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Santa Clara, California 95051-5308

September 28, 2009

Mr. Jeff Schwilk, AICP, Associate Planner
City of Santa Clara, Planning Division
1500 Warburton Drive
Santa Clara, CA 95050

Dear Mr. Schwilk:

I would like to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the proposed development of an NFL stadium for the San Francisco 49ers. My comments are on four areas of the report – the traffic, estimates of mass transit usage, the road closures and the parking analysis:

1. Traffic:

Section 4.8.5, beginning on page 203 of the Draft EIR Main Report, makes this only too clear: The Project Owners propose to degrade traffic to the two worst Levels-of-Service (LOS) on seventeen intersections north of U.S. 101.

However, the Report then states, on page 204, "*The project does not, therefore, propose to implement any of the physical improvements described below.*"

In other words: Seventeen intersections on the northern side of our city will be essentially gridlocked on NFL event days – and the only "mitigation" proposed is to drop 160 police officers into the middle of those intersections and others.

On the issue of the traffic congestion alone, the DEIR is woefully insufficient. It is ample reason to deny any permitting for this project.

2. Estimates of Mass Transit Usage:

In the original EIR Scoping sessions of September 2nd, 2008, several speakers, myself included, stated our well-founded skepticism over the rosy projections of mass transit usage in the area of the proposed stadium. Specifically, the initial estimates of 25% usage of light rail, local and charter buses in Santa Clara for NFL games were simply improbable.

In this Draft EIR, on pp. 175-176, this figure is now stated to be 26%. Since the time of the Scoping Sessions, however, more information has come to light which again contradicts this mass-transit figure:

This writer was made aware of discussions between the Project Owners and transit authorities in San Francisco. In those meetings, those authorities were told that a 20-25% mass-transit utilization at any Hunters Point stadium location was – somehow – a gross overestimate.

In other words: The “one-quarter” figure, unacceptable to the Project Owners in reference to the Hunters Point development, is now somehow considered to be perfectly reasonable for a stadium site in Santa Clara.

Based on the many millions of dollars for traffic infrastructure which will no doubt be expended by San Franciscans to make a Hunters Point site freely accessible: Underestimating mass-transit utilization at Hunters Point and overestimating it for Santa Clara simply paints far too optimistic a picture for the flawed proposal here.

For comparison, transit modes for Candlestick Park were surveyed for single NFL events in the years 2002-5 and 2007, with data compiled by SamTrans, the San Francisco Muni Railway, our own VTA and Golden Gate Transit. They arrived at an average mass-transit utilization figure of only 18.5%. The notion that we would exceed that here – and by an additional 7.5% - should be immediately suspect.

In fact, it's quite plausible that the most minor of variances in the mass-transit usage figures will have a severe impact on the already congested traffic acknowledged in Section 4.8.4.3 of the Draft EIR.

3. Closure of Tasman Drive; Checkpoints, Tasman & Lafayette:

In this region, our cities spent many millions of dollars and waited well over a decade to finally see the completion of a Tasman Drive which truly links Sunnyvale and Milpitas. High-technology businesses, creating high-quality employment and generating significant tax receipts have greatly benefited from this thoroughfare. Tasman Drive allows easy access for technology workers, as well as ease of access to transportation modes into and out of the "237 Triangle."

In fact, a case could be made that this infrastructure alone has increased productivity of the employers in this north side business area, and to the benefit of us all.

However, the Project Owners actually propose to CLOSE Tasman Drive on NFL event days. This simply defies any reasonable logic, after what we've gone through to get Tasman done at last.

In addition, Santa Clarans with Zip Codes of 95054 will be severely impacted by not only the closure of Tasman Drive, but particularly by that of Agnew Road, and as well as by the seven checkpoints proposed for Lafayette Street. A rather startling graphic which proves how serious this really is may be found on page 186 of the Report, as "Figure 61."

What is particularly troubling about these closures is the fact that the Project Owners – as well as stadium proponents in general – have assured Santa Clarans that the proposed site at Tasman and Great America is somehow 'stadium-ready'.

The closure of Tasman Drive on NFL event days provides ample proof that, in fact, serious capacity problems with the site exist and that they remain unaddressed. By no means is the site 'stadium ready'.

4. Parking:

There can be no doubt that the problem of parking some 20,000 vehicles on private land is a major undertaking, and one certainly deserving of treatment in this Draft EIR Report. Some additional figures may provide some insight into exactly why this environmental impact will be as severe as it is:

Note that the Project Owners are proposing to locate a stadium with approximately a 14-acre footprint on a 17-acre site. The complete lack of any ancillary development, as well as the utterly insufficient Project parking nearby, should give us all considerable pause.

Contrast the 17-acre Santa Clara site with the current 84 acres at Candlestick Park and with the well-over-600 acres at Hunters Point – and one can see immediately why the proposed “private-parking” plan is completely insufficient to the siting of a 68,500-seat stadium in Santa Clara.

One interesting line on page 178 of the Draft EIR reads, “*Although the Traffic Management Plan assumes that the office parking lots to be used by the stadium will be vacated prior to 3:00 pm on a weekday game day,...*”

...In fact, it would be astonishing if technology business managers and executives, who are relying on their workers being present for a full work day, would ever agree to lose the latter part of any work day, merely so that they can accommodate 49ers fans on Mondays. As many of these businesses operate well outside of the “nine-to-five” workday, requiring their workers to compete with football fans for parking spaces in their own lots is simply absurd.

The insufficiency of the stadium site itself is the immediate reason for the insufficiency of the parking plan. However, nowhere in this Draft EIR are those considerations even addressed.

Conclusions

To sum up: Among the considerations of congested traffic, inflated mass-transit usage numbers, disruptive closures of major roads, and a

completely insufficient plan to park some 20,000 automobiles, the Draft EIR gives us Santa Clarans no reason to proceed. In fact, it's a clear statement of exactly why the permitting of this project should be denied at once.

It is unfortunate that we would arrive at this stage, only to find that an NFL stadium at Tasman and Great America Parkway would cause the problems that it will – **and that the Project Owners continue to demand that Santa Clarans pay a public subsidy of \$114,000,000 for such a substandard development.**

I urge the Planning Commission to halt the permitting of this Project at once. For the money we're expected to pay for it, it will clearly do more harm than good.

I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to add comments to the DEIR process for a stadium project, and I would like to respectfully request that this letter be included in its public record.

If there any questions about this letter or its contents, please do contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

William F. "Bill" Bailey
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