

Comment I-51 Barry Chang (2)

From: Barry Chang <barry4ca@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2014 11:20 PM
To: 85expresslanes
Subject: Re: SR 85 Express Lanes Project: Comment period extended to February 28, 2014

Categories: Blue Category

Hi,

I have more comments on SR 85 Express Lanes Project. Here it is:

I-51-1 The Santa Clara County Transportation Authority (VTA) and Caltrans State Route 85 (Highway 85) Express Lanes project will not solve traffic congestion. Instead, it will create new problems: more single-occupancy car driving, more pollution, and greater social inequality. Furthermore, the funding of this project lacks transparency.

I-51-2 The Express Lanes proposed will encourage more single-occupancy cars and defeat the whole purpose of reducing cars on freeway. It will increase greenhouse gasses and ultimately worsen the climate change that we are experiencing now. The United States has 4.4% of the world's population*. However, as the largest contributor to U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, carbon dioxide (CO2) from fossil fuel combustion has accounted for approximately 78 percent of global warming potential (GWP) weighted emissions since 1990*. It is unconscionable to encourage more cars on freeway and contribute to increased production of greenhouse gases. Running a few buses a day on express lanes is not a mass transportation. With more and more cars on the freeway, eventually Highway 85 will reach a gridlock stage where no car or bus can move. At that stage, VTA and Caltrans may have to tear the express lanes down and replace it with light rail or some other form of real mass transportation. The estimated \$170 million express lanes project cost will have been a total waste. Where is the fiscal responsibility?

I-51-4 The pay to use on the public funded freeway will create classes and social inequality. It is against the fundamental principal of democracy. Those who can afford to pay will have a special privilege on a publicly-funded roadway. Is that equality?

which would decrease, not increase, traffic noise levels. A new noise study to capture the effects of higher employment levels would not result in different conclusions.

The comment appears to refer to SR 85 noise data in the City of Saratoga's 2013 Draft Noise Element compared with that in the 2012 *Noise Study Report* prepared for the proposed project. Refer to Master Response N-4 regarding these noise data. Master Response N-3 compares Saratoga noise levels that were predicted before SR 85 was built with existing noise levels and predicted future noise levels with and without the proposed project.

I-100-2

See response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the City of Saratoga agreement.

I-100-3

The reasons that mass transportation options were not considered as project alternatives are described in Master Responses GEN-7 regarding mass transit alternatives and GEN-2 regarding light rail in the median.

I-100-4

The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at the SR 85/I-280 interchange and other bottleneck locations along the project corridor, as described in Master Response TR-2.

I-100-5

The analyses for the project accounted for expected population and employment growth in the region (see IS/EA Section 1.2.2.1. under "Projected Travel Demand"). Moreover, the project would improve average travel times and speeds on SR 85, as discussed in Master Response TR-1.

Comment I-101 Mark Goldman

Question	
Mark Goldman [mark.goldman@yahoo.com]	
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2014 12:04 PM	
To: 85expresslanes	
I-101-1	I do not support adding another lane to Highway 85 until there is a clear solution to the problem of the intersection of Highway 85 and 280. It does not make any sense to add another lane that will just add more delays.
I-101-2	I would support adding mass transit in the middle of the current Highway 85; if mass transit were convenient, people would use it.
Please respond.	
thanks Mark Goldman 514 Clearview Dr Los Gatos, CA 95032	

Responses to Comment I-101

I-101-1

The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at the SR 85/I-280 interchange, as described in Master Response TR-2.

I-101-2

This is not a comment on the IS/EA.

Comment I-102 Stu Goodgold

Comment on IS/EA draft
Stu Goodgold [stugo@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Thursday, January 16, 2014 5:13 PM
To: 85expresslanes
Cc: mike.wasserman@bos.sccgov.org

Sirs:

I would have liked to attend the public meeting on the Hwy 85 Express lanes, but am not able to physically get there.

Having perused a substantial portion of the report, I am concerned that implementation of the Express lanes as detailed in the plan will only worsen the overall highway flow. Even the studies quoted in the plan show that the general access lanes will degrade from D to F in certain areas once the plan is implemented.

I-102-1 What bothers me most is that this is the only freeway in the state where the general access (in non-commute hours) will be reduced from 3 to 2 lanes in each direction. Granted there is a section where the plan will add a 4th lane, but that appears to be a 2nd express lane.

It just seems totally irrational to have a suburban freeway reduced to 2 general lanes for local traffic.

I-102-2 For example, I get on Hwy 85 at Almaden Expy., Even if I had a carpool or wanted to pay for the Express Lane access, I would have to drive 4 miles to Hwy 17 before I could get to the entrance/exit point. Forcing other carpool/express lane drivers to stay out of the express lane while coming on at the onramps between Almaden and Hwy 17 will make for an enormous amount of traffic squeezed into 2 lanes.

I-102-3 If you suggested widening Hwy 85 to 4 lanes with one express lane, such as was done with I-680, I for one would find that a commendable improvement. Changing Hwy 85 from a 3 lane freeway into a 2 lane freeway plus 1 limited access lane is no improvement at all; it is a degradation.

I am copying Mike Wasserman on this email because he is my Santa Clara County district supervisor and has been very responsive to my past queries and comments.

Regards,
Stu Goodgold
San Jose, CA 95120

Responses to Comment I-102

I-102-1

The comment is correct that at the segment level, levels of service in some short areas of SR 85 would be better in the No Build than the Build condition. However, average travel times and speeds on SR 85 would improve with the project, as discussed in Master Response TR-1.

It should be noted that the express lanes would have the same hours of operation as the HOV lanes. Therefore, during non-peak periods, SR 85 would continue to have three

general purpose lanes in each direction except between SR 87 and I-280, where it would have a fourth general purpose lane in each direction. However, crossing a solid striped line or buffer would be considered a traffic violation at all times.

I-102-2

The development of the current access points is described in Master Response GEN-4. Continuous access—like the existing SR 85 HOV lane, with no buffer separation—will be considered during detailed project design, as discussed in Master Response GEN-4.

I-102-3

See the responses to Comments I-102-1 and I-102-2.

Comment I-103 Srikant Gopalnarayan

Public comment - SR 85 Express Lanes Project
Srikant G [srikantg@yahoo.com]
Sent: Friday, January 31, 2014 3:31 PM
To: 85expresslanes

Hi

I-103-1 I am writing this to strongly object to and oppose the SR 85 Express Lanes Project.
Instead of fostering public transit, the VTA seems to be advocating for putting more cars on the road by making it easier for single (and affluent) drivers to move about more quickly.

Adding more lanes will do nothing over the long run and run contrary to the mission of the VTA.

I-103-2 The mission of the VTA (since the people advocating for this project seem to have forgotten about it) is “The mission of VTA is to provide the public with a safe and efficient countywide transportation system. The system should increase access and mobility, reduce congestion, improve the environment and support economic development, thereby enhancing quality of life.”

Adding more lanes
1) Does nothing to foster safety – Public transit is safer than individual automobiles
2) Efficient – Needless to say, individual automobiles are the LEAST efficient mode of transportation.

I-103-3 This project adversely impacts the environment and reduces quality of life.
A full environmental impact study is a MUST. The VTA should takes its own mission seriously and live up to its goals. The fact that the Silicon Valley has one of the worst public transit systems of any community of its size in the United States is testament to the failed leadership and vision of the VTA management.

Thank you
Srikant Gopalnarayan
19910 Viewridge Dr
Saratoga, CA 95070

Responses to Comment I-103

I-103-1

Master Response GEN-7 discusses why transit options are not being implemented instead of the proposed project.

As discussed in Master Response EJ-1, low-income drivers use express lanes and would benefit from the travel time savings that express lanes offer.

I-103-2

VTA disagrees that the project is contrary to its mission. The project would increase access and mobility by providing additional HOV capacity (with priority use by HOVs, as described in Master Response GEN-1), as well as by providing a revenue source for HOV, transportation, and transit service improvements within the SR 85 corridor. Moreover, the project would reduce congestion by reducing travel times and increasing speeds, as discussed in Master Response TR-1.

The project would be designed in accordance with Caltrans safety requirements to provide a safe freeway. No information is presented about why the project would adversely impact the environment or reduce the quality of life. However, the IS/EA addresses all of the environmental topical areas that might have a potential environmental impact and concludes that there would be no significant impacts.

I-103-3

California Public Resources Code Sections 21080(d) and 21082.2(d) require the preparation of an EIR for projects with significant environmental effects. The determination that the proposed project would not have significant environmental effects was based on a detailed and comprehensive review of each technical study area. Also refer to Master Response GEN-3 regarding preparation of an EIR.

Comment I-104 Robert (Bob) Gotch

From: bob.gotch@comcast.net
To: SR85expresslanes
Cc: BobGotch@comcast.net
Subject: Questions and Cocerns about "SR 85 ExpressLanes Projects"
Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 3:38:28 PM

February 28, 2014

Dear VTA Board of Director,

I have been at my current residence for almost 30 years. I live one house from the SR85 corridor, and I have used it at all different times of the day in different directions.

I-104-1

I have the following questions and concerns:

1 Why not only institute 1 HOV lane to minimize construction and save, probably, a major portion of the \$170 million?

I-104-2

2 What is the scenario if the 2 HOV lanes do not "pay for themselves"?

I-104-3

3 Has the light rail extension into Mountain View to the CALTRAIN station been studied for its feasibility? This would be a major step to encircle the South Bay with a rail system.

I-104-4

4 Has this initial study been reviewed and evaluated by independent consultants?

I-104-5

5 Has there been any computer simulation conducted? This should include the element of vehicles merging back and forth to enter and exit these HOV lanes?

I-104-6

6 It is not clear if both lanes are to be available to paying and non-paying vehicles and "mass transit" (express/VTA buses)?

I-104-7

7 What is the contingency plan if any portion on this project is not implemented?

I-104-8

8 Currently the noise level on my front porch is extremely high, will this noise level increased?

Thank you for your consideration concerning these matters.

Sincerely,

Robert (Bob) Gotch

Responses to Comment I-104

I-104-1

Refer to Master Response GEN-8 regarding why a single HOV/express lane in each direction of SR 85 is not proposed.

I-104-2

Refer to Master Response GEN-10 regarding funding, cost, and revenue.

I-104-3

Refer to Master Response GEN-7 regarding the SR 85 Express Lanes Project. Information about light rail planning is available on the VTA website at <http://www.vta.org/projects-and-programs/transit>.

I-104-4

As the Lead Agency for CEQA and NEPA, Caltrans has the responsibility to ensure that the environmental document adequately addresses all environmental concerns and respond to environmental comments raised during the public review period.

I-104-5

Computer modeling was conducted for the proposed project and included vehicle movements between the express lanes and general purpose lanes (URS 2012a; URS and DKS 2013). IS/EA Section 2.1.3 summarizes the findings of the traffic studies.

I-104-6

The project would convert the HOV lanes to express lanes and add a second express lane in the median between SR 87 and I-280. Transit buses, carpools, and other HOVs would use the express lanes for free. If the lanes become congested, tolls will be increased to deter solo drivers from entering the lanes, or the toll signs will be changed to read “HOVs only” and only HOVs will be allowed in the lanes. Also refer to Master Response GEN-1 regarding the express lanes.

I-104-7

Caltrans and VTA intend to implement the project as described.

I-104-8

The comment does not identify the location of the house in question, but in general, the project would increase existing noise levels by 0 to 3 dBA, depending on the location. A 3 dBA change is not considered significant, as discussed in Master Response N-1.

Comment I-105 William and Betty Gott

Hyw 85 Express Lane project
Bill Gott [billgott@earthlink.net]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2014 1:40 PM
To: 85expresslanes
Cc: Betty Gott [Bettygott@earthlink.net]

I-105-1 I want to let you know that we oppose this project based on what we have read about it to date, because it will produce worse air quality, more road noise, more visual blight (electronic signs) and more congestion on 85.

William and Betty Gott
100 Ash Court
Los Gatos, CA 95032
Billgott@earthlink.net

Responses to Comment I-105

I-105-1

The commenter's opposition is noted. The comment briefly lists a number of issues, which are addressed in the following:

- Refer to Master Response AQ-1 regarding air quality
- Refer to Master Response N-1 regarding noise
- Refer to IS/EA Section 2.1.4.3 regarding visual impacts from signs
- Refer to Master Response TR-1 regarding congestion improvement from the proposed project

Comment I-106 Melanie Guzzo

SR 85 Express Lanes comments
Melanie Guzzo [melanieringler@yahoo.com]
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 10:02 PM
To: 85expresslanes

Dear VTA,

I-106-1 I am a Saratoga resident living at 13505 Wendy Lane, approximately .28 miles away from SR 85. **I strongly oppose the SR 85 Express Lane Plan.** There are many negative impact issues of concern to me. For the purposes of this letter though, I will limit them to the two I consider most detrimental to the Saratoga community:

I-106-2

- **Additional noise!** The city of Saratoga recently conducted a study that found CURRENT SR 85 NOISE LEVELS TO BE ABOVE ACCEPTABLE LIMITS. Grinding the road surface on 85 did very little to address this issue. The Express Lane Plan will result in an increasing amount of vehicles traveling at higher rates of speed. The current version of this plan does not adequately address noise dampening measures necessary to accommodate this very negative impact! I've been made aware of pavement technology that could negate a fair amount of this noise impact but VTA has not included/specified it in this plan. A detailed comprehensive landscaping plan designed to help reduce noise should also be prepared PRIOR to start of the project.

I-106-3

- **NO modifications to bottlenecks that create much of the congestion on SR 85.** The net result of the additional lanes feeding into the 85/280/101 bottleneck will push the chokepoint further south on 85... just making a bad situation worse.

I-106-4 I was fully aware of the SR 85 noise prior to purchasing our house. I considered it within acceptable limits and thought of it as "white noise". It has increased to unacceptable levels over the 17+ years we've lived here. I find it especially loud and annoying during the late fall/winter months and have great concern regarding the negative impact the additional noise will have on our property value.

At a minimum, VTA must address the above issues to a satisfactory level within the Saratoga community before moving forward with approval of this plan.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,
Melanie Guzzo

Responses to Comment I-106

I-106-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted.

I-106-2

The comment appears to refer to the City of Saratoga's 2013 Draft Noise Element, which included data for SR 85. Refer to Master Response N-4 regarding these noise data. The City of Saratoga's 2013 Draft Noise Element did not characterize noise from SR 85 as being above acceptable limits, as indicated by the comment.

The noise technical studies show that the project would result in a 0 to 1 decibel increase in traffic noise along the Saratoga portion of SR 85, as described in Master Response N-3. Noise level changes from 1 to 2 dB are not substantial, as discussed further in Master Response N-1.

Refer to Master Response N-2 regarding noise abatement for the project. Landscaping along highways typically provides an imperceptible amount of noise reduction (less than 1 dB; Caltrans TeNS 2013, p. 5-55) and is not considered an effective form of noise abatement. However, any landscaping that is removed or damaged during project construction will be replaced in kind.

I-106-3

The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at choke points along the project corridor, as described in Master Response TR-2.

I-106-4

As the commenter notes, seasonal weather conditions can affect how sound travels. The response to Comment I-7-2 provides information about how weather conditions would affect noise levels with and without the proposed project.

See the response to Comment I-106-2 regarding future noise level changes. An increase of 0 to 1 dBA along the Saratoga portion of SR 85 is not substantial and therefore would not be expected to affect the commenter's property value.

Comment I-107 Mary Alice Hall

SR 85 Express Lanes
Mary Alice Hall [mahall6@verizon.net]
Sent: Sunday, February 02, 2014 3:55 PM
To: 85expresslanes

Hello:

I-107-1 [I am a resident near Good Samaritan Hospital having lived in the area for 48 years. I remember when 85 was built and we all welcomed the access. BUT now I hear you are widening the hiway and may include big trucks, etc. This is a negative for our neighborhoods. I live 4 blocks from 85 and can hear traffic 24 hours/day. With big rigs it will be unbearable. I know the residents in Los Gatos and Saratoga will totally agree with me. Big rigs should stay on 280 and 101.

I hope you listen and consider the concerns of residents bordering 85.

Thank you,

Mrs. Hall

Responses to Comment I-107

I-107-1

The project would not change the truck restrictions on SR 85.

Comment I-108 Leah Halper

Two Tier systems create division and unrest
lhalper@garlic.com
Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2014 10:01 AM
To: 85expresslanes

I-108-1 [I oppose a pay-for-privilege system on Highway 85.

Class-based privilege has no place in our highway system.
Find other ways to decongest by getting more cars OFF the roads and flexing work hours.

Leah Halper

8521 Wayland Lane
Gilroy CA
95020

Responses to Comment I-108

I-108-1

The project would create additional capacity for carpools and maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, as described in Master Response GEN-1. Studies in California and elsewhere show that express lanes provide time and convenience benefits to drivers of all income levels. Refer to Master Response EJ-1 regarding express lane users.

Comment I-109 Sastry Hani



3331 N. First Street, San Jose CA 95134-1927
(408) 321-7575 TDD: (408) 321-2330
Fax: (408) 321-7537
community.outreach@vta.org

**SR 85 Express Lanes Project
Draft Environmental Document Public Meeting
Comment Card**

Name: Sastry Hani

Address: 6074 Bollinger Rd San Jose CA 95129

E-mail Address: SASTRYH@Yahoo.com

Meeting attended: SR85 Express Lanes Project Draft Environmental Document Public Meeting

Comments: On this entire project I did not see any plan in the near future to address the traffic congestion that happens between SR237 and I280/85 exchange for the north bound traffic in the morning peak time. Adding a new lane will certainly make matters worse than it can help and/or improve. Not sure why this important & vital congestion issue is left un-addressed for so long ??? PLEASE LET THE TAX PAYERS KNOW YOUR PLANS SOON!!

I-109-1

Responses to Comment I-109

I-109-1

The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at choke points along the project corridor, as described in Master Response TR-2. The project would improve average travel times and speeds on SR 85, as described in Master Response TR-1. Once the environmental process is completed, Caltrans would need to make a decision on whether to proceed with the project and pursue funding sources.

Comment I-110 Carole Harris

Highway 85

C Harris [artecmh@aol.com]

Sent: Saturday, February 22, 2014 5:15 PM

To: 85expresslanes

I-110-1

I am shocked to learn of the expansion of Highway 85 on the backs of the citizens of Saratoga and Cupertino. The noise and air pollution issues have never been resolved under the first contract with the VTA. Only when these issues are resolved should the possibility of an expansion of 85 be addressed. I am requesting a full environmental impact study for the expansion of 85.

Carole harris

Indio Ct

Saratoga, CA

Responses to Comment I-110

I-110-1

Refer to Master Response N-1 regarding noise and AQ-1 regarding air quality. The comments about unresolved noise and air pollution issues are noted, but no specifics are provided.

California Public Resources Code Sections 21080(d) and 21082.2(d) require the preparation of an EIR for projects with significant environmental effects. The determination that the proposed project would not have significant environmental effects was based on a detailed and comprehensive review of each technical study area, including noise and air quality. Refer to Master Response GEN-3 regarding preparation of an EIR.

Comment I-111 Pam Harry



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**SR 85 Express Lanes Project
Draft Environmental Document Public Meeting
Comment Card**

Name: Pam Harry

Address: 5423 Starcrest Drive

E-mail Address: pam.san.jose@gmail

Meeting attended: SR85 Express Lanes Project Draft Environmental Document Public Meeting

I-111-1 [Comments: Noise IN area has increase and
no plans w/ this expansion to provide
additional wall barrier in Nighlin.

Responses to Comment I-111

I-111-1

Project-related noise increases and abatement are discussed in Master Responses N-1 and N-2.

Comment I-112 Jahangir Hasan

85 express lane - Saratoga exit unfairness
Jahangir Hasan [jahangirhasan@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, January 26, 2014 11:03 PM
To: 85expresslanes

Hi,

I am writing to voice my concern about the current proposal for the 85 express lane plan. The current plan unfairly affects riders who take the Saratoga ave exit for their commute.

I-112-1 As far as I can tell if a driver gets on 85N at Saratoga ave, he would not be able to get into the HOV lane until almost near 280? And likewise on the commute down from 101 to 85S, he would have to exit the HOV lane shortly after 280, and ride in regular lanes till Saratoga ave. This effectively eliminates HOV lane access for about 30% of the driving distance for people who use Saratoga Ave exit.

Why cant the plan for express lanes not include entry/exit points at each major ramp? The plan for 101 seems to have a much more frequent entry/exit point?

I-112-2 I understand the need for increasing utilization and raising funds, but prioritizing paying drivers over carpool drivers like this goes against the very spirit of why these lanes exist. Effectively, the current plan is saying that if you are willing to pay you will get better treatment than if you carpool, and that is plain wrong.

Regards,
Jahangir Hasan
Saratoga Resident

Responses to Comment I-112

I-112-1

Under the current access configuration, the first northbound access zone for a driver entering SR 85 at Saratoga Avenue is planned between De Anza Boulevard and Stevens Creek Boulevard. The closest southbound access zone is between Saratoga Avenue and Winchester Boulevard. The development of the current access points is described in Master Response GEN-4. Continuous access—like the existing SR 85 HOV lane, with no buffer separation—will be considered during detailed project design, as discussed in Master Response GEN-4.

I-112-2

Contrary to the comment, the project would create additional capacity for carpools with the second lane and maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, as described in Master Response GEN-1. In addition, express lane tolls would provide a revenue source for HOV, transportation, and transit service improvements in the SR 85 corridor.

Comment I-113 Angela Haskell

From: [angela.haskell](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Subject: SR 85 Express Lanes
Date: Wednesday, February 26, 2014 8:42:49 PM

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to encourage the VTA to use the existing SR 85 median for mass transportation, conforming to the Transportation Authority's PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT with the City of Saratoga which states:

Route 85 through the CITY will be a 6-lane facility with a median width of 46' reserved for mass transportation

The Agreement also states that the Transportation Authority will monitor and mitigate noise levels. As a resident of Saratoga for nearly 18 years, I can testify that noise from Highway 85 has increased significantly over time, presumably from degradation of the road surface. Conformance to original Transportation Authority promises indicate that a *reduction* of noise, not an increase, is needed.

I-113-1

Using the median for mass transportation instead of additional traffic lanes will

- reduce air pollution
- reduce noise pollution
- reduce traffic on SR 85 on-ramps and surrounding surface streets
- reduce energy consumption
- avoid violation of the Transportation Authority's PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT with the City of Saratoga

These are benefits for everyone, not just the ever-growing number who live within hearing distance of SR 85.

Sincerely,
Angela Haskell
12370 Arroyo de Arguello
Saratoga, CA 95070

Responses to Comment I-113

I-113-1

See response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the agreement. Light rail in the median of SR 85 was not carried forward because it was determined not to be reasonable or practicable, as described in Master Response GEN-2.

The comment about traffic noise from SR 85 is noted. Refer to Master Response N-3 regarding noise in the City of Saratoga.

Comment I-114 Richard Hawley

encourage car-pooling
Richard Hawley [brorichard@earthlink.net]
Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2014 10:14 AM
To: 85expresslanes

Ngoc Bui,

I-114-1 [I am against the proposal to convert car-pool lanes to toll lanes -- for the rich and powerful.

Have you ever noticed how good people in government start a program with good intentions for the benefit of society in general, and gradually the most wealthy of our citizens sneakily find ways to convert the programs to benefit themselves at the EXPENSE of the rest of us? Arguments often given are “jobs” or “easy sources of revenues.”

Phooey on those reasons. We need to stick to the original intentions, which in this case is reducing global warming and promoting community and cooperation. Money, if needed, can be raised through taxation of those same wealthy. They need to pay their fair share WITHOUT getting special perks.

Regards, Richard Hawley, 408-249-8749, 1155 Lenor Way, San Jose CA 95128

Responses to Comment I-114

I-114-1

The project would create additional capacity for carpools with the second lane and maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, as described in Master Response GEN-1. Refer to Master Response EJ-1 regarding the income equity of express lanes.

Comment I-115 Brian Heggen

toll for single-occupancy vehicles
BCSBH@aol.com
Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2014 10:07 AM
To: 85expresslanes

I-115-1 [Regardless of whom uses the express lanes, none of us should be paying any more to use these roads that we are already paying for through gas taxes and bond fees. We were originally sold these express lanes with the statements that they were going to relieve congestion. If they are not relieving congestion, then eliminate the express lanes and let us all use them. We all pay for them already anyway. Politicians in this state have an insatiable lust for the public's money. Live with what you have, like the rest of us. Brian Heggen, San Jose.

Responses to Comment I-115

I-115-1

The express lane toll for solo drivers is a user fee, as described in Master Response GEN-5. SR 85 will continue to have two general purpose lanes in each direction that do not have tolls or vehicle occupancy requirements.

Comment I-116 Suzi Hellwege

From: [Suzi Hellwege](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Subject: Highway 85 Expansion
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2014 6:11:42 PM

I-116-1 I would like to express my concern over the proposed expansion of Highway 85 and the double commuter/toll lane.

I-116-2 It was my understanding that the median lane was to be used to extend light rail, the addition of this lane will make this impossible. Additionally I live close to the intersection of 85 and 17, and the traffic noise from existing traffic is extremely loud at times. Expanding 85 to 8 proposed lanes will only increase that noise and associated air quality.

I-116-3 I have no objection to changing the existing lane into a toll lane, but I have a strong objection to expanding traffic and lanes on 85. My current commute can take over 30 minutes from 17 to 280, and this would only make that commute worse.

Thank you.

Suzi Hellwege
1822 White Oaks Court
Campbell, CA 95008

Responses to Comment I-116

I-116-1

Refer to Master Response GEN-2 regarding why light rail in the median of SR 85 has not been implemented. The project would not preclude the development of a light rail system within the SR 85 median, as described in the response to Comment L-1-12.

I-116-2

Technical studies show that the project would increase noise by 0 to 3 decibels depending on the location. Refer to Master Response N-1 regarding noise and Master Response AQ-1 regarding air quality.

I-116-3

The project would improve average travel times and speeds on SR 85, as described in Master Response TR-1.

Comment I-117 Paul Hernandez

From:	Paul Hernandez
To:	85expresslanes
Subject:	Planned expansion
Date:	Friday, February 28, 2014 4:31:46 PM

I-117-1 [I want to express my displeasure at the expansion of Highway 85. We're having our one nice community further intruded upon by people traveling from their jobs in the North-bay to Morgan Hill and Gilroy where their Country lifestyle affords them to have two and 3 acre homesites. I consider it slightly criminal to turn a road paid for by the public into a tollroad; fees to be collected and used by the VTA. Maintenance for the road comes from normal funding I'm quite sure, so this is just another ploy to increase taxes.

Paul Hernandez
A Saratoga resident since 1955.

Responses to Comment I-117

I-117-1

The commenter's opposition is noted. The project does not propose to make SR 85 into a toll road.

Tolling solo drivers to use express lanes is a way to improve roadway congestion without imposing additional gas tax, sales tax, or motor vehicle registration fee increases. Such additional taxes and fees place the burden of congestion relief on taxpayers who do not necessarily use the project corridor, or in the case of sales tax, do not necessarily drive. Tolling solo drivers requires the users to pay for the additional access

SR 85 will continue to have two general purpose lanes in each direction that do not have tolls or vehicle occupancy requirements. Refer to Master Response GEN-7 regarding the requirement to use the tolling fees for transportation improvements on SR 85.

Comment I-118 Joyce Hlava (1)



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Fax: (408) 321-7537
community.outreach@vta.org

**SR 85 Express Lanes Project
Draft Environmental Document Public Meeting
Comment Card**

Name: Joyce Hlava
Address: 146625 Sprunger Ave Saratoga 95070
E-mail Address: jh.lava@q.comcast.net
Meeting attended: SR85 Express Lanes Project Draft Environmental Document Public Meeting

I-118-1

Comments: I was Mayor when we negotiated the
freeway agreement in 86-87. One of the parts
of the agreement was that there would
be no additional automobile lanes and
the median would only be used for
light rail. This was part of our
(City of Saratoga) local agreement with
Caltrans the freeway authority.

(If you require more room for additional comments, please use the backside of this card)
Please note that all comments must be received by January 31, 2014

This comment card can also be mailed to:
Ngoc Bui, Office of Environmental Analysis
P.O. Box 23660, MS-8B, Oakland, CA 94623

*How can you do
this violate that
agreement?*

You can also e-mail comments to 85expresslanes@urs.com

Responses to Comment I-118

I-118-1

The commenter is referred to the City of Saratoga comment letter (Comment L-3), particularly the response to Comment L-3-4. Light rail in the median of SR 85 was not carried forward because it was determined not to be reasonable or practicable, as described in Master Response GEN-2.

Comment I-119 Joyce Hlava (2)

SR 85 Express Lanes
Joyce Hlava [jhlavaogden@comcast.net]
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 3:07 PM
To: 85expresslanes

Dear Sir:

I do not believe than a Negative Declaration is sufficient for this project and feel that a full EIR should be done for the following reasons.

I-119-1 1. There is no discussion in the Neg Dec of the prohibition on additional traffic lanes in the 1988 Hwy 85 Saratoga freeway agreement with Caltrans and the VTA. The language in the freeway agreement says the median will be used or widened only for "mass transportation". I don't think that High Occupancy Vehicle lanes are included in anyone's definition of mass transportation.. They are still vehicle lanes. As the Mayor who negotiated the freeway agreement, I can tell you that the intention and the discussion always centered around the County's light rail system.

I-119-2 2. The widening of the railroad bridge and the car bridge at Saratoga Ave. as well as the widening of the bridges at Pollard and Saratoga Creek are all major construction projects which will impact Saratoga and should require an EIR.

I-119-3 3. The noise impacts of Hwy 85 have not been evaluated since the freeway was built. Saratoga is just finishing an update of it's General Plan noise element and the levels our sound engineer found are much higher than indicated in the Neg Dec.

I-119-4 4. Highway 85 is 2 standard lanes plus an HOV lane for it's entire length and still there are significant slowdowns in some areas. This proposal suggests that expanding the number of lanes and then reducing them will not create a huge bottleneck at either 85 or Bascom depending on the primary traffic flow. Common sense says the, when a lane is subtracted there are huge backups. The Neg Dec doesn't even discuss this as a possibility. This definitely needs more study!

I-119-5 Caltrans unilateral abrogation of the Highway 85 Freeway Agreement is shocking. If the State doesn't intend to live up to that agreement, why should anyone ever believe any of your commitments?

Joyce Hlava

Responses to Comment I-119

I-119-1

The commenter's opinion is noted. California Public Resources Code Sections 21080(d) and 21082.2(d) require the preparation of an EIR for projects with significant environmental effects. The determination that the proposed project would not have significant environmental effects was based on a detailed and comprehensive review of each technical study area. The same technical studies must be prepared whether the ultimate environmental document is an IS/EA or an EIR. Also refer to Master Response GEN-3 regarding preparation of an EIR.

I-119-2

The project does not propose to widen the railroad bridge to the south of SR 85 at Saratoga Avenue. The project would install new bridge decking in the median between the separate northbound and southbound SR 85 bridges at Saratoga Avenue, Pollard Road, and Saratoga Creek. The environmental effects of the bridge work are fully evaluated in the IS/EA.

I-119-3

Refer to Master Response N-4 for a comparison of the noise levels for the proposed project with those in the Saratoga Noise Element update.

I-119-4

The project would add a second express/HOV lane in the median between SR 87 and I-280 and would not reduce the number of lanes. A detailed traffic operations analysis was prepared for the project (URS and DKS 2013) and is summarized in IS/EA Section 2.1.3. The analysis shows that in the peak traffic hour for the primary commute travel direction, levels of service approaching major system interchanges would generally remain the same or improve slightly with the project in both 2015 and 2035 (northbound in the AM peak and southbound in the PM peak; IS/EA Tables 2.1.3-5 and 2.1.3-6 for 2015, and Tables 2.1.3-9 and 2.1.3-10 for 2035). Overall corridor speeds would increase and total delay would decrease with the project in 2015 and 2035 compared with the No Project conditions (IS/EA Tables 2.1.3-8 and 2.1.3-12).

I-119-5

See the response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the agreement cited in the comment.

