratoga.ca.us; mcappello@saratoga.ca.us; cpage@saratoga.ca.us; supervisor.simitian@bos.sccgov.org; assemblymember.fong@ca.gov

From:

Caroline Prasad

19770 Solana Dr. Saratoga, CA 95070

carolineprasad@yahoo.com

Subject: Objection to the "State Route 85 Express Lane Project" to increase the number of lanes on 85.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I object to the "State Route 85 Express Lane Project" to increase the number of lanes on 85, for the following reasons:

I-202-1

1: I am very concerned that this "State Route 85 Express Lane Project" to increase the number of lanes on 85 will cause a significant increase in noise to the residents who live near the freeway. I live near the freeway and I am already concerned about the noise level which I believe has deteriorated to the point where I request an environmental study to be done, especially in the backyards and 2nd floor of houses close to the freeway. The noise level especially in the 2nd floor of houses like mine close to the freeway and in the backyards is very loud. There is NO mitigation of the noise levels which are already ABOVE Federal standards of 67 dBA. I request quiet pavement technology (available today) to fix this issue first, before any further planning is done to build additional lanes.

I-202-2

2. I am also extremely concerned about air quality which has also significantly deteriorated based on the amount of dust and pollution that I observe near my house, most likely due to increase in traffic over the last several years. For this reason as well, I request an environmental study to be done, especially in the backyards of the homes next to the freeway. I heard the previous study was done at the time of peak unemployment, which is NOT representative of the traffic and environmental condition today.

I-202-3

3: The expanded lanes will do nothing to address the problem of traffic congestion at the freeway choke points, and will only add to congestion. If a long-term traffic congestion solution needs to be found, it needs to be light rail based or something similar, not more buses and express lanes.

I-202-4

4. This proposal does not honor the agreement with the City of Saratoga at the time the 85 freeway was built; the agreement was only for 6 lanes, with the median reserved for light rail/mass transportation, which is NOT express buses. This opens up many legal issues.

I-202-5

5. The space in the center divider of 85 was reserved for future light rail expansion. This will not be possible once the lanes are expanded.

I request the cancellation of the project or at least put it on hold until an environmental study is done and all the points indicated above are adequately addressed.

Sincerely,

Caroline Prasad

Concerned Saratoga Resident

Responses to Comment I-202

I-202-1

Refer to Master Responses N-1 regarding noise levels and N-2 regarding noise abatement.

The comment appears to refer to the Federal noise abatement criteria (NAC) of 67 dBA, which are shown in IS/EA Table 2.2.7-1. It is important to note that the NAC values are used to determine whether noise abatement must be considered, and do not represent levels to which noise must be abated. Master Response N-2 provides additional information about noise abatement evaluated for the project.

I-202-2

Refer to Master Response AQ-1 regarding air quality. The traffic studies for the project were conducted for the worst-case traffic scenario, which is constrained by the capacity of the freeway and is not affected by economic factors such as unemployment. The detailed noise and air quality studies for the project fully accounted for existing and future traffic conditions.

I-202-3

Refer to Master Response TR-1 regarding other projects designed to address choke points. Also refer to Master Response GEN-2 regarding light rail in the median.

I-202-4

See the response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the agreement with Saratoga. This project does not preclude light rail in the median in the future.

I-202-5

An environmental study has been done for the project and further evaluation is not warranted, as described in Master Response GEN-3.

Comment I-203 Neil Prasad

From: [Neil Prasad](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Cc: [ctclerk@saratoga.ca.us](#); [elo@saratoga.ca.us](#); [ihunter@saratoga.ca.us](#); [hmiller@saratoga.ca.us](#); [mcapello@saratoga.ca.us](#); [craqa@saratoga.ca.us](#); [supervisor.simitian@bos.sccgov.org](#); [assemblymember.fong@ca.gov](#); [Caroline Prasad](#)
Subject: State Route 85 Express Lane Project
Date: Wednesday, February 26, 2014 7:59:41 PM

From:
Neil Prasad
19770 Solana Dr. Saratoga, CA 95070
neilprasad4@gmail.com

Subject: Objection to the "State Route 85 Express Lane Project" to increase the number of lanes on 85.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am sending this email to state that I object to the "State Route 85 Express Lane Project" to increase the number of lanes on 85, for the following reasons:

I-203-1

1: I am extremely concerned that this "State Route 85 Express Lane Project" to increase the number of lanes on 85 will cause a significant increase in noise to the residents who live near the freeway. I live near the freeway and I am already concerned about the noise level which I believe has deteriorated to the point where I believe the noise level violates Federal and other standards, especially in my backyard and the 2nd floor of my house close to the freeway. The noise level especially in the 2nd floor of houses like mine close to the freeway and in the backyards is extremely loud. There is NO mitigation of the noise levels which are already ABOVE Federal standards of 67 dBA. I request quiet pavement technology (available today) to fix this issue first, before any further planning is done to build additional lanes.

I-203-2

2. I am also extremely concerned about air quality which has also significantly deteriorated based on the amount of dust and pollution that I observe near my house, most likely due to increase in traffic over the last several years. Adding additional lanes will exacerbate the problem.

I-203-3

3: The expanded lanes will do nothing to address the problem of traffic congestion at the freeway choke points, and will only add to congestion. If a long-term traffic congestion solution needs to be found, it needs to be light rail based or something similar, not more buses and express lanes.

I-203-4

4. This proposal does not honor the agreement with the City of Saratoga at the time the 85 freeway was built; the agreement was only for 6 lanes, with the median reserved for light rail/mass transportation, which is NOT express buses. This opens up many legal issues.

I-203-5

5. The space in the center divider of 85 was reserved for future light rail expansion. This will not be possible once the lanes are expanded.

I request the cancellation of the project until all the points indicated above are adequately addressed.

Sincerely,

Neil Prasad
Concerned Saratoga Resident

Responses to Comment I-203

I-203-1

See the response to Comment I-202-1.

I-203-2

See the response to Comment I-202-2.

I-203-3

See the response to Comment I-202-3.

I-203-4

See the response to Comment I-202-4.

I-203-5

See the response to Comment I-202-5.

Comment I-204 [Number Not Used]

There is no Comment I-204. This comment number was not used.

Comment I-205 Jim Pyle

SR 85 Express Lanes

Pyle, Jim S (US SSA) [jim.pyle@baesystems.com]

Sent: Thursday, January 23, 2014 9:38 AM

To: 85expresslanes

Cc: Pyle, Jim (pylepacker@comcast.net)

I-205-1

I am not in favor of any additional lanes being built on CA85 in the City of Saratoga area for the following reasons:

- There is no need
 - The existing commuter lane is not fully utilized during maximum traffic hours. Why would a second high speed commuter lane be necessary?

I-205-2

- Increased noise levels
 - The freeway is already not in accordance with the promised noise levels given in the agreements and Environmental Impact Report with the City of Saratoga and CALTRANS/VTA. An additional high speed lane of traffic will only make this problem worse.

I-205-3

- Deletion of the vehicle weight limit on CA85
 - I am against the use of any federal funds for any improvements on CA85 as that would open up the possibility of deleting the existing weight restrictions currently imposed on the freeway.
 - Adding large trucks to the traffic on CA 85 will increase the noise level (that is readily evident when illegal trucks go down the freeway in front of my house).
 - Truck traffic at night will make the noise level intolerable and reduce the value of my home even further than what occurred when CA85 was opened.
 - Truck traffic will only cause worse traffic slow-downs to what is already slow traffic on the two unrestricted lanes.

I-205-4

The CA85 corridor through the city of Saratoga should remain what it was always intended to be, a commuter freeway only. The freeway already has not given the local residents the promises on noise abatement. The VTA has not followed through with the CA85 bicycle route (something I would use to get to work), nor has there been any work performed on an extension of Light Rail in the CA85 median (another promise not followed).

Jim Pyle

Saratoga Resident
18898 Bonnet Way
Saratoga CA 95070
pylepacker@comcast.net
408 460-2966

Responses to Comment I-205

I-205-1

As described in Section 1.2.2.1, under “SR 85 HOV Lanes,” some of the existing HOV lane segments, particularly between SR 87 and I-280, experience peak-hour congestion and/or reduced speeds. The traffic study for the proposed project also shows that segments of the HOV lane system would operate at LOS D, E, and F (with decreased speeds and impaired traffic flow) in 2015 and 2035 (Section 2.1.3.2). Refer to Master Response TR-1 regarding improvements to future travel times and speeds with the project.

In regard to the reference to a high-speed commuter lane, note that the project would not change the posted speed limit on SR 85, and express lanes would be subject to the same speed limit as the general purpose lanes.

I-205-2

Refer to Master Response N-3 for a discussion of existing noise levels in Saratoga, future noise levels with and without the proposed project, and future noise levels that were predicted in the 1987 Final Environmental Impact Statement for the construction of SR 85.

The noise technical studies show that the project would result in a 0 to 1 decibel increase in traffic noise along the Saratoga portion of SR 85, as described in Master Response N-3. This increase would typically not be perceptible, as discussed in Master Response N-1.

I-205-3

The project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85, regardless of whether federal funding is used.

I-205-4

The commenter's opposition is noted. Refer to Master Responses N-3 regarding noise in Saratoga and GEN-2 regarding light rail in the SR 85 median.

Comment I-206 Nick Radov

	<p>opposed to SR 85 Express Lanes Project Nick Radov [nradov@gmail.com] Sent: Tuesday, February 11, 2014 9:38 PM To: 85expresslanes; community.outreach@vta.org; Ngoc.Bui@dot.ca.gov Cc: Bijan.Sartipi@dot.ca.gov; sleonardis@losgatosca.gov; mjensen@losgatosca.gov; dmcnuttt@losgatosca.gov; jpirzynski@losgatosca.gov; bspector@losgatosca.gov; Mirela R. Radov [mizemun@yahoo.com]</p>
I-206-1	<p>I am writing to express my opposition to the SR 85 Express Lanes Project. http://www.vta.org/projects-and-programs/highway/vta-express-lanes-sr-85-express-lanes-project http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/documents/85ExpressLanesProject/front%20matter chapter 1 thru chapter 6.pdf</p>
I-206-2	<p>This project will do nothing to solve long term traffic congestion problems. Furthermore it breaches Performance Agreements signed in 1988 - 1990 with Cupertino, Saratoga, Campbell, and Los Gatos. I encourage VTA and Caltrans to abandon this project and instead focus on installing light rail tracks in the median. We need to get commuters out of cars and make mass transit a viable option.</p>
	<p>Nick Radov 102 Bungalow Ter Los Gatos, CA 95032 nradov@gmail.com +1-408-396-1100</p>

Responses to Comment I-206

I-206-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted. The project would improve average travel times and speeds on SR 85 through 2035, as described in Master Response TR-1.

I-206-2

See the responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding the agreements cited in the comment. VTA is not aware of any additional requirements from a City of Campbell Performance Agreement.

Light rail in the median of SR 85 was not carried forward because it was determined not to be reasonable or practicable, as described in Master Response GEN-2.

Comment I-207 Rainydae

85 express lanes

rainydae@aol.com

Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 6:38 PM

To: 85expresslanes

I-207-1 [I am very against this proposal. The noise we hear from 85 is already disturbing!
We can't even open our windows at night and must run the air conditioner instead!
No bird songs, no crickets! Just big power bills! We say no!

Responses to Comment I-207

I-207-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted. The project would increase existing noise levels by 0 to 3 dBA, depending on the location. This level of increase is less than significant, as discussed in Master Response N-1.

Comment I-208 Shoba Rao

Re: SR-85 express lanes
Shoba Rao [shobarao@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2014 9:04 PM
To: 85expresslanes
Cc: ctclerk@saratoga.ca.us; elo@saratoga.ca.us; jhunter@saratoga.ca.us; hmiller@saratoga.ca.us; mcappelo@saratoga.ca.us; cpage@saratoga.ca.us; supervisor.simitian@bos.sccgov.org; assemblymember.fong@ca.gov

Hello VTA representative

I-208-1 [After reading through the plans on 85 corridor improvement, I strongly disagree to the various aspects of it.

- Noise level is very high in my backyard now. I think this change will only make it worse. I don't agree with analysis by VTA
- the traffic choking problem in SR 85/280 intersection is going to be worse, if anything
- The plan is in violation of the agreement that there will only be light rail instead of express buses. So, it is a legal breach of the agreement
- EIR report is unavailable which makes it very suspicious and misleading

Thanks
--
Rgds,
Shoba.

Responses to Comment I-208

I-208-1

The opposition to the proposed project and existing noise levels are noted. The project would increase existing noise levels by 0 to 3 dBA, depending on the location. This level of increase is less than significant, as discussed in Master Response N-1.

A detailed traffic analysis was conducted and shows that the project would improve average travel times and speeds on SR 85, as described in Master Response TR-1. Master Response TR-2 discusses congestion at the SR 85/I-280 interchange and other planned projects.

The comment does not identify which agreement is cited. See the responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding the agreements.

The Initial Study/Environmental Assessment (IS/EA) for the project was issued on December 30, 2013. Although the public review period ended on February 28, 2014, the IS/EA will continue to be available at the Caltrans District 4 Environmental Document website at <http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/envdocs.htm#santaclara>. The environmental impacts of the proposed project, including the additional express lane in each direction between SR 87 and I-280, have been fully evaluated in the IS/EA and appropriate measures have been included to avoid or minimize impacts. Refer to Master Response GEN-3 regarding preparation of an EIR.

Comment I-209 Bob Rayl

	Your Name : Bob Rayl Phone Number : Email Address : bobrayl@pacbell.net
I-209-1	Your Comments to the City Council of Saratoga, California : I do not favor any expansion of Highway 85 through the corridor of the City of Saratoga, except for light rail, because of my concerns of additional by-pass traffic on city streets, air quality and increased noise. The City Council should request a full EIR for the suggested project by VTA and Cal-Trans, and team up with neighboring cities to oppose this project. Most importantly, the Saratoga City Council should not re-negotiate or change any of the existing Freeway Agreement (September 19, 1989) between the State and the City of Saratoga for State Highway Route 85 from Quito Road to Prospect Avenue, I am also amazed, but not necessarily surprised, that city council representatives to the VTA (Council-members Page and Miller) seem to have not kept the city council, administration and the community up-to-date about any Highway 85 project through Saratoga. Major regional projects by state agencies just do not pop-up over night.
I-209-2	
I-209-3	

Responses to Comment I-209

I-209-1

The commenter’s opposition to the project is noted. Refer to Master Responses GEN-2 regarding light rail in the median, TR-1 regarding traffic, AQ-1 regarding air quality, and N-1 regarding noise.

I-209-2

California Public Resources Code Sections 21080(d) and 21082.2(d) require the preparation of an EIR for projects with significant environmental effects. The determination that the proposed project would not have significant environmental effects was based on a detailed and comprehensive review of each technical study area, including noise, air quality, and traffic. Refer to Master Response GEN-3 regarding preparation of an EIR.

See the response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the agreement cited in the comment.

I-209-3

IS/EA Chapter 3 and Master Response GEN-6 list the extensive public outreach that has taken place as part of this project, including two community meetings and a City Council meeting presentation in Saratoga.

Comment I-210 Katherine Reader

Comments re: 85 Express lanes

Katherine Reader [ktreader@comcast.net]

Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2014 11:09 AM

To: 85expresslanes

I-210-1

I really object to express lanes. This is an absolutely crystal clear message to everyone that money can buy anything. The US didn't used to be so obviously this way and the older I get, the more obvious this becomes. Why don't you just charge everyone for using the "free" ways and you will relieve congestion by keeping all poor and lower-middle-class people off them altogether?

I strongly object to this plan. If rich people want to travel in carpool lanes, they should have to pay a poor person to ride with them; that would help get some unemployed people money, at least!

Katherine Reader
1831 Van Buren Cir
Mountain View, CA
94040-4054
phone: 650-969-4625

Responses to Comment I-210

I-210-1

The commenter's opposition to express lanes is noted. The project would maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, as described in Master Response GEN-1. Studies in California and elsewhere show that express lanes provide time and convenience benefits to drivers of all income levels. Refer to Master Response EJ-1 regarding express lane users.

Comment I-211 Lisa Reiche

Express lanes will not help

lisa.cowart@yahoo.com

Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2014 8:34 AM

To: 85expresslanes

I-211-1

The carpool lane is often clogged with cars already during commute hours. Why would anyone want to pay a toll to sit in the same traffic as everyone else? How will this have any effect in reducing traffic?

Perhaps make it a toll freeway, as we do in other states. Car poolers and motorcycles can be free. Once it costs more to commute than it does to take public transportation, people won't drive so much.

Lisa Reiche
664 SIERRA AVE. MOUNTAIN VIEW 94041

Responses to Comment I-211

I-211-1

The carpool/HOV lanes already have areas of congestion, as the commenter notes. The detailed traffic analysis indicates that the congestion will become worse in 2015 and 2035. The project would maintain traffic conditions in the express lanes at or near free-flow conditions through 2035 by adding a second express lane in the median between SR

87 and I-280 (IS/EA Section 2.1.3). The project would improve average travel times and speeds on SR 85, as discussed in Master Response TR-1. However, as stated in Master Response GEN-1, travel speeds in the HOV/express lanes must be 45 mph or higher for solo drivers to pay a toll to use the express lanes.

The commenter's recommendation is noted.

Comment I-212 Dan Rhoads

Comments on proposed express lanes on 85
Dan Rhoads [dr.hoadsg@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 3:44 PM
To: 85expresslanes

I-212-1 Hi: I realized I missed the council meeting where this topic was discussed. However, wanted to add a few comments that may/may not have been stated.
I agree with the comments on sound concerns, adding more noise above the agreed 60db will not be acceptable to the neighbors in Saratoga nor Los Gatos.

I-212-2 1) Having commuted in the south bound direction during the week days, I fail to see how adding the ability to pay to ride in the carpool lane during commute times will be attractive. This lane is already full with valid carpool cars without having the tolls. I don't see drivers wanting to pay for something that is as slow and congested as the regular lanes. I would think your studies during commute time would show the results I observed as well.

I-212-3 2) This is strictly a "feeling" comment. LA already has these toll lanes for several years. Do we want to have our slogan to be "no better than LA traffic?" Wouldn't think that would sell in Bay area.

Thanks
--
Dan,
Dr.HoadsG@GMAIL.COM

Responses to Comment I-212

I-212-1

The project would increase existing noise levels by 0 to 3 dBA, depending on the location. This level of increase would not be significant, as discussed in Master Response N-1.

The comment refers to a 60 dB threshold but does not identify the source of the threshold. The 1987 Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the construction of SR 85 between US 101 in southern San Jose and I-280 in Cupertino, which includes SR 85 in Saratoga and Los Gatos, stated that noise attenuation would be provided in school and residential areas whenever forecasted noise levels exceed 67 dBA (p. XI-59). The Final EIS also notes that while it would be desirable to meet local noise goals, it is not always practical to do so (p. XI-55).

I-212-2

The carpool/HOV lanes already have areas of congestion as the commenter notes, and detailed traffic analysis indicates that the congestion will become worse in 2015 and 2035. The project would maintain traffic conditions in the express lanes at or near free-

flow conditions through 2035 by adding express lane capacity between SR 87 and I-280 (IS/EA Section 2.1.3). The project would improve overall average travel times and speeds on SR 85, as discussed in Master Response TR-1.

However, as stated in Master Response GEN-1, travel speeds in the HOV/express lanes must be 45 mph or higher for solo drivers to pay a toll to use the express lanes.

I-212-3

The comment is noted.

Comment I-213 Stephen Roberts

	From: Steve Roberts
	To: 85expresslanes ; ctclerk@saratoga.ca.us ; elo@saratoga.ca.us ; jhunter@saratoga.ca.us ; hmiller@saratoga.ca.us ; mcappello@saratoga.ca.us ; cpage@saratoga.ca.us ; Supervisor.simitian@bos.sccgov.org ; assemblymember.fong@ca.gov
	Cc: Steve Roberts
	Subject: 85 Corridor
	Date: Thursday, February 27, 2014 5:37:09 PM
I-213-1	<hr/> <p>Hi All, PLEASE STOP IT. I Oppose Hwy 85 Expansion!!! Thanks</p> <p>Stephen Roberts 119 Cherry Wood Ct. Los Gatos Ca. 95032</p>

Responses to Comment I-213

I-213-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted.

Comment I-214 Brian Robertson

SR 85 Express Lanes

Brian Robertson [BRobertson@infinera.com]

Sent: Sunday, February 23, 2014 8:42 AM

To: 85expresslanes

I-214-1 Regarding the VTA proposal for adding an Express Lane in addition to the conversion of current diamond lanes being added to HY85 (making it 8 lanes), I oppose proceeding without a full EIR. Further, VTA further needs to respect the 1989 Performance Agreement with the City of Saratoga for 6 lanes (maximum) with light rail. Equally required, is a commitment to repave with "Quiet Pavement" as documented in use by Caltrans to further mitigate the existing noise in excess of the Performance Agreement.

I-214-2 The Evaluation Assessment and Negative Declaration conducted by VTA for noise has much lower decibel ratings (up to 10db less) than what the City of Saratoga recently (summer of 2013) recorded. This was discussed and shared with VTA's John Risto at the February 6th Saratoga City Council meeting.

I-214-3 Further, as demonstrated when HY85 was built, the project compliance with 60db was far from being achieved due to the PCC (cement) highway. Even after grinding the sound has continued to worsen up to 70+ db (as measured by the City of Saratoga summer 2013). Over the past years, no money has supposedly been available to neither repave nor use the "quiet pavement" used elsewhere by Caltrans.

I-214-3 As documented on the California Department of Transportation website (<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/env/noise/pub/CaliforniaTestsShow.pdf>), starting in 1998, Caltrans had investigated European highways and installed "quiet pavement" on Interstate 80 just east of Davis. And in 2002, they repaved portions of HY280 on top of the same surface we have through Saratoga. The benchmark results do show that as much as a 6.2db reduction can be achieved.

I-214-4 With the existing noise levels documented in the EA stated as approaching or exceeding Federal Noise Abatement criteria, the already projected potential 3db increase does need to be mitigated. Since Caltrans has not met the original design criteria for HY85, how are we to believe they will not exceed the 3db estimate? Noise mitigation must be required. The technology and experience for the "quiet pavement" application has already been demonstrated by Caltrans.

I-214-5 Once again, I strongly request the VTA for a full EIR and to respect the Performance Agreement of 6 lanes and Light Rail. My additional ask, along with the EIR, are for VTA/Caltrans/MTC to repave HY85 through Saratoga (and Cupertino / Campbell / Los Gatos) with "quiet pavement". Clearly, since VTA/Caltrans have the capability to raise/allocate \$170-180 million to HY85, they should have the ability to apportion funds and deploy the technology already tested and proven to reduce noise with "quiet pavement" to help reduce the current limits exceeded.

Thank you.
Brian Robertson
Saratoga Resident

Responses to Comment I-214

I-214-1

California Public Resources Code Sections 21080(d) and 21082.2(d) require the preparation of an EIR for projects with significant environmental effects. The determination that the proposed project would not have significant environmental effects was based on a detailed and comprehensive review of each technical study area,

including noise, air quality, and traffic. The technical studies included the additional express lane in each direction between SR 87 and I-280. Refer to Master Response GEN-3 regarding preparation of an EIR.

See the response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the agreement cited in the comment and Master Response N-2 regarding quieter pavement.

I-214-2

Refer to Master Response N-4 for a discussion of the SR 85 noise data in the City of Saratoga's 2013 Draft Noise Element compared with that in the 2012 *Noise Study Report* prepared for the proposed project.

I-214-3

The comment refers to a 60 dB threshold but does not identify the source of the threshold. At this time, FHWA policy does not allow quieter pavement to be considered as a noise abatement measure (Caltrans TeNS 2013). Quieter pavement is not currently listed in 23 CFR 772 as a noise abatement measure for which Federal funding may be used (Caltrans Protocol, p. 20). Although not considered an abatement measure for purposes of this project, the possibility of applying pavement surfaces that have a noise-reduction benefit, are cost-effective, and meet safety and maintenance requirements, can be considered at the time of final project design and development of contract specifications.

I-214-4

Where the future noise level with the project is predicted to approach (within 1 decibel) or exceed the NAC, an impact has been identified, and potential noise abatement has been evaluated in the IS/EA as required by Caltrans and FHWA (IS/EA Section 2.2.7.4, under "Traffic Noise Abatement Evaluation"). None of the evaluated sound wall locations met the Caltrans "feasibility" and "reasonableness" criteria. That does not mean noise levels cannot be reduced or that no other noise abatement can be considered or included in the project. Rather, the feasibility and reasonableness criteria are used to determine whether project-related noise abatement is eligible for federal funding. Potential noise abatement can be considered if non-federal funds are available.

Refer to Master Response N-3 regarding the comment that noise from SR 85 exceeds that expected at the time it was approved.

I-214-5

See the response to Comment I-214-1.

Comment I-215 Mary Robertson (1)

Re: Contact the City Council of Saratoga, California Form Submission

Mary Robertson [robertson.b.m@mindspring.com]

Sent: Tuesday, February 04, 2014 8:17 AM

To: Gpupdates [gpupdates@earthlink.net]

Cc: Barry Chang [barry4assembly@gmail.com]; bob rayl [bobrayl@pacbell.net]; mark@weisler-saratoga-ca.us; john.chen.sjca@mail.com; d.poppenhagen@comcast.net; plam_93154@yahoo.com; cherielj@earthlink.net; shericourtney@yahoo.com; winnie_chanlu@yahoo.com; 85expresslanes

Hi All,

I-215-1

For those of you that have not had the opportunity, you might listen to the Saratoga City Council Meeting of 1/16/2013 (last year) when VTA presented. It "might" give you some insight to council feelings by listening to council comments. Some comments may be at end also. In addition you can also listen to council comments for the January 15, 2014 meeting that Cheriell spoke at. Listen to comments at end of video as this is where council discusses 85.

Mary

Responses to Comment I-215

I-215-1

The comments are noted.

Comment I-216 Mary Robertson (2)

On Feb 7, 2014, at 12:42 PM, "Mary Robertson" <robertson.b.m@mindspring.com> wrote:

Dear Mr. Ristow,

Thank you for taking the time to come out to present the VTA proposal on SR 85 on February 5, 2014.

I spoke with you after the meeting to inform you that this proposal was not properly noticed via the project description as posted in the January 30, 2014 San Jose Mercury News and is in fact deceptive to the public.

I pointed out to you and had you read the Mercury News Public Notice description which is as follows:

"What's being planned: The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in cooperation with the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), is proposing to convert the existing High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes on State Route (SR)85 to express lanes. The express lanes would allow HOV's to continue to use the lanes without cost and eligible singular occupant vehicles to pay a toll."

I-216-1

1. As you can see above, the description does NOT mention anything about ADDING (2) additional lanes of traffic. It only speaks of Converting EXISTING lanes.

I am asking that you REPOST and properly NOTICE this transformation of SR85 to read, "convert the existing HOV Lanes and add (2) additional Lanes....."

In addition, since this was not properly noticed, I would also request that an extension to public comment be made as well.

Please Advise.

I-216-2

2. I am also asking that you Notice/post in the World Journal or SingTah Daily so as to communicate to various families living along the corridor that do not utilize the Mercury News.

Please Advise.

I-216-3

3. Posted on the MTC website is "Bay Area Plan 2013 (July 2013). It references (2) line item costs associated with SR85. One line item is RTPID 240439 in the amount of \$187 Million. The other line item referenced is RTPID 240742 in the amount of \$791 Million. I have already spoken with John Goodman of the MTC. He has referred me back to the VTA as the source of the costs and

I-216-3,
cont.

information. I would like to understand how much of the \$791 Million is apportioned to SR85 and for what?

Please Advise.

Thank you for answering, in a timely fashion, my requests and questions above.

Sincerely,

Mary Robertson
(A long time Santa Clara Valley Resident)

Dear Mr. Ristow,

I-216-4

Thank you for your response. Since the original VTA notice postings were inaccurate (deceptive one might say), it seems to me that it is only right that the Public comment period be extended.

1. With the reissuing of the Public notice, will the public comment period be extended 30 days past the PROPER reposting of this Freeway Expansion?

Please Advise

I-216-5

2. Will VTA be posting public notice in the World Journal and Sing Tah Daily? Many residents in the corridor utilize these papers as their main source of information and certainly have a right to know what is occurring in their native language. While you have the E/A posted in various languages on your site, it is not helpful if the original notice is not communicated to readers of the (2) papers mentioned above.

Please advise

3. Please clarify costs further. As mentioned below, MTC has advised me that all costs, as published in their reports, come directly from the various agencies, in this case VTA. The 2011 document you refer to below from the August 2011 Project Study Report actually indicated that this freeway project as submitted by VTA was going to cost \$1.2 BILLION. Now it appears the same project has been **significantly** reduced to the neighborhood of \$170M to \$187M(as published again by MTC).

I am really having a hard time understanding how a project goes from \$1.2 Billion as published (Table 92 screen shot below and published MTC August,2011) to the current cost levels. That is an 86% reduction in costs and project scope?? That raises a red flag for me!

I have to really wonder what is being left out of this current project (\$170-\$187Million) in total or is the VTA breaking up the project in its totality and performing the entire project as outlined in \$1.2 Billion over a phase-in/peacemeal fashion so as to make it appear costs are lower.

I-216-6 In addition and as indicated below, the most recent Final Plan Bay Area project list as published by MTC July 2013 (again with information submitted by VTA) indicates the RTPID 240439 in the amount of \$187 Million. The other line item referenced is RTPID 240742 in the amount of \$791 Million. What does this \$791Million refer to.? I have given you the RTPID nos. for reference.

Since VTA is a government agency, sunshine law and all, as a member of the taxpaying public, I have real questions as to the REAL dollar costs of this project.

Please advise how such a project can go from \$1.2Billion to \$187 Million.

Please advise: Just as Table 92 has a breakout of costs, I would like the same breakout for the \$170Million to \$187Million Project.

Please advise what the additional \$791 Million as listed by MTC per VTA referencing this SR85 project is to be used for.

Thank you,

Mary Robertson
(A Long Time Santa Clara Valley Resident and Concerned Taxpayer)

Mr. Ristow,

Thank you for your response below.

I-216-7 I look forward to hearing MTC response to the numbers published in their Published Document which they have indicated, to myself,came from VTA directly. Table 92 was indicated by MTC to have come from VTA and the "exercise" was in reference to the HOV Conversion as well as the HOT addition on SR85.

Since you have indicated the project to cost \$170 million, please advise where I can find the breakout of the costs relating to this project. For instance, excavation cost, road surface/specified cost, signage, center cement median replacement cost, Fast track monitor poles cost, lighting poles cost, road re-stripping

I-216-7 cost, drainage cost, HOT lane monitoring costs, etc. I would like to see the breakout of the costs much as was
cont. presented in Table 92 which I had attached in the original email.

Thank you for your help with this,

Mary Robertson

Responses to Comment I-216

I-216-1

The public review and comment period for the proposed project was extended to February 28, 2014, and additional public outreach was conducted to clarify information about the second express lane between SR 87 and I-280, as described in Master Response GEN-6.

I-216-2

The commenter's recommendation is noted. Project notices have been advertised in *El Observador*, *Sing Tao*, *Korea Times*, and *Viet Nam*, as described in Final IS/EA Section 3.3.

I-216-3

The proposed project is listed in Plan Bay Area as RTP ID 240439.

The difference in costs from the MTC *Plan Bay Area* Regional Transportation Plan and now is due to an early 2011 estimate prepared for that plan and a refined and updated cost estimate now that studies have progressed further into preliminary engineering. Some project scope and update costs were revised resulting in a lower overall cost estimate. It is still early in the development of the project, and the estimates can change as the project moves forward.

As to the costs, the numbers used (\$187 million revised to \$170 million) are the correct numbers. The form attached to the email may have come from MTC and was prepared for a separate unrelated exercise.

I-216-4

The public review and comment period for the proposed project was extended to February 28, 2014, and additional public outreach was conducted in mid-February to clarify information about the second express lane between SR 87 and I-280. Refer to Master Response GEN-6 regarding public notices.

I-216-5

See the response to Comment I-216-2.

I-216-6, I-216-7

See the response to Comment I-216-3 and Master Response GEN-10 regarding costs.

