

Active Transportation Commission

January 17, 2023

Re: Freeport Boulevard Transportation Plan Final Draft

Dear Commission Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public input on the Freeport Boulevard Transportation Plan Final Draft ("the Plan"). I appreciate the Staff's efforts to continue to examine and propose ways to improve our City.

The Plan concludes by pointing out these improvements will take an estimated 15 years and \$37 million to complete. To provide such an investment of time and money, we should demand nothing less than a revolutionary plan that aligns with our adopted Vision Zero goals: eliminating Traffic Fatalities and Serious Injuries citywide. **This plan remains concerningly accommodating to the automobile and leaves major opportunities for conflicts, fatalities, and serious injurious to still occur.** Walking or rolling along Freeport Boulevard will remain unpleasant because of the high speeds, high traffic, attached sidewalks, and lack of shade.

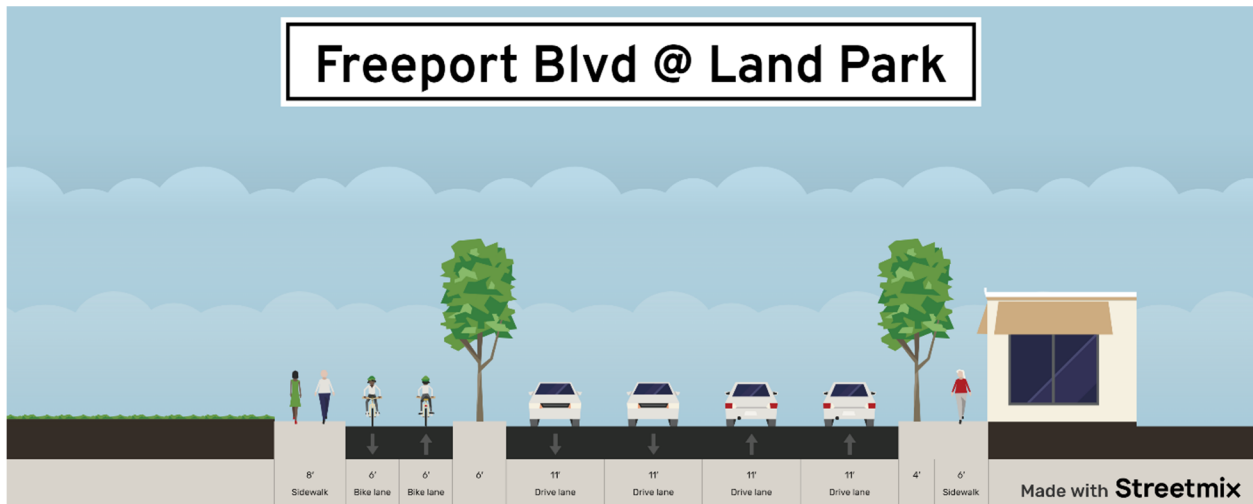
I see these as the main shortcomings and missed opportunities:

- 1. Separate Trails to Avoid Driveways**

Many commercial corridors are challenging to retrofit because of the multitude of driveways serving strip malls and businesses on small lots. Freeport Boulevard is unique in that it contains two publicly owned land uses that have little to no driveways: Land Park and Sacramento Executive Airport. By providing dedicated trails along these frontages with frequent crossings to adjacent communities, we can provide a safer, more pleasant experience.

Land Park

Land Park provides an opportunity for almost half a mile of continuous, off-street walking and biking trail between 14th Avenue and Sutterville Road. The existing DG trail adjacent to Freeport is hardly used because it is loud and adjacent to a busy street. The plan does nothing to remedy this. This should also be extended to 13th Avenue, closing the 14th Avenue entrances to automobiles to discourage cut-through traffic through the Park. The current plan along the east side of Freeport Blvd would contain 14 conflict points over the same stretch.