Comment I-120 Anthony Hoffman

Agreement RE Highway 85 express lane

Anthony Hoffman [flyer44er@yahoo.com]

Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2014 7:15 AM

To: 85expresslanes

Anthony L. Hoffman
PO Box 2273
Saratoga, CA 95070
1-408-446-3230
February 21, 2014

Mr. Ngoc Bui, c/o Caltrans Office of Environmental Analysis
PO Box 23660 MS-8B
Oakland CA 94623

Dear Mr. Ngoc Bui;

I-120-1 [The proposal to add express lanes to Highway 85 has more far-reaching implications than even the considerable increased noise, traffic, and air pollution it will bring.

I-120-2 [It is vital that governmental agencies uphold their end of any agreement or guarantee made to the public. If only voters are held to that agreement, and the government entities can withdraw from it at any time, the agreement is meaningless. The agreement that the City of Saratoga, Caltrans, and the Traffic Authority which we voters relied upon that trucks and busses would be banned on Highway 85 is no exception.

I-120-3 [If the agencies involved ignore these agreements, future projects will be in extreme jeopardy, since any future agreements would be deemed worthless by the voters who must approve the issues, placing in jeopardy any future projects that require public support.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue.

Sincerely,

Anthony Hoffman
Political Activist

Responses to Comment I-120

I-120-1

The comment does not identify the basis for the statement that the project would result in considerable increased noise, traffic, and air pollution. These and other environmental issues were studied in detail, as described in Master Responses N-1 regarding noise, TR-1 regarding traffic, and AQ-1 regarding air quality.

I-120-2, I-120-3

See the response to Comment L-3-4 regarding agreement cited in the comment.

The project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85. Note that the truck restrictions do not include transit buses.

Comment I-121 Jane Hoffman

Jane Hoffman

PO Box 2273
Saratoga, CA 95070

flyer44er@yahoo.com
1-408-446-3230

February 18, 2014

Ngoc Bui, c/o Caltrans Office of Environmental Analysis
PO Box 23660 MS-8B
Oakland CA 94623

Dear Mr. Ngoc Bui;

I-121-1 [The proposal to add express lanes to Highway 85 will create more far-reaching implications than the increased noise, traffic, and air pollution it will bring, if any Federal funds are used in its construction.

The written agreement by the Traffic Authority and local cities that we relied upon to approve the building of Highway 85 originally, clearly states that trucks and busses are banned.

I-121-2 [If any federal funds are taken to build the roadway, diesel trucks and busses must then be allowed on it. Since diesel smoke is a well-known carcinogen, this would significantly increase cancer risks, creating considerable future liability for all the agencies involved, and a threat to those who relied upon their promises and moved to residences near highway 85.

It is vital that all governmental agencies uphold any agreements with us, and the continued banning of trucks and busses on Highway 85 is no exception.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter,

Jane Hoffman



Responses to Comment I-121

I-121-1

Refer to Master Responses N-1 regarding noise, TR-1 regarding traffic, and AQ-1 regarding air quality. The project would not change the existing truck restriction on SR 85.

I-121-2

See the responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding the agreements cited in the comment. The agreements do not ban buses. Refer to Master Response AQ-1 regarding air quality.

Comment I-122 Jay Hopkins

85 express lanes
Jay Hopkins [jhopkins@goldenpmi.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 11:51 AM
To: 85expresslanes

I-122-1 [I believe it is a great idea to convert HWY 85 HOV lanes to express lanes for those willing to pay via Fastrak. The 237/880 express lanes save me quite a bit of time on a daily basis. I live in Cupertino and am all for the change.

Jay Hopkins
Golden PMI
4441 Enterprise Street
Fremont, CA 94538
510.498.4428 Office
510.498.4428 Fax
408.210.5722 Cell
jhopkins@goldenpmi.com

Responses to Comment I-122

I-122-1

The commenter's support for the project is noted.

Comment I-123 Marina Huang

Against 85 Express Lane Development!!!
Marina Huang [marinahuang@comcast.net]
Sent: Monday, March 03, 2014 5:24 PM
To: 85expresslanes

I-123-1 [NO to 85 Express Lane development! It is designed only for getting more money from drivers! And practically not really increase efficiency!

Responses to Comment I-123

I-123-1

The project would improve average travel times and speeds on SR 85, as described in Master Response TR-1. The commenter's opposition to the project is noted.

Comment I-124 Elizabeth Hudepohl

From: [Elizabeth Hudepohl](mailto:Elizabeth.Hudepohl@vta.org)
To: [85expresslanes](mailto:85expresslanes@vta.org); general.manager@vta.org; michael.hursh@vta.org
Cc: elo@saratoga.ca.us; hmliller@saratoga.ca.us; mcappello@saratoga.ca.us; coage@saratoga.ca.us; ihunter@saratoga.ca.us
Subject: SR 85 express lanes
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2014 12:44:26 AM

To VTA Planners and Officers,

I request that the VTA use the existing State Route 85 median for mass transportation, conforming to the Transportation Authority's PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT with the City of Saratoga which states:

Route 85 through the CITY will be a 6-lane facility with a median width of 46' reserved for mass transportation

The Agreement also states that the Transportation Authority will monitor and mitigate noise levels. As a resident of Saratoga for nearly 18 years, I can testify that noise from Highway 85 has increased significantly over time, presumably from degradation of the road surface. Conformance to original Transportation Authority promises indicate that a *reduction* of noise, not an increase, is needed.

I-124-1

Using the median for mass transportation instead of additional traffic lanes will

- reduce air pollution
- reduce noise pollution
- reduce traffic on SR 85 on-ramps and surrounding surface streets
- reduce energy consumption
- avoid violation of the Transportation Authority's PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT with the City of Saratoga

These are benefits for everyone, not just the ever-growing number who live within hearing distance of SR 85.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Hudepohl
19567 Dorchester Drive
Saratoga, CA 95070

Responses to Comment I-124

I-124-1

See the response to Comment I-94-1.

Comment I-125 R Huff

SR 85 Express Lanes
R Huff [rbhuff@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2014 11:42 AM
To: 85expresslanes

I-125-1 Just was made aware of this proposed project and as Saratoga residents, we have grave concerns.

I-125-2 First, the original agreement enabling Hwy 85 to be constructed through our bedroom communities was that it was never to exceed 6 lanes and semi-trucks were NOT allowed. The noise pollution remains a huge issue and will only increase if this new project is allowed to proceed not to mention the huge increase in traffic when semi's are allowed to now travel on this road.

I-125-3 Please explain how this proposal legally complies with the previous agreements and commitments that are in force currently that govern the Hwy 85 corridor/freeway?

I-125-4 What studies have been done on the noise and environmental impact that this will have on our communities? What are the results of said studies?

We officially wish to submit opposition to this plan as currently described.

The Huffs
Saratoga, CA

Responses to Comment I-125

I-125-1

The commenter's concerns are noted. See the response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the City of Saratoga agreement. The project would not change the truck restrictions on SR 85.

I-125-2

The noise technical studies show that the project would result in a 0 to 1 decibel increase in traffic noise along the Saratoga portion of SR 85. Refer to Master Response N-3 regarding project-related noise in Saratoga. As noted in the response to Comment I-125-1, the project would not change the truck restrictions on SR 85.

I-125-3

See the responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding the agreements cited in the comment.

I-125-4

The IS/EA summarizes the findings of the noise and other technical studies for the proposed project. The technical studies are listed in IS/EA Appendix G. In addition, refer to Master Responses N-1 through N-5 regarding noise.

Comment I-126 Rob Huston (1)

Oppose Hwy 85 Expansion

Rob Huston [rob_huston@yahoo.com]

Sent: Friday, February 21, 2014 7:51 AM

To: 85expresslanes

I-126-1 [I oppose expansion of Hwy 85, especially the addition of another "Lexus Lane." Tax dollars pay for highways not tolls! Be fair to all that drive our roads and not divide us by having the rich afford drive in the carpool lanes while the not-so-rich can't. Plus, this sets a bad precedence. I
I-126-2 [oppose this and will contact Los Gatos Town council members to fight this. They will since this proposal breaches agreements made to neighboring communities.
-Rob Huston, Los Gatos

Responses to Comment I-126

I-126-1

The commenter's opposition to the proposed project is noted. The project would maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, as described in Master Response GEN-1. Studies in California and elsewhere show that express lanes provide time and convenience benefits to drivers of all income levels. Refer to Master Response EJ-1 regarding express lane users.

I-126-2

The commenter's opposition to the proposed project is noted. See the responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding the agreements cited in the comment.

Comment I-127 Rob Huston (2)

From: [Rob Huston](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Cc: supervisor.simitian@lxs.sccgov.org
Subject: Hwy 85 Expansion
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2014 8:36:07 AM

VTA,

I-127-1 [I heard about the Hwy 85 express lane expansion. I oppose it. I live near Hwy 85 in Los Gatos. I was there before Hwy 85 existed. The freeway is too noisy! Before the freeway I could hear my doorbell in the upstairs bedroom. Then the freeway opened and I get a steady roar of the cars. I can't hear my doorbell anymore yet I have perfect hearing. I'm concerned of more noise with the additional lane. I'm also

I-127-2 [concerned about more pollution and dirt. When the freeway opened I found I had to dust inside my home more often. I contribute that to the freeway traffic.

I-127-3 [Finally, this plan takes away the center median reserved for mass transit. I want Light Rail along Hwy 85. Mass transit is a better solution than adding more cars. This Hwy 85 express lane plan is not wanted and certainly short sited. I suspect the hidden agenda is revenue generation from tolls.

Rob Huston
111 Abby Wood Ct
Los Gatos, CA 95032

Responses to Comment I-127

I-127-1

The detailed noise analysis for the project found that the project would increase noise levels along the Los Gatos portion of SR 85 by 0 to 2 decibels, depending on the location. Noise level changes in this range are not substantial, as described in Master Response N-1.

I-127-2

The project is not expected to increase air pollution, as discussed in Master Response AQ-1, and the improvement in congestion would reduce exhaust emissions from vehicle idling.

I-127-3

Light rail in the median of SR 85 was not carried forward because it was determined not to be reasonable or practicable, as described in Master Response GEN-2. Master Response GEN-7 discusses why transit options are not being implemented instead of the proposed project.

Comment I-128 Rob Huston (3)

From: Rob Huston [rob_huston@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2014 8:03 AM
To: Steven Leonardis
Cc: Marcia Jensen; Diane McNutt; Joe Pirzynski; BSpector
Subject: Oppose Hwy 85 Expansion - Info from Saratoga VTA meeting attached.

Mayor and Town Council,

I-128-1

I attended Tuesday evenings meeting with VTA at the Saratoga Library. Great to see you there Mr Pirzynski. The room was packed with upset residents. They blasted the representative from VTA. It's apparent Saratogans don't want the expansion of Hwy 85. It will add more noise, pollution, light (yes, as they will add lighting to the on/off express lane points), possibility of allowing big rig trucks (if the project takes federal funding), won't alleviate the bottleneck at Hwy 280 and per VTA's study will be out data in less than 10 years! The travesty is allowing more cars won't solve long term goals;

I-128-2

we need to keep the center divide open for light rail. VTA's alternative to light rail is express hybrid busses... give me a break! The VTA representative acknowledged the performance agreements when Hwy 85 was first built. He indicated the VTA didn't have to honor them because the group that wrote them is no more. This is a huge problem for me as VTA should honor our wishes and not bully us into doing what they want to do.

Please defend our Town! I urge the you to be proactive like Saratoga and challenge this development.

Attached are the display boards and 4-pages from the meeting.

-Rob Huston
111 Abby Wood Ct
Los Gatos, CA 95032

Responses to Comment I-128

I-128-1

This comment was forwarded by the Town of Los Gatos.

The commenter's concerns about the proposed project are noted. Refer to Master Responses N-1 regarding noise, AQ-1 regarding air quality, and IS/EA Section 2.1.4 regarding lighting. The project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85, regardless of funding source. Also refer to Master Response TR-2 regarding other planned projects in the area.

I-128-2

See the response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the agreement cited in the comment. Master Response GEN-2 discusses light rail as an alternative to the proposed project.

Comment I-129 Tina Jai

I oppose single drivers in vehicles on 85

Tina Jaime [pandabluu@gmail.com]

Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 10:19 PM

To: 85expresslanes

I-129-1

I oppose letting single driver vehicles use the HOV lanes on 85. These are supposed to reward those easing environmental damage done by those in gasoline single passenger vehicles.

Letting more affluent people use the lanes by paying a fee will NOT help with traffic congestion, and lead to frustration on the part of those who plan trips and errands with carpooling in mind.

Adding to the great divide in equality of income should not be added to by the state highway system.

thank you for your time,

Tia Jai

408-269-7335

14938 Camden ave

San Jose, 95124

Responses to Comment I-129

I-129-1

The commenter's opposition to the proposed project is noted. The project would maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, as described in Master Response GEN-1. Studies in California and elsewhere show that express lanes provide time and convenience benefits to drivers of all income levels. Refer to Master Response EJ-1 regarding express lane users.

Comment I-130 Suzanne Jasjewski (?)

I-130-1

2/25/14 TURISCOR
 Dear VTA and Caltrans,
 Please listen to all of us who oppose TOLL Booths.
 You will be forcing a great amount of misery on motorists, and, don't forget, tourists. I'm glad that my husband's mother no longer drives. These new ideas to inflict PAIN on motorists must STOP.
NO TO TOLL BOOTHS!
 Mrs. Suzanne Jasjewski
 9450 - OLIVEIRA DO HOSPITAL Portugal
 Hotel S. Paulo
 S. Paulo Hotel
 Hótel S. Paulo
 TurisCor resident

Dept. of Transportation
 District 4, Attn: Ngoc Bui
 P.O. Box 23660, MS 8B
 Oakland, CA 94623-0660



I-130-2

2/25/14
 To: VTA and Caltrans, SAN JOSE CA 950
 2004 AVILA
 Puerta de San Vicente - Puerta de San Vicente - The San Vicente Door.
 I am OPPOSE TOLL BOOTHS ON HWY 85 in Santa Clara County.
 Right now the road is much safer without big trucks sharing the road and slowing rush hour traffic or worse yet causing horrific accidents.
NO TOLL BOOTHS!
 Mrs. Suzanne Jasjewski

Ediciones Ambas - Santiago Guallar, 4 - Tel (916) 27 65 84 - Zaragoza

Dept. of Transportation
 District 4, Attn: Ngoc Bui
 P.O. Box 23660 MS 8B
 Oakland, CA 94623-0660



3 -
I-130-3

150 - LISBOA (Portugal)
Praça do Comercio
Place du Commerce
The Commerce Square

2/25/14

SAN JOSE CA 950

75 FEB 2014 PM 2 L



To: VTA and Caltrans,
I'm not able to attend
the meeting in Saratoga
tonight, so I am writing
to let you know that my
position is NO

TOLL BOOTHS
ON HIGHWAY 85.

My friends will all be
attending tonight's meeting
to let you know that they
do not approve of ~~the toll booths~~
on Highway 85. I am a resident

Dept. of Transportation
District 4, Attn: Ngoc Bui
P.O. Box 23660, Ms 8B
Oakland, CA 94623-0660

Colectado 00UA - Reproducción Prohibida

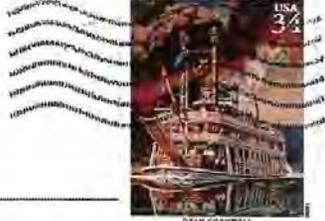
I-130-4
4 -

GRANADA, Alhambra Nº 4034
Patio de los Leones
Cour des Lions
Lions court
Löwenhof

2/25/14

SAN JOSE CA 950

75 FEB 2014 PM 2 L



To whom it may concern,
Everything is getting
so much more expensive
these days. My grand-
children will not be able
to afford a home someday.

Check out the stamp
on this postcard. A few
years ago it would mail my
first-class letters now it can
only send a postcard.

I STRONGLY OPPOSE TOLL BOOTHS & TOLL ROADS.
Stop bleeding Californians to
death with taxes

Dept. of Transportation
District 4, Attn: Ngoc Bui
P.O. Box 23660, Ms 8B
Oakland, CA 94623-0660

Postales Granada

5-
I-130-5

Feb. 25, 2014
 To Whom it my concern,
 As a resident of Los Gatos, I am opposed to putting TOLL BOOTHS on Highway 85 in Santa Clara County. Make cuts elsewhere instead of adding more and more FEES and TAXES. I am AGAINST toll booths on Hwy 85.

Ms. Suzanne Jaszewski
 WARRICK CASTLE England
 The Castle Press, 516 North Fair Oaks Avenue
 Pasadena, California 91107
 Linda G. Stevens, photographer

SAN JOSE CA 950
 FEB 25 2014 PM 2 L
 POSTC



Department of Transportation
 District 4 Attn: Ngoc Bui
 P O Box 23660, MS 8B
 Oakland, CA 94623-0660

6-
I-130-6

2-25-14
 Dear Ngoc Bui,
 I am AGAINST making Highway 85 into a toll road.

Highway 85 has made my life so much better after the decades wait for it to be built. Do NOT RUIN HWY 85 with toll booths. Please have integrity and honor the contract that was signed with Los Gatos (6 lanes, 45 median for future light rail).

Ms. Suzanne Jaszewski Los Gatos Resident

SAN JOSE CA 950
 FEB 25 2014 PM 4 L



Department of Transportation
 DISTRICT 4 Attn: Ngoc Bui
 P.O. Box 23660, MS 8B
 Oakland, CA 94623-0660

7. I-130-7

SMALAND February 25, 2014
 SAN JOSE CA 950
 To whom it may concern,
 I am writing that you honor the wishes of the towns of Los Gatos and Cupertino's wishes to NOT BUILD TOLL BOOTHS ON HWY 85. The resulting noise and expense will take monies away from future light rail lines and will be most unbearable.

Department of Transportation
 District 4, Attn: Ngoc Bui
 P.O. Box 23660, MS 8B
 Oakland, CA 94623-0660

NO ON TOLL BOOTHS
 06-11-41 Foto: Hallberg & Cam
 Mrs. Suzanne J. Jorgensen Resident

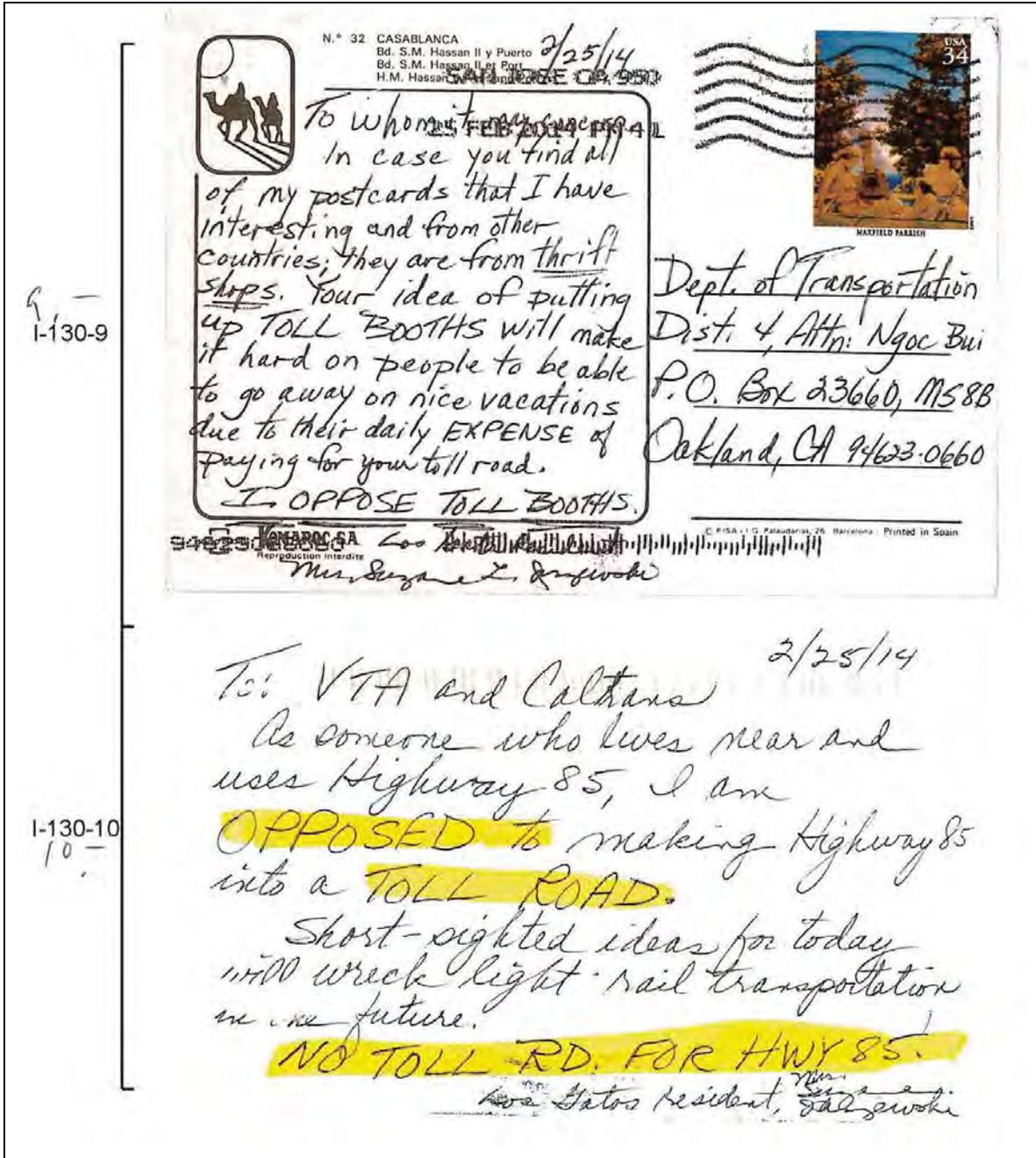
612 - LISBOA (Portugal)
 Padrão dos Descobrimentos
 Monument Commemorating the Discoveries

8. I-130-8

2/25/14
 SAN JOSE CA 950
 To: Ngoc Bui, VIA eLettians,
 I am writing friends of mine who are not in the area a right now. They OPPOSE TOLL BOOTHS ON THE HIGHWAY 85 too. Please listen to all of my friends, neighbors and myself, DO NOT BUILD TOLL BOOTHS.

Dept. of Transportation
 Dist. 4, Attn: Ngoc Bui
 P.O. Box 23660, MS 8B
 Oakland, CA 94623-0660

Los Gatos Resident
 Mrs. Suzanne J. Jorgensen



Responses to Comment I-130

I-130-1

The project does not propose to make SR 85 into a toll road or construct toll booths.

The project would convert the existing HOV lanes on SR 85 to express lanes and add a second express lane in each direction in the median between SR 87 and I-280, which would give solo drivers the option to pay to use the HOV lanes by using a FasTrak toll tag. The toll tag would be “read” by overhead antennas, eliminating the need for the driver to stop and pay tolls.

Express lane use is voluntary. SR 85 will continue to have two general purpose lanes in each direction that do not have tolls or vehicle occupancy requirements.

I-130-2

See the response to Comment I-130-1. The project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85.

I-130-3, I-130-4

The commenter's opposition is noted. See the response to Comment I-130-1.

I-130-5, I-130-6

The express lane toll for solo drivers is a user fee, as described in Master Response GEN-5. SR 85 will continue to have two general purpose lanes in each direction that do not have tolls or vehicle occupancy requirements. Also see the response to Comment I-130-1.

See the response to Comment L-4-2 regarding the agreement with the Town of Los Gatos.

I-130-7

See the responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino) and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding the agreements cited in the comment.

Refer to Master Response N-5 regarding noise and GEN-2 regarding light rail in the median of SR 85.

I-130-8

See response to Comment I-130-1.

I-130-9

See response to Comment I-130-1.

I-130-10

See response to Comment I-130-1.

Comment I-131 Luke Jen

Concern about VTA Plan of Changing Highway 85 from 6 Lanes to 8 Lanes

Luke [luke95070@aol.com]

Sent: Thursday, January 30, 2014 1:24 PM

To: 85expresslanes

Cc: bcao.us@gmail.com; abbottnet@juno.com

Hello

I-131-1

As a 25 years resident of the City of Saratoga, I'm very concern about the California VTA's proposed plan to expand from 6 lanes to 8 lanes of Highway 85, that is passing adjacent to my backyard. Ever since the completion of Highway 85, I have noticed frequently rumbling/vibration of my house from time to time during morning traffic, in addition to the heavier dusts inside the house as well as outside, which were not mentioned in the VTA environmental report.

I am **strongly object** to the expansion plan, for the following reasons:

1. I am deeply concern of what may have done to the house structure integrity by the rumbling/vibration of the house due to the traffic.
The expansion plan will aggravate the situations.

I-131-2

2. It will worsen noise and air quality (pollution) due to increased number of cars.

I-131-3

3. It violates the Performance Agreement of 6 Lanes

Sincerely Yours,

Luke Jen
12285 Saratoga, CA 95070
(408) 255-7119

Responses to Comment I-131

I-131-1

The project is not expected to result in vibration impacts, as described in the response to Comment L-1-16.

I-131-2

Technical studies for the project show that it would increase noise by 0 to 1 decibel along the Saratoga portion of SR 85 (which is not substantial; refer to Master Responses N-1 and N-3), and the project would meet air quality standards (refer to Master Response AQ-1).

I-131-3

See the response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the agreement cited in the comment.

Comment I-132 Cheriel Jensen (1)

January 15, 2014

I-132-1 [Enclosed are my comments to VITA and CalTrans concerning the proposed Highway 85 additional lane each direction as paid express lanes, and the conversion of the carpool lanes also, apparently to a paid express lane.

Yours truly,

Cheriel Jensen

Cheriel Jensen, 13737 Quito Road, Saratoga, CA95070
408 379-0463
cherielj@earthlink.net<<mailto:cherielj@earthlink.net>>

I-132-1, cont.	<p>Saratoga negotiated a contract with CalTrans prior to allowing the building of Highway 85. This contract was based on considerable environmental work identifying ways to mitigate the considerable environmental damaging aspects of Highway 85. This contract and it's mitigation were signed by both parties representing CalTrans and the City of Saratoga (Mayor Joyce Llava) with specific provision including:</p>
I-132-2	<p>There were to be only two regular lanes of traffic each way and one carpool lane each way. This was a firm commitment. It was based on the EIR. The carpool lane was to reduce trips by taking cars off the road, and in return allow for a faster trip for those who had taken care to add passengers.</p> <p>The noise level was promised to be within state prescribed limits for residential uses. To that end the freeway was to be below grade in specific places and sound walls were to be provided.</p> <p>No trucks were allowed on Highway 85. There were to be only local funds used in that corridor because if federal funds are ever used there could be no limits on trucks of Highway 85.</p>
I-132-3	<p>Saratoga resident assess was to be provided to the freeway from Saratoga Avenue.</p> <p>The center was to be reserved for light rail when funding for light rail became available. This was so that residents of Saratoga and the west valley cities would have access via some form of public transit to CalTrain, other light rail lines and then by links could access the greater Bay Area without requiring a car. This center area was NOT for high speed rail.</p>
I-132-4	<p>This contract was violated the first hour the freeway was opened because of the surface used and material used to build the freeway. The noise level was shocking. It affected at least 1/3 of the city. It took several years of begging and pleading for money to get CalTrans to grind down the surface, but the noise, though slightly improved, is still unbearable and Saratoga's own noise element measurements, recently measured, show it does not even come close to meeting the required noise standards or the promise of the EIR. Residents have begged desperately for resurfacing with asphalt, but no one has been able to arrange funding for this. Thus the freeway is now out of compliance with California state noise standards, and the Saratoga noise element, the contract with CalTrans, and the promise of the Saratoga General Plan on the quality of our environment. The freeway is severely degrading our environment in Saratoga, Cupertino, Los Gatos and west San Jose.</p>
I-132-5	<p>Then the contract was further violated by the traffic monitoring lights put up shortly after the freeway opening restricting Saratoga resident's ability to access the freeway, by then already filled up with south San Jose traffic.</p> <p>While "No Truck" signs are posted this is not often enforced in rush hours.</p>
I-132-6	<p>Then, last year Cal Trans, in violation of the contract, proposed to put high-speed rail in the center. When apparently no one wanted high-speed rail, CalTrans shelved the rail (light or high speed) idea entirely.</p>

<p>I-132-6, cont.</p>	<p>Then, unknown to the majority of Saratoga residents, CalTrans went to the Saratoga Council in mid January, 16th I believe, last year with the concept of “converting” the carpool lane into a high speed express lane. It is not clear what the council did in respect to that sham presentation as CalTrans/VTA’s intention was actually to ADD a paid express lane and also CONVERT the carpool lanes to paid express lanes.</p> <p>Now VIA and CalTrans have rolled out a double paid Expressway ADDITION to Highway 85 as well as other freeways in this county after having converted our carpool lane into one of the high-speed express lanes. We were first introduced to this proposal in a public “viewing” January 14, 2014, last night. This very short notice as comments must be made within two weeks when we were just barely introduced to this issue. From what I can gather on short one-day notice, the EIR does not begin to address the impact of this proposal.</p> <p>We have already sacrificed so much. We thought the Saratoga Council had bent over backwards to allow this freeway in the first place. We depended on them to honor the promise and actual contract with CalTrans. Those of us who had worked so hard finally could go ahead with our lives after so much effort to prevent the disaster Highway 85 has become.</p> <p>Now this proposal is a nightmare.</p>
<p>I-132-7</p>	<p>Even if we were to like the idea of a paid expressway, it will not serve Saratoga Residents in any way as the entry and exits to it are at the junction of 280 and 85 (already at a breaking point) and Winchester. It would be entirely closed off for our Saratoga access.</p>
<p>I-132-8</p>	<p>So what are we west valley residents losing with this proposal so rich people can get through Saratoga faster?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We get trucks on Highway 85 due to the federal funds. Along with the trucks comes a much greater frequency of accidents and actually slower traffic. 2. More through traffic on more lanes will go through Saratoga, but we cannot access these lanes.
<p>I-132-9</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Along with the increased traffic we will have even more noise, much more neighborhood double back traffic and local congestion as a result.
<p>I-132-10</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. We will have even more dust, and more toxic fumes.
<p>I-132-11</p>	<p>How can this proposal serve our communities? It will not. The carpooling lane was intended to mitigate the EIR. It is official mitigation. It cannot now be summarily changed to allow rich people to speed their way by-passing normal traffic. It must remain as a carpool lane and no additional lanes can built.</p> <p>As I have just been introduced to this proposal, I will have additional comments concerning the environmental work.</p>

Yours truly,

Cheriel Jensen

Responses to Comment I-132

I-132-1

This is an introductory comment that summarizes the commenter's understanding of the 1989 Performance Agreement between the City of Saratoga and the Santa Clara County Traffic Authority and the 1989 Freeway Agreement between the City of Saratoga and Caltrans.

The terms of the Performance Agreement are discussed in the response to Comment L-3-4. The terms of the Freeway Agreement are different from those in the Performance Agreement and do not restrict use of the median but include weight restrictions for trucks between the SR 85/US 101 interchange in San Jose and I-280.

I-132-2

The current restrictions on truck use will remain unchanged with this project.

I-132-3

Refer to Master Response GEN-4 regarding access zones. The Performance Agreement states that the median is reserved for "mass transportation," not light rail specifically.

I-132-4

VTA is aware that officials and residents of Saratoga have expressed concerns about noise from SR 85, including after pavement grinding was conducted. Master Response N-3 discusses existing noise levels in Saratoga, future noise levels with and without the proposed project, and future noise levels that were predicted in the 1987 Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the construction of SR 85.

The comment appears to refer to SR 85 noise data in the City of Saratoga's 2013 Draft Noise Element compared with that in the 2012 *Noise Study Report* prepared for the proposed project. Refer to Master Response N-4 regarding these noise data.

The comment states that noise levels on SR 85 are out of compliance with California state noise standards, the Saratoga noise element, the contract with Caltrans, and the promise of the Saratoga General Plan. It should be noted that there are no absolute State maximum numeric thresholds for freeway noise levels, State highways are not subject to local noise ordinances and standards, and noise abatement has been evaluated consistent with State and federal requirements.