Comment I-217 Mary Robertson (3)

From: robertson.b.m@mindspring.com
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Subject: Not in favor of SR 85 Express Lanes Project
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2014 12:25:22 PM

I-217-1 I am not in favor of the Highway 85 express lane project for the following reasons:

1. The additional lanes from Camden to I 280 violate the performance agreement Caltrans and VTA had with the cities along the corridor to put lightrail in the median of a six lane freeway(current freeway status).

Why are you not adhering to the performance agreement?

2. The Neg Dec E/A indicates on the page signed by Melanie Brent, Deputy District Director of Caltrans that the project description involving SR85 "proposes to convert the existing High-Occupancy Vehicle(HOV) lanes on State Route (SR) 85 to express lanes.....The express lanes would extend along the entire 24.1 mile length of SR85 and 1.5Miles of USH 101...The project would also convert the SR85/ US101 HOV direct connectors in San Jose to express lane connectors, add signs to 4.1 miles of US 101North of SR85 in Mountain View and Palo Alto and to 1.8 miles of US 101 between Metcalf Rd and Bailey Ave. in San Jose, and add an auxiliary lane to 1.1 mile segment of northbound SR 85 between South De Anza Blvd and Stevens Creek Blvd in Cupertino."

On page i of the E/A it indicates," The California Dept of Transportation, in cooperation with the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), proposes to convert the existing High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes on State Route (SR) 85 to express lanes..."

AT NO TIME IS THERE REFERENCE IN THE NEG DEC SIGNOFF NOR REFERENCE IN THE SUMMARY TO ADDING (2) ADDITIONAL LANES IN THE CORRIDOR MAKING THE FREEWAY AN 8 LANE ROAD GOING PREDOMINATELY THROUGH RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES.

I-217-2 Again on page 1-1, Chapter 1, 1.1 Proposed Project again is listed as : The California Dept of Transportation,...., proposes to convert the existing HOV lanes on State Route 85 to HOT lanes..... This page also references the 2009 Santa Clara VTA Plan 2035 listing this project which again is listed on page 69 and again on page 170 VTP ID "H-1" as converting existing lanes only.

You cannot have it both ways in that you present this E/A as signed off by Caltrans Proposed Negative Declaration as being for "conversion only" and then later in the E/A talks about adding lanes.

How can you possibly claim there is no added affects with additional lanes?

The entire Neg Dec is invalid based on what Caltrans has signed off on (conversion only of existing lanes) vs your presentations of conversion and ADDING (2) lanes.

How can you sign a Neg Dec declaring one thing (conversion of

I-217-2, cont.	existing lanes) and then later add (2) lanes to your project??
I-217-3	3. Adding additional lanes is a TYPE 1 Federal Project requiring a full EIR. Why are you not doing a full EIR??
I-217-4	4. In reviewing your Table S-1 Summary: Land use: The build alternative does indeed affect the median that was reserved for lightrail per the performance agreement the Cities along the corridor have with Caltrans and VTA.
I-217-5	Growth: The build alternative could increase cars in the intended additional lanes corridors by as much as 35-53% assuming full capacity of 1650 cars. This is a substantial increase of vehicles and would be designated by the Feds as a Type 1 Highway project as this is putting additional cars on the road.
I-217-6	Visual Aesthetics: In many parts of the corridor, the freeway is depressed as low as 5-10 feet with berms or sound walls as low as 12 feet. With signs as high as 26 feet and lighting listed as high as 40 feet these would be visually UNCOMPATIBLE with the existing freeway setting or surrounding areas. What type of mitigation would be provided to bordering residences for the light pollution of lighting in which the structures would be substantially higher than the sound walls, as well as visual pollution of toll signs, or express lane entrance/exist signs?
I-217-7	Hazardous Waste/Materials: How is this going to be handled? As I recall, when this original freeway was constructed, hazardous areas were encountered, one not too far away from Blue Hills Elementary School. What type of notice have you provided to the Elementary school and District regarding the additional lanes and ground disturbance. Have the Schools along this corridor been properly notified and had the opportunity to comment on this project??
I-217-8	Air Quality: With an increase of 35-53% in vehicles along corridor between SR87 and I280, there will also be an increase in pollutants. Unless you stop each car every day, the national control standards do not mean a thing. If trucks are allowed in the corridor, the pollutant factor increases further. How do you plan on mitigating pollutants?
I-217-9	Noise: Current noise Levels conducted by the City of Saratoga regarding SR85 show levels of 67dBA to 71dBA. These are already exceeding Federal abatement standards. In addition a VTA noise Study done September 2001 titled "Evaluation of Noise Mitigation Alternatives for Route 85" showed that PCC is substantially noisier than Quiet pavement. What type of mitigation will you provide to bring the noise levels down below federal standards as was originally promised by Mr. William Kempton, Caltrans Executive, in January 1989 before the City of Saratoga? You have a current problem in exceeding standards and the fact that an additional 35-53% in capacity will occur will far exceed the 3-5 dBA which will be more than a doubling of sound to the human ear. As we know, the tires to road create high frequencies of sound which are more disturbing than low frequencies of sound to the human ear. What are the frequencies of sound levels with these additional cars?

I-217-9, cont.	<p>How will you mitigate this additional noise? Will you be installing quiet pavement as was done in San Rafael on 101?</p> <p>How will you mitigate the current noise levels of 67-71dBA currently experienced along this freeway? Will you be installing quiet pavement as was done in San Rafael on 101 and I-80 around Sacramento?</p> <p>The noise studies were conducted in October/November 2011. In researching unemployment numbers for Santa Clara County, a graph from the ST. Louis Federal website depicts the timing of the noise study to be conducted at one of the highest times of unemployment over the past 24 years. High unemployment means less cars on the road for your noise readings.</p> <p>How do you reconcile the noise differences between your study and the City of Saratoga's</p>
I-217-10	<p>Climate change: It is stated that in 2015(assuming the freeway was built then) would have higher carbon dioxide emissions than existing conditions. As indicated above 35-53% more cars would be on the road. More cars in 2015 and more cars in 2035 equal more emissions, more greenhouse gasses. The PSR (October 2010) signed off by Caltrans indicates that this project will be good till 2023 -2028 and then full congestion again. More cars, congestion, more fumes.</p> <p>How do you plan on insuring carbon dioxide emissions, greenhouse gasses, and particulates do not exceed what they are already today?</p>
I-217-11	<p>Deficiencies: This project does not fix the following: 85 North/280 bottleneck that currently exists 85 South/17 bottleneck that currently exists 85 N/EI Camino Real bottleneck that currently exists 85 N and Homestead and Fremont Ave bottlenecks that currently exists etc</p> <p>Your field observations at various points in your traffic study indicated that the lanes in most areas are not congested but merging is a problem. Maybe you should try fixing the merging first by installing more ramp metered lights, a few painted lines designating spots to merge in and out of.</p> <p>In other words, you are not fixing the bottlenecks that currently exist with 3 lanes of traffic. You are adding a 4th lane to further contribute to this bottleneck.</p> <p>The bottom line is that this is an unacceptable project which per your PSR of October 2010 on page 22 indicates may be outdated by 2023. This proposal is a short term solution.</p> <p>Light rail that goes where people want to go is what is needed to move large masses of people out of their cars and into this form of transportation. Light rail will take cars off the road really reducing greenhouse gasses. Light rail is what the median was reserved for.</p> <p>While I will expect an answer to my questions, I would like to reiterate, do not waste my tax dollars on a short term solution! Scrape</p> <p>Thank you, Mary Robertson</p>

Responses to Comment I-217

I-217-1

See the responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding the agreements cited in the comment. Note that no other cities provided comments regarding Performance Agreements for the original construction of SR 85.

Light rail in the median of SR 85 was not carried forward because it was determined not to be reasonable or practicable, as described in Master Response GEN-2.

I-217-2

The IS/EA included and described the proposed addition of a second express lane between SR 87 and I-280. Advertisements in the following newspapers were run on the following days to clarify that the project would include the second express lane: local English-language newspapers (*Mercury News*, February 14, 2014 and *Philippines Today*, February 12, 2014); and foreign-language newspapers (*El Observador*, February 14, 2014—Spanish, *Sing Tao*, February 14, 2014—Chinese, *Korea Times*, February 14, 2014—Korean, and *Viet Nam*, February 14, 2014—Vietnamese).

The second express lane was fully disclosed in the IS/EA, and is shown in Figures 1.1-2 and 1.3-1 of the IS/EA and discussed in Sections 1.2.2.3, 1.3.1, 1.3.1.9, 1.3.1.10, 1.3.5.1, 1.3.5.2, 2.1.1.3, 2.1.2.2, 2.1.3.2, 2.1.4.3, 2.2.6.3, 2.2.7.3, 2.2.7.4, 2.5.1.1, and 2.5.1.2, as well as in Appendix C. The second express lane was also fully analyzed in all of the technical studies for the project.

In addition, the IS/EA has been revised to identify the second express lane on the title page, Negative Declaration, Summary, and beginning of Chapter 1.

I-217-3

The proposed project is a Type I project as defined by 23 Code of Federal Regulations 772.7, as noted in IS/EA Section 2.2.7.3. The Type I designation refers to the level of noise analysis that is required (Caltrans 2011d). The project's noise analysis satisfies the requirements for a Type I project.

The Type I project designation does not relate to the type of environmental document that should be prepared for a project. An Initial Study/Environmental Assessment (IS/EA) was prepared for the proposed project, and many other Type I projects are evaluated in IS/EA reports.

California Public Resources Code Sections 21080(d) and 21082.2(d) require the preparation of an EIR for projects with significant environmental effects. The determination that the proposed project would not have significant environmental effects was based on a detailed and comprehensive review of each technical study area. Refer to Master Response GEN-3 regarding preparation of an EIR.

I-217-4

Refer to the responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding the agreements.

The extension of light rail along SR 85 is not a planned or programmed project. The IS/EA Table S-1 description of land use remains accurate.

I-217-5

The comment does not identify the basis for the statement that the Build Alternative would increase vehicles by 35 to 53 percent. It should be noted that 1,650 vph is considered the threshold needed to maintain 45 mph in an HOV/express lane. During the peak hour, when congestion is highest, the express lanes would be managed through toll pricing, and solo drivers would be restricted if necessary to maintain free-flow conditions for HOVs. Also refer to Master Response GEN-1 regarding maintaining speeds of 45 mph or greater.

See the response to Comment I-217-3 regarding the Type I designation.

I-217-6

The project would add signs along SR 85, and additional discussion and exhibits about the signs and other project components have been added to IS/EA Section 2.1.4. See the responses to Comments L-1-24 and L-3-20 regarding the signs and lighting.

Unlike the existing lighting along the freeway that illuminates the outside lanes and freeway entrances and exits, the new luminaires will be in the median and will be focused on the inside lanes. The proposed luminaires and other light fixtures would have lighting configured at the minimum necessary illumination level and optimal angle to restrict light to the freeway right-of-way. If needed, the fixtures would be outfitted with shields to prevent light trespass to surrounding properties.

I-217-7

The commenter is referred to IS/EA Sections 2.2.5.3 and 2.2.5.4 regarding potential hazardous materials sites. Public outreach for the project is described in IS/EA Chapter 3.

I-217-8

Project-related effects to air quality were evaluated in detail as described in Master Response AQ-1, and measures to control dust and emissions during construction are listed in IS/EA Section 2.2.6.4. The project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85.

I-217-9

The comment appears to refer to SR 85 noise data in the City of Saratoga's 2013 Draft Noise Element compared with that in the 2012 *Noise Study Report* prepared for the proposed project. Refer to Master Response N-4 for a discussion of these noise data.

The comment states that noise levels already exceed the Federal standard of 67 dBA. The comment appears to refer to the Federal noise abatement criteria (NAC), which are shown in IS/EA Table 2.2.7-1. Where the future noise level with the project is predicted to approach (within 1 decibel) or exceed the NAC, an impact has been identified, and potential noise abatement has been evaluated in the IS/EA as required by Caltrans and FHWA. It is important to note that the NAC values are used to determine whether noise abatement must be considered, and do not represent levels to which noise must be abated.

The comment is incorrect that a 3 dB difference is a doubling of noise. A 3 dB increase in noise level represents a doubling of acoustic energy, rather than a doubling in perceived loudness. As stated in the City of Saratoga Draft Noise Element, a 3 dB change is considered a just-noticeable difference in noise level, and a 10 dB change is subjectively

heard as approximately a doubling in loudness (City of Saratoga Noise Element, p. 5). The sound frequency from vehicles on SR 85 would be the same with or without the project. Refer to Master Response N-2 regarding quiet pavement.

Noise measurements for the 2012 *Noise Study Report* were collected in October and November 2011 and in March 2012. Based on unemployment data for Santa Clara County, the highest unemployment rates in recent years were for 2009 and 2010, before the noise study was conducted.

Although employment levels have increased since the *Noise Study Report* was prepared, it is important to note that the noise measurements and predicted future levels (assuming growth in the area through 2035) reflect the worst hour for traffic noise, when traffic is heavy but still moving at or close to the speed limit. Adding vehicles to the freeway due to an assumption of higher employment would result in congestion and slower speeds, which would decrease, not increase, traffic noise levels. Therefore, a new noise study to capture the effects of higher employment levels would not result in different conclusions.

As discussed in Master Response N-4, there is no conflict between the City of Saratoga's 2013 Draft Noise Element and the 2012 *Noise Study Report* prepared for the proposed project.

I-217-10

IS/EA Section 2.5.1.1 provides a project-level evaluation of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions prepared using the most recent project data in accordance with Caltrans modeling standards. The 2010 PSR was prepared before the project design was refined. The technical studies, including detail traffic and air quality studies, were prepared after the PSR.

The Build Alternative would have slightly higher CO₂ emissions in 2015 than existing and No Build conditions (Final IS/EA Table 2.5.1-1, which has been refined to include CO₂ and other GHG components). The project-related increase in 2015 would be 3.7 percent compared with existing conditions and less than 0.5 percent compared with the No Build Alternative.

However, in 2035, the Build Alternative would have substantially lower CO₂ emissions than the No Build Alternative. The 2035 Build CO₂ emissions would also be lower than existing CO₂ emissions.

Greenhouse gas reduction strategies are discussed in IS/EA Section 2.5.1.2. The project would result in negligible changes to air quality and would have long-term air quality benefits, as described in Master Response AQ-1.

I-217-11

Reconstructing the SR 85/I-280 interchange or other bottlenecks is not within the scope of the project. Refer to Master Response TR-2 for additional information about other planned improvements that, together with the SR 85 Express Lanes Project, would provide incremental improvements to bottlenecks at major system interchanges.

The statement regarding the 2010 Project Study Report is incorrect; the discussion cited indicates that the HOV lane (that is, the existing HOV lane) would reach capacity between 2023 and 2028. The proposed project would help to address this situation by

adding a second HOV/express lane in the median in each direction of SR 85 between SR 87 and I-280.

Refer to Master Response GEN-2 regarding light rail in the median.

Comment I-218 Fiona Rodrigues

Express lanes on highway 85

Gary Rodrigues [gary@grodrigues.com]

Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2014 3:13 PM

To: 85expresslanes

I-218-1

Don't let the HOV lanes on Highway 85 be turned into "express lanes". The change would cause the "Environment-Friendly-Lanes" to be turned into "Rich-Man" lanes. The HOV lanes are getting people to carpool and drive environmentally friendly cars. Don't ruin it.

Fiona Rodrigues
Saratoga Resident

Responses to Comment I-218

I-218-1

The commenter's opposition to the proposed project is noted. The express lanes would create additional capacity and maintain priority use for carpools, transit buses, and other HOVs, which would continue to use the lanes for free. In addition, express lane tolls would provide a revenue source for HOV, transportation, and transit service improvements in the SR 85 corridor. Refer to Master Response GEN-1 regarding the express lanes.

Studies in California and elsewhere show that express lanes provide time and convenience benefits to drivers of all income levels. Refer to Master Response EJ-1 regarding express lane users.

Comment I-219 Gary Rodrigues

Highway 85 Express Lanes

Gary Rodrigues [garyr@starone.org]

Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2014 12:37 PM

To: 85expresslanes

I-219-1

Please don't let the HOV lanes on Highway 85 be turned into "express lanes". The change would cause the "Environment-Friendly-Lanes" to be turned into "Rich-Man" lanes. The HOV lanes are getting people to carpool and drive environmentally friendly cars. Don't ruin it.

Gary Rodrigues
Saratoga Resident

Responses to Comment I-219

I-219-1

See the response to Comment I-218-1.

Comment I-220 Paul Rood

From: [Paul Rood](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2014 3:18:16 PM

I-220-1 [How dare you take our money then charge us to use the road.
nobody asked for it and nobody wants it!!! this is part of Agenda 21 and it must be stopped. This is
the camels nose under the tent! [then you have the whole camel]
This must not proceed!

Responses to Comment I-220

I-220-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted.

The express lane toll for solo drivers is a user fee, as described in Master Response GEN-5. SR 85 will continue to have two general purpose lanes in each direction that do not have tolls or vehicle occupancy requirements.

Comment I-221 Steve Rosenblum

SR85 Express Lanes
Steve Rosenblum(pol1) [pol1@rosenblums.us]
Sent: Friday, February 07, 2014 11:51 AM
To: 85expresslanes

I-221-1 [I strongly oppose this proposal as it will encourage more automobile traffic on our roads, increasing the emission of global warming gasses. It will also mostly benefit the wealthy at the expense of the poor as only the richer drivers will be willing to pay the tolls to save time, leaving the poorer drivers sitting in stopped lanes. A much better alternative would be to put this money into mass transit options such as express busses and light rail with convenient feeder routes to get people to their work destinations in times comparable to auto travel during commute times.

Stephen Rosenblum
Palo Alto

Responses to Comment I-221

I-221-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted. Refer to Master Responses TR-1 and TR-2 regarding traffic and AQ-1 regarding air quality.

The project would maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, as described in Master Response GEN-1. Studies in California and elsewhere show that express lanes

provide time and convenience benefits to drivers of all income levels. Refer to Master Response EJ-1 regarding express lane users.

Refer to Master Response GEN-7 regarding why transit options are not being implemented instead of the proposed project.

Comment I-222 Susan Rosenzweig

From: [Susan Rosenzweig](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Subject: VTA Freeway 85 Project
Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 2:39:51 PM

I am a resident of Saratoga and attended the VTA Freeway 85 project meeting held at the Saratoga Library Tuesday evening, Feb 25. As a result of the presentation by the VTA representative, I would like you to address following comments/questions:

- I-222-1 1. The noise measurements you took in 2009 are not valid. We were in the depths of the worst recession since the Great Depression. The traffic had disappeared. Everyone was out of work!! A recent study done by the town of Saratoga, using the same contractor as you did, showed much higher readings, far exceeding the limit agreed upon when 85 was first built.
- I-222-2 2. The original Contract signed by the local community leaders and the County agency in charge at that time, said that the 85 median would be reserved for future light rail. You can not contractually use that for another lane of gas powered vehicles even if they are hybrids.
- I-222-3 3. Using the proposed new lane for Express Buses is not equivalent to light rail!! Hybrid does not equal all electric. You will be adding to the overall Carbon particle-rants in the air when you should be finding the best ways to reduce them. Less cars/busses not more.
- I-222-4 4. The priority for any new funds should be alleviating the rush hour bottleneck at the 85/280 merge. Adding another lane of traffic feeding into that same bottleneck will exacerbate the problem. If that problem is a 280 issue, not an 85 issue as the speaker indicated then concentrate on 280 and not 85!
- I-222-5 5. Your whole approach seems to be short sighted. The valley is expanding in people and jobs. The proposed Express lanes will be obsolete before they are even in place.

Susan Rosenzweig
srosenz@comcast.net
12154 Marilla Drive, Saratoga
408-257-1396

Responses to Comment I-222

I-222-1

Noise measurements for the 2012 *Noise Study Report* were collected in October and November 2011 and in March 2012. Based on unemployment data for Santa Clara County, the highest unemployment rates in recent years were for 2009 and 2010, before the noise study was conducted.

Although employment levels have increased since the *Noise Study Report* was prepared, it is important to note that the noise measurements and predicted future levels (assuming

growth in the area through 2035) reflect the worst hour for traffic noise, when traffic is heavy but still moving at or close to the speed limit. Adding vehicles to the freeway due to an assumption of higher employment would result in congestion and slower speeds, which would decrease, not increase, traffic noise levels. Therefore, a new noise study to capture the effects of higher employment levels would not result in different conclusions.

Also refer to Master Response N-4 regarding a discussion of the Saratoga Noise Element Update noise levels and the IS/EA noise levels.

I-222-2

See the response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the agreement and Master Response GEN-2 regarding light rail in the median.

I-222-3

Additional express bus service on SR 85 is not included as part of the project but could be considered as part of reinvestment of toll revenue in the project corridor.

The project would improve average travel times and speeds on SR 85, as discussed in Master Response TR-1, which in turn would reduce emissions from vehicles idling. Carbon emissions from the project were fully evaluated in IS/EA Sections 2.2.6.3 (under “Evaluation of Potential for Traffic-Related CO Impacts,” for carbon monoxide) and 2.5.1.1 (for carbon dioxide).

I-222-4

The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at the I-280 interchange, as described in Master Response TR-2.

I-222-5

The project was proposed to accommodate expected local and regional growth. See IS/EA Section 1.2.2.1 (under “Projected Travel Demand”) for additional information.

Comment I-223 Carol Ross

From: Carol Ross [cross2@comcast.net]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2014 12:18 PM
To: Steven Leonardis; Marcia Jensen; jpirznski@losgatosca.gov; BSpector; Diane McNutt
Subject: Highway 85 toll lines

I-223-1

I understand VTA and Caltrans want to expand highway 85 by adding two toll lanes. I understand that this will hinder future light rail installation. I am a BIG proponent of high speed public transportation. Traveling frequently overseas, I see that we are years behind other countries in providing fast, clean travel options. We can't just keep adding cars. Not only do they cause congestion on the roads, they add to our already polluted air. We have to consider the world our children and grandchildren will have to fix if they can. So please vote against this proposal. Thank you.

Carol Ross

Responses to Comment I-223

I-223-1

This comment was forwarded to Caltrans and VTA by the Town of Los Gatos.

The commenter's opposition to the proposed project is noted. Light rail in the median of SR 85 was not carried forward because it was determined not to be reasonable or practicable, as described in Master Response GEN-2.

Comment I-224 Dave and Christie Ross

From:	Christie Ross
To:	85expresslanes
Subject:	85 expansion
Date:	Friday, February 28, 2014 4:18:54 PM

I-224-1 [NO, NO, NO....I do not approve of the expansion of 85 to add two toll lanes!!!!!! YOU MUST HONOR THE CONTRACT AGREED UPON IN 1990 AND BRING VTA TO LOS GATOS!!!! My gosh no more cars on the road!! Let us encourage the use of mass transit like other countries do. This is a ridiculous and environmentally unhealthy idea!!!

Dave and Christie Ross
Los Gatos 85/railroad border residence

Responses to Comment I-224

I-224-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted.

See the response to Comment L-4-2 regarding the contract cited. The extension of light rail in the median of SR 85 is discussed in Master Response GEN-2. Refer to Master Response GEN-7 regarding transit as an alternative to the proposed project.

Comment I-225 Alexis Rubin

From: [designsbyalexis](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Subject: We opposed the changes planned for the 8 freeway
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2014 11:27:04 AM

I-225-1

Living close to the 85 freeway brings an amazing amount of noise whenever my husband and I step outside. We doubt that the noise level has been correctly tested in the past and we are fearful that adding new lanes to this freeway will surely make the noise situation worse. We also are convinced that the particulate matter generated by the tires of even more automobiles will further destroy our neighborhood environment.

The concept of toll lanes in California, the land of the "freeway", is highly objectionable.

Do not go ahead with any changes to the 85 freeway.

Alexis Rubin

Responses to Comment I-225

I-225-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted. The existing noise environment and future noise levels with and without the project were evaluated in detail in accordance with Caltrans and FHWA standards. Project-related noise increases would not be significant, as discussed in Master Response N-1.

The project would result in minimal changes to particulate matter and other pollutants and would have long-term air quality benefits, as described in Master Response AQ-1.

The express lane toll for solo drivers is a user fee, as described in Master Response GEN-5. SR 85 will continue to have two general purpose lanes in each direction that do not have tolls or vehicle occupancy requirements.

Comment I-226 Mike Ryken

Comment on 85 express lane

Mike Ryken [mike_ryken@yahoo.com]

Sent: Friday, February 07, 2014 7:42 PM

To: 85expresslanes

I read some are proposing a "solution" to congestion on the 85:

"Carpools with two or more occupants, motorcycles, transit buses, and clean air vehicles with applicable decals will continue to use the express lanes free of charge."

I-226-1

I have carpoled with my wife on the 85 and we have noticed something the last few years: Quite simply, the carpool lane is already as congested and therefore as slow as the other lanes.

There are so many clean air vehicles in the Bay Area that allowing them to use the carpool lane has negated any advantage to using the lane. It is now as congested as the other lanes. Asking someone to pay for use of the lane (through Fastrak) is, quite frankly, offensive. The lane is already as slow as the other lanes and adding another group would probably make it slower. The proposed "solution" is uninspired at best and another money making scheme at worst.

Thanks,
Mike

Responses to Comment I-226

I-226-1

The commenter's opposition to the proposed project is noted. The express lanes would create additional capacity and maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, which would continue to use the lanes for free. In addition, express lane tolls would provide a revenue source for HOV, transportation, and transit service improvements in the SR 85 corridor. Also refer to Master Response GEN-1 regarding the express lanes.

The project would improve average travel times and speeds on SR 85, as discussed in Master Response TR-1.

Comment I-227 Alexander Sakhanyuk

From: [Aleksandr Sakhanyuk](#)
To: [SR85expresslanes](#)
Subject: Public Comment from Alexander Sakhanyuk
Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 4:18:58 PM

Hello,

I am Alexander Sakhanyuk and I am a resident of the city of Cupertino. I am writing to inform you that I share the same concerns as those outlined by the city of Cupertino, as discussed in the letter sent to you on February the 26th (link here: <http://cupertino.org/inc/pdf/SR85/SR%2085%20Comment%20Letter%20Final%20Draft%20SIGNED.pdf>)

I-227-1

In addition, I am concerned by the fact that the VTA and Caltrans did not follow through on their promise for mass transportation on SR 85, as outlined in the performance agreements signed with the corridor cities. In my conversation with Jeff Barco, who represented himself as a consultant for the VTA, I was informed that neither agency drafted a plan for the median to be used for mass transportation during the 15 years after the agreements were signed and before the proposal of the current project.

Moreover, I dispute the VTA's claim that the express lanes' potential for use by buses qualifies them as a mass-transit project. Furthermore, the former mayor of Saratoga who signed the performance agreement with the VTA insisted that the mass transportation clause referred to light rail.

I can be reached at 8081 Park Villa Circle, Cupertino, CA 95014.

Best regards,
Alexander Sakhanyuk

Responses to Comment I-227

I-227-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted. Light rail in the median of SR 85 was not carried forward because it was determined not to be reasonable or practicable, as described in Master Response GEN-2. Refer to Master Response GEN-7 regarding transit as an alternative to the proposed project.

See the response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the Performance Agreement signed by the City of Saratoga.

Comment I-228 Adele Barbara Salle

Additional lanes on Highway 85

Adele Barbara Salle [salle@usfca.edu]

Sent: Monday, January 27, 2014 2:45 PM

To: 85expresslanes

I am writing to you pursuant to the presentation by John Risto, VTA Congestion Officer, to the Cupertino City Council to state that I am vehemently opposed to the addition of two additional lanes to Highway 85 from 280 to the Camden exit in San Jose for the following reasons:

I-228-1

Though I don't deny that traffic is heavy on Highway 85 and a resolution is needed, your solution is a short term remedy. Going north, the added lanes will have to funnel down to the existing configuration at 280 causing considerable backup. The real problem is the area from 280 N to Highway 237. No consideration is being given to this bottleneck. Before long, the highway will be just as congested as it was prior to the remedy addition.

With the addition of new lanes, Mr. Risto stated that more buses and shuttles will use the highway. More buses and shuttles, not to mention more cars, will add to noise pollution that is already considerable to begin with to those who live within 2 - 3 blocks of the highway, and will add to air pollution. It appears that all these changes are being considered without mitigating any increased noise levels, air quality or additional surface street traffic the additional two lanes may bring. I would suggest that VTA pay a visit to any neighborhood close to the highway, especially in the morning and afternoon commute, and stop to listen to the noise coming from it.

I-228-2

Further, philosophically, I have trouble with providing an advantage to those who can afford to pay tolls to drive in the express lanes. It is a little like "let them eat cake." Those who cannot afford the tolls, can just crawl along in the non-express lanes. Of course, if there is too much traffic in the express (pay) lanes, VTA will manage the demand by not allowing more vehicles into the express lane. Could this become a matter of road rage?

I-228-3

I am disappointed that the VTA or its predecessor agency did have enough foresight to see traffic levels into the future and is not exploring other possible options. Before jumping into additional lanes, why not explore extending light rail or study other remedies on main thoroughfares.

Let me repeat, I am vehemently opposed to adding additional lanes to Highway 85 as proposed by the VTA.

Adele Salle
Resident of Saratoga

Responses to Comment I-228

I-228-1

The project would improve average travel times and speeds on SR 85 through 2035, as described in Master Response TR-1. The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at bottlenecks along the project corridor, as discussed in Master Response TR-2.

The potential environmental effects of the second express lane were studied in detail, including for air quality and noise. The project would not result in violations of air quality standards, as described in Master Response AQ-1. The project would increase existing noise levels by 0 to 3 dBA, depending on the location. A 3 dBA change is not a significant impact, as discussed in Master Response N-1.

I-228-2

The project would maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, as described in Master Response GEN-1. Studies in California and elsewhere show that express lanes provide time and convenience benefits to drivers of all income levels. Refer to Master Response EJ-1 regarding express lane users.

A discussion of whether express lanes could cause road rage would require speculation and does not raise an environmental issue that would need to be addressed as part of the environmental process.

I-228-3

Refer to Master Response GEN-2 regarding light rail in the median of SR 85. Master Response GEN-7 discusses why transit options are not being implemented instead of the proposed project.

Comment I-229 Suresh Sankaralingam

SR-85 express lanes

Suresh Sankaralingam [ssuresh25@gmail.com]

Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2014 8:25 PM

To: 85expresslanes

Cc: ctclerk@saratoga.ca.us; elo@saratoga.ca.us; jhunter@saratoga.ca.us; hmiller@saratoga.ca.us; mcappelo@saratoga.ca.us; cpage@saratoga.ca.us; supervisor.simitian@bos.sccgov.org; assemblymember.fong@ca.gov

Hello VTA representative

After reading through the plans on 85 corridor improvement, I strongly disagree to the various aspects of it.

I-229-1

- Noise level is very high in my backyard now. I think this change will only make it worse. I don't agree with analysis by VTA
- the traffic choking problem in SR 85/280 intersection is going to be worse, if anything
- The plan is in violation of the agreement that there will only be light rail instead of express buses. So, it is a legal breach of the agreement
- EIR report is unavailable which makes it very suspicious and misleading

Thanks

- Suresh

Responses to Comment I-229

I-229-1

This comment is similar to Comment I-208-1 and is addressed in the response to Comment I-208-1.

Comment I-230 Jeffrey Schwartz and Paul Krug

From: jasletra@aol.com
To: 85expresslanes
Cc: jlebecker@aol.com; cherieli@earthlink.net; waltonsmith@comcast.net; jim_hwong@yahoo.com; jim@jimfoley.com; AKEDIT@IX.NETCOM.COM; marcia@qizmology.com; chris@chrisbums.us; david14493@sbcglobal.net; e.wyckoff@yahoo.com; jasletra@aol.com; busse.bob@gmail.com; schist@earthlink.net; Sbogolian@aol.com; charlesbutterfieldbkr@yahoo.com; ron@egoldsolutions.com; Mallory58@aol.com; waltonsmith@comcast.net; cherieli@earthlink.net; robertson.b.m@mindspring.com; davea@saratoga.ca.us; jlindsay@saratoga.ca.us; cityhall@saratoga.ca.us; planning@saratoga.ca.us; yanniezhaoyahoo.com; rtaylor@smwlaw.com
Subject: Public comments on SR 85 Express Lanes Project
Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 2:10:27 PM
Attachments: [Restore_Saratoga_Highway_85.pdf](#)

I-230-1 [Please include the attached comments as part of the public record on the SR 85 Express Lanes Freeway Expansion Project.