Sacramento Executive Airport

Sacramento Executive Airport offers a similar opportunity to provide significantly reduced conflict points. The east side of Freeport Boulevard would offer a 1.2 mile stretch with only the entry & exit points for the airport. Over that same corridor, the west side contains 26 conflict points. These improvements would have the added benefit of reducing the crossing distance for pedestrians by at least 22 feet compared to the proposed design. Reducing the curb-to-curb width is also an effective way to slow drivers down.



2. Reducing Vehicle Speed

The Plan makes no mention or study of existing speed limits or notes on observed vehicle speeds. At the south end of the corridor, the speed limit is 50 miles per hour with highway designs. Vehicles tend to carry this speed north as they travel through the corridor, even as the speed limit incrementally decreases to 30 mph in the northern end of the corridor. These speeds limits are excessive and drivers tend to speed well beyond these posted limits. The design speed should be reduced to no more than 25 mph and the plan should propose additional strategies to reduce vehicle speeds such as raised intersections and pedestrian crossings. This should include a strategy to significantly and immediately reduce speeds at the southern gateway near the airport prior to Blair Ave, such as traffic tables, textured paving, and flashing signage.



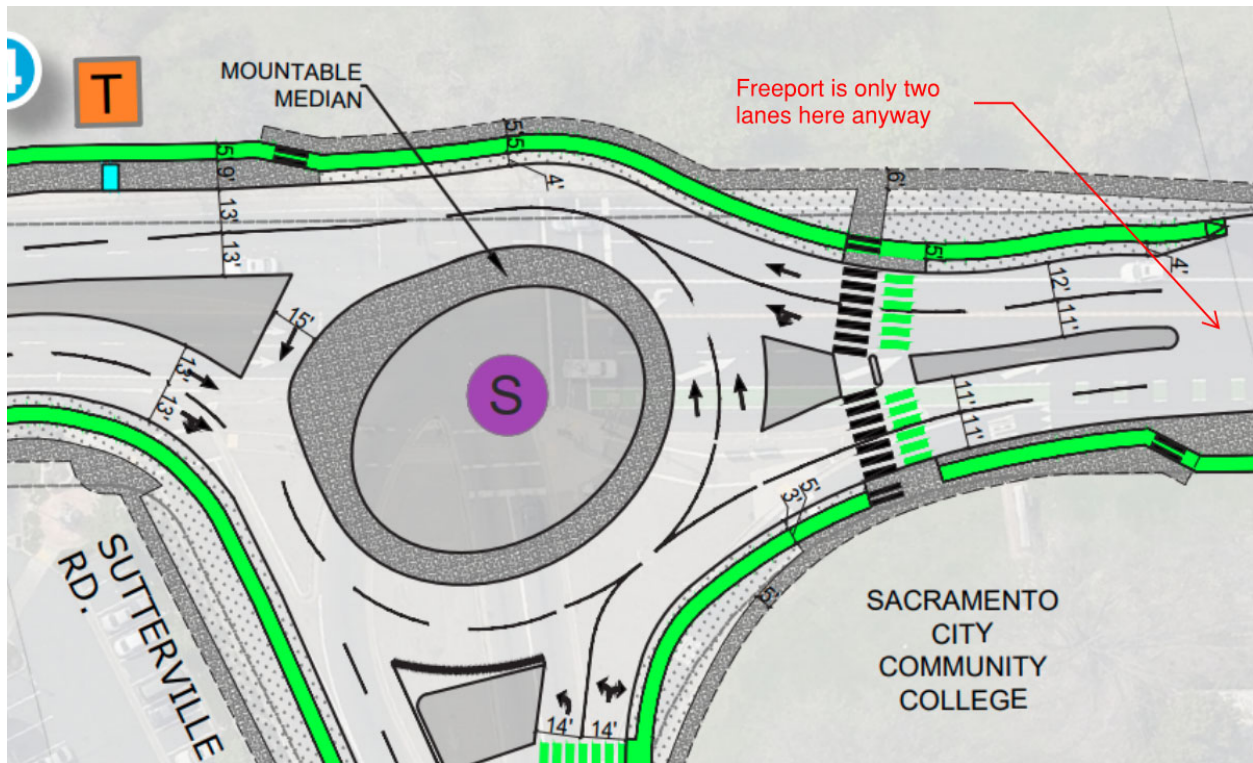
Approaching Blair Avenue from the south. Highway design encourages unsafe speeds.

