



Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning
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May 15, 2023

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

Re: Miramonte Avenue Improvements, Project 20-01

Dear Chairperson Kamei and committee members:

The Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition Mountain View local team and the Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning (MVCSP) appreciates the opportunity to comment on this project you'll be reviewing tonight. Mary Dateo has reviewed the agenda item materials on behalf of our organizations, and with input from reviewers among our members, we have the following comments we would like to share with you.

Summary

Miramonte is due for improvements, and Staff is taking the opportunity to make improvements that are meant to make the area much safer for cyclists and pedestrians, which we greatly appreciate and heartily applaud. We want to thank Staff for being so proactive and finding a way to make so many really great improvements.

We would like to request that climate-appropriate trees and plants be added to new medians and bulb-outs where possible.

We would also like to request some improvements to the **proposed intersection of Miramonte and Hans**.

We have strong safety concerns about

- Visibility, and drivers' ability to assess cyclist speed
- Who has the right-of-way, and whether drivers and cyclists actually know who has the right-of-way, with an uncommon design.

To address the safety concerns, we suggest three alternatives that we think will make the intersection much safer.

We shared the initial version of this letter via email with members of the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition Mountain View local team, and also with the Cuesta Park Neighborhood Association, in order to get further input. We've included a summary of their feedback at the end.

Background / Proposed Design

At the April 29 B/PAC meeting, the recommended Miramonte design included:

- Reconfiguration of Miramonte from 4+ lanes down to 3 lanes (one lane each direction, and a left-turn lane), and multiple pedestrian improvements
- Class II buffered bike lanes along Miramonte
- Treatment to address bike/ped traffic at Graham:
 - Class IV bikeway (two-way separated bike lanes) on the east side of Miramonte Avenue, between Hans Avenue and Castro Street, in place of a single Class II bike lane;
 - Curb extensions (bulb-outs) and storm drain modification at Hans Avenue; and
 - A pedestrian actuated, LED-enhanced crosswalk system at the Miramonte Avenue and Hans Avenue intersection.

From the April 29 B/PAC meeting Memo, these Memo diagrams show the scope of the whole project, with a more detailed view of the proposed Class IV bikeway (**a.k.a. "Cycle-track"**) between Hans and Castro.

Why a Cycle-track? Per the April 29th B/PAC Staff Memo (bolding and italics are mine):

"This section of Miramonte Avenue has a significant volume of school bicyclists, specifically on the east side of Miramonte Avenue, due to Hans Avenue being heavily used as a neighborhood connection for school bicyclists to and from Miramonte Avenue. Students turning right from Hans Avenue onto Miramonte Avenue to access Graham Middle School can use a green Class II bike

lane on the east side of the street and turn right onto Castro Street. **However, students leaving Graham Middle School must turn left from Castro Street onto Miramonte Avenue and then left again onto Hans Avenue. In this case, they must either cross Miramonte Avenue at both Castro Street and Hans Avenue (650' apart) to use the bike lanes on the west side of Miramonte Avenue or ride on the Miramonte Avenue sidewalk on the east side *counter to the direction of motor vehicle travel*.** Staff recommends providing a Class IV two-way separated bikeway (a.k.a. “**Cycle-track**”) on the east side of Miramonte Avenue, between Hans Avenue and Castro Street, to provide a safer alternative to crossing Miramonte Avenue twice or riding on the sidewalk.”

We would like to add that Hans is an important connector for cyclists:

- It's a gateway into the Cuesta Park neighborhood, and from there to Cuesta Park and neighborhoods south/east toward the High School.
- It connects with Phyllis, which students can use to bike toward Old Mountain View, or else to Martens and eventually Stevens Creek trail and the bridge over Highway 85.

At the B/PAC meeting, several parents expressed strong support for the cycle-track.

Our concerns:

We assume that the cycle-track will make this stretch safer, but we also think it will not be fully safe. It is the **intersection of Hans & Miramonte** that concerns me, because this is not a common design.

When cyclists bike on the cycle-track, from Castro to Hans, and approach the Hans intersection, and either cross the intersection to get to the crosswalk, or cross the intersection to turn left from the cycle-track onto Hans:

- Will drivers exiting Hans onto Miramonte be expecting cyclists coming from their right? There are crossing guards for an hour or so on school days, but what about all of the other hours of the day, when students and others are biking, especially at night?
- Will drivers on Miramonte, making a left turn onto Hans, be aware they need to look back over their left shoulder to check for cyclists approaching Hans?
- Will all drivers understand who has the right-of-way for cyclists exiting a cycle-track?
- Will all cyclists understand how to exit the cycle-track? Do they have the right-of-way, and can they freely bike across Hans without stopping? Will they be expected to stop before crossing Hans, and if so, will they stop?

I personally live at an intersection where cyclists occasionally bike the wrong way in the bike lane, against traffic. It is startling and scary to have a bike appear in front of you at an intersection, suddenly, from an unexpected direction.

We would like to see the design changed to prevent people from making mistakes, especially as more students and other cyclists will likely be using the cycle-track once it's in place, including outside of school hours, and when it's dark.

Possible Additions to the Cycle-track design:

We think either Alternative 1 or 2 would greatly enhance the intersection's safety, though Staff may see shortcomings not apparent to us.

Alternative 1: Make Hans a cul-de-sac for cars, but not for bikes, at Miramonte.

There are 3–4 houses on the last block of Hans, between Miramonte and Alison; use signs / bollards at Alison and Hans to warn drivers that Hans does not connect to Miramonte. Still allow bikes to use Hans to connect to Miramonte.

Hans gets a lot of car traffic, including to access Bubb school, so this will shift cars onto other local streets, which might raise objections.

Alternative 2: Put a full traffic signal at Hans and Miramonte, instead of the proposed pedestrian actuated, LED-enhanced crosswalk system.

Since a signal is planned anyway, install one that is up to the task. Include

- No right turn on red for cars from Hans to Miramonte.
- Bike-specific signal, and sensors on the cycle-track to turn the light to green for cyclists when they are approaching Hans.
- Signs on Hans warning drivers of cyclists coming from the right.
- Consider crosswalks on both sides of Hans to cross Miramonte, instead of just the single crosswalk in the current proposal.

I'm personally not a big fan of adding more traffic lights, but we think this is needed to make this intersection safe, if Alternative 1 is not chosen.

Alternative 3: If Alternatives 1 and 2 would significantly delay the project, instead, incorporate additional safety measures, such as

- Add bicycle sensors on the cycle-track, and flashing "Yield to Bicycles" signs that would be on Hans, and also on Miramonte for cars turning from Miramonte onto Hans.
- Add more visual and other cues to drivers: raise the crosswalk and cycle-track across Hans, or add rumble strips before the intersection, and add signs warning drivers that the cycle-track is there.
- Consider adding green pavement paint on Hans to show the path that bicycles will take to get to and from the cycle-track.

- Add an additional crosswalk across Miramonte on the north side of the intersection to reduce some bike traffic crossing Hans.
- Do not allow left turns from Miramonte onto Hans, and/or do not allow cars to exit Hans.
- If there are low-cost items that would greatly reduce the cost of adding a future traffic light, include those now.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Mary Dateo

for the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition Mountain View local team and Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning

cc:

Kathryn Robertson, Associate Civil Engineer

Robert Gonzales, Principal Civil Engineer

Edward Arango, Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer

Dawn S. Cameron, Public Works Director

Kimbra McCarthy, City Manager

Heather Glaser, City Clerk

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 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