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Sent: Friday, February 18, 2022 4:24 PM
To: General Plan <generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org>
Cc: Eric Rodriguez <erodriguez@cityofsanmateo.org>
Subject: Comments on General Plan Land Use Alternatives, Circulation Alternatives, and Evaluation Metrics

Mr. Zachary Dahl,

Deputy Community Development Director
City of San Mateo

I have lived and worked in San Mateo for over 35 years—first as a renter and subsequently as a homeowner. Having attended several General Plan workshops, heard the presentations, and listened to the evaluation of the alternatives during Thursday's Steering Committee meeting, I would like to offer the following comments:

1. **I prefer Land Use Alternative A** as it provides for reasonable but not unrealistic growth, thus preserving the character of the City. It also maintains a reasonable balance of jobs and housing, a balance that is better than today's balance.
2. **I prefer Circulation Alternative A** as it enhances the downtown, improves safety, and is not measurably different from the other two circulation alternatives, as described below. My concerns with the other circulation alternatives include:
 - a. ***A BRT would reduce the El Camino's travel lanes and capacity*** increasing the trip time and congestion endured by all travelers on the El Camino other than those able to use a BRT.
 - i. A BRT would only be accessible to people travelling along the El Camino, requiring others to transfer from one bus to another, while the loss of travel lanes would adversely impact nearly everyone in the City and adversely impact parallel local streets.
 - ii. It is not clear if a BRT could be extended north to Burlingame due to the width of the El Camino, reducing the benefits of such a service.
 - b. ***New technologies, such as an autonomous shuttle, are yet unproven***, many years away from adoption or capable of operation in mixed traffic streams. Today's automated shuttles are very slow and can only operate within protected guide paths.
 - c. ***The reference to ride-share is unclear***. Would that be a ride-hailing service like Uber or Lyft, or a car sharing service like GetAround? In either case, it is not clear how deployment would improve circulation in San Mateo.
 - d. ***While promoting bikes and transit is admirable, the circulation alternatives should address*** the (1) needs of the elderly (who cannot bike or walk to their destinations), (2) families with small children (who may be concerned about the lack of car seats on buses,) (3) residents who prefer not to carry several

bags of groceries on and off a bus, and (4) impacts to those walking to bus stops and bus operations in the hilly areas west of the El Camino.

e. **Better address the original goals.** As stated in earlier handouts, increasing traffic congestion, traffic safety and a lack of parking were among the most frequently expressed concerns during the original goal setting workshops. The circulation alternatives should clearly explain how these concerns will be addressed.

3. Different metrics should be used to evaluate the Circulation Alternatives.

a. **It is improper and unrealistic to present estimates of 2040 VMT to the nearest mile.** Doing so conveys a false impression of the accuracy of the forecasts which at best are within +/- 1%, 5%, or perhaps 10% given the many input assumptions about future conditions and inability to precisely calibrate a regional model within specific corridors or city-wide. I doubt those responsible for the model will claim it represents 2019 conditions to the nearest vehicle mile, and thus it cannot be expected to estimate 2040 VMT conditions precisely.

b. **VMT and VMT/capita do not indicate any significant differences among the three circulation alternatives.** These metrics rely upon forecasts of 2040 population and City-wide VMT which cannot be precise due to the many unknowns that are used to prepare these forecasts. The reported differences are within a few percent and within the statistical variances of the results.

c. **City-wide average travel speeds do not indicate any significant difference among the three circulation alternatives.** The City-wide travel speeds produced by the regional model are nearly identical, and certainly do not provide a basis for selecting one alternative over the other. However, the differences between today's average travel speeds and the future speeds are striking. It would be helpful if the transportation portion of the General Plan evaluation presented the estimated 2025, 2030, and 2035 City-wide travel speeds as well as those for 2040.

4. Use of travel times should be used to supplement the estimates of VMT and city-wide speeds. It would be helpful to compare the estimated travel times for each Circulation Alternatives along a few major corridors within the City both for today's conditions as well as for 2025, 2030, 2035, and 2040 conditions.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,
Peter Mandle


San Mateo