3. Reducing Traffic Lanes

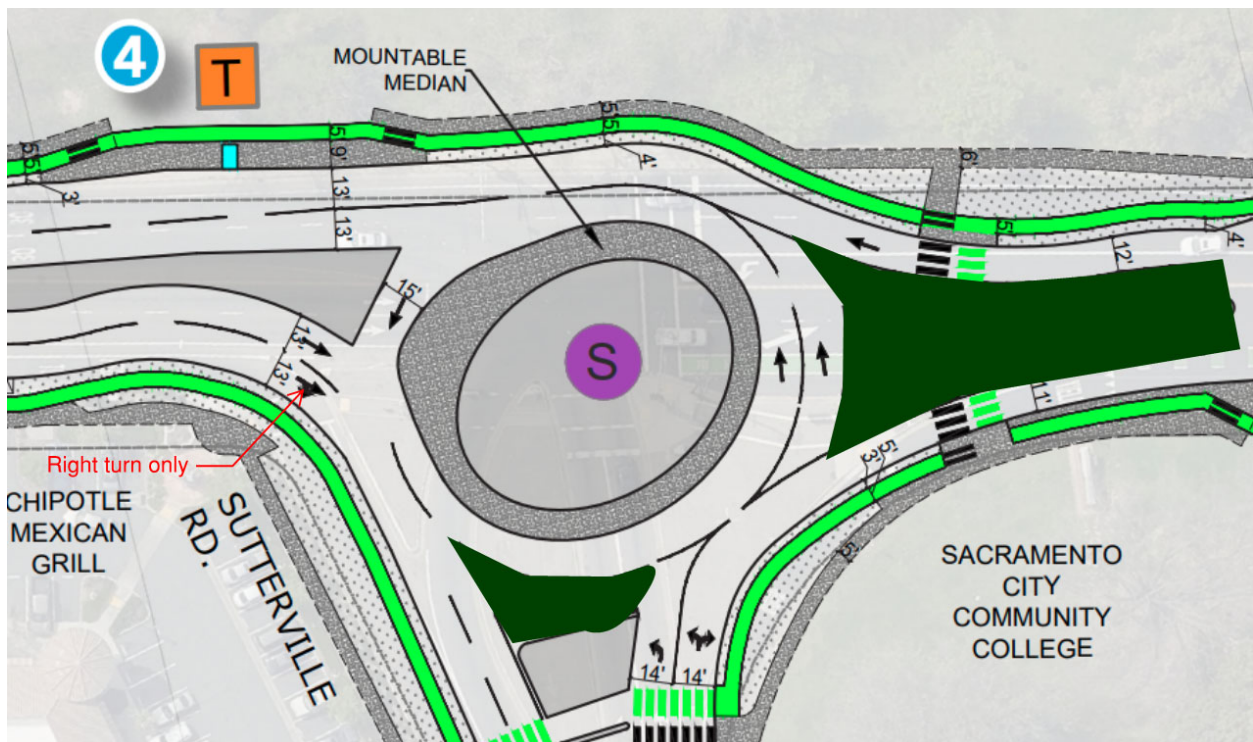
Page 17 roughly notes the Average Daily Traffic (ADT) in the corridor. Technical Appendix A does not provide sufficient information to determine how these ADTs were determined. At what time and day were these ADT counts collected? It's not clear how the number of lanes or the need for a center turn lane were determined. Could the corridor still be well served by a single automobile lane in each direction, especially south of Sutterville Rd and north of Fruitridge? Would this tradeoff maximize pedestrian safety and placemaking while still providing automobile access, and encouraging through-traffic to use the parallel freeways that were recently expanded? Why were dedicated right turns preserved?

