

Oregon Expressway Improvement Project Community Outreach Report #2 (June-October 2008)

Introduction

The Santa Clara County Roads and Airports Department has initiated the planning phase for a project to make operational improvements along Oregon Expressway. The goal of this project is to improve conditions for all modes of travel both along the expressway and crossing the expressway. Extensive community outreach is a key component of the planning phase.

On April 3, 2008, the first community workshop was held to receive input about the public's experiences in using and crossing Oregon Expressway and types of improvements they would like to see. This was followed by a month-long open comment period where additional comments were received by e-mail, telephone, and fax. A full report on the results of the April community outreach process is provided on the project website: www.oregonexpressway.info.

June 2008 Community Workshop Overview

On June 9, 2008, a second community workshop was held at Jordan Middle School. At this workshop, staff presented a range of alternatives for various intersections that were developed in direct response to the comments/concerns receiving during the April community outreach process. The purpose of the workshop was to receive input about the alternatives which staff could use in refining the alternatives and developing recommendations.

Advertising for the June workshop was the same as for the April workshop. Over 3,200 postcards were mailed to residents living near the expressway. Notices were posted in both local newspapers (*Palo Alto Daily* and *Palo Alto Weekly*). E-mails were sent to various community/neighborhood groups asking them to notify their memberships about the workshop. In addition, an e-mail notice was sent to the project e-mail list, which included all participants from the April public outreach process who provided an e-mail address.

At the workshop, a presentation was given about the purpose of the improvement project, key findings from the April public input process, and the types of improvement alternatives participants will see during the workshop. After a brief question and answer period, participants went around the room to learn more about the improvement alternatives developed for each intersection and provide comments using a questionnaire form. A total of 61 respondents attended the workshop. The postcard advertising the workshop, the alternative drawings, and all workshop handouts are posted on the project website.

Comments provided after the workshop were submitted by e-mail, telephone, fax, and mail. The deadline to receive comments after the June workshop was originally set for June 24, 2008. Due to a high level of community interest and a desire for more time to submit comments, the comment deadline was extended to July 19, 2008. A few comments were received after July 19 and they have also been included in the June-July sections of this report (the last comment is dated July 25, 2008).

August 2008 Midtown Residents Association Meeting

On August 28, 2008, the Midtown Residents Association (MRA) hosted a community meeting about the Oregon Expressway Improvement Project. MRA handled all meeting notifications and logistics. County staff repeated the presentation from the June workshop, shared the same improvement alternatives, and invited comments using the June workshop questionnaire. Approximately 150 respondents attended the MRA meeting.

Similar to the April and June community workshops, comments were also accepted after the MRA meeting by e-mail, fax, mail, and phone, with the final comments arriving in mid-October 2008. The comments from the MRA meeting and after the meeting are summarized in the August-October sections of this report.

Additional Public Input Forums

In addition to the workshops and MRA meeting, County staff was invited to attend meetings with the Palo Alto Bicycle Advisory Committee and the Ohlone School Parent/Teacher Association (PTA) to present the alternatives and receive input. The City of Palo Alto also forwarded comments provided to the City's Planning and Transportation Commission and to the City Council about the project.

Public Input Report

Nearly 300 questionnaires, e-mails, and phone calls were received between June and October 2008. In addition, two petitions were submitted: one with 242 signatures opposing changes to the Oregon/Middlefield intersection and one with 200 signatures supporting improvements from West Bayshore to Louis. Comments were also received from the City's Bicycle Advisory Committee, Midtown Residents Association, and Ohlone School groups.

This report summarizes the main comment themes regarding the alternatives for each intersection. It does not attempt to list every single comment.¹ The report takes into consideration comments received during the entire June through October 2008 comment period from all sources, with comments shown separately for the June through July period and for the August through October period. **Many respondents provided their comments through multiple forums during both comment periods; therefore, although the report can provide an order of magnitude for the number of similar comments submitted, precise numbers counting each individual's comments only once cannot be provided.** None of the input mechanisms used a scientifically representative sample process. All comments summarized in this report represent the opinions of those who chose to participate and are not considered statistically valid for projecting the data out to the general population.

