



# STATE ROUTE 37 IMPROVEMENT PLAN

## SR 37 Open House summary

### INTRODUCTION

Between September 20<sup>th</sup> and October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017, Caltrans, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM), the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA), the Napa County Transportation Authority (NCTA) and the Solano Transportation Authority (STA) conducted a series of 4 open houses to inform the public about the State Route 37 Improvement Plan. The attendance at the open houses ranged from approximately 30 to about 100 members of the public. Staff and management from Caltrans, MTC and the four transportations authorities were in attendance, as well as elected officials from the local counties and cities. The event details for each open house can be found in table 1.

**Table 1. Event Details**

City	Date	Location	Attendees (sign-ins)	Comment Cards	Elected officials present
Novato	Sept 20 6pm-8pm	The Key Room	26	7	- Damon Connolly, District 1 Supervisor, Marin County - Judy Arnold, District 5 Supervisor, Marin County
American Canyon	Sept 27 6pm-8pm	American Canyon Council Chambers	20	5	- Leon Garcia, Mayor of American Canyon
Sonoma	Sept 28 6pm-8pm	Sonoma Veterans Memorial Building	29	7	- David Rabbitt, District 2 Supervisor, Sonoma County - Susan Gorin, District 1 Supervisor, Sonoma County - Jake Mackenzie, Mayor of Rohnert Park
Vallejo	Oct 2 6pm-8pm	Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum	72	24	- Bob Sampayan, Mayor of Vallejo



## Open House Objectives and Format

The objectives of the Open House were to:

- Inform residents about the status of efforts to reduce traffic congestion and respond to climate change on SR 37;
- Highlight key takeaways from studies conducted to date, including high level results from the affordability analysis;
- Provide an opportunity for participants to share their issues and concerns regarding the corridor, and
- Inform residents about upcoming opportunities to receive information and provide input.

The events followed an “open house” format, where participants browsed through the information provided at 7 thematic stations at their own pace. Staff was positioned at each station to provide information, answer questions, and collect feedback. The topics covered by the informational boards included:

- Process Overview
- Traffic Concerns
- Environmental Concerns
- Potential Short-Term Improvements
- Potential Mid- to Long-Term Improvements
- Potential Financing Options
- Existing and Planned Bay Trail

## Media Coverage:

All four events received media coverage from local newspapers and TV stations. Local media coverage included the following articles and TV stories:

- Vallejo Times Herald: <http://www.timesheraldonline.com/general-news/20171003/dozens-fill-vallejo-museum-to-discuss-possible-highway-37-improvements>
- Fairfield Daily Republic: <http://www.dailyrepublic.com/solano-news/vallejo/the-week-ahead-highway-37-plans-topic-of-vallejo-open-house/>
- Sonoma Index Tribune: <http://www.sonomanews.com/news/7468672-181/agencies-host-hwy-37-informational>
- San Francisco Chronicle: <http://www.sfchronicle.com/opinion/article/Rebuild-State-Route-37-to-address-sea-level-rise-12219708.php>
- Marin IJ: <http://www.marinij.com/general-news/20170921/highway-37-marin-officials-seek-solutions-for-flood-prone-road>
- KRON 4: <http://kron4.com/2017/09/20/video-toll-proposed-on-highway-37-in-the-north-bay-for-rebuilding-road/>
- Marin IJ: <http://www.marinij.com/general-news/20170920/live-updates-highway-37-improvements-planning-meeting-6-pm>



## PUBLIC COMMENTS

All event attendees were invited to submit comment cards to share their concerns and ideas about the project with the team. Below is a summary of the written comments received during the open houses. The summary is intended to illustrate the variety of comments received and key takeaways include the most frequently mentioned concerns. The attached appendix includes a scan of all of the comments received.

### Key takeaways:

- **Short-Term Improvements:** Many respondents insisted on the urgency of implementing the short-term improvements proposed to relieve congestion along the corridor.
- **Expand alternatives to driving:** Expanding road capacity will not achieve a long-term solution; many travelers are seeking more transportation options including all forms of public transportation, bicycling, and walking.
- **Public Transit Options:** Many comments showed strong support for providing public transit options between Vallejo and Marin, often citing ferry services, and express bus services.
- **SMART train extension:** Several comments expressed the need to place a higher priority on considering rail as an option. Extending the SMART train and using existing rail should be more prominently considered.
- **Bicycle and Pedestrian Access:** Creating a quality bicycle and pedestrian path along the corridor with access to open space was a top priority for many commenters.
- **SR 37 & SR 121 Intersection:** The Sears Point intersection was identified by many as the top priority for congestion relief along the corridor, with several respondents offering solutions such as extending the merge length east of the intersection or installing permanent barriers between the east-bound lanes west of the intersection.
- **Opposition to full privatization:** Several comments expressed strong opposition to the privatization of the road, however very few respondents were opposed to the tolling options.
- **Four-lane expansion:** Many comments showed support for expanding Segment B to 4-lanes, many of which suggesting the additional lanes should be HOV lanes.
- **Growing needs of freight:** Though comments were limited, goods movement needs and potential alternatives need to be considered.

