



TA Board of Directors
Meeting of June 5, 2025

Correspondence as of June 4, 2025

Subject

1. 05-29-25 SMCTA Response Letter to San Mateo Opposition
2. 05-29-25 SMCTA 28th Avenue Letter to San Mateo
3. FW_ Recent research_ on roads, only separated class 4 bike lanes result in mode shift.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2025

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APRIL CHAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

May 29, 2025

Mayor Robert Newsom, Jr. and
Members of the San Mateo City Council
330 W. 20th Avenue
San Mateo, CA 94403-1338

Subject: US 101/ SR 92 Direct Connector Project - Environmental Review

Dear Mayor Newsom, Jr. and City Council Members,
Thank you for your letter regarding the US 101/SR 92 Direct Connector Project dated May 6, 2025. We appreciate your input and the opportunity to address the concerns raised by you and the residents of San Mateo. We hope the following clarifications reaffirm our partnership and assure you that we share your commitment to supporting the long-term economic success of the City of San Mateo and San Mateo County, reducing congestion on county highways, and addressing community needs.

Currently the project is in the Environmental Review (EIR) phase which evaluates how a proposed project may affect the local environment and identifies ways to avoid or reduce those impacts. We anticipate Caltrans (California Department of Transportation) complete of the analysis of three alternative designs plus a fourth "no-build" alternative by the fall of 2026.

In response to the concerns outlined in your letter:

The potential use of eminent domain: No project alternatives require acquisition of houses or parks.

We understand your opposition to the use of eminent domain and want to assure you that the current project alternatives will not require the acquisition of any houses or parks. In fact, the 'Alternative 3' design exists entirely within Caltrans property.

For 'Alternatives 1' & '2' private property along the western side of Norton Street may be needed within an existing utility easement (the area between rear fences and the freeway soundwall) or from narrow portions of a few residential yards. The project team is conducting a detailed analysis to determine what amount of space may be required for utilities. We are committed to providing options that minimize or avoid potential property impacts. *The alternatives and potential impacts are illustrated in the enclosed attachment.*

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San Carlos, CA 94070 (650) 508-6200

The inclusion of toll lanes in the project with surge pricing: Existing express lane policies continue to evaluate pricing and balance the needs of low-income travelers.

We understand and share your concern about addressing the needs of low-income travelers when evaluating the use of demand-based pricing on our county highway system. Given that the proposed project would connect to existing express lanes which currently use demand-based pricing, the direct connector would be subject to the same tolling program and policies. The most recent quarterly performance report for the express lanes found that almost 60% of trips cost less than \$3. To ensure that all San Mateo County residents benefit from the lanes, the 101 Express Lane's equity program offers qualifying individuals a \$200 FasTrak transponder or a \$200 Clipper Card. The program has provided more than 8,000 benefits to individuals who earn less than \$82,260; 80% of whom choose Clipper cards to use on public transit. Later this year, the program will offer a flexible \$200 mobility debit card to help participants fund commutes using public transit, express lanes, e-bikes, and/or scooter share programs.

Potential impacts to bike and pedestrian lanes: The TA is committed to the 19th Ave/Fashion Island bikeway.

We share your commitment to delivering safety improvements for people biking and walking and will integrate the project with the 19th Avenue/Fashion Island Boulevard improvements. The TA is involved with both projects as the primary funding and implementing agency and will ensure the designs are complementary. The TA and City staff are actively working together to fully fund the 19th/ Fashion Island project by the end of this year and complete the project by 2028.

A lack of clear and consistent communication with residents: The TA is committed to improving community engagement.

The TA strives for an open and transparent engagement process with every capital project we undertake. We are committed to improving our outreach efforts and ensuring that residents are fully informed and have ample opportunity to provide input as the project progresses.

Since the presentation to San Mateo City Council on April 7, 2025, our project team walked door-to-door with project flyers reaching 100+ residents whose property was previously identified as having a potential impact (along Washington, Adams, and Norton streets). We also hosted a neighborhood "meet & greet" for those residents on May 17, 2025, where we answered residents' questions and provided project information and the latest property assessment findings. The project team will continue to provide monthly electronic community updates via email newsletters, and host future focused-topic discussions. Please encourage interested parties to sign up for updates by emailing 101-92DC@smcta.org.

May 29, 2025

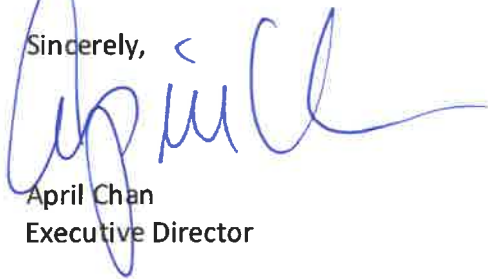
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Cost and environmental impact: The current study phase will formally evaluate cost-benefits of the project and potential next steps.

