

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT

Report Title: "Traffic Congestion in Marin: The Sir Francis Drake Boulevard Project Deconstructed"

Report Date: June 23, 2016

Response by: Marin County Board of Supervisors

FINDINGS

- We agree with the findings numbered: F1, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8, F9 & F13
- We disagree wholly or *partially* with the findings numbered: F2, F3, & F12.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations R4 and R9 have been implemented
- Recommendations R3 and R6 have not been implemented, but will be implemented.
- Recommendations R1, R2, and R7 require further analysis.
- Recommendation R5 and R8 will not be implemented.

Date: September 20, 2016

Signed: _____

Number of pages attached: 7

Marin County Board of Supervisors

Response to Findings and Recommendations from Grand Jury Report
“Traffic Congestion in Marin: The Sir Francis Drake Boulevard Project
Deconstructed” (June 23, 2016)

FINDINGS

- F1. “The SFDB project team provided extensive outreach and transparency with many public meetings and workshops, published information, and modified and sharpened direction based on the feedback received.”**

Response: Agree.

- F2. “There is no statement in the SFDB Project documentation of current congestion levels (except for specific intersections) and no quantified goals for congestion relief.”**

Response: Partially Disagree. Traffic volumes and vehicle speeds during peak hours for road segments along the Sir Francis Drake corridor were provided during the existing conditions presentation at the May 2, 2015 community meeting and posted on the project’s website at <http://www.marincounty.org/depts/pw/divisions/transportation/sir-francis-drake-boulevard-rehabilitation>. The funding source for the project requires, as a minimum, that pavement rehabilitation be provided. Opportunities to make additional improvements to the roadway are being evaluated at this time without preconception as to what those modifications should be. Through the public review and outreach efforts, congestion relief was identified as a priority. Project features that could potentially improve congestion were presented at subsequent community meetings (on 11/18/2015 and 3/15/2016) and qualitative information provided as to how much potential certain features could improve congestion. Summaries of these community meeting presentation materials are also provided on the project’s website - <http://www.marincounty.org/depts/pw/divisions/transportation/sir-francis-drake-boulevard-rehabilitation>. More detailed traffic analysis of the proposed project and alternatives will be conducted during the environmental review phase.

- F3. “The SFDB Project considered only roadway improvements for traffic operation, mass transit, and pedestrian and bicycle access and safety. More comprehensive analysis of traffic and congestion is possible as seen in the Mill Valley Traffic Congestion Task Force Report. This could open the possibility for a wider range of solutions.”**

Response: Partially disagree. The funding for the project is for pavement rehabilitation and infrastructure and is therefore limited to physical improvements to the project corridor. While more comprehensive transportation planning efforts, that include items such as looking at ways to reduce travel demand, could be conducted similar to that of the Mill Valley Traffic Congestion Task Force Report, traffic studies of this level and scope would be beyond the scope of the Sir Francis Drake Boulevard rehabilitation project. Nevertheless, other entities are undertaking activities that can complement the SFDB project, including reintroduction of school busing and roadway improvements outside the corridor, such as adding a third lane on the Richmond-San Rafael bridge.

- F4. “The use of 11-foot traffic lane widths on SFDB is safe, will not materially slow traffic flow, is commonly used for roads with much higher traffic volumes and speeds, and abides by standard guidance.”**

Response: Agree.

- F5. “Existing traffic signals are programmed and coordinated for multiple time-of-day and day-of-week schedules across 12 intersections. Adjustment of these programs to account for new and more efficient intersection configurations and new traffic patterns is expected to have moderate payoff.”**

Response: Agree.

- F6. “As demonstrated in the 2011-2012 project to synchronize traffic signals along SFDB, the County has the ability to model Level of Service measures including elapsed time to travel the corridor, average speed, calculated fuel consumption as a function of congestion, cost of time lost, cost of fuel, CO2 emissions, and toxic gas emissions before and after a project.”**

Response: Agree.

- F7. “The cost of all components under consideration for this project is \$19.2M, but the budget is \$13.2M. \$800,000 has been allocated for the work already completed and the upcoming development and filing of an Environmental Impact Report.”**

Response: Agree.

- F8. “Future leadership changes on the Marin County Board of Supervisors, TAM Board of Commissioners, as well as city and town councils during design-approval stages can cause a previously well-conceived and vetted congestion reduction project to fall out of favor and be abandoned or seriously curtailed.”**

Response: Agree.

- F9. “Funding and implementing school bus programs for Bacich Elementary School and Kent Middle School would reduce peak school traffic which makes up an estimated 20-30% of all peak hour morning trips on SFDB.”**

Response: Agree.

- F12. “Multi-use pathways constructed along Hwy 101 at a cost of \$35M yielded insignificant conversion of motorized travel to walking and biking.”**

Response: Disagree. The paths cited are part of a larger network, both of which had endpoints when completed that did not provide adequate connectivity until subsequent projects provided improved connections by closing gaps between segments. In situations where a network has been fully-connected, whether multiuse paths, sidewalks, or bike lanes, usage has increased and provided a viable alternative for people to not drive.

