



TA Community Advisory Committee
Meeting of September 2, 2025

Correspondence as of July 11, 2025

Subject

1. Recent SF Chronicle op-ed on highway widening - incl. former CA Air Resources Board executive
2. Great video on traffic modeling, and how it can be deeply flawed.
3. Rejecting reappointment of Mike Swire to the CAC
4. Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety

From: [Mike Swire](#)
To: [Board \(@smcta.com\)](#); [cacsecretary \[@smcta.com\]](#); [Mima Crume](#)
Subject: Recent SF Chronicle op-ed on highway widening - incl. former CA Air Resources Board executive
Date: Saturday, July 5, 2025 11:47:57 AM
Attachments: [image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[20250624 Chronicle op-ed anti-widening Ward-Waller.pdf](#)

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OPINION // OPEN FORUM

Adding freeway lanes doesn't fix traffic. Why does California keep wasting billions on it?

By Jeanie Ward-Waller, Craig Segall

June 24, 2025

 Gift Article



25, 11:11 AM

Adding freeway lanes doesn't fix traffic. Why waste money on it?



Interstate 5 in Los Angeles fills with traffic in 2023. Studies show that adding lanes to highways does not reduce traffic congestion
Dania Maxwell/Los Angeles Times/Getty Images

Trending: Wine company layoffs | Tax bill | Ethnic studies | Fireworks canceled | Scavenger hunt | Weather forec

OPINION // OPEN FORUM

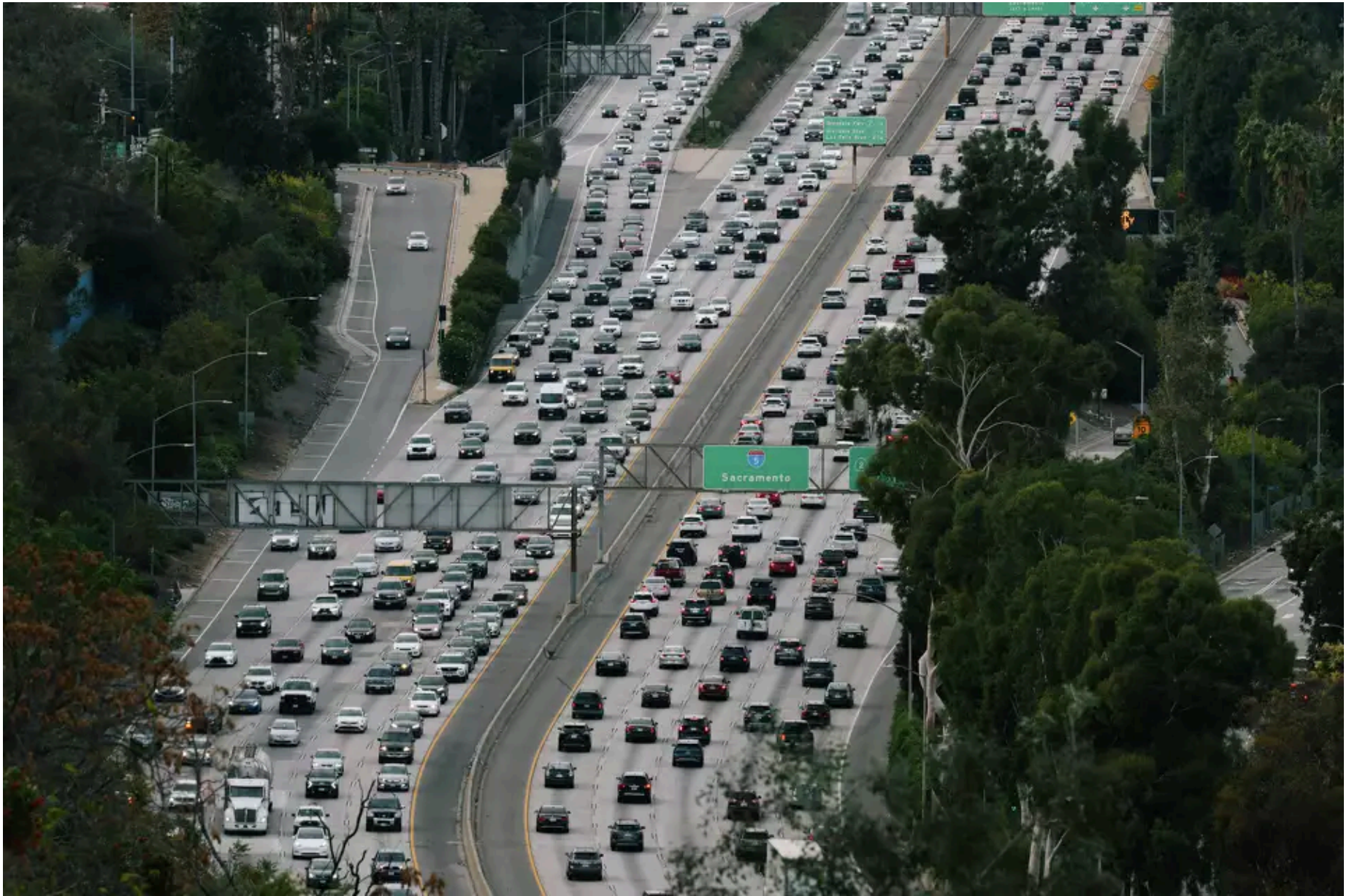
Adding freeway lanes doesn't fix traffic. Why does California keep wasting billions on it?