The report is organized by intersection, describing the current intersection configuration and alternatives presented and then summarizing the comments for that intersection. The last section summarizes comments received that were not intersection specific (e.g., comments about sidewalks, sound walls, and community meeting process).

¹ A spreadsheet listing all comments received and the County's response will be posted on the project website: www.oregonexpressway.info.

West Bayshore Drive Intersection

Current Configuration

Signalized T-intersection with West Bayshore terminating at Oregon Expressway. There is a crosswalk on the west side of the intersection to provide access to the frontage road north of the expressway.

List of Alternatives Presented

1. Enhance pedestrian/wheelchair curb ramps and the landing area at the frontage road, including trimming back some of the shrubbery for improved visibility. Improve bicycle detection and timing, including adding a bicycle slot on the West Bayshore approach to Oregon Expressway.

Summary of June-July Comments

This intersection received the least number of comments (less than 15). The comments were very supportive of the improvements in Alternative 1. Additional requests included guide signage at the intersection to the US 101 pedestrian overpass and a barrier at the frontage road landing to prevent bicycles from entering the frontage road. There were also requests from frontage residents to improve the landing without trimming the shrubbery.

Summary of August-October Comments

The Bayshore Drive intersection received a few additional comments (less than 5). They were supportive of Alternative 1 with a focus on providing a safe crossing of Oregon Expressway.

Indian Drive Intersection

Current Configuration

Unsignalized T-intersection with Indian terminating at Oregon Expressway. There is a stop sign on Indian. A median opening on Oregon allows left turns from Oregon and Indian. No pedestrian crossing or access to frontage road north of the expressway exists at this location.

List of Alternatives Presented

1. Close the median with landscaping to eliminate left turns from Oregon and Indian and limit Indian to right-in and right-out access.

Summary of June-July Comments

This intersection also received few comments (less than 15). The respondents were mixed in their support or opposition to Alternative 1, with a couple more comments in opposition than in support. Concerns expressed about the alternative included diverting more traffic onto Greer and no demonstrated need for the change. A couple of respondents requested that “Keep Clear” be painted in the intersection and changes in striping be provided to assist left turns off of Oregon.

Summary of August-October Comments

Several additional comments (less than 10) were made regarding this intersection. All were opposed to closing the median, with most citing concerns about potential traffic impacts.

Greer Road Intersection

Current Configuration

Signalized intersection with permissive left turn (5-phase) signal operation (on Greer, left turn vehicles do not have their own signal phase and must yield to oncoming vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles, waiting until there is a sufficient gap in traffic to make the turn safely). Crosswalks jog at an angle on the north side of the median. Access to the frontage road from Greer north of the expressway is open.

List of Alternatives Presented

1. Provide separate left turn and through lanes at intersection approaches in both directions of Greer, allowing for protected left turn (8-phase) signal operation (left turns from both directions of Greer have their own signal phase, or green arrow indication, separate from the through movements). Straighten crosswalks. Implementation would require parking to be prohibited for about 75 feet on both sides of Greer south of Oregon Expressway.
2. In both directions of Greer, provide two lanes at intersection approaches with one for left/through traffic and one for right turns, allowing for split phase (6-phase) signal operation (all vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian movements from one direction of Greer are served first followed by movements from the other direction). Straighten crosswalk on the west side and eliminate crosswalk on the east side. Provide a bicycle slot at the southbound intersection. Implementation would require parking to be prohibited for about 75 feet on both sides of Greer south of Oregon Expressway.
3. Theoretical example for demonstration only in response to requests from April community workshop – Close access to frontage road from Greer north of Oregon Expressway to eliminate conflicts with frontage road. Lane configuration, crosswalks, 6-phase signal operation, and parking prohibitions same as Alternative 2.

Summary of June-July Comments

The Greer intersection received a medium number of comments, in the range of 20 to 30.

- Alternative 2 was most preferred as a first choice and also received the highest number of second choice preferences for a combined total of half of the responses. Respondents liked the bicycle slot and felt that the 6-phase option is safest for bicyclists and pedestrians while the 8-phase option (Alternative 1) will back up cars.
- A few respondents favored Alternative 1 with a desire to preserve both crosswalks.
- Although Alternative 3 was presented for demonstration only, a few respondents selected it as their first choice while an equal number of respondents indicated opposition to it.
- A few respondents indicated opposition to all three alternatives, listing concerns about the parking prohibitions and that the options will lessen green time for Oregon. They preferred no changes to the intersection.