I-132-5

The comment is noted but does not pertain to the proposed project. The California Highway Patrol is responsible for enforcing the truck restrictions.

I-132-6

The lead entity for the high-speed train project is the California High-Speed Rail Authority, not Caltrans. Any consideration of using SR 85 as part of an alignment for the

high-speed train project is unrelated to the potential for evaluating light rail along the median of SR 85.

It should also be noted that VTA is the sponsor of the SR 85 Express Lanes Project and as such has led the public outreach for the project. Refer to Master Response GEN-6 regarding the timing and details of public outreach, which dates back to 2004 with public events/presentations beginning in 2008. The IS/EA was circulated to the public starting on December 30, 2013.

I-132-7

The development of the current access points is described in Master Response GEN-4. Design modifications to revise the proposed express lane configuration to continuous access—like the current HOV lane—will be considered during detailed project design, as described in Master Response GEN-4.

I-132-8

The project would maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, as described in Master Response GEN-1. Studies in California and elsewhere show that express lanes provide time and convenience benefits to drivers of all income levels. Refer to Master Response EJ-1 regarding express lane users.

It is incorrect that the project would change the truck restrictions on SR 85. The use of federal funds will not have any effect on the existing truck restrictions, which will remain in place.

See the response to Comment I-132-7 regarding express lane access.

I-132-9

The project would improve average travel times and speeds on SR 85, as discussed in Master Response TR-1. The comment expresses concerns that the project will create more pollution, noise, and traffic in residential areas along SR 85. Refer to Master Response N-3 regarding noise in Saratoga. Refer to Master Response TR-3 regarding local street congestion.

I-132-10

Refer to Master Response AQ-1 regarding air quality.

I-132-11

The express lanes would continue to provide preferential use for HOVs during the hours of operation, as described in Master Response GEN-1.

Comment I-133 Cheriel Jensen (2)

From: cherielj [mailto:cherielj@earthlink.net]

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2014 11:45 PM

To: Council

Subject: Comments by Cheriel Jensen to SR 85 Express Lanes Project IS ND/EA

Cheriel Jensen
13737 Quito Road, Saratoga, CA 95070
408 379-0463

February 28, 2014

California Department of Transportation (CalTrans), District 4
Board of Directors, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA)

85expresslanes@urs.com

RE: SR 85 Express Lanes (Pay Lanes) Project
Comments on Initial Study (IS) with proposed Negative

Declaration/ Environmental Assessment (ND/EA)

Dear CalTrans and VTA Board,

These are my comments and questions on the Highway 85 Express Lanes Project. Please enter them into the record and provide answers:

I-133-1

VTA and CalTrans are seeking to convert the entire RT 85 carpool lanes to pay-and-carpool lanes and in addition add two pay-and-carpool lanes, one each way, to SR 85 between RT 87 and SR 280. This additional lane plan would take up the space that was reserved by contract since 1989 for a light rail line even though the cities including Los Gatos, San Jose, Campbell, Cupertino and Saratoga along this corridor signed permanent contracts with the Santa Clara County Transportation Agency to limit the width of the freeway to 6 lanes, two being carpool lanes, and provide a center median of 46 feet for light rail. Contracts were also signed with CalTrans and the cities to prohibit trucks over 9,000 pounds.

1. THIS PROJECT VIOLATES THE CONTRACTS SIGNED WITH THE CITIES OF THE CORRIDOR.

How can the VTA, the successor agency to the Santa Clara County Transportation Agency, now entertain this proposal that outright violates the signed contracts limiting the number of lanes, 1 carpool lane each way, 2 general lanes each way, unimpeded access to ALL lanes available from Saratoga Avenue, noise within standards, effective noise abatement, abatement until it is effective, the given profile by reference to the plans, landscaping and of course land for landscaping, no large trucks, and width of reservation for light rail?

I-133-2

These contracts are still in effect. These are official mitigations for establishment of the freeway flowing from the original EIS/EIR. What authority does VTA or CalTrans have to unilaterally violate ANY aspect of these terms of the contracts?

How can CalTrans now even consider the use of federal funds in this corridor KNOWING that such funding means the ban on large trucks could then not be enforced when they themselves signed the "permanent" contract to prohibit trucks? The noise section of the project IS ND/EA and other sections expect truck traffic on Hwy 85 with this project (See page 2-92, Section 2.2.7.3, fourth paragraph.)

2. AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT IS REQUIRED.

There is no EIR nor EIR process, nor any intention to prepare one. There has been no public hearing. Up to the last two weeks the one published announcement (in the San Jose Mercury which most people in the west valley do not see) did not disclose the new lane, only the conversion. Thus real input will not likely be considered in any formal process as it would with an EIR. No workable alternatives such as light rail, or fixing choke points will be presented or considered. This is the epitome of poor planning and against State Environmental Law.

I-133-3

An IS ND/EA has been prepared for this project. In violation of the California Environmental Quality Act, no environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be prepared, even though it is a Type I Project, it will cost between \$170 - \$150 million, it converts the energy/climate/noise/pollution benefiting carpool lane into a deliberately more crowded Pay-Lane-carpool-lane for 24.1 miles and adds a new Pay-Lane-carpool-lane between RT 87 and RT 280, adding a third to the capacity of the freeway.

The IS ND/EA in some places admits, and in some places denies it will have a substantial environmental impact. It cannot be both ways. An Environmental Impact Report is required whenever there may be a substantial impact on the environment as with this project.

A Type I project requires noise abatement for noise approaching 67 dBA:

Under 23CFR772.7, projects are categorized as **Type I**, **Type II**, or **Type III projects**. FHWA defines a Type I project as a proposed Federal or Federal-aid highway project for the construction of a highway on a new location, the physical alteration of an existing highway where there is either a **substantial horizontal** or substantial vertical alteration, or other activities discussed in Section 3 below in the definition of a Type I project.

I-133-4

Under 23CFR772.13, noise abatement must be considered and evaluated for feasibility and reasonableness for Type I projects if the project is predicted to result in a **traffic noise impact**. In such cases, 23CFR772 requires that the project sponsor “consider” noise abatement before adoption of the NEPA Categorical Exclusion (CE), Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), or Record of Decision (ROD). This process involves identification of noise abatement measures that are feasible, reasonable, and likely to be incorporated into the project, and noise impacts for which no noise abatement measures are feasible and reasonable.

Certainly a doubling of the noise (3 db admitted), where noise is already above the standards, where at least another 28 feet for two more lanes qualifies as a Type I project requiring noise abatement.

3. THE CORRIDOR IS STILL A PROJECT FOR WHICH THERE IS ALREADY AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT, AND IT’S MITIGATIONS ARE STILL IN EFFECT.

Saratoga, Los Gatos, Campbell, Cupertino and San Jose negotiated contracts in good faith prior to allowing the building of Highway 85. They were based on environmental work in the EIS/EIR identifying ways to mitigate the considerable environmental damaging aspects of Highway 85. These contracts, with the mitigation incorporated, were signed by parties representing the Santa Clara County Transportation Authority and each of the cities with specific provision including:

I-133-5

Lanes were to be limited to two regular lanes of traffic each way. A third lane each was agreed to only when there were promised permanent restrictions on that lane. It was to always be a carpool lane. These were firm commitments. The carpool lane was to reduce trip numbers by taking cars off the road, thus it would produce less overall noise, energy consumption and pollution. In return travelers who had taken the extra care and time to add passengers get a faster trip. (When extra quiet and fuel efficient vehicles were available the legislature allowed these vehicles to also enter the carpool lane as they kept almost all of the environmental advantages of carpools, even more efficiently than some carpools.) No one questioned this modification.

The noise level on SR 85 was promised to be within state and local prescribed limits for residential uses. To that end the freeway lanes were limited and the profile was to be below grade in specific places, surfaces were to be chosen for sound absorbing qualities, and effective sound walls were to be provided. Other measures were to be included if this was not enough to bring the freeway within noise standards for residential, schools and other specific sensitive land uses.

A separate contract was signed between CalTrans and Saratoga and with the other west valley cities restricting trucks. No trucks were allowed on Highway 85

through Saratoga or the other parts of the west valley south of Stevens Creek. Only local funds were to be used in that corridor because if federal funds are ever used there could be no limits on trucks on Highway 85 according to federal law. For that reason we, the residents paid for it entirely locally with many years of a local sales tax premium. Now the IS ND/EA admits their plan includes trucks on this route.

Saratoga resident full access was to be provided to the freeway from Saratoga Avenue. This means including access to the carpool lane.

The center was reserved for light rail when funding for light rail became available, so residents of Saratoga and the west valley cities would eventually have access via some form of public transit to CalTrain, other light rail lines and by links could access the major work centers in Palo Alto and Mountain View, and the greater Bay Area without a vehicle.

I-133-5,
cont.

This contract was violated the first hour the freeway was opened. The deliberately rough, concrete surface used to build the roadbed of the freeway sent noise throughout 1/3 of the city effecting half of the city population. The noise level was shocking.

It took several years of begging and pleading for money to get the County and CalTrans to work again on noise, but instead of a cover of asphalt paving, they ground down the road surface.

With the grinding came massive dust. From a near pristine environment where dusting was not necessary even once a month, to dusting everyday will not keep houses clean near the freeway. This massive concrete dust and its corrosive effects on health and the environment are not addressed in the IS ND/EA.

The noise, though slightly improved with the grinding, is still often unbearable, over the state and local limits and at times of inversions well over the limits. People near the corridor have lost their use of their backyards, life values stolen by the negligently built freeway.

If there is distrust and anger exhibited upon this proposal, there is ample reason for it with the long history, lies and failed promises we have experienced.

4. THE IS ND/EA IS INCONSISTENT AND DOES NOT FULLY DISCLOSE IMPACTS.

I-133-6

The IS ND/EA does little to disclose impacts. It does not even consistently acknowledge the whole project. For example, Page i, paragraph 1, of the IS ND/EA says it is "converting" the existing HOV lanes to express lanes, failing to even admit the additional lane. These inconsistencies and failures to disclose are pervasive throughout.

5. AGENCY OBJECTIVES ARE NOT CONSISTENT WITH THE OBJECTIVES OF THE USERS OR RESIDENTS.

I-133-7

Not being an EIR, neither the IA ND/EA, nor the studies leading up to it, provides a single alternative approach to the traffic slow downs not including Pay Lanes. Indeed, what is the purpose of the project?

The objectives the IS ND/EA variously gives:

- a) putting more single occupancy traffic into the carpool lanes,
- b) reducing speeds in the former carpool lanes to 45 mph, and
- c) "managing" the carpool lane traffic (by adding non-carpools to it).

I-133-7, cont.	<p>It alternately gives d) raising money as the objective.</p> <p>Nowhere does the IS ND/EA say the objective is to improve traffic flow to most destinations, nor will this project improve traffic flow through to most of the destinations. But it will reduce the effectiveness of the one well working part of this freeway system and destroy the incentives for carpooling and for purchasing electric cars.</p> <p>The users and residents of the area have very different goals from the Agencies pushing this project. Our goals are for a smoothly working freeway, keeping the width as the contract specifies, but without the choke points, and reducing the environmental damage we experience. We expect to get our share of state gas tax funds to fix the choke points.</p> <p>Both users and residents demand replacement of the pavement surface to stop the excessive, unnecessary noise and extraordinary dust caused by the current outrageous pavement mistakes made by CalTrans. We expect to get our share of gas tax to do this. We do not accept the attempts to extract more money from us, we who already had to pay for our own freeway, unlike every other area of this state who now gets their and some of our share of gas tax. For example, look at RT 395, where vast sums have been used to built perfect miles and miles of freeway where almost no one goes. Why was so much of our money used there when cities seriously needed that money? When the freeway was built we only consented to a third lane IF it was to be a carpool lane knowing that lane would always have fewer cars and would take cars off the two general lanes. It was NEVER intended to be a full third lane.</p> <p>We are dead set against truck use in this corridor due to the residential nature of the interface and that we made such a huge monetary effort to make sure that did not happen. We are alarmed by the threat of the coming of federal funds, which would bring medium and large trucks.</p> <p>We support the carpool lane as it is, knowing the current carpool lane takes some significant numbers of cars off the highway general lanes, and with this prevents additional air pollution and noise that are certain with a lane more crowded with paying customers. While South San Jose residents may want a smooth ride in it to Mountain View unaffected by the intervening traffic, this is a lot to ask that intervening residents be blocked from the best lane of the very freeway they have paid for and from which they must tolerate more pollution and noise but will be blocked from use, even in non-rush hours. And not only will we be blocked from use of the carpool lane, but a risky fortune will be spent to construct this by-pass for south San Jose residents.</p>
I-133-8	<p>6. NOISE IN THE SR 85 CORRIDOR HAS NOT BEEN ADEQUATELY DESCRIBED IN THE IS ND/EA.</p> <p>SIGNIFICANT NOISE IMPACTS.</p> <p>The decibel ranges given by the IS ND/EA for average noise is 61 -67 db. Near corridor noise measured in the summer of 2013 by the Saratoga Draft Noise Element consultants (before this project was announced to the public) is 67-71 db. Please explain why these noise measurements are so different.</p> <p>The noise levels reported for this project are as much as 10 db lower than the levels found by the Saratoga Noise Element noise consultants (the same consultants).</p> <p>Explain this difference.</p> <p>Explain time of day and day of week and dates of measuring.</p>

I-133-8,
cont.

Relate data to times of frequent inversions.

The sound is variously projected in the IS ND/EA to increase between 0 to 3 decibels, but varies within the document. (3 db means doubling the noise. Decibels are measured on the logarithmic scale.) Of course this 0 to 3 is nonsense, as the travel lanes will increase by 1/3 and the hard surface will increase by at least 28 feet, meaning more noise generation and much more reverberation on the freeway and throughout the residential neighborhoods.

The background noise prior to building the freeway was variously measured between 35 and 40 db. The current Saratoga City Noise element measurements show up to 71 db. A way to describe it: the difference, 30 or more db means we can attribute for illustration about 5 db per each of the 6 lanes. Adding two additional lanes to the current 6 are not likely to produce 0 to 3 db. More likely these additional lanes, which are projected to carry more than 1600 cars per lane, will produce closer to at least 76 db, and more than 80 db if trucks are added to the mix. This is industrial scale noise in this predominantly residential area.

The IS ND/EA failed entirely to disclose the current noise range, the intermittent noise, the failure to cite extra loud vehicles such as certain motorcycles, night time noise and it's effects, or the increase in all of these to be expected. This IS ND/EA claims that a 3 db increase is barely perceptible. 3 db is a doubling of the sound pressure.

Is there any intention to produce an accurate noise study? Is there any intention of reporting this noise accurately? Where? When? Is there any intention to mitigate the additional noise?

Times of air inversions produce much greater sound volumes. Air inversions are becoming more frequent with global warming. Is there any plan to measure sound levels during air inversions?

Segment 7, the segment between Saratoga Avenue and Winchester is missing from the more detailed assessments and mitigations for noise (This should have been between pages 2-100 to 2-101), so there is no recognition of noise in this entire part of the project, and no mitigation whatsoever. Throughout the other parts of the corridor, mitigation for noise is listed, but mainly segment by segment solutions for noise throughout is said to be too expensive or not effective or both.

The noise section of the IS ND/EA and other sections expect truck traffic on Hwy 85 with this project (See page 2-92, Section 2.2.7.3, fourth paragraph.) With truck traffic the noise level increases projected (0 – 3 db) are especially unrealistic. What is the truck factor in the noise calculations? Where are the revised calculations?

The concrete barriers planned for the median will reflect noise much like they do along RT 280 N. What is the factor used for the concrete barrier noise reflection? Why is this in the plan?

Even without this project, noise due to growth is projected to increase 5 decibels. (Saratoga Noise Element Draft.) With this project, the Negative Declaration says noise will increase, some places admitted within the ND/EA 3 decibels. Just as the earlier predictions in the original EIS/EIR were wrong by 10 decibels, noise will be more than projected. These two projections, brings the sound levels to about 78 dBAs. The freeway does not now even come close to meeting the noise standards [limits] of 65 dBA for residential areas, or the promise of the original EIS/EIR.

I-133-8, cont.	<p>Residents have begged desperately for resurfacing with asphalt, but to deaf ears. When is this resurfacing to take place?</p> <p>The freeway is now out of compliance with Federal noise standards, California state noise standards, the signed contracts with the County Transportation Agency, the Saratoga Noise Element, and the promise of the Saratoga General Plan on the quality of our environment. The freeway is severely degrading our environment in Saratoga, Cupertino, Los Gatos, Campbell, and west San Jose.</p> <p>It also degrades the Highway 85 driving environment with the intensity and particular frequency generated against the hardened surfaces, making drivers very tired, adding to the risk of accidents, and making conversation impossible, discouraging carpooling.</p>
I-133-9	<p>7. SIGNIFICANT LIGHT POLLUTION IMPACTS</p> <p>In spite of the primarily residential interface of this project in the west valley, light on high standards (well above the sound walls) spaced every half-mile, on an industrial scale, will flood the adjacent neighborhoods. This light is to be added due to the complex signage every half-mile that goes with Pay Lanes, to warn of and then mark the Pay Lane exit/entry points, and to light tall toll-taking towers.</p>
I-133-10	<p>8. SIGNIFICANT AESTHETIC IMPACTS</p> <p>Where now the view backdrop from residences and the freeway is mostly of the nearby trees, mountains, a few tall power lines, and broad expanse of sky, the views from nearby residences and from the freeway itself would be substantially degraded with massive, confusing, ever changing lighted bright yellow signage and tall lighted/toll towers. Contrary to the document, damage to views both on and off the freeway is significant impact.</p>
I-133-11	<p>9. CHOKE POINTS, MERGES AND CROSSOVERS NOT ADDRESSED.</p> <p>Anyone who drives Highway 85 at rush hour knows the slow downs and stops along this route have to do with the choke points, intersections which are so poorly designed they act as if they had 4 way stop signs, merges which are poorly managed by metering lights, and crossover traffic to and from the carpool lanes and to and from the merges, all of which this proposal will increase, not decrease. The IS DN/EA does nothing to correct a single one of these issues, nor does it account for the traffic delay caused by these issues.</p> <p>The current worst choke point, with 4 crossovers all in one place, Highway 280/85 going north in the morning, causing up to a 15 minute delay for all drivers there, is not even on the list for future resolution and causes far more time delay than the time claimed saved by a limited number of Pay-vehicles in these toll lanes. The solution to this worst choke-point is relatively simple design, but not on anyone's list.</p> <p>The second worst choke point is the merging going north with highway 280 in which two full lanes of 280 traffic merge into Highway 85s' two general lanes with attempted crossovers to the carpool lane. These choke points, merge problems, crossovers, etc. are not even acknowledged in the IS ND/EA and not even on the list to be fixed. Instead, by changing many carpool drivers to individual Pay-drivers, and adding other drivers as described below, all of SR 85 would become more backed up and cause even worse delays.</p> <p>The increase in traffic would result from:</p> <p>(a) loss of incentives to carpool and thus more single-occupancy vehicles to carry</p>

the same number of people,

(b) collecting people from other routes with the promise of a faster commute trip, and

(c) people moving further from their jobs thinking they can commute easily by paying a toll,

(d) people doubling back to enter where they can get into or out of a Pay Lane, and

(e) and the additional vehicles from the forced densification of housing to meet ABAGs Forced Growth plan.

The other major slowdown is RT 85 at RT 101 in the morning going north where even the flawed IS ND/EA admits this project will increase slowdowns on both routes SR 85 and RT 101, reducing the value of what the project mistakenly claims will be time saved.

Other choke points, practically every intersection north and south, are “to be addressed” sometime in the future. Yet CalTrans/VTA would create more single car drivers and crowd more cars on Highway 85 without addressing a single one of these. See San Jose Mercury News article at:

<http://sanjosemercurynews.ca.newsmemory.com/publink.php?shareid=606663b10> showing the increase in traffic, problems, general delays and frustration on Route 237 by users with the Express lane. This frustration, though real, was not reflected in the VTA rosy report on the 237 HOT project.

I-133-11,
cont.

Two Pay-Lanes funnel into one at exactly the place where no widening (north of Stevens Creek) can be accomplished and delays are already often 15 minutes. So they will even be choking what is now the carpool lane.

Queuing theory dictates traffic will move at the rate of the slowest vehicle. Currently carpoolers have not been prohibited from moving into the general lanes to get around the slow vehicles. General lane vehicles have a second lane to get around slow vehicles. With lane restrictions in this plan, queuing theory rules, and slow drivers will frequently slow the restricted single Pay-Lanes south of RT 87 and north of Stevens Creek with no escape for miles.

Picture an accident in either the Pay-Lanes or the regular lanes now requiring necking one section or the other of the freeway to one lane or none with no options to shift traffic across the lanes as needed, as can be done now. Accidents, slow drivers, etc. are so frequent these restrictions will make traffic impossible many days. People who use RT 237 have said that drivers cross the double white lines wherever they want regardless of traffic in the adjacent lanes with frequent near accidents.

The research study “Effectiveness of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes in the San Francisco Bay Area” by Jaimyoung Kwon, California State University, East Bay Hayward, and Pravin Varaiya, UC, Berkeley have analyzed these systems in depth and conclude:

“The first conclusion implies that although HOV lanes will seem underutilized, there is little ‘excess capacity’ to permit toll-paying or hybrid vehicles access to HOV lanes in order to raise revenue or promote fuel efficiency. The fourth conclusion implies that HOV use will not increase as congestion worsens. Together, these conclusions threaten belief in the effectiveness of [adding to] HOV lanes as a means to mitigate congestion or reduce pollution in the Bay Area.”

I-133-12

10. IF THERE IS ROOM TO FILL IN THE CARPOOL LANES, IT IS SIMPLE TO ADD

CARS WITHOUT THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THIS PROJECT.

The use of the carpool lanes by hybrid vehicles is now being limited by state issued permits due to overcrowding of the carpool lanes. Why would we even begin to allow paying drivers into the carpool lanes when these newer, very fuel-efficient, very quiet vehicles are not allowed? If there truly is room in the carpool lanes, then why spend all this money? Why not just allow more hybrid vehicles in the carpool lanes, costing the public NOTHING, requiring no project, preventing excessive noise, limiting greenhouse gas, and other pollution, and saving fuel? Everybody wins with this.

I-133-12,
cont.

It is critical that a real EIR be prepared with an open mind to examine honest alternatives, not to just to look at adding Pay Lanes as the only option, but to really get started on the promised light rail, and to really present solutions to the choke points, merging and crossovers which slow traffic and cause accidents, frequently foreclosing movement on the system altogether.

Light rail is needed because we will never accommodate the growth being forced on us by ABAG by adding lanes to the freeway. The County has managed to put light rail where most people do not go. Now the County can put it where people actually do go, on this route.

The Saratoga Council had bent over backwards, against residents interest, to allow this freeway in the first place. At the very least we depended on the County Transportation Agency and CalTrans to honor the promises and the actual contracts. We had no idea CalTrans/VTA (the successor County Transportation Agency) would think they do not have to honor the contracts signed by the former Transportation Agency and CalTrans.

11. THIS PROPOSAL IS A NIGHTMARE.

Even if we were to like the idea of Pay Lanes, they will not serve Saratoga Residents in any way as the entry and exits are nowhere near Saratoga Avenue. They would be entirely closed off for Saratoga access through the west valley. Cars entering and exiting the most nearby access point near Winchester and DeAnza Blvd. will crowd our neighborhood streets and Los Gatos and Cupertino residential streets getting to these access points.

I-133-13

What are we west valley residents losing with this proposal so south San Jose Residents can (perhaps) get through the west valley faster as lone drivers? (Actually so they can hurry up and wait.)

a. We get trucks on Highway 85 if any federal funds come in, as the IS ND/EA expects. Along with the trucks comes a much greater frequency of accidents, much slower traffic in the general lanes and much more noise and air pollution. This increase should be spelled out.

b. More through traffic on more lanes of Highway 85 will go through Saratoga, but we cannot access these lanes.

c. We lose access to our carpool lane in the west valley. Our accessible lanes go from 3 to 2. We west valley residents and south valley residents lose incentive to carpool or use electric cars. In environmental terms this is going backwards.

d. Along with the increased traffic, we will experience even more noise. Even the IS ND/EA says an additional as much as 3 decibels, a doubling of current noise

levels. An increase in lanes by another third will cause more than 3 db in an area where we are already seriously lied to about noise, and heavily impacted by noise. Eight lanes could easily mean an ungodly 78 db or more and more than 80 dba if trucks are invited in due to the entry of federal money. This will be industrial scale noise in a residential area.

e. Much more neighborhood double-back traffic will go through our streets on the way to and from Winchester, De Anza, and the other limited access points. Local congestion and even more local noise will result. Overall mileage per Pay Lane user will increase much more than just being in the Pay Lane as single drivers, as roughly half of these users will double back through the neighborhoods to access the Pay Lane entry and exit points, and also will add mileage to their travel on the Pay Lanes they have doubled back to. Congestion will increase sending more traffic through the neighborhoods. Please present what is known about the current neighborhood spill-over traffic and the projected spill-over traffic.

f. Heavy construction activity noise, impact noise, light pollution and chemical pollution through the night for months, maybe years. Please provide documentation and description of this nighttime noise from a similar project.

- g. Even more corrosive concrete dust, and more toxic fumes including more:
- 1) carbon monoxide (CO),
 - 2) Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons,
 - 3) sulfur acids (SOx),
 - 4) nitrogen acids (NOx),
 - 5) fine (PM 2.5) particulates,
 - 6) and not quite so fine (PM10) particulates,

to add to the health damage we already experience. The IS ND/EA does not account for these health and life limiting damages to the near residents, or the area-wide population. How many years are now being lost due to pollution health damage from this freeway? How many more years of residents lives will be lost due to the pollution increase? How many more years if trucks come in? How many years of disability can be expected from this pollutant-caused health damage? We are entitled to have this spelled out.

The IS ND/EA amazingly asserts that due to federal clean air laws making vehicles cleaner, no mitigation for the increased vehicle pollution is required. It is OK to add more traffic with more pollution, they imply. But they cannot claim our own efforts in buying cleaner automobiles, so the collective "we" have cleaner air, allows THEM to increase the pollution we experience. We are entitled to the benefits of better pollution control on vehicles due to tightened federal and state efforts just as everyone is, without being co-opted by more traffic pollution taking those of us along the corridor back to a more polluted baseline or worse.

The baseline for these pollutants is the pre-freeway baseline. What are the current numbers for each pollutant? An EIR is necessary with these pollutants set forth, the health effects, the changes spelled out and the projections. This is not a theoretical exercise. Our lives are at issue. We are entitled to have an accurate description.

h. Industrial strength light pollution on high standards, well above any sound walls, will be introduced to the corridor further disturbing sleep, on top of the noise

I-133-13
cont.

disturbance. Industrial scale lighting will be introduced during the night time construction all along the entire length. What does this light pollution mean in terms of residents health damage through loss of sleep?

i. We paid for the facility with our premium sales tax. It is paid for. Now we are to be charged for use of part of it? A statewide ballot measure prohibited just such charges. Explain how VTA and CalTrans can skirt this law.

We are entitled to our share of gas tax money. Why are we not getting it to fix the choke points and resurface? Who specifically is in charge of speaking up for the money and planning these projects? Why are they not acting on our behalf?

The \$170 million debt pay-back time is a very long time in the future. No explanation is provided for who gets left holding the bag for the capitol costs if charges do not cover the operations and capitol costs? What are the limits on the tolls? Who decides what tolls to charge?

We already know this proposal will not serve our west valley communities. The carpool lanes were in the contracts with the cities and were intended to mitigate the original EIR identified impacts. They are official mitigation to reduce traffic. The lower levels of traffic in the carpool lane now reduce pollution and noise. This is the way the freeway was accepted by the cities. The light rail in the median was in the contracts with the cities, also as mitigation for the original EIR impacts. These official mitigations cannot now be summarily dismissed to allow those south San Jose residents with money to burn, to speed their way as single drivers by-passing further-constricted general lane traffic.

I-133-13
cont.

The carpool lane must remain as a carpool lane, and no additional lanes can be built under the contracts. Promises were made to each city along the corridor and all cities signed contracts essentially the same as Saratoga's contracts, limiting the number of lanes and reserving space for light rail. Impacts cannot be increased while at the same time removing the formally adopted mitigations. The IS ND/EA claims no mitigations are needed as, variously 2007, or 2010, or today is the claimed baseline. This of course is not true. Mitigations promised with the original freeway are as important now as they were then. Because they were not completed the baseline for environmental review and mitigation remains the pre-freeway baseline. This is a project with a long history and is out of compliance with standards, promises and actual contracts. The IS ND/EA entirely fails to acknowledge the contracts, the mitigation in those contracts or any obligation to cities and residents whatsoever.

This proposal would close forever our ability to have real public transportation, and not be totally road vehicle-dependent in the west valley. The light rail promised must be built.

In the west valley, we have the right to public transportation as most every other part of the Bay Area now has, all of it subsidized (much of it by us). The median must be reserved for light rail. A plan for building light rail must be commenced.

Trucks on Highway 85 would blow to bits any traffic improvements. VTA/CalTrans apparently has ignored all these signed, valid contracts, and by inviting federal money. CalTrans/VTA thus does not care about the trucks or the impact of trucks. Does VTA/CalTrans actually care about the real congestion or is the idea to just get money no matter how much environmental and traffic damage is done?

When it was pointed out by the Cupertino Council that the additional lane would

I-133-13, cont.	<p>not solve the congestion issues, that the choke points were the main problem, and light rail was promised and should be at long last put in (instead of an additional paid lane and loss of the carpool lane), the VTA spokesperson stated that light rail would require higher density to work. But BART does not require higher density in the residential end of its lines and it works. It works because it goes from residential areas to major work centers. This light rail line would go exactly where needed, unlike most of the other light rail lines in the County, which go to downtown San Jose where relatively few people have any need to go.</p>
I-133-14	<p>12. THIS PROJECT IS TOO RUSHED FOR A PROPER EVALUATION. CITY AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IS LIMITED BY THE TIGHT TIMELINES.</p> <p>The VTA/CalTrans deadline for comments on the IS ND/EA was at first set just two weeks, January 31, 2014, from the first and only public introduction to this plan, appearing to make sure no city council could schedule a meeting on the project as the west valley city council meetings are on the firsts and thirds Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays of the months, and residents would not learn of or be able to engage in time. Cupertino Council by accident found out about this project, held an emergency meeting and asked for an extension on comments.</p> <p>Still the extended February 28, 2014 deadline is very little time to review the IS ND/EA and the background documents, especially for people with very busy lives, as most people in this valley have.</p> <p>It is an impossibly short time for cities to schedule noticed public hearings and decide their course of action on something with such potential impact.</p> <p>Throughout the IS ND/EA the agencies in charge of aspects of the environment “will be” contacted, not “were” contacted as would be required with and EIR. So there is no room for agencies to say no or really qualify their consent. Thus the agencies and residents are not really part of the decision making as they are supposed to be and would be with an EIR.</p> <p>Following the CEQA process, preparing a true EIR gives city councils, the various responsible agencies, and the public notice, a process, and enough time to understand and react to a proposal of this size. An EIR should have been prepared and CEQA properly followed.</p> <p>A Negative Declaration is laughable if it wasn't so serious. This is a \$150 to \$170 Million project adding 2 traffic lanes to the existing 6, and increasing traffic capacity in the lanes by 1/3 more on a freeway already way out of compliance with the noise standards of the residential areas it passes through. Of course a project of that magnitude requires an EIR with serious alternatives including an intention to clear the bottlenecks.</p> <p>We, the citizens, have more interest in a working freeway than VTA or CalTrans because we deal with the consequences every day. It will not do to overload the choke points of this freeway with even more traffic that can only speed to stop.</p> <p>But we also know we must have real public transit, not busses which get caught in traffic jams as other vehicles do. We are as much entitled to our share of state transportation money as any other area and have had very little of it up to this time having had to finance our own freeway locally. It is time for our state government to provide us our share of transportation money, both to fix our choke points and to put in the light rail line.</p>

I-133-14, cont.	<p>Most important of all, federal funds may cause the loss of the ability to prevent trucks on Highway 85. We will lose way more than any possible or theoretical gain if trucks are allowed. Yet the funding sources listed in the IS ND/EA include the federal government. This is the elephant in the room, the worst serious flaw of the overall deficient plan.</p>
I-133-15	<p>Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act is the law. A real EIR, with real alternatives is required. The alternative to an EIR -- drop this project.</p>
I-133-15	<p>13. STILL NEEDED MITIGATIONS: Lowering traffic counts by providing light rail as promised. Rectifying the concrete mistake -- resurfacing with asphalt rubber, Completing and maintaining the promised landscaping,</p>
I-133-15	<p>14. UNELECTED ENTITIES, ISSUES OF TRUST, FAIRNESS: Unelected entities, such as VTA, the Santa Clara County Transportation Agency before them and CalTrans answer to no voters. These agencies made contracts with us and then broke them, leaving us a damaged community. They stand firm, refusing to fix the damage. Now they say since we are already damaged, starting at that damage point, we must accept more damage so they can generate money from us. Doubling the noise they claim is too small to be noticed. They give us noise measurements 10 db lower than our city measurements!!</p>
I-133-16	<p>How can we trust these unelected agencies with our environment, our family's health, our peace, our major investment in our homes, our transportation needs, the very air we breathe when they have so thoroughly failed us and now threaten more damage?</p>
I-133-16	<p>CalTrans can force an unneeded road through a redwood park, force a freeway by-pass no one wants or needs destroying an important RURAL wetland (with no EIR), build and maintain a gigantic freeway for miles and miles (RT 395) where almost no one goes, all this and more using our gas tax.</p>
I-133-16	<p>This is where the money is generated. It should stay here to fix our choke points. If we had it to fix our choke points CalTrans would not have so much to waste on damage to our rural areas and wildlands.</p>
I-133-16	<p>CalTrans and VTA have found a project to extract money from us surrounding a freeway for which we already paid a premium. We can stop now, before even more money is sent down the rabbit hole.</p>
I-133-16	<p>When they present this "overload-the-carpool-lanes/preempt-the-light rail-lines plan," is it believable that they have an understanding of, or interest in the real delay issues in that corridor? It certainly does not appear so.</p>
I-133-16	<p>Yours truly, Cheriel Jensen</p>

Responses to Comment I-133

I-133-1

Note: This comment was submitted twice, once via the Town of Los Gatos and once directly to 85expresslanes@urs.com. The comments have been confirmed to be identical and are only included once.