By **Jeanie Ward-Waller, Craig Segall**

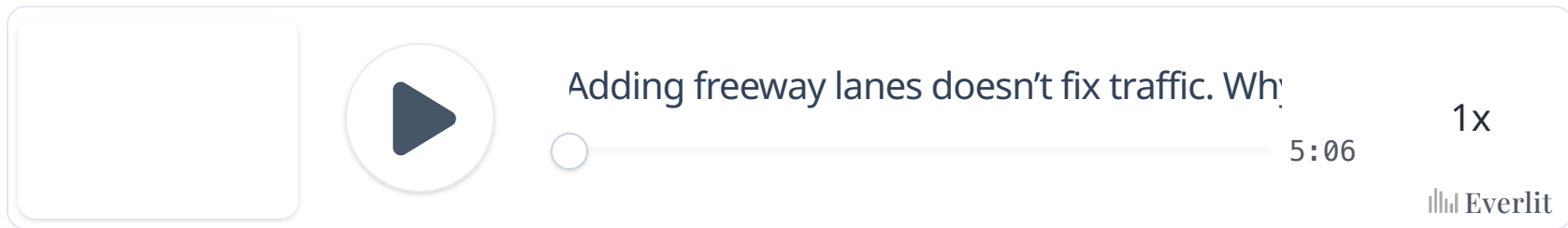
June 24, 2025

 Gift Article





Interstate 5 in Los Angeles fills with traffic in 2023. Studies show that adding lanes to highways does not reduce traffic congestion.
Dania Maxwell/Los Angeles Times/Getty Images



People believe all sorts of things without any evidence. Take the common misconception that earthquakes are more likely in warm weather or that talking about a no-hitter in progress will jinx its completion.

Another unfounded belief is that adding lanes to highways reduces traffic congestion. But unlike simple superstitions, adding freeway lanes is incredibly expensive, in terms of public tax dollars and the time spent on construction, and ultimately doesn't fix the problem.

Worse, highway officials charged with improving mobility keep perpetuating the myth that adding lanes alleviates congestion. Countless studies — including those used by Caltrans for highway planning — have documented “induced demand” for driving, meaning that adding new highway lanes in the

hope of reducing traffic only encourages more drivers to use the road, which results in higher levels of congestion.

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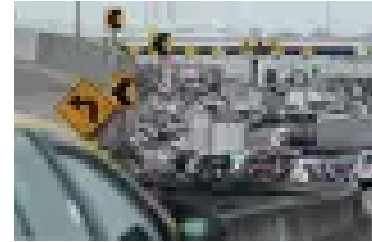
The poster child project for this effect was the \$1.6 billion Interstate 405 expansion in Los Angeles that began in 2011. After drivers suffered through years of mind-numbing construction closures, the new lanes were opened with great fanfare, and traffic congestion was worse than ever on Day 1.