Jeffrey A. Schwartz
1610 La Pradera Dr.
Campbell, CA 95008
(408) 379-9400 Work
(408) 529-4077 Cell
jasletra@aol.com

Restore Saratoga

P.O. Box 2224

Saratoga, CA 95070

February 28, 2014

VTA Board of Directors

Gentlepersons:

Please consider these comments as part of the Public Record concerning the VTA's proposed expansion project for the 85 freeway. These comments are submitted by Restore Saratoga. Restore Saratoga represents several hundred-member families in Saratoga, California, and is committed to preserving those qualities, which make Saratoga a unique and attractive low density, semi rural community.

I-230-2

1. We are shocked and appalled that a project of this magnitude is being proposed without a full Environmental Impact Study (EIS). It is our understanding that the proposal meets the criteria for a Class I project and that Class I projects require full Environmental Impact Reports.¹

I-230-3

2. It is unclear, and most disturbing to us, that this project could have reached this stage of detailed development with no meaningful public discussion until the last month or so. Elected officials, VTA staff and Caltrans are all aware that this freeway was extremely controversial at its inception in Saratoga and has remained a continuing and major topic of controversy and disapproval within the City of Saratoga ever since, primarily due to concerns with noise pollution and surface street traffic congestion. Meetings in Cupertino and in Saratoga in the last month, with members of the general public just becoming aware of the nature and scope of this project, have reflected overwhelming levels of negative reaction. How did VTA and/or Caltrans spend millions of dollars and several years of planning efforts on this project without taking any steps that would have brought the project to the attention of the general public when it was at the early conceptual stages?

3. Perhaps residents would have known about this project if it were described in VTA's published list of project plans. It is not. The VTA plan 2035 only mentions "A recommendation to convert existing car pool lanes to express lanes on SR 85 and US 101 by 2012 and 2015, respectively." There is nothing that suggests freeway expansion or additional lanes. When was VTA plan 2035 published? The VTA spokesperson said this project has been in the planning stages for several years. If he is correct, was the failure to mention the true nature of this project in VTA's "Plan 2035" a purposeful attempt to avoid broad public awareness? Manny Gonzales, of VTA, has acknowledged that this project will not be in VTA's project plans until "Plan 2040" is published

1

Under 23CFR772.7, FHWA Defines a Type I Project as a proposed Federal or Federal-aid Highway Project for the construction of a highway on a new location, the physical alteration of an existing highway where there is either a substantial horizontal or substantial vertical alteration, or other activities discussed in Section 3 below in the definition of a Type I Project. A Type II Project involves construction of noise abatement on an existing highway with no changes to highway capacity or alignment. A Type II Project is a project that does not meet the classifications of a Type I or Type II project. Type III Projects do not require a noise analysis.

I-230-3, cont.	Restore Saratoga; Comments on proposed 85 Freeway expansion; February 28, 2014.	and that will not be for another six to eight months. Is that correct?
I-230-4		<p>4. When the 85 freeway was initially built, the City of Saratoga signed contracts with Caltrans and with the Santa Clara County Traffic Authority (SCCTA). A few years later, VTA absorbed SCCTA. It is our assumption that as the successor agency to SCCTA, VTA is bound by and will honor the contract between the City of Saratoga and SCCTA. Will VTA do that? If not, what is VTA's position with regard to that contract?</p> <p>5. It is important to understand the local context within which this project is proposed. Many residents in our area do not trust information, data or commitments from VTA or Caltrans because of the history of the 85 freeway. Formal commitments were made and agreements reached with the City of Saratoga regarding crucial characteristics of the 85 freeway. The commitments and agreements made with our city regarding landscaping, noise levels and other issues were broken the day the freeway opened and have been breached continuously ever since. Is there a commitment by VTA and/or Caltrans to comply with those commitments and agreements before any new project is completed concerning the 85 freeway?</p>
I-230-5		<p>6. We do not vote for the VTA Board. It is an amalgam of representatives from South Bay cities, with disproportionate representation from the City of San Jose. Because of the structure of VTA – which we did not vote for either – the Board terms are relatively short, affording VTA staff more influence and power than is true in elected government jurisdictions. Some key VTA staff and most of the representatives to VTA from Saratoga, Los Gatos, Cupertino and Monte Sereno and Campbell knew this project would be highly controversial in those cities. Why did VTA not proactively and fully inform residents two, three or four years ago that this project was being considered? VTA staff are now engaged in trying to "sell" this project to residents of our communities. Why didn't they make a parallel effort to let us know about this years ago? How is that consistent with principles of good government? Or of democratic process?</p> <p>7. One of the important agreements in Saratoga's contracts regarding the 85 freeway was a provision that no trucks over 9,000 lbs would be allowed on the freeway. We are concerned that this agreement is not currently being enforced. Would you please provide current data on the level of enforcement of this provision, including any memos, letters, emails or other documents between either VTA or Caltrans and the California Highway Patrol regarding trucks on 85, and data reflecting the number of citations given to trucks violating this provision, by month, for the last two years.</p> <p>8. At a community meeting in Saratoga called for and arranged by a Saratoga resident, a staff spokesperson for VTA was asked questions about the financing of this proposed project. The VTA spokesperson acknowledged that it would be approximately two years, and perhaps more, before financing decisions were made and that while he had been talking about bonds being issued to pay for the construction of the project with the revenue from the toll lanes then paying off those bonds over time, he did not know what kinds of bonds would be issued or whether that would be, in fact, the mechanism for funding this project. He could offer no assurance that the revenue from the toll lanes would be sufficient to pay off the construction indebtedness and also had no information about what would happen if that revenue were insufficient for that purpose. Was the VTA spokesperson accurate or is there more information that is known with certainty about funding this project?</p> <p>9. We believe that by national law or regulation, trucks may use any freeway that has been funded in</p>

Restore Saratoga; Comments on proposed 85 Freeway expansion; February 28, 2014.

I-230-5,
cont.

all or in part with federal money. We are concerned that if, in the future, federal funds become available for some portion of the proposed project or for some portion of the payback for the construction of this project, or for some unrelated future project involving the 85 freeway, then the restriction against large trucks using the 85 freeway would be lost, and residents would have no recourse. That raises two questions: first, does VTA have some mechanism or contractual vehicle that will bar VTA, Caltrans and any succeeding agencies of interest in the proposed project, from accepting federal funds for any aspect of the project, now and into the future? If so, please explain the specifics of how that binding provision will work. Second, we request that all of the data and analysis for the proposed project be redone with an assumption that heavy trucks will be using the expanded freeway 85, either because federal funds have been used and the trucks cannot be stopped, or because the California Highway Patrol has inadequate resources to enforce that provision, as we believe is the current situation. Please note that Caltrans states that trucks can increase roadway noise levels by 10db. Will you obtain that additional data and conduct those additional analyses?

10. There is a basic constitutional issue that we would like explored and explained. Trucks may not be excluded from a freeway that has been constructed in whole or part with federal funds. The rationale is straightforward. All of us, including truck drivers and trucking companies, have paid taxes that have flowed into federal highway funds. Once those funds are used, it is impermissible to discriminate against truckers or any other segment of industry or society, and those roads must be open to all. Does it not follow that since all residents in our area contributed to the tax dollars that were used to build 85, it should be impermissible to discriminate against low income individuals who cannot afford to pay extra to get out of the heavily congested traffic lanes and into the toll lanes? Why should individuals now paying one very small fraction of the total cost of the projected and expanded highway 85, including all of its infrastructure, be permitted to buy their way out of congestion while poor residents must suffer in that congestion? This is not a matter of who can afford to buy a Ford versus a Lexus, this is a matter of government restrictions on tax funded facilities.

I-230-6

11. There is a basic flaw in this project planning at the most fundamental level. The proposed project cannot achieve its objectives. The reason the 85 freeway resembles a parking lot for miles long stretches in the Northbound commute from Saratoga in the morning rush hours and in the Southbound commute from Saratoga in the afternoon rush hours, is because of bottlenecks getting on and off the freeway at the 280 freeway, at El Camino Real, at 101, at Highway 17 and at other locations. That is, the problem is not with the capacity of highway 85 but instead is with those specific choke points. That has been acknowledged by the VTA spokesperson both at the community meeting in Saratoga on February 25 and the prior Saratoga City Council meeting on February 5, 2014. In each case, the spokesperson for VTA said that VTA and Caltrans were well aware of those choke points but that there were not yet any projects on the books to cure or mitigate those choke points. At the community meeting in Saratoga, the spokesperson further said that there was money for the current toll lane and expansion project for 85 but that there was no money available to fix the choke points. If a water hose is closed at both ends, then introducing more water and more pressure at the middle of the hose is unlikely to change the output.

12. Currently, Saratogans can get on 85 at Saratoga Avenue and merge into the diamond (carpool) lane as quickly as traffic will allow. The proposed project would have no access to either of the toll lanes within the city limits of Saratoga or for a mile to the North and a mile to the South of Saratoga. Essentially, the access to the proposed project would be blocked for Saratogans and we would lose our current access to the carpool lane. Please explain whether this is accurate or not

Restore Saratoga; Comments on proposed 85 Freeway expansion; February 28, 2014.

I-230-6,
cont.

and if it is not accurate, how that traffic flow would work.

13. We had believed, perhaps mistakenly, that VTA and Caltrans are committed to reducing the use of fossil fuels and mitigating the pace of climate change. It appears to us that the proposed project would provide incentives for, and increase, the number of single person car trips. Currently, the way drivers can use the diamond lanes and avoid the much more congested regular lanes is to have two or more people in the car. The proposed project would make that irrelevant as long as an individual is willing to pay the toll. That arrangement and the proposed project appear to fly in the face of concern for our environment. If that analysis is inaccurate, please explain.
14. When the 85 freeway was originally purposed, the single most controversial issue was noise. Commitments were made for a variety of ways to attenuate the noise, and commitments were also made about the overall level of noise the freeway would be produce. Those commitments were written into the contracts the City of Saratoga signed about the 85 freeway. Each of those contractual commitments regarding noise was broken and has remained broken. Prior to the construction of the 85 freeway, Saratoga was a very quiet community. Since the freeway was built, over one third of the homes in Saratoga have 24/7 freeway noise. During the construction of the freeway and at any point in its history, including now, the freeway could have been originally surfaced or later resurfaced with material that would substantially reduce the noise created. Neither VTA nor Caltrans as shown the slightest interest in doing that and does not now propose to do that as part of the expansion project under discussion.

I-230-7

15. We do not believe the VTA figures or projections on noise are realistic or accurate. It is our understanding these noise measurements were taken years ago and at a time when unemployment in this valley was close to its nadir. We request that those noise measurements be redone with current traffic conditions. We note that the City of Saratoga, as part of its general plan update cycle, has very recently taken noise measurements along the 85 freeway corridor and that those measurements are substantially higher than the measurements provided by VTA.
16. The VTA predicted freeway noise impact of the addition of two express lanes is questionable and unsatisfactory in the following respects: VTA presented noise impacts are contradictory and unreliable (3dB in written material, a significant increase on the logarithmic dB scale, and 1dB in a presentation to the Saratoga City Council on February 5, 2014. Which is it?). Existing 85 noise levels significantly exceed the original noise predictions of the Santa Clara County Transportation Agency, the responsible agency for highway 85 design and construction.
17. The Highway 85 noise mitigation approaches (suppressed highway, sound walls were negated by installation of a high road noise generating grooved concrete road surface. This roadbed was used although significant domestic and foreign data was available showing significant noise reduction by rubberized asphalt over conventional asphalt (Sacramento County -5.1 to -7.7 dB 1993, Los Angeles County -3 to -7 dB 1991, Phoenix AZ -10 dB (-88%) 1990, Tucson, AZ -6.7 dB (-78%) 1989. (Ref #1 pg. 8). Note that conventional asphalt roadbed noise is already significantly lower than the grooved concrete roadbed used on highway 85.
18. The Santa Clara County Transportation Agency (SCCTA) also apparently ignored the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (CEQA) for transportation noise. "The California Environmental Quality Act state that transportation noise will have a significant impact if it 'Increased substantially the ambient noise levels for adjoining areas'. There are several criteria CEQA uses to access (sic) the transportation noise impact on a project.

Restore Saratoga; Comments on proposed 85 Freeway expansion; February 28, 2014.

- a. If the exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in an excess of standards established the local general plan or other applicable standards.
- b. If the projects results in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project.
- c. If the projects result in substantial temporary or periodic increases in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project.” (Reference 1, Appendix under Table 6).

19. Sacramento County Noise Element Standards for acceptable residential transportation noise is a weighted day/night average of 60 dB with 75 dB conditionally acceptable. (Reference 1, Appendix Table 5). Measured Highway 85 noise is already 70 dB and the VTA predicts an increase for the proposed express lane additions of 1 to 3 dB. However, based on previous unreliable agency predictions, noise will probably actually increase by 5 to 6 dB.

20. VTA provides neither assurance that the maximum predicted sound levels will not be exceeded nor has proposes noise reduction remedies to bring sound levels to/below the predicted maximum in the event the predicted maximum is exceeded. VTA is not even considering reducing roadbed noise to within standards defined by the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines and suffers no consequences if noise exceeds predictions or accepts any responsibility for the damage done by excess noise to residential neighborhoods.

Summary of Key Noise Issues

I-230-7,
cont.

A. The VTA determined Highway 85 noise increase from two additional express lanes is questionable in the following respects: VTA has presented contradictory data in different presentations (3 dB and 1 dB). The VTA predecessor, The Santa Clara County Transportation Authority (SCCTA), grossly underestimated Highway noise impact on Saratoga. When it was shown to be unsatisfactory, VTA, who assumed responsibility from SCCTA, took neither responsibility for nor, action to bring the roadbed into compliance with predicted noise values.

B. VTA is only presenting a increase in noise levels over an already unacceptable roadbed noise level. VTA shows no intent to use well established roadbed technologies (rubberized asphalt) commonly used in other California districts (the counties of Sacramento, Orange, and Los Angeles) as well as in the Arizona cities of Phoenix and Tucson, that are shown to significantly reduce roadbed noise (up to 10dB) through residential areas.

C. Highway 85 far exceeds California State requirements for roadway noise though residential districts.

I-230-8

21. The VTA study is flawed with respect to their determining the need for two express lanes each in north and south direction for the following reasons. Morning northbound commute traffic is not impeded by inadequate lane carrying capacity, but by:

- a. Exit ramp limitations at Highway 280, at Highway 82 (the El Camino Real) at which traffic backup reduces 85 from three to two lanes.
- b. And by merger congestion at the Highway 17/Los Gatos Blvd/Winchester Blvd onramps.

I-230-8, cont.	<p>Restore Saratoga; Comments on proposed 85 Freeway expansion; February 28, 2014.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">c. Evening southbound commute traffic is not impeded by inadequate lane carrying capacity, but by merger congestion at the Winchester/Highway 17/Los Gatos Blvd onramps. After completion of these mergers at about Camden Avenue traffic flows at speed limit. <p>22. VTA proposes no improvement to the Highway 82 exit ramp congestion and proposes limited modifications to the Highway 280 exit ramp, which will not correct this traffic backup problem into the right lane of Highway 85.</p> <p>23. Adding two express lanes without correcting the traffic flow impediments at these intersections will only increase the parking lot capacity of Highway 85, but will neither reduce travel time nor increase freeway capacity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Crossover traffic from the two HOV lanes to the 280-exit ramp will further constrict traffic flow in the general-purpose lanes and increase accident risk.b. Even after correcting traffic flow impediments, adding HOV toll lanes will provide marginal, if any, mitigation of congestion or reduction in pollution according to Pravain Varaiya of UC Berkeley and Jaimyoung Kwon of Cal State Hayward report "Effectiveness of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes in the San Francisco Bay Area." <p>24. The proposed two toll express lanes restricted entries will be well before and after Saratoga Avenue on ramps, which will effectively deny Saratoga residents the use of these lanes and restrict Saratoga to the two right lanes instead of the current three.</p>
	<p>Summary of Key Traffic Issues</p> <p>A. The VTA solution to congestion on Highway 85 is flawed because it neither resolves northbound downstream choke points at Highway 280 and 82 that back exiting vehicles into the far right lane and occasionally into the two right lanes, reducing usable lanes by 33% and occasionally 67%, nor does it resolve the merging congestion of the Highway 17/Winchester/Bascom-Los Gatos Blvd on ramps.</p> <p>B. The crossover from the two express lanes into already backed up vehicles at exits will further exacerbate highway congestion and pose a safety hazard.</p> <p>*****</p> <p>25. Traffic analysis should not focus exclusively on freeway traffic. The impact of the proposed project on traffic on our surface streets cannot be underestimated. Please present a detailed explanation of the impact of this project on Saratoga's surface streets.</p> <p>26. At the City Counsel meeting in Saratoga on February 5, the VTA spokesperson made it clear that improving the commute for residents of the West Valley Suburbs was not the primary goal and that that was to improve the commute for individuals from South San Jose and South County who are commuting to 101 and the Mountain View area. To the extent that is true, the freeway will become more unavailable to residents in Saratoga and that will displace some current freeway traffic onto our city streets. The interchange with the 85 freeway in Saratoga, at Saratoga Avenue, is already a grade D intersection and the location of frequent car accidents. Even a slight increase in traffic at that location will have a major negative impact on the City of Saratoga. Please explain how that intersection will not have a significant negative impact from this project.</p>

Restore Saratoga; Comments on proposed 85 Freeway expansion; February 28, 2014.	
I-230-8, cont.	<p>27. Since Saratoga residents will not be able to use carpool lanes or toll lanes if the projected project is built, residents may choose to substitute surface streets for work commutes. That may produce serious safety hazards on residential streets and particularly around school sites.</p>
I-230-9	<p>28. While noise and traffic have dominated the discussion of the impact of the 85 freeway on Saratoga, questions of lights spill and air pollution are both serious. Saratoga is semi rural and most of the city does not have streetlights. At night, light from the freeway dominates the city landscape. The proposed project would provide a major increase lights spill, in part because four lanes will hold more cars than three lanes and in part because the complex nature of the car lane/toll lane entries, exits, toll collection stations, etc. will require large, high mast lighting at very frequent intervals. In short, after dark, Saratoga will not look the same if this project is built as proposed, and we will take another step away from the semi rural environment which many of us treasure. Please provide graphic representations of every lighted feature of the existing and proposed 85 freeway, within the city limits of Saratoga, and include a map showing the location of each such lighted feature within Saratoga's city limits, including those features that will be repetitive. We also request an analysis of light spill from the proposed expanded freeway at each of the four sites in that proposed freeway that will have the highest lighting levels of all freeway locations within Saratoga, comparing those four proposed sites to both current ambient light levels with the current freeway configuration, and separately compared to ambient light levels that would characterize those location if no freeway was there.</p>
I-230-10	<p>29. We do not believe that it is realistic to propose this project and suggest that it will have no significant impact on air pollution for homes along the freeway corridor. Home owners who have lived I the same house before and after the construction of the freeway all have stories about the change in the ambient levels of dust in their houses and dirt outside. A 33% increase in the number of lanes can be expected to create a 33% increase in the amount of dust, dirt and other pollutants. Please explain.</p>
I-230-11	<p>30. We request a detailed explanation of why a 33% increase in the number of lanes on the freeway will not produce a 33% increase in the amount of CO2 generated and in the other airborne pollutants associated with car and truck traffic.</p> <p>31. The dirt and dust created when the freeway was built ruined landscaping for some residents and created a wide variety of other hazards. We request a specific timetable for the construction of the project as proposed, in terms of years and months, and a specific and detailed description of mitigation measures that will prevent significant impact during construction due to construction noise and airborne particulate matter during construction.</p> <p>32. The City of Saratoga contracts with Caltrans and SCCTA regarding the 85 freeway, allow for three lanes of freeway traffic in each direction and guarantee that the median area between the three lanes in each direction will be reserved for mass transit. The discussions at the time of the approval of those contracts were entirely about light rail and it was clear at that time that the references to mass transit or mass transportation meant light rail. There is a specific reference to light rail in one of the two contracts, further reinforcing that interpretation. We regard it as ludicrous and an extremely cynical exercise in semantics for VTA to now suggest that they in good faith believe that the references in those contracts to mass transit and mass transportation are consistent with using express busses in the toll lanes. We would like a specific answer about whether it is VTA's position that express buses meet that requirement of our cities contracts pertaining to the freeway and a statement of whether Caltrans interprets</p>

I-230-11, cont.	those contract provisions as meaning express bus service. If either Caltrans or VTA has obtained a legal opinion about that question, we request a copy of that opinion.
I-230-12	33. We are concerned that the VTA spokesperson was unable to explain how express bus service might serve Saratogans in any fashion. Please provide us with detailed plans for the use of express bus service on the freeway from locations within Saratoga. Please include in those detailed plans, the proposed locations of parking for patrons of the express buses, pick up and drop off locations, and routes through our city streets to and from the pick up and drop off locations and parking locations. 34. Finally, we would renew our request that you abandon your plan to try to obtain environmental review approval for this project through the use of a negative declaration or modified negative declaration and instead follow the dictates of common sense and conduct a full environmental impact study, and evaluate this proposed project against reasonable alternatives, specifically including a “no project” alternative.
Sincerely, Paul Krug Jeffrey A. Schwarz, Ph.D. For the Steering Committee, Restore Saratoga	

Responses to Comment I-230

I-230-1

This comment submittal is included in the Final IS/EA and therefore is part of the public record for the project.

I-230-2

These and all other public comments submitted for the proposed project are part of the administrative record for the project.

The project is a Type I project as defined by 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 772.7, as noted in IS/EA Section 2.2.7.3. The Type I designation refers to the level of noise analysis that is required (Caltrans 2011d). The project’s noise analysis satisfies the requirements for a Type I project.

The Type I project designation does not relate to the type of environmental document that should be prepared for a project. An Initial Study/Environmental Assessment (IS/EA) was prepared for the proposed project, and many other Type I projects are evaluated in IS/EA reports.

California Public Resources Code Sections 21080(d) and 21082.2(d) require the preparation of an EIR for projects with significant environmental effects. NEPA requires an EIS to be prepared when the proposed project as a whole has the potential to “significantly affect the quality of the human environment.” Under NEPA, significance is a function of both context and intensity (40 CFR 1508.27). The environmental impacts of the proposed project, have been fully evaluated in the IS/EA and appropriate measures have been included to avoid or minimize impacts. Also refer to Master Response GEN-3 regarding preparation of an EIR.

I-230-3

IS/EA Chapter 3 and Master Response GEN-6 list the extensive public outreach that has taken place as part of this project, including two community meetings and a City Council meeting presentation in Saratoga. The outreach began when the project was in its early conceptual stage. The public review and comment period for the proposed project was extended to February 28, 2014, and additional public outreach was conducted to clarify information about the second express lane between SR 87 and I-280.

The Valley Transportation Plan 2035 was published in 2009. It is not correct that the description of the project in the Valley Transportation Plan 2035 was an attempt to avoid public awareness. The project is included in the project list for the Valley Transportation Plan 2040, which dates from 2011 and is available on VTA's website (VTA 2011). The project description in the RTP (ABAG and MTC 2013) and TIP (MTC 2013) for the nine-county Bay Area includes the second express lane between SR 87 and I-280.

Master Response GEN-8 provides information about how the project was developed and ultimately included a second express lane in the median in each direction of SR 85 between SR 87 and I-280.

Refer to Master Responses N-1 regarding noise and AQ-1 regarding air quality.

I-230-4

See the response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the agreement with the City of Saratoga.

It is outside of the scope of the environmental process for this project to address commitments made as part of an earlier project. The environmental effects of the proposed project have been fully evaluated and compared with the existing conditions and the No Project Alternative, and appropriate avoidance and minimization measures have been included. Concerns raised by members of the public during the 60-day comment period have been addressed as part of the environmental process.

In regard to item 6, VTA began public outreach for the proposed project in 2004. IS/EA Chapter 3 and Master Response GEN-6 list the extensive public outreach that has taken place as part of this project, including two community meetings and a City Council meeting presentation in Saratoga.

I-230-5

The current truck restriction on SR 85, which is included in California Vehicle Code Section 35722 and Santa Clara County Ordinance Section B17-5.3, does not apply to all trucks over 9,000 pounds. The following vehicles are exempted: Police and Fire Department vehicles, passenger buses, recreational vehicles, and utility vehicles which need to enter the area for the purpose of providing services, making pickups or deliveries of goods, wares and merchandise, or delivering construction materials to sites within the restricted highway segment and have no other means of access, while actually involved in and transacting such activities. The project would not change the truck restriction or requirements to enforce the restriction. Data about truck restriction enforcement does not pertain to the proposed project's environmental process.

Refer to Master Response GEN-10 regarding project funding, cost, and return.

As previously stated, the current truck restriction on SR 85 is included in California Vehicle Code Section 35722 and Santa Clara County Ordinance Section B17-5.3. Neither Caltrans nor VTA are aware of any current provision that would require changes to the truck restrictions as a result of federal transportation funding for projects on SR 85. It is not clear which federal condition is referenced in the comment. The technical analyses for the project, including for noise, accounted for the existing truck restrictions. As the restrictions would not change, the technical findings remain applicable. Also refer to Master Response GEN-9 regarding federal funding and the truck ban.

The express lanes do not constitute discrimination against low-income persons, as discussed in detail in IS/EA Section 2.1.1 and Master Response EJ-1 regarding express lane users.

I-230-6

The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at bottlenecks along the project corridor, as described in Master Response TR-2.

The comment states that the project cannot achieve its objectives. The project's objectives, as outlined in IS/EA Section 1.2.1, are to manage traffic in the congested HOV segments of the freeway between SR 87 and I-280, and maintain consistency with provisions defined in AB 2032 (2004) and AB 574 (2007) to implement express lanes in an HOV lane system in Santa Clara County. The IS/EA demonstrates that the project would achieve these objectives. The carpool/HOV lanes already have areas of congestion, and detailed traffic analysis indicates that the congestion will become worse in 2015 and 2035. The project would maintain traffic conditions in the express lanes at or near free-flow conditions through 2035 by adding a second express lane in the median between SR 87 and I-280 (IS/EA Section 2.1.3). The project would also improve overall average travel times and speeds on SR 85, as discussed in Master Response TR-1. The express lanes would be consistent with the provisions defined in AB 2032 (2004) and AB 574 (2007).

In regard to item 12, the development of the current access points is described in Master Response GEN-4. Continuous access—like the existing SR 85 HOV lane, with no buffer separation—will be considered during detailed project design, as discussed in Master Response GEN-4.

In regard to item 13, it should be noted that the express lanes would maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, which would continue to use the lanes for free. If the lanes become congested, tolls will be increased to deter solo drivers from entering the lanes, or the toll signs will be changed to read “HOVs only” and only HOVs will be allowed in the lanes. In addition, express lane tolls would provide a revenue source for HOV, transportation, and transit service improvements in the SR 85 corridor. Refer to Master Response GEN-1 for additional information.

Climate change is discussed in IS/EA Section 2.5. Measures to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions are outlined in IS/EA Section 2.5.1.2, and strategies to address climate change are discussed in IS/EA Section 2.5.1.3.

I-230-7

Refer to Master Response N-3 regarding the existing noise levels in Saratoga, future noise levels with and without the proposed project, and future noise levels that were predicted in the 1987 Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the construction of SR 85.

At this time, FHWA policy does not allow quieter pavement to be considered as a noise abatement measure (Caltrans TeNS 2013). Item 15 appears to refer to SR 85 noise data in the City of Saratoga's 2013 Draft Noise Element compared with that in the 2012 *Noise Study Report* prepared for the proposed project. Refer to Master Response N-4 regarding these noise data.

Also in regard to Item 15, noise measurements for the 2012 *Noise Study Report* were collected in October and November 2011 and in March 2012. Based on unemployment data for Santa Clara County, the highest unemployment rates in recent years were for 2009 and 2010, before the noise study was conducted. Although employment levels have increased since the *Noise Study Report* was prepared, it is important to note that the noise measurements and predicted future levels (assuming growth in the area through 2035) reflect the worst hour for traffic noise, when traffic is heavy but still moving at or close to the speed limit. Adding vehicles to the freeway due to an assumption of higher employment would result in congestion and slower speeds, which would decrease, not increase, traffic noise levels. Therefore, a new noise study to capture the effects of higher employment levels would not result in different conclusions.

The commenter states that the noise data presented for the project are contradictory (Item 16); however, both statements cited in the comment are accurate. The project would increase existing noise levels by 0 to 3 dBA, depending on the location within the 33.7-mile project corridor. Along the Saratoga portion of SR 85, the project would increase existing noise levels by 0 to 1 dBA. Even a 3 dBA increase does not constitute a significant increase on the logarithmic dB scale, as discussed in Master Response N-1. Refer to Master Response N-3 regarding the comment that existing SR 85 noise levels in the IS/EA significantly exceed the original noise predictions of the Santa Clara County Traffic Authority (not the Santa Clara County Transportation Agency as referenced in the comment).

The comment about the roadbed pavement (Item 17) is noted. A 2002 project found that texture grinding the pavement of SR 85 changed the frequency but not the noise level, compared with the existing longitudinally grooved portland cement concrete (Parsons 2003). Also refer to Master Response N-2 regarding noise abatement.

In regard to Item 18, project-related noise was evaluated with respect to CEQA as described in IS/EA Sections 2.2.7.1 (under "California Environmental Quality Act") and 2.2.7.5. The first CEQA criteria listed in the comment (Item a) refers to standards established by local general plans or other applicable standards. State highways are not subject to local noise standards and ordinances. The second and third CEQA criteria (Items b and c) were analyzed in IS/EA Sections 2.2.7.3 for permanent noise changes and 2.2.7.4 for temporary construction noise. Permanent noise changes would be less than significant, as described in IS/EA Section 2.2.7.5. Construction noise levels would not be substantially higher than existing hourly average traffic noise levels on SR 85 except

during temporary pile driving, and measures are included to minimize project construction noise, as described in IS/EA Section 2.2.7.4.

The Sacramento County Noise Element Standards cited in Item 19 are noted; however, State highways are not subject to local noise standards or ordinances. Existing worst-hour noise levels along SR 85 in Saratoga range from 51 dBA Leq(h) to 67 dBA Leq(h), and the project would increase noise levels by 0 to 1 dBA, depending on location (refer to Master Response N-3). The comment does not provide evidence for the statement that the project will increase noise by 5 to 6 dB.

With respect to Item 20, a noise analysis was conducted for the project in accordance with applicable State and federal requirements, and noise reduction measures have been evaluated as described in IS/EA 2.2.7.4. Refer to Master Responses N-1 regarding the noise findings and N-2 regarding noise abatement. Also refer to the response to Item 18 above regarding CEQA.

Summary Items A, B, and C are addressed above.

I-230-8

Refer to Master Response TR-2 regarding existing congestion and items 21-23. The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at bottlenecks along the project corridor, as described in Master Response TR-2.

The detailed traffic analysis for the project, which is summarized in IS/EA Section 2.1.3.2, shows that in both 2015 and 2035, some HOV lane segments of SR 85 would have decreased speeds and impaired traffic flow. The second express lane in the median in each direction of SR 85 would help to accommodate increased HOV lane use and provide other congestion reduction benefits as described in Master Response GEN-1. Moreover, the traffic studies show that the project would improve average travel times and speeds on SR 85, as discussed in Master Response TR-1.

The comments in items 24 and 27 address the proposed access zone in relation to SR 85 interchanges in Saratoga. The development of the current access points is described in Master Response GEN-4. Continuous access—like the existing SR 85 HOV lane, with no buffer separation—will be considered during detailed project design, as discussed in Master Response GEN-4.

For items A and B, refer to Master Responses TR-2 regarding other planned projects and GEN-4 regarding access.

In regard to items 25 through 27, refer to Master Response TR-3 regarding local intersections.