This is an introductory comment. Responses to the detailed comments follow. It should be noted that the Performance Agreement between the City of Saratoga and the Santa Clara County Traffic Authority reserved the median for "mass transportation" and not specifically for light rail.

I-133-2

See to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding the agreements cited in the comment.

Using federal funds in the corridor would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85, which are in effect for the 18.4-mile segment between US 101 in San Jose and I-280. These restrictions, which apply to trucks over 9,000 pounds except for maintenance and emergency vehicles, buses, and recreational vehicles, will remain in place with the project. Parts of the IS/EA refer to trucks because the project limits include SR 85 north of I-280 as well as segments of US 101 to the north and south of its interchanges with SR 85. Trucks are not restricted in these areas.

I-133-3

An Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment (IS/EA) was prepared for the project. An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) were not prepared because, based on the detailed evaluation described in Master Response GEN-3, no significant environmental impacts were identified. Two public meetings were held, and additional outreach was conducted to clarify that the project includes a second express lane, as discussed in Master Response GEN-6. The input received during the public comment period receives the same consideration regardless of whether the environmental document is an IS/EA or EIR/EIS. Refer to Master Responses GEN-2, GEN-8, and TR-2 regarding the comments about alternatives and choke points.

It is not correct that an EIR must be prepared because the project is a Type I project. The Type I designation is specific to consideration of noise abatement on Caltrans and federal facilities. This project is considered a Type I project because it would add a lane (Caltrans 2011d). Under 23 Code of Federal Regulations 772.13, noise abatement must be considered and evaluated for feasibility and reasonableness for Type I projects if the project is predicted to result in a traffic noise impact. This evaluation took place, and the findings are summarized in the IS/EA. The project cost and other factors listed in the comment do not mandate the preparation of an EIR.

The comment states but does not provide evidence that the IS/EA in some places admits and in some places denies that the project will have a substantial environmental impact. Where substantial environmental impacts were identified, avoidance and minimization measures were included to reduce impacts to acceptable levels. This is similar to what would be done with an EIR.

I-133-4

The project is a Type I project as defined by 23 Code of Federal Regulations 772.7, as noted in IS/EA Section 2.2.7.3. See the response to Comment L-3-7 7 and Master Response N-2 regarding the evaluation of noise abatement for the project.

The comment is incorrect that a 3 dB difference is a doubling of noise. A 3 dB increase in noise level represents a doubling of acoustic energy, rather than a doubling in perceived loudness. As stated in the City of Saratoga Draft Noise Element, a 3 dB change is considered

a just-noticeable difference in noise level, and a 10 dB change is subjectively heard as approximately a doubling in loudness (City of Saratoga Noise Element, p. 5).

I-133-5

These comments are addressed in the responses to Comment I-132.

See responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding the agreements cited in the comment.

Refer to Master Responses N-1 through N-5 regarding noise.

See response to Comment I-133-2 regarding truck restrictions.

Design modifications to revise the proposed express lane configuration to continuous access—like the current HOV lane—will be considered during detailed project design, as described in Master Response GEN-4. This would allow access from Saratoga Avenue.

Refer to Master Response GEN-2 regarding light rail.

No grinding of pavement is proposed as part of this project.

I-133-6

Additional outreach was conducted to clarify that the project includes a second express lane, as discussed in Master Response GEN-6 including extending the comment period. The comment does not identify which impacts the IS/EA failed to disclose or which inconsistencies.

I-133-7

The project's purpose and need are clearly set forth in IS/EA Section 1.2. The objectives listed in the comment are the commenter's interpretation. The statement that one project objective is to reduce speeds in the HOV lanes to 45 mph is inaccurate. Rather, 45 mph is the minimum average operating speed for HOV lanes with a speed limit of 50 mph or higher, set by 23 United States Code Section 166(d)(2).

The IS/EA clearly demonstrates that the project will improve future traffic compared to the No Build condition (refer to Master Response TR-1). The comment does not provide evidence that the project will remove incentives for carpooling or for purchasing electric vehicles. Express lanes maintain priority use for HOVs, as explained in Master Response GEN-1.

FHWA policy does not allow quieter pavement to be considered as a noise abatement measure, as described in Master Response N-2.

As noted previously, the project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85, regardless of funding source.

I-133-8

Master Response N-4 discusses the IS/EA noise findings with respect to the City of Saratoga Noise Element. The *Noise Study Report* (Illingworth and Rodkin 2012) for the proposed project provides the dates and times of the noise measurements. The report is available at <http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/envdocs.htm#santaclara>, under "State Route 85 Express Lanes Project, Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment." See the response to Comment I-7-2 regarding noise and inversions.

The comment states that the IS/EA “variously” projects noise to increase between 0 and 3 decibels. This is correct; of the more than 140 locations evaluated for the noise analysis, the project-related increase would be 0 to 3 dBA depending on location, both compared to existing conditions and future No Build conditions. Existing and predicted future Build and No Build noise levels for each location are listed in the *Noise Study Report* (Illingworth and Rodkin 2012).

As stated previously, 3 dBA is not a doubling of perceived loudness, and the characteristics of roadway noise described in the comment are not accurate. Decibels are logarithmic units, so sound levels do not combine arithmetically. When adding a noise level to an approximately equal noise level, the total noise level increases 3 dB. For example, doubling the traffic on a highway would result in an increase of 3 dB (Caltrans Technical Noise Supplement 2013, p. 2-14) When two noise levels are 10 dB or more apart, the lower value does not contribute significantly (less than 0.5 dB) to the total noise level (Caltrans Technical Noise Supplement 2013, p. 2-15).

See the response to Comment L-1-15 regarding intermittent noise, single noise events, and nighttime noise.

The response to Comment L-3-8 addresses noise data for Segment 7.

As stated previously, the project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85; the results of the noise analysis account for the project segments with and without truck restrictions.

See the response to Comment L-1-15 for the project’s potential to result in reflected noise. The concrete median barriers are not expected to result in increases in reflected noise.

The project’s noise analysis includes projected local and regional growth as part of the required modeling for future Build and No Build conditions. The City of Saratoga Updated Draft Noise Element of the General Plan (Charles M. Salter Associates, Inc., December 22, 2013) does not include the statement that noise due to growth is projected to increase 5 decibels. See Master Response N-4 for analysis of the Saratoga noise study compared to the IS/EA.

See the response to Comment L-3-7 regarding noise standards and Master Response N-2 regarding resurfacing with asphalt pavement.

With regard to safety, SR 85 meets all of the current state safety standards.

I-133-9

See the response to Comment L-3-21 and Final IS/EA Section 2.1.4.3 (under “Light and Glare”). Although some locations may have partial or full views of new luminaires, the fixtures would be placed in the median, as far as possible from residences adjacent to the SR 85 corridor. Project-related lighting is not expected to result in substantial light trespass, surface brightness, or glare to motorists, adjacent residents, or other viewers along the project corridor.

I-133-10

Additional information about the visual effects of the signs and toll structures has been added to the Final IS/EA. These effects are fully evaluated in IS/EA Section 2.1.4.3

(under “Project Impacts,” then “Signs, Toll Structures, and Lighting”). For the reasons described in the IS/EA, these features are not expected to substantially degrade views from nearby residences or SR 85.

The comment refers to ever-changing lighted bright yellow signage. As discussed in IS/EA Section 2.1.4.3 (under “Project Signs and Tolling Equipment”), one of four express lane access zone signs would have DMS panels for the toll rate, and Exhibit R shows one such sign. The toll rate would only change during the express lane hours of operation, which would be the same as the current HOV lane hours of operation.

I-133-11

In regard to the comments about choke points, merges, and crossovers, the project would provide incremental improvements to bottlenecks at major system interchanges, as described in Master Response TR-2. In addition, other projects are proposed that would help to relieve congestion at major interchanges along SR 85. These projects are also described in Master Response TR-2.

The comment lists sources of increased traffic resulting from the project but provides no evidence to indicate how these outcomes would occur. As described in Master Response GEN-1, the project would maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs.

The comments about queuing theory, the newspaper article, and the academic study are noted but do not constitute evidence that the traffic studies summarized in the IS/EA omitted consideration of existing traffic conditions or incorrectly projected future Build/No Build traffic conditions. The traffic studies were conducted by a qualified transportation engineer and reviewed by VTA and civil engineers in the Caltrans Traffic Forecasting and Traffic Operations departments.

Existing and future Build/No Build traffic conditions were thoroughly evaluated in the detailed traffic operations analysis for the project (URS and DKS 2013), which is summarized in IS/EA Section 2.1.3. The analysis shows that in the peak traffic hour for the primary commute travel direction, levels of service approaching major system interchanges would generally remain the same or improve slightly with the project in both 2015 and 2035 (northbound in the AM peak and southbound in the PM peak; IS/EA Tables 2.1.3-5 and 2.1.3-6 for 2015, and Tables 2.1.3-9 and 2.1.3-10 for 2035). Overall corridor speeds would increase and total delay would decrease with the project in 2015 and 2035 compared with the No Project conditions (IS/EA Tables 2.1.3-8 and 2.1.3-12).

Under existing and future No Build conditions, no buffer separates the HOV lane from the general purpose lanes. HOV lane congestion occurs from both the high demand in the HOV lanes and the friction caused by vehicles moving between the HOV lanes and the heavily-congested general purpose lanes. The merging of HOVs into and out of the HOV lanes influences the speed in the HOV lane, causing higher density. This can occur even when the HOV demands are below capacity. With the Build Alternative, the introduction of restricting access and buffer (2-foot-wide double-lined striped buffer zone) would reduce the friction between the general purpose lanes and the express lanes, thus allowing the express lanes to operate at higher speeds and lower densities with the same volume.

I-133-12

The suggestion to allow additional hybrids to use HOV lanes is noted but is outside of the scope of this project. Refer to Master Response GEN-2 regarding a light rail alternative and the response to Comment L-3-4 regarding agreements that the City of Saratoga entered into before SR 85 was constructed. Also refer to Master Response GEN-3 regarding preparation of an EIR.

I-133-13

The comments in items **a** through **e** are addressed in the responses to Comments I-132-7 through I-132-9.

For the questions in item **f** regarding construction noise, see the response to Comment L-1-16.

In regard to the comments in item **g**, see the responses to Comments L-1-17 through L-1-20 and Master Response AQ-1 regarding air quality. It is neither feasible nor required under CEQA or NEPA to compare project-related changes to a pre-SR 85 baseline.

The comment in item **h** states that project lighting will disturb residents' sleep. As stated in IS/EA Section 2.1.4.3 (under "Lighting"), lighting will be adjusted to minimize impacts to adjacent residential areas. No evidence is presented that project lighting would disturb sleep or have other health effects.

Item **i** states that the facility has already been paid for through sales tax. The express lane toll for solo drivers is a user fee, as described in Master Response GEN-5, and use of the express lanes is optional. SR 85 will continue to have two general purpose lanes in each direction that do not have tolls or vehicle occupancy requirements.

The comments about gas tax revenue allocation are outside of the scope of this process to address.

The comment refers to a \$170 million debt. This appears to be a reference to the project cost. The project will be funded as described in IS/EA Section 1.3.3. The funding sources for the project approval and environmental document phase include federal, state, and local funds for transportation improvements, which are not loans and would not be accrued as debt. Full funding for the design development and construction has yet to be determined but could be from a combination of toll bonds, third party loans, local contributions, or federal grants. Refer to Master Response GEN-10 for more information regarding funding, cost, and return.

Toll rates have yet to be determined. The rates would be set by VTA. No tolls would apply to carpools and other HOVs.

The comment states that the existing HOV lanes and light rail in the median of SR 85 were mitigation for the original construction of SR 85, the carpool lane must remain as a carpool lane, and no additional lanes can be built. The HOV lanes were constructed as planned, and the proposed project would maintain preferential use by HOVs, as discussed in Master Response GEN-1. The addition of a second express lane in the median of SR 85 between SR 87 and I-280 is intended to provide additional HOV capacity because traffic modeling shows that segments of the existing HOV lane would otherwise operate between LOS D and F—with decreased speeds and impaired traffic flow—in 2015 and

2035 (IS/EA Section 2.1.3.2). The second express lane is consistent with the intent of the original SR 85 project to provide HOV capacity throughout the freeway corridor.

Light rail in the median was not included as part of the preferred alternative in the 1987 Final EIS for the construction of SR 85, as described in Master Response GEN-2. See the responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding the agreements cited in the comment.

As stated previously, the use of federal funds will not have any effect on the existing truck restrictions on SR 85.

As shown in IS/EA Table S-1, impacts are summarized and measures are included to avoid and/or minimize impacts to utilities/emergency services, traffic and transportation/pedestrian and bicycle facilities, cultural resources, hydrology and floodplain, water quality and storm water runoff, geology/soils/seismicity/topography, paleontology, hazardous waste/materials, air quality, noise, natural communities, wetlands and other waters, plant species, animal species, threatened and endangered species, and invasive species.

Refer to Master Response GEN-2 regarding light rail.

I-133-14

Caltrans and VTA advertised and circulated the IS/EA for public review and comment on December 30, 2013. The end of the public comment period, originally January 31, 2014, was extended to February 28, 2014. The total length of the comment period was 60 days, which is longer than the 45-day comment period typically required for EIRs. Also refer to Master Response GEN-6 regarding public noticing.

The comment states that the IS/EA indicated that “agencies in charge of aspects of the environment ‘will be’ contacted, not ‘were’ contacted as would be required with an EIR.” IS/EA Chapter 5 lists the agencies and individuals that were notified of the availability of the IS/EA either directly or through the State Clearinghouse. As described in IS/EA Section 3.2, public outreach on the project began in 2004, and several community meetings—including in Saratoga and Cupertino—were held in 2011 through 2013. The comment does not provide evidence that the public outreach and review period were not in accordance with CEQA.

The remaining comments are repeated from earlier in this comment letter. See responses to Comments I-133-1 through I-133-13.

I-133-15

As noted previously, prior agreements reserved the median for “mass transportation,” not specifically light rail. Installing concrete was not a mistake and noise levels are within the range of previously projected levels; refer to Master Responses N-1 through N-4. Regarding landscaping, plantings were completed and are being maintained in accordance with available budget.

I-133-16

The commenter’s opinions and objection to the proposed project are noted. See the responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding the agreements cited in the comment. Refer to Master Responses N-through N-

4 regarding noise; GEN-1 regarding express lanes and HOVs; GEN-2 regarding light rail in the median; and GEN-10 regarding funding, cost, and return.

Comment I-134 Cheriel Jensen (3)

From: cherielj [<mailto:cherielj@earthlink.net>]
Sent: Monday, March 03, 2014 8:41 PM
To: Council
Subject: VTA successor to contracts of SCCo Transportation Agency -Citation

Dear Town Council Members,

It is essential that the Town defends the Los Gatos - SCCo Traffic Authority contract dated October 23, 1990 limiting the number of lanes on HWY 85 and reserving the median for light rail. The following is State PUC . CODE § 100126 which perpetuates the obligations of the SCCo Traffic Authority upon reorganization into VTA.

>
> http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=PUC&division=10.&title=&part=12.&chapter=5.&article=2.

I-134-1

>
> CAL. PUC. CODE § 100126 : California Code - Section 100126
> The district, which was established with the approval of the voters in 1972, shall continue as an entity under the control of its governing board as reorganized pursuant to the amendments to this part by statutes that were enacted in 1994. Nothing in the act that added this section during the second year of the 1993-94 Regular Session shall be construed to alter, impair, or terminate existing contracts between the district and other parties, including, but not limited to, funding agreements, grants, labor agreements, agreements entered into pursuant to Section 13(c) of the Federal Transit Act and its antecedents, bonds, notes, equipment trust certificates, or other obligations of the district. All rights and powers of the district shall continue in full force and effect and no affirmation, adoption, or assumption by the board of directors is required for that continuation. The district shall become the successor to certain county contracts as provided by agreement between the county and the district.

Yours truly,
Cheriel Jensen
cherieli@earthlink.net

Responses to Comment I-134

I-134-1

This comment, submitted to the Town of Los Gatos, is noted. See the response to Comment L-4-2 regarding the Los Gatos agreement cited in the comment.

Comment I-135 Ken Jorgensen

FW: 85 Express Lanes Project

Ken Jorgensen [mariposaken@comcast.net]

Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 11:08 AM

To: 85expresslanes

I-135-1

We all pay gasoline taxes to develop and maintain the highway transportation system. It is not a social engineering nor fund raising system. The traffic lanes should be open to all drivers. Since car pool lanes increase congestion in the other lanes, the best thing to do is eliminate the car pool lanes, forget the express lane, a thinly disguised fund raising scheme, and forget the social engineering projects.

Ken Jorgensen
1450 Teal Drive
Sunnyvale, CA

Responses to Comment I-135

I-135-1

The commenter's opinions about the project and carpool lanes are noted. The express lane toll for solo drivers is a user fee, as described in Master Response GEN-5. SR 85 will continue to have two general purpose lanes in each direction that do not have tolls or vehicle occupancy requirements.

Comment I-136 Uday Kapoor

From: [uday.kapoor](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Subject: We are against the modifications to Highway 85
Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 8:44:46 AM

I-136-1

Need responses to:

I-136-2

Full EIR has to be done. Why not ?

I-136-3

How will choke point of 280/85/Stevens Creek be solved ?

I-136-4

Why existing Performance Agreement will not be honored ?

Legally binding guarantees that no trucks will be allowed.

ORACLE

Uday Kapoor | Director

Phone: [+1 4082766059](#)

Oracle Corporate CAD

4190 Network Circle | Santa Clara, California 95054



Oracle is committed to developing practices and products that help protect the environment

Responses to Comment I-136

I-136-1

California Public Resources Code Sections 21080(d) and 21082.2(d) require the preparation of an EIR for projects with significant environmental effects. The

determination that the proposed project would not have significant environmental effects was based on a detailed and comprehensive review of each technical study area. Refer to Master Response GEN-3 regarding preparation of an EIR.

I-136-2

Refer to Master Response TR-2 regarding other planned projects to address the choke point at the SR 85/I-280 interchange.

I-136-3

The comment does not specify which Performance Agreement is cited. See the responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding the agreements.

I-136-4

The project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85.

Comment I-137 Bob and Susanne Karlak

<p>From: Susanne Karlak Photography To: 85expresslanes Subject: NO on more lanes on 85 Date: Wednesday, February 26, 2014 7:01:12 PM</p> <hr/>
<p>I-137-1 Dear VTA ... I vehemently oppose adding additional express toll lanes on Hwy 85. We already have enough noise and air pollution from Hwy 85. We do not want to ruin our outdoor life in our own backyards because of noise and pollution from Hwy. 85. Before 85 was built, CalTrans promised to do everything possible to maintain the character of Saratoga. That character includes peace, quiet and a serene environment. Research suggests that building more freeways and more lanes will only give people an incentive to move farther and farther away from the place of their employment. In other words, there will just be more people on the freeways; the additional people will cause the new lanes to be as congested as the present condition. PLEASE, do not add more lanes to Hwy. 85. Thank you, Bob and Susanne Karlak 13000 Anza Dr. Saratoga, CA 95070</p>

Responses to Comment I-137

I-137-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted.

The express lanes would maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, which would continue to use the lanes for free. In addition, express lane tolls would provide a revenue source for HOV, transportation, and transit service improvements in the SR 85 corridor. Refer to Master Response GEN-1 regarding the express lanes, N-1 regarding noise, and AQ-1 regarding air quality.

Comment I-138 Adam Karsten

85 Express Lanes
Beowoulf Yahoo [ulfbeo@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2014 2:33 PM
To: 85expresslanes

Hello,

I-138-1 [As a resident of Mountain View, I would like to express my desire for both the proposed Route 85 and US 101 express lanes to be continuous access, with no buffer (physical or striped) in between them and the other mixed flow lanes. One of my biggest reservations using the existing express lanes on 680 or 237 is the feeling of being "trapped" once you enter the express lane. A continuous buffer does not offer the option of exiting where needed, whether to reach a local road, to move over if there is somebody tailgating and you want to avoid a dangerous situation, or for general emergency purposes of a breakdown, flat tire or an accident in the express lane. No buffer = safer and more people using the express lanes.

Thanks for your consideration.

-Karsten Adam

Responses to Comment I-138

I-138-1

The commenter's preference for an open/continuous access configuration for the express lane is noted. Design modifications to revise express lane access to continuous access (with no buffer separation) will be considered during detailed project design, as discussed in Master Response GEN-4.

Comment I-139 Arun Katkere

From: [Arun Katkere](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Subject: SR 85 Express Lanes
Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 9:44:48 AM
Attachments: [Screen Shot 2014-02-26 at 10.45.47 AM.png](#)
[Screen Shot 2014-02-26 at 10.46.52 AM.png](#)

Hi:

I am sending my email to register my opposition to the proposed project, both as a resident of Saratoga and as someone who wants our public agencies to work on reducing the car usage and not help encourage increased use.

I-139-1 The [Change.org](#) petition at <http://www.change.org/petitions/vta-stop-85-expansion> conveys most of the points I want to make. As the petition outlines, the proposal goes completely against the agreement between the west valley cities and SCCTA/VTA. Many of us who bought homes in Saratoga based our decision on the noise limits and no trucks provisions of the agreement. The noise already is much higher than what was originally promised. If trucks are forced into the stretch of 85 south of 280, and if additional lanes are added, I do not see if the overall noise and pollution will increase.

I-139-2 Even if we do not consider the prior contract, the new proposal makes things worse for Saratoga residents. In addition to increases in traffic noise and pollution, it cuts off access to carpool lanes completely within the city boundaries, even during non carpool hours. As you can see from attached pictures (drawn from the report on your site), the current plan has no exit or entry points to these HOT lanes within Saratoga boundaries, and Saratogans are not going to see much benefit from the project even from a solo HOT driver perspective. For those of us driving north, we can only enter the HOT lane past De Anza blvd (almost near Steven's creek), and as soon as you enter, you face the slowdown that will happen when 2 HOT lanes merge into 1 HOT lane. Driving south, you can only enter the HOT lane *past*

I-139-3 Winchester blvd (around the 85/17 mess). Coming back home, the same thing. You need to exit before De Anza (just past Steven's Creek), around the place 85 is losing one lane on the right, and spend 20 minutes or so it takes to drive to Saratoga ave to exit in the non HOT lanes (unlike now, when you can delay your carpool exit until very close to Saratoga Ave).

Responses to Comment I-139

I-139-1

Note: this comment was submitted twice.

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted. See the responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding the agreements.

I-139-2

The project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85. Refer to Master Response N-3 regarding noise in Saratoga. The project is not expected to increase air pollution, as discussed in Master Response AQ-1, and the improvement in congestion would reduce exhaust emissions from vehicle idling.

The commenter's preference for an open/continuous access configuration for the express lane is noted. Design modifications to revise express lane access to continuous access (with no buffer separation) will be considered during detailed project design, as discussed in Master Response GEN-4.

I-139-3

The development of the current access points is described in Master Response GEN-4. Continuous access—like the existing SR 85 HOV lane, with no buffer separation—will be considered during detailed project design, as discussed in Master Response GEN-4.

Comment I-140 Russell Kellum

From: [onfinal](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Subject: SR 85 Express Lanes
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2014 9:22:15 PM

I-140-1

I live less than 1/2 mile from the 85/Saratoga Ave. intersection. The noise generated by high speed automobile tires and motorcycles on 85 is already at an unacceptable level. It is loud enough to interfere with normal conversation in my yard.

I had hoped you would try and find a way to REDUCE the noise on 85, but instead this express lane proposal will greatly INCREASE NOISE for those of us who live in Saratoga and the other nearby cities. Also, the way the proposal is now written there will be no entry to or exit from the express lane at Saratoga Ave. This means the cars using this lane will pass by Saratoga at maximum speed, even further INCREASING the NOISE.

This proposal for a new express lane on 85 is entirely unacceptable without aggressive and proven sound suppression measures being incorporated in the plan. You should be lowering the noise level, not increasing it!

Sincerely,

Russell Kellum
10201 Harleigh Dr.
Saratoga, CA 95070

408-867-1442

Responses to Comment I-140

I-140-1

The project would increase existing noise levels by 0 to 1 dBA along the Saratoga portion of SR 85, as described in Master Response N-3. This level of increase is not substantial, as discussed in Master Responses N-1 and N-3.

Under the current project design, the closest northbound and southbound access zones would be between Saratoga Avenue and Winchester Boulevard. The development of the current access points is described in Master Response GEN-4. Continuous access—like the existing SR 85 HOV lane, with no buffer separation—will be considered during detailed project design, as discussed in Master Response GEN-4.

Comment I-141 Thomas Kempe

SR 85 Express Lanes

Kempe, Thomas [Tom.Kempe@bms.com]

Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2014 1:34 PM

To: 85expresslanes

I-141-1

We are long time Sunnyvale residents at 1093 Yorktown Dr, 94087, near the intersection with Bernardo and Fremont Avenues. I don't see any practical benefit of express lanes to our area at all. The commute gridlock between 101 between Mountain View and Homestead Ave will be virtually the same, according to all your tables. But I am worried that we might see our section of 85 narrowed to just 2 lanes in each direction during non-commute hours, like what happened on Highway 237 near McCarthy in Milpitas. Express lanes striping permanently create limited access in/out so I fear that our local use of 85 might be restricted 24/7. That would be really inconvenient. A better solution would be to eliminate HOV lanes in this narrow section. They just cause worse problems by people merging back and forth.

I-141-2

Our biggest concern is really the lack of attention to noise abatement and control on the Sunnyvale side of Route 85. When Route 85 was widened to 6 lanes between Fremont Ave and El Camino Real, no sound walls were added to the east side of the freeway. The excuse was that the ground was too unstable due to Stevens Creek watershed. Meanwhile, the increased traffic has resulted in almost unbearable noise at times. It does not take much investigation to find all the root causes, and to identify some practical solutions:

1. The raised elevation of the highway over Fremont Avenue. There are no barriers or panels to block either noise or lights on this bridge.
 - a. Solution: Add some panels to the bridge railings.
2. There are no sound barriers on the Sunnyvale side of 85 north of Fremont Ave.
 - a. Solution: Install sound barriers on both sides of 85 from Fremont Ave to El Camino. (It can be done – no more excuses please!)
 - b. Add significant landscaping: trees and large shrubs along the right-of-way. That would help with direct and rebound noise.
3. There is a serious influx of reflected noise that travels down 85 (South) from El Camino towards the Fremont intersection. This noise is focused on the Bernardo Avenue and Cherry Hill neighborhood. This is caused by atmospheric conditions. It is much worse whenever there are prevailing breezes from the northwest, which is most of the time (our climate)
 - a. Solution: Repave this section of 85 with the newest sound deadening asphalt. This is what we thought we were getting last year. Instead, just more noisy cement. Asphalt would make a dramatic difference. It is so loud that you can hear a motorcycle accelerating for minutes – at least for 1-2 miles away.

I-141-3

Finally, one last comment needs to be made: Much attention and money has been thrown at the more southern sections of Route 85. When it was being built there was a great outcry from Saratoga and Los Gatos residents. "Limit the access ramps; Build it below grade; Add sound walls and landscaping..." They got it all. Despite our letters and pleas, we were ignored ("no funds, not considered, etc").

Thanks for listening this time!

Tom Kempe
1093 Yorktown Drive
Sunnyvale, CA 94087
tkempe@aol.com

Responses to Comment I-141

I-141-1

In terms of levels of service, the general purpose lanes in Segment Group 1 (which includes the area described in the comment) would be similar for the No Build and Build conditions. The travel times would improve slightly with the project, particularly in 2035 for the south PM peak hour (IS/EA Table 2.1.3-11).

The commenter's recommendation is noted. The development of the current access points is described in Master Response GEN-4. Continuous access—like the existing SR 85 HOV lane, with no buffer separation—will be considered during detailed project design, as discussed in Master Response GEN-4.

I-141-2

Existing noise levels in Sunnyvale and other locations along the project corridor were documented in the *Noise Study Report* (Illingworth and Rodkin 2012), which is summarized in the IS/EA. Current noise levels in the area between El Camino Real and West Fremont Avenue (referred to as Segment 3 in the NSR and IS/EA) range from 57 to 71 dBA $L_{eq(h)}$. Although some parts of Segment 3 have 12-foot and 16-foot sound walls, other areas along SR 85 lack noise barriers. Therefore, two new sound walls, as well as 14-foot and 16-foot sound walls to replace the existing 12-foot sound wall, were evaluated with respect to Caltrans and FHWA criteria (IS/EA Table 2.2.7-3, under "Segment 3: SR 85—El Camino Real to Fremont Avenue). These walls did not meet all criteria, and therefore cannot be constructed with federal funding for noise abatement; Refer to Master Response N-2 regarding noise abatement, including the use of asphalt and other pavement types.

Landscaping along highways typically provides an imperceptible amount of noise reduction and is not considered an effective form of noise abatement. However, any landscaping that is removed or damaged during project construction will be replaced in kind.

See the response to Comment L-1-15 regarding reflected noise.

I-141-3

The commenter's observation is noted.

Comment I-142 Diane Kilcoyne

From:	Diane Kilcoyne
To:	85expresslanes
Cc:	community_outreach@vta.org
Subject:	Community+Outreach
Date:	Friday, February 28, 2014 9:24:34 AM

I-142-1 [I strongly oppose the SR 85 Express Lanes project proposed by the VTA. This proposal violates the 1968 contract for 85 in several ways. 85 was never intended to be a 8 or 10 lane freeway with the possibility of trucks using it. 85 mainly transverses quiet residential neighbor hoods, many already disturbed by the noise and pollution created by the traffic on 85.