Summary of August-October Comments

Around 10 additional comments were received. Similar to the June-July comments, respondents tended to favor Alternative 2 (nearly half of the comments). Alternatives 1 and 3 were each preferred by around one-quarter of the respondents. A few comments were also made about making sure that bicyclists are kept safe from right turning vehicles and bicycle detection is provided.

Louis Road Intersection

Current Configuration

Signalized intersection with permissive left turn (5-phase) signal operation (on Louis, left turn vehicles do not have their own signal phase and must yield to oncoming motor vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles, waiting until there is a sufficient gap in traffic to make the turn safely). Crosswalks jog at an angle on the north side of the median. Bicycle lanes are provided on Louis. Access to the frontage road from Louis north of the expressway is closed.

List of Alternatives Presented

1. Provide separate left turn and through lanes at intersection approaches in both directions of Louis, allowing for protected left turn (8-phase) signal operation (left turns from both directions of Louis have their own signal phase, or green arrow indication, separate from the through movements). Tighten radius at intersection corners to reduce speed of right-turning vehicles. Straighten crosswalks. Implementation would require parking to be prohibited for about 100-130 feet on both sides of Louis north and south of Oregon Expressway and stopping the bicycle lane short of the intersection.
2. In both directions of Louis, provide two lanes at intersection approaches with one for left/through traffic and one for right turns, allowing for split phase (6-phase) signal operation (all vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian movements from one direction of Louis are served first followed by movements from the other direction). Tighten radius at intersection corners to reduce speed of right-turning vehicles. Straighten crosswalk on the west side and eliminate crosswalk on the east side. Implementation would require parking to be prohibited for about 100 feet on both sides of Louis north and south of Oregon Expressway and stopping the bicycle lane short of the intersection.

Summary of June-July Comments

The Louis intersection received slightly more comments than Greer but still in the medium range (20 to 30).

- Alternative 1 was most preferred by approximately half of the respondents, with a few others indicating that both alternatives were acceptable.
- Alternative 2 was preferred by approximately one-third of respondents. However, some respondents were opposed to Alternative 2 because they objected to eliminating the crosswalk on the east side with a concern that a preschool at Louis and Garland needed the crosswalk.
- A few respondents objected to both alternatives listing concerns about the parking prohibitions and that the options will lessen green time for Oregon. They preferred no changes to the intersection.
- Many respondents asked that the bicycle lanes be continued on Louis through the intersection under both alternatives.

Summary of August-October Comments

Several additional comments were received (less than 10). Preferences for Alternatives 1 and 2 were generally equally split. A few of the comments requested continuing the bicycle lane through the intersection and providing other accommodations for bicyclists, such as bicycle islands and bicycle detection.

Ross Road Intersection

Current Configuration

Unsignalized intersection with stop signs on Ross. A median opening on Oregon allows left turns from Oregon and Ross. There is a crosswalk on the west side of the intersection. Access to frontage road from Ross north of the expressway is open.

List of Alternatives Presented

1. Close the median with landscaping to eliminate left turns from Ross and Oregon and limit Ross to right-in and right-out access. Eliminate crosswalk and provide new sidewalk on south side of Oregon for pedestrians to access signalized intersection at Middlefield.
2. Reconfigure northbound and southbound Ross to allow right-turn exits only (no left turns or crossing Oregon). Use signage to prohibit left turns from Oregon onto Ross during peak hours. Eliminate crosswalk and provide new sidewalk on south side of Oregon for pedestrians to access signalized intersection at Middlefield.

Summary of June-July Comments

The Ross intersection received a high number of comments, in the range of 40 to 45.

- A little over half of the respondents indicated opposition to both alternatives, citing concerns about traffic being detoured to other streets and long detours for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Around one-quarter of the respondents indicated that Alternative 2 was preferred, with a few of them saying that left turns from Oregon should not be posted as prohibited during peak hours for this alternative.
- One group indicated opposition to closing the median because of the designation of Ross Road as a future bicycle boulevard and suggested pursuing Alternative 2 but also adding a bicycle/pedestrian signal now to support the development of the bicycle boulevard.
- Alternative 1 was preferred by several respondents who expressed concern about traffic using their street to bypass red lights at the Middlefield/Oregon intersection.
- A few respondents suggested a traffic signal should be added at this intersection.

