



Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning
Mountain View, CA 94041

March 20, 2016

City Council
City of Mountain View

Re: Item 3.1, March 22, 2016 Council agenda: Mountain View Transit Center Master Plan

Honorable Mayor Showalter and Members of the City Council:

The Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning, a group of Mountain View residents concerned with our city's sustainability, would like to comment on the above item, the topic of your study session.

We emphatically agree with Council and Staff that trains must be separated from everything else at this grade crossing. However, critical information is missing.

How many people currently cross the tracks in each direction and by what mode, i.e., pedestrians, bicycles, shuttles, public transit, and private vehicles? How do all of these various modes exit downtown? It is not clear how trips using shuttles or buses were counted. Are the well-known Castro/Moffett major vehicle backups in both directions occurring only at peak periods, and how much of the total daily vehicle traffic does that contribute to? Please see Adina Levin's blog post, <http://www.greencaltrain.com/2016/03/tuesday-should-mountain-view-trench-its-pedestrian-friendly-main-street-or-close-the-train-crossing-to-cars/>.

This information is needed for making the best decisions. Additionally, evaluation of an underpass of the tracks—and probably Central—has to analyze the huge direct cost, construction disruption, and continuing impacts on the economy and culture of the 100 block of Castro. Making the north end of Castro car-free sounds like a very good choice to many of us, so we strongly encourage the City to look carefully at some form of Alternative 4.

We expect a large increase in pedestrian and bicycle crossing of the tracks and Central Expressway once there is a way to cross safely. To achieve this, what are the safest, quickest, least landscape-consuming, and physically accessible possibilities for everyone? Rapid and slow pedestrians, strollers, and wheelchairs all need to be accommodated and physically separated from bicycles for safety at all times. Please maintain full-width walkways, both ground level and above, not blocked by structures or poles, and not creating visual blight such as shown in the Attachment 5 overcrossing. As stairs are not universally accessible, ramps should be considered. (Is there enough horizontal distance for a non-vehicular overcrossing that is simply a shallow arc?) Alternative 3 is problematical as pedestrians only get a grade crossing of Central Expressway, and the Central Expressway median ramps recall the very unsatisfactory situation dating back many years at Oregon Expressway and Alma Street in Palo Alto.

We need to understand how much and when vehicular traffic occurs, to best resolve circulation issues. Routing northbound traffic onto westbound Evelyn and then Shoreline does not look good as described. Are there enough northbound vehicles from the Transit Center to justify constructing an expensive vehicles-only Evelyn onramp to the Shoreline overcrossing? Wouldn't that make it even more crowded and dangerous than it is now? Circulation analysis for all the streets in that area is essential.

If the Evelyn-Shoreline option is also proposed for northbound vehicles approaching the tracks from further south, how is a left turn from northbound Castro onto Villa (a turn that cannot be banned without cutting out access to a lot of businesses) to be prevented? Is Evelyn Avenue wide enough to allow for good bike lanes as well as all those cars? An alternative attractive to drivers might be allowing them to go west the first few blocks of Evelyn from Castro, then on Villa westbound to Shoreline between Franklin and Oak, using a single-lane cut-through across the edge of the police-fire station property.

But any vehicular use of Evelyn heading west from Castro eliminates a very desirable pedestrian plaza (see Alternative 2) at the north end of Castro, which would easily allow people to cross the street there.

Will Shoreline Blvd. become the only way vehicles can get between Moffett Boulevard just north of Central Expressway and downtown?

Have #81 bus line riders been considered, including those going between downtown and MVHS or El Camino Hospital? We doubt they were represented at the Community Meeting.

How many people using all modes travel explicitly to the Transit Center? Could those coming from the north side have a way to avoid the train crossing altogether, including parking on the north side?

Where will the downtown terminus be located for the high-capacity transit to North Bayshore, so it has easy Transit Center access?

Shouldn't some important questions like this be considered at least in general terms during Phase I, for all alternatives, not postponed completely to Phase II of the Transit Center Master Plan?

Thank you very much for taking our comments into account.

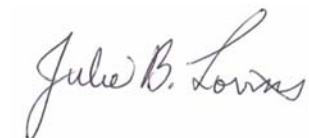
Sincerely,



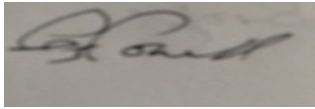
Cliff Chambers



Aaron Grossman



Julie B. Lovins

A rectangular image showing a handwritten signature in dark ink on a light-colored background. The signature is cursive and appears to read "Peg Powell".

Peg Powell

for the Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning

cc: James Lightbody, Linda Forsberg, Michael Fuller, Dan Rich, Lorrie Brewer