

From: Gary Lauder gary@lauderpartners.com
Subject: M-2 DEIR Comments
Date: August 1, 2016 at 5:30 PM
To: connectmenlo@menlopark.org

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Deanna Chow
Planning Division
City of Menlo Park

Dear Ms. Chow,

While I am a member of the Atherton Transportation Committee, I am not speaking on behalf of it nor Atherton, but rather as a private citizen concerned about the welfare of all citizens in the area, not just my town. The traffic impacts of the development plans in the M-2 Zone will be substantial. Since many of the affected roads and intersections were already very congested, the congestion impact of the incremental traffic will be disproportionate. The graph below shows the relationship between the level of congestion and incremental vehicles. Many streets in MP are on the far right (steep) part of the curve, so the Transportation Impact Fees (TIF) should be appropriately high to fund the many ways that traffic can be alleviated.

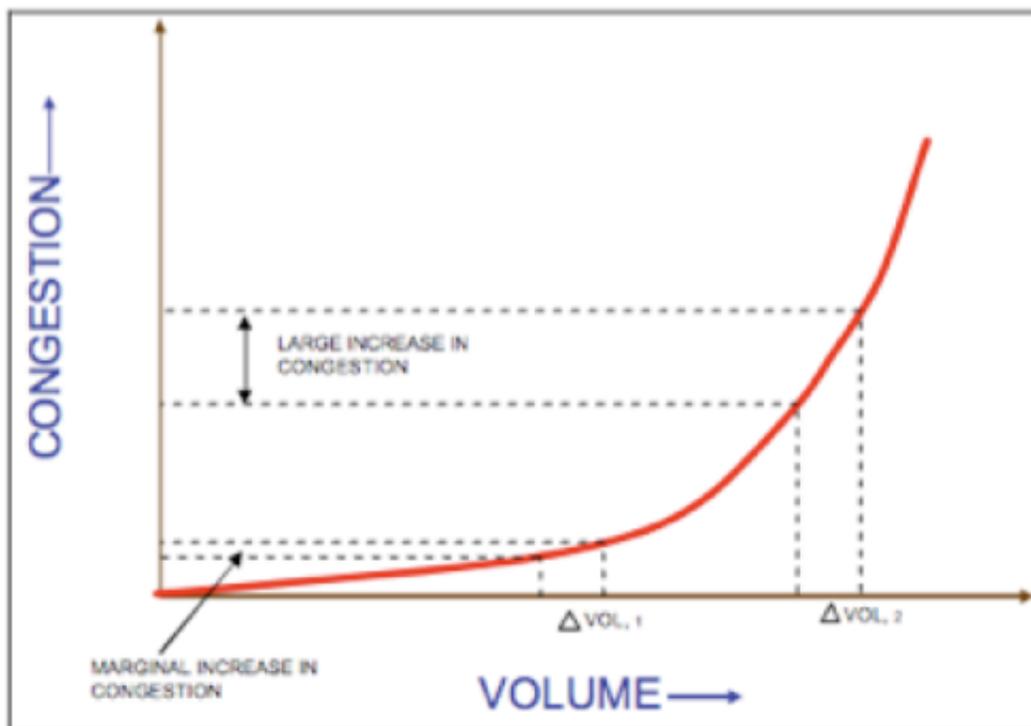


Figure 1: Illustration showing the effect of incremental vehicle volume on congestion.

From: <http://www.examiner.com/article/why-aaa-is-wrong-about-congestion-and-bike-lanes>

Many of the traffic impacts were described as being "significant and unavoidable." Calling it "unavoidable" betrays an attitude of hopelessness and intellectual poverty that we have come to expect — but should not accept — from local government that has the intellect and resources to actually avoid them. Those resources would be obtained via TIFs and other means.

The time that people waste stuck in traffic is valuable. For more on that, see my 11-min. presentation: <http://bit.ly/GML-TEDx> When the value of people's time is multiplied by the vast numbers of people delayed, it becomes evident that investing in the additional capacity to accelerate traffic has a high return on investment.

The main opportunity to decongest this area's congestion would be via improving the 2 intersections of: Bayfront (84) & Willow and Bayfront (84) & University. As I explained in a letter to the MP City Council on 2/23/16 (http://lauderpartners.com/MP/Memo_to_MP_City_Council_re_Willow-101_Interchange.html), the monies destined for replacing the interchange of 101 & Willow should instead be redirected to upgrading the 2 Bayfront intersections. Not fixing those prior to replacing the 101 interchange would be even worse. There are many potential ways of improving affected roads such that the word "unavoidable" should only be used after having already tried the following (among others):

bridges, tunnels, non-grade crossings, additional turn lanes, additional lanes, eminent domain, roundabouts, etc.

I am not advocating for MP to pay for all this. I think that the appropriate thing would be for all developers to pay TIFs for its incremental traffic (at very high rates given the points above) toward projects that would also be paid for by Caltrans, MP and perhaps also incremental tolls collected on the Dumbarton bridge.

California state law mandates that any time a new traffic signal is considered, a roundabout must be considered for that location as an alternative. Roundabouts often provide more throughput than traffic lights, and they are much safer (90% reduction in fatalities). That would be a better form of intersection than the reconfigured traffic light planned for 280 & Sand Hill.

Turn restrictions in order to reduce cut-through traffic do not reduce congestion, they just shift it elsewhere.

We are an advanced society that suffers from traffic problems due to having given up on solving problems using hundred year old technology (bridges, tunnels, etc.). One rationalization for the hopelessness is believing in "induced demand" — the notion that more capacity just invites more traffic such that it doesn't help. I believe that that perspective misreads the data and that actually it is a result of pent-up demand.

Menlo Park has some of the worst traffic in the Bay Area, which has the worst in the country, so I hope that will not succumb to the doctrine of hopelessness. It's not "unavoidable."

Thanks,

-Gary Lauder

PS: for more background, see: <http://lauderpartners.com/MP/>