



PRESS RELEASE

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***CITY OF SARATOGA RESPONDS TO CALTRANS' INITIAL STUDY
FOR THE PROPOSED HIGHWAY 85 EXPRESS LANES PROJECT***

Mayor Emily Lo has sent a letter, on behalf of the Saratoga City Council, to Caltrans expressing concerns about the initial study for the proposed Highway 85 Express Lanes Project and asking for deeper study on possible negative impacts to Saratoga residents.

"The [Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment] concludes that the Project will have no significant adverse effects on the environment," Mayor Lo writes in the letter. "The [Initial Study], however, does not contain sufficient information to assure the City and concerned members of the public that this will be the case."

Mayor Lo points to potential noise, traffic, visual and air quality impacts associated with the widening of the highway.

She also asks that Caltrans and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority clarify whether the project will allow heavy trucks to use Highway 85, which is currently banned; if the project could be revised to allow Saratogans immediate access to express and carpool lanes, which would not be the case under the current design; and how VTA plans to move forward with the project consistent to its 1989 commitment to the City of Saratoga that Highway 85 be limited to six lanes with the 46-foot median reserved for mass transportation, such as light rail.

The Saratoga City Council authorized Mayor Lo at its February 5, 2014 meeting to work with staff to file a comment letter providing background and analysis of the proposed Project. Council members stated that they wanted more information on possible impacts to residents.

This information is being distributed prior to the end of the Project's comment period to allow concerned residents an opportunity to consider the information in the City's comments for their own letters to Caltrans and VTA.

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Council members brought the proposed Highway 85 Express Lanes Project up for discussion for the first time in October 2011. The Project was discussed during the “Ad Hoc and Agency Assignment Reports” section of several Council meetings throughout the past few years, including October 5, 2011; October 19, 2011; and December 15, 2012. The Council also received a presentation from VTA on the Project on January 16, 2013 and again on February 5, 2014.

Visit www.saratoga.ca.us/highway85, to view the letter and accompanying documents and information.

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