



April 5, 2024

Administration, Projects, and Planning Executive Committee
Transportation Authority of Marin

Chance Cutrano
Kate Colin
Beach Kuhl
Eric Lucan
Stephanie Moulton-Peters

Re: April 8, 2024 TAM Administration, Projects, and Planning Executive Committee Meeting
Agenda Item 6.a.

Dear TAM Administration, Projects, and Planning Executive Committee members.

We know that you place a high priority on the safety of our transportation system, and especially the safety of our transportation system's most vulnerable users — pedestrians. That is why we hope that you will give direction to TAM staff to address what appears to be a significant flaw in the Bellam Boulevard Off-Ramp Improvement Project design.

Based on the before-and-after images on page 36 (**see attached**) of the April 8, 2024 TAM Administration, Projects, and Planning Executive Committee Meeting Agenda Packet, the curb radius of the southwest corner of intersection formed by the NB US-101/EB I-580 offramp and Bellam Boulevard is unchanged from the existing conditions (i.e. "before") to the improved condition (i.e. "after").

Based on our measurements, the existing curb radius is 45 feet. Such a large curb radius is a relic of now-outdated engineering practices from the mid-20th century which prioritized vehicle speed and flow over pedestrian safety. Large curb radii encourage motorists to take right turns at high speeds, which endanger pedestrians in the crosswalks.

The crosswalk in question is heavily used by pedestrians from San Rafael's Canal neighborhood to access businesses and facilities such as the Marin Square Shopping Center, the Post Office, Davidson Middle School, and the North – South Greenway/SMART Pathway.

Since TAM is already preparing to make engineering modifications to the NB US-101/EB I-580 offramp at Bellam Boulevard, this is a perfect opportunity to correct the dangerous curb radius at



this intersection and construct a curb extension. Doing so would shorten the pedestrian crossing distance, slow down motorists turning right, and overall improve pedestrian safety significantly.

The NACTO Urban Street Design Guide recommends curb radii of no greater than 15 feet. According to NACO, "Corner radii directly impact vehicle turning speeds and pedestrian crossing distances. Minimizing the size of a corner radius is critical to creating compact intersections with safe turning speeds. While standard curb radii are **10–15 feet**, many cities use corner radii as small as 2 feet. In urban settings, smaller corner radii are preferred and actual **corner radii exceeding 15 feet should be the exception.**"

We realize this this facility is on a Caltrans state highway. There is ample precedent throughout Caltrans facilities across the state for tightening curb radii where freeway offramps meet local streets. In fact, it is especially important to tighten curb radii at the intersections of freeway offramps and local streets because motorists getting off the freeway are still in "freeway mode" even when they should be slowing down to "local street mode".

Tightening the curb radius where the freeway offramp meets the local street is one of the best ways to slow down traffic and save pedestrian lives. This intersection is on San Rafael's High Collision Network (Segment #14) as documented in the Marin County Local Road Safety Plan, approved by the San Rafael City Council on April 2, 2024.

Finally, the new pedestrian crosswalks shown in the "after" image on page 36 are depicted as traditional, low-visibility style crosswalks (i.e. two parallel white lines). This type of crosswalk is outdated and provides poor visibility to motorists. We recommend modifying the project design to include "universal" crosswalks (a.k.a. "zebra" crosswalks) which are much more visible to motorists and thus much safer for pedestrians. The cost difference between the two types of crosswalks is negligible.

Please make sure that the safety of pedestrians and Canal residents is being prioritized in this TAM project. Thank you for your consideration.

Patrick Seidler
President, WTB-TAM

Matthew Hartzell
Planning Director, WTB-TAM

Crosswalk Improvements



Source: Parisi Transportation Consulting

45-foot curb radius