Summary of August-October Comments

The Ross intersection received a relatively high number of comments during this comment period as well, in the range of 25 to 30.

- Nearly three-quarters of the comments indicated opposition to both alternatives, citing concerns about traffic being detoured to other streets. Many of the respondents noted they live on streets that may be affected by the increased traffic.
- Around one-quarter of the respondents indicated that Alternative 2 was preferred, with most stating they wanted the design to support Palo Alto's plans for a bicycle boulevard on Ross, including having a light for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross Oregon Expressway.

Middlefield Road Intersection

Current Configuration

Signalized intersection with split phase (6-phase) signal operation (all vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian movements from one direction of Middlefield are served first followed by movements from the other direction). Middlefield has four lanes (two lanes each direction) on both sides of the intersection. Access to the frontage road from Middlefield north of the expressway is closed.

List of Alternatives Presented

1. Add left-turn pockets on both directions of Middlefield allowing for protected left turn (8-phase) signal operation (left turns from both directions of Middlefield have their own signal phase, or green arrow indication, separate from the through movements). The right-hand lane at the approach to the intersection in each direction is for through and right turns. Room for nine-foot left-turn pockets is provided by reducing four existing lanes to ten feet wide and reducing the landscape strip on three sides of the intersection: five-foot reduction on the northwest side; and three-foot reductions on the northeast and southeast sides. The reduction of the three landscape strips would require removing a total of thirteen trees.
2. Add left-turn pockets on both directions of Middlefield allowing for 8-phase signal operation (left turns from both directions of Middlefield have their own signal phase, or green arrow indication, separate from the through movements). The right-hand lane at the southbound approach to the intersection is for through and right turns while the right-hand lane at the northbound approach is designated for right turns only. Northbound across the expressway would be a single seventeen-foot lane providing a wide shoulder for bicycle use at the northeast corner. Room for the nine-foot left-turn pockets is provided by reducing other lanes to ten feet wide at the northwest, southwest, and southeast corners and reducing the landscape strip on two sides of the intersection: five-foot reduction on the northwest side and three-foot reduction on the southeast side. The reduction of the two landscape strips would require removing a total of eight trees.
3. Add left-turn pockets on both directions of Middlefield allowing for 8-phase signal operation (left turns from both directions of Middlefield have their own signal phase, or green arrow indication, separate from the through movements). The right-hand lane at the northbound and southbound approaches to the intersection is for through and right turns. Room for the nine-foot left-turn pockets is provided by reducing four existing lanes to nine feet wide and a five-foot reduction in the landscape strip on the northwest side. The reduction of one landscape strip would require removing a total of five trees.

Summary of June-July Comments

The Middlefield intersection received nearly 90 comments, more than double any other intersection. In addition, a petition with 242 signatures was submitted.

- More than half of all comments opposed all three alternatives for the Middlefield intersection, with the greatest objection being the removal of trees and reduction in landscape strips. The petition also opposed all three alternatives objecting to the removal of the trees and landscape strips and expressing concern that this will diminish pedestrian safety and walkability of the intersection.
- Approximately 15% of the comments indicated support for Alternative 1 as first or second choice. Alternatives 2 and 3 were each supported by 10% of respondents. A few respondents noted that Alternative 3 was the least drastic in terms of tree and landscape strip impacts. For Alternative 2, it

was suggested that sharrows be added to the lanes to support shared use by motor vehicles and bicyclists and that the 17-foot northbound lane be narrower to help reduce impacts on the landscape strip on the northwest side.

- A few respondents indicated support for having an 8-phase signal cycle and/or noted that the Middlefield intersection was a bottleneck for Oregon Expressway that needed to be fixed.
- Some suggestions were made to just change one of the through lanes to a left turn lane in each direction, maintaining two lanes on Middlefield at the intersection, so that an 8-phase signal cycle could be implemented without affecting the trees or landscape strips.

Summary of August-October Comments

The Middlefield intersection received a high number of comments again, in the range of 40 to 50.