Diane Kilcoyne
Saratoga,CA

Responses to Comment I-142

I-142-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted. See the response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the contract cited in the comment. The project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85. Refer to Master Response N-1 regarding noise.

Comment I-143 Virginia King

From: [Virginia King](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Cc: [ctolark@saratoga.ca.us](#); [elo@saratoga.ca.us](#); [ihunter@saratoga.ca.us](#); [hmillen@saratoga.ca.us](#); [mcapello@saratoga.ca.us](#); [cpaige@saratoga.ca.us](#); [Supervisor.simitian@bos.sccgov.org](#); [assemblymember.fong@ca.gov](#)
Subject: Proposed expansion of Highway 85
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2014 3:38:46 PM

Dear Sirs/Madams,

I am writing to protest the proposed expansion on Highway 85.

I-143-1 There is in existence an agreement with the City of Saratoga not to expand the lanes on 85 going through Saratoga. Before this agreement is modified such a change should come to a public vote. And before such a public vote, an environmental impact assessment should be conducted along with a current measure of noise and particulate pollution.

I-143-2

I-143-3 There are many commuter bottlenecks along the 85 corridor where 85 joins 101, 280, etc. These should be resolved prior to planning any expansion that would exacerbate the current bottlenecks.

Please stop this planned disaster.

Sincerely,

Virginia King

Responses to Comment I-143

I-143-1

The commenter’s opposition is noted. See the response to Comment L-3-4 in regard to the Saratoga agreement.

I-143-2

California Public Resources Code Sections 21080(d) and 21082.2(d) require the preparation of an EIR for projects with significant environmental effects. The determination that the proposed project would not have significant environmental effects was based on a detailed and comprehensive review of each technical study area, including noise and air quality. Refer to Master Response GEN-3 regarding preparation of an EIR and N-1 regarding noise.

I-143-3

Refer to Master Response TR-1 regarding general traffic improvements from the project and Master Response TR-2 regarding bottlenecks along SR 85 and planned improvements.

Comment I-144 Frank Kiss

From: fkiss@gazos.com on behalf of [Frank Kiss](#)
To: [85Expresslanes](#)
Subject: Saratogan against 85 Expansion for HOV Lanes
Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 2:26:56 PM

Hello VTA:

Hear our call, that we do not want HOV lanes instead of light rail through the City of Saratoga. In the very, very short term it may be cheaper for you, but the cost, including emissions will be so much higher.

I-144-1 Here are a number of reasons why I'm against your proposal:

1. The project really does nothing to solve the major traffic problems which are outside of the project. For example, going north on 85, the choke points are 280, 237 (entry to 101S) and 101N. These choke points are OUTSIDE OF THE HWY 85 PROJECT SO NOTHING IS SOLVED AT THAT END.

I-144-2 2. The proposed HOV lane does not help Saratoga residents. When entering from DeAnza or Saratoga Ave., there is no entry to the HOV lane. Our cars have already passed the entrance to the HOV lane.

I-144-3 3. The VTA states that the addition of the HOV lane will not significantly increase noise, dust, or pollution. "yea right". By the way, highway 85 is already out of compliance with noise because the road bed was supposed to be rubberized asphalt not grooved cement.

I-144-4 4. The new HOV lanes would take the place of future expansion for light rail. Now there's the way to decrease noise, dust, and pollution. Light rail was in the original contract between the City of Saratoga and the organization that preceded the VTA.

I-144-5 5. We Saratogans paid for 85, and we continue to pay with noise, dust and pollution.

Sincerely,
Frank Kiss
13808 Via Alto Ct.
Saratoga, CA 95070

Responses to Comment I-144

I-144-1

This comment is addressed in the responses to Comments I-99-1 and I-99-2.

I-144-2

See the response to Comment I-99-3.

I-144-3

See the response to Comment I-99-4.

I-144-4

See the response to Comment I-99-5.

I-144-5

See the response to Comment I-99-6.

Comment I-145 Steven Klos

Disagreement with the current Hwy 85 expansion

Steve Klos [stevek@tagvault.org]

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2014 8:24 PM

To: 85expresslanes

Categories: Blue Category

- I-145-1 I want to register my extreme disagreement with the project to expand Hwy 85 to 8 lanes from the current 6. Effectively, the plan being put forward will allow more cars from further south (Gilroy and South San Jose) to travel faster and in greater quantity up to the real choke points in Hwy 85 North - which are at the 280 and 101 interchanges. This will shift the point of the very slow freeway bottlenecks even further south in the morning commute than they are today at least as far south as Hwy 17, perhaps even further.
- This is not a plan for faster traffic, this is a plan for disaster since the already highly over crowded section of Hwy 85 between 280 and 101 is not being addressed at all. This plan will not provide any benefit to Campbell at all and will simply make the commute for anyone who drives 85 that much longer and more painful!
- The first project must be the segment of Hwy 85 between 280 to the south and 101 to the North.- this is where the choke point for the freeway is. Without addressing this segment, expanding 85 where the current project is slated will simply cause a bigger backup in the mornings where Hwy 85 North meet up with 280.
- As it stands, this project is a serious waste of tax payers money and will decrease, not increase the speeds for vehicles – in particular on Hwy 85 North in the morning. Any commuter of that highway can tell you where the choke points are and this project simply does not solve any existing problem. With Hwy 287 making something like \$2 Million/Year in revenue, it means the payment for this expansion will take somewhere between 20 to 30 years which is not an effective return on investment.
- I-145-2 We need Mass Transit for the 85 corridor and this is especially true for any of the high tech companies that would love to expand their operations in the Mountain View area near 101 and 85 (Google, Microsoft and HP among many others). We do not need to get even more cars arriving at the same choke point faster and in greater quantity than we already see on a daily basis.
- I-145-3 Cupertino, Los Gatos and Saratoga have contracts with the organization that became VTA indicating that the middle area of Hwy 85 would be used for mass transit. Paid express lanes can, in no way, be considered mass transit! The contracts are already being broken due to the noise level exceeding expectations. Going forward with a project like this will guarantee lawsuits which is even more of a waste of taxpayer money.
- I-145-4 Due to the fact that VTA has not publicized this project effectively, the neighbors of Saratoga arranged their own community meeting that resulted in a standing room only audience of people who are against this project.
- I-145-5 We absolutely need mass transit – and this would most certainly be a preferred first priority – even if it costs more than the proposed project. Having a higher speed rail that goes through heavily populated areas up to very large work centers makes the most sense. Fixing the choke point on Hwy 85 North (between 280 going up to 101) is a clear second priority. Lowering the sound level that comes from Hwy 85 would be a third priority. This effort would be a very distant 4th, if not much lower priority.
- This project simply does not make sense – from a financial perspective, from a logistics perspective, nor from a legal perspective.

Regards,

Steven Klos
1600 Van Dusen Lane
Campbell, CA 95008

Responses to Comment I-145

I-145-1

The commenter's opposition is noted. The project would improve average travel times and speeds on SR 85, as described in Master Response TR-1. The express lanes would offer immediate congestion relief using the existing right-of-way.

The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at choke points along the project corridor, as described in Master Response TR-2.

I-145-2

Refer to Master Responses GEN-2 regarding light rail and GEN-7 regarding mass transit alternatives and why transit options are not being implemented instead of the proposed project.

I-145-3

The commenter's opinions are noted. See the responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding the contracts cited in the comment. The agreements stated that the median was reserved for "mass transportation," not mass transit as mentioned in the comment.

I-145-4

The commenter's opinion about public outreach for the project is noted. Extensive outreach for the proposed project was conducted and the comment period was extended, as described in Master Response GEN-6.

I-145-5

Master Response GEN-7 discusses why transit options are not being implemented instead of the proposed project. Refer to Master Response GEN-2 regarding light rail on SR 85. The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at choke points along the project corridor, as described in Master Response TR-2. Refer to Master Responses N-1 through N-3 regarding noise.

Comment I-146 Charles Kolar

SR 85 Express Lanes

Charles Kolar [charliek2452@gmail.com]

Sent: Saturday, February 08, 2014 12:30 PM

To: 85expresslanes

I-146-1

I don't like the idea that if you have money you can pay to use the express lane. That means the poor stay stuck in the traffic, and those with money can pay to pass by everyone else. This just doesn't seem fair to me.

Responses to Comment I-146

I-146-1

Studies in California and elsewhere show that express lanes provide time and convenience benefits to drivers of all income levels. Refer to Master Response EJ-1 regarding express lane users.

Comment I-147 Mary Ann Kretschmar

Fw: Hwy 85

Mark Kretschmar [me.kretschmar@att.net]

Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 9:46 AM

To: 85expresslanes

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Mark Kretschmar <me.kretschmar@att.net>

To: "85expresslane@urs.com" <85expresslane@urs.com>

Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 9:34 AM

Subject: Fw: Hwy 85

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Mark Kretschmar <me.kretschmar@att.net>

To: "elo@saratoga.ca.us" <elo@saratoga.ca.us>; "hmillers@saratoga.ca.us" <hmillers@saratoga.ca.us>; "mcappello@saratoga.ca.us" <mcappello@saratoga.ca.us>; "cpage@saratoga.ca.us" <cpage@saratoga.ca.us>; "jhunter@saratoga.ca.us" <jhunter@saratoga.ca.us>

Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 8:43 PM

Subject: Hwy 85

Dear City Council Members,

I-147-1 [I'm writing let you know that I don't agree with the VTA's plan to add two additional lanes to Highway 85.
I would agree, in fact prefer, the addition of light rail.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann Kretschmar,
12599 Titus Ave.
Saratoga, 95070

Responses to Comment I-147

I-147-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted. Refer to Master Response GEN-2 regarding why light rail was not analyzed as an alternative to the proposed project.

Comment I-148 Ram G. Krishnan

From: [Ram G Krishnan](mailto:Ram.G.Krishnan@85expresslanes.com)
To: [85expresslanes](mailto:85expresslanes.com)
Cc: ctclerk@saratoga.ca.us; elo@saratoga.ca.us; jhunter@saratoga.ca.us; hmillier@saratoga.ca.us; mcappello@saratoga.ca.us; gpaga@saratoga.ca.us; supervisor.simitian@bos.sccgov.org; assemblymember.fong@ca.gov; senator.beall@senate.ca.gov
Subject: Concerns Regarding State Route 85 Express Lanes Project
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2014 1:12:37 PM
Importance: High

Dear VTA and Elected Representatives,

I am writing this email letter to state my strong objection to the proposed "State Route 85 Express Lanes Project" for the following reasons:

- I-148-1 • **Increased Air Pollution:** This project will increase the level of Air pollution for people living close to the freeway. I live near the freeway and am extremely concerned about the air quality deterioration already. **We are finding that the accumulation of dust, dirt and related airborne particles has increased over the past few years, requiring greater cleaning both inside and outside our house, and we believe this is directly related to freeway traffic.** We expect further lanes, further traffic, further construction will all exacerbate this situation greatly and increase the health hazard for my children, my family, myself and my neighbors.
- I-148-2 • **Increases Noise Pollution:** This project will increase the level of noise pollution for people living close to the freeway. I live close to the freeway and can lately hear freeway noise from our upper floor in spite of having high quality double-pane windows. These noise levels have gone up and **now the existing level is already above the Federal Standard of 67 dBA.** Quiet pavement technology and other approaches are available to address this, but have not been utilized. I strongly reject a proposal to introduce further noise in my community. In fact, **I want to see the existing noise issue fixed and the level of noise reduced to an acceptable level,** as is our right to expect!
 - I-148-3 • Increased hours of Noise: Today the noise on the highway is most during the daytime hours and
 - I-148-3 • **Violates existing Performance Agreements with the city of Saratoga:** When Highway 85 was constructed, the city of Saratoga gave its consent with the clear written understanding that it would be a 6-lane freeway and the median would be reserved for light rail and mass transportation. Not for buses, additional paved roads and traffic. **This project violate this Performance Agreement,** and I object to this.
 - I-148-4 • **Exacerbates Choke Points, instead of alleviating them:** This project does even not address the choke point in our section of Hwy 85, which takes place (northbound) at the 85 junction with I-280, Stevens Creek Blvd, Foothill Expressway and the merging lanes before Fremont Ave. In fact, this project will simply create a greater flow of traffic upto this choke point, thereby worsening the situation at this . **Many studies of work-in-progress through a supply chain or assembly line or pipeline have proven that the only way to increase throughput is to expand capacity at the choke-point, and any expansion of capacity before the choke-point will actually worsen the situation and potentially reduce the overall throughput.** If VTA has these funds and desires to address Hwy 85

I-148-4, cont.	throughput, then they should work on improving traffic flow through this key choke-point.
I-148-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not plan for the long term, and eliminates mass transit option: Why are we not implementing true mass transit such as a rail system? Why does mass transit work in every major European city and much of Asia, and even in parts of the US North-East, but we keep expanding our road network in the bay area? The answer is that our transit system is not extensive enough and efficient enough, so nobody wants to rely on it. Our thinking is short term. Every time we consider a mass transit project, by itself it is not as attractive as building more car traffic capacity, so we reject it. Just like its predecessor, this SR 85 Express Lane Project is short sighted, and in two decades we'll once again have too much traffic. Why not truly fix the problem, by investing in a long-term rail-based mass transit solution for the future? This is an embarrassment, especially considering we are in Silicon Valley, the world's capital for innovation and for being eco-friendly in the long term. By taking this project forward, we eliminate the possibility of a rail-based Mass Transit system down this median as was originally planned and promised. I object to yet another short-sighted road based decision that does not truly address our long term needs.
I-148-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Truck Traffic: The VTA representative who fielded questions at an informational meeting in Saratoga promised that trucks would not be allowed on Highway 85 as a result of this project, but I question this. The current proposed plan includes Federal funding for this project, and my understanding is that if Federal moneys are used that we would not be able to prohibit truck traffic on Highway 85. If so, these trucks would greatly exacerbate all the issues above. Trucks generate an order of magnitude greater air and noise pollution. Another huge issue is they could travel at nighttime, which would result in a dramatic uptick from the current levels of nighttime noise pollution. I do not want to see truck traffic on Highway 85, period, as this again violates the original Performance Agreement and funding approach. Yet another reason that I object to this project.
I-148-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secrecy vs Informing the Public: It appears this project has been driven by VTA for a few years, yet the residents of Saratoga are only learning about it now. It does appear as though the proponents of this project (who I understand mostly live in South San Jose and therefore do not care about many of the issues above) were intent on secretly taking this project to the point of no return before opponents or members of the public could object. If true, this approach seems devious and violates generally accepted norms of providing information and making major decisions that impact the lives of tax-paying citizens. I object in principle to such an approach to pushing this project through the system.
I-148-8	<p>For all of the above reasons, please cancel this proposed project. Please also address the issues raised above, such as reducing the current level of noise, address the choke points, plan for rail-based mass transit and taking a more public-friendly approach to future decisions.</p>
	<p>Thanks for reading. I look forward to hearing back about how these issues will all be considered and addressed.</p>
	<p>Sincerely,</p>
	<p>Ram G. Krishnan Saratoga, CA rg007@krishnan.org</p>

Responses to Comment I-148

I-148-1

The project is not expected to increase air pollution, as discussed in Master Response AQ-1, and the improvement in congestion would reduce exhaust emissions from vehicle idling.

I-148-2

The comment states that noise levels are already above the Federal standard of 67 dBA. The comment appears to refer to the Federal noise abatement criteria (NAC), which are shown in IS/EA Table 2.2.7-1. The NAC values are used to determine whether noise abatement must be considered, and do not represent levels to which noise must be abated.

Where the future noise level with the project is predicted to approach (within 1 decibel) or exceed the NAC, the increase is considered an impact, and potential noise abatement has been evaluated in IS/EA Section 2.2.7 as required by Caltrans and FHWA. Refer to Master Response N-2 regarding noise abatement, including quiet pavement technology.

I-148-3

The commenter's opposition to the proposed project is noted. Light rail in the median of SR 85 was not carried forward because it was determined not to be reasonable or practicable, as described in Master Response GEN-2. See the response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the comment that the agreements state that the median must be reserved for light rail. Specifically, the agreement says the median would be used for "mass transportation." The agreement does not preclude buses.

I-148-4

The detailed traffic analysis for the proposed project shows that it would improve average travel times and speeds on SR 85, as described in Master Response TR-1. The proposed project together with other planned projects would also provide incremental improvements at choke points along the project corridor, as described in Master Response TR-2.

I-148-5

Refer to Master Response GEN-2 regarding why light rail was not analyzed as an alternative to the proposed project. Master Response GEN-7 discusses why transit options are not being implemented instead of the proposed project.

I-148-6

The project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85. The use of federal funds would have no effect on the truck restrictions.

I-148-7

The commenter's opinions about outreach for the project are noted. The public outreach history for the project is described in IS/EA. Chapter 3 and Master Response GEN-6 list the extensive public outreach that has taken place as part of this project over the past several years, including two community meetings and a City Council presentation in Saratoga.

I-148-8

This concluding comment summarizes previous detailed comments. See responses to Comments I-148-1 through I-148-7.

Comment I-149 Paul Krug

From: Paul Krug [mailto:Akedit@ix.netcom.com]
Sent: Friday, February 28, 2014 9:14 AM
To: Community.Outreach
Subject: Highway 85 Proposed addition of Two Toll Express Lanes (one in each direction) and conversion of existing carpool lanes

Dear Sir/Madam

As a resident of Saratoga and a frequent morning commute user of Highway 85, I have a vital interest in the proposed modification to Highway 85. Therefore, I request response to the following questions/comments.

1. Northbound 85 has two major choke points, the offramp to Highway 280 and the offramp to The El Camino Real (Highway 82). On both exits, vehicles back up into and obstructing the far right lane of Highway 85. At each of these exit obstructions Highway 85 through traffic is limited to two to two lanes, one general purpose lane and the carpool lane. The VTA representative attending the Saratoga City Council Meeting on February 5 and the Saratoga County Library meeting on February 25 gave incomplete and unsatisfactory responses to the following.
 - o Specifically, what modifications does VTA intend to make at the northbound Highway 85/280 interchange and to what extent does VTA expect this to relieve the choked flow and 85 to 280 traffic backup into the right lane of Highway 85?
 - o Does VTA seriously believe improved traffic flow will result on the section of 85 between 280 and the El Camino Real if no changes are made to the northbound exit ramp from 85 to the El Camino?
 - o Is VTA still considering restricting the right lane in each direction of the El Camino Real to bus traffic only, thereby reducing private vehicle traffic capacity on the El Camino by one lane? If so, this will exacerbate the Highway 85 off ramp congestion on to the El Camino Real in both the northbound and southbound directions.
 - o Why is not VTA's first priority the elimination of choke points that impede the flow of traffic in the existing traffic lanes of Highway 85 instead of adding Express Lanes that can only further choke highway traffic flow at off ramps? If full lane carrying capacity of Highway 85 were not impeded by major choke points, the proposed additional Express Lanes would probably not be necessary.
2. During morning commute hours on northbound Highway 85 the travel speeds in the existing Carpool lane are typically below the VTA objective of 45 mph in the planned Express Lanes. This is especially a problem in the section of Highway 85 between Highway 280 and the El Camino Real (Highway 82), which will only see the single Carpool lane converted to an Express Lane.

I-149-1

I-149-2

I-149-3

- o How can the VTA study conclude that after the conversion of this Carpool Lane to an Express Lane, allowing the addition of FasTrak paying vehicles into this Carpool lane, will increase this lanes average speed to 45 MPH when the existing traffic in this lane is already less than 45 MPH?
- o How can the VTA study conclude that the merger of two Highway 85 Express Lanes into one Express Lane at Highway 280 will not create an additional impediment to Highway 85 traffic and will instead result in an increase in the single Express Lane average speed to 45 mph?
- o How can VTA conclude that Express Busses traveling in the proposed Express Lanes and crossing traffic to exit into the existing choke point exit ramps will improve traffic flow?

3. Saratoga signed a good faith agreement with the Santa Clara County Transportation

<p>I-149-3, cont</p>	<p>Authority (SCCTA), which included both promises and limitations on the proposed freeway. The responsibility for the Highway 85 was assumed by VTA after completion of Highway and the sunseting of SCCTA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o How can VTA conclude that it has no responsibility for and can ignore the agreements made in good faith between the SCCTA and the City of Saratoga after it took responsibility for Highway 85? o How can VTA conclude that it has no responsibility to complete the promises made to the City of Saratoga in the City of Saratoga/SCCTA agreement, which were not completed by SCCTA after the Highway's responsibility was assumed by the VTA? o How can VTA conclude that it is not responsible to correct the serious errors committed by the SCCTA in the construction of Highway 85, and instead sidestep its responsibility with non-responsive answers as "We met all Federal requirements" although the lower Federal standard violates the agreement between the City of Saratoga and the SCCTA? Federal requirements are irrelevant when the agreement with respect to Highway 85 was to provide a highway with a roadbed noise limitation that was superior to Federal requirements. It is not the option of a contractor to substitute a lower roadbed standard for a contract specified higher standard. This superior roadbed technology was available and being implemented in other counties of California (Los Angeles, Sacramento, and Orange) and in the cities of Phoenix and Tucson at the time of Highway 85 construction to reduce the adverse impact of their major highways through residential areas. Why does VTA not have the same concerns regarding environmental damage to residential communities as other counties in California; major cities in Arizona; and even the foreign countries of Canada, Belgium, France, Germany, Austria, and the Netherlands that used this same rubberized asphalt roadbed technology before the construction of Highway 85? (see Note 1 below) o How can VTA state there was never any consideration of light rail in the median of Highway 85 when provision for future light rail in the median was a condition for allowing Highway 85 construction through Saratoga, which was formally accepted in the agreement signed by the City of Saratoga and SCCTA and assumed as an obligation in the assumption of responsibility for Highway 85 by VTA? o Is VTA committed to protecting the 9000 pound limit for trucks on Highway 85 or will this go the way of the commitment to preserve a median light rail option? <p>6. Note 1: "<i>Report on the Status of Rubberized Asphalt Traffic Noise Reduction in Sacramento County</i>", http://www.rubberpavements.org/Library_Information/4_6_Sac_County_Noise_Study.pdf</p>
<p>I-149-4</p>	<p>Instead of the productive relationship expected by the Saratoga with the SCCTA and VTA, VTA has betrayed Saratoga and we have reached an impasse with a non-responsive entrenched bureaucracy that has no intent of serving the communities that it is chartered to serve, but to rather serve its own purposes regardless of the environmental damage it does to these communities. We appeal to the VTA to end replys of non-responsive clichés to our questions/comments and work with Saratoga and our sister cities of Los Gatos and Cupertino to reach reasonable solutions to the issues that we raise. The non-response</p>

I-149-4,
cont.

responses by the VTA representative at the February 5 Saratoga City Council meeting and the February 25 Saratoga County Library Meeting were very disappointing in that he expressed no intent by VTA to correct any Highway 85 existing problems, to honor or to complete any promises made in the original agreement with SCCTA, or consider any of the concerns expressed by community attendees at these meetings.

Sincerely,
Paul H. Krug
19299 Shubert Drive
Saratoga, CA 95070
408.253.6287

Responses to Comment I-149

I-149-1

It is not within the scope of the proposed project to correct issues with existing interchanges along SR 85. However, other projects are planned that would help to relieve congestion on SR 85 in the vicinity of the I-280 and El Camino Real interchanges. These projects are summarized in Master Response TR-2 and would provide incremental improvements to choke points at major system interchanges.

Freeway interchange modification and reconstruction projects must go through the same multi-year planning and programming process as part of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP; ABAG and MTC 2013) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP; MTC 2013) as the SR 85 Express Lanes Project. Transportation projects are prioritized based on regional needs and goals and availability of funding. The SR 85 Express Lanes Project is part of a regional effort to develop 550 miles of express lanes in the Bay Area.

VTA is studying BRT improvements along El Camino in the vicinity of SR 85. One alternative under consideration would involve a bus-only lane in each direction, using the center lanes for this purpose. A final decision on project alternatives is expected in Fall 2015.

I-149-2

Existing and future Build/No Build traffic conditions were thoroughly evaluated in the detailed traffic operations analysis for the project (URS and DKS 2013), which is summarized in IS/EA Section 2.1.3. Under existing and future No Build conditions, no buffer separates the HOV lane from the general purpose lanes. HOV lane congestion occurs from both the high demand in the HOV lanes and the friction caused by vehicles moving between the HOV lanes and the heavily congested general purpose lanes. The merging of HOVs into and out of the HOV lanes influences the speed in the HOV lane, causing higher density. This can occur even when the HOV demands are below capacity. With the Build Alternative, the introduction of the 2-foot-wide double-lined buffer reduces the friction between the general purpose lanes and the express lanes, thus allowing the express lanes to operate at higher speeds and lower densities with the same volume.

Overall corridor speeds would increase with the Build Alternative compared with No Build (IS/EA Tables 2.1.3-8 [2015] and 2.1.3-12 [2035]). As shown in IS/EA Tables

2.1.3-7 (2015) and 2.1.3-11 (2035), express lane travel times would generally improve with the Build Alternative.

Additional express bus service on SR 85 is not included as part of the project but can be considered as part of reinvestment of toll revenue in the project corridor.

I-149-3

See the response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the Saratoga agreement.

The focus of this IS/EA is the proposed project and the analysis of its environmental impacts. Refer to Master Responses N-1, N-3, N-4, and N-5 regarding noise impacts resulting from the proposed project. Refer to Master Response N-2 regarding noise abatement. Refer to Master Response GEN-2 regarding light rail in the median of SR 85 and GEN-8 regarding other alternatives.

The project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85. The use of federal funds would have no effect on the truck restrictions.

I-149-4

Since no specific topical issue is raised in this comment, see responses to Comments I-149-1 through I-149-3 for the topical areas previously raised.

Comment I-150 Rishi Kumar

I-150-1	<p>Question: Highway 85 Rishi Kumar [rishub@hotmail.com] Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2014 6:41 PM To: 85expresslanes</p> <p>What does it mean: The project would also add a second express lane on SR 85 between SR 87 and Interstate 280. Is a new lane going to be constructed and added or an existing lane converted to express?</p> <p>How about trucks? Is there going to be a change to allow tractor semis over 4.5 tons ??</p> <p>Thanks</p>
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Responses to Comment I-150

I-150-1

The existing HOV lane in each direction of SR 85 would be converted to an express lane. A second express lane in each direction would be created by paving available space in the median of SR 85 between I-280 and SR 87.

The project would not change the existing truck weight restrictions on SR 85.

I-51-5	<p>When it comes down to transparency, where are the sources of funding? The VTA needs to provide a more detailed list of the sources and amount of funding from each source and the requirements attached to these funds. The public has the right to know. What would be the potential revenue? The VTA and Caltrans also need to have a written guarantee that the current regulation that prohibits trucks from using Highway 85 will stay intact in order to protect public health and safety.</p>
I-51-6	<p>VTA has signed performance agreements with the surrounding cities. Those agreements stipulate that “THE FREEWAY WAS TO BE SIX LANES AND THE CENTER MEDIAN IS RESERVED FOR MASS TRANSPORTATION.” Those are valid contracts. VTA cannot unilaterally breach those contracts.</p>
I-51-7	<p>The project will increase the air pollution, the noise pollution and the light pollution. It impacts at least seven surrounding cities. It is a big project that definitely requires a complete Environment Impact Report.</p>
I-51-8	<p>When asked during their second public hearing about how the VTA determines what the projected traffic congestion reduction is worth in dollars, VTA representatives—including URS Corporation official Mrs. Lynn McIntyre—stated that the VTA did not consider this in their planning. Given that the project’s value has not been quantified, how does the VTA intend to justify its costs to the taxpayer? Moreover, why was this never addressed during the project’s decade-long planning? There seems to be no data-driven economic argument for the express-lane construction. Furthermore, another VTA representative stated that the tolls from the express lanes will not pay for the project. Since the VTA does not know how much—if any—net economic benefit the project will bring and since this project will not pay for itself, then another, more important, question is raised: How can the VTA prove that the express lanes project will not be a complete waste of taxpayer money?</p>
I-51-9	<p>Financial issues aside, there is the question of whether the project is practical. It cannot be argued that the expressway project is a serious solution to congestion. Indeed, VTA employer, Mr. Murali Ramanujam’s explanation of the purpose of this project suggests that the express lanes are intended to be a mere adjustment of the level of congestion on SR85, not a solution to it.</p>
I-51-10	<p>Whether the express lanes project will actually improve congestion levels is a separate issue entirely. The VTA has, realistically, made it impossible for the public to see whether the SR85 Express Lanes Project will result in any improvement because the data, such as traffic modeling, is not available online or even during the public hearings. In fact, Mr. Ramanujam said that a host of studies had been done during the planning of the project, but none of them can be found online or were available at the public hearing. Thus, the public has been refused a real chance to study the project. This is unacceptable because it keeps the public from being able to scrutinize the decision-making involved in the project’s planning or to judge the project’s worth. In essence, the public is expected to simply accept anything that the VTA proposes.</p>

Responses to Comment I-51

I-51-1

Refer to Master Response TR-1 regarding traffic and AQ-1 regarding air quality changes. Studies in California and elsewhere show that express lanes provide time and convenience benefits to drivers of all income levels. Also refer to Master Response EJ-1 regarding social equity.

The project funding sources are listed in IS/EA Section 1.3.3. Also refer to Master Response GEN-10 regarding funding, cost and return.

I-51-2

Research on managed lane use shows that express lanes do not discourage carpooling, as described in detail in Master Response GEN-1. The project would maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, as well as increase capacity for HOVs by adding a second express lane in the median in both directions of SR 85 between SR 87 and I-280.

IS/EA Table 2.5.1-1 shows that in the opening year (2015), the project would have higher CO₂ emissions than the No Project Alternative. The project-related increase would be less than 1 percent (0.73 percent) over the No Project condition. Both alternatives would have higher emissions than the existing condition (2007). In 2035, the project would have lower CO₂ emissions than the No Project Alternative.

The commenter's opinion about future gridlock on SR 85 is not supported by the traffic studies for the project, which are summarized in IS/EA Section 2.1.3. The project would improve average travel times and speeds on SR 85, as described in Master Response TR-1.

The reasons that mass transportation options were not considered as project alternatives are discussed in Master Responses GEN-7 and GEN-2.

I-51-3

The commenter's opinion is noted. Also refer to Master Response GEN-10 regarding funding, cost, and return.

I-51-4

Studies in California and elsewhere show that express lanes provide time and convenience benefits to drivers of all income levels, including low-income drivers (FHWA 2013a). Refer to Master Response EJ-1 regarding social equity.

I-51-5

Refer to Master Response GEN-10 regarding funding, cost, and return

The project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85, regardless of funding source.

I-51-6

See the responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding the agreements cited in the comment.

I-51-7

The project's potential to increase air (Section 2.2.6), noise (Section 2.2.7), and light (Section 2.1.4) pollution was evaluated in detail in the IS/EA. The decision to prepare an IS/EA instead of an EIR was based on the technical studies' findings that no significant impacts would result from the project. The size of a project does not dictate that an EIR must be prepared. Also refer to Master Response Gen-3 regarding preparation of an EIR.

I-51-8

See the response to Comment L-1-4 regarding the financial value and cost implications of the proposed project. These evaluations have been ongoing since preliminary project development. Also refer to Master Response GEN-10 regarding funding, cost, and return.

I-51-9

Funding for transportation improvements has historically lagged behind growth in travel and traffic. Express lanes provide a means to fund transportation and transit improvements within the SR 85 corridor for more HOVs and solo drivers to use the freeway during the peak period and provide an option to reduce travel time, without widening the existing right-of-way. The project would provide incremental improvements to traffic congestion on SR 85, as described in Master Responses TR-1 and TR-2.

I-51-10

The traffic studies were available on request from the beginning of the comment period. In addition, on January 24, 2014, the traffic studies for the proposed project were made available on the Caltrans District 4 Environmental Document website at <http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/envdocs.htm#santaclara>, under "State Route 85 Express Lanes Project, Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment." The length of the public comment period was extended to February 28, 2014; therefore, the traffic studies were available for public review and comment for more than 30 days.