Right now, the California Transportation Commission is set to vote on half a dozen of these lane widening boondoggles that will widen highways in Los Angeles and Riverside counties, the Central Valley and the Bay Area at a cost of \$1.25 billion in our limited tax dollars. It's well past time to put a stop to this.

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Not only will these highway widening projects do nothing to relieve traffic congestion, they will encourage more people to hit the roadways and push California further away from its goals for greenhouse gas reduction at a time when investment in our public transit systems would be far more effective.

One thing that is not a myth, according to 99.9% of scientific experts, is that human beings are causing climate change through activities like driving gasoline-powered cars. Yet, the California Transportation Commission will vote to expand car infrastructure just weeks after the Trump administration blew up California's clean car rules, a move that will slow the transition to electric vehicles. Given this horrible development, one would think the state would look for alternative ways to reduce climate emissions from transportation. Widening freeways will only result in more smog, more congestion and more housing displacement.

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Traffic moves over the Mare Island Bridge on Highway 37 in Vallejo in 2021. An “interim” lane expansion of the notoriously jammed highway is planned, though it could endanger wildlife, and the area could be submerged by 2040 due to rising sea levels.

Carlos Avila Gonzalez/S.F. Chronicle

While all six of the projects that the commission is set to approve this year are classic money-wasters, one stands out: the “interim” lane expansion of notoriously jammed Highway 37 that connects Solano and Marin counties.

Caltrans and local policymakers have brushed aside concerns about endangered wildlife by advancing a bill this year that would exempt the project from California Endangered Species Act rules and dedicated nearly \$500 million to this project — including \$73 million that will be awarded by commission this week, all with the knowledge that sea-level rise projections anticipate that the entire corridor could be underwater as soon as 2040. The only traffic the project will ever relieve will be duck traffic.

Let's talk about another myth, the one that says that thanks to the rise in the number of electric vehicles on the road, we don't really need to worry as much about climate change. Unfortunately, our electric future is in jeopardy with the Trump administration planning to eliminate incentives for EV purchases and striking down California's mandate to phase out gasoline-powered cars by 2035. But even if our renewable energy dream were to come true, that alone wouldn't come close to achieving our climate goals, and it certainly wouldn't alleviate traffic congestion.

There are other projects the state could embark on if it really wants to get cars off the road and improve our quality of life. Our public transit systems are struggling to maintain service. Our existing streets and highways are crumbling due to poor maintenance. We also need major investment in the charging infrastructure for zero-emission trucks and trains that could reduce diesel pollution in communities near freeways. A broader solution would call for a holistic approach to housing, jobs and transportation that would eliminate the need for people to live so far from where they work.

About Opinion

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While some supporters of adding more lanes to freeways will counter that many people love to drive, many others simply are forced to do so due to a lack of better options.

Although the California Transportation Commission has made some progress on driving alternatives in recent years, the idea persists that its primary mandate is road building and widening. That's simply not true. The mandate is to invest in a multimodal transportation system that includes rail, transit and active transportation to help us move through the world to work, school and elsewhere efficiently and improve our quality of life. Some will choose to do that in a car, but some want faster, cleaner options — and it's the commission's mandate to provide that.

Jeanie Ward-Waller is the interim director of ClimatePlan and the former deputy director of planning and modal programs at Caltrans. Craig Segall is the former deputy executive officer of the California Air Resources Board, overseeing the state's transportation-related climate policies.

June 24, 2025

Jeanie Ward-Waller

Craig Segall

More For You

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From: [Giuliano](#)
To: [Giuliano](#)
Subject: Great video on traffic modeling, and how it can be deeply flawed.
Date: Tuesday, July 8, 2025 12:29:11 PM

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Hi Jessica, CAC and Board Members,

Great traffic modeling video: <https://youtu.be/NgJ998KHBpc>

The video says at the start that traffic folks often say something like "we need more lanes because the model says we do". If you hear this, it's time to ask questions. A lot of questions ...