**Marin Open House Comment Summary:**

- Suggests consideration of variable pricing toll lanes (express lanes). Need to study undesirable effects of tolling, such as increasing overall system congestion. Suggests creating a middle reversible lane for segment B with varying toll price.
- Suggests doing a geotechnical survey to find bedrock, investing in ferry service, and considering floating roadway (like Bayou states).
- Encourages alternative transportation options, specifically public transit and ferries.
- Supports the protection of wildlife corridors in the project area.
- Strongly supports implementation of near-term improvements to allow sufficient time for selection of long-term strategy.
- Safety should be prioritized along the corridor: the east bound lane reduction and merge before Sears Point needs to be improved for safety by adding permanent lane partitions.
- Insists on the need to lessen congestion at the 101/37 interchange.

**Napa Open House Comment Summary:**

- Suggests further consideration of public transit options, especially bus service.
- Supports preserving the function of wetlands, creating HOV lanes and an expanded ferry service between Vallejo and Marin.
- Suggests increasing the production of affordable housing in Marin to alleviate traffic; opposed to a fully private road; strongly supports the creation of HOV lanes, consider rail options.
- Suggests car ferries to relieve congestion and offer a first and last mile option.

**Sonoma Open House Comment Summary:**

- Prioritize HWY 121 interchange and all short-term improvements, supports elevated highway option and suggests looking into rail service, consider the freight usage of road.
- Supports short-term improvements at 121/37 intersection, encourages more public transit options especially expanding smart.
- Supports short-term improvements, especially lengthening left turn lane eastbound at Lakeville road, extend 2 lanes eastbound past sears point for 2 miles, and activate passenger rail service to integrate with smart system.
- Support for smart train expansion along SR37 to Vallejo.
- Supports toll road and widening of lanes.

**Solano Open House Comment Summary:**

- Opposed to tolls and private ownership of road; supports 4-lane road expansion as double-decker bridge, HWY 37 should be prioritized because of the urgency of climate change.
- SR 37 needs to be prioritized; the Sears Point intersection needs to be improved in the short-term, the economic impact of the congestion needs to be studied, suggests adding a reversible lane to segment B.

- Suggests looking at Caltrans' 1990 study of SR 37 and the Sonoma County Regional Parks Department's Bay Trail feasibility study from 2005/2006. Insists on including the creation of a "quality" Bay Trail along the corridor to attract tourists.
- Opposed to tolling but recognizes the urgency of the situation; if tolling is inevitable preference for a toll road. Strongly opposed to full privatization, in favor of a public transit option.
- Concerned about the cost to senior citizens on fixed incomes.
- Suggests adding permanent barriers between lanes on eastbound 37 before the 121 intersections in the short term, and prohibiting cars altogether in the long-term to make room for buses.
- Suggests creating a 2<sup>nd</sup> eastbound lane with the shoulder room and adding permanent barriers to separate eastbound lanes before the 121 junction.
- Strong support for a 4-lane causeway to be built urgently, and for improvements at the 121 intersection.
- Supports toll option as only realistic way to get project underway, and is in favor of creating a bike/ped path along the route.
- Encourages looking at public transit between Vallejo and Marin, such as a commuter bus.
- Supports widening segment B to 4 lanes, suggests building light rail tracks from Novato to HWY 12 junction, from Fairfield to Vallejo, and from Vallejo to Napa, with a free park and ride stations.
- Supports a public/private finance option, as only viable solution for the corridor.
- Supports bicycle and rail solutions to ease traffic and provide access to piers and levee trails; also supports elevated roadway and increased lanes.
- Priority issues along the corridor are: Mare Island access ramp, merge from 2 to 1 lane, elevate and expand number of lanes, correct 121 intersection. Also in favor of tolling and providing ferry service.
- Strong opposition to privatization, and strong support for Class 1 Bike lanes.
- Supports creating a bike path along the corridor, elevating the roadway and developing hiking trails.
- Suggests considering realignment to SR12 and adding bike paths with viewing areas.
- Supports enjoyable bicycle and pedestrian facilities along the route, with better access to open space (mentions the east span of the bay bridge as a good example).
- Supports creating a Class 1 bike/ped path.
- Supports a ferry service from Vallejo to Larkspur, which connects to the SMART train.
- Strong support for the creation of a public transit option between Vallejo and Marin, as well as exploring a floating 4-lane bridge option with HOV lanes. In favor of tolling but strongly opposed to privatization.
- Suggests using RM3 funding for initial feasibility studies and alerting state legislators of the urgency of the project.
- Suggests considering the no project option and putting all funds towards public transit and home creation near jobs, would like to see a full VMT analysis and growth inducing impact analysis, recommends consideration of a floating bridge option, supports Bay Trail project.

#### Summary of Comments Received Electronically:

- The needs of cyclists need to be prioritized along the corridor.



- Recommends partitioning the road prior to the crest of the hill with a barrier to separate the traffic going EB to Vallejo/Mare Island from the traffic turning north into 121 to Sonoma. Prefers funding SMART train extension than a bike lane.
- Advocates for a Class 1 fully separated multi-use path that accommodates both bicycles and pedestrians.

**Comments specific to the Draft DAA**

Comments specific to the draft DAA were submitted by the following organizations and agencies, the full comments are provided in Appendix B:

- Marin County, Department of Public Works
- SR 37 – Baylands Group
- Greenbelt Alliance
- Bay Area Ridge Trail Council
- Marin Audubon Society
- San Francisco Bay Trail
- The Marin, Sonoma, and Napa County Bicycle Coalitions
- Sonoma County Transportation and Land Use Coalition
- Friends of SMART