Comment I-52 Barry Chang (3)

Re: Fw: Contact the City Council of Saratoga, California Form Submission

Barry Chang [barry4assembly@gmail.com]

Sent: Monday, February 03, 2014 10:13 PM

To: bob rayl [bobrayl@pacbell.net]

Cc: robertson.b.m@mindspring.com; gpupdates@earthlink.net; mark@weisler-saratoga-ca.us; john.chen.sjca@mail.com; d.poppenhagen@comcast.net; plam_93154@yahoo.com; cherielj@earthlink.net; shericourtney@yahoo.com; winnie_chanlu@yahoo.com; 85expresslanes

Hi Bob,

I-52-1 [Thank you very much. It is a very interesting reply.

Barry

On Sun, Feb 2, 2014 at 1:46 PM, bob rayl <bobrayl@pacbell.net> wrote:

FYI, a response I received from Saratoga City Council-member Page re: my comments on Highway 85 "conceptual" conversion project. Bob Rayl

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Chuck Page <cpage@saratoga.ca.us>

To: "bobrayl@pacbell.net" <bobrayl@pacbell.net>

Cc: City Clerk [Crystal Bothelio] <ctclerk@saratoga.ca.us>; Howard Miller <hmillers@saratoga.ca.us>

Sent: Friday, January 31, 2014 2:08 PM

Subject: RE: Contact the City Council of Saratoga, California Form Submission

Bob, thank you for your message to the City Council. Since I became a member of the VTA Policy Advisory Committee and later a VTA Board Member and now as an alternate to the VTA Board, I have continually discussed the VTA plans for an express lane (now 2 lanes) with the city council. I brought it up as a council item many times and between Howard Miller and I we probably have brought it to the council's attention at least 30 times over the past 4 years. We have also had VTA come and present their plans to us several times. We have also tried to get the newspaper to write articles about it and have had a couple of "mentions" of the topic and one good write-up in the Saratoga Patch last year.

Of course this is a concern to Howard and me, and that is why we have brought it forward so often. We are having VTA present it to the council again at our February 5th meeting. Please understand that VTA has no funding for this project, so it is far from an imminent project. As you pointed out, these projects take many years to evolve. I suspect that the only way this project will have any hope of funding is if the Federal Government does any new funding of "shovel ready projects" as they did several years ago. And, by my observation, the prospect of that happening in DC is slim to none.

Thank you,

Chuck Page | Council Member

City of Saratoga | 13777 Fruitvale Ave, Saratoga, CA 95070

Mobile: [408-839-9555](tel:408-839-9555)

From: City Council

Responses to Comment I-52

I-52-1

This is not a comment on the IS/EA.

Comment I-53 Winnie Chan-Lee

From: [winnie.chan.lee](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Subject: Opposition to the proposed hwy 85 expansion.
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2014 5:10:51 AM

Hello VTA or 85 Express Lane Project planners,

I-53-1 [We live right behind the sound wall in Saratoga. It is noisy enough 'as it is'.
With additional lanes and without resurfacing the roadway, the noise level will be unbearable. Our quality of life will be worse with the Hwy 85 expansion.

I-53-2 [The expansion of Hwy 85 with additional lanes will not fix the freeway congestion problem since the bottlenecks are at 85/280 interchange, and along 85 to Hwy 101.

[We oppose to the proposed Hwy 85 expansion.

Regards,
winnie
winnie chan-lee
19434 DeHavilland Court, Saratoga, CA

Responses to Comment I-53

I-53-1

The noise technical studies show that the project would result in a 0 to 1 decibel increase in traffic noise along the Saratoga portion of SR 85, as described in Master Response N-3. Noise level changes from 1 to 2 dB are generally not noticeable, as discussed further in Master Response N-1.

I-53-2

The commenter's opposition is noted. Refer to Master Response TR-1 regarding general traffic improvements from the project and Master Response TR-2 regarding bottlenecks along SR 85.

Comment I-54 Pak Chau

	From: Pak Chau
	To: 85expresslanes
	Cc: Pak Chau
	Subject: Oppose to the Hwy 85 expansion project
	Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 3:52:28 PM

Hi,

I-54-1 [I'm writing to express my opposition to the proposed Hwy 85 express + toll lane project.

I-54-2 [I believe this will only delay the saturating point of the congestion rather than solving the problem, and the environmental impact through the saratoga neighborhood seems to be incomplete. Furthermore, this project is also very different from the original Hwy85 project agreement with the Saratoga city which stipulate the use of the center median.

[Once again, I'm disappointed in how the expansion project is being conceived and oppose to it.

Regards,

Pak

Responses to Comment I-54

I-54-1

The commenter's opposition to the proposed project is noted.

The project would provide incremental improvements to traffic congestion on SR 85, as described in Master Responses TR-1 and TR-2. Environmental impacts of the project were fully evaluated for Saratoga and all other locations along the project corridor in the IS/EA.

I-54-2

The performance agreement with the City of Saratoga included "a median width of 46' reserved for mass transportation," as discussed in the response to Comment L-3-4.

Comment I-55 Andrew Chan

Environmental analysis questions
Andrew Chen [trythinking@yahoo.com]
Sent: Saturday, January 18, 2014 8:31 AM
To: 85expresslanes

I-55-1 Hello,
I have concerned about the Land Uses by Activity Category on page 2-90 of the "Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment".

Segment 7 (Saratoga Ave. to Winchester) fails to take into account both a school (Rolling Hills Middle School) and churches (Korean Revival Presbyterian and St. Basil the Great Byzantine Catholic Church) that are directly adjacent to the freeway. These are both conditions that should require a higher standard of noise abatement, but the document says "noise abatement was not considered in this area."

Segment 6 also fails to note that Blue Hills Elementary School is adjacent to the freeway. Including this should make Segment 6 subject to the same higher standard as Segment 7.

Thank you.

Andrew

Responses to Comment I-55

I-55-1

Receptors ST-64, ST-66, and ST-68 were selected as acoustically equivalent receptors for land uses west of SR 85 between Quito Road on the north and Pollard Road on the south. Receptors in this area, including residences, Rolling Hills Middle School and churches (Korean Revival Presbyterian and St. Basil the Great Byzantine Catholic Church) are currently shielded by noise barriers. Predicted future noise levels at first-row receptors ST-64, ST-66, and ST-68 were 62 dBA L_{eq} or less, below the Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) for Category B and Category C land uses. Noise impacts were not identified in this segment because future noise increases would not be considered substantial, and worst-hour noise levels would not approach or exceed the NAC.

See response to Comment I-47-2 for a detailed response regarding Blue Hills Elementary School.

Comment I-56 John Chen (1)

Comments on the SR-85 Express Lanes Project

JOHN CHEN [john.chen.sjca@gmail.com]

Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2014 3:16 PM

To: 85expresslanes

Attachments: 85 summary.pdf (534 KB)

Department of Transportation, District 4
Attention: Ngoc Bui
P.O. Box 23660, MS-8B
Oakland, CA 94623

Dear Ngoc Bui,

I am writing this email as a resident of the City of Saratoga in order to comment on the SR-85 Express Lanes Project.

COMMENTS / QUESTIONS

I-56-1

1. The proposed lane expansion, paving over the median reserved for mass transportation, does not provide point-to-point service from South San Jose to Mountain View/Sunnyvale. A bottle of traffic is created from SR-87 to I-280. An increase in speed (25%) by having by having more lanes seems to be taken away once a commuter has reached the congestion point. Has VTA/Caltrans studied alternatives which directly address congestion points? Without addressing congestion points by adding capacity around the interchanges of I-280 and Hwy 17, there seems no point in spending \$170M for toll lane expansion.

I-56-2

2. Paving over the SR-85 median, which can accommodate light-rail tracks, will almost certainly guarantee that light-rail will never be put in the median. Have there been studies of the feasibility and cost of light-rail in the median? A light-rail line from Chynoweth Station in San Jose to DeAnza College will certainly less costly because the right-of-way already exists. An extension from DeAnza College to Mountain View-Evelyn Station would certainly offload commuter traffic from SR-85. If a study exists of light-rail, how may I obtain a copy? What is the cost per mile of building a light-rail track along SR-85?

I-56-3

3. Has there been consideration of a light-rail line from DeAnza College down Stevens Creek Blvd to Downtown San Jose? How may I obtain a copy of a study if one exists. There is plenty of density being built in that corridor.

I-56-4

4. I have walked neighborhoods in Saratoga, Campbell and Los Gatos informing residents of the proposed SR-85 Express Lanes Project. No one has told me they already knew about it. VTA should consider better ways to inform the public. Since most of us get our news online, posting announcement in newspapers seems an ineffective way of asking for public comment. VTA should run a marketing campaign using a public relations agency.

I-56-5

5. What is the yearly cost to operate the SR-85 Express Lanes project once it is built for \$170M? Is there a Return on Investment (ROI) analysis of this project? If so, how would I obtain a copy? From my simple calculations (see attachment), the ROI would seem to be anywhere from 10 years in the best case up to 40 years, or more.

Thank you, in advance for kindly responding to my questions.

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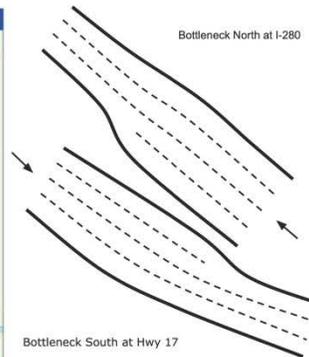
John Chen
Saratoga Resident along SR-85

SR-85 Express Lanes Notes - Feb 25, 2014

Adding additional toll lanes adds cars to the bottleneck.

- The proposed lane expansion does not provide point to point service from South San Jose to Mountain View/Sunnyvale, traffic is bottled from I-280 to SR-87 for cost of \$170M.
- Air pollution density increases.
- Noise pollution density increases.
- Performance agreements signed in 1988-1990 with the cities of Cupertino, Saratoga, Campbell and Los Gatos are still valid and stipulate “Route 85 ... with be a 6-lane facility with a median width of 46’ ... and ... that center median is reserved for mass transportation.”
- Cupertino City Council voted against the proposal on January 21, 2014.
- Saratoga City Council expressed concerns on February 5, 2014.

I-56-6



The Return On Investment (ROI) period seems long!

- At 45 MPH the number of cars per mile is about 66. This is 1782 cars along the total 27 miles of the project. A rough estimate of revenue could be 6 hours x 1782 x \$5 = \$53K/day or \$14M/year. If the cost of operations is \$5M/year, revenue is only \$9M/year in the best case.
- At a project cost of \$170M, a 100% toll collection rate at \$9M/year produces an ROI of 19 years. A 50% toll collection rate produces an ROI of 38 years. 25% toll collection is an ROI of 76 years.
- Adding a second toll lane reduces the ROI to 10.6 years only if everyone in the toll lanes pay!

I-56-7

VTA/Caltrans should study alternatives.

- Lower cost project with one toll lane instead of two.
- Commuter bus service.
- Reevaluate rail service along SR-85.
- Offload traffic with light-rail from Mountain View to DeAnza College or from DeAnza College/Stevens Creek to Downtown San Jose.

I-56-8

It is difficult to expand freeways further. The sustainable solution is less cars, not more cars. Paving over a right-of-way reserved for future mass transportation is short-sighted. The BART

I-56-9

SR-85 Express Lanes Notes - Feb 25, 2014	
I-56-9 cont.	<p>extension to Berryessa is a great start to solving transportation issues in the South Bay! Silicon Valley leads the world in technology. Having a great transit system is something we can do!</p>
I-56-10	<p>Example ROI with One Toll Lane</p> <p>Say we are driving at 45 MPH. If the average length of a car is 20 feet and the rush hour driving distance between cars is 3 car lengths, or 60 feet, the number of cars per mile is $5280 / (20+60) = 66$. The number of cars along the 23 miles of SR-85 from SR-87 to US-101 is 1518. An additional 4 miles along 101 in S San Jose brings that number to 1782. If the bulk of rush hour is 3 hours in the morning and 3 hours in afternoon, then $6 \times 1782 \times \\$5 = \\$53K/day$ or $\\$14M/year$ for an expenditure of $\\$170M$. Say op cost is $\\$5M/year$, so income is $\\$9M/year$. The ROI is $\\$170M/\\$9M$ or 19 years. This is the best case if everyone in the toll lanes pay.</p> <p>Example ROI Adding Second Toll Lane from SR-87 to I-280</p> <p>So what can be done? Add another lane in the 13 mile stretch from SR-87 to I-280. 13×66 cars per mile = 858 cars. $6 \times 858 \times \\$5 = \\$26K/day$ or $\\$6.7M/year$.</p> <p>$\\$9M/year$ with 1 toll lane plus $\\$6.7M/year$ with 2 toll lanes = $\\$16M/year$. $\\$170M/\\$16M = 10.6$ years ROI in the best case. With 50% toll collection, ROI is 21 years. With 25% toll collection, ROI is 42 years.</p> <p>From the City of Saratoga Web Page: http://www.saratoga.ca.us/news/displaynews.asp?NewsID=407</p> <p>VTA is currently accepting comments on the Draft Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment. The deadline to comment is February 28, 2014.</p>
I-56-11	<p>Comments on the project should be sent to:</p> <p>Department of Transportation, District 4 Attention: Ngoc Bui P.O. Box 23660, MS-8B Oakland, CA 94623 85expresslanes@urs.com</p> <p>For more information on the project, visit http://www.vta.org/projects-and-programs/highway/vta-express-lanes-sr-85-express-lanes-project.</p>

Responses to Comment I-56

I-56-1

Congestion points and other alternatives are addressed in Master Responses TR-2 regarding traffic and GEN-8 regarding other alternatives.

I-56-2, I-56-3

Refer to Master Response GEN-2 for detailed information about the extension of light rail in the median of SR 85. Information about light rail planning is available on the VTA website at <http://www.vta.org/projects-and-programs/transit>.

I-56-4

The commenter's recommendation is noted. VTA has performed extensive public outreach for the project, as described in IS/EA Sections 3.1 and 3.2 and Master Response GEN-6.

I-56-5

Refer to Master Response GEN-10 regarding funding, cost and return.

I-56-6

The comment lists a number of issues, which are addressed in the following:

- Refer to Master Response TR-1 regarding congestion improvement from the proposed project
- Refer to Master Responses GEN-4 regarding access points and TR-2 regarding bottlenecks
- Refer to Master Response AQ-1 regarding air quality
- Refer to Master Response N-1 regarding noise impacts
- Refer to Responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding agreements executed with those cities.

I-56-7

Refer to Master Response GEN-10 regarding funding, cost and return.

I-56-8

Refer to Master Response GEN-8 regarding other alternatives that included a single express lane in each direction of SR 85.

The reasons that mass transportation options were not considered as project alternatives are described in Master Responses GEN-7 and GEN-2.

I-56-9

The commenter's opinions are noted. See the response to Comment I-56-8 regarding mass transit.

I-56-10

Refer to Master Response GEN-10 regarding funding, cost, and return. An investment grade traffic and revenue analysis (including return on investment) is necessary and will be performed before the project can be constructed. This study is not available at this planning level stage.

I-56-11

This is not a comment on the IS/EA.

Comments I-57 John Chen (2)

From: [JOHN CHEN](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Subject: Re: Comments on the SR-85 Express Lanes Project
Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 10:13:56 AM

Department of Transportation, District 4
Attention: Ngoc Bui
P.O. Box 23660, MS-8B
Oakland, CA 94623

Dear Ngoc Bui,

I-57-1 [Previously, I have sent an email regarding my concerns with the SR-85 Express Lanes Project. I have added two more questions.

I-57-2 [6. Does there exist an itemized cost audit for building light rail along SR-87? What is the estimated yearly operations cost audit for maintaining light rail in the median of SR-87? If not a specific document for each of those items, does there exist a document from which that information may be extract? How may I obtain a copies of any of those documents?

7. What documents contains the most recent noise and air pollution study along SR-85 performed by VTA or Caltrans. How may I obtain a copies of any of those documents?

Thank you, in advance for kindly responding to my questions.

--
John Chen
Saratoga Resident along SR-85
12075 Saraglen Drive
Saratoga, CA 95070
408.307.0795

Responses to Comment I-57

I-57-1

It is assumed that the comment is regarding SR 85 rather than SR 87.

No recent cost estimates have been developed for the extension of light rail in the SR 85 median. Refer to Master Response GEN-2 regarding light rail in the median.

I-57-2

The IS/EA contains detailed noise (Section 2.2.7) and air quality (Section 2.2.6) impact analyses. The supporting technical reports are available on the Caltrans District 4 Environmental Document website at <http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/envdocs.htm#santaclara>, under “State Route 85 Express Lanes Project, Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment.”

Comment I-58 **Chunjer Cheng**

From: [Chuck Cheng](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Subject: About Freeway 85 Express Lane
Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 1:21:28 PM

Hi,

I-58-1

I heard on the news that Cupertino City Council expressed concern about making both the existing carpool lane and a new lane, to be constructed, into express lanes. I share 100% about the concern on loosing future light rail lane, discourage carpool and resulted in more carbon footprint, and flawed traffic impact study. VTA and CalTran must redo the study to get an accurate prediction.

Regards,
Chunjer Cheng
19433 De Havilland Court
Saratoga, CA 95070

Responses to Comment I-58

I-58-1

The commenter's opinion about the proposed project is noted. The express lanes would create additional capacity and maintain priority use for carpools, transit buses, and other HOVs, which would continue to use the lanes for free. Also refer to Master Response GEN-1 for regarding traffic. Master Response GEN-2 discusses light rail in the median. See the responses to Comments L-1-8 through L-1-10 regarding the City of Cupertino's comments on the traffic analysis.

Comment I-59 Ken Chu

Where are the access points to the proposed Express Lane on 85?

Ken Chu [ken_c_chu@yahoo.com]

Sent: Monday, February 03, 2014 7:07 PM

To: 85expresslanes

Hi VTA,

I-59-1 I was reading this page: <http://www.vta.org/projects-and-programs/highway/vta-express-lanes-sr-85-express-lanes-project>, and I see on the map near the top of the page that there will be no access points to the Express Lane at Saratoga Ave exit on 85 in either direction. But it isn't clear on the map where the nearest access point is located. It looks like it is north of Winchester Blvd and 85, but there is no other exit on 85 between the two streets.

I-59-2 I have another question I want to ask about this Express Lane. When I am driving my kids around in the backseat of the minivan and decide to use this Express Lane, would the FasTrak sensors charge me when I get in the Express Lane? If so, what would I have to show as proof to get that money back, and how quickly could I get it refunded?

I-59-3 I also have a comment about the access points currently on the map. I live in Saratoga, and I will be basically locked out of the HOV lane when I am on 85, because all the access points are either north or south of Saratoga, and the double-white lines are in effect 24/7. Why did VTA decide to lock out the commuters from a whole community with this design? I will no longer be able to use the HOV lane when I'm driving on 85 to go home, regardless if I have another person in the car with me! This is unacceptable to me. Please add access points to this Express Lane in Saratoga.

Thanks,
Ken Chu
Verde Vista Lane, Saratoga

Responses to Comment I-59

I-59-1

New Figure 1.3-2 has been added to IS/EA Section 1.3.1.1 to show the conceptual access zone locations. Continuous access—like the existing SR 85 HOV lane, with no buffer separation—will be considered during detailed project design, as discussed in Master Response GEN-4.

I-59-2

HOVs do not require a FasTrak toll tag to use the express lanes. In the commenter's case, the FasTrak toll tag should be placed in the small Mylar bag that came with the toll tag. The Mylar bag shields the tag from being "read" by the overhead toll antenna and the toll from being collected. For a replacement Mylar bag, visit <https://www.bayareafastrak.org/vector/dynamic/signup/index.shtml>, or call 1-877-BAY-TOLL (1-877-229-8655).

I-59-3

The development of the current access points is described in Master Response GEN-4. Continuous access—like the existing SR 85 HOV lane, with no buffer separation—will be considered during detailed project design, as discussed in Master Response GEN-4.

Comment I-60 Martha Clevenger

From: [Marty Clevenger](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Subject: Highway 85 Performance Agreement
Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 9:34:17 AM

I-60-1

I was on the Saratoga City Council in 1989 and signed the Performance Agreement which committed Saratoga and VTA to a six lane freeway and a central corridor reserved for future light rail. All of the studies were based on this configuration. How can you ignore this contract?

Martha Clevenger
19337 Titus Court
Saratoga, CA 95070

Responses to Comment I-60

I-60-1

The response to Comment L-3-4 discusses the Performance Agreement with the City of Saratoga.

Comment I-61 David Cohen

From: [David Cohen](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Subject: SR 85 Express Lanes
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2014 11:30:16 AM

I-61-1

I am a longtime Sunnyvale resident who leaves near and regularly used Hwy 85.

My comment:

I strongly oppose these toll lanes.

It is time for the VTA to stop punishing normal commuters, as if driving to/from work is some kind of criminal act.

So now the new idea from the VTA is to add more carpool lanes, which increase traffic and pollution and cause dangerous driving conditions when adjacent lanes operate at dramatically different speeds - but we can pay extra to use them as "toll lanes".

Bad idea!

So you build a new lane at taxpayer (read: working people) expense.
Then you close the lane, making it HOV only, so that most commuters can't use it.
Then you decide that we can use it after all, but only if we pay more!

Enough!

Just build more lanes and stop trying to social engineer our lives.

Regards,

David

Responses to Comment I-61

I-61-1

The commenter's opposition to the project and HOV lanes is noted. Refer to Master Response TR-1 regarding traffic and the IS/EA regarding other topical areas.

A traffic safety analysis was conducted for the project that addressed infrastructure modifications, the SR 85 corridor's baseline (i.e., existing) safety performance, and anticipated changes in operating conditions, especially lane changing and weaving. The analysis identified safety measures, including for striping, signing, and lighting, that will be implemented as part of detailed project design.

Comment I-62 Rosario Consiglio

NO Toll lanes on HWY 85

Rosario Consiglio [rosario@impulsesemi.com]

Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2014 2:51 PM

To: 85expresslanes

To Whom it may concern,

I-62-1 [I am against the use of toll express lanes on HWY 85. It will not relieve traffic congestion and is a threat to public safety. The HOV lanes also serves emergency vehicles and any additional congestion will certainly increase emergency response times. This is not what was intended when I voted for taxes to build highway 85. NO TOLL LANES ON HWY 85.

thank you

R. Consiglio
Almaden Valley, CA
408 355 5018

Responses to Comment I-62

I-62-1

The commenter's opposition to the proposed project is noted. The project would maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs and improve average travel times and speeds on SR 85, as described in Master Responses GEN-1 and TR-1. A traffic safety analysis was conducted for the project that addressed infrastructure modifications, the SR 85 corridor's baseline (i.e., existing) safety performance, and anticipated changes in operating conditions, especially lane changing and weaving. The analysis identified safety measures, including for striping, signing, and lighting, that will be implemented as part of detailed project design.

The express lanes would continue to serve emergency vehicles, which can use the lanes for free in accordance with California Vehicle Code Section 23301.5. The proposed second express lane in the median in each direction of SR 85 between SR 87 and I-280 would also facilitate travel for emergency vehicles. The project would be designed in accordance with Caltrans safety criteria.

Comment I-63 Cindy Conway

Support for Express Lanes on Highway 85

Cindy Conway [cconway@cadence.com]

Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2014 10:27 AM

To: 85expresslanes

I-63-1 [As a long time resident of San Jose I want to lend my support for the creation of an express toll lane for single drivers.

Cindy Conway



Cindy Conway | Group Director, Global Benefits
P: 408.944.7746 F: 408.944.7104 www.cadence.com

Responses to Comment I-63

I-63-1

The commenter's support for the project is noted.

Comment I-64 Ola Cook

Dump the carpool lanes altogether or make them mass transit lanes

Ola Cook [olamarco@pacbell.net]

Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2014 12:07 PM

To: 85expresslanes

I have been against the carpool lanes for years. 85 has become nothing more than a corridor connecting the far south bay with the far north bay, which impacts all of us living in between. There are just not enough people able to carpool to warrant a special lane just for them. What carpool lanes do is keep traffic idling in all the other lanes while the very few people in the carpool lanes speed by--and yes, they SPEED by.

I-64-1

It's time to change with the times. We are no longer a manufacturing society with everyone coming and going together at the same time window. The traffic hour used to be...an hour! Now it is 4-5 hours, and keeping people trapped in slow-moving lanes while there is another lane available is unfair, expensive, and frustrating!

Creating a toll road makes no sense either. We already pay too much for gas..where does it end?

I-64-2

Here's a question...how many people would take a bus or light rail if that carpool lane was converted to a mass transit lane?

Ola Cook

Responses to Comment I-64

I-64-1

The commenter's opposition to carpool/HOV lanes is noted. Also refer to Master Response GEN-1 regarding the express lanes.

The project does not propose to make SR 85 into a toll road.

The express lane toll for solo drivers is a user fee, as described in Master Response GEN-5. SR 85 will continue to have two general purpose lanes in each direction that do not have tolls or vehicle occupancy requirements.

I-64-2

The carpool/HOV lane already serves transit buses.

Comment I-65 Quentin Correll

85 Express Lanes

Quentin Correll [qcorrell@pacbell.net]

Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2014 4:25 PM

To: 85expresslanes

I-65-1 [My comment is *** NO *** !!!



Responses to Comment I-65

I-65-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted.

Comment I-66 Roberta B. Corson

Dear Mr. Hursh:

The neighbors on Ravenwood Drive in Saratoga were not aware of the impending work on Highway 85 until a few weeks ago. Having now been informed, these are the concerns that I would like addressed:

I-66-1 1. If the current lanes produce about 66 decibels of noise (between 61 and 70), how can the conversion of two carpool lanes into express lanes and the addition of two carpool lanes add only between one and three decibels of sound?

I-66-2 2. If a second carpool lane is added both ways between Highway 17 and Highway 280, how can this not add to the further congestion of those intersectional areas, which are already choked?

I-66-3 3. VTA signed and must be held to its commitment to “mass transit,” as in “light rail,” with the space available. This was not meant to be for express lanes with more cars and busses, which equal more noise, air, and light pollution. Why has this commitment changed?

I-66-4 4. Some of us bordering the freeway are asthmatic, including me, and many are children. Our neighborhood takes this matter seriously since one our neighbors died of asthmatic disorder this past year. The increased pollution of construction and the additional exhaust upon completion will undermine the air quality even more. This is a detriment to the health of all of us.

I-66-5 5. I am concerned about the Saratoga Sub-Acute Hospital that backs up against the freeway. Fragile people live there, whose well-being will be harmed by the additional noise, air, and light pollution.

I-66-5 I request a **current Environmental Impact Review**, to which all the neighbors would be privileged to see and respond. This would be part of the process, not the end.

I-66-6 VTA does much valuable work in our community, but it is important that you take into account the needs of the residents as well as the travelers in making your decisions. Saratoga residents would gain nothing from the reconstruction as it is planned.

I-66-6 Thank you for your consideration of this rational concern. I would like to see the facts on the issues I have raised.

Sincerely,

Roberta B. Corson, Ph.D.
13831 Ravenwood Drive
Saratoga, CA 95070

Responses to Comment I-66

I-66-1

Decibels (dB) are logarithmic units, so sound levels do not combine arithmetically. When adding a noise level to an approximately equal noise level, the total noise level increases by 3 dB. In Saratoga, the project is predicted to increase future noise levels by 0 to 1 decibel, as described in Master Response N-3. Noise level changes from 1 to 2 dB are generally not noticeable, as discussed further in Master Response N-1.

I-66-2

A detailed traffic operations analysis was prepared for the project (URS and DKS 2013) and is summarized in IS/EA Section 2.1.3. The analysis shows that in the peak traffic hour for the primary commute travel direction, levels of service approaching major

system interchanges would generally remain the same or improve slightly with the project in both 2015 and 2035 (northbound in the AM peak and southbound in the PM peak; IS/EA Tables 2.1.3-5 and 2.1.3-6 for 2015, and Tables 2.1.3-9 and 2.1.3-10 for 2035). Overall corridor speeds would increase and total delay would decrease with the project in 2015 and 2035 compared with the No Project conditions (IS/EA Tables 2.1.3-8 and 2.1.3-12). In addition, other upcoming projects are proposed that would help to relieve congestion at major system interchanges along SR 85. Refer to Master Response TR-2 for existing congestion issues and other planned projects.

I-66-3

The proposed project does not change VTA's commitment to mass transit. Refer to Master Response GEN-2 for detailed information about the extension of light rail in the median of SR 85.

Potential effects to noise and air quality from the proposed project were evaluated in detail and found to be minor, as described in Master Responses N-1 and AQ-1. Freeway lighting would be restricted to the SR 85 roadway and would not affect surrounding residences in Saratoga, as discussed in L-3-20 and L-3-21.

I-66-4

Regional and federal agencies have established standards to protect human health from air pollutants, including dust and other airborne particulate matter (PM₁₀, particulate matter less than 10 micrometers in diameter; and PM_{2.5}, particulate matter less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter). The federal regulatory level for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) was made more stringent in 2006. Particulate levels in the Santa Clara Valley and Bay Area have generally decreased; however, the standards are still periodically exceeded, as documented in the *Air Quality Impact Assessment* (URS 2013I).

Project construction would take place in the existing right-of-way, primarily in the median and shoulder areas adjacent to the existing lanes. Emissions of the primary pollutants related to project construction were modeled and compared with Bay Area Air Quality Management District criteria (IS/EA Table 2.2.6-5). The criteria are used to determine when control measures should be implemented during construction. The worst-case construction emissions did not exceed any of these criteria. However, this does not mean that an increase in construction dust or particulate matter may not occur. The measures listed in IS/EA Section 2.2.6.4 were therefore included in the project and will be required of the construction contractor during all construction operations.

PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} are strongly associated with diesel truck traffic. The project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85, therefore additional diesel truck traffic and associated PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} emissions would be negligible. In addition, the project would reduce delay time and increase speeds compared to the No Project Alternative, which in turn would reduce vehicle idling and resultant air emissions, including particulate matter.

PM_{2.5} emissions are also modeled as part of the regional air quality conformity analysis process by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) MTC's analysis accounts for increases in vehicle emissions regionwide, not just from this project. The analysis used data inputs for the winter season, when the Bay Area experiences its

highest levels of PM_{2.5}. The analysis shows that regional PM_{2.5} emissions are expected to decrease by 26 percent between 2008 and 2040 due to local and regional transit and freeway operational improvements (MTC 2014).

Project-related emissions would not result in violations of any applicable air quality standards, as described further in Master Response AQ-1. Therefore, the project is not expected to undermine local air quality. Refer to Master Response N-1 regarding noise impacts and IS/EA Section 2.1.4 regarding lighting impacts.

I-66-5

California Public Resources Code Sections 21080(d) and 21082.2(d) require the preparation of an EIR for projects with significant environmental effects. The determination that the proposed project would not have significant environmental effects was based on a detailed and comprehensive review of each technical study area, including noise, air quality, and visual resources. Also refer to Master Response GEN-3 regarding preparation of an EIR.

I-66-6

The commenter's concern is noted. Refer to Master Response TR-1 regarding the benefits of the project.

Comment I-67 Sheri Courtney

From: [Sheri Courtney](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#); [jhunter@saratoga.ca.us](#); [hmiller@saratoga.ca.us](#); [mcappello@saratoga.co.us](#); [cpaige@saratoga.ca.us](#)
Subject: 85 Caltrans/VTA project
Date: Wednesday, February 26, 2014 10:16:59 PM

I-67-1 I have lived in Saratoga for 32 years. My home is located about 1/4 mile from highway 85, near West Valley College.
Since the freeway opened, the noise and pollution has been very detrimental to my environment, health and well being. The noise keeps me from enjoying opened windows and I need "white noise" to sleep on many nights. I certainly do not want more pollution and noise added to it.
I am vehemently against the VTA's current proposal of Express lanes and other changes!

I-67-2 I do not believe Fast Track lanes would improve the flow of traffic.
Highway 85 is a "small community" road - not a fast track. Why not use what we have, in better ways.

