

**SUSTAINABLE TAMALMONTE
215 JULIA AVENUE
MILL VALLEY, CA 94941**

February 28, 2017

Mill Valley City Council
Mill Valley Dept. of Public Works
Mill Valley City Manager Jim McCann
Senior Planner Danielle Staude
26 Corte Madera Ave.
Mill Valley, CA 94941

Attention:

Mill Valley City Council

Jessica Sloan, Mayor
Stephanie Moulton-Peters, Vice Mayor
James P. Wickham, Councilmember
Sashi McEntee, Councilmember
John McCauley, Councilmember

Mill Valley Department of Public Works

Andrew Poster, P.E., T.E., Director of Public Works
Scott Schneider, PE, Engineering Manager
Cecilia Zamora, PE, Associate Engineer
Denise Andrews, Operations Superintendent
Robert Zadnik, Public Works Manager

Re: Request for a revision of the Marsh “Room” of the Miller Ave. Streetscape Improvement Project in order to retain the full length of the right-turn lane from outbound Miller Ave. to Almonte Blvd.

Dear Mill Valley City Council, Department of Public Works, City Manager Jim McCann, and Senior Planner Danielle Staude,

Thank you for listening to community concerns and considering a revision to the Miller Avenue Streetscape Plan as it relates to the Marsh “Room” and the Miller Ave/ Almonte Blvd intersection.

In order to ensure the best circulation and safety conditions for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians, we urge you to revise the Marsh “Room” of the Miller Avenue Streetscape Improvement Project and retain the full length of the existing right-turn lane on outbound Miller Ave. that leads to Almonte Blvd. by adopting the “Third Design Option – Combined Bike Lane and Right-Turn Lane” (described below).

For many years Shoreline Hwy (AKA Hwy 1), leading to Almonte Blvd, Miller Ave and the City of Mill Valley, has had unacceptable traffic congestion. The 2007 Countywide

Plan's Environmental Impact Report (EIR) found Shoreline Hwy to be the most congested highway in Unincorporated Marin, with an unacceptable Level of Service (LOS) "F".

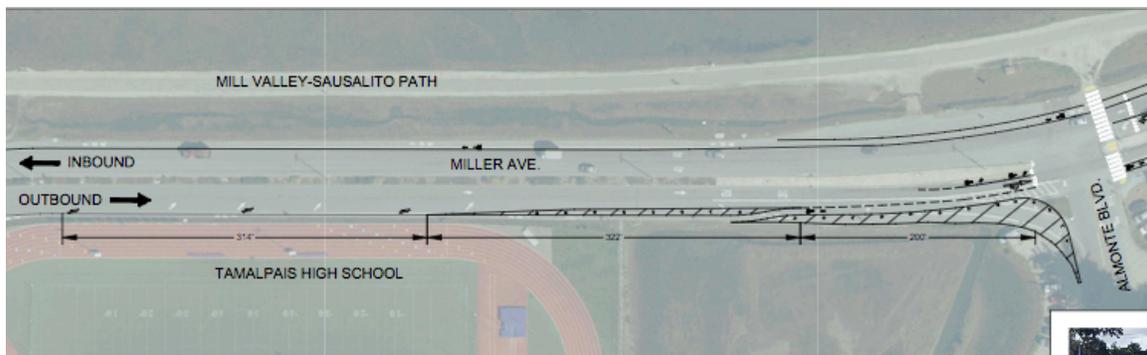
The Miller Avenue Streetscape Plan was adopted in 2011. At that time, although traffic conditions were poor, our economy was still recovering from the "Great Recession" and the housing crash, and traffic levels had remained steady for a while.

Since then, the economy has improved, the local population has increased (particularly school children), visitation to Muir Woods and other Marin recreational areas has risen, flooding has become more frequent, the light at the intersection of Tennessee Valley and Shoreline Hwy was installed, which has caused significant new delays, and traffic congestion has worsened tremendously between Hwy 101 and the City of Mill Valley.