As I've attended advisory, board, and council meetings, various concerns with projects are raised. Staff often responds that these concerns will be investigated during "traffic modeling". As I have noted when possible, traffic modeling is broken. Bad models produce bad results. Bad inputs to models produce bad results. They are often a self fulfilling prophecy, where the input to the models are set and generate outputs that are used to justify the inputs.

This is a spectacular video, by a traffic engineer, describing exactly how traffic modeling is broken. I hope you will watch, and recognize why we need to take their results with grains (and rocks, and boulders) of salt.

Thanks,

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.

From: [Giuliano](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Cc: [cacsecretary \[@smcta.com\]](mailto:cacsecretary [@smcta.com])
Subject: Rejecting reappointment of Mike Swire to the CAC
Date: Wednesday, July 9, 2025 12:01:59 AM

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A few days after the last TA meeting, I wrote to the board expressing my concern that my advocacy might result in my not being reappointed, and explaining that I thought that would be bad policy. Talk about a harbinger of what was to come.

At tonight's CAC meeting it came out that the nominating committee was recommending that Mike Swire not be reappointment to the CAC. The reason: his outside advocacy. No complaints about his performance on the CAC. About his behavior on the CAC. About his following the Rules of Procedure. About anything substantive. Just that he advocates vigorously outside of the CAC against some TA projects. For two members that is disqualifying.

My random and disorganized thoughts. I still haven't wrapped my brain around this:

- Well, my removal is next.
- This is remarkably bad policy.
- Mike is the hardest working member of the CAC. That counts for nothing? Mike was just elected vice chair of the CAC. That counts for nothing?
- It seems like some folks think that it's fine to advocate for TA supported projects, but forbidden to advocate against them. That is just wrong. There are many events celebrating the projects the TA funds. All are encouraged to attend these. To visibly affirm their support. But those who oppose are not permitted to do the same. For if they do, they will be removed.
- Those who will not be cowed will be removed. Those who can be cowed will now be silent.
- This seems to be true not only for CAC member reappointments, but that new candidates have been similarly rejected. Qualified candidates. Good candidates. Who would have been positive assets to the CAC, the TA, and the community. Disqualified only because the advocate in the wrong direction.
- The CAC is not supposed to be a rubber stamp. It is supposed to provide advice from a cross section of the community.
- How will this appear to the public? What happens if this bounces up and becomes a public relations issue?
- What will happen to the support for the TA if the public sees it as being tarnished?
- What will happen to the Measure A renewal if the public loses faith in the TA?
- I, Mike, and others who believe that the TA is approving some projects that fail to meet the Measure A goals, the Measure W Core Principles, and that are harmful to transit and more generally to society, are trying to work within the system.
- If you throw us out, that means that folks will need to work outside the system. Unlike us, they are likely to adopt tactics that are disruptive; after all, y'all will have shown them that working inside the system does nothing.
- What happens when these folks use this as a reason for the electorate to reject Measure A renewal? Do you really want to hand these folks this sort of ammunition? "You can't

trust the TA, they have silenced the advisory body that represents the community. That represents us. They don't care what we think, only what big money special interests think".

- Frankly, throwing us out is just Trumpian. Shades of the Trump administration suspending and investigating EPA staff who raised legitimate concerns. And a 1000 other acts removing those who they see as being "in the way". That is not you. Y'all are better than that.
- This directly contradicts what was said during the discussion of the Rules of Procedure at both CAC and TA meetings. When the revised Rules of Procedure were first presented to us at the CAC, I spoke up concerned that this would be used to silence opposition. Staff, I believe including SMCTA legal counsel, assured us that this was not the case, that we were free to advocate for or against, provided only that we either did not describe our being on the CAC, or if that if we did that we make clear we spoke only for ourselves.
- When the Rules of Procedure came to the TA board, several TA board members raised this concern again. The board during discussion made clear that they supported the need for CAC members to be able to advocate, for or against, before any body, without fear of reprisal.
- And now, despite being assured at both the CAC and TA meetings, two members of the nominating committee want to throw Mike off for his advocacy. And presumably me. And presumably any who follow us. Advocacy is bad and must not be allowed. Well, if it is the "wrong" kind of advocacy. But, "correct" advocacy, well that's okay and must be permitted.
- Why should I bother investing my time and effort on the CAC. It's clearly not wanted, unless I fall into lock step.
- Why should any other CAC member want to invest their time. Will they feel that you really value their input? It doesn't feel like it.
- The CAC is already short 5 members. Making quorum is already difficult. Can the CAC afford to lose Mike? Making quorum will be even harder. Can it afford to lose any of the others of us if we become disaffected.