I-67-3 VTA's proposal would be in violation of the original contract with Saratoga, so I cannot see how this plan even got this far.

I-67-4 What happened to the light rail plan (item #8 of the 1989 Performance Agreement? What happened to noise reduction through asphalt pavement?
Wouldn't those cost less than VTA's plans?

I-67-5 At the meeting on Tues. Feb 25th 2014 I was **shocked** to see VTA's grandiose, "done deal" looking spreads across the room and hear the VTA representative dance around questions and concerns put to him.
I do not trust the VTA. I do not believe they have our citizen's best interest in mind.
I want our Saratoga city leaders to fight for what is in the contract and for the health and well being of the citizens who elected them.
I hope and pray they will not just "run for the hills" (away from the noise) but will fight for us.
Sincerely,
Sheri Courtney
13544 Holiday Drive
Saratoga, CA 95070

Responses to Comment I-67

I-67-1

The commenter's concerns are noted. The project would result in a 0 to 1 decibel increase in traffic noise along the Saratoga portion of SR 85, as described in Master Response N-3. Noise level changes from 1 to 2 dB are generally not noticeable, as discussed further in Master Response N-1.

The project is not expected to increase air pollution, as discussed in Master Response AQ-1, and the improvement in congestion would reduce exhaust emissions from vehicle idling.

I-67-2

The project would improve average travel times and speeds on SR 85, as described in Master Response TR-1.

I-67-3

See the response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the contract cited in the comment. Light rail in the median of SR 85 was not carried forward because it was determined not to be reasonable or practicable, as described in Master Response GEN-2.

I-67-4

FHWA policy currently does not allow “quieter pavement” to be considered as a noise abatement measure, as discussed in Master Response N-2.

I-67-5

The commenter’s opinions are noted.

Comment I-68 Sam Cramer

<p>From: Sam Cramer To: 85expresslanes Subject: Route 85 HOV/toll lanes Date: Thursday, February 27, 2014 9:00:05 PM</p> <hr/> <p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I live in Sunnyvale close to Route 85, which I use daily to get to and from work.</p> <p>I am against HOV/toll lanes on Route 85. This is a boondoggle which will only increase congestion on the roads by denying many commuters the opportunity to drive in all lanes. I don't know the source of the mania for forcing people to carpool, but I prefer to make the decision as to have many passengers to have in my car on my own, thanks. I don't need VTA bureaucrats trying to make that decision for me.</p> <p>Dump the HOV/toll lanes and give us more road capacity, please.</p> <p>Sincerely, Sam Cramer</p>	<p>I-68-1</p>
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Responses to Comment I-68

I-68-1

The commenter’s opposition to HOV and express lanes is noted. Refer to Master Response TR-1 regarding traffic.

Comment I-69 Cathy, Tom and Will Crumpton

Against Hwy 85 Express Lanes

Cathy Crumpton [crumpton3@verizon.net]

Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2014 12:55 PM

To: 85expresslanes

I-69-1 [We are against making the HOV Lanes into Express lanes. It would defeat the ideal of the HOV lanes of carpooling for cleaner air and environment.

Crumpton, Cathy, Tom & Will

124 Las Astas Dr

Los Gatos, CA 95032-7680

crumpton3@verizon.net

Against Express Lane

Crumpton Family [crumpton3@verizon.net]

Sent: Monday, January 27, 2014 2:21 PM

To: 85expresslanes

I-69-2 [We are against an express lane on Hwy. 85.
Allowing people to pay to use the current HOV lane will produce more carbon in the air and defeat the purpose of the HOV lane as originally built.

Respectfully,

Crumpton, Cathy, Tom & Will

124 Las Astas Dr.

Los Gatos, CA 95032

(408) 356-3632

crumpton3@verizon.net

Responses to Comment I-69

I-69-1

The commenter's opposition to the proposed project is noted. The express lanes would create additional capacity and maintain priority use for carpools, transit buses, and other HOVs, which would continue to use the lanes for free. Refer to Master Response GEN-1 regarding express lanes and AQ-1 regarding air quality.

I-69-2

See response to Comment I-69-1.

Comment I-70 Peter Curtis

	From: Peter Curtis <peter.s.curtis@comcast.net>
	Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2014 10:19 AM
	To: 85expresslanes
	Subject: hwy 85 HOV Lanes
	Categories: Blue Category
I-70-1	<p>I think converting these HOV lanes to pay per use is a really bad idea. I would suggest at peak times the HOV Lanes are already full, what will this accomplish at peak times?</p> <p>If these lanes are not to be used by just "Carpoolers" and certain electric vehicles, I would suggest you abandon the idea of High Occupancy Vehicle lanes altogether. In other words eliminate the HOV lane and open these lanes to anyone at all times. There is enough wealth discrimination in the Bay Area already.</p> <p>I am very disappointed that in you.</p> <p>Peter Curtis 163 La Canada Ct Los Gatos, CA 95032</p>

Responses to Comment I-70

I-70-1

The commenter's opposition to the proposed project is noted. The project would create additional capacity for carpools, maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, and improve future average travel times and speeds on SR 85, as described in Master Responses GEN-1 and TR-1.

Studies in California and elsewhere show that express lanes provide time and convenience benefits to drivers of all income levels. Also refer to Master Response EJ-1 regarding social equity.

Comment I-71 Marisa D'Orfani

Thoughts on 85 express lane

Marisa D'orfani [m.dorfani@yahoo.com]

Sent: Sunday, January 19, 2014 6:52 PM

To: 85expresslanes

Dear Mr. Faug

I-71-1

I live about a mile away from freeway 85 and use the freeway almost 7 days a week. Every weekday morning I drive the the 9 miles from my house to De Anza College. My boyfriend and I have planned our school schedules so that we can drive to school together in the morning and use the carpool lane to make the travel time a little shorter. I think that the carpool lane gets a lot of use during rush hour; i think that making it an express lane would take away the incentive for people to drive together. People who can afford to pay extra money to get into the express lane will do it so they can avoid the traffic and those who can not afford to pay will be forced to sit in traffic even though if they had good intentions of carpooling. Carpooling not only helps the environment but also the traffic situation by putting fewer cars on the road. Adding the express lane on freeway 85 is not the answer to the problem of our very congested freeways and long commute times.

I hope you will remember this opinion when you are making your decision on this plan.

Sincerely,

Marisa D'Orfani

Responses to Comment I-71

I-71-1

The express lanes would create additional capacity and maintain priority use for carpools, transit buses, and other HOVs, which would continue to use the lanes for free. Refer to Master Response GEN-1 regarding express lanes.

The project would improve travel times and speeds, as described in Master Response TR-1.

Comment I-72 Larry and Jeannie DaQuino

From: [Jeannie DaQuino](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#)
Subject: Highway 85 expansion
Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 4:24:33 PM

Larry and Jeannie DaQuino
14330 Mulberry Dr
Los Gatos, CA
95032
(408)858-0408

Dear Ngoc Bui

- I-72-1 [I was very surprised to hear Caltrans has been spending time and money on a project that breaks a written contract. It's obvious Caltrans knows what they are doing is wrong since it has been kept from the public until now.
- I-72-2 [An Express Lane is not what our community wants. It will increase the noise and dust levels to homes and businesses. An Express Lane will not help the local residents with their commute, but they will be affected on a daily basis by the noise and dust.
- I-72-3 [We have a commuter lane that can be used and often is not full. If a person in south San Jose would like to spend less time commuting, they are welcome to invest in an electric car so they can use the commuter lane.
- I-72-4 [It was written in a contract that the median of 85 would be reserved for Light Rail. Why would this be changed when we know Light Rail is the answer to traffic concerns? We have the space for light rail. Why would you take that space and use it for lanes, when you know in the future Light Rail is what would have been needed?
- I-72-5 [Hwy 85 is already a very loud highway in Los Gatos. The surface seems a bit quieter in Saratoga. There would be so much money spent on a project that would bring down the quality of living for residents. Please hear the voices of concern and read our letters with compassion. Please think of how you would feel if this were your neighborhood.

Thank you

Jeannie and Larry DaQuino

Responses to Comment I-72

I-72-1

The comment does not identify which contract is cited. Responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) discuss the agreements executed with those cities.

IS/EA Chapter 3 provides a detailed discussion of public outreach for the project. In addition, refer to Master Response GEN-6 regarding public noticing.

I-72-2

The project would increase existing noise levels by 0 to 3 dBA, depending on the location. This level of increase would be barely detectable to most people, as discussed

further in Master Response N-1. The project is not expected to affect local air quality (refer to Master Response AQ-1), and the construction measures listed in IS/EA Section 2.2.6.4 would avoid or minimize temporary construction-related air quality impacts.

I-72-3

The detailed traffic studies for the project show that some segments of the HOV lane experience peak-hour congestion and will continue to worsen in future years. The project would add capacity for carpools and other HOVs, as described in Master Response GEN-1.

I-72-4

Refer to Master Response GEN-2 regarding light rail along the SR 85 median.

I-72-5

The project would result in noise level increases of 0 to 2 dBA along SR 85 within the Town of Los Gatos. Noise level changes from 1 to 2 dB are not considered a significant impact, as discussed further in Master Response N-1.

Comment I-73 Emil De Smet

	From: Emil De Smet
	To: @Sexpresslanes
	Subject: Los Gatos opposes
	Date: Thursday, February 27, 2014 7:21:31 AM

I-73-1 I am a life long los gatos resident that lives near hwy 85. I am just hearing about this proposed expansion. I have some questions:

- 1) What evidence do you have that shows this project will help congestion?
- 2) what evidence do you have that these lanes will be used by commuters as toll lanes? I have driven through the east bay 680 corridor that has toll lanes and they seem to always be empty.
- 3) why is the VTA wanting to do this project? Is it for revenue?

I am very opposed to this project. I expect your public awareness measures will be improved from here on.

Responses to Comment I-73

I-73-1

Detailed traffic studies show that the project would improve travel times and speeds, as discussed in Master Response TR-1.

Other express lane projects in the Bay Area and elsewhere in California and the U.S. confirm that solo drivers are willing to pay a toll when they need reliable travel times. For example, over one million drivers have paid tolls to use the I-680 southbound express lane in Fremont since it opened in September 2010. Since the express lanes on SR 237 opened in March 2012, the facility has served over 1.3 million toll-paying vehicles (about 20 percent of the more than 6 million vehicles total that have used the facility), and about 120,000 vehicle hours of travel time savings have been gained in the corridor.

The purpose of the project is to manage traffic in the congested HOV segments of the freeway between SR 87 and I-280, and maintain consistency with provisions defined in AB 2032 (2004) and AB 574 (2007) to implement express lanes in an HOV lane system in Santa Clara County. The intent of the legislation was to require that net toll revenue generated after payment of direct expenses (meaning operating and maintenance expenses for the express lanes) be allocated to the improvement of HOV and transit services in the same corridor as the express lane. After the public circulation of the Draft IS/EA, the California Legislature revised the implementing legislation to also allow toll revenue to be used for transportation corridor improvements on SR 85 (California Streets and Highways Code Section 149.6[e][3] as amended by 2014 Assembly Bill 2090, Chapter 528, approved September 21, 2014, effective January 1, 2015). Refer to Master Response GEN-10 regarding revenue.

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted, as well as the opinion about public awareness measures. Refer to Master Response GEN-6 regarding public noticing, which began in 2004.

Comment I-74 Pierre Delforge

Comments on 85 Express Lanes Project

Pierre Delforge [pierre@delforge-melia.net]

Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 9:04 PM

To: 85expresslanes

Cc: Assemblymember.Fong@outreach.assembly.ca.gov

To Ngoc Bui, Associate Environmental Planner
Department of Transportation, Environmental Planning, MS 8B
P.O. Box 23660
Oakland, CA 94623

Dear Mr. Bui,

I-74-1

I strongly oppose the conversion of High-Occupancy Vehicle lanes on 85 to express lanes. I believe it would not ease congestion, while resulting in increased air and carbon pollution as well as noise. Instead, transit options such as increased bus routes and frequency, park and ride areas at every freeway exit, improved bike infrastructure, and ultimately light rail would provide easier and lower impact transportation options, increasing the quality of life in our communities and reducing long-term health and climate impacts.

I-74-2

Increasing road capacity in saturated urban areas does not result in reduced congestion, it increases traffic with similar levels of congestion. Instead of continuing to develop a car-based infrastructure with all its negative health and climate impacts, we should develop a 21st-century mobility infrastructure based on modern, fast and clean transit options. California and Silicon Valley should apply their technology and environmental leaderships to demonstrate how advanced public transit systems can provide solutions that increase quality of life and convenience while reducing environmental impacts. This would not only improve residents' quality of life, it would ensure Silicon Valley continues to be one of the most desirable places to live and do business in the world, benefiting the local and state economies.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Best regards,

Pierre Delforge
12524 Titus Ave
Saratoga, 95070

Responses to Comment I-74

I-74-1

The commenter's opposition is noted. The project would improve travel times and speeds, as discussed in Master Response TR-1. Refer to Master Responses AQ-1 regarding air/carbon pollution and N-1 regarding noise.

I-74-2

Refer to Master Response GEN-7 regarding why transit options are not being implemented instead of the proposed project. Also refer to Master Response GEN-2 regarding light rail in the median of SR 85.

Comment I-75 Alyssa DePalma

Not in favor

Alyssa DePalma [alyssa@italix.com]

Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2014 10:03 AM

To: 85expresslanes

I am not in favor of convert the carpool lanes on State Route 85 to express lanes, so that single-occupancy vehicles may pay a toll!

I-75-1 You obviously don't drive this highway, with the onset of the Leaf it is already grid lock. This plan will no gain any revenue for the state which is the real reason Sacramento is looking at this idea

--

Alyssa DePalma
Italix Company, Inc.
2232 Calle Del Mundo
Santa Clara CA 95054
408-988-2487 ph
408-988-7711 fax

Responses to Comment I-75

I-75-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted. The project would improve travel times and speeds, as discussed in Master Response TR-1. The purpose and need of the project is discussed in IS/EA Section 1.2. Refer to Master Response GEN-10 regarding funding, cost, and return.

Comment I-76 Gary DePalma

HWY 85 Pay lanes

Gary DePalma [gary@ncgpress.com]

Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2014 10:58 AM

To: 85expresslanes

Cc: alyssa DePalma [alyssa@italix.com]

- I-76-1 I think this is a bad idea ,85 is already packed solid in the A.M from 17/880 all the way thru to 101 south/237 exit. The few that will be willing to pay will only make things worse for the other three and sometime two lanes. The State is know better than a beggar on the corner holding a sign that reads " I NEED MONEY ANYTHING WILL HELP " If you really wanted to relieve the traffic you should have looked at the long term projections 20 plus years ago and made 85 wider at that time. The State is so desperate for \$\$\$\$ from all its Pensions obligations it made 30 years that they have sunk this once great state into a GIANT POTHOLE.
- I-76-2
- What next from are brilliant minds in Sacramento ... Build pay tolls on 85 at every City for everyone to pay.
- I-76-3 P.S From what I've read we all ready have this on 680 and there are very few cars that use it and it's making traffic worse for the other lanes that are full and at a cost of over 15 mil dollars why cant you learn from your past mistakes.

Gary DePalma
Northern California Graphics
408-738-3840
gary@ncgpress.com

Responses to Comment I-76

I-76-1, I-76-2

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted. The project would improve travel times and speeds, as discussed in Master Response TR-1.

I-76-3

Over one million drivers have paid tolls to use the I-680 southbound express lane in Fremont since it opened in September 2010. Also refer to the response to Comment I-73-1 regarding traffic improvements from the SR 237 express lane. Express lanes are intended to provide both short-term and long-term congestion relief in order to accommodate planned regional growth in housing and jobs over the next 20 years or more. Express lane use is expected to increase as congestion from future growth also increases, as described in IS/EA Section 1.2.2.1 (under "Projected Travel Demand").

Comment I-77 **Matt DiMaria**

Highway 85 in Saratoga

matt.dimaria@eyefi.com

Sent: Sunday, February 16, 2014 5:56 AM

To: 85expresslanes

Cc: Matt DiMaria [mdimaria@pacbell.net]

Greetings:

I wanted to convey my concerns regarding the expansion of Highway 85 and its impact on the Saratoga community. My home is .25 miles from the sound wall and my morning commute takes me to Mountain View.

I-77-1 An increase in the amount of road noise audible from my home would be unacceptable. As it is, traffic is audible from our home so any increase would negatively effect our neighborhoods quality of life. We are counting on your team to make sure that doesn't happen.

I-77-2 A recent article in the local newspaper indicated that there are discrepancies in the DB level data you presented to the Saratoga City Council. Please take the time to engineer a solution that at least maintains the current levels if they cannot be improved.

Thanks for your consideration of the concerns of Saratoga residents.

Regards,
Matt

Matt DiMaria | CEO | Eye-Fi
967 North Shoreline Blvd. | Mountain View, CA | 94043
W +1(650)963-4467 | M +1(408)394-6424
www.eyefi.com

Responses to Comment I-77

I-77-1

The noise technical studies show that the project would result in a 0 to 1 decibel increase in traffic noise along the Saratoga portion of SR 85, as described in Master Response N-3. Noise level changes from 1 to 2 dB are not significant, as discussed further in Master Response N-1.

I-77-2

The comment appears to refer to SR 85 noise data in the City of Saratoga's 2013 Draft Noise Element compared with that in the 2012 *Noise Study Report* prepared for the proposed project. Refer to Master Response N-4 for a discussion of the noise data.

Comment I-78 Ralph H. Dixon

From: ralfer dix [rdixda@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2014 10:42 AM
To: Steven Leonardis; mjwnawn@losgatosca.gov; Diane McNutt; BSpector; Joe Pirzynski
Subject: Highway 85

Mayor and Town Council,

I-78-1 [As a person who was raised in Saratoga and has lived in Los Gatos for almost twenty-six years I wanted to express my opposition to the proposed expansion of Highway 85.

I-78-1 There are the immediate and obvious reasons such as the noise, dirt, increased traffic, big rigs on the route, and the possible/likely decline in property values to those of us close to the highway. This may not effect you or other residents of our town but it will effect those of us close to this corridor.

I-78-2 [More importantly is the effect the expansion will have upon the future for commuting in this county. It would appear that this expansion would prohibit the eventual construction of light rail or dare I say BART along this route. While this county as a whole has never been forward looking in the area of rapid transit, due to the projected population growth in our area, responsible thinking is now required for future needs.

I-78-3 [A performance agreement was originally signed by the VTA when Highway 85 was originally constructed. It is my understanding that VTA position is that the agreement can be set aside because no one who agreed to it is any longer around. That sounds illogical because the document was signed on behalf of people representing VTA at that point in time. It appears to me the VTA views this situation like the old west where government treaties with the native population were set aside for convenience.

I hope you as a representative body will oppose this attempted expansion.

Sincerely yours,

Ralph H. Dixon
544 Pine Wood Ln.
Los Gatos, Ca.
95032

Responses to Comment I-78

I-78-1

This comment was forwarded to Caltrans and VTA by the Town of Los Gatos.

The comment briefly lists a number of issues, about which the following should be noted:

- Refer to Master Response N-1 regarding project-related noise increases.
- Refer to Master Response AQ-1 regarding air pollution and the improvement in congestion, which would reduce exhaust emissions from vehicle idling. The project would improve travel times and speeds (refer to Master Response TR-1).

- The project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85.

There is no evidence that the project would affect property values.

I-78-2

Refer to Master Response GEN-2 regarding light rail in the median of SR 85. Refer to Master Response GEN-7 regarding why transit options are not being implemented instead of the proposed project.

I-78-3

See the response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the Performance Agreement.

Comment I-79 Matt Domenici

SR 85 Express Lanes

Matt Domenici [matt@domenici.com]

Sent: Friday, February 07, 2014 9:04 AM

To: 85expresslanes

I-79-1

One HUGE issue with all the express lanes in the Bay Area is that for those of us with external FasTrak transponders (due to vehicle limitations, special windscreens, etc.) there is no way to get credit for when we are in the carpool lanes with an electric vehicle – without making phone calls and complaining.

What would be great is if a given License Plate/VIN with an external transponder could be permanently listed to NOT charge on the express lanes since we always have access under current state law even single driver.

- Matt

Responses to Comment I-79

I-79-1

Electric vehicles that are listed on the California Air Resources Board's list of clean air vehicles eligible for HOV lane stickers

(<http://www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/carpool/carpool.htm>) can use HOV and express lanes for free through January 1, 2019.

For FasTrak questions or suggestions, contact Info@mtc.ca.gov or 1-877-BAY-TOLL, or visit <https://www.bayareafastrak.org/en/support/csc.shtml>.

Comment I-80 Thierry Doyen

Comment re: 85 Express Lanes Project

thierry.doyen@nokia.com

Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2014 11:45 AM

To: 85expresslanes

Dear Madam, dear Sir,

I-80-1 I am, like apparently already quite many, a regular user of the HOV lane on Hwy 85, and find that the lane is already in fairly high use today by HOV qualified riders.

I am not sure how high the fee would be that is considered to allow paying use by single-passenger vehicles under this proposal, but, given how well off many Bay Area residents are, I am afraid that too many would want to pay for the privilege of using the carpool lane and that this would quickly result in clogging it up. The indirect result of this would then be that people who carpool would no longer have much of a benefit to do so, and this could hurt our air pollution and well being. Also, for those who paid premium for electric vehicles, this would badly adverse, or even penalize, them in their financial decision to pay the premium, but no longer get the benefits they were paying for.

Thank you for your consideration, and I hope that the carpool lane will continue being a reasonably flowing transportation offering to drivers in the area.

I-80-2 If and where there would be space to add a lane for paying drivers, maybe that could be considered too. And funding for it would come from the usage proceeds (?)

Yours sincerely,

Thierry Doyen
13201 Ten Oak Way
Saratoga, CA 95070
650-450-7814

Responses to Comment I-80

I-80-1

The proposed project would maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs. Electronic sensors in the roadway will continually monitor traffic in the express lanes, and as described in IS/EA Section 1.3.1.3, tolls will be adjusted on a real-time basis to keep traffic flowing smoothly (45 mph or higher as required by 23 USC 166[d][2]). If the lanes become congested, tolls will be increased to deter solo drivers from entering the lanes, or the toll signs will be changed to read “HOVs only” and only HOVs will be allowed in the lanes, as described in Master Response GEN-1. This would ensure that the air quality benefits of HOV use, including free use of the HOV lane by electric vehicles until January 1, 2019, would continue.

I-80-2

The authorizing legislation for the proposed project requires that net toll revenue generated after payment of direct expenses (meaning operating and maintenance expenses for the express lanes) be allocated to the improvement of transit services in the same corridor. Refer to Master Response GEN-7 for more information.

Comment I-81 Diane Drewke (1)

Against the express lane
Diane Drewke [ddrewke@interorealestate.com]
Sent: Friday, February 07, 2014 1:54 PM
To: 85expresslanes

I-81-1 Hello,
I live in Saratoga. I am absolutely against the express lanes. I believe it will negatively impact my quality of life as someone who lives near it and also someone who uses it.

All the best,
Diane
Diane Drewke
ddrewke@interorealestate.com
DRE # 01849831
(408) 482-8687
Oh by the way I am never to busy for any of your referrals ...

Responses to Comment I-81

I-81-1

The commenter's opposition to the proposed project is noted.

Comment I-82 Diane Drewke (2)

Against 85 express lanes
Diane Drewke [ddrewke@interorealestate.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2014 11:05 AM
To: 85expresslanes

I-82-1 Hello,
I am very concerned about the 85 toll lanes. I am emphatically against them for the following reasons:
1. They will not help the congestion and will discourage carpooling
2. As some who car pools when I have to go during rush hour you will be eliminating my incentive
I-82-2 3. This will increase the noise to my home and area in Saratoga
4. I do not want to have buses which are even noiser that what is currently above allowable levels.
I-82-3 5. It will slow down my trip with the carpool lanes gone between 280 and Saratoga.
I-82-4 This is an absolutely terrible idea!!!
Besides making money I see no positive reason to do this and as a tax payer I would prefer other ways to find revenue. It seems to me to make better sense to extend the public light rail to alleviate congestion.

Diane
Diane Drewke
ddrewke@interorealestate.com
DRE # 01849831
(408) 482-8687
Oh by the way I am never to busy for any of your referrals ...

Responses to Comment I-82

I-82-1

The project would improve travel times and speeds compared to the No Build condition in 2015 and 2035, as described in Master Response TR-1.

The express lanes would create additional capacity and maintain priority use for carpools, transit buses, and other HOVs, which would continue to use the lanes for free. In addition, express lane tolls would provide a revenue source for transportation improvements in the SR 85 corridor. Refer to Master Response GEN-1 regarding the express lanes.

I-82-2

The noise technical studies show that the project would result in a 0 to 1 decibel increase in traffic noise along the Saratoga portion of SR 85, as described in Master Response N-3. Noise level changes from 1 to 2 dB are generally not substantial, as discussed further in Master Response N-1.

Transit buses are currently allowed on SR 85 and would not be restricted as part of the project.

The comment refers to allowable noise levels. The noise abatement criteria (NAC) for residential settings is 67 dBA $L_{eq(h)}$, as shown in IS/EA Table 2.2.7-1. Where the future noise level with the project is predicted to approach (within 1 decibel) or exceed the NAC an impact has been identified, and potential noise abatement has been evaluated in the IS/EA as required by Caltrans and FHWA. It is important to note that the NAC values are used to determine whether noise abatement must be considered, and do not represent levels to which noise must be abated.

I-82-3

See the response to Comment I-82-1.

I-82-4

Refer to Master Response GEN-2 regarding light rail in the median of SR 85 and Master Response GEN-7 regarding why transit options are not being implemented instead of the proposed project.

Comment I-83 Richard Dsa (1)

SR85 Conversion of HOV and Addition of Express Lanes between #87 and #280

R Dsa [arambei@yahoo.com]

Sent: Thursday, January 23, 2014 4:13 PM

To: 85expresslanes

Cc: elo@saratoga.ca.us

Dear VTA/EPA Representative, Mr. Ngoc Bui

I-83-1

As a long time resident of Saratoga (my property borders SR85 Noise Wall) and part of the original committee that approved the SR85 Contract based on the guaranteed Limitation of Traffic, Exclusion of Trucks, Trailers and other 2 Ton Vehicles and keeping the VTA right of way for future light rail services, I would like the Environmental Study Group to contact me before any approval of your proposed project moves ahead. I have already spoken to various local groups regarding legal steps to stop this proposed activity on health grounds. I can show your representative that the existing traffic conditions are already violating the original Environmental promises of the original contract. Today as opposed to when the SR85 opened, my pool has had a steady increase in the amounts of soot and pollution and at these levels there are proven studies on health impact. Further with the growing traffic noise that we have had to put up through the last 20 years, The Noise Wall needs to be increased in height and noise reducing technology added and until these are addressed first, I intend to throw my weigh behind any means to stop this project going ahead. Thank you for your immediate response,

Richard A. Dsa

Responses to Comment I-83

I-83-1

The commenter's contact information has been added to the project mailing list. Similar comments from the same individual were submitted as Comment I-84 and are addressed below.

Comment I-84 Richard Dsa (2)

Re: SR85 Conversion of HOV and Addition of Express Lanes between #87 and #280
R Dsa [arambei@yahoo.com]
Sent: Sunday, January 26, 2014 9:48 PM
To: Emily Lo [elo@saratoga.ca.us]
Cc: City Clerk [Crystal Bothelio] [ctclerk@saratoga.ca.us]; Dave Anderson [davea@saratoga.ca.us]; 85expresslanes

I-84-1 Hello Emily,
Based on the 31st January 2014 DEADLINE, is not the 5th too late to do something about VTA and Councilor Howard Miller's misleading statements to us the the saratogans that elected him?? I reviewed several council meeting videos over this weekend and I noted in the specific one regarding VTA HOV conversions that towards the end of the video there appears to be a veiled comment that Conversion of single HOV to Express was not the agenda. In fact I noted that through investigation of all documents publicly posted regarding SR85/#280/DeAnza Access and Los Altos/Cupertino/Saratoga Council Data, that SR85 north of #280 does not have any room for Expansion or Conversion as VTA/CAL Tran do not have any right of way. Therefore why would any one approve 8 Lanes going down to 6 Lanes through the most conjested corridor supporting Facebook, Apple and Microsoft??

I-84-2 On this email I noted that The City Clerk, Crystal Bothelio is also copied and therefore I would like to Officially have her note that As a long time tax paying resident of Saratoga that I do not support any changes to the original contract that was signed and approved in 1989 for SR85 until I see an Official Environmental Impact and Traffic Free Flow Reports .

I-84-3 Further because of the current SR85 Pollution?? What about the 40 Foot Light Pollution?? What about the Saratoga Wild life?? What about the Saratoga Bylaws that attracted me to live here in Saratoga ?? What about the Added Noise??
I deal with the pollution aspect everyday when I clean out my Pool, or traverse my back yard (It Borders on SR85), and now we have to deal with the clandestine way that this whole matter is being handled by members of your council, (I only found out about this plan by chance through my legal council who lives in Cupertino), I regret to inform you that I am also investigating several other means whereby Saratoga Council can be held legally accountable for these decisions without properly informing the paying Taxpayers or representing their needs and contracts. Through my discovery, I find several conflict of interest threads whereby well known companies all have VTA representation. So what is really going on?? Who is pulling the strings?? Who has something to gain at our expense??
Thank you for your original phone call, this email and your follow-up that my objections get recorded with Crystal Bothelio as a first step.

Richard Dsa
(408) 490-4518 Anytime Contact

Responses to Comment I-84

I-84-1

This comment was submitted to the City of Saratoga and forwarded to Caltrans. Only issues related to the IS/EA are addressed in the responses below.

The project does not propose to change the number of lanes on SR 85 north of I-280. The project would add a second express lane in the median in both directions between I-280 and SR 87.

I-84-2

The commenter is referred to the following:

- See response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the contract cited in the comment
- Refer to Master Response AQ-1 regarding the air quality studies performed for the project
- Refer to Master Responses N-1 and N-3 regarding project-related noise.

The Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment (IS/EA) that was issued for public review and comment on December 30, 2013, has been

made available by a number of means as described in Master Response GEN-6, including by request. On January 24, 2014, the traffic studies for the proposed project were made available on the Caltrans District 4 Environmental Document website at <http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/envdocs.htm#santaclara>, under “State Route 85 Express Lanes Project, Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment.” The length of the public comment period was extended to February 28, 2014.

I-84-3

The environmental issues raised in this comment were evaluated in IS/EA Sections 2.2.6 (air quality), 2.3.4 (animals/wildlife), and 2.2.7 (noise). In addition, refer to Master Responses AQ-1 regarding air quality and N-1, N-2, and N-3 regarding noise. Also refer to Master Response GEN-10 regarding funding, cost, and return.

Comment I-85 Sonya D’sa

From:	Sonya D'sa
To:	85expresslanes
Subject:	Hwy 85 expansion
Date:	Friday, February 28, 2014 7:31:20 PM

I-85-1 I oppose expansion of freeway to 8 lanes. It makes no sense to increase the number of lanes when certain choke points such as 280 access is not resolved. Adding more lanes will only make this congestion worse. It makes no sense to spend monies that commuters of these lanes will pay for when the choke points are not resolved. Saying you have no funding for this but have funding to increase to 8 lanes makes no sense.

I-85-2 Also the noise levels in your study need to be reviewed - the noise levels are high now and above the agreed decibels so when you say it will go up by an insignificant amount - this is NOT true as I live close to the freeway and it gets worse each year with the noise, dust levels in my pool, oil droplets I can literally see in my skimmer from the freeway dust. It also causes allergy and asthma conditions for my family.

I-85-3 This is a breach of the 1989 agreement for highway 85 and I oppose any further widening of this freeway to 8 lanes.

Sonya D'sa

Responses to Comment I-85

I-85-1

The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at choke points along the project corridor, as described in Master Response TR-2. Also see Master Response TR-1 regarding improvements to travel times and speeds with the project. The express lanes would offer immediate congestion relief using the existing right-of-way.