Especially egregious is north of the roundabout. The street immediately transitions to one lane in each direction after the roundabout, so its not even clear why two lanes is helpful from a traffic perspective. This increases the crossing distance by 22 unnecessary feet.

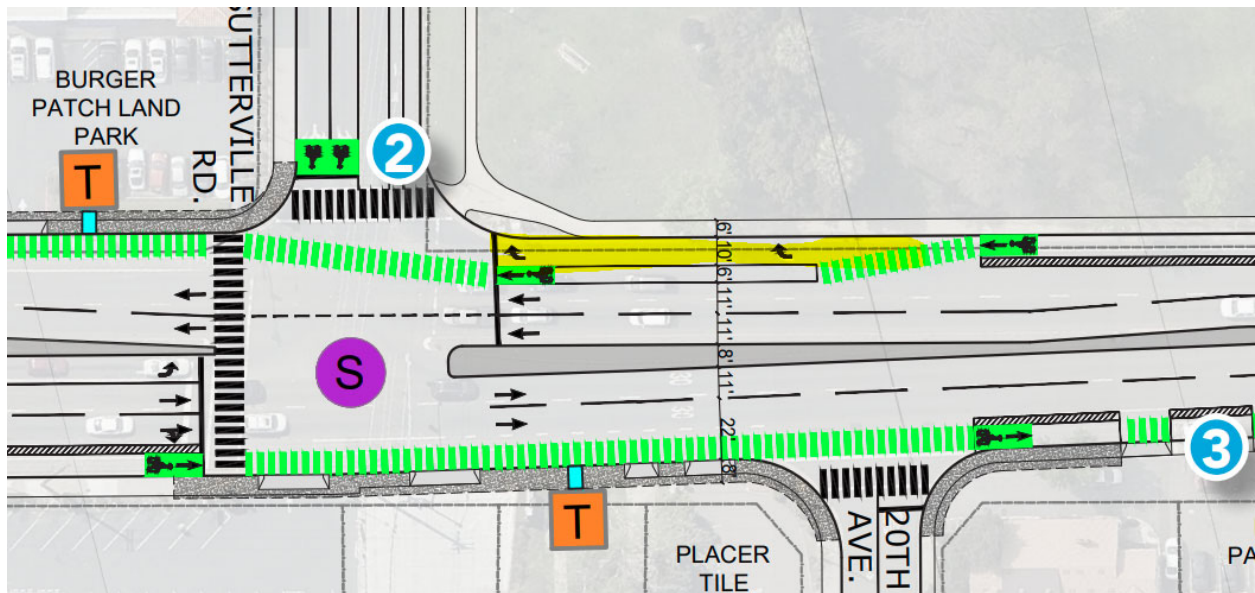
Existing Design:



Reduced design:



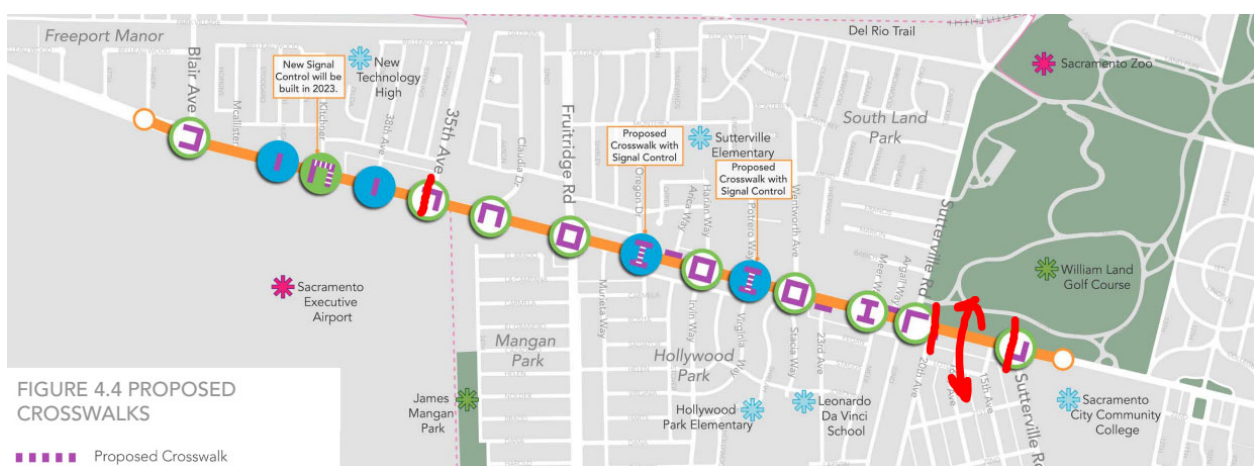
The proposed design for Freeport to Sutterville includes a dedicated right turn lane that is dangerous and will be high-stress for cyclists, dissuading most users from navigating the corridor. Why was this lane necessary? Is there an alternative that is more comfortable for cyclists?



