Murphy, Justin I C

From: Terry Barton [terry.barton@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, May 26, 2011 11:31 PM
To: Murphy, Justin I C
Subject: Comments on Scope for Environmental Impact Report for Facebook Development Proposal

Justin Murphy
Development Services Manager
City of Menlo Park

I am making the following comments about the scope of the transportation ascpects that should be considered in the Facebook Development Environmental Impact Report based on my experience as a bicycle commuter to the Sun Microsytems Menlo Park Campus from 2000-2009.

Small factors can have a big impact on the time, convenience and safety of commuting by bicycle. I expect that Facebook and the city will include several mitigations designed to reduce vehicle traffic and increase bicycling to and through the area. The details of these mitigations will determine whether they are effective in acutally reducing auto traffic and increasing bicycle commuting. The following comments are based on over 10 years of bicycle commuting to the east campus.

The traffic impact of employees returning the to campus is obvious. Less obvious are the small improvements that will increase the percentage of commuters who choose to bicycle.

The main bicycle commuting route to the Facebook Campus from Palo Alto and cities to the south is along the Bay Trail The pavement of the Bay Trail cycle path currently ends at Runnymeade in East Palo forcing cyclist onto narrow streets and requiring multiple turns to connect to University Avenue. The extension of the Bay Trail pavement to make a more direct connection to University Avenue and Bayfront Expressway would improve travel time, convenience and safety. Completion of this segment would provide a continous bike thouroghfare for a significant number of potential bicycle commuters by connecting Menlo Park, East Palo Alto, Palo Alto, Mountain View, Sunnyvale, Santa Clara, and San Jose

Improvements to the Bay Trail and along University Avenue would encourage increased bicyle commuting for commuters coming from the south who would otherwise add to congestion on Highway 101 and along Willow Road to get to the Facebook campus, the Gateway Project, and businesses in East Menlo Park. Bicycle commuters crossing the Dumbarton Bridge and continuing south would also benefit from the reduced travel time, and improved safety and convenience.

The 3 extremely long right turn lanes from North Bound University Avenue to east bound Bayfront Expressway and the lack of a lane for bicycles turning left from University, forces cyclists headed to Facebook and the Gateway Project to ride in the left turn lane for a considerable distance which slows auto traffic adding to the delay at the intersection.

Increased traffic on Bayfront Expressway and the Dumbarton bridge will lead to increased auto collisions. The debris from auto collisions is not currently swept up from the adjacent bike paths and shoulders and causes flats for cyclists. Flats cause significant delays for cyclist and discourage cyclists from riding as often. Sweeping to remove the debris is a mitigation that should be considered.

The facilities provided by Sun at the Menlo Park campus to encourage bicycle commuting were less effective due to small design flaws which I believe Facebook could easily correct. The lack of showers in

several buildings and limited locations from bicycle storage at the Sun Campus significantly increased the total commute time and inconvenience of bicycle commuting. Travel to the showers, and then the bicycle storage shed added up 8 minute of commute time after arriving at the campus and was a large impediment to bicycle and pedestrian commuters. Providing easy access to showers and changing rooms with lockers for clothes storage and bicycle storage near every building would encourage employees to commute by bicycle.

The low number of bicycle trips to the area mentioned on page 3.11-42 of the Gateway project EIR, reflects the poor current state of facilities in the area to support bicycle commuting. Improvements to the bicycling routes and on campus facilities, along with the increasing cost of gasoline and bridge tolls can be expected to increase the number of bicycle commuters coming to or passing through eastern Menlo Park along Bayfront Expressway.

A strong TDM program from Facebook may actually reduce auto trips below the level the campus generated when occupied by Sun Microystems even with the higher occupancy. Facebook's strong shuttle program, facilities to support bicycle commuters and pedestrians, and concentrating workers within walking distance in the East and West Campus will significantly reduce employee trips compared to the operation of the campus when occupied by Sun who had operations in Santa Clara and Menlo Park which generated frequent intercampus solo car trips.

The Environmental Impact Report should consider the effects of increased traffic on the area and the options to reduce automobile trips through encouragement of bicycle commuting.

Terry Barton
Bicycle Commuter to Sun Microsystems 2000-2009