- Nearly 60% of the respondents opposed all three improvements, with the primary reason being the removal of the trees and reduction in landscape strips. Many of the respondents suggested other configurations that would not impact the trees/landscape strips including having one lane in each direction with a center turn lane, converting one lane to left turn and the second lane to through/right turns in both directions, and making changes on sections of Middlefield further north of project limits.
- Approximately 15% of respondents favored Alternative 3 stating a desire for better traffic flow and stopping cut through traffic. Another 10% indicated a preference for Alternative 3 if it could be done without removing any trees.
- Approximately one-tenth of the comments were general statements of support for improving the Middlefield intersection to improve traffic flow.

Cowper Street Intersection

Current Configuration

Signalized intersection with permissive left turn (5-phase) signal operation (on Cowper, left turn vehicles do not have their own signal phase and must yield to oncoming motor vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles, waiting until there is a sufficient gap in traffic to make the turn safely). Cowper has two lanes (one lane each direction) on both sides of the intersection. Access to both frontage roads from Cowper (north and southwest of the expressway) is open.

List of Alternatives Presented

1. Provide separate left turn and through lanes at intersection approaches in both directions of Cowper, allowing for protected left turn (8-phase) signal operation (left turns from both directions of Cowper have their own signal phase, or green arrow indication, separate from the through movements). Straighten crosswalks. Implementation would require parking to be prohibited for about 60 feet on the east side of Cowper south of Oregon Expressway.

Summary of June-July Comments

The Cowper intersection received a similar number of comments as Greer, in the medium range of 20 to 30.

- Approximately half of the respondents stated a preference that no changes be made at the Cowper intersection and a couple of respondents objected to adding left-turn lanes.
- Around one-third of the comments indicated support for Alternative 1.
- Some respondents suggested making the intersection a split phase (6-phase) signal operation rather than a protected left turn (8 phase) signal operation.

Summary of August-October Comments

Cowper received less than 10 additional comments. A little over half of the comments stated a preference that no changes be made at this intersection, citing concerns that Alternative 1 would encourage more cut-through traffic trying to avoid the Middlefield/Oregon intersection. There were a couple of comments requesting traffic movement restrictions or traffic calming at the intersection.

Waverley Street Intersection

Current Configuration

Unsignalized intersection with stop signs on Waverley. A median opening on Oregon allows left turns from Oregon and Waverley. There are crosswalks on both sides of the intersection. Access to the frontage road from Waverley north of the expressway is open.

List of Alternatives Presented

1. Close the median with landscaping to eliminate left turns from Waverley and Oregon and limit Waverley to right-in and right-out access. Eliminate crosswalks and provide new sidewalk on south side of Oregon for pedestrians to access signalized intersections at Cowper (through Anton Court) and Bryant.
2. Reconfigure northbound and southbound Waverley to allow right-turn exits only (no left turns or crossing Oregon). Use signage to prohibit left turns from Oregon onto Waverley during peak hours. Eliminate crosswalks and provide new sidewalk on south side of Oregon for pedestrians to access signalized intersections at Cowper (through Anton Court) and Bryant.

Summary of June-July Comments

The Waverley intersection received a similar number of comments as the Ross intersection, in the high range of 40 to 45.

- Approximately one-third of the respondents expressed support for Alternative 1.
- Another one-third of the respondents indicated opposition to both alternatives, with a few of them listing concerns about sending traffic to Cowper or Bryant or to a lack of demonstrated need for any changes.
- Nearly a quarter of the respondents preferred Alternative 2. Some of the respondents stated they prefer Alternative 2 without the left turn peak period restrictions for left turns off of Oregon Expressway.
- A few respondents requested that a traffic signal be added to the intersection while a couple of comments were made to maintain bicycle and pedestrian crossings of Oregon Expressway at Waverley.

Summary of August-October Comments

Waverley received a high number of comments in this comment period, in the range of 40 to 50.

- Over half of the comments indicated opposition to both alternatives, citing concerns about traffic being detoured to other streets. Many of the respondents noted they live on streets that may be affected by the increased traffic.
- Approximately one-quarter of the respondents expressed support for Alternative 1, with many noting they were residents on Waverley.
- Approximately 15% of the respondents favored Alternative 2 or some kind of left turn restrictions onto Waverley during peak hours.
- There were a few requests to put in a traffic signal but an equal number stating opposition to adding a traffic signal.

