From: Les Earnest <les@cs.stanford.edu>
Sent: Monday, May 21, 2012 3:36 PM
To: BoardOperations; Cortese, Dave; Kniss, Liz; Supervisor.Shirakawa; Wasserman, Mike
Subject: Pedestrian/Bicycling projects

I understand that the Board is considering completion of the “Dumbarton link” of the Bay Trail and building a bicycle/pedestrian overcrossing over Highway 101 at Adobe Creek. Meanwhile governmental agencies continue to overlook a far more important and far less expensive bicycle/pedestrian link that has been needed since the late 1960s.

In my opinion the Bay Trail link would be a worthwhile addition and should be approved. On the other hand, building a bike/ped overcrossing of 101 at Adobe Creek looks to me like an expensive boondoggle. There is already a bike/ped undercrossing there that is open during the dry season but is little used because it is not very useful. There also is a practical way for cyclists and pedestrians to cross the freeway a short distance away on the San Antonio Road overcrossing. I’ve been biking that route regularly for the last 40 years and find that it works well.

I realize that some cyclists are uncomfortable with sharing roads with motorists but I have been doing that for over 75 years and have never been touched by a motor vehicle. However I have had some nasty solo crashes resulting from road defects. I am also aware that some motorists get annoyed when they are held up a few seconds in order to reach a safe place to pass a cyclist but none of that justifies building a separate million dollar bike/ped bridge that will be little used. In a similar vein, I have used the Embarcadero Road overcrossing of 101 fairly often over the years but have used the nearby bike/ped bridge just once.

Meanwhile there is a longstanding "missing link" between the portion of Los Altos Hills off Old Page Mill Road and the rest of the Town. These areas are only about 100 yards apart but since 280 was completed around 1966 there has been no practical way for pedestrians or cyclists to cross that gap and live to tell about it. The main problems are a fast on-ramp to 280 north, a two lane very fast on-ramp to 280 south, and an extremely fast two lane off-ramp from 280 north with no provision for halting traffic long enough to get across.

Going back to the original 1980 Stanford development proposal, it included a plan for a bike/ped route along Old Page Mill Road that was to go either through, over or around the 280 interchange so as to reach upper Page Mill Road. However Stanford subsequently reneged on that plan and instead were given permission to build a path paralleling the Page Mill Expressway then heading south and back north over two unnecessary hills and taking trail users a couple of miles out of their way. I and others tried to tell you that building that multimillion dollar trail to nowhere would be a waste of money but it has now been done and, as you can see, few people are foolish enough to use it.

Several years ago I proposed a practical way to make the original Stanford proposal work but at a tiny fraction of what has been spent on their trail to nowhere. However nobody paid attention. Last year I was pleased to learn that a reconfiguration of the 280/Page Mill interchange was planned so I contacted County Roads authorities and again called attention to my suggestions. However I again have received no response, not even a negative one.

Having recently been appointed to the Los Altos Hills Traffic Safety Committee I have redirected this proposal to that body -- see www.stanford.edu/~learnest/lab/s1.1204.pdf. That Committee is now slated to consider it for the first time on the evening of May 24th. I hope that this proposal will eventually be considered by the Board of Supervisors.
Dear Members of the Board of Supervisors,

I am writing to urge you not to continue the hearing on the above matter at Tuesday’s Board meeting (Item 10, Public Hearing on Potential Recreational Opportunities). It has been 11 years since Stanford’s General Use Permit (GUP) was approved, giving Stanford permission to expand its campus by 2 million square feet of academic buildings and 3,000 housing units. Yet, the mitigation that Stanford agreed to perform in exchange has yet to be fully completed. Surely our communities have waited long enough for the promised mitigation.

The argument in favor of delay does not make sense. On the one hand, we have a proposal for two projects of strong regional significance that will benefit both recreational users and commuters. These projects are appropriate uses of the Stanford funds; they will benefit a large segment of the community; and they are ready to go, with feasibility studies performed and the agencies in charge of them ready to move forward. On the other hand, we have nothing but a suggestion that at some indefinite point in the future, other projects might be proposed that might be so much better than these projects that it is vital to delay this hearing in order to allow them to be considered. It is worth noting that Stanford has had several months to propose their own ideas for use of these funds. Committee for Green Foothills, as you all know, has made every attempt during those months to meet with the Supervisors to advocate for the projects we felt were the best choices for funding. We certainly did not feel that we were excluded from the process, since we were given the same opportunity every citizen and organization has to communicate our views to the Supervisors.

As a final note, some Stanford residential leaseholders appear to have been told that the $10.3 million was supposed to be used solely for the benefit of campus residents, not for the general public. This is untrue. The EIR states that the mitigation is for recreational opportunities “for existing or new campus residents and facility users.” “Facility users” includes anyone who uses any Stanford facilities, including the Dish Trail or other Stanford trails, not just people who live on the campus. If the mitigation funds were intended to be used solely for the benefit of campus residents, that would have ruled out the two trails originally mentioned in the EIR (the S-1 and C-1 trails, which were located at a distance from the core campus and would inevitably have been used by non-residents). In addition, the EIR already contained a separate mitigation measure aimed at improving parks in the faculty area in such a way as to provide recreational opportunities for the campus population. The trails mitigation measure was separate from this and was intended to mitigate the impacts on recreational opportunities in the foothills — i.e., not on campus.

