



DATE: June 30, 2021

AGENDA ITEM # 3

TO: Complete Streets Commission

FROM: Marisa Lee, Transportation Services Manager

SUBJECT: Foothill Expressway Widening Project (San Antonio Rd to El Monte Ave)
Community Concerns Regarding Bicycle Accommodations

RECOMMENDATION:

Review and discuss community feedbacks received on Foothill Expressway Widening Project

INTRODUCTION

The County of Santa Clara – Roads & Airports Department is the lead design and construction agency for the Foothill Expressway Widening Project between San Antonio Road & El Monte Avenue. The design of the project was funded by the City of Los Altos in 2017-18 and construction is funded through 2016 Measure B Half-Cent Sales Tax Program. Major construction of the project was complete in June 2021 with the completion of roadway widening, paving, and installation of roadway markings. Following major completion, the City received about a dozen concerns regarding bicycle accommodations through the project area.

Staff from the County of Santa Clara – Roads & Airports Department will discuss their design approach and any modifications that can be accommodated in response to community concerns.

BACKGROUND

The County of Santa Clara – Roads & Airports Department Street Design guidelines do not currently allow for modern Complete Streets design elements, such as green conflict zone markings or bicycle pathway guidance through intersections. The County is currently going through a Complete Streets design guidelines process, but given that the current design guidelines do not allow for modern street design treatments for bicyclists, none were applied to the Foothill Expressway Widening project. This lack of innovation in the County’s Street Design guidelines has resulted in growing community concerns regarding the lack of bicycle accommodations in the Foothill Expressway Widening project.

All community concerns related to the Foothill Expressway widening project were forwarded to the County of Santa Clara for response, the City has not received any County responses to date on the posting of this staff report.

DISCUSSION

Community concerns received to-date by the city are focused on the following areas related to the Foothill Expressway Widening project. These concerns were validated by City Staff and summarized in a City to County Comment Letter provided in Exhibit A.

- **Bicycle Conflicts with Southbound Right Turn Traffic Approach El Monte Ave**
Delineated, but not designated, bicycle lane facilities provided as part of the project terminate before the southbound right turn movements at El Monte Avenue. The sudden drop of the bicycle facility provides no guidance for bicyclists on how to traverse the remaining southbound approach to El Monte Avenue and provides no warning to motorists regarding interaction with bicyclists.
- **Bicycle Conflicts with Northbound Traffic Approaching San Antonio Rd**
Similar to the item above, the delineated, but not designated bicycle facilities on the northbound approach of Foothill Exp to San Antonio Rd suddenly terminate, resulting in similar undesignated conflict zones in both the approach and the crossing of the San Antonio Rd intersection.
- **Bicycle Pathways through the Foothill Exp & El Monte Ave Intersection**
There is limited visibility on El Monte as motorists and bicyclist traverse through the Foothill Expressway intersection. In the eastbound direction specifically, motorists and bicyclists both course-correct themselves once they pass the crown on Foothill Expressway. Bicyclists are complaining that they drift north while traveling across Foothill Expressway, causing near-miss broadside collisions with motorists.
- **Receive Bike Lane Facilities south of Foothill Exp & El Monte Ave**
Bicyclists traveling on southbound Foothill Expressway through the El Monte Avenue intersection do not currently have a clearly designated receiving pathway/slot south of the intersection that safely guides them to the shoulder. This condition creates confusion for bicyclists on where to position themselves as they travel through the intersection.

City staff has made itself available to the County of Santa Clara – Roads & Airports Department to aid in the design of options to mitigate the above community concerns.



1 North San Antonio Road
Los Altos, California 94022-3087

June 15, 20021

Roads & Airports Department-Administration
Attn.: Harry Freitas, Director
101 Skyport Drive
San Jose, CA 95110

Subject: Cycling Safety Concerns: Foothill Expressway Widening Improvements, Los Altos
(San Antonio Rd to El Monte Ave)

Dear Harry,

On behalf of the Los Altos City Council and City Manager, I am writing you to strongly advocate for bicycle safety enhancements within the project area of the Foothill Expressway Widening Improvements Project between San Antonio Road and El Monte Avenue. The City of Los Altos is being overwhelmed with feedback from residents and bike advocates regarding the safety of bicyclists in the newly constructed project area. The emails that I have received are attached. The specific areas of concern expressed by the community and validated by City staff, include the following:

- **Bicycle Conflicts with Southbound Right Turn Traffic approaching El Monte Avenue**

One of the main purposes of the Foothill Expressway widening project is the addition of southbound right turn storage capacity to help motorists access I-280 via El Monte Avenue from Downtown Los Altos. The new improvements provide no guidance for bicyclists on how to maneuver or position themselves as they ride southbound on Foothill and approach El Monte Avenue from San Antonio Road and cross the two right turn lanes to enter the bike slot that channels them across El Monte Avenue. There is also no signage or markings advising motorists where to expect bicyclists. This creates conflict in the roadway that must be addressed before the completion of the project.

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- **Bicycle Conflicts with Northbound Right Turn Traffic approaching San Antonio Road**

The same bicycle-vehicle conflicts discussed above exist in the northbound segment of Foothill Expressway approaching San Antonio Road. Newly added bike lane equivalent facilities “trap” bicyclists before the San Antonio Road intersection.

- **Bicycle Pathways through Foothill Exp & El Monte Avenue**

There is limited visibility on El Monte as motorists and bicyclist traverse through the Foothill Expressway intersection. In the eastbound direction specifically, motorists and bicyclists both course-correct themselves once they pass the crown on Foothill Expressway. Bicyclists are complaining that they drift north while traveling across Foothill Expressway, causing near-miss broadside collisions with motorists.

- **Receiving Bike Lane Facilities south of Foothill Expressway & El Monte Avenue**

Bicyclists traveling on southbound Foothill Expressway through the El Monte Avenue intersection do not currently have a clearly designated receiving pathway/slot south of the intersection that safely guides them to the shoulder. This condition creates confusion for bicyclists on where to position themselves as they travel through the intersection.

My transportation team is available to brainstorm ideas and/or review any improvement plans that your team develops to enhance the safety of bicyclists within the Foothill Expressway Widening Improvements project area. Additionally, they put together the following ideas for your consideration:

1. Reconfigure the southbound Foothill Expressway between San Antonio Road and El Monte Avenue to add Class IV – Buffered Bike Lanes with delineation markers to provide a dedicated bike pathway on Foothill Expressway.
2. Reconfigure the northbound approach of Foothill Expressway to San Antonio Road to provide a clearly marked Class IV Buffered Bike Lane with supporting merge and transition guidance for bicyclists through the San Antonio Road intersection.
3. Add dashed bike lanes with green conflict zone markings that connect the bike lane facilities on each side of El Monte Avenue at Foothill Expressway. If feasible, similar treatments to connect bike facilities on Foothill Expressway would be appropriate.
4. Reconfigure the south leg of the Foothill Expressway & El Monte Avenue intersection to provide a clearly designated receiving bike lane/slot for bicyclists.

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The Los Altos City Council strongly supports the residents advocating for safety improvements. I look forward to working with you to implement bicycle safety enhancements as quickly as possible.

Sincere Regards,



Jim Sandoval
Engineering Services Director
(650) 947-2621 o
(510) 610-9301 m

Attachments:

Emails from the public (4)

Email from Los Altos Complete Streets Commission Chair Nadim Maluf

CC:

Supervisor Joe Simitian, County of Santa Clara, 70 W. Hedding Street, San Jose, CA. 95110

Los Altos City Council

Los Altos Complete Streets Commission

Los Altos Interim City Manager, Brad Kilger