I-230-9

The comment is correct that there will be additional lighting installed along SR 85. The purpose of the lighting is to better illuminate the freeway for driver safety. The new lighting will be installed in the median, and the light will be directed on the lanes nearest the median. This is in contrast to existing lighting along the corridor, which is along the outside lanes.

There are 24 existing luminaires along SR 85 within Saratoga inside and just outside of the sound walls along the corridor and on overcrossings of SR 85, as described in the response to Comment L-3-20. The project would add approximately seven luminaires in the median for each of the two access zones (one northbound, one southbound) that are proposed between Saratoga Avenue and Winchester Boulevard. The exact locations of these access zones would be determined during the project design phase, so it is unclear how many, or if any, of the luminaires would be in Saratoga city limits.

The proposed luminaires and other light fixtures would have lighting configured at the minimum necessary illumination level and optimal angle to restrict light to the freeway right-of-way. It will be focused on inside lanes, nearest the median. If needed, the fixtures would be outfitted with shields to prevent light trespass to surrounding properties.

See the response to Comment L-3-21 regarding light spill. Evaluation of ambient light levels for a hypothetical existing condition without SR 85 is unrelated to the environmental process for this project.

SR 85 in Saratoga is entirely depressed below the grade of surrounding development. Therefore, the lighting will have a minimal effect because it will be focused on the median and shielded by sound walls and trees between residential development and SR 85. Additional information about the lighting is included in Final IS/EA Section 2.1.4.3 and the responses to Comments L-3-20 and L-3-21.

I-230-10

Items 29 and 30 state that the project would increase the number of lanes on SR 85 by 33 percent and would therefore be expected to increase dust, dirt, CO₂, and other pollutants by 33 percent. Project-related changes to air quality were fully evaluated in the *Air Quality Impact Assessment* and *Mobile Source Air Toxics* technical reports (URS 2013l, m). The reports, which are summarized in IS/EA Section 2.2.6.3, account for the second express lane that would be added in each direction of SR 85 between SR 87 and I-280. The data do not show that a 33 percent increase in the number of lanes between SR 87 and I-280 would result in a 33 percent increase in dust, dirt, and other pollutants for the following reasons.

Carbon monoxide emissions would increase no more than 14 percent in 2015 and would decrease in 2035. Carbon monoxide (CO) emissions for the Build Alternative would generally be lower than the No Build Alternative. For the 2015 PM peak hour at the worst-case freeway segment, 1-hour and 8-hour emissions were found to be higher than No Build by 14 percent and 12 percent, respectively. This increase is the result of additional vehicles using SR 85 where some merging areas or access zones would have slower speeds during the worst traffic hour. Elsewhere along the corridor for the 2015 PM peak hour, Build Alternative CO emissions would be lower. In 2035, Build CO emissions would be lower than No Build in the AM and PM peak hours (IS/EA Table 2.2.6.3) because of increased traffic demand and the inability of the No Build Alternative to accommodate the demand. In 2035, both alternatives would have lower CO emissions than in 2015. It should be noted that the CO analysis used conservative traffic assumptions to represent worst-case conditions.

Mobile source air toxics would increase no more than 7 percent. For mobile source air toxics (MSATs), Build Alternative emissions would be 2 to 4 percent higher than No

Build in 2015, and 5 to 7 percent higher than No Build in 2035. Future MSAT emissions for both alternatives would be substantially lower in 2015 and 2035 than with existing conditions (new IS/EA Table 2.2.6.4).

Carbon dioxide emissions would increase no more than 0.5 percent in 2015 and would decrease in 2035. For carbon dioxide (CO₂), the Build Alternative would also have slightly higher emissions in 2015 than the No Build Alternative (Final IS/EA Table 2.5.1-1). The project-related increase would be less than 0.5 percent. However, in 2035, the Build Alternative would have substantially lower CO₂ emissions than the No Build Alternative. The 2035 Build CO₂ emissions would also be lower than existing CO₂ emissions.

Particulate matter emissions are expected to decrease through 2040. Airborne dirt and dust are components of particulate matter. PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} are strongly associated with diesel truck traffic. The project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85, therefore additional diesel truck traffic and associated PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} emissions would be negligible. In addition, the project would reduce delay time and increase speeds compared to the No Project Alternative, which in turn would reduce vehicle idling and resultant air emissions, including particulate matter.

PM_{2.5} emissions are also modeled as part of the regional air quality conformity analysis process by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). MTC's analysis accounts for increases in vehicle emissions regionwide, not just from this project. The analysis used data inputs for the winter season, when the Bay Area experiences its highest levels of PM_{2.5}. The analysis shows that regional PM_{2.5} emissions are expected to decrease by 26 percent between 2008 and 2040 due to local and regional transit and freeway operational improvements (MTC 2014).

In regard to item 31, project construction would take place in the existing right-of-way, primarily in the median and shoulder areas adjacent to the existing lanes. The measures listed in IS/EA Section 2.2.6.4 were included to control construction dust and particulate matter and will be required of the construction contractor during all construction operations. Additional information about construction noise abatement has been added in IS/EA Section 2.2.7.4.

A specific timetable for the project construction will be developed as part of detailed project design. Although the overall project construction duration is estimated at 1.5 years, construction activities would be temporary, concentrated in specific areas within the right-of-way over a period of several days to a few weeks. See responses to comments L-1-13 and L-1-16 for additional information.

I-230-11

See the response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the agreement cited in the comment and Master Response GEN-2 regarding light rail in the SR 85 median.

Additional express bus service on SR 85 is not included as part of the project but could be considered as part of reinvestment of toll revenue in the project corridor. VTA currently operates three express buses that use SR 85 (routes 102, 168, and 182). Information about bus stops and Park and Ride lots for those and other routes is available at [http://www.vta.org/Getting-Around/Schedules/By-Type#Express Bus Service](http://www.vta.org/Getting-Around/Schedules/By-Type#Express%20Bus%20Service).

I-230-12

See the response to Comment I-230-2. The IS/EA includes evaluation of the No Project Alternative.

Comment I-231 Carmen R. Segnitz

Expanding Hwy 85 from 280 south through Cupertino, Saratoga, Los Gatos

Jan Segnitz [jsegnitz@gmail.com]

Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2014 6:16 PM

To: 85expresslanes

To the VTA,

I-231-1

I am a resident of Monte Sereno.
I am categorically opposed to plans to widen Hwy 85.
The original performance agreement said that this would not happen, that the 46 ft wide current median would be maintained, that consideration would be given to using the median for, mass transit, possibly extending the light rail, but nothing else.

I-231-2

Expansion that triggered use of federal dollars would open up 85 to big rigs, increasing congestion, noise, pollution...all highly undesirable.
How would the undesirable impact of these problems be studied, mitigated, and most importantly avoided all together.

How would the impact of a fast track lane be studied. What would be the cost, funding . Where would parking for cars for people getting on & off be created, at what cost, paid for by whom ???????

All of this sounds like a terrible idea, the kind of irresponsible expansion that communities mourn forever, and wonder how any responsible stewards of our community allowed to occur.

I, we, the community want answers, and we want these terrible ideas and plans to be abandoned forever.

Respectfully,

Jan Segnitz MD
Monte Sereno, Ca

Responses to Comment I-231

I-231-1

The commenter's opposition to the proposed project is noted. Refer to Master Response N-1 regarding noise.

I-231-2

The project would not change the width of the SR 85 right-of-way. The comment does not specify which agreement is cited. See the responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding specific performance agreements.

Comment I-232 Jan Segnitz

Expanding Hwy 85 from 280 south through Cupertino, Saratoga, Los Gatos

Jan Segnitz [jsegnitz@gmail.com]

Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2014 6:16 PM

To: 85expresslanes

To the VTA,

I-232-1

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All of this sounds like a terrible idea, the kind of irresponsible expansion that communities mourn forever, and wonder how any responsible stewards of our community allowed to occur.

I, we, the community want answers, and we want these terrible ideas and plans to be abandoned forever.

Respectfully,

Jan Segnitz MD
Monte Sereno, Ca

Responses to Comment I-232

I-232-1

The commenter's opposition to the proposed project is noted. The comment does not specify which agreement is cited. See the responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding specific performance agreements. Also refer to Master Response GEN-2 regarding light rail in the median.

I-232-2

The comment is incorrect that use of federal funding would open up SR 85 to big rigs. The project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85.

The environmental impacts of the project have been studied in the IS/EA, and the cost and funding is identified in IS/EA Section 1.3.3. Also refer to Master Response GEN-10 regarding funding, cost, and return. Parking is not associated with express lanes; therefore, no additional parking facilities are proposed.

Comment I-233 Tony Sehgal

From: [Tony Sehgal](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Subject: SR 85 Express Lanes Project
Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 10:38:31 AM

Please do not more forward with this project!

- I-233-1 1. Proposed 2 lanes are between Camden Ave. and De Anza Blvd. ONLY
- I-233-2 2. No Additional Lanes to be Added between Sunnyvale and Mt. View on 85
- I-233-3 3. Toll to be charged on HOV and Additional Lanes for Single Occupancy Vehicles
- I-233-4 4. Saratogans will not be able to access additional Lane on 85N as it ends at De Anza Blvd.
- I-233-5 5. There is no Fix to the Highway 280/85 N interchange so you will now have 4 lanes merging to 3--Further congestion
- I-233-6 6. Noise level increase, air quality, possibility of light/sign pollution for those bordering/in proximity to freeway. THERE IS NO PLANNED MITIGATION FOR ANY OF THIS!
- I-233-7 7. This breaks Performance Agreement with the bordering cities in which the center median was reserved for lightrail.
- I-233-8 8. This does nothing to reduce greenhouse gasses which we are continually reminded create the "climate change" we are experiencing.
- I-233-9 9. This does nothing to help with "spare the air" days, current noise levels, air quality etc.
- I-233-10 10. Auxiliary lane between De Anza Blvd and Stevens Creek Blvd.

Thanks
Tony

Responses to Comment I-233

I-233-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted.

The three items listed are elements of the project description. It should be noted that HOVs would use the express lanes for free, as described in Master Response GEN-1.

I-233-2

Saratoga residents would be able to access the second express lane by entering the northbound SR 85 express lane access zone between Winchester Boulevard and Saratoga Avenue, as shown in Figure 1.3-2, which has been added to IS/EA Section 1.3.1.1.

The development of the current access points is described in Master Response GEN-4. Continuous access—like the existing SR 85 HOV lane, with no buffer separation—will be considered during detailed project design, as discussed in Master Response GEN-4.

I-233-3

The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at the I-280 interchange, as described in Master Response TR-2.

I-233-4

Noise, air quality, and visual impacts were studied as part of the IS/EA. Refer to Master Responses N-1 regarding noise, AQ-1 regarding air quality, and the response to Comment L-3-21 regarding project-related visual changes in Saratoga. Measures to avoid or minimize effects from project-related noise and air quality are listed in IS/EA Sections 2.2.7.4 and 2.2.6.4, respectively. The project design includes elements to avoid or

minimize light trespass from new lighting and signs as discussed in IS/EA Section 2.1.4.3.

I-233-5

The comment does not specify which agreement is cited. However, see the responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding the agreements cited in the comment.

I-233-6

Climate change is discussed in IS/EA Section 2.5. The project would have a long-term beneficial effect on carbon dioxide emissions compared to the No Build Alternative, as shown in IS/EA Table 2.5.1-1. Carbon dioxide is the dominant greenhouse gas from vehicle emissions.

The project would result in less than significant noise and air quality impacts and would have long-term air quality benefits, as described in Master Responses N-1 and AQ-1, respectively.

I-233-7

The auxiliary lane is an element of the project description.

Comment I-234 Chris Seitz

85 comment
Chris Seitz [cseitz2@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2014 4:45 PM
To: 85expresslanes

I-234-1 [Hi
I'm a resident that uses 85 daily and uses the carpool lane after entering 85 at saratoga going north in the morning and the reverse in return.
I find it highly objectionable that the plan would not have an entrance to the carpool lane for those coming on at saratoga.
This is a complete degradation of the status quo. Residents here would go from having a carpool lane to access to being locked out.
Please amend this.

I-234-2 [Also, I'm certainly not interested in having this stretch opened up to trucks either

Thanks
Chris Seitz
408 806 5427

Responses to Comment I-234

I-234-1

The commenter's concern is noted. The development of the current access points is described in Master Response GEN-4. Continuous access—like the existing SR 85 HOV lane, with no buffer separation—will be considered during detailed project design, as discussed in Master Response GEN-4.

I-234-2

The project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85.

Comment I-235 Robert Silva

<p>Robert [rsilva95722@att.net] Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2014 11:38 AM To: 85expresslanes</p> <p>I-235-1 [Great idea. That way the rich will go to the car pool lane and us poor folk will have less cars in the poor folk lanes. Thanks.</p>

Responses to Comment I-235

I-235-1

The project would maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, as described in Master Response GEN-1. Studies in California and elsewhere show that express lanes provide time and convenience benefits to drivers of all income levels. Refer to Master Response EJ-1 regarding express lane users.

Comment I-236 Judy and Dan Simpson

<p>From: Don Judy Simpson To: 85expresslanes Subject: No on 85 Toll Lane Date: Wednesday, February 26, 2014 9:55:21 PM</p> <p>I-236-1 [We live in Saratoga. We understood that a "light rail" system was promised for the center space between left and right vehicle passage lanes. The VTA plans for a "Toll Lane" ignore Saratoga residents altogether. We won't be able to ENTER or EXIT the new Toll Lane! All we will get is increased smog, noise, congestion, and lower real estate prices!</p> <p>We say NO on 85 Toll Lane.</p> <p>Judy and Don Simpson 18543 Ravenwood Drive Saratoga, CA 95070</p>
--

Responses to Comment I-236

I-236-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted. Light rail in the median of SR 85 was not carried forward because it was determined not to be reasonable or practicable, as described in Master Response GEN-2.

The closest access zones for the northbound and southbound SR 85 express lanes are between Saratoga Avenue and Winchester Boulevard, as shown in IS/EA Figure 1.3-2. The development of the current access points is described in Master Response GEN-4. Continuous access—like the existing SR 85 HOV lane, with no buffer separation—will be considered during detailed project design, as discussed in Master Response GEN-4.

Technical studies show that the project would meet air quality standards (see Master Response AQ-1); increase noise by only 0 to 1 decibel along the Saratoga portion of SR 85 as described in Master Response N-3 (which would typically not be perceptible, see Master Response N-1); and improve average travel times and speeds on SR 85 (see Master Response TR-1). There is no evidence that the project would lower real estate values.

Comment I-237 Bobby Siu

85 expansion - Saratoga
BobbyS [bobbysiu@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2014 10:15 PM
To: 85expresslanes

Hi,

I-237-1

I'm writing as a concerned Saratoga resident that is currently impacted by the existing freeway noise caused by highway 85. I recently learned that expansion plans are being investigated. I beg you to stop this plan as it will cause additional noise pollution to all of us that border the highway. The existing noise seems to increase every year, please do not inflict more pain on us.

Thanks
Bobby Siu

Responses to Comment I-237

I-237-1

The noise technical studies show that the project would result in a 0 to 1 decibel increase in traffic noise along the Saratoga portion of SR 85, as described in Master Response N-3. This increase would typically not be perceptible, as discussed further in Master Response N-1.

Comment I-238 Deanna Slocum (1)

SR 85 Express Lanes
Deanna [djslocum@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, February 28, 2014 5:20 PM
To: 85expresslanes

Hello,

I-238-1

I am writing to protest the changing of HOV lanes to express lanes. I have an electric car because I care about the env just so I could drive in the HOV lane and now I learn I'm going to have to pay additionally to drive in the HOV lane because you're converting to and expressly HOV lanes should be used for people who are trying to help the environment

Responses to Comment I-238

I-238-1

Alternative fuel vehicles with California Department of Motor Vehicles-issued green or white stickers would be able to continue to use the express lanes for free until January 1, 2019 (<http://www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/carpool/carpool.htm>).

Comment I-239 Deanna Slocum (2)

SR 85 Express Lanes

Deanna [djslocum@gmail.com]

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2014 5:33 PM

To: 85expresslanes

I-239-1 Hello,
I am writing to protest the changing of HOV lanes to express lanes. I have an electric car because I care about the environment. One of the "thank-you" actions I have come to enjoy and even depend on is the privilege to drive in the HOV lane. Now, anybody who pays will have that privilege as well - without having made any commitment to keep our air clean. The HOV lane should be a privilege only to those doing their part to make the world a better place - not for anybody who pays the most money.

Very frustratedly,
Deanna Slocum
1208 Parkington
Sunnyvale 94087

Responses to Comment I-239

I-239-1

See the response to Comment I-238-1.

Comment I-240 Carol Small

We are opposed!

Carol Small [carolsmall2@comcast.net]

Sent: Wednesday, February 19, 2014 12:07 PM

To: 85expresslanes

Dear sirs,

I-240-1 As residents of Saratoga near De Anza Blvd, my husband and I are very disappointed about the expansion of 85. We have lived here---on Northampton Drive---since 1975. We remember the sounds of the birds. With the proposed expansion, we get more noise and more traffic. We will not benefit at all from the new lane, as we always enter the freeway at De Anza when we are traveling north.

Please reconsider this proposal.

Sincerely,
Carol L. Small

19567 Northampton Drive
Saratoga

Responses to Comment I-240

I-240-1

The noise technical studies show that the project would result in a 0 to 1 decibel increase in traffic noise along the Saratoga portion of SR 85. Refer to Master Response N-3 regarding project-related noise in Saratoga. The project is not expected to significantly increase traffic, as described in Master Response TR-1.

The commenter would be able use the express lanes by entering the northbound access zone between De Anza Boulevard and Stevens Creek Boulevard, as shown in new IS/EA Figure 1.3-2. It is correct that the northbound express lane will be a single lane in that area.

In addition, continuous access—like the existing SR 85 HOV lane, with no buffer separation—will be considered during detailed project design, as discussed in Master Response GEN-4. The development of the current access points is described in Master Response GEN-4.

Comment I-241 Phil Smith

	<p>Comments Phil Smith [philbilly@me.com] Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2014 10:09 AM To: 85expresslanes</p>
	<p>To whom it may concern,</p>
I-241-1	<p>I'm opposed to the idea of converting the carpool lanes on SR 85 to paid express lanes. While I'd like the option to use the lanes personally, there are a couple of reasons for my opposition.</p> <p>First, having the carpool lanes provides significant incentive for people to, well, carpool. This reduces congestion and pollution. It also helps us, as a society, conserve petroleum. Changing to paid express lanes just enables personal convenience and raises money for agencies that should be able to do just fine with the income, sales and excise taxes as well as vehicle registration fees and fuel taxes.</p>
I-241-2	<p>Which brings me to my second point. This seems to me to be just another way to make life more convenient for those with resources and less convenient for those without. If you want to raise more money from people who have it, do it the old fashioned way: raise their taxes. The proper use of tax revenue is to purchase public goods. giving disproportionate benefits to people who already have resources is not a public good.</p>
	<p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Phil Smith 2132 Blossom Crest Way San Jose, CA 95124</p>

Responses to Comment I-241

I-241-1

The commenter's opposition to the proposed project is noted. The express lanes would create additional capacity and maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, which would continue to use the lanes for free. In addition, express lane tolls would provide a

revenue source for HOV, transportation, and transit service improvements in the SR 85 corridor. Refer to Master Response GEN-1 for additional information.

I-241-2

The project would maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, as described in Master Response GEN-1. Studies in California and elsewhere show that express lanes provide time and convenience benefits to drivers of all income levels. Refer to Master Response EJ-1 regarding express lane users.

Comment I-242 Jayne Sonnenschein (1)

	<p>From: J. Sonnenschein To: 85expresslanes Cc: sleonardis@losqatosca.gov; miensen@losqatosca.gov; dmcnuttt@losqatosca.gov; jpirzynski@losqatosca.gov; bspector@losqatosca.gov Subject: Stop Highway 85 Expansion Date: Thursday, February 27, 2014 7:06:02 PM</p> <hr/>
	<p>To whom it may concern,</p>
I-242-1	<p>I live in the Old Adobe Neighborhood off Quito Rd. I have been a resident of Los Gatos since 1991, pre-Highway 85. I appreciate using the Hwy and am grateful the original planning committee made minimal on & off ramps through our quiet town. Unfortunately my neighborhood is raised above the level of Highway 85 which causes noise & dirt to flow up over the sound walls & into my neighborhood resulting in increased highway sounds & a noticeable dust particulate that settles in & outside my home.</p> <p>The current Quito road "Bridge Replacement" plan (that is already funded) proposes to remove up to 25 of the large mature trees near Quito & Old Adobe road that currently acts as a natural buffer & reduces some of the automobile noise & roadway dust pollution from Hwy 85.</p>
I-242-2	<p>I strongly oppose the VTA & Caltrans current plans to add additional toll lanes to the Highway 85 using the land that was agreed to be saved for future Mass Transit. This is a direct breach of the Performance Agreement signed in 1988 -1989 with Cupertino, Saratoga, Campbell and Los Gatos.</p>
I-242-3	<p>Their proposal to expand highway 85 by adding two toll lanes will not solve the traffic congestion that is caused by the bottleneck on the stretch of Hwy from 280 to 101. It will only increase the number of vehicles that will collect at that point. Furthermore I am concerned that the project could end up using Federal dollars which will then cause HWY 85 to be available for large trucks & other vehicles that are currently prohibited on this road... I can't imagine living in Los Gatos if the vehicles on Highway 85 become like Hwy 101.</p>
I-242-4	<p>Additionally, VTA states that Express busses will be used as Mass Transit, and have no plans for future light rail. Putting express buses on Highway 85 will only add to the air pollution & noise that affects all the residents of the Old Adobe Neighborhood & Los Gatos residents.</p> <p>Please stop this project, it is a short term band-aid and not a very good solution to the bigger problem.</p> <p>Thank you, Jayne Sonnenschein 239 Plaza La Posada Los Gatos, CA 95032</p>

Responses to Comment I-242

I-242-1

The commenter's opposition to the proposed project is noted. Refer to Master Responses N-1 regarding noise and AQ-1 regarding air quality. Tree removal for the Quito Road bridge replacement is not part of the proposed SR 85 Express Lanes Project.

See the responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding the agreements cited in the comment. Note that the City of Campbell did not comment on the project.

I-242-2

The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at bottlenecks along the project corridor, as described in Master Response TR-2.

I-242-3

The project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85. The use of federal funds will not have any effect on the existing truck restrictions.

I-242-4

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted. The proposed project does not include express bus service beyond that which is already provided on SR 85.

Comment I-243

There is no Comment I-243. This comment number was not used.

Comment I-244 Rajat Srivastava

	<p>From: Rajat Srivastava To: 85expresslanes Cc: Rajat Srivastava Subject: Review of the process of environmental review for the proposed SR85 express lanes project Date: Thursday, February 27, 2014 7:05:59 PM</p> <hr/>
I-244-1	<p>All, Thank you for extending the public comment period. I drive daily on 85 from Saratoga to Mountain View and am very familiar with all the issues and choke points.</p>
I-244-2	<p>- I need to understand who made the decision to not have an EIR done and what was the basis of that decision. This is a \$170M + project. - There is no need to accelerate traffic till the choke points: who made the decision & why to not resolve the choke points and why was that not studied in-depth first? This would be really the simplest approach to reducing congestion.</p>
I-244-3	<p>- Why is there a blatant violation of the agreement with the City of Saratoga, signed in 1989? Who approved this violation and under what grounds?</p>
I-244-4	<p>- I need to understand the full and exhaustive details of the sound study (noise pollution) done for this project. Who did it, when was it done, under which specific conditions (days/times/seasons) and with which measurement tools and from what distance?</p>
I-244-5	<p>- Same (full and exhaustive details) for the air pollution study and specific correlation to spare the air day numbers.</p>
	<p>Sincerely Rajat Srivastava</p>

Responses to Comment I-244

I-244-1

California Public Resources Code Sections 21080(d) and 21082.2(d) require the preparation of an EIR for projects with significant environmental effects. The determination that the proposed project would not have significant environmental effects was based on a detailed and comprehensive review of each technical study area. Refer to Master Response GEN-3 regarding preparation of an EIR.

I-244-2

The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at choke points along the project corridor, as described in Master Response TR-2.

I-244-3

See the response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the agreement cited in the comment.

I-244-4

The *Noise Study Report* (Illingworth and Rodkin 2012) provides this information and is available at: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/envdocs.htm#santaclara>, under “State Route 85 Express Lanes Project, Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment.” In addition, refer to Master Responses N-3 and N-4 regarding noise in Saratoga.

I-244-5

The *Air Quality Impact Assessment* and *Mobile Source Air Toxics* technical reports (URS 2013l, m) are available at: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/envdocs.htm#santaclara>, under “State Route 85 Express Lanes Project, Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment.”

No methodology exists for correlating Spare the Air Day numbers with air quality impacts from individual projects.

Comment I-245 Jim Stallman (1)

Comment submittal from Jim Stallman

I-245
-1 --> **A new HOT lane project, SR85 HOT, is being launched in Santa Clara County (SCC) which fails to fix a POC in the project area.** The POC is pre-ADA and has grades that are too steep for ADA. The landings are also inside the sound wall cutting off Aux Lanes which could be extended to eliminate a needless bottleneck. The HOT lane project will actually double the lane count of the freeway leading up to this bottleneck and yet nothing is being done to relieve the bottleneck.

This is yet another chance (or 3rd strike) for SCC to actually comply with The Caltrans directive DD-64 Routine Accommodation (RA) which now goes by the name Complete Streets (237 HOT and 880 HOV being the recent 1st and 2nd strikes).

We have an opportunity to keep this regional project off of the This is Stupid list.

I-245
-2 The section where the POC resides is ROW constrained due to the POC. There was a partial Aux lane put in already but it would extend back to the previous onramp (making it a complete Aux lane) if the POC landing wasn't in the way. Rebuilding the POC and realigning the center of the freeway in that stretch would match what the SR85 HOT project is doing in the rest of the corridor. The reason it isn't being done where the POC is would likely be because VTA doesn't want to fix the POC.

Why not get a win-win-win out of this project by actually making it do what it is suppose to be doing instead of leaving a debilitating flaw?

I-245
-3 The upstream portion of the SR85 HOT project is adding an Aux lane and a 2nd HOV lane. Along with a recent partial interchange makeover project which added a 2nd lane to the 280nb to 85nb connector ramp, the section with the out of date and in the way POC will continue to be 3 lanes with a planned 6 lanes feeding it. The backup in the morning is already red up to 10am in the morning and doing the SR85 HOT project will actually make this worse since we all know that adding more freeway lanes adds more traffic.

Until VTA Freeway Project Planning gets a good read on RA and comes to terms with it, nothing will change of course, and the larger ticket Bike/Ped issues will continue to get ignored along the CTD4 roadways in SCC - having to rely on separate funding to get done if ever - in violation of MTC Resolution 3765: <http://www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/bicyclespedestrians/res3765final.pdf>

I-245
-4 Background on 1st and 2nd strikes VTA failures to abide by / comply with RA. 237 HOT failed to restore the Class 1 Bike Path in the project stretch. San Jose spent #330k of "bike money" to finally get the path restored in violation of MTC Resolution 3765. 880 HOV converted a 2 way bike/ped/car bridge into a freeway offramp eliminating a crossing of Coyote Creek for bike/peds in the 880 corridor at Brokaw. This project spent an obscene amount of money (\$94M) to build a 2 mile long extra lane (no sound wall either) for 880 where ROW and structures already existed and wouldn't pony up \$200k to build a bridge for bikes/peds over Coyote Creek. This was documented in the EIR with a blatant lie by VTA saying that the project was not doing work in the quadrant of the interchange where the crossing for bikes was being severed (even though it obviously was).

Responses to Comment I-245

I-245-1

The comment does not identify which pedestrian overcrossing (POC) is cited. Based on Comment I-246 from the same commenter, it appears that the POC is between Homestead Road and Fremont Avenue.

Improvements to the POC are not part of the current project scope. The commenter's recommendations would require additional right-of-way and reconstruction of the POC in a different location to meet standards.

The proposed project would help to alleviate congestion within this bottleneck by allowing for some solo drivers to shift into the express lane. Toll revenue from the express lanes would be used to fund future projects in the corridor.

I-245-2

See the response to Comment I-245-1.

I-245-3

The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at bottlenecks along the project corridor, as described in Master Response TR-2. The project would improve overall average travel times and speeds on SR 85, as described in Master Response TR-1.

I-245-4

The comment addresses previous highway projects and does not provide an environmental comment on the current project.

Comment I-246 Jim Stallman (2)

SR 85 Express Lanes - input

Jim Stallman [2jimstallman@gmail.com]

Sent: Tuesday, January 07, 2014 11:59 AM

To: 85expresslanes

Cc: Paul Goldstein [marmot@stanford.edu]; Emily Lo [emilylo@mplusa.com]; Martin Murphy [marengo@gmail.com]; Howard Miller [hmiller@saratoga.ca.us]; Chuck Page [cpage@saratoga.ca.us]

<http://www.vta.org/Give-Your-Input-on-SR-85-Express-Lanes#.UsxYGmt5mK3>

I-246-1

1. Complete aux lane 85nb Homestead to Fremont including ADA rebuild of the POC
2. Complete aux lane 85sb which begins at Stevens Creek Blvd (SCB) to De Anza Blvd (DAB)
3. Provide HOT or HOV (bypass) lanes for onramps where they are missing (incl nbDAB, sbSar)

Note that the original 85 Extension Project had several design flaws affecting LOS and also leading to 5 fatalities including a CHP officer. Do things right this time.

Jim Stallman
19740 Braemar Drive
Saratoga, CA 95070

Responses to Comment I-246

I-246-1

See the response to Comment I-245-1 regarding the northbound auxiliary lane and POC.

The extension of the auxiliary lane on southbound SR 85 from Stevens Creek Boulevard to De Anza Boulevard is not warranted because the proposed project would provide operational improvements in this area.

The project does not propose to modify any ramps; therefore, construction of HOV bypass lanes is not included in the current project scope. VTA and Caltrans developed plans for HOV bypass lanes, traffic operations systems, and ramp metering improvements along the corridor under MTC's Freeway Performance Initiative Program. Construction was completed in mid-2014, and the metering was activated in late January 2015.

Comment I-247 Jim Stallman (3)

Access pathway for SR85 HOT project

Jim Stallman [2jimstallman@gmail.com]

Sent: Thursday, January 23, 2014 8:09 PM

To: 85expresslanes

The SR85 extension project severed direct pedestrian access from north Saratoga to its sports park. Saratoga has a proposed project to reconnect to the neighborhood. This connection is also the missing link in a bike route across 4 cities connecting to West Valley College in the same corridor served by SR85.

Permission from Caltrans will be needed since the project consists of a path next to the inside of the freeway sound wall at the Cox Avenue crossing of SR85.

I-247-1

The project may be viewed at the **Trail-Related Proposed Capital Improvement Projects** section at the City of Saratoga website: <http://www.saratoga.ca.us/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?blobid=7959> (<http://www.saratoga.ca.us/cityhall/comms/pebtac/default.asp>)

Please make the "Congress Springs Park Northside Access" project part of the SR85HOT authorization so that permission for Saratoga to restore this connection can happen.

Thank you.

Responses to Comment I-247

I-247-1

The comment is noted regarding a future pedestrian access that requires Caltrans approval.

