



HOMEGROWN DESIGN FOR COMMUNITY
SELF-DETERMINATION

ETB.EPA@GMAIL.COM

January 30, 2012

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL: JICMurphy@menlopark.org

Justin Murphy, Development Services Manager
City of Menlo Park
Community Development Department, Planning Division
701 Laurel Street
Menlo Park, CA 94025

RE: Draft EIR for Facebook Project/ 1601 Willow Road (10-19 Network Circle) East Campus and 312-314 Constitution Drive (West Campus)

Dear Mr. Justin Murphy,

On behalf of Envision, Transform, Build – East Palo Alto (ETB-EPA) Coalition, a group comprised of non-profit, community-based organizations, residents, the faith community, architects, planners and City of East Palo Alto elected officials and youth, ETB-EPA respectfully submit comments on the draft EIR to Facebook as prepared by the City of Menlo Park¹. ETB-EPA has been responsible for the facilitation of a community-led redevelopment planning process for the Ravenswood Business District in East Palo Alto. ETB-EPA have been holding community workshops, focus groups, conducting surveys, educating residents about land use policies, compiling reports on the existing conditions of the community, and convening community meetings to develop a vision for the area. We have just completed a three year project to develop a community alternative in response to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) proposal to reopen the Dumbarton Rail Station, which has now been postponed until 2025².

Facebook relocation to the former Sun Microsystems raises many concerns to the East Palo Alto community. ETB-EPA commented on Facebook NOP³ last year where we hoped to see those concerns addressed in the EIR. They were not. ETB-EPA now maintains the same concerns as noted in the NOP letter. Furthermore, upon research conducted by Public Advocates and mentions of the City of Menlo Park General Plan, especially its Housing Element is non-compliance and thus the General Plan 'obsolete' – lends to the necessary mitigation measures the City of Menlo Park MUST make regarding traffic, air quality and emissions as it pertains to the City of East Palo Alto. ETB-EPA concerns are as follows:

- Transportation: Co₂ emissions and traffic congestion. Public Advocates noted that the correct baseline of impact is NOT the approximately five thousand new jobs that Facebook is creating in-house but

¹ ETB-EPA also collaborated with Public Advocates which is submitting its own set of comments to the Facebook DEIR

² <http://www.mtc.ca.gov/meetings/hearings/rm2.htm>

³ Notice of Preparation was accepted by Justin Murphy in an e-mail from YUCA on 7/20/2011 @ 6:20PM, the letter was dated May 25, 2011

growing nearly ten-thousand new jobs to the project area and neighboring communities had SIGNIFICANT impact to the modes of which employees will travel to work.

- Of the 43 intersections/Roadway segments that will be reviewed in the Environmental Impact Report, five are located in East Palo Alto and are currently heavily used as pass-through corridors from I-101 to the Dumbarton Bridge – CA 84 (University Avenue and Kavanaugh Drive/Bay Road/Runnymede Street/Donohoe Street/Woodland Avenue). East Palo Alto already has a significant amount of air quality and traffic issues at these intersections and would be interested in what form of mitigations will be put in place to improve not only traffic along that corridor, but also air quality and the overall quality of life for residents as impacted by ten-thousand new employees using this corridor.
- We envision an East Palo Alto that is walkable, bikeable, and transit-accessible and not the current auto jam that occurs during rush hour on a daily basis. How does the City of Menlo Park and Facebook intended on calming traffic at such intersections? The City of Menlo Park/ Facebook should note a current and correct baseline of traffic on such streets to compare against the traffic once Facebook is operating to be able to evaluate if Facebook bicycle/pedestrian incentives are effective. The DEIR should also list if such incentives are NOT effective – where are penalty monies allocated? To the City of Menlo Park or to the City in which impact was most stressful such as East Palo Alto?
- In the EIR scope, Facebook is looking to establish a maximum number, or "trip cap", on peak period and average daily vehicle trips to/from the East Campus rather than a new maximum number of onsite employees (which is an estimated over nine-thousand employees). We would like to know why the EIR reviewed the daily vehicle trips rather than the overall number of employees? How will the daily trips be monitored and enforced and what kind of Transportation Demand Management program will be instituted? Will there be private buses/shuttles that benefit only the employees or will the off-sets be more coordination with SamTrans to improve local and regional public transit connections in the area? We are concerned that the 9,000+ new employees passing through East Palo Alto to get to their jobs at Facebook will exacerbate current traffic and air quality concerns in our City and would like to make sure East Palo Alto residents benefit from any improved transportation/transit mitigations required for the EIR.
- What was the number of employees at Sun Microsystems and are these numbers drastically different than the amount employees working for Facebook?
- As we mentioned earlier, a prompt to create ETB-EPA and address redevelopment in East Palo Alto was partially due to the MTC reopening the Dumbarton Rail Station. Facebook's move to Menlo Park will warrant additional transportation needs for the City – including the reopening of the Dumbarton Rail Station. As part of our community alternative, the City of East Palo Alto is also developing new job opportunities for not only its residents but the larger region – we too will need additional transportation modes. As we continue to plan for both cities – we hope that, as neighbors, we can collaborate on the placement of a rail station that can benefit both communities. Please consider answering questions such as: Can there be a rail station in both Menlo Park and East Palo Alto? Can we place a rail station in mid-point between Menlo Park and East Palo Alto so that both cities can access the station?
- Lastly, with increased traffic, there will also be an increase in noise levels – what measures will be taken to reduce noise emission for both cities?

Thank you for your time. We hope to continue to work together to prepare for the construction of Facebook in Menlo Park. We look forward to reading the results of the final EIR and acceptable, tangible mitigations to take place in East Palo Alto that will address its housing, traffic, air quality, and CO₂ emission concerns.

If you have any questions, please do hesitate to contact us at rbdcoalition@googlegroups.com.

Sincerely,



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CC:

ETB-EPA Coalition

- Youth United for Community Action
- Peninsula Interfaith Action
- Walls of Faith Ministries
- Community Development Institute
- Urban Ecology
- Urban Habitat