

Jan 24th Public Hearing - Traffic

The most recent hearing on January 24th focused on the analysis of traffic impacts from the proposed Brisbane Baylands project. The City's EIR consultant for the traffic analysis, Steve Crosley of Nelson Nygaard, opened the meeting with his [presentation](#). He explained details of the traffic analysis forecasted to 2030 using cumulative impacts based on the proposed project. The traffic study focused on 18 affected intersections. The analysis assumed roadway improvements, such as the Candlestick Park interchange, Sierra Point/101 interchange and Bayshore Blvd and the Geneva extension, as well as transit improvements, like Geneva-Harvey BRT line and Bayshore Intermodal Station.

The Council spent additional time discussing the Geneva-Harney BRT line, Geneva extension, and the Bayshore Intermodal Station. The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, or SFMTA, is in the pre-environmental and design phase for an interim, at-grade route for the Geneva BRT route, with an estimated delivery date by 2023. Although different alignments are still being considered, agencies and the community are eager to move forward with the project since the infrastructure improvement is much-needed in the area.

Crosley also explained "Level of Service" or LOS, which is the way to measure the quality of traffic service in a qualitative approach. Currently the city's arterial roads are at LOS level D which means that there is a gradual unstable traffic flow and there is more of a slight delay of traffic flow within the area. We recently wrote [a blog](#) about the State's efforts to update their guideline from LOS to Vehicle Miles Traveled or VMT. VMT reduces auto congestion by encouraging alternative forms of transportation through infill development and planning housing and jobs around transit. Crosley concluded on the topic of enhanced transit use. He explained that studies demonstrate that in order to increase the use of transit, development should be within a half or 1/3 mile of transit, which in turn will decrease car use for home to work trips and traffic.

After the presentation, Crosley, Lloyd Zola and the City's engineer Randy Breault responded to the Council's questions. Breault explained that MTC, or the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, directs federal and state transportation funds for the bay area. MTC is focused on social planning, and PDAs or [Priority Development Areas](#) which prioritizes investments on infill and intense developments. The Baylands site is one of the bay area's PDAs. These projects tend to be fast-tracked and receive priority funding because if they are dense, transit-oriented developments and have opportunities for live-work. Therefore, funding sources available will be determined based on the land use and scale of the approved Baylands development.

The floor was then opened for public comment. Project opponents expressed concerns of the development's scale and traffic impacts. One project opponent discouraged against the use of the updated VMT standard over LOS to measure the project's impacts. Several project supporters, including SFHAC and SPUR, applauded the Brisbane Baylands for planning residential around the Bayshore Caltrain station. Some supporters pointed out that the regional growth hasn't been balanced with enough housing, increasing the number of workers commuting into the bay area by drastic numbers, leading to traffic congestion and air pollution. Another supporter underscored that many Transportation Demand Management or TDM

programs are moving away from LOS, instead using the updated VMT standard to measure a project's environmental impact. A Brisbane resident supporter pointed out how major companies such as Facebook and Google understand the importance of housing their workers closer to jobs and are committed to building housing units near their campuses so employees could reduce their commutes. He explained that these companies "are putting their money where their hurt is" and he can see how potential businesses for the Baylands would understand the wisdom of this approach. Adina Levin, Executive Director of [Friends of Caltrain](#), ran through a [quick presentation](#) of strong TDM programs throughout the Peninsula that lead to improved solutions for transportation and housing issues. One example she provided was the Mountain View North Bayshore project, which decreased 10-20% of the city's GHG emissions.

Project supporter James Ruigomez, head of the San Mateo County's Building and Trade Council, brought over 30 union members with him. He asked them to stand during his public testimony. He spoke about his organization's commitment to work with the City and Developer to ensure traffic and other environmental impacts would be kept to a minimum during construction. He also expressed his support for the Council's goal in ensuring the Baylands would serve as a model for sustainability, and hopes the Council will ensure housing is built on the site. Ruigomez stated that his trade members "are being priced out of the area, like so many others, and housing as part of the approved project would not only provide valuable jobs for his members, but also help the regional housing crisis that affects us all".