Comment I-248 Jim Stallman (4)

Re: SR 85 Express Lanes - input

Jim Stallman [2jimstallman@gmail.com]

Sent: Thursday, February 06, 2014 7:29 PM

To: 85expresslanes

Cc: Emily Lo [emilylo@mplususa.com]; Martin Murphy [marengo@gmail.com]; Howard Miller [hmiller@saratoga.ca.us]; Chuck Page [cpage@saratoga.ca.us]; Kevin Jackson [kjbiker@netzero.net]; Iveta Harvancik [iharvancik@saratoga.ca.us]; jill hunter [jhunter95070@yahoo.com]; Manny Cappello [mcappello@saratoga.ca.us]; bchang@cupertino.org; john.ristow@vta.org

Comment submittal for SR85 HOT proposal

- I-248-1 1. **Sunnyvale bottleneck** - move centerline north by rebuilding POC which allows for aux lanes both sides reaching Homestead to Fremont and show the rebuilt to ADA standards POC in Table S-1 Traffic and Transportation / Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities line item Mitigation column
- I-248-2 2. Support proposed **Congress Springs Path in Saratoga** and show this in Table S-1 Traffic and Transportation / Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities line item Mitigation column
- I-248-3 3. See that **quiet pavement** is used - either micro-ground PCC or rubberized asphalt (used on HWY17/ECR) - see that this is explicitly stated in Table S-1 Noise line item Mitigation column - not the wishy washy verbage that is there now
- I-248-4 4. Provide **transit node in median at SCB** like Cristin Hallissy, CTD4, is doing in San Ramon and show this in Table S-1 Traffic and Transportation / Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities line item Mitigation column - this is a left over, undone, item from the Traffic Authority West Valley Extension EIR/Plan - *providing this connection for the De Anza College transit node would also feed more transit patrons from the SCB Bus Rapid Transit line to the north county express bus network*
- I-248-5 5. Change "Gilroy" to "Los Gatos" on sb 101 signage in Mt. View
- I-248-6 6. Provide entrance / exit to HOV/HOT lane(s) starting $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from Saratoga Avenue in both directions
- I-248-7 7. Add **HOV/HOT bypass lanes to all signalized onramps** like the nb Saratoga Avenue ramp has - *don't know why this didn't happen with the West Valley Extension project originally*
- 8. Activate dynamic onramp signals based on freeway speed

I-248-8	9. Extend HOV/HOT lane hours 1 hour later than currently posted
I-248-9	10. Plant trees to a achieve a density of 200 per mile both sides (400 total per mile) with replacement surveillance extending 10 years
I-248-10	<u>To make the SR85 HOT project successful, extend I-280 HOV lanes to Page Mill Rd. in Palo Alto (gets rid of the Magdalena 4 to 3 to 4 lane insidious backup for sb I-280) and apply to make these a single lane HOV/HOT from SR85 to Page Mill Rd.</u> I suspect that this route segment could possibly generate the most revenue of any HOT lane in the state provided it also included an HOV/HOT direct connector for SR85 to I-280 northbound - along with making the VTA bus running this route (VTA 102) a quicker trip by 10 to 15 minutes in the morning and saving 2 to 5 minutes for the VTA bus lines (VTA 101, 102, & 103) using this route for the pm commute southbound

Responses to Comment I-248

I-248-1

See the response to Comment I-245-1.

I-248-2

See the response to Comment I-247-1. The proposed project does not impact existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and therefore mitigation is not required or proposed.

I-248-3

Refer to Master Response N-2 regarding quiet pavement.

I-248-4

A transit node in the median is not part of the project or needed to mitigate an impact. However, the comment is noted and would need to be addressed as a separate project.

I-248-5

This comment is noted but is not part of the project.

I-248-6

Express lane access zones are planned between Saratoga Avenue and Winchester Boulevard, as shown in Figure 1.3-2, which has been added to IS/EA Section 1.3.1.1. The development of the current access points is described in Master Response GEN-4. Continuous access—like the existing SR 85 HOV lane, with no buffer separation—will be considered during detailed project design, as discussed in Master Response GEN-4.

I-248-7

HOV/HOT bypass lanes are not part of the project but can be considered in the future.

Item 8 of the comment will be considered during the next design phase.

I-248-8

The recommended extension of express lane hours of operation is noted.

I-248-9

The commenter's recommendation to plant trees is noted. In accordance with Caltrans policy, landscaping and irrigation that is damaged or removed during project construction would be replaced in kind. For safety reasons, fixed objects such as trees cannot be placed within 30 feet of traffic lanes on a freeway.

I-248-10

Refer to Master Response TR-2 regarding a future study of the I-280 corridor from US 101 to the San Mateo County line.

Comment I-249 Peggy and Peter Stark

I-249-1	<p>Personal Protest Stark [starkpg@comcast.net] Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2014 10:56 AM To: 85expresslanes</p> <p>To whom it might concern,</p> <p>Regarding paid fees for express lanes: Many car pool users will simply refuse to pay the fee to use the same diamond lane which they have been using, and cram onto the other 2 lanes. Our original 1989 agreement to build the HWY included the use of the middle section ONLY for LRC. Now you want to use it for express buses? This plan if realized will guarantee more pollution, noise and congestion.</p> <p>Outraged, Peggy and Peter Stark Saratoga, CA.</p>
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Responses to Comment I-249

I-249-1

The express lanes would create additional capacity and maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, which would continue to use the lanes for free. In addition, express lane tolls would provide a revenue source for HOV, transportation, and transit service improvements in the SR 85 corridor. Refer to Master Response GEN-1 for additional information.

Light rail in the median of SR 85 was not carried forward because it was determined not to be reasonable or practicable, as described in Master Response GEN-2. The comment does not specify which agreement is cited. See the responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding specific performance agreements.

Note that the proposed project does not include express bus service beyond that which is already provided on SR 85.

Potential effects to noise and air quality were evaluated in detail and found to be less than significant, as described in Master Responses N-1 regarding noise and AQ-1 regarding

air quality. The project would improve average travel times and speeds on SR 85, as discussed in Master Response TR-1.

Comment I-250 Scott Stauter (1)

SR 85 Express Lanes

Scott Stauter [scott@stauter.org]

Sent: Monday, January 13, 2014 9:56 PM

To: 85expresslanes

I-250-1

Having a single HOV lane seems to be an incentive to get more people to car pool, or drive non-polluting vehicles. This seems to be a good motive. Making the HOV lane available for money seems to favor the 1% of the population. To take away another lane from the 99%, so a few of the very rich can go a little faster seems to be a very elitist idea. I find this plan to be very repulsive. All taxpayers paid for the highway, and it would make me very angry to be sitting in heavy traffic, watching the Tesla's and Lamborghini's go speeding by in the underutilized lanes.

This lame scheme appears just to make a profit for some entity. The corporation who collects the tolls is the one who gets the windfall, and the 99% of the public who drives on the supposed "freeway" gets the shaft.

Please do not go through with this lame plan.

Scott Stauter

Mountain View

Responses to Comment I-250

I-250-1

The project would maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, as described in Master Response GEN-1. Studies in California and elsewhere show that express lanes provide time and convenience benefits to drivers of all income levels. Refer to Master Response EJ-1 regarding express lane users.

The express lane toll for solo drivers is a user fee, as described in Master Response GEN-5.

Comment I-251 Scott Stauter (2)

Express Lanes

Scott Stauter [scott@stauter.org]

Sent: Tuesday, January 14, 2014 8:44 PM

To: 85expresslanes

I-251-1

Having a single HOV lane seems to be an incentive to get more people to car pool, or drive non-polluting vehicles. This seems to be a good motive. Adding a lane to highways 101 and 85 is sorely needed, but making two Express Lanes and making them available for money seems to favor the wealthiest 1% of the population. To take away another lane from the 99%, so a few of the very rich will have two lanes and can go a little faster seems to be a very elitist idea. I find this plan to be very offensive. All taxpayers paid for the freeway, and it would make me very angry to be sitting in heavy traffic in the right lanes, watching the Tesla's and Lamborghini's go speeding by in the two underutilized Express Lanes.

This lame scheme appears just to make a profit for some entity. The entity who collects the tolls is the one who gets the windfall, and the 99% of the public who drives on the supposed "freeway" gets the shaft.

Sincerely,

Scott Stauter

Responses to Comment I-251

I-251-1

See the response to Comment I-250-1.

Comment I-252 Lori Stenn

85 Express Lanes CONCERNS

Lori Stenn [loris@iarchive.com]

Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2014 11:31 AM

To: 85expresslanes

Cc: Lori Stenn [loris@iarchive.com]

Importance: High

Paul,

Thank you for the opportunity to tell you about my concerns with this proposal to change the carpool lanes to express lanes.

I have been using the HOV lanes for the past 7 years.

I have purchased cars to keep up with the changes in usage policies.

I am on 85 from Almaden Expressway to the 101 interchange.

The HOV lane is currently more congested than ever before.

My normal commute was 30-35 minutes in the carpool lane. It is now anywhere from 45-60 minutes still using the carpool lane.

I-252-1 During the morning commute, the HOV lane is slower/stopped compared to the other lanes.

I do not see how changing the current HOV lane to an Express Lane is going to ease any traffic at all.

It will only make the situation more unbearable.

The commuter's quality of life is at risk here, not to mention the danger the lane already represents by the erratic drivers that weave in and out of these lanes.

Adding more people access to this already congested lane will only add to the frustration of commuting in Silicon Valley.

Has anyone proposing this change tried to use the HOV lane to see the congestion during commute hours?

There are a solid lines of cars in all three lanes, as far as you can see.

Thank you

Lori Stenn

Inside Sales

Integrated Archive Systems, Inc.

1121 N. San Antonio Road, Ste. D-100

Palo Alto, CA 94303

650-528-4693 (Direct)

Responses to Comment I-252

I-252-1

The commenter's opposition to the proposed project is noted. The express lanes would create additional capacity and maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, which would continue to use the lanes for free. In addition, express lane tolls would provide a revenue source for HOV, transportation, and transit service improvements in the SR 85 corridor. Refer to Master Response GEN-1 for additional information.

The project would also improve travel times and speeds compared to the No Build condition in 2015 and 2035, as described in Master Response TR-1.

Comment I-253 Mitch Stermer

Hwy 85 Express Lane Project

Mitchell Stermer [mestermer@gmail.com]

Sent: Tuesday, March 04, 2014 12:38 PM

To: 85expresslanes

Cc: theunit@nbcbayarea.com

In the Hwy 85 Express Lane Project document
<<http://www.vta.org/sfc/servlet.shepherd/version/download/068A0000001QnIf>> there is a item:

Revenue reinvested in the corridor: Revenue from tolls would maintain the facility, enhance transit improvements, and provide enforcement by the California Highway Patrol.

It is my understanding that a 3rd party is responsible for collecting the toll.

Could you provide detailed information on:

I-253-1

1. what percentage of the toll will be returned for reinvestment?
2. what percentage is retained by the toll collecting party?
3. is the contract for the toll collection a public record, if so where can it be found?
4. what is meant by "maintain the facility", fixing roads, nicer VTA offices?
5. what is meant by "enhance transit improvements" and does that include light rail and buses?
6. can this revenue be used for any other purpose by the VTA?

--

Regards

Mitch Stermer

Responses to Comment I-253

I-253-1

The terms of toll collection and reinvestment are dictated by California Streets and Highways Code Section 149.6. The Bay Area Toll Authority, which is the toll collection entity for all Bay Area bridges and express lanes, would collect the tolls. According to California Streets and Highways Code Section 149.6(e), toll revenues "shall be available to VTA for the direct expenses related to the operation (including collection and enforcement), maintenance, construction, and administration of the program. The VTA's administrative costs in the operation of the program shall not exceed 3 percent of the revenues.... All remaining revenue generated by the program shall be used in the corridor from which the revenues were generated exclusively for the preconstruction, construction, and other related costs of high-occupancy vehicle facilities, transportation corridor improvements, and the improvement of transit service, including, but not limited to, support for transit operations pursuant to an expenditure plan adopted by the VTA."

Also refer to Master Response GEN-10 regarding funding, cost, and return.

Comment I-254 Tom Stevenson

Another example of income inequality

Tim Stevenson [tstevens@employees.org]

Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2014 11:10 AM

To: 85expresslanes

Hi,

Sorry, I can't get behind this project, even if the state is hurting for cash (which last I heard it no longer was).

I-254-1

These express lanes are a perfect example of sticking it to the poor, turning a good idea (carpool lanes, to encourage people not to drive solo) into a way for the rich to get where they need to go quickly because they can afford to while everybody else slogs along.

Count my vote as AGAINST.

Tim Stevenson
880 Hanover Ave
Sunnyvale CA 94087

Responses to Comment I-254

I-254-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted. The project would maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, as described in Master Response GEN-1. Studies in California and elsewhere show that express lanes provide time and convenience benefits to drivers of all income levels. Refer to Master Response EJ-1 regarding express lane users.

Comment I-255 Sue

SR 85 Express Lanes

Sue [jhshlimited-sue@yahoo.com]

Sent: Sunday, February 16, 2014 7:53 PM

To: 85expresslanes

I-255-1

With the new proposal on 85 will you maintain the "no large/semi trucks allowed" or will that be changed?

Is this project dependent on Federal funds and if so, won't that mean large/semi trucks will have to be allowed access?

Sue

Responses to Comment I-255

I-255-1

The project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85. The use of federal funds will not have any effect on the truck restrictions.

Comment I-256 Sujatha Bodapati

From: [Sujatha Bodapati](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Subject: Stop highway expansion
Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 3:31:50 PM

I-256-1 [My family and I oppose the expansion of highway 85. We ask that noise studies and environmental impact studies be done before the project is allowed.

Sujatha Bodapati
Chandra Bodapati
Sunil Bodapati
Deepika Bodapati

19900 saraglen ct
saratoga ca 95070

Responses to Comment I-256

I-256-1

A *Noise Study Report* (Illingworth and Rodkin 2012) for the proposed project was prepared in accordance with Federal Highway Administration and Caltrans policies to address traffic noise impacts and noise abatement. An Initial Study/Environmental Assessment was prepared for the project in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, as described in Master Response GEN-3.

Comment I-257 Daniel Swid

I oppose conversion of HOV Lanes to Express Lanes

Daniel Swid [da.swid@gmail.com]

Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 10:04 PM

To: [85expresslanes](#)

I-257-1 [I strongly oppose the conversion of High-Occupancy Vehicle lanes on 85 to express lanes. I believe it would not ease congestion, while resulting in increased air and carbon pollution as well as noise.

I-257-2 [Instead, transit options such as increased bus routes and frequency, park and ride areas at every exit, and ultimately light rail would provide easier and lower impact transportation options, increasing the quality of life in our communities and reducing long-term health and climate impacts.

I-257-3 [Increasing road capacity in saturated urban areas does not result in reduced congestion, it increases traffic with similar levels of congestion. Instead of continuing to develop a car-based infrastructure with all its negative health and climate impacts, we should develop a 21st-century mobility infrastructure based on modern, fast and clean transit options. California and Silicon Valley should apply their technology and environmental leadership to demonstrate how advanced public transit systems can provide solutions that increase quality of life and convenience while reducing environmental impacts. This would not only improve residents' quality of life, it would make Silicon Valley one of the most desirable places to live and do business in the world, benefiting the local and state economies.

Best Regards,
Daniel Swid

Responses to Comment I-257

I-257-1

The commenter's opposition is noted. The project would improve travel times and speeds, as discussed in Master Response TR-1. Refer to Master Response AQ-1 regarding impacts from air/carbon pollution and N-1 regarding noise,

I-257-2

Refer to Master Response GEN-7 regarding why transit options are not being implemented instead of the proposed project. Also refer to Master Response GEN-2 in regard to light rail in the median of SR 85.

I-257-3

See the response to Comment I-257-2.

Comment I-258 Cathy Switzer

I-258-1

For this project, please review the opportunity to improve bicycle and pedestrian access across SR85 at The Dalles in Sunnyvale - the bridge is does not meet ADA requirements, and is heavily used by students and parents to get to/from West Valley Elementary School and Cupertino Junior High School. The steepness of the ramps forces most/all students to walk up/down, and the resultant backlog of students ends up on Bernardo, in the traffic lanes.

The document does not seem to indicate any improvements, such as adding auxiliary lanes, on SR85 between Homestead and El Camino Real. If this is the case, there is the opportunity to utilize available land there and replace the existing Pedestrian / Bicycle bridge at The Dalles.

Thank you for your consideration,

Cathy Switzer
Sunnyvale, CA

Responses to Comment I-258

I-258-1

The comment is noted. The project does not include reconstruction of the pedestrian overcrossing at The Dalles. The commenter's recommendations would require additional right-of-way and reconstruction of the pedestrian overcrossing in a different location to meet standards.

Comment I-259 Keith Szolusha (1)

Highway 85 project in Saratoga

Keith Szolusha [szolusha@gmail.com]

Sent: Tuesday, February 04, 2014 10:10 AM

To: 85expresslanes

Hello,

I live on Ravenwood Drive in Saratoga, CA.

I have read through some reports and cannot find information regarding where the new billboards or lights will be placed, how much light will bleed into the surrounding communities, and/or if trucks will now be allowed access to these roads due to the federal funding from these projects.

I-259-1 Without telling the neighboring communities if big trucks will now have access to the road, maybe we are skipping the important fact about a big increase in exhaust and noise pollution.

Can you tell me if trucks will have to be allowed on the roads or if the expansion of the lanes will still keep trucks off of the road?

Much of the neighborhood where I live is very concerned about the increase in pollution and that the original build of Highway 85 was done in a way that guaranteed that trucks would not be allowed in this area. So, the ramps and roads were not built in a way to accommodate the trucks and signs indicate that trucks are currently now allowed to use this route. If that is set to change, then there will be a major negative impact on our environment and that is a concern of our entire community.

Keith Szolusha
Saratoga, CA

Responses to Comment I-259

I-259-1

The Draft IS/EA did not include specific locations of new express lane signs or lighting because the locations will not be finalized until detailed project design. However, information has been added to the Final IS/EA to show the proposed access zones (Figure 1.3-2) and the approximate number of new overhead sign structures within each city (Section 2.1.4.3, under "Project Signs and Tolling Equipment"). As stated in Section 2.1.4.3 (under "Lighting"), new lighting would have light-emitting diodes (LEDs) configured at the minimum necessary number of bulbs, optimal mounting height, mast-arm length, and angle to restrict light to the freeway right-of-way. Therefore, no light is expected to spill into surrounding communities and cause a significant impact, as discussed further in response to Comment L-3-21.

The project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85. As described in Master Response AQ-1, project-related air quality changes would be minor.

Comment I-260 Keith Szolusha (2)

Highway 85 express lanes in Saratoga

Keith Szolusha [szolusha@gmail.com]

Sent: Thursday, February 06, 2014 4:38 PM

To: elo@saratoga.ca.us; hmiller@saratoga.ca.us; mcappello@saratoga.ca.us; cpage@saratoga.ca.us; jhunter@saratoga.ca.us; senatorbeall@senate.ca.gov; assemblymemberfong@assembly.ca.gov; 85expresslanes

Dear Saratoga Council Members,

I am opposed to an increase in noise, exhaust, and light pollution that an expansion on Highway 85 might bring to our neighborhood and surrounding community.

I am a resident of Saratoga near Highway 85 in the Ravenwood Drive neighborhood. I live there with my wife and two small children. We enjoy playing outside in the nice neighborhood park and riding our bikes up and down the street. We enjoy walking our dog nearby as well.

I-260-1 We moved to Saratoga to enjoy its relative tranquility and proximity to the nearby hills while maintaining our simple access to our jobs in nearby silicon valley. Although the neighborhood is excellent in many ways, there is some noise and air pollution already eroding the neighborhood from nearby highway 85. The highway was there when we made our decision to move there, but we were not expecting it to change or be built up in any way.

We have become aware of a VTA project to do several years of construction on Highway 85 and build up an extra lane.

I am opposed to any construction or changes that would allow for big trucks or any type of vehicle that is not currently allowed on Highway 85. From everything that I have read, I cannot find a reference to this and fear that the changes would bring about an increase in truck traffic that would certainly increase noise and other pollutants.

I-260-2 Currently, you can hear the highway throughout the day and at night inside of our house. An increase in noise of any level would be unwelcome. I think that the reports that I have read are downplaying the increase in sound that the new lanes would bring, especially if truck traffic is allowed.

Please consider this as feedback from a concerned community member that spends a significant time with my family outside. I would not like to see an increase in traffic, noise, or trucks on the highway. At least, this project should not be going forward without proper discussion with the community and understanding of its true environmental impact. Is this the way major projects usually move forward?

I-260-3 What happened to the light rail project that the extra space on highway 85 was intended to provide?

Thankyou for your time,
Keith Szolusha
Saratoga, CA

Responses to Comment I-260

I-260-1

Detailed technical studies show that the project would increase noise by 0 to 1 decibel along the Saratoga portion of SR 85 as described in Master Response N-3 (which would typically not be perceptible; see Master Response N-1). The project would meet air quality standards (see Master Response AQ-1). As stated in Section 2.1.4.3 (under "Lighting"), new lighting would have light-emitting diodes (LEDs) configured at the minimum necessary number of bulbs, optimal mounting height, mast-arm length, and

angle to restrict light to the freeway right-of-way. Light pollution is not expected, as discussed further in response to Comment L-3-21.

The proposed project would take an estimated 1.5 years, not several years, to construct. Project-related construction activities would be concentrated in specific areas over a period of several days to a few weeks. See responses to Comments L-1-13 and L-1-16 for additional information.

I-260-2

The project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85.

See the response to Comment I-260-1 regarding project-related noise.

IS/EA Chapter 3 and Master Response GEN-6 list the public outreach that has taken place for this project.

I-260-3

Light rail in the median of SR 85 was not carried forward because it was determined not to be reasonable or practicable, as described in Master Response GEN-2.

Comment I-261 Barbara Takahashi

From: [Barbara Takahashi](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Subject: SR 85 Express Lanes
Date: Wednesday, February 26, 2014 9:12:22 PM

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to encourage the VTA to use the existing SR 85 median for mass transportation, conforming to the Transportation Authority's PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT with the City of Saratoga which states:

Route 85 through the CITY will be a 6-lane facility with a median width of 46' reserved for mass transportation

The Agreement also states that the Transportation Authority will monitor and mitigate noise levels. As a resident of Saratoga for 25 years, I can testify that noise from Highway 85 has increased significantly over time, presumably from degradation of the road surface. Conformance to original Transportation Authority promises indicate that a *reduction* of noise, not an increase, is needed.

I-261-1

Using the median for mass transportation instead of additional traffic lanes will

- reduce air pollution
- reduce noise pollution
- reduce traffic on SR 85 on-ramps and surrounding surface streets
- reduce energy consumption
- avoid violation of the Transportation Authority's PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT with the City of Saratoga

These are benefits for everyone, not just the ever-growing number who live within hearing distance of SR 85.

Sincerely,
Barbara Takahashi
12326 Larchmont Ave
Saratoga, CA 95070

Responses to Comment I-261

I-261-1

See the response to Comment I-94-1.

Comment I-262 Panette Talia

How stupid do you think the tax payer are?

panette ptalia100 [panetteski@gmail.com]

Sent: Monday, February 24, 2014 6:06 PM

To: 85expresslanes

I-262-1

This is the stupidest thing I've ever heard of. Obviously none of you drive this road at rush hour, if you did, you'd be screaming for additional lanes to be added, not taken away. All this is, is another way for you to tax us....knock it off. Between this and the dumb ass bullet train I am now positive that everyone in Sacramento is insane. Which one of your friends is going to make millions of dollars off this wild idea? And People say Russian politics are corrupt. Shame on all of you.

Panette Talia
Campbell, CA

Responses to Comment I-262

I-262-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted. Lanes are not being taken away. Also refer to Master Response GEN-1 regarding express lanes.

Comment I-263 Don Tanner

SR 85 Express Lanes

Don Tanner [donaldtannerjr@gmail.com]

Sent: Friday, February 07, 2014 8:43 AM

To: 85expresslanes

I-263-1

I've always thought that car pool lanes are a waste of money.

IF Public Transit was better, THEN and only THEN will people leave their cars.

I and my neighbors ALL pay for the construction and maintenance of the car pools lanes, and we should ALL be allowed to use them.

Converting them to 'LEXUS Lanes' or as you call them, 'Express Lanes' is a bigger slap in the face. Apparently, if you have enough money you can BUY your way out of the laws that the rest of us must adhere to.

If you follow in this trend then it just leads to being able to buy 'Get Out of Jail' cards, too.

Don

Don Tanner

Responses to Comment I-263

I-263-1

The commenter's opposition to carpool lanes is noted. Express lane tolls would provide a revenue source for HOV, transportation, and transit service improvements in the SR 85 corridor, as described in Master Response GEN-7.

The express lane toll for solo drivers is a user fee, as described in Master Response GEN-5. SR 85 will continue to have two general purpose lanes in each direction that do not have tolls or vehicle occupancy requirements.

The project would maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, as described in Master Response GEN-1. Studies in California and elsewhere show that express lanes provide time and convenience benefits to drivers of all income levels. Refer to Master Response EJ-1 regarding express lane users.

Comment I-264 Chris Tar

I do not support the 85 express lanes plan

Chris Tar [christophertar@gmail.com]

Sent: Thursday, February 20, 2014 4:01 PM

To: 85expresslanes

I live within 600 feet of 85 in Saratoga, and I do not support the express lanes plan, nor the expansion of lanes on I-85. The noise from I-85 is already too loud, despite the retaining walls, and more lanes means more traffic which means more air pollution. I also understand that the expansion plan may indirectly permit trucks on I-85 which I object to for the same reasons - more noise and more air pollution.

I-264-1

The noise from 85 is very inconsistent, so any studies related to noise pollution should be aware of this, and understand when to take measurements. For instance, last night I could hear traffic from I-85 very prominently in my bedroom, most of the night, whereas many nights I do not hear any traffic at all from inside my house. When the traffic can be heard, it is very loud and intrusive.

My understanding is that the original construction of I-85 required noise to stay within a certain range in order to meet contract commitments with the city of Saratoga, and that those commitments are not being kept. This is not surprising, given how loud the traffic noise is on some days - to the point where it easily penetrates walls and windows.

Please consider this an objection from someone who will be directly impacted by these changes.

Thank you,

Chris Tar

18658 Casa Blanca Lane, Saratoga

Responses to Comment I-264

I-264-1

The noise technical studies show that the project would result in a 0 to 1 decibel increase in traffic noise along the Saratoga portion of SR 85, as described in Master Response N-3. This increase would typically not be perceptible, as discussed further in Master Response N-1.

The project is not expected to increase air pollution, as discussed in Master Response AQ-1, and the improvement in congestion would reduce exhaust emissions from vehicle idling. Refer to Master Response TR-1 regarding traffic.

The project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85.

Evaluation of the noise levels at night, representing more sensitive periods of time for nearby residents, would yield no difference with and without project conditions because the same number of vehicles would be traveling the same speed under both scenarios, resulting in no long-term effect on nighttime noise levels. This is a result of the express lane usage being confined to early morning and evening hours during congested periods of commuter traffic.

Refer to Master Response N-3 regarding commitments about noise levels from SR 85 in Saratoga.

Comment I-265 Teresa

expansion	
William Y. Hata [wmhata@prodigy.net]	
Sent: Saturday, February 01, 2014 7:21 AM	
To: 85expresslanes	
I-265-1	[No More Noise ! No more abusing the ok for one thing and changing it to something else later. Vote NO!
	Teresa

Responses to Comment I-265

I-265-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted. Refer to Master Response N-1 regarding noise.

Comment I-266 Louie Tersini

From: Louie Tersini	
To: 85expresslanes	
Subject: Highway 85 Express Lanes Proposal	
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2014 10:27:09 AM	
I-266-1	[Dear VTA, Are there independent studies regarding cost benefit ratios, parking, anticipated usage etc.? Please add me to your mailing list. Thank you, VTA Taxpayer

Responses to Comment I-266

I-266-1

See the response to Comment L-1-4 regarding cost-benefit analyses for the project. The project as currently proposed would not affect parking and does not include parking facilities. Anticipated usage has been studied as described in IS/EA Section 3.1. Also refer to Master Response EJ-1 regarding express lane usage.

The commenter has been added to the project mailing list.

Comment I-267 George Thorn

From: [George Thorn](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Cc: [ctclerk@saratoga.ca.us](#); [elo@saratoga.ca.us](#); [jhunter@saratoga.ca.us](#); [hmiller@saratoga.ca.us](#); [mcappello@saratoga.ca.us](#); [cpage@saratoga.ca.us](#); [supervisor.simitian@bos.sccgov.org](#); [assemblymember.fong@ca.gov](#); [Carmel Thorn](#)
Subject: SR 85 Express Lanes
Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 8:53:30 AM

To the VTA Planning Department:

I-267-1

I am writing to express my serious concerns regarding the proposed changes to highway 85. I am a Saratoga resident in close proximity to the 85 between Saratoga Avenue and De Anza Blvd, and the noise levels have steadily increased over the 13 years that I have lived here. During commute times in the week the noise of traffic becomes extremely loud. Air pollution has always been a major problem, with my driveway turning black from all the heavy particles that settle on it. I power wash it every couple of years in an effort to keep it looking reasonable, but can do nothing short of wearing a mask all the time to keep from ingesting the particles into my lungs. Even the remotest possibility that either or both of these environmentally damaging forces will get worse fills me with dread.

I-267-2

My understanding is that, when the 85 was originally constructed, the city of Saratoga entered into an agreement with the state that guaranteed the median would only be utilized for light rail / mass transit in the future. I recently learned that multiple express lanes with toll controls, and mass transit busses are going in in place of the existing HOV lanes. This can only lead to increased traffic, and hence increased noise and air pollution, making an already unhealthy environment that much worse. I've heard that the VTA has conducted studies and estimates zero to 3dB increases in noise as a result of the new plan. A 3dB increase would *double the perceived noise level*. This would have a terrible impact on the surrounding neighbourhood. Where is the concern for the environment here? Why isn't a light rail solution being pursued instead of attracting even more single user vehicles into an already crowded corridor. How is the VTA able over-ride the legal agreement it signed with the city of Saratoga so callously! The city should consider taking legal action against the VTA in my opinion.

I-267-3

I would like to know specifically **how the noise estimates have been arrived at, and when were the most recent readings of the existing noise levels made** that this plan is based upon. I'd like the same information regarding air pollution. Finally, it seems a *third impact on our environment* is quite possible, that of light pollution, from the new illuminations that the toll signs will require. This would have a dramatically negative impact on our quality of life, living as close to the freeway as we do.

I-267-4

I fear that, if this plan gets approved, no matter what assurances are given, noise, air and light pollution will increase, and there'll be no recourse available to help us address it. Estimates are extremely prone to error, because only a real world test is accurate, and by then it will be too late. Please stop this absurd plan now and start afresh with a plan for light rail that would help South Bay residents to have a viable, environmentally friendly, affordable way of reaching the growing employment hubs of Sunnyvale and Mountain View. Busses are not the answer. They will get stuck in the same traffic that will eventually accumulate on the new express lanes, and even if they are hybrid busses, they will be adding to the already disturbing noise levels that the traffic generates.

I-267-4,
cont.

Please reconsider this plan and look seriously at the alternative of adding a light rail route up into Mountain View. Surely deep pocketed Google would be in favor and would make a generous contribution, as it would certainly help more Googlers get to work in a more environmentally friendly way!

George Thorn
Saratoga resident

--

George Thorn
Digital Media Consulting
(408) 307-4382

Responses to Comment I-267

I-267-1

The commenter's concerns about the proposed project are noted. Refer to Master Responses N-1 regarding noise and AQ-1 regarding air quality.

I-267-2

See the response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the agreement with the City of Saratoga.

Light rail in the median of SR 85 was not carried forward because it was determined not to be reasonable or practicable, as described in Master Response GEN-2. Refer to Master Response GEN-7 regarding transit as an alternative to the proposed project. Note that the project does not include express bus service on SR 85 beyond that which is already provided.

Master Response TR-1 provides information about traffic improvements with the project compared to the No Build condition.

The noise technical studies show that the project would result in a 0 to 1 decibel increase in traffic noise along the Saratoga portion of SR 85, as described in Master Response N-3. This increase would typically not be perceptible, as discussed in Master Response N-1.

For clarification purposes, a 3 dB increase in noise level represents a doubling of acoustic energy, rather than a doubling in perceived loudness. As stated in the City of Saratoga Draft Noise Element, a 3 dB change is considered a just-noticeable difference in noise level, and a 10 dB change is subjectively heard as approximately a doubling in loudness (City of Saratoga Noise Element, p. 5).

The project is not expected to increase air pollution, as discussed in Master Response AQ-1, and the improvement in congestion would reduce exhaust emissions from vehicle idling.

I-267-3

This information is provided in the *Noise Study Report* (Illingworth and Rodkin 2012), *Air Quality Impact Assessment* (URS 2013l), and *Mobile Source Air Toxics* (2013m), which are available at: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/envdocs.htm#santaclara>, under "State Route 85 Express Lanes Project, Initial Study with Proposed Negative

Declaration/Environmental Assessment.” Also refer to Master Response N-1 through N-4 regarding noise impacts in Saratoga.