4. Lack of Sufficient Crosswalks throughout the Corridor

Many intersections continue to only provide one crosswalk on one side of the intersection. This is a clear indicator that a design remains automobile oriented, prioritizing turn movements over pedestrians. This includes the intersections at Sutterville Rd (North), Sutterville Rd (South), and 35th Avenue.

This is most concerning for residents of the Carleton Tract, who have to cross not one but two major streets just to reach their closest greenspace. Carleton Tract residents should have quick, safe, convenient access this neighborhood gem.

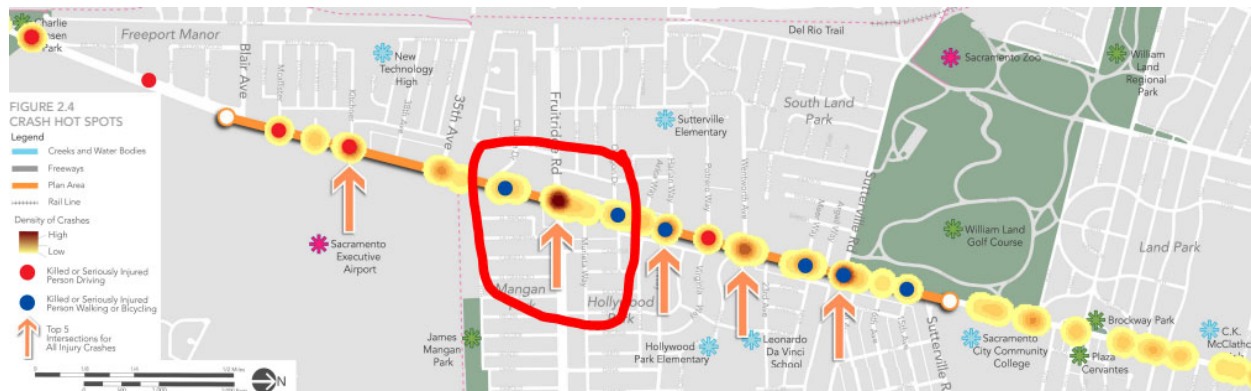


5. Reduce Lane Widths

The Plan contains the “City Standard” lane width of 11’ – 12’ throughout the corridor. The plan should include a goal to revisit these lane widths after the City Standards have been reevaluated this year. 11’ is still unnecessarily wide – NACTO recommends 10’ and other cities in the region already use this standard. Please revisit our City Standards and reduce this “standard” treatment.

6. Fruitridge/Freeport Intersection

The Plan makes no mention of improvements to the Fruitridge/Freeport intersection, in spite of the fact that this was identified as the point with the highest density of crashes in the corridor. The intersection is also obscenely wide (7 traffic lanes). Is there a plan to reduce the number of lanes through this intersection?



Conclusion

Make no mistake – the Plan is great improvement over the status quo! Is the Plan better than nothing at all? Certainly. But this is an enormous effort to only end up with a plan that tinkers around with the edges. I encourage Commissioners and City Staff to continue to set a standard that lives up to Vision Zero and put together a truly revolutionary plan that make Freeport Boulevard safe & accessible for all.

Regards

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