My last thought:

- This is frustrating. It's disheartening. It is galling. Why am I spending my time on this?

Please, do the right thing. Reappoint Mike. When my time comes around don't reject me just because I advocate.

It's the way of the world if two members of a body want to do something like this. There will always be a few folks like that. It becomes a problem only if a majority of y'all feel the same.

Thanks,

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.

On Sat, Jun 7, 2025, at 1:20 AM, Giuliano wrote:

Hi all,

Concerns

I went to the last TA meeting, 5 June 2025, planning only to thank my fellow CAC members Jeff Londer and Peter Ohtaki for the service. I needed to leave early as my Aikido Nidan test was later that evening. I was not expecting to speak on any item as I had already said my piece at the CAC meeting, and felt no need to repeat any of it for the public at large as part of the TA meeting.

I was quite surprised when staff had a significantly different view of the Foster City Council's reaction to the 101/92 connector presentation than I had, based on my attendance at their May 19th meeting. And so I quickly filled out a speaker card and made my comments.

Now, I'm a bit concerned based on the recent changes to the rules of procedure for the CAC, and the drafts leading up to it. I'm concerned that when I speak out opposed to projects which the TA sponsors, whether at CAC and TA meetings or during advocacy outside of these meetings, that this may result in my eventual removal from the CAC; possibly based on claimed violations of the Rules of Procedure, possibly on pretextual reasons. I believe completely in the Rules of Procedures principles, and do my utmost to follow them.

The CAC is the advisory body that is tasked to give the TA the community's frank opinions. The CAC ensures the TA is fairly apprised of the broad range of the community's opinion. Those who agree have no need to advocate. Their desires are being met. You want me/others who disagree (after reasonable consideration) to feel comfortable advocating. You want me to be part of the process, and engaging with the process. You do not want a "rubber stamp". Indeed, the statutes setting up the CAC demand no less.

I hope y'all can give full throated support when I oppose to TA decisions, even though we disagree. Otherwise, the CAC becomes nothing but a rubber stamp, and useless to you in gauging what the community wants.

RE: my statement above "after reasonable consideration". I can understand frustration with folks who are doctrinaire and who are closed minded. I am not. I decide on projects based based on the data, science/engineering, Measure A goals, Measure W Core Principles, and TA and state policy. Show me how I'm wrong, how the data, science/engineering, etc support a project and I'll change my opinion on that project.

Foster City Council reaction to 101/92 presentation by TA

Foster city council May 19 meeting

video: <https://fostercity.new.swagit.com/videos/343233>.

Council member comments and questions. I generally capture below the opposition and concerns. Other than they mayor, there were very few equivocal

comments. What did occur was mostly the polite preludes and epilogos folks generally give. Only the mayor expressed whole hearted support for modeling and the EIR.

Initially there was start of meeting formalities, followed by TA staff presentation.