Bryant Street Intersection

Current Configuration

Signalized intersection with permissive left turn (5-phase) signal operation (on Bryant, left turn vehicles do not have their own signal phase and must yield to oncoming motor vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles, waiting until there is a sufficient gap in traffic to make the turn safely). Crosswalks jog at an angle on the north side of the median. Access to the frontage road from Bryant north of the expressway is open.

List of Alternatives Presented

1. Provide separate left turn and through lanes at intersection approaches in both directions of Bryant, allowing for protected left turn (8-phase) signal operation (left turns from both directions of Bryant have their own signal phase, or green arrow indication, separate from the through movements). Straighten crosswalks. Implementation would require parking to be prohibited for about 75 feet on both sides of Bryant south of Oregon Expressway.
2. In both directions of Bryant, provide two lanes at intersection approaches with one for left/through traffic and one for right turns, allowing for split phase (6-phase) signal operation (all vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian movements from one direction of Bryant are served first followed by movements from the other direction). Straighten crosswalk on the west side and eliminate crosswalk on the east side. Provide a bicycle slot at the southbound intersection. Implementation would require parking to be prohibited for about 75 feet on both sides of Bryant south of Oregon Expressway.
3. Theoretical example for demonstration only in response to requests from April community workshop – Close access to frontage road from Bryant north of Oregon Expressway to eliminate conflicts with frontage road. Lane configuration, crosswalks, 6-phase signal operation, and parking prohibitions same as Alternative 2.

Summary of June-July Comments

The Bryant intersection received a high level of comments in the range of 40 to 45.

- Approximately one-third of the comments objected to all alternatives, stating that no changes should be made to the intersection.
- Around one-quarter of the respondents favored Alternative 1 as their first choice.
- Another one-quarter indicated that Alternative 2 was either their first or second choice; however, a few respondents expressed a preference that only one lane be provided for the northbound approach to the intersection.
- Several respondents requested that motor vehicle movement on Bryant through the intersection be restricted in one way or another while maintaining the bicycle and pedestrian crossing of Oregon Expressway at Bryant in support of Bryant's designation as a bicycle boulevard. Some respondents requested that bike lanes be added to Bryant.
- Although Alternative 3 was presented for demonstration only, a few respondents selected it as their first choice while several respondents indicated opposition to it.
- A few respondents also requested speed meters on Oregon at the Bryant intersection.

Summary of August-October Comments

Around 10 additional comments were received. One-third of the respondents favored Alternative 1 as their first choice, while one comment each favored no changes, Alternative 2 or Alternative 3. Other comments noted that bicycles should be supported or opposed adding left turn lanes due to negative impacts on right turns from Oregon Expressway.

General Comments (not specific to an intersection)

For the June-July period, a medium number of comments (in the range of 20 to 30) were received that related to the entire Oregon Expressway Improvement Project rather than specific intersection alternatives. For the August-October period, an additional 20 to 25 general comments were received. All non-intersection specific comments are summarized below.

Improvements for All Signalized Intersections

The project also includes the following improvements at all signalized intersections: new signal equipment; improved Americans with Disability Act (ADA), pedestrian, and bicycle access at corners; pedestrian countdown signals; and red light violation indicators (i.e., “rat boxes”) for enhanced police enforcement.

These improvements were generally well received and supported regardless of individual positions on the various alternatives. A concern was expressed that the red light violation indicators would lead to more siren noise; however, many others reiterated concerns with red light running at the intersections.

Support for Improvements from Louis to West Bayshore

A petition with 200 signatures was submitted by a representative of the Ohlone PTA supporting intersection improvements from Louis to West Bayshore.

Oregon Expressway Signal Coordination

Several respondents reiterated their desire for improved signal coordination along Oregon Expressway to “improve the flow”, with some expressing concern about motor vehicles detouring from Oregon Expressway onto neighborhood streets to avoid red lights on Oregon. Similar to comments from the first community workshop on April 3, 2008, some respondents expressed concerns about speeding along Oregon Expressway, asking that the signals be coordinated to a slower speed, there be more enforcement, speed bumps be installed, or electronic speed signs be added.