The TA takes its financial stewardship role in funding major capital projects very seriously. The purpose of Caltrans' environmental review process is to evaluate the benefits and costs of the project. This State-mandated comprehensive assessment will allow all project partners (The Transportation Authority, The City of Foster City, The City of San Mateo, and the City/County Association of Governments) to make an informed decision about whether this project is an effective and environmentally responsible approach to addressing congestion at this interchange. This information will help inform the TA Board whether or not to provide the local funding required to construct the project.

We value your partnership and look forward to continued collaboration to find solutions that best meet the needs of the local and regional community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'April Chan', is written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

April Chan
Executive Director

Attachments

Revised R/W Assessment

San Mateo Request Letter

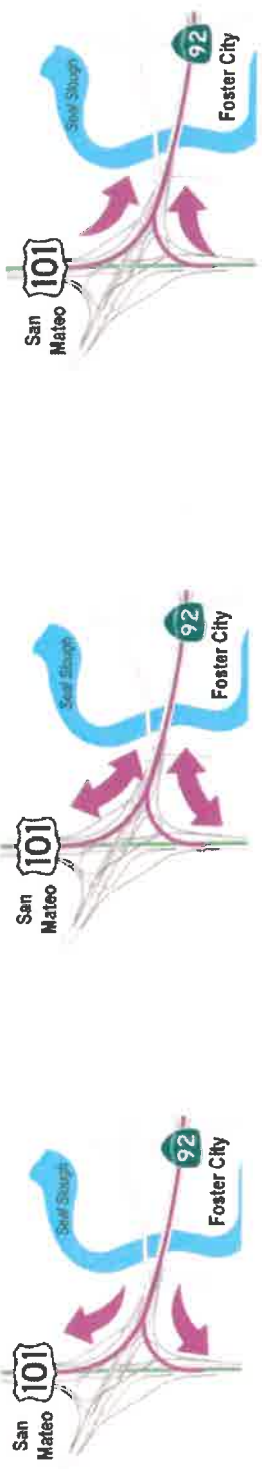
Cc: San Mateo County Transportation Authority Board of Directors

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Revised Right of Way Assessment Summary



<p>Build Alternative 1: Westbound SR 92 to 101 Express Lanes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portions of some residential yards along Norton Street (~320sf total) • Portions of existing utility easement, the area between property owner rear fences and the freeway sound wall • 0 parks • 0 houses 	<p>Build Alternative 2: Reversible lane between SR 92 and 101 Express Lanes</p>	<p>Build Alternative 3: Eastbound from the 101 Express Lanes to SR 92</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 properties
<p>Subject to Change (Pending Further Study):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drainage improvements/flood resiliency • Confirmation of utility requirements • Caltrans Safety Assessment & Design Exception approval • Noise Impact Analysis and soundwall needs 		

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
Brad B. Underwood, P.E., L.S., Director



330 West 20th Avenue
San Mateo, California 94403-1338
Telephone (650) 522-7300
FAX (650) 522-7301
www.cityofsanmatco.org

August 2, 2019

Pamela Kwan, P.E., Project Manager
San Mateo County Transportation Authority
1250 San Carlos Avenue
San Carlos, CA 94070

RE: US-101/SR-92 Interchange Area Improvement and Direct Connector Project Sponsor

Dear Ms. Kwan:

The City of San Mateo and the City of Foster City are the project sponsors for the Project Initiation Document (PID) phases of the US-101/SR-92 Interchange Area Improvements Project (short term improvements) and US-101/SR-92 Direct Connector Project (long term improvements).

The City of San Mateo is support of further development of both projects. Due to the regional nature of the proposed improvements, the City requests that C/CAG and/or the San Mateo County Transportation Authority sponsor subsequent phases of the project for their technical expertise and experience with similar improvements. As the project moves forward, every effort shall be made to minimize additional right-of-way take.

Thank you for your continuing efforts in managing and advancing these projects.

Sincerely,

Brad B. Underwood, P.E., L.S.
Director of Public Works
City of San Mateo

c: Norman Dorais, City of Foster City
Chron/File



BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2025

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May 29, 2025

Alex Khojikian
City Manager
San Mateo City Hall
330 West 20th Avenue
San Mateo, CA 94403

APRIL CHAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Alex,

I write to follow-up on the meeting last July between staff members of the City of San Mateo (City) and the San Mateo County Transportation Authority (TA) regarding the agencies' respective positions on the transfer of ownership from the TA to the City of what was previously 2777 S. El Camino Real (the Property) and now serves as a new segment of 28th Avenue, a City street. The TA recognizes the City believes it has no obligation to reimburse the TA for the purchase of the Property in 2002, ~23 years ago. The TA also understands that the City, like many municipalities and public agencies, currently faces financial challenges.

