

February 12, 2007

Jeremy Ketchum, Environmental Branch Chief
Attention: Ken Lastufka
Dept. of Transportation, Environmental Planning
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95833

Sac 50 Bus/Carpool Lanes and Community Enhancement Project Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (DEIR/EA)

Dear Mr. Lastufka,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

East Sacramento Improvement Association (ESIA) is a neighborhood association in the east part of the City of Sacramento and a member of Neighbors Advocating Sustainable Transportation (NAST). Our neighborhood abuts a segment of highway 50 that is proposed for widening under this project. ESIA is submitting comments on this project because we support the NAST principles of cheaper, cleaner, efficient transportation; using transportation funding for sustainable projects with long-term benefits other than widening freeways; and livable communities protected from freeway and traffic impacts. We are particularly concerned that the DEIR/EA does not seriously evaluate the possibility of enhanced public transport (e. g., double-tracking light rail to Folsom) as an alternative to increasing the capacity of Highway 50 by means of HOV lanes.

In addition we have the following comments.

Traffic Impacts

There are several highway 50 exits into our neighborhood, including 65th Street and 59th Streets. Folsom Boulevard parallels the highway on the north side and runs the length of our neighborhood. Folsom Blvd. is a very busy commercial street. When cars leave highway 50 to try to avoid slow traffic on the highway they travel up and down Folsom Blvd, bringing traffic on this street to a complete standstill, which increases the amount of time it takes to reach highway 50 on ramps, Folsom Blvd. businesses, or even our own street and homes.

Parallel to Folsom Blvd. is M Street, a residential street and major bike route. This street is heavily used by bicyclists, pedestrians and local residential traffic. It is also becoming an alternative route for cars when Folsom Blvd. is backed up. Along M Street and Folsom Blvd. are several schools, both public and private. Traffic in the mornings and afternoons is busy when parents are dropping off and picking up their children.

The DEIR/EA needs to address the local traffic circulation and air quality impacts to our neighborhood from these traffic impacts. Specifically, evaluate the baseline traffic circulation and congestion in East Sacramento. Also, evaluate how bicyclists, pedestrians, school children and local residential auto traffic are now already impacted by auto traffic congestion along Folsom Blvd. and M Street, and what the increased impact of the highway widening project may be on the situation. It is possible that introduction of HOV lanes on Highway 50 would initially relieve congestion, thereby decreasing the

amount of traffic diverted to Folsom Boulevard. However, it is most likely that traffic will increase in the future, to the point that Highway 50 is once again highly congested, and the impact to Folsom Boulevard could be worse than ever. Impacts to address should include access to commercial businesses along Folsom Blvd; access to the highway 50 on ramps from Folsom Blvd. and 65th St.; accidents involving bicyclists, pedestrians, other autos, and school children being hit by cars in the neighborhood.

Air Quality

ESIA is concerned about toxic air pollution impacts on school children attending our neighborhood schools, which will result from more cars, buses and trucks using a widened highway 50.

The Draft EIR/EA says that air quality impacts will be temporary and construction related, with no significant impact. However, the additional traffic that will use a widened freeway is a significant, long-term and permanent impact for which the DEIR/EA provides no description or mitigation.

There are several schools in close proximity to highway 50 between 65th and 34th streets (Phoebe Hearst, Sacred Heart, St. Mary's, St. Francis, David Lubin). Recent studies have shown that air quality is worse close to freeways and that this has a negative impact on children going to schools located near freeways. For example in a recent study by Breathe California (2006 *T.A. Cahill, PhD, UC Davis: Vehicular Particulate Exposures and Potential Mitigations Downwind of Watt Avenue, Sacramento, California*) exhaust particle levels at Arden Middle School (just east/upwind of Watt Ave.) were higher than the area near the Roseville railyard.

Please evaluate the air quality impacts on schools within a mile of the project corridor and the impacts to school children attending those schools. Please provide an air quality impact analysis for each of these schools.

Thank you for considering our concerns.

Sincerely,

Jim Collins
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