I-85-2

A *Noise Study Report* for the project was prepared to evaluate conditions at residences and other land uses along SR 85 (Illingworth and Rodkin 2012). Noise measurements were taken in more than 140 locations, including in the backyards of several dozen

homes that back onto the project corridor. As described in Master Response N-1, the project would result in noise level increases of 0 to 3 dBA over both existing and No Project conditions, depending on location. A 3 dBA change is not a significant impact. Also refer to Master Response AQ-1 regarding air quality.

I-85-3

The comment does not specify which agreement is cited. See the responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding agreements executed with those cities.

Comment I-86 R. L. Erdman

	<small>R. L. Erdman 875 Radcliff Court Sunnyvale, CA 94087 408-736-4558 r.l.erdman@att.net</small>
	January 15, 2014
	Ngoc Byui Department of Transportation, Environmental Planning MS 8B P.O. Box 23660 Oakland, CA 94623
	Dear Sir/Madam,
I-86-1	I understand there is consideration of converting some lanes on highway 85 to "express lanes". I am opposed to this change as I believe the highway is for all citizens and should not favor anyone or any group. It is especially ridiculous to charge tolls thus creating the expense to collect the toll and monitor the operation by the State Highway Patrol.
	If the Department of Transportation needs something to do, I suggest they eliminate the High Speed Rail "boondoggle"!
	Sincerely, 
	cc: Assemblymember Paul Fong

Responses to Comment I-86

I-86-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted. Refer to Master Response GEN-1 regarding express lanes and HOVs.

Comment I-87 James Ernst

HWY 85

James Ernst [James@gleimjewelers.com]

Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2014 6:58 PM

To: 85expresslanes

I-87-1

It will be full of BMW's and Mercedes...

Sad

James

Responses to Comment I-87

I-87-1

Studies in California and elsewhere show that express lanes provide time and convenience benefits to drivers of all income levels. Refer to Master Response EJ-1 regarding social equity.

Comment I-88 David Fadness



3331 N. First Street, San Jose CA 95134-1927
(408) 321-7575 TDD: (408) 321-2330
Fax: (408) 321-7537
community.outreach@vta.org

**SR 85 Express Lanes Project
Draft Environmental Document Public Meeting
Comment Card**

Name: DAVID FADNESS

Address: 445 STRATFORD PARK COURT SAN JOSE 95136-2031

E-mail Address: DFADNESS@SBCGLOBAL.NET

Meeting attended: SR85 Express Lanes Project Draft Environmental Document Public Meeting

Comments: TO MAKE HOV/HOT LINES WORK SAFELY AND TO ENCOURAGE THEIR USE, PLEASE CONSIDER DIRECT HOV-TO-HOV CONNECTORS AT ALL FREEWAY AND COUNTY EXPY INTERCHANGES. ALSO PROVIDE BARRIER SEPARATION BETWEEN HOV/HOTL AND MIXED FLOW LANES. DRIVING IN HOV LANES DURING PEAK HOURS IS, TODAY, A VERY SCARY EXPERIENCE DUE TO SPEED DIFFERENCES AND LACK OF BARRIER PROTECTION BETWEEN LANES. TRAFFIC SLOWS IN HOVLS AS A RESULT, REDUCING THEIR EFFECTIVENESS. PLEASE SPEND THE MONEY REQUIRED TO DO THIS JOB RIGHT - IT'S A 50-100 YEAR INVESTMENT THAT WILL NEVER COST LESS THAN

I-88-1

(If you require more room for additional comments, please use the backside of this card)
Please note that all comments must be received by January 31, 2014

THANKS!

This comment card can also be mailed to:

Responses to Comment I-88

I-88-1

The proposed project would convert the SR 85/US 101 HOV direct connectors in San Jose to express lane direct connectors. The SR 85/US 101 HOV direct connectors in Mountain View are proposed to be converted express lane direct connectors as part of a separate project. The recommendation to add direct connectors to county expressway interchanges is noted. There is no programmed project to construct HOV direct connectors at interchanges of SR 85 and county expressways.

As currently designed, the project would provide striped buffer zone separation between the express lanes and adjacent general purpose lanes, except at access zones (see IS/EA Section 1.3.1.1).

Comment I-89 Allen Fan

From:	Allen Fan
To:	85expresslanes
Subject:	HOT Lanes On I-85 Does Not Make Sense
Date:	Wednesday, February 26, 2014 6:48:08 PM

Dear Sir/Madame:

I-89-1 [Lately I heard VTA/Caltran's plan to add paid express lane to I-85.
I, as a concerned resident, demand a full environment impact study.
The fund required to do this work can be better spent such as LRC

I-89-2 [study. That would be the right way to alleviate traffic congestion around the
silicon valley.

The original 1989 agreement to build the HWY specifies that the middle section is only reserved to LRC, NOT paid HOT lanes.

Best Regards,

Allen Fan
408-718-8866
Saratoga resident

Responses to Comment I-89

I-89-1

California Public Resources Code Sections 21080(d) and 21082.2(d) require the preparation of an EIR for projects with significant environmental effects. The determination that the proposed project would not have significant environmental effects was based on a detailed and comprehensive review of each technical study area. Refer to Master Response GEN-3 regarding preparation of an EIR.

I-89-2

The comment does not specify which 1989 agreement is referenced. See the responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding agreements executed with those cities. Light rail in the median of SR 85 was not carried forward because it was determined not to be reasonable or practicable, as described in Master Response GEN-2.

Comment I-90 Marcia Fariss (1)

85 mods
Marcia Fariss [marcia@gizmology.com]
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2014 3:51 PM
To: 85expresslanes

I-90-1 I am against additional lanes on Hwy 85, anywhere. One of the main reasons is that additional additional lanes will promote single occupancy commuting. It was my understanding that the State is encouraging just the opposite: car and/or van pooling! I do not see how an additional lane will promote either multiple auto passengers or use of mass transit.

Another point:

I-90-2 The City of Saratoga has a contract with Transportation Authority Item 4 of the agreement states that Route 85 through the city will be a 6-lane facility with a median width of 46' reserved for mass Transportation. The mass transportation was to be light rail NOT AN ADDITIONAL 2 LANES OF FREEWAY FOR TRAFFIC.

I-90-3 Lastly, as far as I know, what more traffic will do to worsen air pollution near the freeway has not been studied or evaluated. I urge a new comprehensive EIR be performed prior to any planning for additional traffic lanes on Hwy 85.

Thank you for seriously considering my comments.

Marcia Fariss
Saratoga

Responses to Comment I-90

I-90-1

The commenter's opposition to the proposed project is noted. The project would create additional capacity for carpools and maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, including mass transit, as described in Master Responses GEN-1. In addition, express lane tolls would provide a revenue source for HOV, transportation, and transit service improvements.

I-90-2

See the response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the agreement cited in the comment.

I-90-3

Project effects on air quality have been studied in detail and are summarized in IS/EA Section 2.2.6. Also refer to Master Response AQ-1.

California Public Resources Code Sections 21080(d) and 21082.2(d) require the preparation of an EIR for projects with significant environmental effects. The determination that the proposed project would not have significant environmental effects was based on a detailed and comprehensive review of each technical study area, including noise, air quality, and visual resources. Refer to Master Response GEN-3 regarding preparation of an EIR.

Comment I-91 Marcia Fariss (2)

Hwy 85 express toll lanes

Marcia Fariss [Marcia@Gizmology.com]

Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2014 10:13 PM

To: 85expresslanes

VTA Board:

- I-91-1 As presented by John Ristow at a community meeting this evening (2-15-14) at the Saratoga Library, the plan to use the Hwy 85 median for express toll lanes is short sighted, ill conceived and it will not the flow of traffic.
- I-91-2 Specifically: No one in Saratoga (or Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Campbell or parts of Cupertino) will be able to use the lanes due to limited access; however, we will suffer all the consequences.
- I-91-3 1. Increased noise levels--recent measurements demonstrate significantly improved noise levels (your measurements were taken during a recession-low traffic period of time). Current noise levels are already above the State and National acceptable levels.
- I-91-4 2. Increased air particulate pollution will have adverse affects on Saratoga residents and every resident living near or driving on Hwy 85. The current levels are already causing health problems for corridor residents and during air inversion periods, the problem is magnified.
- I-91-5 3. Instead of decreasing congestion on Hwy 85, express toll lanes will increase traffic congestion throughout the corridor. The result will be the same congestion and gridlock, just as we have now. The current plan certainly does not account for the projected population increase in Silicon Valley.
- I-91-6 4. The center area (the median) of the freeway was designed for light rail which is considerably less polluting and more efficient than additional automobile traffic. The agreements signed between the cities clearly stated that light rail would occupy the median areas.
- I-91-7 6. Express buses will be caught in the traffic congestion/gridlock, just as automobiles will be. Thus, increased noise and air pollution. Aside: if VTA considers express buses to be mass transit, then there is a serious disconnect with reality.
- I-91-8 7. Agreements with several cities stated that Hwy 85 would be limited to 6 lanes with light rail in the median. VTA is bound to honor the agreements with the agency that it superceded. Express buses are NOT the same as light rail!
- I-91-9 8. Adding lanes on Hwy 85 does not address the overriding problems of the choke points, of which there are several. One of the reasons there is gridlock on Hwy 85 during commute hours is the back up of autos attempting to access or exit the freeway at the choke points.
- I-91-10 9. The proposed additional lanes is in direct conflict with the stated goals of encouraging car pools and use of mass transit.
- I-91-10 10. You are assuming that the cost of the project will be covered by the toll revenues; we've heard that before and it rarely occurs. That

I-91-10, cont.	means either there will be Federal funds used (which then means we'll have large trucks on the road) or taxpayers will be forced to make up the difference. Taxpayers, many of whom cannot afford to pay the tolls as they are on fixed incomes.
I-91-12	Your proposed plan needs to be shelved! It is seriously flawed and short sighted in many ways, only a few of which have been addressed in this letter. Your plan is already obsolete and ignores the anticipated population and commercial growth in Silicon Valley. I urge you to rethink this entire project and listen to residents and cities that will be adversely affected by your current plans.
<p>Marcia Fariss Saratoga</p>	

Responses to Comment I-91

I-91-1

The project would improve congestion as described in Master Response GEN-1. The development of the current access points is described in Master Response GEN-4. Continuous access—like the existing SR 85 HOV lane, with no buffer separation—will be considered during detailed project design, as discussed in Master Response GEN-4.

I-91-2

The comment appears to refer to SR 85 noise data in the City of Saratoga's 2013 Draft Noise Element compared with that in the 2012 *Noise Study Report* prepared for the proposed project. Refer to Master Response N-4 regarding the noise data.

Noise measurements for the 2012 *Noise Study Report* were collected in October and November 2011 and in March 2012. Based on unemployment data for Santa Clara County, the highest unemployment rates in recent years were for 2009 and 2010, before the noise study was conducted.

Although employment levels have increased since the *Noise Study Report* was prepared, it is important to note that the noise measurements and predicted future levels (assuming growth in the area through 2035) reflect the worst hour for traffic noise, when traffic is heavy but still moving at or close to the speed limit. Adding vehicles to the freeway due to an assumption of higher employment would result in congestion and slower speeds, which would decrease, not increase, traffic noise levels. Therefore, a new noise study to capture the effects of higher employment levels would not result in substantially different conclusions.

The comment states that noise levels are already above the State and National acceptable levels. There are no absolute State maximum numeric thresholds for freeway noise levels. The comment appears to refer to the Federal noise abatement criteria (NAC), which are shown in IS/EA Table 2.2.7-1. It is important to note that the NAC values are used to determine whether noise abatement must be considered, and do not represent levels to which noise must be abated.

Where the future noise level with the project is predicted to approach (within 1 decibel) or exceed the NAC, the increase is considered an impact, and potential noise abatement has been evaluated in the IS/EA as required by Caltrans and FHWA.

I-91-3

Particulate levels in the Santa Clara Valley and Bay Area have generally decreased because of stricter standards in recent years; however, the state and federal standards are still periodically exceeded, as documented in the *Air Quality Impact Assessment* (URS 2013I). As pointed out in the comment, regional climatic inversions can result in the highest levels of air pollution from particulates and other pollutants.

Air particulate pollution is categorized as particulate matter less than 10 micrometers in diameter (PM₁₀) and particulate matter less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter (PM_{2.5}). Both types of particulates are strongly associated with diesel truck traffic. The project would not change the existing truck restrictions on SR 85, therefore additional diesel truck traffic and associated PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} emissions would be negligible. In addition, the project would reduce delay time and increase speeds compared to the No Project Alternative, which in turn would reduce vehicle idling and resultant air emissions, including particulate matter.

Particulate emissions are also modeled as part of the regional air quality conformity analysis process by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) MTC's analysis accounts for increases in vehicle emissions regionwide, not just from this project. The analysis used data inputs for the winter season, when the Bay Area experiences its highest levels of PM_{2.5} concentrations. The analysis shows that regional PM_{2.5} emissions are expected to decrease by 26 percent between 2008 and 2040 due to local and regional transit and freeway operational improvements (MTC 2014).

Refer to Master Response AQ-1 and IS/EA Section 2.2.6 for additional information regarding other air pollutants.

I-91-4

A detailed traffic analysis was conducted for the proposed project. The analysis shows that the project would improve average travel times and speeds on SR 85, as described in Master Response TR-1. The analysis accounted for local and regional population growth using data from the Association of Bay Area Governments, as described in IS/EA Section 2.1.3.1 (under "Traffic Operations Analysis Study Area and Methods").

I-91-5

Light rail in the median of SR 85 was not carried forward because it was determined not to be reasonable or practicable, as described in Master Response GEN-2. See the responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding the agreements cited in the comment.

I-91-6

Additional express bus service on SR 85 is not included as part of the project but can be considered as part of reinvestment of toll revenue in the project corridor. See the response to Comment I-91-4 regarding the potential for gridlock.

According to the American Public Transportation Association and the Federal Transit Administration, public transportation (also called transit, public transit, or mass transit) is defined as transportation by a conveyance that provides regular and continuing general or special transportation to the public, but not including school buses, charter, or sightseeing

service (American Public Transportation Association 2014; Federal Transit Administration 2014). Express buses provide regular and continuing transportation to the public and would therefore fall into the category of public transportation.

I-91-7

See the responses to Comments L-1-2 (Cupertino), L-3-4 (Saratoga), and L-4-2 (Los Gatos) regarding the agreements cited in the comment, and Master Response GEN-2 regarding light rail in the median.

I-91-8

The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at choke points along the project corridor, as described in Master Response TR-2.

I-91-9

The proposed second express lane in the median in each direction of SR 85 between SR 87 and I-280 would provide additional capacity for carpools and mass transit. The express lanes would maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, which would continue to use the lanes for free. Refer to Master Response GEN-1 for further discussion of the express lanes and HOVs.

I-91-10

Refer to Master Response GEN-10 regarding cost, funding, and revenue. The SR 237 Express Lanes have been operating with net revenues since opening to tolling operations two years ago. In addition, over one million drivers have paid tolls to use the I-680 southbound express lane in Fremont since it opened in September 2010.

Neither Caltrans nor VTA are aware of any current provision that would require changes to the truck restrictions on SR 85 as the result of using federal funds.

I-91-12

The analyses for the project accounted for expected population and commercial growth in Silicon Valley. See IS/EA Section 1.2.2.1 (under “Projected Travel Demand”) and the response to Comment I-91-4.

The decision makers will consider comments provided during the public review period in making decisions about the project.

Comment I-92 Sue Fettchenhauer

From: sfsoprano@sbcglobal.net
To: [85expresslanes](http://85expresslanes.com)
Subject: No
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2014 2:34:19 PM

I-92-1

I find this project has not been thoroughly vetted.

It should not go through.

Sue Fettchenhauer

Responses to Comment I-92

I-92-1

The commenter's opposition to the proposed project is noted.

The environmental evaluation and public outreach processes for the project are described in Master Responses GEN-3 and GEN-6, respectively.

Comment I-93 Leila Forouhi

Input on SR 85 Express Lanes Project

Layla F. [green.creativity@yahoo.com]

Sent: Monday, January 13, 2014 12:16 PM

To: 85expresslanes

Hello,

I-93-1

I am a Cupertino resident and former Environment Planning intern with VTA.

I appreciate this incentive to help ease traffic, and in fact I think carpool lanes create more traffic by backing up cars that don't carpool, i.e. the carpool lanes haven't created enough incentive to get people to actually carpool!

However, I am concerned about possible environmental impacts from adding new lanes to highways SR 237, SR 85 and US 101 and the negative declaration in the Draft EIR.

I-93-2

It is reasonable to conclude that high speeds, construction of new lanes, and more motor vehicles may impact wildlife and could infringe on sensitive habitat, specifically since SR 237 runs along the south San Francisco Bay wetlands and US 101 crosses through a wildlife corridor in Coyote Valley in south San Jose.

Additionally, I did not find any mention of sensitive habitats in Coyote Valley or its use as wildlife corridor in the Draft EIR. Information and a study published by De Anza College is available publicly online which specifies Coyote Valley as a wildlife corridor. VTA may benefit from looking closely at this document ([Safe Passage for Coyote Valley](#)) and should do more investigation to determine the project's environmental impacts on this region.

Thank you for your consideration and would appreciate any response.

Regards,

Leila Forouhi

11551 Upland Ct.

Cupertino, 95014

Responses to Comment I-93

I-93-1

The commenter's opinion about carpool lanes is noted. A detailed traffic analysis was conducted for the proposed project. The analysis shows that the project would improve average travel times and speeds on SR 85, as described in Master Response TR-1.

I-93-2

The project only includes express lanes on SR 85. The SR 85 Express Lanes Project does not include roadway widening along US 101 in the Coyote Valley. Pavement widening would take place in the median of SR 85 between SR 87 and I-280, in an urbanized part of the project corridor. SR 85 between SR 87 and I-280 was not included in *Safe Passage for Coyote Valley* or identified as an essential connectivity area in the *Essential Habitat Connectivity Project: A Strategy for Conserving a Connected California* (Spencer et al. 2010).

Comment I-94 Bhushan Fotedar

From: [Bhushan Fotedar](#)
To: [85expresslanes](#); [community.outreach@vta.org](#)
Cc: [elo@saratoga.ca.us](#); [hmler@saratoga.ca.us](#); [mcappello@saratoga.ca.us](#); [cpage@saratoga.ca.us](#); [jhunter@saratoga.ca.us](#); [thelma.oros](#)
Subject: Please do not expand State Route 85
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2014 11:47:41 AM

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to encourage the VTA to use the existing State Route 85 median for mass transportation, conforming to the Transportation Authority's PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT with the City of Saratoga which states:

Route 85 through the CITY will be a 6-lane facility with a median width of 46' reserved for mass transportation

The Agreement also states that the Transportation Authority will monitor and mitigate noise levels. As a resident of Saratoga for nearly 11 years, I can testify that noise from Highway 85 has increased significantly over time, presumably from degradation of the road surface. Conformance to original Transportation Authority promises indicate that a *reduction* of noise, not an increase, is needed.

I-94-1

Using the median for mass transportation instead of additional traffic lanes will

- reduce air pollution
- reduce noise pollution
- reduce traffic on SR 85 on-ramps and surrounding surface streets
- reduce energy consumption
- avoid violation of the Transportation Authority's PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT with the City of Saratoga

These are benefits for everyone, not just the ever-growing number who live within hearing distance of SR 85.

Sincerely,

Bhushan Fotedar
12667 Cambridge Drive
Saratoga, CA 95070
1-408-857-6267

Responses to Comment I-94

I-94-1

Light rail in the median of SR 85 was not carried forward because it was determined not to be reasonable or practicable, as described in Master Response GEN-2. See response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the agreement.

Refer to Master Response N-3 regarding noise in the City of Saratoga.

Comment I-95 Susan Freeman

Hwy 85 expansion
Susan Freeman [susan@superfreeman.com]
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2014 10:50 PM
To: 85expresslanes

I-95-1 [You need to abide by the agreement of 1988.
I am NOT in favor of this project for many reasons. It is of no value to those who live in Saratoga.

Susan Freeman

Responses to Comment I-95

I-95-1

See response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the Saratoga agreement. The commenter’s opposition to the project is noted.

Comment I-96 Ray and Betty Froess

High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes on State Route 85
Ray Froess [ray@froess.com]
Sent: Monday, January 20, 2014 2:07 PM
To: 85expresslanes

I-96-1 [Unless there’s significant evidence that allowing single-occupant vehicles to pay a toll to use the lanes would reduce congestion, we are opposed to it. It discourages car pooling, is unfair to those who can’t afford it, and would increase occupancy that would eventually defeat its use.

I-96-2 [Highway 85 was supposed to reduce congestion but it’s real purpose was to develop land use South. We are suspicious of this change too.

Ray & Betty Froess
20225 Ljepava Dr
Saratoga, CA 95070-4345
(408) 867-4233

Responses to Comment I-96

I-96-1

The commenter’s opposition to the proposed project is noted. The project would create additional capacity for carpools, maintain priority use for carpools and other HOVs, and improve average travel times and speeds on SR 85, as described in Master Responses GEN-1 and TR-1.

Studies in California and elsewhere show that express lanes provide time and convenience benefits to drivers of all income levels. Refer to Master Response EJ-1 regarding use of the toll lanes.

I-96-2

The commenter's opinions are noted.

Comment I-97 Joshua Gerlach

85 Express Lanes Study Comment

Joshua Gerlach [jgerlach@BiggsCardosa.com]

Sent: Thursday, January 30, 2014 11:07 AM

To: 85expresslanes

Regarding the 85 Express Lanes Project:

I-97-1

In the draft ND/EA document for this project, the project description (section 1.3) states that an additional lane will be added to the median of SR 85 between SR 87 and I-280. This will require widening a number of bridges where 85 crosses over creeks or other roadways. Section 1.3.1.9 includes a list of 7 bridges that are proposed to be widened for this project. However, there are four additional bridges in this portion of the corridor (between SR 87 and I-280) that are omitted from this list but may also need to be widened to accommodate the addition of the 2nd HOV/Express lane. These bridges include:

- GUADALUPE RIVER BRIDGE (NB & SB)
- ALMADEN EXPRESSWAY UC (SB) – Only the NB bridge is included in the list of bridges to be widened.
- LOS GATOS CREEK BRIDGE (NB & SB)
- CALABAZAS CREEK BRIDGE (NB & SB)

These four bridges need to be evaluated to determine whether any widening will be required for the additional lane. If so, the cost and environmental impacts of widening these bridges should be evaluated and included in the final version of the ND/EA document. It would be unfortunate to determine during the design phase that additional widening is required, as this would likely require a supplemental environmental evaluation and an increase in the project cost.

If these bridges will not need to be widened, please explain how an additional lane will be added at these locations, as the current bridges do not appear to have any additional room to add a lane.

Sincerely,

Joshua Gerlach, P.E.

Staff Engineer

jgerlach@biggscardosa.com

Responses to Comment I-97

I-97-1

The four additional bridges listed in the comment were evaluated during preliminary project planning and were found to accommodate the current design. Roadway shoulders at these locations may be reduced in width.

Comment I-98 Anwar Ghazi

SR 85 Express Lanes Project
Anwar Ghazi [aghazi1@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2014 10:11 PM
To: 85expresslanes
Cc: Howard Miller [hmiller@saratoga.ca.us]

I-98-1 I oppose VTA's proposal of converting Hwy 85 from 6 lane to 8 lane highway without a full Environmental Impact Report (EIR). My home backs Hwy 85 and as it is, noise from traffic wakes me up at 4 AM in the morning in summer when I need to keep my windows open to sleep. Loud noise from motorcycles and cars has been disturbing. Converting 6 Lane to 8 Lane will further aggravate the noise pollution.

I-98-2 If the existing Impact Statement already talks about increase in traffic noise, why this SR 85 Express Lanes Project without counter measure?

I-98-3 Current carpool lane can handle single riders if they are willing to pay like Hwy 237. Adding extra lanes means adding more traffic. VTA's goal should be mass rapid transit and not add lanes to alleviate traffic congestion.

Hwy 85 runs through the residential hearts of Cupertino, Saratoga and Campbell unlike 237, 880 and 680. Adding extra lanes will be unacceptable.

I am concerned about the SR 85 Express Lanes Project.

Sincerely,

Anwar Ghazi
Marilla Drive
Saratoga, CA

Responses to Comment I-98

I-98-1

California Public Resources Code Sections 21080(d) and 21082.2(d) require the preparation of an EIR for projects with significant environmental effects. The determination that the proposed project would not have significant environmental effects was based on a detailed and comprehensive review of each technical study area. The technical studies included the additional express lane in each direction between SR 87 and I-280. Refer to Master Response GEN-3 regarding preparation of an EIR.

I-98-2

The project would increase existing noise levels by 0 to 3 dBA, depending on the location. A 3 dBA change is considered a barely noticeable, or just noticeable, difference, as discussed in Master Response N-1. See the response to Comment L-1-15 (under "Nighttime Noise Levels") regarding nighttime noise along SR 85.

Where the future noise level with the project is predicted to approach (within 1 decibel) or exceed the noise abatement criteria (NAC), the increase is considered an impact, and potential noise abatement has been evaluated as required by Caltrans and FHWA (see IS/EA Section 2.2.7.4). None of the evaluated noise barrier locations met the criteria for

federal funding. However, potential noise abatement can be considered if non-federal funds are available.

I-98-3

The project would improve average travel times and speeds on SR 85, as described in Master Response TR-1. Refer to Master Response GEN-7 regarding why transit options are not being implemented instead of the proposed project.

Comment I-99 Laura Gloner

Saratogan against 85 Expansion for HOV Lanes
Gloner, Laura Kiss [laura.gloner@hp.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2014 3:40 PM
To: 85expresslanes

Hello VTA:

I-99-1 Hear our call, that we do not want HOV lanes instead of light rail through the City of Saratoga. In the very, very short term it may be cheaper for you, but the cost, including emissions will be so much higher.

I-99-2 Here are a number of reasons why I'm against your proposal:

I-99-3 1. The project really does nothing to solve the major traffic problems which are outside of the project. For example, going north on 85, the choke points are 280, 237 (entry to 101S) and 101N. These choke points are OUTSIDE OF THE HWY 85 PROJECT SO NOTHING IS SOLVED AT THAT END.

I-99-4 2. The proposed HOV lane does not help Saratoga residents. When entering from DeAnza or Saratoga Ave., there is no entry to the HOV lane. Our cars have already passed the entrance to the HOV lane.

I-99-5 3. The VTA states that the addition of the HOV lane will not significantly increase noise, dust, or pollution. "yea right". By the way, highway 85 is already out of compliance with noise because the road bed was supposed to be rubberized asphalt not grooved cement.

I-99-5 4. The new HOV lanes would take the place of future expansion for light rail. Now there's the way to decrease noise, dust, and pollution. Light rail was in the original contract between the City of Saratoga and the organization that preceded the VTA.

I-99-5 5. We Saratogans paid for 85, and we continue to pay with noise, dust and pollution.

Regards,

Laura Gloner
12649 Lido Way
Saratoga, CA 95070

Responses to Comment I-99

I-99-1

The commenter's opposition to the project is noted. Light rail in the median of SR 85 was not carried forward because it was determined not to be reasonable or practicable, as described in Master Response GEN-2.

I-99-2

The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at choke points along the project corridor, as described in Master Response TR-2.

I-99-3

The development of the current access points is described in Master Response GEN-4. Continuous access—like the existing SR 85 HOV lane, with no buffer separation—will be considered during detailed project design, as discussed in Master Response GEN-4.

I-99-4

The project would increase existing noise levels by 0 to 1 dBA along the Saratoga portion of SR 85, as described in Master Response N-3. This level of increase is not significant, as discussed further in Master Response N-1. The project is not expected to affect local air quality (see Master Response AQ-1), and the construction measures listed in IS/EA Section 2.2.6.4 would avoid or minimize temporary construction-related air quality impacts.

I-99-5

Refer to Master Response GEN-2 regarding light rail in the median of SR 85. See response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the agreement with the City of Saratoga.

The commenter's opinion about the project is noted. Refer to Master Responses N-1 regarding noise and AQ-1 regarding air pollution.

Comment I-100 Ellen and Harvey Gold

From: Ellen Gold
To: 85expresslanes
Subject: VTA Freeway 85 Project
Date: Friday, February 28, 2014 4:12:18 PM

I am a resident of Saratoga and attended the VTA Freeway 85 project meeting held at the Saratoga Library Tuesday evening, Feb 25. As a result of the presentation by the VTA representative, I would like you to address following comments/questions:

I-100-1

1. The noise measurements you took in 2009 are not valid. We were in the depths of the worst recession since the Great Depression. The traffic had disappeared. Everyone was out of work!! A recent study done by the town of Saratoga, using the same contractor as you did, showed much higher readings, far exceeding the limit agreed upon when 85 was first built.

I-100-2

2. The original Contract signed by the local community leaders and the County agency in charge at that time, said that the 85 median would be reserved for future light rail. You can not contractually use that for another lane of gas powered vehicles even if they are hybrids.

I-100-3

3. Using the proposed new lane for Express Buses is not equivalent to light rail!! Hybrid does not equal all electric. You will be adding to the overall Carbon particle-rants in the air when you should be finding the best ways to reduce them. Less cars/busses not more.

I-100-4

4. The priority for any new funds should be alleviating the rush hour bottleneck at the 85/280 merge. Adding another lane of traffic feeding into that same bottleneck will exacerbate the problem. If that problem is a 280 issue, not an 85 issue as the speaker indicated then concentrate on 280 and not 85!

I-100-5

5. Your whole approach seems to be short sighted. The valley is expanding in people and jobs. The proposed Express lanes will be obsolete before they are even in place.

Sincerely,

Ellen and Harvey Gold
12325 Miller Avenue
Saratoga, Ca. 95070
408.257.9446

Responses to Comment I-100

I-100-1

Noise measurements for the 2012 *Noise Study Report* were collected in October and November 2011 and in March 2012. Based on unemployment data for Santa Clara County, the highest unemployment rates in recent years were for 2009 and 2010, before the noise study was conducted.

Although employment has increased since the *Noise Study Report* was prepared, it is important to note that the noise measurements and predicted future levels (assuming growth in the area through 2035) reflect the worst hour for traffic noise, when traffic is heavy but still moving at or close to the speed limit. Adding vehicles to the freeway due to an assumption of higher employment would result in congestion and slower speeds,

which would decrease, not increase, traffic noise levels. A new noise study to capture the effects of higher employment levels would not result in different conclusions.

The comment appears to refer to SR 85 noise data in the City of Saratoga's 2013 Draft Noise Element compared with that in the 2012 *Noise Study Report* prepared for the proposed project. Refer to Master Response N-4 regarding these noise data. Master Response N-3 compares Saratoga noise levels that were predicted before SR 85 was built with existing noise levels and predicted future noise levels with and without the proposed project.

I-100-2

See response to Comment L-3-4 regarding the City of Saratoga agreement.

I-100-3

The reasons that mass transportation options were not considered as project alternatives are described in Master Responses GEN-7 regarding mass transit alternatives and GEN-2 regarding light rail in the median.

I-100-4

The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at the SR 85/I-280 interchange and other bottleneck locations along the project corridor, as described in Master Response TR-2.

I-100-5

The analyses for the project accounted for expected population and employment growth in the region (see IS/EA Section 1.2.2.1. under "Projected Travel Demand"). Moreover, the project would improve average travel times and speeds on SR 85, as discussed in Master Response TR-1.

Comment I-101 Mark Goldman

Question	
Mark Goldman [mark.goldman@yahoo.com]	
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2014 12:04 PM	
To: 85expresslanes	
I-101-1	I do not support adding another lane to Highway 85 until there is a clear solution to the problem of the intersection of Highway 85 and 280. It does not make any sense to add another lane that will just add more delays.
I-101-2	I would support adding mass transit in the middle of the current Highway 85; if mass transit were convenient, people would use it.
Please respond.	
thanks Mark Goldman 514 Clearview Dr Los Gatos, CA 95032	

Responses to Comment I-101

I-101-1

The proposed project together with other planned projects would provide incremental improvements at the SR 85/I-280 interchange, as described in Master Response TR-2.