The TA Board of Directors has a fiduciary responsibility to ensure Measure A tax dollars are spent in accordance with voter-approved expenditure plans. For reasons based in law, contractual requirements, TA policy, and fairness to the taxpayers of San Mateo County, the TA submits that this issue must remain open for future discussion and resolution. To facilitate the discussion when it resumes, I summarize below the factual and historical background of this issue.

1. The initial goal of the 25th Avenue Grade Separation Project (Project) was to vertically separate the existing high-traffic, high-risk car roadway at 25th Avenue from the Caltrain right-of-way. As 25th Avenue was the only existing at-grade crossing in the Project area, it was the only grade crossing eligible for Measure A funding and the City understood its responsibility to cover the costs of creating new grade separations at 28th and 31st Avenues.
 - a. The 1988 Measure A voter-approved Transportation Expenditure Program (TEP) governs the use of 1988 Measure A sales tax revenues. The 1988 TEP programmed ~\$183 million of tax revenues to a Grade Separation Program category for elimination of specific, existing at-grade rail crossings. The TEP-listed grade crossings in the City included 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 9th and 25th Avenues.
 - b. Grade separating the existing crossing of the Caltrain tracks at 25th Avenue did not necessitate the creation of two new grade separations at 28th or 31st Avenues. Further, the 1988 TEP did not contemplate or authorize the expenditure of Measure A funds to grade separate either 28th or 31st Avenues because neither constituted an existing at-grade rail crossing.

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- c. The City's 2013 Project Application to the TA for Measure A Grade Separation Program Funds for the Project recognized that costs to implement the two newly-created grade separations at 28th and 31st Avenues were not eligible for Measure A support, but were the responsibility of the City. It specifically states in Section 1, Project Description:

The overall project would construct a two-track elevated rail alignment grade separating the existing at-grade crossing at 25th Avenue. The elevated rail alignment will require the relocation of the existing Hillsdale Caltrain Station northward to a location between 28th and 31st Avenues. The elevated rail alignment also creates an opportunity to make new street connections between El Camino Real and Delaware Street at 28th and 31st Avenues. These new connections would be funded by the City and would not add costs to the project. (Emphasis added)

While the City provided some funding towards the construction of these new grade crossings, the Project budget did not account for the use of Measure A funds expended in 2002 to purchase the Property. Payment for the costs to acquire what has become a City street, which now passes under the rail corridor as a new grade separation, must be a cost for which the City is responsible, as stated in the City's own Project application.

- d. At no point, including in 2002, has there been sufficient funding in the 1988 TEP to support separating the numerous still-existing at-grade rail crossings in the County. This reality has become more pronounced over the past 23 years, as the costs of grade separation projects have risen astronomically. Reimbursing the TA for funds spent on the creation of grade separations not authorized in the TEP will facilitate the TA's financial support for the eligible grade separation projects, as well as honor and help maintain the faith of County voters and taxpayers.
2. The City requested the TA to acquire the Property on its behalf to facilitate the desired scope expansion of the 25th Avenue Grade Separation Project beyond that eligible for Measure A funding, and to minimize overall Project costs in the future.
 - a. The Property is a 0.8 parcel formerly owned by the San Francisco Credit Union, where an office building was located. This Property was located on El Camino Real at a "T" intersection where 28th Avenue was previously blocked from access west of El Camino Real before construction of the Project.
 - b. To facilitate the planning for the new Bay Meadows development and the introduction of high speed rail operations on the Peninsula, the City contemplated a scope of work that would elevate the track corridor in the Project vicinity, create two new rail crossings at 28th and 31st Avenues, rebuild and relocate the Hillsdale Caltrain Station, and accommodate the installation of new passing tracks.
 - c. The City's planning work identified 2777 El Camino Real as a critical parcel needed to create a new east-west connection under the rail corridor to open up the new Bay Meadows community. Accordingly, when it came on the market for sale in 2002, the City sought to place the Property in public ownership. To facilitate this element of the City's expanded Project, the City requested the TA to purchase the Property on its behalf, as the City did not have funds available at the time to do so.