The Board of Supervisors should not consent to privatize what is supposed to be a public benefit. Stanford’s development resulted in impacts to all the neighboring communities, not just campus residents, and the mitigation measures were intended to make up for those impacts. I urge the Supervisors to approve the Adobe Creek bridge and Bay Trail funding proposal so that the community can at last receive the benefits they were promised 11 years ago.

Alice Kaufman
Legislative Advocate, Committee for Green Foothills
650-968-7243 x. 313
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County Supervisors,

I am a fulltime resident of Stanford campus, and I am writing to object to the proposal to redirect Stanford-paid dollars to fund construction of the Dumbarton Link and Adobe Creek Bridge projects.

I'm aware that Committee for Green Foothills is supporting this project, but they have misrepresented the facts, with regard to the $10.3 millions dollars of funds paid by Stanford to mitigate impacts on campus residents from Stanford development. Their group's "Action Alert" implies that the funds were intended as general mitigation for the overall region rather than specific mitigation for campus residents. This is untrue. It further distorts facts when it states: "The intent all along has been for this money to be used for public trails, not for private recreational facilities for the benefit of Stanford residents, students and staff."

In reality, these funds were given by Stanford to to Santa Clara County under a contract which stated “County shall use such funds only to mitigate impact OS-3 ... of the Environmental Impact Report for the GUP (to wit: the adverse effect on recreational opportunities for existing or new campus residents and facilities users that will be caused by the housing and academic development approved by the GUP...)”

I do not oppose the Dumbarton Link and Adobe Creek Bridge projects per se. But transferring Stanford-paid dollars to fund these projects is misappropriation, pure and simple. I urge the county supervisors to reject this proposal.

regards,
Mark Nye

69 Pearce Mitchell Place
Stanford, CA 94305
650-283-1547
May 21, 2012

RE: Adobe Creek Bridge Letter of Support from Pamela Radin of Palo Alto, CA

Dear Santa Clara Board of Supervisors,

I am writing as a member of Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition and a member of the Palo Alto Bicycle Advisory Committee. Formerly I served at the Midtown Residents Association Traffic Chair during the County’s Santa Clara Oregon Expressway Improvements. I supported the County Safety Improvements.

During this time I have been involved in many public projects especially the original concept that emerged for the Adobe Creek Bridge over Highway 101.

There is great public interest in having this bridge funded and built. During the public input process for the County project involving Oregon Expressway Safety Improvement project we heard that a large number of residents highly value the existing, but deteriorating Leftkowitz Highway 101 undercrossing.

The undercrossing is closed down often. Residents, Senior Cyclists and Stanford Professors use this crossing on a regular basis, as they have expressed to me on many occasions. The new Adobe Bridge would create dependable year round recreation for the Stanford/Palo Alto Community.

I also learned that many residents living in Palo Alto use this crossing for recreation and a way to go to work at Lockheed in Sunnyvale, California via the Adobe Creek Bridge.

This new link is invaluable to our Stanford/Palo Alto community for recreational purposes and I would like to add in my strong support for the project now.

Thank you for your consideration of this great public benefit, I hope it goes forward adding to our County’s recreational opportunities.

Best Regards,
Pamela Radin
Palo Alto, CA
Dear Supervisors:

Let me begin by thank you for the extremely difficult task that you all engage in as board supervisors. It’s not easy to balance the many competing interests in the county, and generally speaking my feeling is that the board does an excellent job of protecting residents’ interests. Although this is true most of the time, I’m afraid you are faced with a vote for a proposal that would be a serious blemish to your record if it passes. As a resident of Stanford’s campus, I am writing to express my vehement opposition to Supervisor Kniss’ plan to use money intended to mitigate the loss of recreational opportunities due to development on Stanford’s land. The proposed plan of trails will NOT meet the needs of Stanford residents, for whom the 10.3 million dollars in question the funds are allotted to help. Using the funds that were allocated for the purposes of mitigating the adverse effects of development on our recreational opportunities—the very opportunities that make this region such an attractive place to live—for trails that are either on the complete other side of town or miles away is pretty outrageous usurpation of our county’s money (some people might call it worse). Unfortunately, it feels like this new plan is meant to use public funding for political gain rather than for its original intention.

Please vote no to this proposal.

Sincerely,
Jonathan Levav
856 Esplanada Way
Stanford, CA 94305
Dear President Shirakawa and Members of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors,

I write in my personal capacity as a homeowner on the Stanford Campus.

For the reasons stated in Larry Horton's letter of May 21, I urge you to remove item 10 from the Board's agenda.

Sincerely,

Paul Brest

Emeritus Professor and Dean, Stanford Law School