

Shape Our Fremont

Where Fremont residents can learn about shaping proposed housing developments...

A to F: Development Along Mission Boulevard Slows Traffic

2011 General Plan EIR Appendix B: Traffic Impact Analyses - June 30, 2011										
TABLE ES 5 CITY OF FREMONT STUDY ARTERIAL SEGMENTS										
#	Roadway Segment	From	To	Peak Period	Existing		2035 General Plan		2035 Growth Trend Alternative	
					Speed	LOS	Speed	LOS	Speed	LOS
13.	SR 238 (Mission Blvd) - SB	Nursery Ave	Stevenson Blvd	A.M.	31	B	18	D	19	D
				P.M.	39	A	12	F	1	F
14.	SR 238 (Mission Blvd) - SB	Stevenson Blvd	I-680 NB Ramp	A.M.	23	C	6	F	7	F
				P.M.	39	A	13	E	18	D
19.	SR 238 (Mission Blvd) - NB	I-680 NB Ramps	Stevenson Blvd	A.M.	42	A	2	F	2	F
				P.M.	44	A	9	F	11	F
20.	SR 238 (Mission Blvd) - NB	Stevenson Blvd	Nursery Ave	A.M.	44	A	1	F	1	F
				P.M.	35	A	8	F	10	F

Notes: Speed: MPH LOS: Level of Service E/F Intersections operating below acceptable LOS E are in bold. V/C based Link Volumes directly from Travel Demand Models.

2011 General Plan

In December of 2011, a new General Plan was adopted which increased allowable residential density of parcels along Mission Boulevard. It was approved despite a traffic impact study showing that the traffic Level of Service (LOS) along Mission Blvd. will drop from A down to F by at least 2035.

Parcels that are currently designated as Commercial or Low Density Residential can easily be changed to Medium Density Residential. Developers just request a General Plan Land Use Amendment (GPA). So there could be even more new housing than is planned for in the 2011 General Plan.

The Current Traffic Situation

Mission Blvd. runs from I-680 in Warm Springs through the Mission San Jose district. It continues north as State Route 238 from the I-680 Mission Blvd-North interchange up to the Fremont - Union City border and beyond. Mission Blvd. is under the jurisdiction of Caltrans.

Mission Blvd. is used as a morning commute route from cities to the north headed down to Silicon Valley. The Niles Canyon and the Mowry intersections with Mission Blvd. were already rated as E or F in 2011.

Morning commuters trying to reach I-680 combine with parents taking their children to Hopkins Junior High or Mission San Jose High School. That slowdown was rated C back in 2011.

Afternoon and evening commuters on northbound I-680 often get off at Mission Blvd-South and use Mission Blvd. to reach I-680 Mission Blvd-North in order to skip the stoppage on I-680 between those interchanges. This clogs the streets in Mission San Jose each workday.

Ohlone College students and staff have to deal with an overloaded street. The parents of students in the many schools in Mission San Jose also join the queue.

New Housing Developments

Over 300 housing units along Mission Blvd. have been approved since December 2011. There are over 1,100 more in the approval process. And Ohlone College plans to lease its Mission Blvd. frontage land for 300 apartments. That's potentially 1,700 to 3,400 more cars that will be added to the already congested commute and school traffic. By 2020, when all these units are completed, the traffic LOS will near an F.

Each proposed development is subject to a traffic impact review. But developers are not held responsible for the cumulative impact of new housing along the streets.

Fremont uses the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) standards for traffic studies. The trip generation calculation gives a lower rate for townhouses than for single-family houses of the same square footage or number of bedrooms. And even for single-family houses, they say that it will generate, at most, one car trip per house.

All of the approved units are large traditional single-family houses or just-as-large three-story townhouses. They have three to five bedrooms and will likely generate at least two cars per household - either two commuters or one commuter and one school transporter.

If the city has already designated a traffic intersection as having an unacceptable LOS, the development won't be denied for traffic reasons unless "the addition of the project causes the intersection average control delay to increase by more than 4 seconds per vehicle."

Changes to traffic controls on Mission Blvd. are subject to Caltrans approval and the city uses that to justify why they don't hold developers responsible for traffic problems.

What Can We Do About This?

Mission Blvd. is just one example of the impact that new residential developments will have on the future traffic in Fremont. New housing isn't the only problem, but keeping new housing to a minimum can be part of the solution. What can we do?

- § Have Fremont's traffic impact studies rate townhouses the same as single-family houses - look at bedrooms and not just use the ITE standards.
- § Revoke the policy that if an intersection is already bad, the development has to make it a whole lot worse in order for the project to be denied for traffic reasons.
- § Stop allowing General Plan Land Use Amendments that increase density for small parcels for a single development - use GPA's only for projects with a Master Plan like the Downtown Center or the Warm Springs/South Fremont area.
- § Require that the density of parcels of less than two acres be in the lower 10% of the density range designated for that area.
- § No longer allow small parcels to be developed as planned districts - set a minimum parcel size rather than leave it up to the City Council.
- § Use the cumulative impact of recently approved and proposed developments as part of the traffic impact study.

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