- F13. “Planning is underway for another bike bridge and pathway with a projected cost of \$19.8M. And further south, studies are underway with vigorous advocacy support for converting the abandoned Alto Tunnel to a multi-use pathway at an estimated cost of \$40M to \$50M.”**

Response: Agree. These projects include the North South Greenway and Alto Tunnel projects. Both projects are identified in adopted bicycle and pedestrian master plans for the respective jurisdictions and are part of the countywide North-South Greenway, or spine, between the Golden Gate Bridge and Sonoma County line.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2015-2016 Marin County Civil Grand Jury recommends that:

- R1. **“TAM and the County should reconcile the \$19.2M in desired work along SFDB with the \$13.2M budget by giving priority to the traffic congestion measures.”**

Response: The recommendation requires further analysis which will be conducted as part of CEQA review anticipated to be concluded by Spring or Summer of 2017. As established under the Measure A Transportation Sales Tax, the sponsoring agency defines the scope of the project based on a series of maintenance and congestion relief elements. All projects will consider all users, including transit riders, bicyclists, and auto drivers. Aside from these requirements being set by the funding source and federal law, additional priorities were identified through the public process. Design concepts to date have focused on congestion and safety improvements.

The public process generated an extensive list of potential projects which exceeds the current funding. An initial prioritization of those project components was presented at the June 2016 public open house for comment. All elements under consideration will be included in the CEQA process. In the meantime, the County will attempt to secure additional funding to undertake as many of the identified projects as possible. Ultimately, the Board of Supervisors will act on a schedule of project components that can be constructed within the funding available at that time.

- R2. **“The County should publish current and expected post-project Level of Service (LOS) for the corridor: time to travel the corridor, average speed, fuel consumption, economic benefit, and level of change in CO2 and toxic gas emissions.”**

Response: The recommendation requires further analysis which will be conducted as part of CEQA review, anticipated to be concluded by Spring or Summer of 2017. Economic impact analysis is not a potential environmental impact, is not funded, and therefore will not be evaluated as part of CEQA review.

R3. “TAM and the County should include and publish the Level of Service and other actual benefits achieved in the project scope of work.”

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented as part of the CEQA process with a defined project and alternatives.

R4. “Marin County Board of Supervisors and TAM Board of Commissioners should facilitate the identification and publication of project facts and both qualitative and quantifiable benefits to better inform the public and guide their future decision making.”

Response: The recommendation has been implemented. The [project website](#) contains data collected to date, multiple iterations of design concepts reflecting the evolution of thought as the community involvement process has proceeded, and analysis of various proposals that has been conducted to date. This information has also been presented at each of the community events as it becomes available. As the project design process continues forward and the CEQA process proceeds, additional data and information will be generated and provided for public review. Additional review of the proposed project and alternatives will be provided during a public hearing of the Marin County Board of Supervisors.

R5. “TAM, Marin Transit District, and the County should fund school buses for the Bacich Elementary and Kent Middle School population. Consider overall optimization of Measure A transit fund, including modification of the Measure A expenditure plan.”

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable; it is beyond the scope of the project being undertaken by Marin County and can be evaluated by other entities.

R6. “TAM and the County should negotiate implementation of ramp metering with MTC and Caltrans.”

Response: The recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented in the future among TAM, MTC and Caltrans. The County understands that TAM has been working with MTC and Caltrans to implement ramp metering and other traffic operation systems with their benefits of congestion relief and reducing accidents on Highway 101. The project currently is not fully funded but MTC, Caltrans and TAM are working together to address the funding shortfall. The County does not exercise any authority or direction regarding ramp metering on Highway 101.

R7. “TAM and the County should evaluate the cost/benefit of adaptive signaling improvements in reducing congestion and fund once other more cost effective solutions have been implemented.”

Response: This recommendation requires further analysis, which would require coordination with TAM and other local agencies to seek funding to analyze the feasibility of an adaptive signal control program. The project currently envisions the installation of conduits and technology-ready signal control cabinets to provide for future adaptive signal controls. However, adaptive signals are corridor-based and, in the case of SFDB, involve multiple jurisdictions. A multiagency program, including Caltrans, would be necessary to undertake such improvements. Funding for ongoing annual adaptive traffic signal control operations and maintenance would also need to be identified prior to implementation.

R8. “Existing planned but not yet constructed highly expensive bicycle-pedestrian pathways should not be built if their only justification depends on traffic relief or mitigation with no evidence that peak traffic relief is reliably predicted to result. Such projects should be funded and supported only if justified on other grounds.”

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable. Funding for such projects comes from a variety of sources, many of which restrict the funds specifically to these types of projects. In other instances, the project may be part of a larger project being undertaken. Because of the significant competition for funds, it has not been feasible to construct the entire network at once.

Bicycle and pedestrian pathways, like other bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, is identified in various planning documents, including bicycle and pedestrian master plans which exist for the County and ten of the eleven cities and towns in Marin. The stated purpose of those plans is to provide a countywide, connected network of facilities for cyclists and pedestrians to provide the opportunity for people to travel without requiring the use of an automobile. Unconnected network segments do not increase usage to the degree that a connected network does, particularly for children. Potential benefits can be derived from such projects by providing alternative means for travel other than the automobile.

- R9. “TAM should coordinate with other agencies to produce sets of integrated projects prioritizing solutions that have engineered and predicted benefits for areas of the County, not just for individual road segments.”**

Response: This recommendation has been implemented. The nature of the county’s road network and jurisdictional boundaries require coordination between jurisdictions on roadway projects and to date there have been many instances of such coordination, many times with TAM taking the lead or acting as the funding agency. The County routinely collaborates with affected jurisdictions for roadways that cross into other communities and works with TAM to deliver projects. The amount of funding available drives the degree to which project scopes can or cannot factor in additional roadway. Nevertheless, the County actively seeks funds from a variety of sources to implement priority projects throughout the unincorporated area. Marin County also participates with TAM and other jurisdictions during the Regional Transportation Plan updates which occur every two years.