It is imperative that the Streetscape Improvement Project's plans for the road system between Hwy 101 and the City of Mill Valley (along Shoreline Hwy, Almonte Blvd. and Miller Ave) do **NOT** increase traffic congestion and further exacerbate the hazardous conditions.

ORIGINAL 2011 MILLER AVE STREETSCAPE PLAN

The original Miller Ave Streetscape Plan, adopted in July 2011, merged the two outbound traffic lanes to one lane on outbound Miller Ave. in front of the Tam High Football Field in advance of Almonte Blvd., just where traffic begins to back up during high traffic congestion commute times, and eliminated the right-turn lane onto Almonte Blvd. The one outbound lane continued through the Almonte/Miller intersection. The shared through and right-turn lane, rather than separate through and right-turn lanes, would result in unnecessary delays to both through and right-turn turning vehicles. This would greatly increase traffic congestion in the area, which we do not want. Below is a drawing of this original plan:



**STREETScape DESIGN
(ADOPTED JULY 2011)**

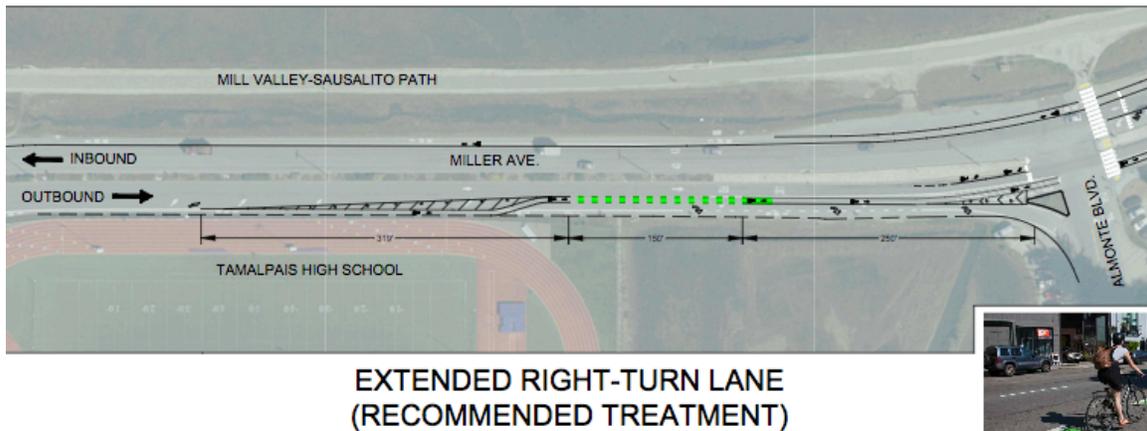
CITY OF MILL VALLEY STAFF'S NEW RECOMMENDED DESIGN CHANGE

The Mill Valley Staff's new recommendation, described in the January 30th Staff Memorandum, is a little better but not much better. It still merges the two outbound traffic lanes to one lane on outbound Miller Ave. in front of the Tam High Football Field,

where traffic begins to back up during high traffic congestion times, and then opens up to two lanes again before the Miller Ave./Almonte Blvd intersection to allow for a right-turn lane onto Almonte Blvd. This new recommended plan, which still merges two lanes of outbound traffic into one lane, would still worsen the back up around the Tam High Football Field. The January 30th Staff Report states; “Right-turning vehicles would be delayed... when vehicle queues extend more than 400 feet east of Almonte Blvd.” Creating new delays and worsening traffic congestion is unacceptable.

Moreover, we understand the new recommended design would put a pole barrier between the bike lane on the right and the single vehicle lane on the left. Besides being unattractive, this barrier would be detrimental during floods because it would prevent vehicles from being able to use both lanes to traverse through the flooding and avoid the saltwater pools that are corrosive to vehicles. Below is a drawing of this recommended plan:

EXHIBIT 3 EASTBOUND MILLER AVE. AT ALMONTE BLVD.



