

To: HLUET

Cc: Rod Diridon, former County Supervisor

From: Akos Szoboszlay, Modern Transit Society (disbanded)

Agenda date: Dec. 19, 2024 (Date of letter: 12/15/2024)

This letter as a pdf file (not email) has better formatting: [ModernTransit.org/2024/HLUET.pdf](https://ModernTransit.org/2024/HLUET.pdf)

**Subject: HLUET agenda #5: draft Active Transportation Plan (ATP)**

Hon. Supervisor Arenas and Supervisor Simitian,

Between 1988 and 2008, County Roads tried to eliminate bicyclists from expressways a total of 3 times and eliminate pedestrians a total of 4 times, but County Roads lost all BOS votes. [See Figure 1.] The 2003 County Expressway Plan includes detailed bike lane requirements. This was approved by the Expressway Policy Advisory Board, city councils, the VTA BPAC, VTA Board and the BOS. [Figure 2] **Now, County Roads is trying to eliminate bike lanes from all 62 miles of expressway [Figure 3] without allowing *any* of these entities to vote, other than the BOS.**

For the 2008 County Expressway Plan, County Roads tried to eliminate sidewalks from all expressways, but lost all votes. Instead, city BPACs, VTA BPAC, VTA Board, and the BOS approved sidewalks along all expressways on both sides of the road. This Plan included Sidewalk Maps for each expressway. [Figure 4] County Roads does not recognize the existence of these Sidewalk Maps in the ATP in order **to eliminate half the sidewalks which would force pedestrians to cross the expressway to reach the sidewalk on the other side of the expressway.** Crossings cause the most pedestrian fatalities, and increase exponentially with number of traffic lanes. This makes expressways the most dangerous to cross.

In March, 2024, County Roads **censored** both the 2003 and 2008 County Expressway Plans by eliminating them from the County website, but was forced to restore them in May. Now, they are trying to eliminate them by a Board vote. They do not let other entities (which voted for the 2003, 2008 Plans) be heard, including BPACs comprised of bicyclists and pedestrians who actually use expressways.

County Roads **ignored all public comment** for the ATP. The document version presented to the HLUET is the same as on the day it was released on October 28. I uploaded 15 pages of my comments, as did others. All were ignored. (The comment period was closed after 4 weeks, on Nov. 24, way to short for a 250 page document.)

The accident statistics were **doctored** to make bike lanes appear dangerous. County Roads merged collisions from jay-walking, which is dangerous, and bicycling in the bike lane, which is safe. They placed these in the same category named "High collision roadway segments." [Table 5.] This makes no logical sense except for propaganda purposes.

County Roads put this agenda item on the VTA BPAC agenda in November, but in order to **prevent a vote**, placed the label “information item.” Many BPAC members stated that they want to vote. The Chair of the Committee stated she would place this agenda item as an action item on the next meeting. The bylaws allow this. Then, staff cancelled the meeting.

These facts show that the highway engineers of the County are **not qualified** to write the ATP. Even if major errors are corrected, the innuendos and doctored data remain. I ask HLUET to reject this draft ATP outright, or at least take no action until the VTA BPAC has voted and has given their input.

I would gladly meet with you or your Policy Aide for transportation to provide more information and answer questions. I am available any day or time.

Sincerely,



Akos Szoboszlay

**Contact:**

Akos Szoboszlay (at right, being ticketed \$149 for using the bike lane on San Tomas Expressway)

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email:

expressway [“at” symbol] [akos.us](mailto:akos@akos.us)



**Links:** (If reading on paper, going to the first link makes other links clickable)

This letter to the HLUET: [ModernTransit.org/2024/HLUET.pdf](https://ModernTransit.org/2024/HLUET.pdf)

Full rebuttal to the draft ATP: [ModernTransit.org/2024/ATPrebuttal.pdf](https://ModernTransit.org/2024/ATPrebuttal.pdf)

One-page of quotes of BOS policies and requirements: [ModernTransit.org/2024/Quote.pdf](https://ModernTransit.org/2024/Quote.pdf)

Links to scans of County documents (for above quotes): [ModernTransit.org/Quote](https://ModernTransit.org/Quote)

Timeline of Expressway Events: [ModernTransit.org/expy/#timeline](https://ModernTransit.org/expy/#timeline)

Expressway Topics, Links page: [ModernTransit.org/expy](https://ModernTransit.org/expy)

**Figures:**

(next pages)

