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Sent: Wednesday, August 11, 2021 9:22 PM
To: Sustainability & Infrastructure Commission
Subject: Tonight's Agenda Item: Transit-Oriented Development Pedestrian Access Plan

Dear Commissioners,

I listened in on most of tonight's presentation but was not able to stick around for comment. Here are my comments. Thank you for the opportunity!

Hillsdale Caltrain Station is one of Caltrain's highest ridership (pre-pandemic) stations and is consequently a stop on every baby bullet (express train) in Caltrain's newly released schedule. It is imperative that the station meet the highest standard of pedestrian and multi-modal access. It currently does not. There are a few specific pedestrian-oriented issues with the new station I'd like to point out.

1. Pedestrians descending the stairs to the 28th Avenue underpass are met with a hostile environment, hostile for both bicyclists and pedestrians. They are forced to cross four lanes of high-speed traffic to go from one side of the street to another in order to access the parking lots on either side. There is no marked crosswalk, and in order to cross legally from one side of the station to another once at ground level, pedestrians must walk an additional 700 feet to Delaware Street. This is obviously not something that people do. The consultant should address this pain-point by adding a mid-block crosswalk at the underpass.
2. At ground level, pedestrians on the southern side of the road are forced to interact with bicycles on a narrow sidewalk, creating dangerous ped-bike conflicts. We should have wider sidewalks and separated, protected bike lanes that remove this conflict for bicyclists and pedestrians. The focus of 28th avenue, which runs right below the station, should not be vehicle traffic. It should absolutely be pedestrians, bicyclists, and active mobility users, given the high amount of pedestrian activity at the station.
3. One of the plazas at the underpass is fenced off from the Michael's parking lot. In order to access Hillsdale shopping center and the high-frequency ECR SamTrans service on El Camino, which are both only a few hundred linear feet away from the station, pedestrians must walk all the way from the pedestrian plaza underneath the station, to 28th avenue, to El Camino, and then walk to the bus or shopping center. When 31st Avenue opens, assuming there is a ramp to get to 31st, there will be a marginally better access to Hillsdale shopping center, but not to buses. The fencing between the parking lot and the station should be taken down to improve ped connectivity.

In terms of outreach, I am glad that the consultant reached out to Youth Leadership institute for pointers.

I would suggest that the consultant reach out to the following groups: Caltrain riders at the stations, Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition San Mateo Local Team (bicyclists are also often pedestrians, and as such there would be much overlap).

Thank you so much for your time,
Raayan