Opposition to Entire Project

A few respondents indicated opposition to the entire project and all its potential improvements. Some comments related to these positions were that the focus should be to promote commute alternatives to the single occupant automobile, or that the project money should be spent on red light/speed enforcement or to fix the Alma/Oregon interchange problems.

General Bicycle Related Comments

A few comments were made related to bicycling not specific to an intersection. These included requesting a dedicated space for student bicyclists to wait at intersections and/or wider shoulders for shared bicycle/pedestrian use, reducing signal cycle times and increasing green times for bicyclists to cross Oregon, adding more bicycle lanes, and keeping the frontage road open to bicyclists.

Sound Walls

Many respondents expressed opposition to the construction of sound walls stating that they do not want to lose landscaping/trees to sound walls and expressing concern about “walling off” the expressway and making it “freeway-like”. There were also a couple of requests to install sound walls.²

Sidewalks on South Side of Oregon Expressway

At the community workshops, a map of a proposed pedestrian route plan along Oregon Expressway was shared. This map was developed as part of the 2008 Update to the 2003 Comprehensive County Expressway Planning Study, where pedestrian route maps are being developed for all eight expressways. For Oregon Expressway, the map includes the Oregon Avenue frontage road for pedestrian travel along the north side of the expressway and a mix of existing sidewalks, frontage/parallel streets, and proposed new sidewalks for the south side. The improvement alternatives for the unsignalized intersections (Indian, Ross, and Waverley) include filling in sidewalk gaps along the south side to connect pedestrians from the unsignalized intersections to the nearest signalized intersections for access to the north side of the expressway.

There were approximately 25 comments related to sidewalks. A few opposed any new sidewalks on the south side regardless of location. Several opposed installing sidewalks connecting Bryant to Waverley and to High Street, with concerns about losing landscaping/trees along the relatively narrow landscaping strips between the homes and Oregon Expressway in the Bryant vicinity. While several respondents indicated support for all sidewalk segments along the south side, the greatest level of support were for new sidewalk segments connecting Ross to Middlefield and Indian to Greer.

A few respondents were under the impression that the Oregon Expressway Improvement project will eliminate some existing sidewalk segments on cross streets and expressed opposition to this.³

Oregon Expressway/El Camino Real Intersection

Improvement alternatives were not shown for this intersection because the City of Palo Alto will be determining and making any improvements as a separate project. However, there were a few write in comments about this intersection, including that traffic signal timing must be improved here as well as along the rest of Oregon Expressway and requests for a “rat box” to detect red light running and a flyover ramp.

Meeting Notices and Materials

Several respondents commented that the postcards and ads about the community meetings caused people to think that all improvements would be limited to Oregon Expressway and not affect cross streets or that this was simply a signal timing project. Some also stated that June 9 was bad timing for a meeting because it was the last week of school and they were unavailable. They requested another

² For clarification, sound walls are not part of the Oregon Expressway Improvement Project. They are not an eligible use of the grant funds for the project. Several respondents complained about noise levels and some requested sound walls during the April 2008 community input process but the County’s response was that they are outside project scope. The 2003 Comprehensive County Expressway Planning Study did include a noise analysis for all eight expressways and noted that additional noise mitigation is needed for Oregon Expressway; however, determining the type of noise mitigation improvements to use would be a separate project subject to its own community outreach process should funding become available for noise mitigation in the future.

³ For clarification, none of the improvement alternatives involve removing existing sidewalks on Oregon Expressway or any of the cross streets. Some sidewalks may be modified at intersection corners to provide pedestrian curb ramps, but no sidewalk gaps will be created.

community meeting where all residents are more clearly notified about how the cross streets may be affected. There was also a complaint that it was not clear that the August 28 MRA meeting would not have new information available.

Comments were also made that the maps need to be clearer on orientation, should include a legend, and should show more than just partial blocks from Oregon Expressway so all changes could be seen. Suggestions were also made for improving the project web site.

Traffic Data Requests

Some respondents requested more data (e.g., traffic volumes, collision data) to support the need for the alternatives. There was also the suggestion that the project consider proposed new developments (e.g., high density housing, police station) that may affect Oregon Expressway and cross street traffic demand in the development of potential improvements.