Refer to Master Response AQ-1 regarding air quality.

As stated in Section 2.1.4.3 (under “Lighting”), new lighting would have light-emitting diodes (LEDs) configured at the minimum necessary number of bulbs, optimal mounting height, mast-arm length, and angle to restrict light to the freeway right-of-way. Therefore, light pollution would not result in a significant impact.

I-267-4

See the responses to Comments I-267-2 and I-267-3.

Comment I-268 Mark Thorpe

From: [Mark Thorpe](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Cc: grichards@mercurynews.com
Subject: SR 85 Express Lanes
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2014 9:51:51 PM

I strongly object to the removal of a lane of Highway 85 North that I've been able to use for as long as it has existed. I live just north of the Fremont Avenue ramp in Sunnyvale, and though there is no firm information available regarding entry point locations to the express lane, I suspect the closest one will be at the 280/85 interchange, which will likely mean that when I get on 85N, there will never be a legal way for me to enter the #1 lane. That means I'll be stuck in the right two lanes with the horrible traffic tie ups due to the El Camino/237E traffic jam. As it currently stands, I set my appointments with clients to the north so I can leave at 9AM and use the currently called carpool lane. The only information I found on the FAQs page regarding what are carpool hours referred to the express lane on 237, and those are an hour later. Is this the case for 85 as well?

I-268-1

There is another big problem looming on our surface streets. Currently, traffic on Bernardo from both sides of Fremont fights to make turns toward 85 in the morning hours to get onto either the north or south ramps. The north ramp is rather short, and though it has been widened, it's not obvious at this point whether it will be two lanes or three. One of those lanes is a HOV lane, I believe. If there is only one other lane held at a stop at the metering light, there is nowhere near enough room for the typical number of driver-only cars that back up there in the morning, and I suspect that two lanes would be inadequate, too. This will make that intersection an even greater nightmare during the morning commute.

I reviewed the data in the report and it confirms my assessment that the HOV lanes are under-utilized, in other words, an expensive waste. What would make the most sense would be to remove the restriction on these lanes and let them fill up with the drivers who paid the taxes that funded their construction. If one made the case that that would make traffic worse in commute hours (which seems doubtful), then keep the HOV lanes as is, and rely on the metering lights to even the influx of cars during peak hours.

I've lived in this home in Sunnyvale since 1988. I recall the oleanders being removed for the two new lanes and my dismay when I realized there was a sound wall on the Los Altos side, but not on the Sunnyvale side just north of Fremont. The noise increased dramatically, but at least we had better traffic speed due to the additional capacity. Now that capacity is essentially being taken away from me, but the noise will remain. This is grossly unjust.

Mark Thorpe

Responses to Comment I-268

I-268-1

As shown in new IS/EA Figure 1.3-2, a northbound express lanes access zone is proposed in the vicinity of Fremont Avenue. The development of the current access points is described in Master Response GEN-4. Continuous access for the express lanes—like the existing SR 85 HOV lane, with no buffer separation—will be considered during detailed

project design. The express lanes would have the same hours of operation as the existing SR 85 HOV lanes.

The commenter's observation about the SR 85 ramps at Fremont Avenue and recommendation about the HOV lanes are noted. It should be noted that the project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at bottlenecks along the project corridor as described in Master Response TR-2. Refer to Master Responses GEN-1 regarding express lanes and HOVs and TR-1 regarding traffic.

Comment I-269 Tracy

From:	Yahoo <mikeshields@yahoo.com>
Sent:	Thursday, February 27, 2014 8:38 AM
To:	Beth Berger
Cc:	85expresslanes
Subject:	Re: Highway 85 Expansion
Categories:	Blue Category

I-269 [We are also submitting a letter of complaint . Tracy.
-1]

Responses to Comment I-269

I-269-1

The comment is noted.

Comment I-270 Trish

Re: Contact the City Council of Saratoga, California Form Submission

Gpupdates [gpupdates@earthlink.net]

Sent: Tuesday, February 04, 2014 7:40 AM

To: Barry Chang [barry4assembly@gmail.com]

Cc: bob rayl [bobrayl@pacbell.net]; robertson.b.m@mindspring.com; mark@weisler-saratoga-ca.us; john.chen.sjca@mail.com; d.poppenhagen@comcast.net; plam_93154@yahoo.com; cherielj@earthlink.net; shericourtney@yahoo.com; winnie_chanlu@yahoo.com; 85expresslanes

Hi Barry,

Thanks very much for your note and interest in the issue of lane projects on Highway 85. What comes out of this process will affect all of us. I know we will all work on the best possible outcome for those who live in our cities and those who drive through our cities via highway 85.

For me, it would be helpful to understand what Chuck has in mind for Saratoga and highway 85 and the reasons surrounding these ideas.

I-270-1 Howard has connections with Apple, so it would be helpful to understand how he views the highway lane upgrades with respect to his employer.

Thanks to Cheriell, as she has informed us that it's important to keep in mind that accepting federal funding would allow trucks on this stretch of highway.

The Jarvis Tax Association has attempted to provide clarification on the issue of charging for use of a lane when that lane has already been paid for. I continue to research on Jarvis-Gann and its application to Highway 85.

Thanks,
Trish

Responses to Comment I-270

I-270-1

This comment was sent to other individuals. It is not a comment on the IS/EA.

It is incorrect that accepting federal funding for the project would require trucks to be allowed on the section of SR 85 where they are currently restricted. The project would not change the truck restrictions, regardless of whether federal funding is used.

The express lane toll for solo drivers is a user fee, not a tax, as described in Master Response GEN-5. Express lanes and toll roads are in use in several locations in California and throughout the United States. The project would maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, as described in Master Response GEN-1.

Comment I-271 Gil Troutman

	From: Gil Troutman
	To: 85expresslanes
	Subject: Comments on the proposed 85 Express Lane
	Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 4:40:34 PM

I-271-1 Hi, I have a couple of comments **opposing** the proposed 85 express lane. These are in order of importance.

I-271-1

1. Traffic on 85 from Saratoga Avenue to 280 at 8AM is very slow. By 9 or 930 it is backed up to 17 and sometimes beyond. **A flyover ramp from 85 to 280 north would the HIGHEST priority.**
2. If the afternoon, traffic backs up from 101 south to 280 and beyond. Many times that will extend to beyond 17.
3. **I can see NO benefit from the express lane in either case.**
4. If the highway is moving at a reasonable rate, the added cars will increase noise and pollution.

I-271-2

Because of seeing no benefit to the express lane I am opposed.

Thanks, Gil Troutman, Saratoga resident.
13070 Regan Lane
Saratoga, CA 95070

Responses to Comment I-271

I-271-1

The commenter’s opposition to the project is noted.

The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at choke points along the project corridor, as described in Master Response TR-2. Also refer to Master Response TR-1 regarding improvements to travel times and speeds with the project.

I-271-2

Technical studies show that the project would increase noise by 0 to 3 decibels depending on the location (which would result in a less than significant impact; see Master Response N-1).

The project is not expected to increase air pollution, as discussed in Master Response AQ-1, and the improvement in congestion would reduce exhaust emissions from vehicle idling.

Comment I-272 Chiping Tsai

highway 85: change 6 lane to 8 lane

Chi Tsai [tsaichiping@gmail.com]

Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2014 2:15 PM

To: 85expresslanes

Cc: elo@saratoga.ca.us; hmiller@saratoga.ca.us; mcappello@saratoga.ca.us; cpage@saratoga.ca.us; jhunter@saratoga.ca.us; ctclerk@saratoga.ca.us

Mr. Ngoc Bui (Department of Transportation, District 4)

I have just received a info regarding to Highway 85 changing from 6 lane to 8 lane. And surprised me that only be added to the section between Camden and DeAnza Blvd.

- I-272-1 I am resident in Saratoga, and like to protect the environments and the right of private and public on the area to concern the benefits to all citizens. I do not agree this propose as the reasons of following:
 - 1) will create the bottleneck at this area. if add more lanes to highway, it should consider whole highway flow and impact! never add it at residential area.
 - I-272-2 2) more noise, pollution and environment damage. and it is important that affects need more environment impact evaluation and reports for this project.
 - I-272-3 3) Cost more to make and maintain. who pay for it?
- Thanks for considering my suggestion, and like to hear the response.

-- Citizen at Saratoga
Chiping Tsai

Responses to Comment I-272

I-272-1

Environmental studies for the proposed project included preparation of the 27 technical reports listed in Appendix G of the Initial Study/Environmental Assessment (IS/EA). The technical reports addressed noise, traffic, air quality, cultural resources, paleontological resources, biological resources, community impacts, hydraulics and water quality, hazardous waste, geology, and visual impacts. The determination in the IS/EA that the proposed project would not have significant environmental effects was based on a detailed and comprehensive review of each technical study area, including noise and air quality.

The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at choke points along the project corridor, as described in Master Response TR-2. Also refer to Master Response TR-1 regarding improvements to travel times and speeds with the project.

I-272-2

Refer to Master Responses N-1 regarding noise and AQ-1 regarding air quality. Also see response to Comment I-272-1.

I-272-3

As noted in Section 1.3.3 of the IS/EA, the project is funded through the project approval and environmental document phase from federal earmarks (Surface Transportation Program and Transportation Community and System Preservation), American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds, VTA Local funds, and private funding sources. VTA is working with local, state, and federal agencies to identify funding sources for the design

and construction of the project. Also refer to Master Response GEN-10 regarding funding, cost, and return.

Comment I-273 Yung-Ching Tseng

opposing 85 expansion and express lanes
Yung-Ching Tseng [ymotseng@gmail.com]
Sent: Saturday, March 01, 2014 8:43 AM
To: 85expresslanes

I-273-1 [Hi,
I am los gatos resident ans lives jusst by 85. So far the noise is bearable level without truck sound. i hope to remain this way. And if any improvement were to be made, please first fix 280 junction problem.
Thanks,
Yung-Ching Tseng

Responses to Comment I-273

I-273-1

The project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85. Refer to Master Response TR-2 regarding other planned improvements including at the I-280 interchange.

Comment I-274 Karen Tucker

From: [Karen Tucker](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Subject: Addition of lanes to Highway 85
Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 12:43:19 PM

I-274-1 [I just received an email from a neighbor regarding proposed changes to Highway 85 in our area. I am very concern that this is a back door deal and flies in the face of what was promised to the citizens of Saratoga. We were told that there would be NO truck traffic. I believe it is part of the initial contract. This is a bedroom
I-274-2 [community that still has not had noise issues from the freeway resolved to peoples satisfaction. Promises made but not kept. The new proposal would only increase the noise and pollution. What is proposed to mitigate the adverse effects? Has an environmental report been issues and was there a public hearing to discuss it? I strongly object to my understanding of the current proposal and want to be notified of the next meeting to discuss this issue.
Karen Tucker
13645 Riverdale Drive
Saratoga, CA 95070

Responses to Comment I-274

I-274-1

The project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85, which are included in California Vehicle Code Section 35722 and Santa Clara County Ordinance Section B17-5.3.

I-274-2

The comment about existing noise levels from SR 85 not being resolved is noted.

The noise technical studies show that the project would result in a 0 to 1 decibel increase in traffic noise along the Saratoga portion of SR 85, as described in Master Response N-3. This increase would typically not be perceptible, as discussed further in Master Response N-1.

The project is not expected to increase air pollution, as discussed in Master Response AQ-1, and the improvement in congestion would reduce exhaust emissions from vehicle idling.

The project includes measures that will be implemented during construction to reduce the potential for noise and air quality impacts, as described in IS/EA Sections 2.2.7.4 (under “Construction Noise Measures”) and 2.2.6.4. Additional avoidance and minimization measures are listed in IS/EA Table S-1.

An Initial Study/Environmental Assessment was issued on December 30, 2013. Two public information meetings were conducted during the public review period, which was from December 30, 2013, to February 28, 2014. Also refer to Master Response GEN-6 regarding public notices. The commenter’s contact information has been added to the project mailing list.

Comment I-275 Chris Umminger

Hwy 85 express lanes

Chris Umminger [umminger@alum.mit.edu]

Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2014 10:13 PM

To: 85expresslanes

Dear Sir or Madam,

I-275-1

I am writing to express my opposition to toll lanes on Hwy 85. I believe the highways are a public resource paid by public taxes. Like public schools, I think access should be equal for all. Granting special access to single drivers who pay, or who can afford government favored cars (e.g. hybrids or electrics), undermines the principles of an egalitarian society. I don't believe the carpool lanes should be set aside for the rich. It further stratifies society and breeds resentment.

I-275-2

I also find the limited access and entry points on these lanes (such as on 237 and 680) to be exceptionally restrictive. Even when I carpool, I am unable to make use of these lanes now because the access does not line up with my needs (e.g. I cannot enter 237 westbound at McCarthy and I cannot exit 680 westbound at Automall because of the solid white lines).

Regards,
Chris Umminger
Mountain View

Responses to Comment I-275

I-275-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted. The express lane toll for solo drivers is a user fee, as described in Master Response GEN-5. SR 85 will continue to have two general purpose lanes in each direction that do not have tolls or vehicle occupancy requirements.

The project would maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, as described in Master Response GEN-1. Studies in California and elsewhere show that express lanes provide time and convenience benefits to drivers of all income levels. Refer to Master Response EJ-1 regarding express lane users.

I-275-2

The development of the current access points is described in Master Response GEN-4. Continuous access for the express lanes—like the existing SR 85 HOV lane, with no buffer separation—will be considered during detailed project design, as discussed in Master Response GEN-4.

Comment I-276 C. Vanslow

Hwy 85 Attn:Ngoc Bui

cjv [cjv39@yahoo.com]

Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2014 12:32 PM

To: 85expresslanes

I-276-1

Yesterday was the first time I heard that governmental cronies are at it again, scheming again to bring more air and noise pollution through our backyards to appease big government and big business. When this freeway was built our city council lied to us and allowed the building of this monstrosity through our bedroom community. The section of freeway that goes behind our house spews pollution and noise which has made our yard unusable except to maintain the landscaping. It is impossible to have a conversation outside due to the noise. Our pool is unusable and sits empty. The sound walls cause a ricochet effect that causes a loud muffler to be heard for miles and miles especially at night. There is no railroad, on/off ramp, industrial area, park or any other kind of buffer in our area, we are just houses being bashed by freeway pollution, noise and air. You never claimed to have the money to lay a surface to mitigate the noise, only slightly trying to appease us into thinking you had done all you could afford to change. Now you want to widen to EIGHT LANES. Just so big business can transport their employees through our backyards even more? Your widening this freeway to eight lanes will make this home unliveable. I invite you to come and do a sound reading on it now. You would NOT live here.

Period. C. Vanslow. 19759 Sea Full Court, Saratoga

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

Responses to Comment I-276

I-276-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted. The environmental effects of the proposed project have been fully evaluated and compared with the existing setting and the No Project Alternative, and appropriate avoidance and minimization measures have been included. Refer to Master Response GEN-6 regarding public notices about the project.

The noise technical studies show that the project would result in a less than significant increase in traffic noise, as discussed further in Master Response N-1. The project is not expected to adversely increase air pollution, as described in Master Response AQ-1, and the improvement in congestion would reduce exhaust emissions from vehicle idling.

Comment I-277 Nancy Varnell

expansion of 85

ntvarnell@aol.com

Sent: Sunday, February 23, 2014 8:32 AM

To: 85expresslanes

I-277-1

there is already entirely too much noise on this freeway - and after being assured of the beauty of this project, it remains an eyesore... please drop this project... nancy varnell

Responses to Comment I-277

I-277-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted. Refer to Master Response N-1 regarding noise.

Comment I-278 Rashmi Verma

From: [Rashmi Verma](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#); [community.outreach@vta.org](#)
Cc: [elo@saratoga.ca.us](#); [hmiller@saratoga.ca.us](#); [mcappello@saratoga.ca.us](#); [cpage@saratoga.ca.us](#); [jhunter@saratoga.ca.us](#)
Subject: SR 85 Express Lanes
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2014 10:44:35 AM

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to encourage the VTA to use the existing State Route 85 median for mass transportation, conforming to the Transportation Authority's PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT with the City of Saratoga which states:

Route 85 through the CITY will be a 6-lane facility with a median width of 46' reserved for mass transportation

The Agreement also states that the Transportation Authority will monitor and mitigate noise levels. I moved here in beautiful saratoga city with my family for its serenity. Conformance to original Transportation Authority promises indicate that a *reduction* of noise, not an increase, is needed.

I-278-1

Using the median for mass transportation instead of additional traffic lanes will

- reduce air pollution
- reduce noise pollution
- reduce traffic on SR 85 on-ramps and surrounding surface streets
- reduce energy consumption
- avoid violation of the Transportation Authority's PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT with the City of Saratoga

These are benefits for everyone, not just the ever-growing number who live within hearing distance of SR 85.

Sincerely,
Rashmi Verma
12768 Cambridge Drive
Saratoga, CA 95070

Responses to Comment I-278

I-278-1

Light rail in the median of SR 85 was not carried forward because it was determined not to be reasonable or practicable, as described in Master Response GEN-2.

See the response to Comment L-3-4 (Saratoga) regarding the agreement.

The comment about traffic noise from SR 85 is noted. Refer to Master Response N-3 regarding noise levels in Saratoga.

Comment I-279 Binh Vo (1)

About State Route 85 Express Lanes Project

binh vo [v_binh@hotmail.com]

Sent: Thursday, January 30, 2014 9:07 PM

To: 85expresslanes

To whom it may concern,

I-279-1

This letter is to express our concern about the severe environmental impact up coming State Route 85 Express Lanes Project and to urge you to please perform a full Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for this 170 million project that affects several cities before any decision can be made for the project. Besides, it is really not appropriate to charge on a public funded freeway paid by Local Sales taxes.

Sincerely Yours,
-Binh Vo

Responses to Comment I-279

I-279-1

California Public Resources Code Sections 21080(d) and 21082.2(d) require the preparation of an EIR for projects with significant environmental effects. The determination that the proposed project would not have significant environmental effects was based on a detailed and comprehensive review of each technical study area, including noise, air quality, and traffic. Refer to Master Response GEN-3 regarding preparation of an EIR.

The express lane toll for solo drivers is a user fee, as described in Master Response GEN-5. SR 85 will continue to have two general purpose lanes in each direction that do not have tolls or vehicle occupancy requirements.

Comment I-280 Binh Vo (2)

NO MORE NEW HW 85 CONSTRUCTION

Binh Vo [b_vo@yahoo.com]

Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 2:46 PM

To: 85expresslanes

VTA guys:

I-280-1

Please no more new construction on highway 85. We are sick and tired of more traffic. Even Freeway 5 has only 2 lanes on each direction.

NO MORE PLEASE !

Responses to Comment I-280

I-280-1

The commenter's request is noted.

The project would add a second express lane in the median in each direction of SR 85 between SR 87 and I-280. The lane would not extend the entire length of SR 85. The project would improve travel times and speeds, as described in Master Response TR-1. The express lanes would offer immediate congestion relief using the existing right-of-way.

Comment I-281 John Wallace

From: jwallac@aol.com
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Cc: manager@LosGatosCA.gov
Subject: Highway 85 public comment period questions
Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 1:00:28 PM

Caltrans & VTA,

My name is John Wallace, and I own property and reside right next to highway 85 in Los Gatos. I am a concerned neighbor who is not impressed with the plan to expand highway 85. With respect to your public comment period, I have a few questions about the proposed expansion of highway 85.

- I-281-1 1. I am raising a 2 and 5 year old in a home right next to 85 in Los Gatos. What guarantees are being made the original agreement that there will be no diesel trucks (Semis) on highway 85 with be upheld no matter what. I'm concerned that my kids will have to breathe diesel truck fumes in their backyard when you eventually use federal funds to build this lane, and can no longer keep the restriction.
- I-281-2 2. Why are we creating more lanes to feed into the real morning bottleneck at 85/280?
- I-281-3 3. Why isn't 85 north of 280 widened, it is more congested than 85 south of 280?
- I-281-4 4. Will this 4th lane be for busses only?
- I-281-5 5. Noise is a major concern of mine, will the road be a ground concrete surface like the existing 3 lanes (quieter), or will it just be poured and troweled concrete?
- I-281-6 6. What traffic studies have been done to asses how much worse the morning 85/280 north back up will be?
- I-281-7 7. Sine there will be a significant increase in the number of cars that are traveling 85, what is the plan to address noise abatement for my neighborhood?
- I-281-8 8. Are there plans to increase the height of the sound walls?
9. Are there plans to compensate neighbors based on the increased nuisance that the noise and car exhaust create?

I-281-9 This entire plan looks like a government agency financing a road they don't have money for, not solving the real transportation problems on the highway (280/85 interchange and 85 north of 280), then charging people to use that road to create an revenue stream to become a bigger agency. The idea of paying to use a restricted public asset is crazy. Can we set up a express toll line at the DMV? How about an express toll line at the Emergency Room? Or an express toll phone number for the fire department or police. That way the people with money don't have to be bothered by poor people in their way! What ever happened to the idea that roads should be a public asset, paid for and used by everybody! Parks, libraries, schools all follow this business model. I just don't get it.

John Wallace
14330 Browns Lane
Los Gatos, CA 95032

Responses to Comment I-281

I-281-1

The project would improve travel times and speeds, as described in Master Response TR-1. The express lanes would offer immediate congestion relief using the existing right-of-way.

I-281-2

The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at the I-280 interchange and other bottlenecks along the project corridor, as described in Master Response TR-2.

I-281-3

The project does not propose to widen SR 85 north of I-280. The widening would require additional right-of-way; reconfiguration of interchanges, overcrossings, and other structures; and major utility work. See Master Response TR-2 for incremental improvements along SR 85 south of I-280.

I-281-4

The second express lane in the median in each direction of SR 85 between SR 87 and I-280 is not proposed to be used for transit only. Transit buses and other HOVs would continue to use the express lanes for free, and solo drivers would have the option to pay a toll to use the lanes, provided that capacity is available to accommodate solo drivers. Also refer to Master Response GEN-1.

I-281-5

New pavement is currently anticipated to match the existing pavement type of the adjacent lanes.

I-281-6

A detailed traffic analysis was conducted for the proposed project and is summarized in IS/EA Section 2.1.3. The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at the I-280 interchange and other areas of congestion along the project corridor, as described in Master Response TR-2.

I-281-7

There will not be a significant increase in the number of cars. With the project, an additional express lane would be added in each direction but only within a portion of the SR 85 corridor, between SR 87 and I-280. During the peak period, a portion of the existing traffic would shift to using the express lanes. This would include some drivers who previously might have driven before or after the peak period to avoid congestion. The cost of using the express lanes will be adjusted to “regulate” the number of single occupancy vehicles in the lanes and maintain free-flow conditions (as discussed further in Master Response GEN-1). The express lanes will be most attractive to drivers who already use SR 85 and need an additional option to travel to their destination in a predictable time frame.

The noise technical studies show that the project would result in a 0 to 2 decibel increase in traffic noise along the Los Gatos portion of SR 85 (Illingworth and Rodkin 2012; also see Final IS/EA Tables 2.2.7-11 [receptors ST-67 through ST-70] and 2.2.7-12 [receptors ST-72 through ST-76] for locations in Los Gatos). This increase would not be significant, as discussed in Master Response N-1.

I-281-8

The project evaluated a number of new or reconstructed noise barriers in IS/EA Section 2.2.7.4 (under “Traffic Noise Abatement Evaluation”). None of the evaluated sound wall locations met the Caltrans “feasibility” and “reasonableness” criteria.

I-281-9

Potential project-related effects to air quality and noise were studied and are not expected to create a nuisance, as described in more detail in Master Responses AQ-1 regarding air quality and N-1 regarding noise.

Master Response TR-2 addresses the SR 85/I-280 interchange and other congestion points along SR 85.

The express lane toll for solo drivers is a user fee, as described in Master Response GEN-5. SR 85 will continue to have two general purpose lanes in each direction that do not have tolls or vehicle occupancy requirements.

Studies in California and elsewhere show that express lanes provide time and convenience benefits to drivers of all income levels. Refer to Master Response EJ-1 regarding express lane users.

Comment I-282 Bill Wang

From: [Bill Wang](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Subject: 85 express lanes
Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 2:00:51 PM

I-282-1

I am a Saratoga residents. I am strongly oppose to the proposed 85 lane changes and very concerned the negative impact such as noise level and pollution this changes will bring to Saratoga.

There are other solutions to the traffic issues on 85. The expansion will not address the current gridlock that we are experiencing but may make it even worse.

Thank you,

Bill Wang

Responses to Comment I-282

I-282-1

The commenter’s opposition to the project is noted.

The project would improve travel times and speeds, as described in Master Response TR-1. The express lanes would offer immediate congestion relief using the existing right-of-way.

Potential project-related effects to noise and air quality were studied and are not expected to result in adverse impacts, as described in more detail in Master Responses N-1 regarding noise and AQ-1 regarding air quality.

Comment I-283 Mark Weisler

Mark Weisler
13138 Heath Street, Saratoga, California 95070
mark@weisler-saratoga-ca.us

Saratoga City Council, Saratoga, California

Dear Council Members, 05 February 2014

Saratoga has been my home for over six decades now. I am writing to address the proposed expansion of Route 85 to an eight lane freeway.

Residents of Saratoga trust their elected officials in the form of the City Council to look out for their health and wellbeing including that of their children. There are few matters that affect our health and welfare as much as the installation or expansion of a freeway as such infrastructure can be in place for decades or centuries.

I'm concerned about the increase in pollution that would result from adding lanes and traffic signals to Route 85.

I request:

I-283-1

- A full Environmental Impact Report (EIR) including addressing the topic of pollution. This examination should be refined to include particulate, chemical, gas, noise and light pollution and any other relevant effects from the expansion. I request that the study show the incremental effects from adding the lanes to the freeway. The project proponents want to proceed with the project with only an environmental assessment, but I don't think that is sufficiently rigorous considering the potentially serious effects and long term of the project. I also request that ongoing studies be performed to measure the pollution from the existing freeway to compare actual pollution to the initial project assumptions and agreements about the freeway and that this information be regularly (at least semiannually) conveyed to the public via Saratoga City Council.

I-283-2

- That the existing Route 85 agreement made in 1989 be respected and adhered to. Deviation from this agreement should not take place without explicit citizen and resident approval.

I-283-3

- Considering that the project would also establish a mechanism to charge a toll to use roadways we have already paid for, I also request the establishment of a financial review committee appointed by Saratoga City Council to review the financial aspects of the project and that this include sources and uses of funds statements and other appropriate analyses.

I-283-4

- I also request a statement of the problem this expansion is intended to address. While it may seem obvious that the expansion is intended to relieve the problem of congested traffic, will we go through this process again in a few years when increased population and traffic again result in congestion? And again a few years after that? I request a process that develops and considers alternatives to adding more paved lanes.

Sincerely, Mark Weisler

Responses to Comment I-283

I-283-1

The commenter's concerns are noted. To clarify, the project would not add traffic signals to SR 85.

California Public Resources Code Sections 21080(d) and 21082.2(d) require the preparation of an EIR for projects with significant environmental effects. The determination that the proposed project would not have significant environmental effects was based on a detailed and comprehensive review of each technical study area, including air quality, noise, and visual resources. The technical studies included the additional express lane in each direction between SR 87 and I-280. It is important to note that Caltrans requires the same technical studies to be prepared whether the ultimate environmental document is an Initial Study or EIR. Thus, preparing an EIR would not change the content or nature of any of the technical studies. Also refer to Master Response GEN-3 regarding preparation of an EIR.

Ongoing pollution studies are not within the scope of this project, but local air quality data are available to the public at <http://www.baaqmd.gov/Know.aspx>.

I-283-2

The comment is noted. See the response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the Performance Agreement. Also refer to Master Response GEN-6 regarding the public noticing that has taken place.

I-283-3

The commenter is referred to California Streets and Highways Code Section 149.6, which sets the terms of toll collection and reinvestment for the proposed project. The Bay Area Toll Authority, which is the toll collection entity for all Bay Area bridges and express lanes, would collect the tolls. It would be up to the City of Saratoga whether they were interested in establishing a financial review committee.

I-283-4

A detailed statement of the problem that the proposed project is intended to address is provided in IS/EA Section 1.2, Purpose and Need.

Comment I-284 Jackie Welch

Jackie Welch
14500 Fruitvale Ave. #5322
Saratoga CA 95070
February, 2014

Ngoc Bui
Caltrans Office of Environmental Analysis
P.O. Box 23660, MS-8B
Oakland CA 94623

Dear Sir:

I-284-1

I read in the Saratoga News that Caltrans is proposing to widen Hwy #85 with yet another lane. But adding more lanes to our highways creates more problems than it solves. It increases air pollution and noise pollution for nearby neighborhoods; and increases the use of more cars using more gasoline that increases the need for more environmentally destructive oil drilling; destroys the adjacent natural environment by covering precious land with asphalt; creates the possibility of more traffic accidents; and is the most expensive way for people to travel because of the necessity of buying a car and the rising cost of gasoline, and the cost of insurance. Traffic accidents on highways cause delays, sometimes to a standstill, and may result in injuries, even death.

All of these problems, just to move one person per one car! It would be far more efficient to put 50 of those people in one vehicle, a county bus! Compare the cost of bus fare to the cost of using a car. Compare the number of auto accidents on a freeway to traffic accidents of buses.

Witness San Francisco, Berkeley, Walnut Creek etc., where public transportation can get you almost anywhere you want to go: to work, school, shopping, entertainment, airports. Santa Clara County has to become similarly more efficient in transporting people.

Saratoga is particularly isolated because of meager public transportation. How can you get to Los Gatos if you don't drive, such as seniors or students? How do you get to San Jose airport, or students to San Jose State University, or Saratoga High School, or Westmont High School, or Lynbrook High School or to Kaiser Hospital, or the theatre district of San Jose, or Valley Fair Shopping Mall? Our bus service is remiss in not serving these transportation needs. Saratoga is no longer a self-contained small town. It depends on the larger urban community, and people have to be moved in an urban way, by public transportation. And Saratoga could retain its country appearance if we don't smother it with freeways.

How does the cost of increasing the service and routes of a county bus compare with the cost of building more highway lanes? What is the cost for people to take a bus compared to the total expense of using an automobile to work or school? What is the difference in toxic fumes of 50 automobiles compared to one bus? Where are all these cars going to park once they reach their destination?

We must adjust our habit of always taking our car to places that could be served by a bus. We have been raised to think of automobiles of being the only way to go anywhere, even to nearby shopping centers or schools. Even children expect to be driven to school instead of walking or taking a bus. In older communities, neighborhoods were built with sidewalks, and streetcars or buses to take residents to distant places. But the little country town of Saratoga had its spurt of growth when automobiles were common, so sidewalks were not required by the City for permits for the development of new neighborhoods. This vision of "keeping Saratoga rural" has backfired, because by increasing the dependence on automobiles has meant more and larger freeways that destroy our rural appearance.

Jackie Welch

Responses to Comment I-284

I-284-1

The commenter's opposition is noted. The SR 85 Express Lanes Project is part of a region wide effort to develop 550 miles of express lanes in the Bay Area (MTC 2015).

Express lanes will benefit bus riders and carpoolers through faster, more reliable travel, and ultimately create an incentive for more bus service. Toll revenues from the SR 85 express lanes will be used for HOV, transportation, and transit service improvements in the SR 85 corridor. Moreover, the number of paid vehicles will be limited so they do not congest the express lanes.

Master Response GEN-7 discusses why transit options are not being implemented instead of the proposed project.

VTA conducts bus service planning annually and adjusts service to better serve those communities with greater demand. Should locations in Saratoga demonstrate sufficient ridership demand, bus service would be considered.

Comment I-285 Harry Weller

SR 85 Express Lanes
Bill Weller [bill.weller@icloud.com]
Sent: Sunday, February 09, 2014 1:58 PM
To: 85expresslanes

I-285-1 [I am against this expansion of SR 85. The documents do not address why &/or how VTA justifies breaking the agreement with Saratoga that the only expansion of SR 85 would be for light rail. This plan violates the agreement and is not acceptable to the local residents. Plus, ending the extra lanes near I-280 will increase the magnitude of the backups that already occur from DeAnza north bound in the mornings.