- 24:30 Sullivan: Financing question.
- 26:15 Venkat:
 - "I could not find any studies that showed that projects like this help long term." ... paraphrasing: are there any.
Director Manzi: modeling and analysis but no studies. the hope is "[NB: when it is well understood that adding capacity to any part of the system increases capacity and then demand.]
 - "I don't see a transit component in this plan"
"I would think we'd want to focus on transit ... can be really helpful in relieving congestion"
Paraphrasing: can transit be added? Response: no, because it is a highway project. [NB: According to the text of Measure W, highway projects may use funds on transit, just not exclusively on transit. If I recall correctly, Measure A is silent on this.]
 - 31:13: even if no takings, won't pollution impact residents.
- * 33:50 Niederhofer:
Focus should be on regional transit working together to reduce congestion ... "and solving the real problem".
- 35:10 Kiesel: Was this project part of RM3 scope? Response: no, no specific projects were scoped.
40:15: We are going to be drafting long term project EIR when we don't have data from near term project +
- 43:15 Jimenez: Eminent domain questions
- 44:30 Sullivan: We have been patching 101 for 20 years ... "We are have trying to get people off the freeways".
Project has to address public transportation.
- 47:00 Public comments. 57:20 Public comments done
- 57:40 Niederhofer: "We need to solve the issue of the bridge with some kind of commute transit that goes to transit ... We really need to look at that."
- 58:05 Venkat: "If we are going to make real progress, it needs to be long term projects ... [that have impact]... and that we have data that will show that"
No one in Foster City or outside that asking for this ... what I'm hearing is options for transit ... That's where we need to head to for the future.
- 59:19 Sullivan: 50% of our traffic is moms and dads taking their kids back and forth to school. Most of the people driving on 101 are going less than 30 miles. The failure we've had is to get CalTrain, BART, SamTrans to get together and develop a seamless thing.

How are we connecting transportation, how are we taking care of the environment.

We can come up with some kind of public transportation or ebikes or scooters

We gotta get people out of their cars.

- 1:00:35 Kiesel: I'm not sure we can cancel this project or give the nod to go ahead with it. [NB: While they may not be able to make the decision, they are being asked for their input]]

All we are doing is moving congestion from 101 to 92. Wherever you put the neck of the bottle, that's where the jam will start.

92/101 interchange has been a problem since 1968 when I first started driving on it. Sitting here talking about it means it hasn't been solved.

- :04:00 Jimenez: Concern is primarily for Foster City residents. Concerns about emergencies. If it might help congestion, I'm all in. It's too early to say
- 1:09:20 Item concluded. Informational only. Nothing else we can do.

Thanks much,

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.

From: [Malcolm Robinson](#)
To: [Board \(@smcta.com\)](#); [Public Comment](#); [cacsecretary \[@smcta.com\]](#)
Subject: Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety
Date: Thursday, July 10, 2025 3:38:41 PM

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I am writing this note from Telluride, Colorado. As I watch people walk and bike on a dirt trail while rafters float down the San Miguel River, I am reminded that all early settlers traveled to California by boat, by horse, in covered wagons or on foot. And yet, motor vehicles are the primary focus of this committee? Please help me understand your focus on concrete and kaboki.

The SMC TA bike/ped plan put forward a few years ago was called Plan 2050, a.k.a. Not in My Lifetime. That morphed into the Local Road Safety Plan. The Vision Zero Deaths Plan that other countries and localities accept and promote was too much effort?

The SMC TA appears steadfast in 2 things, freeway construction and control of transport funding and narrative. Please alter how you support transportation in the county. Please make it safe for ALL modes (small m) of transport. It appears that 64% of county poll respondents agree!

Specifically, please allow advocacy of the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists on our county committees. Silencing Bike/Ped proponents, and those who confess alarm at the desecration of our planet by transport pollution does a disservice to us all.

Knowledgeable and courageous advocates are an important part of the American experiment. The SMC TA must stop your efforts over the last 2 years to silence voices of the impassioned, to control transport discussion, allow questionable committee membership practices to continue, and most importantly, who ranks projects. Guiding funds to pet projects with questionable benefit should be addressed in public, and not hidden from view.

Last year two members of your own Community Advisory Committee addressed you, and asked that you work WITH the CAC. A member of the SMC TA said, "Git, go back to your committee." This brazen condescending treatment of people is unworthy of the SMC TA, our county or the America I grew up in. You should be looking for input, not silencing it.

Thank you.

Rgds,

Malcolm Robinson
SMC Resident Since 1970

Sent from my iPad