## Figure 1: County Roads actions and BOS actions and votes regarding bicyclists and pedestrians along expressways

Year	Event	County Roads action	BOS action	BOS vote
1960		Cities prohibit bicyclists and pedestrians but State law only authorizes prohibiting from freeways, not expressways.		
1960s, 1970s		County Roads takes over pre-existing roads with bicyclists and pedestrians, and posts illegal prohibitory signs. Traffic lanes and bike lanes (“shoulders”) are added. Bike lanes are 8 to 10 feet wide. (A standard bike lane is 5 feet.) Pedestrians and bicyclists continue to use these roads because most detours are 1 mile. Speeds are unchanged.		
1988		Requested BOS to seek legislation in Sacramento to re-impose bicycle prohibitions by over-ruling cities that repealed prohibitions.	Rejected request. Voted to “support” bicycles on expressways.	4-1
1989		Opposed bike lanes at the (then) County Transportation Commission.	Required bike lanes along all expressways. (Bike lanes already exist. This was to prevent destroying them.)	5-0
1991	T2010 Plan	Eliminated bicyclists and pedestrians from all expressways in the draft Plan.	Retained bicyclists and pedestrians.	5-0
1991	1991 Policy	Ignored my requests to remove shrubs at intersection corners to create a path to prevent right-turning vehicles from killing pedestrians.	Required, and fully funded, the creation of pedestrian paths along the “entire expressway system.” Required pedestrian use of expressway bridges crossing rivers, freeways and train tracks. Required paths at corners.	5-0
2003	2003 County Expressway Plan	Tried to eliminate pedestrians from (estimated) 70% of expressway miles by claiming that unless there is a sidewalk, expressways are unsafe.	Recognized that “shoulder or path facilities can serve for ... occasional pedestrian use.” Recognized that expressways are, in fact, arterial roads. Approved detailed specifications for bike lanes along all expressways.	5-0
2003 to 2004		Refused to remove “Pedestrians Prohibited” signs in Sunnyvale after the City repealed the prohibition.	Gave a direct order to staff to remove these signs in Sunnyvale and to comply with the law.	5-0
2004 and 2006	SB 1233	Without informing the County, added legal text to an unrelated bill that eliminated the right to ride a bicycle or to walk on public roads in California.	Directed staff to seek repeal of this law (on 1/19/2006). Staff never complied. Staff wrote one letter and then dropped the matter because staff wanted the law kept. (They wrote the legal text.)	5-0
2008	2008 County Expressway Plan	Went to every city BPAC to oppose sidewalks on expressways by faking accident statistics, but lost all the votes.**	Required sidewalks along all expressways, on both sides of the road, as per Sidewalk Maps for each expressway.	5-0
2024 in May	2003, 2008 County Expressway Plans	Censored the 2003 and 2008 County Expressway Plans by eliminating them from the County website.	I (Akos Szoboszlay) informed the BOS under “Public Comment” of the censoring. Then, County Roads was forced to restore these documents. These Plans are valid today. MTC recognizes them to be Master Plans.	None
2024 in Nov.	draft ATP	Eliminated all bike lanes and half the sidewalks from expressways. Prevented voting by entities that approved existing 2003, 2008 Plans.	TBD. Agenda item was continued into 2025. See Timeline for details and latest info at: <a href="https://ModernTransit.org/expy/#timeline">ModernTransit.org/expy/#timeline</a>	

For details and links for the above items, see the Timeline at: [ModernTransit.org/expy/#timeline](https://ModernTransit.org/expy/#timeline)

\*\*See the letter from County Roads Director to the City of Santa Clara at this link: [ModernTransit.org/2024/SCrepeal.pdf](https://ModernTransit.org/2024/SCrepeal.pdf)

**Figure 2: Cities endorsed bike lanes along all expressways when they endorsed the 2003 County Expressway Plan. [Copy of Plan's Appendix C]**