I-285-2 [The congestion here is already so bad that it can take 5-10 minutes to travel get on SR 85 North onramp from DeAnza Blvd. Ending an express lane here will make the congestion worse.

I-285-3 [Returning to the biggest issue, why does VTA think they can violate the agreements made with the local communities prior to SR 85 being completed? Is this political arrogance? Why should I vote for VTA projects in the future if they are not going to live up to the agreements from the past, both the letter and the spirit of the agreements?

Thank you,
Harry Weller
Saratoga, CA

Responses to Comment I-285

I-285-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted. See the response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the comment about light rail along SR 85.

I-285-2

The project would provide incremental improvements to traffic congestion on SR 85, as described in Master Responses TR-1 and TR-2. Also note that the project would add an auxiliary lane on northbound SR 85 between the South De Anza Boulevard on-ramp and the Stevens Creek Boulevard off-ramp, which would help to accommodate congestion in this area.

I-285-3

The comment does not specify which agreements are cited. See the responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding specific performance agreements.

Comment I-286 Gary Wesley

Print Page 1 of 1

Subject: Highway 85 Express Lanes
From: Gary Wesley (gary.wesley@yahoo.com)
To: 85expresslanes@vta.org;
Cc: gary.wesley@yahoo.com; editor@mv-voice.com;
Date: Monday, January 27, 2014 7:50 PM

I-286-1 [On January 25, 2014, I sent an email to Community.Outreach@vta.org trying to use my cell phone. I am now presenting those points in this email:

Insofar as the HOV lanes are not actually under-utilized, the Express Lanes will be clogged and lessen the incentive to carpool - adding to overall congestion. Moreover, the increased revenue from tolls will encourage the next step of disallowing access to the Express Lanes by any high occupancy vehicle not paying toll charges - adding further to overall congestion. Toll charges may well be next extended to all lanes - increasing the need for alternatives to driving. All of these factors must be evaluated in the EIR.

GARY WESLEY

Responses to Comment I-286

I-286-1

It is incorrect that HOVs not paying tolls would be disallowed from the express lanes. The express lanes would create additional capacity and maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, which would continue to use the lanes for free. Refer to Master Response GEN-1 regarding the express lanes and HOVs. The project would also improve travel times and speeds compared to the No Build condition in 2015 and 2035, as discussed in Master Response TR-1.

There is no plan or legislative authority to charge tolls for use of the general purpose lanes of SR 85.

The environmental impacts of the proposed project have been fully evaluated in the IS/EA and appropriate measures have been included to avoid or minimize impacts. Refer to Master Response GEN-3 regarding preparation of an EIR.

Comment I-287 Caron Whitacre

From: [Caron Whitacre](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Subject: Saratoga
Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 1:04:59 PM

I-287-1 I cannot believe VTA is evening thinking of putting in an extra "toll" lane on Hwy 85. The middle area of 85 was supposed to be for Light Rail. That's what we voters voted for. Not toll lanes. The extra noise, lights, and air pollution going through Saratoga will be horrendous. And we in Saratoga will get NOTHING GOOD out of having this running through our city. I hear the rumblings of the cars on 85 in the morning and I live 2 miles from it.

I-287-2 Access to 85 north toll lanes doesn't happen until De Anza Blvd, I believe. Then doesn't it end at 280? What does this give us? The bottleneck created when the 4 lanes narrow down into 3 will be worse than the bottleneck now. Much worse.

I-287-3 Please do not put the express lanes in. Instead look into Light Rail. Think for the future, not just for awhile. These lanes will fill with cars quickly and then we're back where YOU started. Light Rail should be our future. Not express lanes.

Caron Whitacre
14070 Shadow Oaks Way
Typed with 2 fingers on my iphone

Responses to Comment I-287

I-287-1

Light rail in the median of SR 85 was not carried forward because it was determined not to be reasonable or practicable, as described in Master Response GEN-2. Also refer to Master Responses N-1 regarding noise and AQ-1 regarding air quality. Lighting is addressed in IS/EA Section 2.1.4.

I-287-2

New Figure 1.3-2 has been added to IS/EA Section 1.3.1.1 to show the conceptual access zone locations. The development of the current access points is described in Master Response GEN-4. Continuous access—like the existing SR 85 HOV lane, with no buffer separation—will be considered during detailed project design, as discussed in Master Response GEN-4.

A detailed traffic analysis was conducted for the project, and the findings do not support the statement in the comment that major congestion would result from the two express lanes transitioning to one express lane. The analysis shows that in peak traffic hour for the primary commute travel direction, levels of service approaching major system interchanges would generally remain the same or improve slightly with the project in both 2015 and 2035 (northbound in the AM peak and southbound in the PM peak; IS/EA Tables 2.1.3-5 and 2.1.3-6 for 2015, and Tables 2.1.3-9 and 2.1.3-10 for 2035). Overall corridor speeds would increase and total delay would decrease with the project in 2015 and 2035 compared with the No Project conditions (IS/EA Tables 2.1.3-8 and 2.1.3-12).

I-287-3

The commenter's opposition is noted. Refer to Master Responses GEN-2 regarding light rail in the median and TR-1 regarding traffic.

Comment I-288 Patty Winningham

SR 85 Express Lanes - to VTA

Patty Winningham [pattyw@stanford.edu]

Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2014 9:09 AM

To: 85expresslanes

Cc: Patty Winningham [pattyw@stanford.edu]

- I-288-1 VTA-
Within the last few weeks is the first time I heard about this "HWY85 Express Lane Project" and I want you to know that I am totally opposed to this project.
I have been living at my current location well before Hwy 85 was build.
I live in eye sight of the Saratoga Ave / Hwy 85 interchange.
- I-288-2
When Saratoga voted for the HWY 85 project, we agreed to have mass transit in the median and not express "BUS" lanes / toll lanes / or PAY AS YOU GO Lanes.
I am requesting you not go forward with this "express lanes" project and evaluate the need to mass transit (light rail or BART) to be in the median.
I believe that this express lane is a breach of the initial contract that Saratoga signed. I ask you to stop this project. I believe the community voted for only a 6 lane freeway not 8 lanes.
If there is such a change in the project, it needs to back to the voters on a ballet measure and let the people vote.
- I-288-3
I am very concern about:
Noise : current we get both increased noise from both Saratoga Avenue and from the Hwy 85. Most of the year we are unable to open our windows because the noise is so loud.
I don't believe that adding extra lanes is going to keep the noise level at the current level or less. It will only increase the noise level.
I see that in your posted reports that you have taken noise readings. I believe that you should take noise reading for a full year and then average with the median and the mean. Adding 2 more lanes is not going to help decrease this. Today, I can't sit outside in my yard and not hear the freeway.
Additional lane will increase the noise. I want to enjoy where I live and not hate it.
- I-288-4
Air pollution: We have an major increase in the pollutants that come down in my property and into my windows because of the current traffic on Hwy 85. I am unable to open my windows because the noise is so loud.
Not only do I get the pollution from Hwy 85, I get the back up traffic idling on Saratoga Avenue as commuters get backed up on Saratoga Avenue because it is the only major exit point for many schools (West Valley College, Redwood Middle School, Saratoga High School, Sacred Heart School, Saint Andrew's School
- I-288-5
I understand that is no EIR (Environmental Impact Report) for this project. I request that there should be one. I believe my home will be negatively impacted by this project. The noise and air pollution will have a negative impact on both my health and home. Decreasing the value of my home because it is located so close to the freeway.
- I-288-6
The believe the express lanes are not the answer. We want mass transit, not a Band-Aid for the bottle neck problems that exist at Hwy 85. If you want traffic to flow more smoothly, there needs to be more

<p>I-288-6, cont.</p>	<p>full interchanges (on and off ramps) at Winchester, , Quito, and Prospect Ave (just to name a few places). Please provide a report that confirms that you evaluated this and show that it won't make a difference. I can tell you that there are "many accidents" on Saratoga Avenue right before the interchange. It is because there is a lot of traffic coming off north bound Hwy 85 that takes the exit at Saratoga Avenue to do a U-turn and under Hwy 85 to go South Hwy 85. Too many people are in a hurry and don't see that car back up / go through yellow lights to complete the U turn.</p>
<p>I-288-7</p>	<p>I know the pollution in the entire bay area will increase. So let's be smart about our planning and put in light rail or Bart.</p>
<p>I-288-8</p>	<p>I also don't want federal funds used for any mass transit project along Hwy 85. As in the current plan, large trucks are prohibited along the Hwy 85 corridor. I heard that if federal funds are used (and that is what the current plan calls for) then the large truck restriction will no longer apply, is that correct? If so, this again will add to the NOISE and AIR POLLUTION that I get being located so close to the freeway. THIS CAN NOT HAPPEN. Again, I can't sit in my back yard without hearing the freeway 24/7. This is a negative environmental impact on my health and wellbeing.</p>
<p>I-288-9</p>	<p>Again, light rail or BART is the long term solution. I am requesting that this go to a vote people and listen to us. As a community, we know what we want and this project is not one that we agreed to.</p>
<p>I-288-10</p>	<p>Also, from the meeting at the Saratoga Library last night (February 25, 2014) the speaker from VTA stated that this project does not address the "bottle neck" locations on Hwy 85. How will these express lanes help because the bottle necks are still there? Yes, it may help the flow from point A to point B but the bottle neck is still there. I believe this is short sighted by VTA. Fix the problem areas first and put in light rail or BART as the voters requested in the initial contact (leaving the median for future mass transit). Again, if the population is growing in the bay area, plan for the future not something that will not truly address the problem.</p>
<p>I-288-11</p>	<p>I commute from Saratoga to Palo Alto. I am unable to get to a train station unless driving all the way to Sunnyvale to catch Cal Train to take to Palo Alto. I would love to commute on the train but there is NOTHING available. I personally see a trend by companies creating their own " mass transit" system (Google Bus, Genentech Bus) because the VTA / Bay Area has really not addresses mass transit in a way that we can loop the entire pay area. This is what needs to happen. What projects are planned for the expansion of light rail. This needs to extend out into all communities to make it convenient. At this point, there is nothing in that connects Los Gatos, Saratoga Cupertino to light rail. I would love to get on light rail / BART to take up to San Francisco. Where is the long term planning for this? If the projections for the bay area is to turn into a LA or New York, then lets put the proper mass transit in place now, not more buses or car lanes. It will be more noise and air pollution and decrease the quality of live for our community.</p>
<p>Patty Winningham 19196 Dagmar Drive</p>	

Responses to Comment I-288

I-288-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted. Refer to Master Response GEN-6 regarding public notices.

I-288-2

See the response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the contract cited in the comment.

I-288-3

The noise technical studies show that the project would result in a 0 to 1 decibel increase in traffic noise along the Saratoga portion of SR 85, as described in Master Response N-3. This increase would typically not be perceptible, as discussed further in Master Response N-1. Also refer to Master Response N-3 regarding noise in Saratoga.

All Caltrans highway noise analyses are required by 23 CFR 772 to be conducted in terms of the worst noise hour (Leq[h]) for traffic. The *Noise Study Report* (Illingworth and Rodkin 2012) for the proposed project included more than 140 measurements along the proposed project corridor at various times of day. This approach is intended to determine the worst-case noise levels from traffic, which occur when the maximum number of vehicles are traveling at the speed limit. Taking noise measurements for a full year and then averaging them with the median and the mean would result in lower levels than the worst noise hour for traffic.

I-288-4

The commenter's observations are noted. Refer to Master Response AQ-1 regarding air quality, and see the response to Comment I-288-3 regarding noise. Also refer to Master Response TR-3 regarding local traffic.

I-288-5

The environmental impacts of the proposed project have been fully evaluated in the IS/EA. California Public Resources Code Sections 21080(d) and 21082.2(d) require the preparation of an EIR for projects with significant environmental effects. The determination that the proposed project would not have significant environmental effects was based on a detailed and comprehensive review of each technical study area, including noise and air quality.

It is important to note that Caltrans requires the same technical studies to be prepared whether the ultimate environmental document is an Initial Study or an EIR. Thus, preparing an EIR would not change the content or nature of any of the technical studies. Refer to Master Response GEN-3 regarding preparation of an EIR.

Potential effects to air quality and noise would be minor, as described in more detail in Master Responses AQ-1 regarding air quality and N-1 regarding noise. There is no evidence that the project would reduce the value of the commenter's home.

I-288-6

Refer to Master Response GEN-7 regarding the comment that mass transit should be advanced instead of the proposed project, and Master Response TR-2 regarding bottlenecks on SR 85.

I-288-7

Refer to Master Response GEN-2 regarding light rail in the median of SR 85.

I-288-8

The project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85. The use of federal funds will not have any effect on the truck restrictions. In addition, the current truck restrictions on SR 85 are included in California Vehicle Code Section 35722 and Santa Clara County Ordinance Section B17-5.3. Refer to Master Response GEN-9 regarding the truck restrictions.

Refer to Master Response N-1 regarding noise and AQ-1 regarding air quality impacts from the project.

I-288-9

See the response to Comment I-288-7.

I-288-10

The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at bottlenecks along the project corridor, as described in Master Response TR-2.

I-288-11

Light rail in the median of SR 85 was not carried forward because it was determined not to be reasonable or practicable, as described in Master Response GEN-2. Also refer to Master Response GEN-7 regarding mass transit alternatives. Information about light rail planning is available on the VTA website at <http://www.vta.org/projects-and-programs/transit>. Also refer to Master Responses N-1 regarding noise and AQ-1 regarding air quality.

Comment I-289 Sybil Wolden

From: sybilsmail@comcast.net
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Subject: Concerns
Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 8:24:17 AM

To whom it may concern:

As a 33 year resident of Saratoga I am very upset over the proposed express lane on Highway 85 for the following reasons:

I-289-1

1. The noise level is already unbelievably loud where we live (about a block from 85) Adding another lane will create even more noise! I had to put a fountain in the backyard to help muffle the freeway sound so we can enjoy a BBQ in the summer!! We were here before the freeway!!

I-289-2

2. The air pollution from such an addition will only compound the problem we already have with the dust and debris which coats our patio table, BBQ, serving shelves, etc. We suffered through the construction of 85 and the unbearable amount of dirt we had in the air then and now we will have to do it again?? What is this doing to our lungs? It is a health hazard to be outdoors! I never had allergies before 85 went in but I do now.

3. The other part of air pollution is the carbon monoxide that will be put in the air from the additional cars and buses! Trucks already drive on 85 illegally and now you want to also put buses on it? Even if they are hybrids they still make noise, throw up dust and and have some emissions.

4. Making the existing lanes narrower to make room for a 4th lane will be dangerous and cause more accidents!!

I-289-3

Besides, the above reasons for not putting in the express lane I argue that it will not help the congestion! The bottlenecks will still be there only more cars will be backed up behind them because of the merging of cars from the main arteries! If the real problem were to be addressed such as the 280 interchange the traffic would move more smoothly with the existing 3 lanes! Save the extra median space for what it was planned for...rail transit, not busses!

I sincerely hope that this proposal will be reconsidered and abandoned! It is not a good solution for our community or the others along 85!!

Sybil Wolden

Responses to Comment I-289

I-289-1

The noise technical studies show that the project would result in a 0 to 1 decibel increase in traffic noise along the Saratoga portion of SR 85, as described in Master Response N-3. This increase would not be significant, as discussed further in Master Response N-1.

I-289-2

The project is not expected to increase air pollution, as discussed in Master Response AQ-1, and the improvement in congestion would reduce exhaust emissions from vehicle idling. The project would not exceed applicable thresholds for carbon monoxide, as addressed in IS/EA Section 2.2.6.

Construction activities for this project would be substantially less than for construction of a new freeway (i.e. SR 85). In addition, IS/EA Section 2.2.6.4 provides avoidance and minimization measures to reduce air quality impacts during construction.

Note that there are no restrictions on buses on SR 85, and buses would continue to use the corridor. The project does not propose to change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85.

I-289-3

The project would not make existing lanes narrower to accommodate the second express lane in the median in each direction of SR 85 between SR 87 and I-280. See IS/EA Section 1.3.1.9.

Refer to Master Response TR-1 regarding general traffic improvements from the project and Master Response TR-2 regarding the I-280 interchange and other bottlenecks along SR 85.

Light rail in the median of SR 85 was not carried forward because it was determined not to be reasonable or practicable, as described in Master Response GEN-2.

Comment I-290 Rosemary Woolley

From: arealrose@aol.com
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Subject: Express Lanes on 85
Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 3:39:14 PM

VTA,

I-290-1 I am a resident of Saratoga. I drive this freeway 3 and 4 times a week to take my Granddaughter to school. I drive South at 8:00 am on 85 and North back at 8:30 am. I do not take the freeway back because I am alone in the car. It would take me an hour to get home if on the freeway so I opt to take the back roads which take me 40 minutes. We are talking an hour to get from Cottle Road to Saratoga Ave. And if you are on the freeway anywhere from 4:00 to 7:00 PM and in the commuter lane and want to get to your exit, look out. Your life is in danger. That is with only one commuter lane and two regular lanes, plus you could have an exit lane. This highway serves a purpose but is getting more dangerous each year. Add the large Google buses that can block your view and what do you have. In fact, trucks weighing 41/2 tons are not allowed as of this time on the freeway. How much do those buses weigh and will trucks be allowed on the freeway that has more lanes.

I-290-2 I attended all the meetings when 85 was being discussed. Light Rail was the reason the center was left free on lanes. Light rail could carry as many or more people that all the cars that would be added with more lanes. We were told light rail and it doesn't matter I doesn't matter that the same people are not around. Who is being promised what to get these lanes in?? Who has ties to the companies that will benefit from the business of adding signs and making transponders and readers above the lanes????????? We the people are not dumb.

Rosemary Woolley
Saratoga, Ca

Responses to Comment I-290

I-290-1

The commenter's observations are noted. The project would provide incremental improvements to traffic congestion on SR 85, as described in Master Response TR-1.

A VTA bus weighs 27,500 pounds (13.75 tons) when empty and 39,500 pounds (19.75 tons) when full. The project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85.

I-290-2

Light rail in the median of SR 85 was not carried forward because it was determined not to be reasonable or practicable, as described in Master Response GEN-2.

Contrary to the statements in the comment, the project was developed as a result of California Assembly Bills 2032 (2004) and 574 (2007), which authorized VTA to implement express lanes in two freeway corridors in Santa Clara County, as discussed further in Section IS/EA 1.1.2. As stated in Section 1 of Assembly Bill 2032, express lanes (or high occupancy toll [HOT] lanes, as used in the legislation) have been implemented and proven successful on freeways in California and elsewhere, increase the efficiency of the transportation system by taking advantage of existing capacity without forfeiting the congestion mitigation and air quality benefits provided by HOV lanes, and provide a source of revenue to be reinvested in projects and services that provide traffic congestion relief in the corridor.

Comment I-291 (Vivian) Huifen Wu

From: [WuVivian](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Subject: I oppose the expansion of Highway 85.
Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 10:50:05 AM

Dear Mr. Ngoc Bui,

I-291-1

I am writing to you to address my strong opposition to the project of the expansion of Highway 85.

I am Huifen Wu, a resident at 18553 Aspesi Dr., Saratoga, CA. Our house is next to Highway 85 Saratoga Ave exit. .

If another 2 lanes are added on HW85, the increasing noises and traffic level will have a huge impact on all the residents like us. This will impact the quality of life and the housing value of all the related neighborhood.

I-291-2

I know that The 1968 contract states that 85 will be a max 6 lanes and the median will be used for public transportation (light rail was noted.) If this statement is true, then this expansion project is violating the law, which could incur multiple law suits.

In summary, I am asking you to send my opinion to the related persons.

Thanks for your attention.

Huifen Wu

18553 Aspesi Dr., Saratoga, CA, 95070

Vivian_7799@hotmail.com

408-621-7749

Responses to Comment I-291

I-291-1

The noise technical studies show that the project would result in a 0 to 1 decibel increase in traffic noise along the Saratoga portion of SR 85, as described in Master Response N-3. This increase would not be significant, as discussed in Master Response N-1.

The project would provide incremental improvements to traffic congestion on SR 85, as described in Master Response TR-1.

There is no evidence that the project would lower the quality of life or housing values along SR 85.

I-291-2

The commenter's opposition to the proposed project is noted and will be shared with the project team.

See the response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the agreement cited. Light rail in the median of SR 85 was not carried forward because it was determined not to be reasonable or practicable, as described in Master Response GEN-2.

Comment I-292 Wilma Y.

I-292-1	<p>From: Wilma Y. To: 85expresslanes Subject: Against 85 express lanes project Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 4:22:45 PM</p> <hr/> <p>I'm against adding lanes to existing 85 corridors for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- I live in Saratoga, the noise level is already unbearable and it is mentally disturbing to have more lanes and cars- My house is already dusty with the freeway air pollution. I can't afford to have more and made my allergy worse- Adding extra lanes are not in the contract- Saratoga residents would not benefit as Saratoga Ave cannot access the express lanes- The express bus VTA suggested has no concrete plans nor they won't be able to serve Saratoga residents as they CAN'T exit on Saratoga Ave exit <p>This is a project that worsen the life of Saratoga residents and with no added benefits to the environment nor solving the choke point issue at 280/85 function.</p> <p>Regards, Wilma</p>
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Responses to Comment I-292

I-292-1

The commenter's opposition is noted. The comment lists a number of issues, which are addressed in the following:

- Refer to Master Response N-1 regarding noise;
- Refer to Master Response AQ-1 regarding air quality;
- See the Response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the contract/agreement cited in the comment;
- Refer to Master Response GEN-4 regarding access points;

- Refer to Master Responses GEN-1 and TR-1 regarding the project’s traffic benefits; and
- Refer to Master Response TR-2 regarding bottleneck at SR 85/I-280 and other planned projects

Comment I-293 Steven Yang

From: [Steven Yang](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Subject: I oppose the 85 freeway Expansion with paid express lanes
Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 4:20:46 PM

I-293-1 [Hi, I just wanted to say that I oppose the proposed expansion of highway 85 with paid express lanes in the middle between 280 and 87.

Steven Yang, Palo Alto resident

Responses to Comment I-293

I-293-1

The commenter’s opposition to the project is noted.

Comment I-294 Jim and Helena Yeh

Concerns
James Yeh [jimyeh@aol.com]
Sent: Friday, February 07, 2014 6:15 PM
To: jimyeh@aol.com
Cc: elo@saratoga.ca.us; hmiller@saratoga.ca.us; mcappello@saratoga.ca.us; cpage@saratoga.ca.us; jhunter@saratoga.ca.us; ctclerk@saratoga.ca.us

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I-294-1 [We learned recently that there was a discussion to widen Highway 85 from 6 lanes to 8 lanes in Saratoga.
We are residents of Saratoga for 25 years long before Hwy 85 was built and we have concerns about the plan. Our personal experiences have been that the biggest bottlenecks are at 85N to 280 and 85S to 17. Without any relief at these two bottlenecks, widening the Hwy 85 makes no senses to us. The money spent will turn the section in Saratoga to be a snail path or parking lot that create noises and terrible emissions in Saratoga.

I-294-2 [We demand a Full Environmental Impact Report (EIR). This is a misguided project from our perspective and should be evaluated properly.

Respectfully yours,
Jim + Helena Yeh
Edina Lane
Saratoga

Responses to Comment I-294

I-294-1

The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at bottlenecks along the project corridor, as described in Master Response

TR-2. Also see Master Response TR-1 in regard to improvements to travel times and speeds with the project.

Technical studies show that the project would meet air quality standards (refer to Master Response AQ-1) and increase noise by only 0 to 1 decibel along the Saratoga portion of SR 85 (refer to Master Responses N-3 and N-1).

I-294-2

The environmental impacts of the proposed project have been fully evaluated in the IS/EA. The determination that the project would not have significant environmental effects was based on a detailed and comprehensive review of each technical study area. It is important to note that the same technical studies must be prepared whether the ultimate environmental document is an Initial Study or an EIR. Thus, preparing an EIR would not change the content or nature of any of the technical studies. Refer to Master Response GEN-3 regarding preparation of an EIR.

Comment I-295 John Yu

TO: VTA

FROM: John Yu, Resident of Saratoga

DATE: February 25, 2014

SUBJECT: Highway 85 Expansion Project

I would like to have the following questions/concerns regarding to the proposed Highway 85 Project to be answered:

I-295-1 1. How the priorities of the future VTA projects were set:
1.1. What are the Decision Making Process and the Key Determination Factors in setting the priorities of future potential project?
1.2. Why the "Convert HOV to HOT Lanes and Add 2 Express and Auxiliary Lanes of the Highway 85" Project became the 1st priority project while "Relieving the Bottleneck Traffic of the Highway 85/280 and Highway 85/Foothill Expressway intersections" projects are set as the Long Range Projects? It appears to most of the local residents that the latter projects are much more needed and should be solved first before considering the current proposed Highway 85 project.

I-295-2

I-295-3 2. Would you please explain and elaborate that "The prerequisite of the establishment of any future Plan should have adequate Funding first". Why? The government infrastructure projects should evaluate the benefit to the people as the utmost consideration rather than looking at the Revenues or Financial returns as the most important requirement.

I-295-4 2.1. Why solving the most important "Traffic Bottleneck" problem was put at a lower priority than the proposed Project? It just likes to put a Cart in front of a Horse. The proposed project will make the current "Traffic Bottleneck" problem even worse. We local resident deserve a detailed rational explanation.

I-295-5 3. Why there was no Feasibility Study done on the Light Rail Project? Why the existing valid Performance Agreement between VTA and the City of Saratoga was totally ignored? In this Agreement, the median of Highway 85 was reserved for Light Rail.

I-295-6 3.1. Mass Transportation System of Light Rail and/or High Speed Train will be the global trend of efficient Transportation in the next decades. Why VTA totally ignore such a long term global trend?

I-295-7 4. Board of Directors and Board Meetings of VTA:
4.1. How the Board members of VTA were determined? By appointment or by elections? By whom? How long of each term?

I-295-8 4.2. Would you please release the Board Meeting minutes relevant to the decision of the proposed Highway 85 project as the 1st priority one among many potential future Plans.

Responses to Comment I-295

I-295-1

Transportation projects are prioritized based on regional needs and goals and availability of funding. The planning process for transportation projects takes place at both the county and regional level, which are coordinated as part of VTA's Valley Transportation Plan (VTP) and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

The VTP is the long-range transportation plan for Santa Clara County, which VTA is responsible for preparing and updating. The VTP provides a planning framework for developing and delivering transportation projects and programs over a 25-year period. The planning process for each VTP update sets priorities for study, policies, development, and investment; identifies existing and future transportation needs; and guides investments to specific program areas. The VTP identifies sources and amounts of funding reasonably expected to be available over 25-year period, but does not include precise schedules for implementation or make assumptions regarding financing costs that may be needed to implement specific projects in specific years. VTA proactively works with local jurisdictions and the public to seek input into the VTP. To learn more, see VTA's VTP 2040 website at <http://www.vta.org/projects-and-programs/planning/valley-transportation-plan-2040-vtp-2040>.

The VTP and other counties' long-range transportation plans provide input into the RTP, which covers the nine-county Bay Area. The RTP lists projects of local and regional importance based on factors such as local support and need, ridership, and potential cost and funding. These factors provide direction in how anticipated federal, state, and local transportation funds will be spent in the Bay Area during the next 25 years.

The SR 85 Express Lanes Project is part of the Silicon Valley Express Lanes Program, the history of which is described in IS/EA Section 1.1.2. The program has been included in the VTP since 2009. The project is also part of a regional effort to develop 550 miles of express lanes in the Bay Area, which has been included in the RTP since 2009.

I-295-2, I-295-3

Other projects are planned that would help to relieve congestion on SR 85 in the vicinity of I-280 and Foothill Expressway. These projects are summarized in Master Response TR-2. See the response to Comment I-295-1 regarding how projects are prioritized.

The comment asks why adequate funding should be a prerequisite for the establishment of any future plan. The source of the statement is not identified. As previously noted, regional needs and goals and availability of funding are all considered in prioritizing transportation projects. The commenter's opinion is noted.

I-295-4

The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at bottlenecks along the project corridor, as described in Master Response TR-2.

I-295-5

Light rail in the median of SR 85 was not carried forward because it was determined not to be reasonable or practicable, as described in Master Response GEN-2.

See the response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the agreement cited.

I-295-6

VTA is committed to light rail and other forms of public transit, and that commitment is demonstrated through the allocation of funds in the upcoming Valley Transportation Plan 2040. As shown in the most recent project list for the plan, approximately \$7.9 million is slated for transit projects including light rail, Caltrain, Altamont Commuter Express

(ACE), and California High Speed Rail. Less than half of that amount (approximately \$3.4 million) is slated for highway projects and improvements (VTA 2011).

I-295-7, I-295-8

These are not comments on the IS/EA. Information about the VTA Board of Directors and board meetings is available at <http://www.vta.org/get-involved/board-of-directors>.

Comment I-296 Larry Yuan

Highway 85 proposal - Department of Transportation, District 4 (Attn: Ngoc Bui)

larryymail-reg@yahoo.com

Sent: Monday, February 24, 2014 1:05 AM

To: 85expresslanes

Attn: Ngoc Bui

Dear VTA/Caltrains,

I-296-1 I have been recently informed that there is a proposed project of \$170 MM to change Highway 85 from a six lanes to a eight lane highway. As a resident of the city of Saratoga, I have concerns with the impact of this project on the nearby cities including Saratoga.

I-296-1 I am requesting a full environmental impact report (EIR). I would like to understand the impact of increased noise pollution and air quality. I would like to understand what types of measures are going to be taken to mitigate these issues. As a concerned resident, I believe it is reasonable to get a copy of this information.

I-296-2 In addition, I believe there are several things that seem unsettling. First, it does not seem appropriate to charge on a public funded freeway paid by the local sales taxes. Second, we should have a focus to actual address the bottleneck at 85N and 280. I drive and see this is where the bottleneck is happening. I would like to see what type of plan we have to address that.

I-296-3

Thanks,

Larry Yuan
Concerned Resident

Responses to Comment I-296

I-296-1

The environmental impacts of the proposed project have been fully evaluated in the IS/EA. The determination that the project would not have significant environmental effects was based on a detailed and comprehensive review of each technical study area, including noise and air quality. It is important to note that the same technical studies must be prepared whether the ultimate environmental document is an Initial Study or an EIR. Thus, preparing an EIR would not change the content or nature of any of the technical studies. Refer to Master Response GEN-3 regarding preparation of an EIR.

Avoidance and minimization measures for the project, including for noise and air quality, are summarized in IS/EA Appendix E.

I-296-2

The express lane toll for solo drivers is a user fee, as described in Master Response GEN-5. SR 85 will continue to have two general purpose lanes in each direction that do not have tolls or vehicle occupancy requirements.

I-296-3

The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at the I-280 interchange and other bottlenecks along the project corridor, as described in Master Response TR-2.

Comments I-297 Sharon Zhang

	From: Sharon
	To: 85expresslanes
	Subject: No 85 lane change
	Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 4:32:55 PM

I-297-1 [I am a Cupertino residents. I am strongly oppose the proposed 85 lane changes and very concerned the negative impact such as noise level and pollution the changes will bring to Cupertino.

[There are other solutions to the traffic issues on 85 - and expansion will not address the current gridlock that we experience- but may even worsen it.

Thank you,
Sharon Zhang

Responses to Comment I-297

I-297-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted.

Technical studies show that the project would meet air quality standards (see Master Response AQ-1) and increase noise by 0 to 3 decibels (which would not be significant; see Master Response N-1). The project would improve travel times and speeds, as described in Master Response TR-1. The express lanes would offer immediate congestion relief using the existing right-of-way. Also refer to Master Response TR-2 regarding other planned projects.

Comment I-298 Tracy Zhao

From:	Tracy Zhao
To:	85expresslanes
Subject:	85 lane conversion/expansion
Date:	Friday, February 28, 2014 1:49:33 PM

I-298-1 I am a Saratoga residents. I am strongly oppose the proposed 85 lane changes and very concerned the negative impact such as noise level and pollution the changes will bring to Saratoga.

I-298-1 There are other solutions to the traffic issues on 85 - and expansion will not address the current gridlock that we experience- but may even worsen it.