3. The TA's decision to use 1988 Measure A Grade Separation Program funds in 2002 to purchase this Property on behalf of and at the request of the City for \$3.416 million, plus \$100,000 in transaction costs, for a Project that was in an early design stage was atypical and in hindsight (given this unresolved issue) unwise.
 - a. When the TA agreed to cash-flow the Property purchase, it had never before "land banked" a piece of property at the request of a Project Sponsor for a project whose design was far from complete. In this case, the Property purchase occurred 15 years before the Project was ready to begin construction. The TA had never before, and has never since, entertained a request from a Project Sponsor to purchase property for a project that is not near shovel-ready status. The TA also has never purchased a property on behalf of a Project Sponsor for a community development project.
 - b. We note that the TA's willingness to land bank the Property served to reduce the overall Project costs. The Project saved 15 years of land value escalation on this 0.8 acre parcel in a prime location on El Camino Real.
 - c. While it is regrettable the TA and City did not enter into a formal agreement for repayment of the TA funds used to purchase the Property in 2002, the record evidences the clear intention that the TA's conveyance of the Property to the City for use as a City street would include "appropriate compensation." (See the TA staff report, dated October 6, 2016, when the City, as Project Sponsor, asked the TA to program and allocate \$65.3 million to support implementation and construction of the Project.) In addition, as pointed out above, the City's application to the TA recognized at the outset of the Project development that the City was responsible for the costs to create the new grade crossings at 28th and 31st Avenues.
4. The 2017 Project Funding Agreement with California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) contractually required both the City and Caltrain to own and maintain any property and appurtenances supporting the Project that fall within their respective jurisdictions.
 - a. The October 2017 Funding Agreement among the City, Caltrain and CHSRA requires the City to own and maintain all of the roadbeds, drainage facilities and other appurtenances supporting the Project that are located within its sphere of jurisdiction. For Caltrain, this obligation equates to the railroad being required to own and control the property and appurtenances related to the elevated rail corridor and right of way in the Project vicinity. For the City, Sections 3.1, 5.1 and 6.2 of the Funding Agreement obligate the City to own the entirety of 28th Avenue, a City street, in the Project vicinity. (See Attachment for relevant excerpts from this Funding Agreement)
 - b. At the present time, the TA has granted a no-cost License to the City for the use, operation and maintenance of 28th Avenue. This License does not satisfy the City's obligations under its Agreement with the CHSRA to own the roadbeds and new City streets created by and supporting the Project.

In total, the taxpayers of San Mateo County invested \$97.8 million (48%) of total \$205.9 million cost in this Project which separated an existing at-grade rail crossing at 25th Avenue and created two new grade separations at 28th, and 31st Avenues. The Project had a transformational effect on the City by improving safety and access to new homes, office parks, schools, and businesses; and connecting these destinations with the Hillsdale Shopping Center and El Camino Real. The \$97.8

million represents the Measure A funds allocated for all phases of the Project, including planning, engineering and construction, but this sum does not include the funds expended to purchase the Property.

Over the past two years, the TA has pursued discussions in good faith as anticipated in the TA's October 2016 staff report regarding the terms for conveyance of the Property now constituting 28th Avenue. As we have made clear, the TA is not seeking fair market value or profit maximization to transfer ownership of this Property which is a City street. Instead it seeks reimbursement to make itself whole for this Property purchase and is willing to consider a reimbursement over time. The repayment funds will replenish the TA's Grade Separation Program Category to help fund planning and construction of the TA's next-in-line "pipeline" grade separation projects that are needed to address extreme safety hazards in your neighboring cities. These include three priority grade separation projects the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has ranked as #1, #4, and #10 out of 38 priority at-grade crossings throughout the State of California following careful evaluation of each crossing's vehicular and train volumes, accident history, sightlines, track angles, traffic delays, plus other relevant factors: Broadway Burlingame (#1), Ravenswood Menlo Park (#4) and South Linden and Scott Avenues in South San Francisco and San Bruno (#10).

Given the funding challenges experienced by the Project, we know the City understands the importance of preserving and maximizing all available Measure A funds for these eligible grade separation projects. Recall how the Project's \$25.9 million in construction cost overruns exceeded all contingencies in the final months of the Project which nearly halted construction. The TA Board saved the Project in January 2021 by contributing an additional \$23.8 million of unbudgeted Measure A funds from its Grade Separation category to finish the Project and preclude further cost increases that would have fallen to the City to cover as the Project Sponsor. This is why it is both essential and fair for the City to do its part and pay for ownership of the City street at 28th Avenue, a commitment the City recognized in its initial Project application to the TA.

