

From: rachel scheuring [mailto:rachscheuring@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, June 20, 2016 7:24 AM
To: _Planning Commission
Cc: rachel scheuring; arron retterer
Subject: General Plan Update letter-corrected version

Here is the corrected version of my letter. The original was not specific about the name of the EMC-occupied office building. I apologize for the inconvenience.

Rachel Scheuring

June 20, 2016

To the Menlo Park Planning Commission,

I would like to express my concern about the potential traffic and visual impacts of the proposed bayfront development. As a long time resident of Suburban Park, I have noted increasing traffic pressure along Willow and Marsh Roads over the past few years, which has led to a spillover effect (worsened by the advent of WAZE) onto Bay Road and Ringwood Avenue. Traffic routinely backs up at the Bay/Ringwood intersection during the morning commute, leading to a snake of frustratingly slow moving cars that stretches many blocks. Bay Road on its southern stretch approaching Willow Road is similarly heavily impacted during the afternoon commute, necessitating waiting in a lengthy car line through successive changes of lights to access Willow Road and Highway 101. Needless to say, with the closure of Marsh Road, this situation has only worsened.

What mitigations are planned to address our worsening traffic issues? If the city is to add 4500 residential units, 400 hotel rooms, and as much as 2.3 million square feet of non-residential space (not to mention thousands of new employees), the already pressured and frustrating traffic situation along the Willow/Marsh/Bay Road corridors will likely reach a tipping point in which our neighborhoods are reduced to morning and afternoon gridlock.

In addition, increased traffic is not the only problem facing the neighborhoods along Bay Road. Tall buildings in the Bohannon area and across the freeway have a negative visual impact on surrounding residential neighborhoods. The new EMC-occupied office building on the east side of Highway 101 towers over Suburban Park, reflecting blinding sunlight into our neighbors' homes and basically obliterating the sense of privacy that these residents previously had.

Suburban Park and surrounding neighborhoods are bearing the brunt of these massive new developments, both in terms of traffic congestion and visual encroachment. I encourage the Planning Commission to consider these very real concerns when reviewing and making decisions regarding future developments. How do we protect our neighborhoods from extensive spillover traffic effects caused by development in an area that already pressures the Willow/Marsh/Bay Road corridors? How do we maintain that quality of life that was once the signature of Menlo Park life?

Please do not rush to pass the General Plan Update without considering the future of our neighborhoods. We should not accept a plan that does not address traffic issues without real, effective mitigations. Likewise, we should not endorse new building without first addressing the visual impact on surrounding residential neighborhoods.

I encourage you to visit the Bay/Ringwood intersection during morning commute (especially when school is in session) and to try to access Willow Road from Bay during afternoon commute. Likewise, I encourage you to drive either Willow Road or Marsh Road (when it reopens) during afternoon commute to experience the gridlock residents in our neighborhoods face on a daily basis. I think you will understand why further development without proper mitigation seems ill-advised and jeopardizes quality of life in the future.

Sincerely,
Rachel Scheuring
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