

Gary Lauder <gary@lauderpartners.com>
To: Kyle Perata <ktperata@menlopark.org>
Cc: "city.council@menlopark.org" <city.council@menlopark.org>, "planning.commission@menlopark.org" <planning.commission@menlopark.org>
Comments on FaceBook's Campus Expansion's Draft EIR

July 11, 2016 5:29 PM

1 Attachment, 83 KB

Dear Mr. Perata,

While I am a member of the Atherton Transportation Committee, I am not speaking on behalf of it nor Atherton, but rather as a private citizen concerned about the welfare of all citizens in the area, not just my town. The traffic impacts of this development will be substantial. Since many of the affected roads and intersections were already very congested, the congestion impact of the incremental traffic will be disproportionate. See graph:

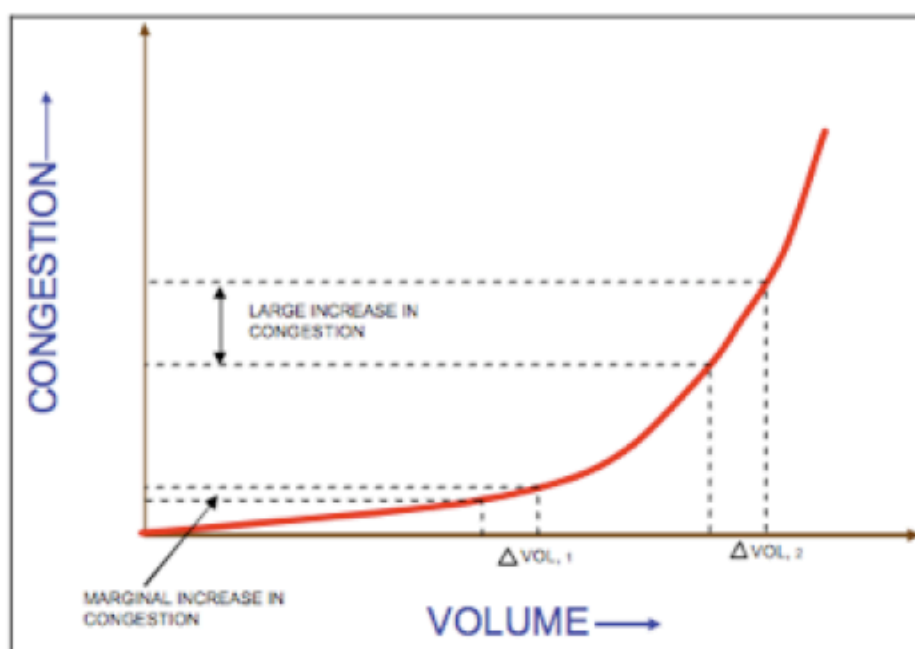


Figure 1: Illustration showing the effect of incremental vehicle volume on congestion.

From: <http://www.examiner.com/article/why-aaa-is-wrong-about-congestion-and-bike-lanes>

Consequently, FB should be responsible for mitigating the incremental traffic impact of the new developments (and the prior ones). The mitigations proposed in the DEIR are not meaningful nor sufficient. The main mitigation proposed is (TRA-1.2 on P.ES-23) promising to get people to commute during off-peak periods, is hard to enforce nor rely on it not being traded away by a future MP government. The mitigations should be of the type that Transportation Impact Fees (TIF) are required to be spent on: adding capacity to the roads. The DEIR was over 5K pages, and the Executive Summary was 72 pages, so thank you for summarizing it in only 10 pages. All of the documents referred to the adverse traffic impacts as being "significant and unavoidable." Calling it "unavoidable" betrays an attitude of hopelessness and intellectual poverty that we have come to expect — but should not accept — from people and companies that have the intellect and resources to actually avoid them.

The time that people waste stuck in traffic is valuable. For more on that, see my 11-min. presentation: <http://bit.ly/GML-TEDx> When the value of people's time is multiplied by the vast numbers of people delayed, it becomes evident that investing in the additional capacity to accelerate traffic has a high return on investment.

The main opportunity to decongest this area's congestion would be via improving the 2 intersections of: Bayfront (84) & Willow and Bayfront (84) & University. As I explained in a letter to the MP City Council on 2/23/16

(http://lauderpartners.com/MP/Memo_to_MP_City_Council_re_Willow-101_Interchange.html), the monies destined for replacing the interchange of 101 & Willow should instead be redirected to upgrading the 2 Bayfront intersections. Not fixing those prior to replacing the 101 interchange would be even worse. There are many potential ways of improving affected roads such that the word "unavoidable" should only be used after having already tried the following (among others): bridges, tunnels, non-grade crossings, additional turn lanes, additional lanes, eminent domain, roundabouts, etc.

I am not advocating for FB to pay for all this, nor MP per se. I think that the appropriate thing would be for FB to pay TIFs for its incremental traffic (at very high rates given the points above) toward projects that would also be paid for by Caltrans, MP and perhaps also incremental tolls collected on the Dumbarton bridge.

We are an advanced society that suffers from traffic problems due to having given up on solving problems using hundred year old technology (bridges, tunnels, etc.). One rationalization for the hopelessness is believing in "induced demand" — the notion that more capacity just invites more traffic such that it doesn't help. I believe that that perspective misreads the data and that actually it is a result of pent-up demand.

Menlo Park has some of the worst traffic in the Bay Area, which has the worst in the country, so I hope that will not succumb to the doctrine of hopelessness. It's not "unavoidable."

Thanks,

-Gary Lauder

PS: for more background, see: <http://lauderpartners.com/MP/>