The history outlined above underscores the legal, contractual and equitable reasons why the City must cover the TA's costs incurred to purchase the Property which has now become a city facility and which the City understood was not an eligible Measure A expenditure. However, in light of the City's current financial constraints, the TA Board of Directors has directed staff to pause these discussions. We trust the City will be willing to engage on this subject in the near future. If not, the TA Board will consider this issue open and revisit the matter and an appropriate solution as soon as reasonably possible to account for the favor the TA undertook on behalf of the City in purchasing the Property in 2002. Our goal is to bring closure to these valid concerns in a manner that minimizes financial stress on the City.

Sincerely,



April Chan
Executive Director, San Mateo County Transportation Authority

Cc: *For the City:* Mayor Rob Newsom Jr., Deputy Mayor Adam Loraine and Councilmembers Lisa Diaz Nash, Danielle Cwirko-Godycki and Nicole Fernandez; City Attorney Prasanna Rasiah

Alex Khojikian
City Manager
May 29, 2025
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For the TA: Chair Carlos Romero, Vice Chair Julia Mates and Directors Noelia Corzo, Anders Fung, Rico E. Medina, Mark Nagales and Jackie Speier; Attorney Joan Cassman; Chief Communications Officer Emily Beach; TA Executive Officer Peter Skinner

Excerpts from Amended 2017 Funding Agreement Among California High-Speed Rail Authority, the Peninsula corridor Joint Powers Board and the City of San Mateo

Section 3.1—last paragraph of Project Description:

In addition to lowering 25th Avenue, the Grade Separation will construct two new east-west connections between Delaware and El Camino Real, one each at 28th and 31st Avenues. Both 31st and 28th Avenues will have four through-lanes, one left turn only pocket, and two sidewalks/bike lanes. Temporary Parking will be constructed within the PCJPB right of way east of the new track alignment to the north and south of 28th Avenue.

5.1 City Ownership and Maintenance Obligations

After completion of the Grade Separation Project, City shall own and be responsible for maintenance of the roadbeds, pavement delineation, signage, lighting, drainage systems, any other supporting appurtenances and landscape established including irrigation, planting and hardscape. The City's maintenance obligations will not extend to the grade separation structure or the railroad right-of-way. City further agrees that it shall take no action with respect to City maintenance and use (or future modification) of the roadbeds and related improvements that City knows or reasonably should know at the time of the action would effectively preclude or make materially more complicated or expensive Authority future use of the Corridor for Blended System operations or make such use or operations noncompliant with Proposition 1A.

6.2 City Cost Responsibilities

The City is solely responsible for securing all costs for all phases to complete the Grade Separation Project (regardless of the accuracy or inaccuracy of the plans, estimates and assumptions that form the basis of the Grade Separation Project), through final completion and placement into service, except as specifically set forth in Section 6.1 - Authority Cost Responsibilities.

From: [Public Comment](#)
To: [Board \(@smcta.com\)](#)
Subject: FW: Recent research: on roads, only separated class 4 bike lanes result in mode shift.
Date: Tuesday, June 3, 2025 7:34:34 AM

From: Giuliano <giuliano@carlini.com>
Sent: Monday, June 2, 2025 9:12 PM
To: Giuliano <giuliano@carlini.com>
Subject: Recent research: on roads, only separated class 4 bike lanes result in mode shift.

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders.

The results from [The link between low-stress bicycle facilities and bicycle commuting](#) in Nature, show that protected bike lanes are nearly 2x more effective at getting more folks to mode shift from cars to bikes than side of the road, just paint on the ground, bike lanes. Whether buffered or not. And that class 3, just paint in the middle of the lane, a picture of a bike, "did not have a significant relationship with changes in ridership".

Class 4 bike lanes, physically separated from traffic by flex posts, bollards, planters, etc significantly increase mode shift from driving cars to riding bikes.

Buffered bike lane results seem a bit mixed. I'll need to read the study more closely. They fare little better than regular bike lanes by some measure. Nearly as good as separated in others.

And yet, too many cities rely disproportionately on class 3 bike lanes. Including on main arterial routes where traffic volumes require protected bike lanes. According to CalTrans, NACTO, and the FHWA.

Study: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s44284-025-00255-5>

Momentum magazine: <https://momentummag.com/want-more-bike-commuters-build-protected-bike-lanes-says-new-study/>

More specifically, block groups that installed PBLs, which we designated as PBL block groups, saw increases in the number of bicycle commuters that were 1.9, 1.8, 1.6 and 4.3 times larger than block groups whose lowest-

stress bicycle facility installed was a BBL (BBL block groups), SBL (SBL block groups), SHR (SHR block groups) or 'None' (that is, block groups that installed no bicycle facilities), respectively.

giuliano

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Drive a bike a bit more often and cars a bit less. You'll be healthier and happier, and so will our world.