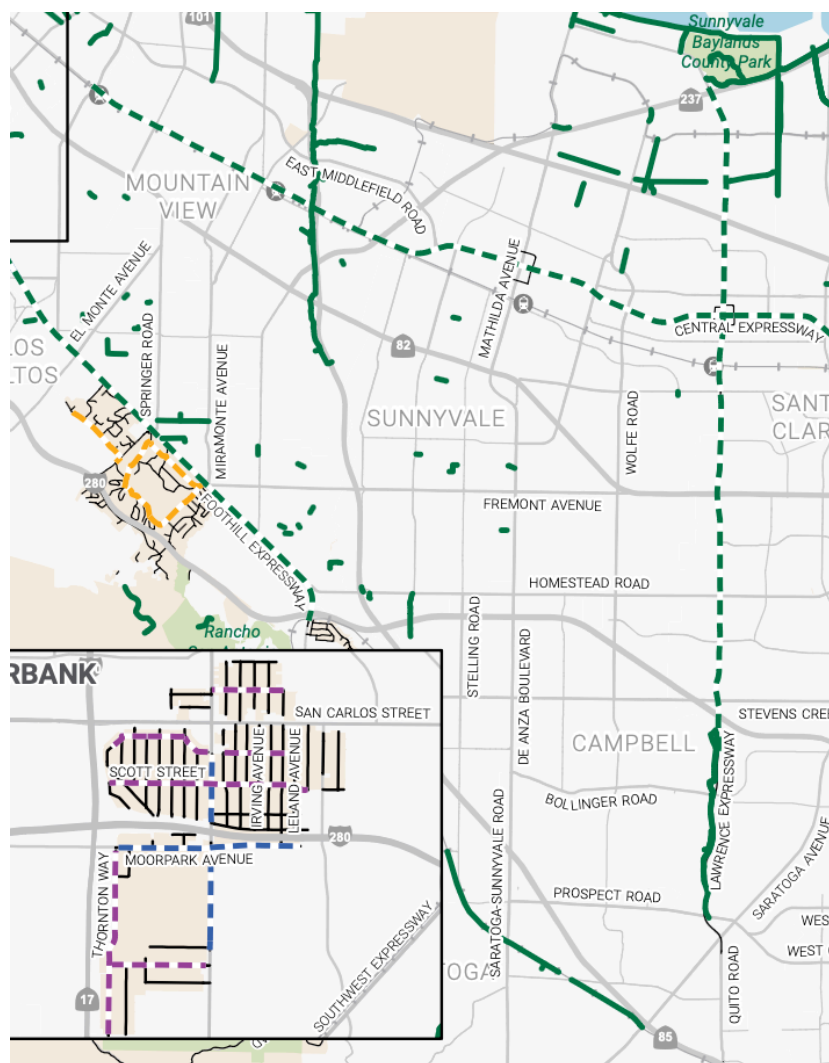
## Summary of Plan Endorsement Actions

On March 25, 2003, the Board of Supervisors released the draft *Implementation Plan* for review and comment. During the comment period, the city councils of the ten cities with existing expressway mileage reviewed the plan. Listed below is a summary of the cities' actions and comments. The final *Implementation Plan* was revised to reflect the comments received as appropriate.

City	Date	Action Taken
Milpitas	April 1, 2003	Endorsed the plan.
San Jose	May 5, 2003	<p>The Council's Building Better Transportation committee approved the plan with the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include in the document a statement about the community's request that the culvert adjacent to San Tomas Expressway be covered and used as a landscaped walkway.</li> <li>• A mechanism is needed to seize opportunities that come along in between the 3-year plan update cycles.</li> </ul> <p>The full City Council received the committee's report on May 20 with no further comments.</p>
Campbell	May 6, 2003	<p>Approved the plan with the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommend that the County with VTA pursue local matching funds for the San Tomas Expressway/Hamilton LOS improvement project.</li> <li>• Reiterated the City's position of not supporting a closure of the East Sunnyoaks Avenue on-ramp to San Tomas Expressway.</li> </ul>
Saratoga	May 7, 2003	Endorsed the plan.
Sunnyvale	May 13, 2003	<p>Endorsed the plan with the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future improvements at the intersection of Central Expressway/Mary Avenue and Lawrence Expressway/Tasman Drive should be listed with the notation that local and regional LOS standards are not projected to be violated at these locations within the timeframe of the plan.</li> <li>• Encourage the County of Santa Clara to pursue shared cooperative local match funding with adjacent local jurisdictions for expressway capital project needs.</li> <li>• VTP 2020 Local Streets and County Roads program funds should be made available for expressways improvements.</li> </ul>
Cupertino	May 19, 2003	Endorsed the plan.
Santa Clara	May 20, 2003	Endorsed the plan.
Los Altos	May 27, 2003	Endorsed the plan.
Mountain View	July 8, 2003	Endorsed the plan.
Palo Alto	August 14, 2003	Endorsed the plan, including changes made at the request of the City's Planning and Transportation Commission.



**Figure 3: Elimination of bike lanes on Foothill, Central and Lawrence Expressways is shown by green dashed lines on the map.**



#### RECOMMENDED BIKE NETWORK

- Class I - Shared-Use Path
- Class IIB - Buffered Bike Lane
- Class III - Bike Route
- Class IIIB - Bicycle Boulevard
- Class IV - Separated Bikeway
- Paved Shoulder With Intermittent Rumble Strip\*

#### FEATURES

- Caltrain Station
- Rail Line
- County Maintained Roadway
- Roadways Maintained By Others
- Water
- Park
- City Boundary

This map from draft ATP (page 181) shows the elimination of bike lanes from these 3 Expressways. Other maps show the same for other expressways.

These maps are identical for both bicyclists (page 181) and pedestrians (page 189) because both use the same space: a “shared-use path.” (Only the map title changes.)

For each expressway, one green-dashed line is shown on the road, rather than two lines on the 2008 Sidewalk Maps (see Fig. 4). This means half the sidewalks are eliminated. Sidewalks already exist along Lawrence Expressway, usually on both sides of the road. **This means County Roads wants to destroy half these sidewalks.**

**Figure 4 (next page): Sidewalk map of 2008 County Expressway Plan (Lawrence Expressway example) is on the next page (original page copy).**

County Roads eliminated half the BOS-approved sidewalks along expressways by pretending the BOS never approved these, by not mentioning them in the ATP. Compare the ATP map (above, with one line on each expressway) with the 2008 Sidewalk Map (next page) which shows sidewalks on both sides of the road (with 2 lines). Much more work and detail went to producing the 2008 Sidewalk Maps.

