



Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning and
GreenSpacesMV
c/o Aaron Grossman
817 Montgomery Street
Mountain View, CA 94041

Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition
96 N. Third Street, Suite 375
San José, CA 95112

May 24, 2021

City of Mountain View City Council
City Hall, 500 Castro Street
PO Box 7540
Mountain View, CA 94039-7540

Re: Recommended Priorities for Multi-modal Transportation Infrastructure Projects

Dear Mayor Kamei and City Council members:

The undersigned organizations would like to provide comments on the priorities we see as important in driving future decisions related to identifying, planning, prioritizing, and executing multi-modal transportation projects in the City of Mountain View.

We are really excited about the projects that are currently in the City of Mountain View's pipeline, including the El Camino Real Streetscape Project and the California Street Complete Street Improvements Pilot Project, both of which we feel are especially progressive in their introduction of Complete Streets elements to the City of Mountain View. We would also like to applaud your leadership in having established a Vision Zero Policy and a Complete Streets Policy,

and your more recent efforts of developing an Active Transportation Plan. Finally, we would like to voice our strong support for your proposal to revisit the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program to determine and implement measures to further calm traffic.

Moving forward, we would like to encourage you to continue along this path of innovation and to further expand your efforts. In particular, we feel that adopting the following priorities, formalizing them in your Active Transportation Plan, and using them to drive prioritization of project funding will not only help the city achieve some of the goals listed in your proposed 2021-23 Strategic Roadmap Action Plan—Mobility and Connectivity, Sustainability and Climate Resilience, and Livability and Quality of Life—but will also establish the City of Mountain View as a thought leader in progressive city design.

Following are our suggested priorities in no particular order:

Designing for People, not Cars

When designing and choosing projects, consider those that put people first—projects that encourage people to get out of their cars and move around the City more frequently under their own steam; projects that make it easier for people to engage with their neighbors and their community by making it more comfortable, safer, and more enjoyable to be outside and to move around the City on foot or by bicycle. A people-first approach is gaining traction and popularity not only for its positive impact on mitigating climate change and improving the physical and mental health of individuals, but also for its ability to strengthen bonds within a community by promoting more face-to-face interactions more frequently.

Taking an Integrated Approach

In line with the approach we've been promoting over the past few months, that which is **more integrated, holistic**, we are happy to see, and fully endorse, the plans for a new Active Transportation Plan (ATP)—which integrates the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans—added to the 2021 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) list. Additional ways to improve the coordination of various City efforts could include:

- Considering the integration of the Vision Zero Policy when creating the new ATP. This approach would lower the expense overall and help Mountain View develop a truly world-class ATP.

- Implementation of private development projects should be tightly coordinated with Public Works to ensure ATP and Green Complete Streets goals are achieved at the same time. Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition (SVBC) has posted some recommendations for [Bike Friendly Developments](#) that can be shared with developers.
- As part of the regular repaving program, bicycle and pedestrian projects that have been identified as part of the ATP and prioritized by AccessMV should be evaluated and included in repaving projects where applicable. Additionally, upcoming repaving actions and information about selection and scheduling criteria should be reviewed with the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee on a regular basis. The more open the public process, the better.

Redefining Complete Streets as Green Complete Streets

Cities around the world are blazing forward in their adoption of both complete and green street policies to guide them in the design of their streets. This is a more holistic approach to the creation of a network of streets and communities that is focused on people and their natural environment instead of cars. The impacts of these changes on the climate are obvious: an increase in the number of trips made by bike or by foot translates directly into reduced CO2 emissions, and an increase in vegetation creates a larger network of carbon sinks.

We would like to see **Green Complete Streets concepts** incorporated as much as possible in projects serving pedestrians and bicyclists (such as Project 21-40: California Street Complete Street Pilot). Some examples include:

- Converting pavement to mini-parks and/or other examples of more permeable, heat-reflective surfaces.
- Adding plants to bulbouts, roundabouts, and along streets to help calm traffic, improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists, and make our streets more comfortable and inviting to encourage getting around our city using options other than vehicle travel.
- And, more specifically for selecting vegetation, choosing native plants that are drought tolerant, pollinator friendly, and provide a shaded canopy for those walking and bicycling around the City.