OUR RECOMMENDED THIRD DESIGN OPTION

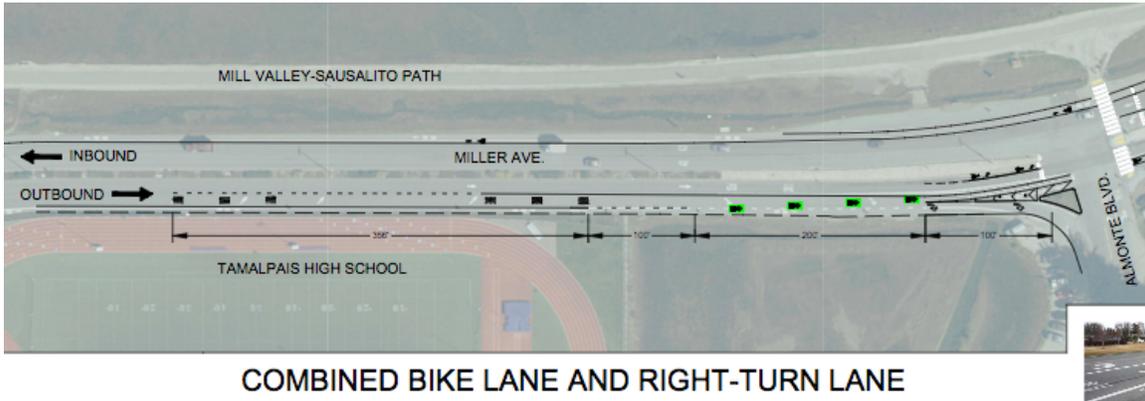
A third potential option, which the City Staff considered, is to keep the two traffic lanes on outbound Miller Ave all the way to the Almonte/Miller intersection and retain the full length of the right-turn lane onto Almonte Blvd. In this scenario, the bike lane and vehicle right-turn lane would be combined together. We believe that this third option would not worsen traffic congestion. It would also be more advantageous when the road floods by allowing vehicles to use either lane in order to traverse through the flooding and avoid the salt water pools that are corrosive to vehicles.

The City Staff's Memorandum states that this continuous right-turn option (Third Option) is not as desirable as the above recommended version because it requires bicyclists to navigate across a traffic lane to access the left-turn access onto the Multi-Use-Path near the marsh. However, we question this assessment.

In the above “Mill Valley City Staff New Recommended Design Change”, it seems that the bicyclists would have to navigate across to the left-hand bike lane at the same time motorists would be trying to get from the single left lane into the right-turn lane. We can't

see it being safer for bicyclists to be maneuvering in hazardous traffic congestion with frustrated drivers, which would result from the above "Recommended Treatment" that merges the two outbound traffic lanes into one lane and increases traffic congestion.

Instead, we recommend the Third Option (Combined Bike Lane and Right-Turn Lane). Below is a drawing of this third option:



ADD PUSH BUTTON FOR BIKERS TO ACTIVATE FLASHING LIGHT

In addition, we recommend that the City add a push button next to the bike left-turn lane for bicyclists to push and activate the flashing light when they want to turn left from outbound Miller Ave at Almonte Blvd to get onto the Multi-Use pathway along the marsh. Unless this light is activated, this left turn would be dangerous for the bicyclists.

CONCLUSION

Once again, in order to ensure the best circulation and safety conditions for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians, we urge you to revise the Marsh "Room" of the Miller Avenue Streetscape Plan and retain the full length of the existing right-turn lane on outbound Miller Ave. that leads to Almonte Blvd. by adopting the above-referenced "Third Design Option – Combined Bike Lane and Right-Turn Lane".

Thank you in advance for your conscientious consideration.

Very truly yours,
/s/

Sharon Rushton, Chairperson
Sustainable TamAlmonte

- Cc: Becky Murray, Administrative Assistant of the Mill Valley City Manager
- Cc: Supervisor Kate Sears
- Cc: Supervisor Aid Maureen Parton