Thank you,
Tracy Zhao

Responses to Comment I-298

I-298-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted.

Technical studies show that the project would meet air quality standards (see Master Response AQ-1) and increase noise by 0 to 3 decibels (which would not be significant see Master Response N-1). Along the Saratoga portion of SR 85, the noise increase would be 0 to 1 decibel and less than significant (see Master Response N-3). The project would improve travel times and speeds, as described in Master Response TR-1. The express lanes would offer immediate congestion relief using the existing right-of-way. Also refer to Master Response TR-2 regarding other planned projects.

Comment I-299 Elizabeth and Michael Zimmermann

	<p>From: Elizabeth Zimmermann To: 85expresslanes Subject: Comments: State Route 85 Express Lanes Project Initial Study Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 10:26:07 AM</p>
	<p>To Whom It May Concern:</p>
I-299-1	<p>We have been residents of the City of Saratoga for more than 15 years, living within a mile of Highway 85 and the Quito Road overcrossing. As a hybrid owner and carpool commuter, I have valued the ability to enter the carpool lane at the Saratoga Road on ramp, an opportunity which the SR 85 Express Lanes Project will eliminate. While we have never appreciated the freeway noise, we have appreciated the lack of heavy truck traffic, particularly overnight.</p> <p>As an environmental professional familiar with the CEQA process, I find it hard to comprehend that a project of this magnitude warrants only a Negative Declaration. The citizens of Saratoga, and indeed those along the entire project corridor, deserve a thorough assessment of the SR 85 Project's potential impacts and the broad range of potential mitigation measures. This is particularly true in light of the massive public investment required to implement the project, the significant effects of both the construction and long term operation, and the apparent lack of corresponding projected improvements in the most serious bottleneck areas such as the Highways 280/85 interchange, and the Highway 85 corridor between Highways 280 and 101.</p>
I-299-2	<p>In closing, we support the detailed comments and questions submitted by the Honorable Emily Lo, Mayor of Saratoga. In addition, please address how the California Highway Patrol (CHP) would intend to effectively enforce these new express lanes. CHP is already rarely seen on Highway 85 enforcing posted speed limits or carpool lanes. As frequent travelers along the Highway 680 corridor with its existing express lanes, we have rarely observed CHP in the vicinity. During non-commute hours, motorists use the express lanes as a speedway and routinely ignore the lane striping resulting in hazardous conditions for all on the road.</p>
	<p>We look forward to your response.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Elizabeth Zimmermann Michael Zimmermann</p> <p>18371 Montpere Way, Saratoga, CA</p>

Responses to Comment I-299

I-299-1

The comment about HOV lane access is noted. The development of the current access points is described in Master Response GEN-4. Continuous access—like the existing SR 85 HOV lane, with no buffer separation—will be considered during detailed project design, as discussed in Master Response GEN-4. Note that the project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85.

The environmental impacts of the proposed project have been fully evaluated in the IS/EA. The determination that the project would not have significant environmental effects was based on a detailed and comprehensive review of each technical study area, including noise and air quality. It is important to note that Caltrans requires the same technical studies to be prepared whether the ultimate environmental document is an Initial Study or an EIR. Thus, preparing an EIR would not change the content or nature of

any of the technical studies. Also refer to Master Response GEN-3 regarding preparation of an EIR.

Avoidance and minimization measures for the project are summarized in IS/EA Appendix E.

The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at the I-280 interchange and other bottlenecks along the project corridor, as described in Master Response TR-2.

I-299-2

The commenter's support for the City of Saratoga comment (Comment L-3) is noted, along with the observation about CHP enforcement along the SR 85 HOV lanes and I-680 express lanes.

The project will include shoulder areas along SR 85 for CHP officers to monitor beacon lights that will identify vehicles without FasTrak toll tags. An officer will visually verify vehicle occupancy to determine whether it is an SOV without a toll tag or a legitimate HOV. Violators will be pulled over to the right shoulder and cited.

Comment I-300 Anthony R. Fisher

*Anthony R. Fisher, Ph.D.
19420 Vineyard Lane
Saratoga, California 95070
(408) 255-0944*

February 28, 2014

Mr. Ngoc Bui
P.O. Box 23660
California Department of Transportation, District 4
MS-8B
Oakland, California 94623

Re: Proposed State Route 85 Express Lanes Project

Dear Mr. Bui:

I-300-1

As a follow up to the Valley Transportation Authority's presentation on February 25th at the Saratoga Library regarding the proposed State Route 85 (SR 85) Express Lanes project, I request that the California Department of Transportation seriously consider eliminating the proposed additional express lanes (i.e., a 4th lane in sections of SR 85) because they would create new bottlenecks within the SR 85 corridor, which extends between U.S. 101 in Mountain View and U.S. 101 in south San Jose. These bottlenecks would be created because the end of these additional 4th lanes terminates in the middle of SR 85.

However, the addition of "auxiliary" lanes (i.e., lanes that would continue an entrance lane to the next exit ramp) would help relieve bottlenecks on SR 85. Such an example would be the proper addition of an auxiliary lane from the entrance at north I-280 onto north SR 85 up to the next exit ramp at Fremont Avenue.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Anthony R. Fisher, Ph.D.

Responses to Comment I-300

I-300-1

The commenter's request to eliminate the second express lane in each direction of SR 85 is noted. The second express lane was included to accommodate existing and future travel demand in the HOV lanes. See IS/EA Section 1.2.

The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at the I-280 interchange and other bottlenecks along the project corridor, as described in Master Response TR-2.

The support for the auxiliary lane is also noted as well as an additional auxiliary lane on SR 85, north of I-280.

Comment I-301 Roy and Barbara Gustafson

From: Roy and Barbara Gustafson <rbgus@msn.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2014 1:15 PM
To: 85expresslanes
Subject: 85 Express Lane Project
Categories: Blue Category

Dear VTA:

As residents located at 1620 Elwood Drive, Los Gatos 95032 we would like to express our concerns about and opposition to the proposed project.

I-301
-1

Our concerns center around the choke points of traffic (particularly where 280 and 85 intersect both north and south), the increased noise level which are already above Federal Standards, an increase in air pollution and the very real potential of trucks being allowed to use this corridor.

I-301
-2

We would encourage you to study some workable alternatives such as one toll lane instead of two and saving the median strip for the use of light rail.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and certainly support your efforts to take the nightmare out of commuting.

Thank you

Roy and Barbara Gustafson/email: rbgus@msn.com

Responses to Comment I-301

I-301-1

The commenters' opposition to the project is noted.

In regard to the points briefly raised in the comment, see the following:

- Master Response TR-2 describes how the proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at the I-280 interchange and other bottlenecks along the project corridor.
- Master Response N-1 discusses project-related noise increases, which would typically not be perceptible. Note that there is no absolute federal maximum numeric standard for freeway noise levels; rather, the standard applies to levels at which abatement should be considered.
- Master Response AQ-1 describes the project's compliance with air quality standards.
- The project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85.

I-301-2

The commenter's request to eliminate the second express lane in each direction of SR 85 is noted. The second express lane was included to accommodate existing and future travel

demand in the HOV lanes. See IS/EA Section 1.2 and Master Response TR-1 regarding the need for the second express lane.

Refer to Master Response GEN-2 regarding light rail in the SR 85 median.

H.7 Responses to Comments on PM_{2.5} Conformity

Comment PM-1 Michele Braucht

From: Michele Braucht [<mailto:mlbtsb@hotmail.com>]
Sent: Thursday, February 19, 2015 9:03 AM
To: Denardo, Eric@DOT
Subject: SR 85 air quality

I read the public notice related to air quality, I then looked at the number of Spare the Air Days so far in 2015. As you know they are at an all time record high. This seems counter-intuitive to the results of your analysis. Please explain how you are address real air quality problems in your plans for our future, and our health?

Additionally, though apparently not the item on the table, why express lanes for the upper class, and congestion for the middle class. It is unreasonable, and not socially or economically responsible when you do not offer efficient timely mass transit alternatives.

When can we expect the VTA type solution down the SR85 corridor we were promised as voters when we funded SR 85 projects ?

Michele Braucht

Responses to Comment PM-1

Public comment has been requested on the project's status with respect to particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) conformity; therefore, this response focuses on how PM_{2.5} is analyzed for highway projects in the Bay Area and why the project has not been identified as a Project of Air Quality Concern.

As stated on the Spare the Air website (<http://www.sparetheair.org/>), wood smoke is the largest source of particulate pollution, including PM_{2.5}, during the winter season. In the summer season, mobile sources, particularly cars and light duty trucks, are the main source of Bay Area air pollution. However, summer Spare the Air days are typically based on high levels of ground-level ozone rather than particulate matter.

The SR 85 Express Lanes Project and other Federally-funded projects are required to undergo a screening process set forth by United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Final Conformity Rule EPA420-F-10-011. This process was established to protect public health with a margin of safety. The process involves interagency consultation, facilitated through the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC's) Air Quality Conformity Task Force, regarding whether a project meets specific criteria defined in Title 40 CFR Part 93 for Projects of Air Quality Concern. The Air Quality Conformity Task Force concurred that the project does not fit the definition of a Project of Air Quality Concern. As a result, it is not subject to further PM_{2.5} project-level conformity requirements or analysis.

Particulate matter, including PM_{2.5}, is strongly associated with diesel truck traffic. The project would not accommodate an increase in truck traffic or truck emissions because large trucks are prohibited on SR 85 between US 101 in San Jose and I-280—more than 18 miles of the 24.1-mile SR 85 corridor—and the project would not change the truck restrictions. In addition, the project would reduce delay time and increase speeds compared to the No Project Alternative, which in turn would reduce vehicle idling and resultant air emissions, including particulate matter.

PM_{2.5} emissions are also modeled by the MTC as part of the regional air quality conformity analysis process. MTC's analysis accounts for increases in vehicle emissions regionwide, not just from this project. The analysis used data inputs for the winter season, when the Bay Area experiences its highest levels of PM_{2.5}. The analysis shows that regional PM_{2.5} emissions are expected to decrease by 26 percent between 2008 and 2040 due to local and regional transit and freeway operational improvements (MTC 2014, Transportation-Air Quality Conformity Analysis for Plan Bay Area and the Final 2015 Transportation Improvement Program. URL: http://files.mtc.ca.gov/pdf/TIP/2015/final_air_quality_conformity_analysis.pdf. September 24, 2014).

The comments regarding social equity and other concepts for the SR 85 corridor are noted.

Comment PM-2 Jim Foley

From: Jim Foley [<mailto:jim@jimfoley.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2015 11:20 AM
To: Denardo, Eric@DOT
Cc: 'Cheriel Jensen'; 'Jim Foley'; 'Jeff Schwartz 2'; 'Jeff Barco'; 'Stan Bogosian'; 'Gpupdates'; 'Marcia Fariss'; 'mark weisler'; 'Paul Krug'; 'Mary Robertson'
Subject: Public Notice - SR 85 Express Lanes Project

Hi Eric –

I would like to provide the following comments to the Public Notice that was included in the San Jose Mercury today regarding the SR 85 Express Lanes Project. I have attached 2 documents that provide a historical and legal background regarding the status of SR 85 in Saratoga. Adjacent communities have similar agreements.

I am opposed to the project because I do not believe the “project level air quality conformity analysis” to be correct. The “project level air quality conformity analysis” did not address the “gridlock condition” that occurs on SR 85, especially during commute hours. Until the “choke points” at the interchanges on SR 85 and SR 87 and I 280 are addressed, SR 85 will continue to be “parking lot” during much of the day. This condition can only result in a deterioration of air quality in the surrounding communities. The congestion is caused by the “choke points.” The current lane configurations may very well be adequate until these “choke points” are removed by increasing the capacity of the referenced interchanges.

The many problems along the SR 85 corridor have not been adequately addressed by either The VTA or Caltrans. The air quality issues are only a small part of a much larger picture. This incremental approach to SR 85 by the VTA and Caltrans can only result in greater harm to the public.

Thanks,

Jim Foley
(408) 777-9917
www.jimfoley.com

Responses to Comment PM-2

Public comment has been requested on the project’s status with respect to particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) conformity; therefore, this response focuses on how PM_{2.5} is analyzed for highway projects in the Bay Area and why the project has not been identified as a Project of Air Quality Concern.

The SR 85 Express Lanes Project and other Federally-funded projects are required to undergo a screening process set forth by United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Final Conformity Rule EPA420-F-10-011. This process was established to protect public health with a margin of safety. The process involves interagency consultation, facilitated through the Metropolitan Transportation Commission’s (MTC’s)

Air Quality Conformity Task Force, regarding whether a project meets specific criteria defined in Title 40 CFR Part 93 for Projects of Air Quality Concern. The project assessment for PM_{2.5} included projected future traffic conditions (with and without the project) for the SR 85 corridor. The development of future traffic volumes included peak-hour traffic counts at existing bottleneck locations. The Air Quality Conformity Task Force concurred that the project does not fit the definition of a Project of Air Quality Concern. As a result, it is not subject to further PM_{2.5} project-level conformity requirements or analysis.

Particulate matter, including PM_{2.5}, is strongly associated with diesel truck traffic. The project would not accommodate an increase in truck traffic or truck emissions because large trucks are prohibited on SR 85 between US 101 in San Jose and I-280—more than 18 miles of the 24.1-mile SR 85 corridor—and the project would not change the truck restrictions. In addition, the project would reduce delay time and increase speeds compared to the No Project Alternative, which in turn would reduce vehicle idling and resultant air emissions, including particulate matter.

PM_{2.5} emissions are also modeled by the MTC as part of the regional air quality conformity analysis process. MTC's analysis accounts for increases in vehicle emissions regionwide, not just from this project. The analysis used data inputs for the winter season, when the Bay Area experiences its highest levels of PM_{2.5}. The analysis shows that regional PM_{2.5} emissions are expected to decrease by 26 percent between 2008 and 2040 due to local and regional transit and freeway operational improvements (MTC 2014, Transportation-Air Quality Conformity Analysis for Plan Bay Area and the Final 2015 Transportation Improvement Program. URL: http://files.mtc.ca.gov/pdf/TIP/2015/final_air_quality_conformity_analysis.pdf. September 24, 2014).

The comments regarding previous agreements with the City of Saratoga are addressed in the environmental document but do not pertain to the PM_{2.5} analysis.

Comment PM-3 Cheriel Jensen

Cheriel Jensen
1337 Quito Road, Saratoga, CA 95070
cherielj@earthlink.net

March 5, 2015

Eric DeNardo,
PO Box 23660 MS 8B, Oakland, CA 94623
Eric.Denardo@dot.ca.gov.

Dear Mr. denardo,

RE: Comments regarding Project Level Air Quality Conformity Analysis for
PM 2.5 on SR 85 Express Lanes Project

If the project-level conformity analysis shows that the project will conform to the State Implementation Plan as you assert, for carbon monoxide (CO) and particulate matter (PM 2.5) required by 40 CFR 93.116 and 93.123 where are your measurements? When were they taken? Give the specific day and time of measurements.

An assumption of conformity, such as you plan, disregards the law. These standards are not met now. The only thing currently holding down the pollutants are the carpool lanes which encourage drivers to drive hybrids and electric cars as well as some drivers doubling up (fewer cars). With the "Lexis Lane" project fewer of these drivers will be willing to double up, fewer will buy hybrids, and fewer still will buy electric vehicles. You are obligated to make the projections for the current number of vehicles. You are obligated to make reasonable projections as the vehicle mix changes to higher polluting vehicles and fewer carpools (more cars). In addition, higher density is being developed in south San Jose in anticipation of this extra capacity. Thus, in addition to the change in pollution from the current numbers of cars, the project will result in far more cars, in fact equivalent to an entire medium sized city. Thus the pollution will be much greater. You are obligated to project the additional pollution based on the land uses planned, not just make assumptions with no foundation.

You admit no detailed measurements or hot spot analysis was completed for even the current conditions. Due to this failure to measure or do analysis, including hot spot analysis, there is no proof that current or future conditions meet the Clean Air Act and 40 CFR 93.116.

I hereby demand true measurements and accurate analysis, according to federal requirements, be completed.

Yours truly,

Cheriel Jensen
cc Santa Clara County VTA
City of Saratoga
City of Monte Sereno
City of Cupertino
Town of Los Gaots

Responses to Comment PM-3

Public comment has been requested on the project's status with respect to particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) conformity; therefore, this response focuses on PM_{2.5} and the conformity process.

The PM_{2.5} hot spot demonstration process for Federally-funded transportation projects is set forth in 40 CFR 93.123(b). Rather than using specific PM_{2.5} measurements, the process begins with an evaluation of whether a project fits into one or more of the categories for "Projects of Air Quality Concern" listed in 40 CFR 93.123(b)(i)–(v). The process requires interagency consultation in order to make this determination. If, in the course of consultation, a project is determined to meet the definition of a Project of Air Quality Concern under 40 CFR 93.123(b)(1), a quantitative hot spot analysis is required.

In the Bay Area, the evaluation process has been established by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and requires interagency consultation with the Bay Area Air Quality Conformity Task Force. The Task Force includes representatives from Federal (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 9, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration), state (California Air Resources Board, Caltrans), regional (MTC, Bay Area Air Quality Management District, and Association of Bay Area Governments), and sub-regional (Congestion Management Agencies, transit operators, local jurisdictions, etc.) agencies. For the SR 85 Express Lanes Project, a detailed PM_{2.5} hot spot analysis was not completed because the Task Force concurred that it is not considered a Project of Air Quality Concern as defined in 40 CFR 93.123(b)(1). As a result, the project is not subject to further PM_{2.5} project-level conformity requirements or analysis.

It should be noted that particulate matter, including PM_{2.5}, is strongly associated with diesel truck traffic. The project would not accommodate an increase in truck traffic or truck emissions because large trucks are prohibited on SR 85 between US 101 in San Jose and I-280, which includes the segment where the second express lanes would be added, and the project would not change the truck restrictions. In addition, the project would reduce delay time and increase speeds compared to the No Project Alternative, which in turn would reduce vehicle idling and resultant air emissions, including particulate matter.

PM_{2.5} emissions are also modeled by the MTC as part of the regional air quality conformity analysis process. MTC's analysis accounts for increases in vehicle emissions regionwide, not just from this project. The analysis used data inputs for the winter season, when the Bay Area experiences its highest levels of PM_{2.5}. The analysis shows that regional PM_{2.5} emissions are expected to decrease by 26 percent between 2008 and 2040 due to local and regional transit and freeway operational improvements that are programmed for implementation during that period (MTC 2014, Transportation-Air Quality Conformity Analysis for Plan Bay Area and the Final 2015 Transportation Improvement Program. URL: http://files.mtc.ca.gov/pdf/TIP/2015/final_air_quality_conformity_analysis.pdf. September 24, 2014).

It should also be noted that the Bay Area is in attainment of the federal and state CO standards, and a carbon monoxide (CO) analysis was completed for the project in

accordance with the requirements set forth in Chapter 11 of the Caltrans Standard Environmental Reference. As shown in the project's environmental document, carbon monoxide emissions modeling was performed for the Build and No Build conditions in 2015 and 2035. Compared with the No Build Alternative, the project would result in a minor increase in CO emissions in the 2015 analysis year (up to 14 percent) but would reduce CO emissions in 2035. The increase in CO emissions in 2015 would not cause or contribute to any new localized CO violations.

Comment PM-4 Mary Robertson (1 of 2)

From: Mary Robertson [<mailto:robertson.b.m@mindspring.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2015 4:45 PM
To: Denardo, Eric@DOT
Subject: Air Quality SR85

Hi Eric,

I would like to submit the following for public comment

In response to your public notice indicating that you "conform and this project is not considered a project of concern regarding particulate matter," please view the California.gov website and Remind yourself of the California Department of Public Health Guidelines.

Your public notice indicates that you have not done a hot spot PM2.5 hot spot analysis. You surely recall that from California.gov Public Health Guidelines that :

" PM2.5 Monitoring

PM2.5 particulate matter, called "fine" particulate, is primarily a result of combustion products emitted into the atmosphere as well as those particles that are formed in the atmosphere from gaseous pollutants as a result of atmospheric chemistry (secondary formation). Generally, the fine particulate poses a greater health risk because these particles can deposit deep in the lung and contain chemicals that are particularly harmful to health. In addition to health impacts, these particles can reside in the atmosphere for long periods of time and are the main contributors to reduced visibility."

How many spare the air days have we had in the Bay Area? Is this as a result of increased PM2.5 particulatesd?

The SR85 corridor is currently estimated to carry over 103,000 -144,000 cars per day per VTA E/A of 2013. The proposed project would increase surface capacity by 33% adding a possible additional 33,390- 47,250 cars per day for a total of 136,390-191250 cars with the proposed added (2) lanes of traffic.

Again from the California Department of Health site,: "The California Tracking Program developed a traffic tool that the Planning Departments use as a screening instrument. The tool helped the Planning Department determine how close high-traffic roads were to a proposed project development. When residential or other sensitive uses such as a community space are proposed for sites within 500 feet of roads that more than 100,000 cars travel on daily, the Planning Department is required to perform a risk assessment to fully understand the potential effects of the project before approving it." In this case we are concerned about air quality risks.

If planning departments are required to do this per the State of California, then why do you feel you are exempt? No doubt the PM2.5 will be increased with the (2) additional lanes being proposed (33% increase in vehicular traffic).

This proposed expansion not only goes along a heavily residential corridor, but also borders (2+) elementary schools, children with developing lungs. In addition, several parks (soccer parks included) are located next to or in close proximity to the proposed expansion, again of concern to developing lungs.

I am appalled at the fact California makes these environmental laws and yet the Caltrans agency thinks they can skirt around them. There is no doubt that PM2.5 will increase (with additional lanes/cars) through this highly residential corridor.

Also please remember, that each city along this corridor has a Performance agreement initiated in building this freeway. Caltrans needs to stick to the performance agreements.

As residents along the corridor are already experiencing increased visual pollutants, please advise what you find the current PM_{2.5} levels to be and where/ when/how often were the tests performed? Conduct the PM_{2.5} hot spot analysis along the entire corridor prior to any lane expansion approval.

As a taxpayer in this State/county (with money used to fund public agencies and projects) my recommendation is that Caltrans convert the existing lane only. Fix the choke points that exist along this freeway such as 85N and 280, 85S and 17 to name a few.

It is time Caltrans step into the 21st Century and out of the car. After all, it was Caltrans Deputy District Director Sean Nozzar that stated, "We cannot build our way out of this with more freeway."

Why not proceed with a Smart Corridor plan (<http://80smartcorridor.org>) which would not require increased surface nor add additional cars? It would use the current roadway provided efficiently. If Caltrans has confidence this will smooth traffic congestion on I80 with 277,000 cars a day why not implement that on SR85 for half the cost of the current proposed project?

Thank you for responding to my questions.

Sincerely,

Mary Robertson

Responses to Comment PM-4

Public comment has been requested on the project's status with respect to particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) conformity; therefore, this response focuses on how PM_{2.5} is analyzed for highway projects in the Bay Area and why the project has not been identified as a Project of Air Quality Concern.

Information about the number of Spare the Air days in the Bay Area can be found at <http://www.sparetheair.org/>. As stated on the Spare the Air website, wood smoke is the largest source of particulate pollution, including PM_{2.5}, during the winter season. In the summer season, mobile sources, particularly cars and light duty trucks, are the main source of Bay Area air pollution. However, summer Spare the Air days are typically based on high levels of ground-level ozone rather than particulate matter.

A detailed PM_{2.5} hot spot analysis was not completed for the project because it meets the requirements set forth by the Clean Air Act and Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 40, Section 93.116. Federally-funded projects are required to undergo a different screening process than the California.gov Public Health Guidelines discussed in the comment. The process is set forth by United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Final Conformity Rule EPA420-F-10-011. The process involves interagency consultation, facilitated through the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC's) Air Quality Conformity Task Force, regarding whether a project meets specific criteria defined in Title 40 CFR Part 93 for Projects of Air Quality Concern. The project

assessment for PM_{2.5} included projected future traffic conditions (with and without the project) for the SR 85 corridor. The projection of future traffic conditions included the proposed second express lane in each direction between SR 87 and I-280. The Air Quality Conformity Task Force concurred that the project does not fit the definition of a Project of Air Quality Concern. As a result, it is not subject to further PM_{2.5} project-level conformity requirements or analysis.

The comment states that the additional express lanes would increase PM_{2.5} along a corridor bordered by residences, schools, and parks. It should be noted the second express lanes would be added in the median, along the centerline, and the traffic lanes would not be shifted toward the outer shoulders of SR 85. Also, particulate matter, including PM_{2.5}, is strongly associated with diesel truck traffic. The project would not accommodate an increase in truck traffic or truck emissions because large trucks are prohibited on SR 85 between US 101 in San Jose and I-280, which includes the segment where the second express lanes would be added, and the project would not change the truck restrictions. In addition, the project would reduce delay time and increase speeds compared to the No Project Alternative, which in turn would reduce vehicle idling and resultant air emissions, including particulate matter.

PM_{2.5} emissions are also modeled by the MTC as part of the regional air quality conformity analysis process. MTC's analysis accounts for increases in vehicle emissions regionwide, not just from this project. The analysis used data inputs for the winter season, when the Bay Area experiences its highest levels of PM_{2.5}. The analysis shows that regional PM_{2.5} emissions are expected to decrease by 26 percent between 2008 and 2040 due to local and regional transit and freeway operational improvements that are programmed for implementation during that period (MTC 2014, Transportation-Air Quality Conformity Analysis for Plan Bay Area and the Final 2015 Transportation Improvement Program. URL: http://files.mtc.ca.gov/pdf/TIP/2015/final_air_quality_conformity_analysis.pdf. September 24, 2014).

The comments regarding performance agreements, visual pollutants, and second express lanes are addressed in the environmental document but do not pertain to the PM_{2.5} analysis. The comment regarding SMART corridor planning is noted.

Comment PM-5 Mary Robertson (2 of 2)

From: Mary Robertson [<mailto:robertson.b.m@mindspring.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2015 10:49 AM

To: Denardo, Eric@DOT

Subject: Air Quality SR85

Dear Eric,

Please read the article below and study recently published in the Los Angeles Times (February 2015) and the "Journal of Environmental Health Perspectives, <http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/1408565/>. As you will note, a 6 year study as conducted by scientists from California's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, has concluded that Heart Disease is a very real concern for those in proximity to car exhaust. Major roadways, such as SR85 are a major source of these fine particles. These fine particles are PM2.5. Unlike the statement in your recent public notice, this is a project of GREAT Concern regarding particulate matter.

Unlike Highway 101, SR85 borders heavy residential areas as well as schools and parks (including soccer parks). The above Environmental study goes on to state that these fine particles from exhaust enter the bloodstream and lungs. The schools bordering SR85 have young children with Developing lungs. The soccer parks have young children running, breathing heavily, with developing lungs. The additional (2) lanes Caltrans is proposing run smack through the middle/proximity of these schools, soccer parks and heavy residential areas.

The State of California, Caltrans, would be remise/negligent in not including this information/study, in your Air Quality findings. This study was conducted by a Department of the State of California. Caltrans responsibility for the residents of the area extend far beyond the road and clearly need to include Air Quality safety concerns for the public.

I strongly recommend that Caltrans do conversion ONLY of the HOV lane to a HOT lane. The additional lanes for only a portion of the freeway through the heavy residential area are not needed. Conversion Only!

If you would like to visit and see the fine particles that currently exist with the current road configuration, I would be happy to accommodate that.

Thank you for providing an answer as to if you will be including the study referenced above as part of the Air Quality issues.

Thank you for a response.

Sincerely,

Mary Robertson
Santa Clara County Resident

California scientists link tiny particles in car exhaust to heart disease

A new study by California scientists has linked chronic exposure to microscopic air pollutants in vehicle exhaust to deaths from heart disease.

By [TONY BARBOZA](#)*contact*

Ultrafine particles, common traffic pollutants, linked to heart disease deaths in California, study finds.

A new study by California scientists has linked chronic exposure to microscopic air pollutants in vehicle exhaust to deaths from heart disease. The finding bolsters evidence that ultrafine particles, which are not regulated by state or federal environmental agencies, are a key contributor to health problems among people living near traffic.

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California drought could end with storms known as atmospheric rivers

Scientists analyzed health data from 2001 to 2007 on a cohort of more than 100,000 middle-aged women across California who had worked as school teachers or administrators. They used a computer model to estimate the levels of ultrafine particles the women breathed.

The authors said their study, recently [published in the journal Environmental Health Perspectives](#), is the first to examine the effects of long-term exposure to ultrafine particles. The pollutants are about one-thousandth the width of a human hair and are released during combustion by car, truck and airplane engines, kitchen stoves, fireplaces and other sources.

cComments

- *As soon as I see the words computer model and extrapolate in the same sentence my eyes glass over. AS the saying goes garbage in garbage out.*

DWBRN1776

AT 1:18 PM FEBRUARY 26, 2015

ADD A COMMENTSEE ALL COMMENTS

29

The analysis found a stronger association between ultrafine particles and early deaths from heart disease than for fine particles, which are 25 times larger and regulated by state and federal emissions rules.

The study identified some components of ultrafine particle pollution, including soot-laden exhaust from diesel engines and specks of copper from vehicle brake pads, that were more strongly associated with heart disease deaths than others.

The findings are the latest to raise concerns about health effects from ultrafine particles, which are so small they can pass through the lungs and into the bloodstream, critical organs and brain. Past research has suggested ultrafine particles as a potential cause of health problems associated with living near traffic, where residents breathe more polluted air, but it remains an area of active study.

Major roadways were among the most ubiquitous of hundreds of sources of ultrafine particle pollution examined in the study. Other contributors included oil refineries, off-road construction equipment, cook stoves, seaports and fires.

The analysis by scientists at California's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, the Cancer Prevention Institute of California, the City of Hope National Medical Center and UC Davis, found a link between the pollutants and heart disease deaths even after controlling for more than two dozen other risk factors, including smoking, drinking and exercise.

While some heart disease risks are genetic or cannot easily be changed, "air pollution is something we can deal with," said Bart Ostro, an air quality researcher with OEHHA and UC Davis and lead author of the study. "It's something we can reduce with the proper standards in place."

For more air quality and environment news, follow me [@tonybarboza](#)

tony.barboza@latimes.com

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Responses to Comments PM-5

Public comment has been requested on the project's status with respect to particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) conformity; therefore, this response focuses on PM_{2.5} and why the project has not been identified as a Project of Air Quality Concern.

The comment cites a Los Angeles Times article and an Environmental Health Perspectives study regarding ultrafine and fine particulate matter. The Los Angeles Times

article refers to “ultrafine particles” and states that they are not regulated by state or Federal environmental agencies. Fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), the air contaminant that was the subject of the request for public comments, is regulated by both the California Air Resources Board and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Particulate matter has well-documented potential health concerns, and therefore state and Federal numeric standards have been established for PM_{2.5} to protect human health with a margin of safety.

The commenter’s concern about potential particulate matter impacts from the SR 85 Express Lanes Project is noted. The term “Project of Concern” in the request for public comments has a specific regulatory definition set by Title 40 CFR Part 93. The statement that the project is not a Project of Concern is based on consultation with the Bay Area Air Quality Conformity Task Force, which includes representatives from Federal (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 9, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration), state (California Air Resources Board, Caltrans), regional (MTC, Bay Area Air Quality Management District, and Association of Bay Area Governments), and sub-regional (Congestion Management Agencies, transit operators, local jurisdictions, etc.) agencies. The Task Force considered projected future traffic conditions, with and without the project, for the SR 85 corridor. The projection of future traffic conditions included the second express lane in each direction between SR 87 and I-280. The Task Force concurred that the project does not fit the definition of a Project of Air Quality Concern. As a result, the project is not subject to further PM_{2.5} project-level conformity requirements or analysis.

For more information about PM_{2.5} levels along SR 85 and in Bay Area, see the response to the commenter’s previous letter, dated February 18, 2015 (Comment PM-4).

Air quality studies for the project have already been completed in accordance with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Federal Highway Administration requirements. The studies demonstrate that the project will conform to the Federal Clean Air Act and the State Implementation Plan. However, a citation to the study referenced in the comment will be included in the administrative record for the project.

The comments regarding the additional express lanes and existing particulate matter are noted but do not pertain to the PM_{2.5} analysis.