Some recent examples of cities and regions that have developed Green Complete Streets policies and elements include [Seattle](#), [Portland](#), [Vancouver](#), [New Jersey](#), [Philadelphia](#), and, closer to home, [San Mateo County](#).

Strategically Prioritizing Projects

We have noted that the projects included in the [planned discretionary projects \(Attachment 3\)](#) for the years 2021-22 through 2023-24 have not changed since they were [last updated in August 2020](#). We would like to request that the newly developed [AccessMV](#) priorities (and public consultation) be used to prioritize transportation projects.

Choosing a Quick-build Approach More Often

We would like to see the City choose a quick-build approach to project planning and implementation—like the pop-up protected bikeway that was installed along California Street during the summer of 2019—on a more regular basis. Bicycle and pedestrian improvements have traditionally taken years to get implemented and have come with a huge price tag. As you know, the quick-build pilot project approach is meant to address these issues by requiring a much shorter up-front design phase and a more extensive use of lower-cost construction materials. The result is a quicker implementation at a fraction of the cost. It also has the added benefit of helping a City realize its climate, mode-share, and Vision Zero goals much sooner. And, as [SFMTA has learned](#), the quick-build approach can serve as a form of on-the-ground community outreach, giving the public a chance to try out improvements prior to making major investments and the City an opportunity to quickly address any issues that might crop up. Pilot projects that prove to be fruitful can then be upgraded to permanent fixtures.

Connecting Communities

Finally, we'd like to see projects that improve and expand Mountain View's east-west connectivity to adjoining communities prioritized and moved earlier in the CIP schedule. In particular:

- **California Street Complete Street Pilot (21-40).** We'd like to see this project be made a Staff priority. It is Mountain View's first example of a Complete Street; it serves a more densely populated area of Mountain View, and it has a reasonably small price tag of \$760K. We feel that one option to expedite implementation would be to follow the quick-build approach suggested earlier.
- **Middlefield Road feasibility studies for pedestrian (24-35) and bicycling facilities (24-36).** Middlefield Road through many parts of Mountain View is dangerous and uncomfortable in multiple ways, and it's time we brought this entire roadway up to current standards. The combined price tag is \$800K. We would also advocate for having this project implemented sooner rather than later as a quick-build pilot first. Middlefield is a prime example of a street where this would be feasible.
- **Palo Alto's Ellen Fletcher Bicycle Boulevard extension into Mountain View.** We feel that it is one more example of an east-west artery that could better connect Mountain View with Palo Alto. The boulevard on the Mountain View side could benefit from the introduction of Complete Streets elements to make it a safer and more popular route among residents of both Mountain View and Palo Alto.

We would like to thank you again for your time and your attention, and we sincerely hope you will engage us in further discussion on our suggestions.

Sincerely,

April Webster on behalf of
Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning
GreenSpacesMV

Emma Shlaes, Deputy Director
Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition

cc:

Ria Lo, Transportation Manager, City of Mountain View
Dawn Cameron, Public Works Director, City of Mountain View

About Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning

The Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning is a local volunteer-based organization dedicated to making Mountain View as beautiful, economically healthy, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian accessible, and affordable as possible. MVCSP member interest and expertise covers areas such as housing, transportation, the environment, the economy, and beyond!

For more information, see <http://www.mvcsp.org>.

To contact us, send email to mvcsp.info@gmail.com.

About GreenSpacesMV

Our focus is on biodiversity, native, drought-tolerant, and pollinator-friendly landscaping, complete green streets, parks and other open spaces, including Privately owned, publicly accessible (or POPA) park spaces, and so on.

For more information, see <https://www.facebook.com/GreenSpacesMV>.

To contact us, send email to GreenSpacesMV.info@gmail.com.

About Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition

Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition is a non-profit, membership-based organization that works to create a healthy community, environment, and economy in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. SVBC coordinates the Mountain View Local Team of residents who are passionate about bicycling and making change in their community.

For more information, see <https://bikesiliconvalley.org/> and <https://bikesiliconvalley.org/local-teams/>

To contact us, send email to advocacy@bikesiliconvalley.org