

On Thursday, November 14, 2019, 09:58,
District4 <District4@sanjoseca.gov> wrote:

NOTES from Orchard PTA

Dear Clemence,

Thank you for contacting our office! We have been receiving a great deal of feedback from the community about the Charcot Avenue Extension Project, all of which we are taking very seriously. Just last week we had a meeting with many of the key actors working on the project in order to share the concerns we have received from community members and to be updated on the Environmental Impact Report and overall state of the project.

The issues of health, safety, climate, and equity, among many others, were given close attention during all stages of the planning of the project.

When conducting the Environmental Impact Report, J Powers and Associates studied the potential health and climate impacts of extending Charcot Avenue extensively. They used the Environmental Protection Agency's highest standard (for infants and children) when determining whether this project would render clean and safe air for the students of Orchard school and the young residents of the nearby neighborhoods. It was deemed that there were no exceedances of this threshold, and that the air would not negatively impact the health of these vulnerable groups.

Additionally, this project is not going to increase traffic, it is going to redistribute the traffic that already exists.

By extending Charcot Avenue over I-880 to Oakland road, traffic will be redistributed to hopefully prevent/alleviate bumper-to-bumper traffic.

This seems to refer to CM Diep's meeting on 11/7/2019 with City staff and consultants paid to execute the project. ([Source](#))

While the draft EIR and its traffic analysis discuss some potential safety issues for drivers, pedestrian safety is not meaningfully addressed. ([Traffic Analysis](#))

Equity is not mentioned in the EIR. ([EIR](#))
A quick search with Ctrl+F confirms neither are other words typically associated with discussions on equity such as "vulnerable", "low-income", "minority".

Experts at the Bay Area Air Quality Management District seem to disagree with this statement. "the modeling underestimated the exposure duration, used inconsistent breathing rates, and included several discrepancies regarding construction, VMT, and vehicle speeds. Therefore, the Air District is concerned that cancer risk and PM2.5 concentrations may be significantly underestimated in the DEIR. Staff highly recommends that the City revise the air quality and health risk analysis and coordinate with the Air District on the best practices and protocols to ensure the most current models and methods are used." ([Comment letter BAAQMD](#))

Statement is inconsistent with the results of the traffic study done by the City itself which estimates that traffic across 880 (trips on Montague, Brokaw, Charcot) will increase as well as in the area in general (VMT).

This should have been analyzed more thoroughly as part of the traffic study, but wasn't. Even CM Diep does not seem to be strongly convinced that the project will actually help drivers.

The traffic study by the City also shows that traffic (VMT) in the area will increase by 111% by 2040 regardless if the project is built or not. Total time spent in traffic by all (new and existing) drivers will increase by more than 250% by 2040.

Cars emit the most air pollution when they are sitting in bumper-to-bumper traffic, so preventing/alleviating this traffic will decrease the amount of harmful pollutants being emitted in the area.

The Charcot Avenue extension will comply with Santa Clara County's Complete Streets Program,

meaning that they will be equipped with both bike and pedestrian lanes.

There will also be crosswalks to

further ensure the safety of the students and residents.

You are correct that the plan is old- it dates back to 1994.

In fact, the plan was put in place before Orchard School existed.

However, it has been updated to meet the needs of today, including compliance with the Complete Streets Program. The bike lanes and pedestrian sidewalks will not only ensure the safety of those in the area, but they will also hopefully encourage alternate modes of transportation to cars.

Studies done for other projects have shown that any decrease from less congestion is likely to be more than undone by additional air pollution caused by the additional traffic (induced demand) resulting from making it easier to drive.

More information on VTA's Complete Streets Program can be found at <https://www.vta.org/programs/complete-streets-program>

Pedestrian lanes are a designated space on the road itself (separated from cars only by a white line). What is actually meant here are sidewalks.
([Pedestrian lanes](#))

Any intersection has crosswalks. The question is whether they are marked and how they are otherwise designed (e.g. raised to slow down cars).

Crosswalks cannot ensure the safety of pedestrians. Drivers regularly fail to yield to pedestrians in crosswalk often resulting in horrific deaths.

Just a few examples:

- [Pedestrian killed in hit-and-run crash in San Jose](#)
- [Woman killed in San Jose hit-and-run, 3rd fatal one this year](#)
- [Crossing Guard Dead, Girl Hurt After Being Hit By Car In Valley Glen](#)
- [Dash cam captures car almost hitting pedestrian in Richmond](#)

For context - things and companies that didn't exist in August 1994, when the Charcot Extension was first planned: Google, Facebook, yahoo, eBay, Sony Playstation, ipods, iphones, blackberries, Uber, Instagram, Angry Birds, tamagotchis, WhatsApp, Internet Explorer, Windows 95, DVDs, the sitcom "Friends"...

Orchard School was actually founded in 1856.
<http://www.orchardsd.org/School/History/Original-Founding/index.html>.

Note: In the early 1990s the City of San José approved a large number of residential developments in the Orchard School district, which more than doubled the number of students in the district. To accommodate the City's growing student population, the district purchased the land for the current school site in 1995/6. This was done with the knowledge and in coordination with the City of San José.

In addition, any tree that is removed will be re-planted or replaced in a nearby location, per San Jose Municipal Code.

The City's environmental study calls the visual impact of the removal of the mature trees at their current location "a significant and unavoidable impact" as Charcot is supposed to be a special visually prominent gateway into North San José. Replacing them at a nearby location does not change that.

While this project will cut into a small portion of the school's recreational area,

The "small cut" will likely lead to bring the school's area below legal standard recommended by the state of California. The environmental study (DEIR) itself describes this loss of recreational space as significant.

every effort is being made to ensure that the students' quality of life is not diminished. The recreational area is being slightly reduced in order to make room for the bike lanes and pedestrian sidewalks.

"Every effort" would include cancelling the project or changing it into a bike-pedestrian-overpass. Any road project at this location will automatically diminish the "students' quality of life".

The recreational area is being slightly reduced in order to make room for the bike lanes and pedestrian sidewalks. However, it is planned to re-position the baseball field to ensure it remains operational for the students. Additionally, noise walls will be built to make sure that students and residents will not be disturbed by noise and

The 6-12ft high noise walls will create a long alley behind the school with limited visibility of the street and sidewalks from the school or neighborhood.

that students will be safe while on school grounds.

A key concern of the community is the safety of students while walking to school, not just on school grounds.

During the development of the project, the City made it a priority to protect students and the environment.

The City's objective for the project are to increase capacity and connectivity for cars and to provide a new connection for bicyclists and pedestrians.

(<https://mailchi.mp/bkf.com/charcot-avenue-extension-project>)

Protecting students and the environment is not an objective and not a priority stated for this project.

We value and consider all feedback that we receive from the community on this project. The design team has responded to community input and will continue to do so.

Although the team has formally responded to input, they have declined to make any safety improvements based on that input such as narrower lanes, raised crosswalks, ban of truck traffic, lower speed limits. (see DEIR - Appendix B, <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/86732>)

I hope you find this information helpful. Please feel free to reach out to our office with any questions or concerns you may have. Thank you again for contacting us.

[NOTE: For more information on the project or comments/corrections to the annotations please contact orchardpta921@gmail.com]

All the best,

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