



Poverty Ridge | Newton Booth | Alhambra Triangle

February 8, 2024

Re: Alhambra Triangle Sound Wall

Eric Guerra

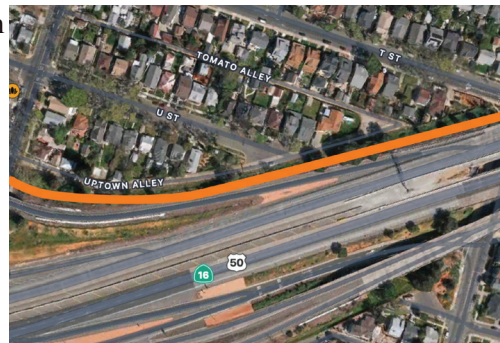
Sacramento Transportation Authority Commission Chairman

700 H Street, Suite 1450
Sacramento, CA, 95814

Dear Chair Guerra:

We are asking your help, as chair of the STA and as a champion of air quality and community engagement, to secure funds for a sound wall to protect us from the dangerous situation we live in every day.

We are residents of the Alhambra Triangle who live in the shadow of the US50 and Business 80 interchange. As cars accelerate onto the freeway at Stockton Boulevard and semi-trucks use their exhaust brakes to descend the slope of this interchange, we are exposed to tire particulate, engine exhaust, car debris, litter, light pollution and sometimes crashing vehicles that land on U Street below.



A portion of this freeway contains about 800 feet where there is no guardrail. Accidents are frequent, including a fatality that occurred when a car plummeted onto U street.

Last year, our neighborhood has been found by the California Air Resources Board to have some of the worst air quality in this region. Sound walls have been identified by ARB as effective barriers in controlling the disbursement of particulate matter. We believe it is more than reasonable to have a sound wall to protect us from these problems.

We are aware that Caltrans is approaching the STA for additional taxpayer funds for the ongoing highway widening project near this interchange. We want to ensure the STA board fully understands how this freeway is negatively impacting the health of residents who live nearby. As part of this negotiation, we ask the STA to identify funds—or to direct Caltrans to identify funds—to build a barrier that will finally help protect us.

We have been working on this issue in vain for years, advocating for Caltrans to construct a 10-foot safety barrier to attenuate and mitigate the vehicle emissions, tire particulate, litter, light and noise pollution.

Residents here requested a sound study in 2006 when the HOV project was first proposed. The study was finally completed in 2017, and it recommends as a mitigating measure “Sound Wall 5A” along the Alhambra Triangle section of the freeway expansion project.

Sound Wall 5A was identified as “acoustically feasible,” meaning it would reduce sound by over 5 dBA. It was deemed too costly and therefore did not meet the “reasonableness” criteria for federal funding in this project.

However, several other sections of the freeway—the entirety of the Elmhurst neighborhood and part of Tahoe Park, from 65th Street to Stockton Boulevard – were funded for a sound wall despite the fact that they neither met the feasibility nor the reasonableness tests; they nonetheless received state and local funds, possibly through the STA.

Caltrans has indicated on several occasions that they would not build or fund the Alhambra Triangle portion of the wall. However, after two years of our advocacy, Caltrans now proposes installing a 42-inch barrier where Sound Wall 5A was supposed to go.

We feel this alternative is insufficient. Given the elevation of the freeway and the unique geography of this section of road, the proposed barrier will not mitigate enough freeway particulate, light, noise, or emissions. Worst of all, it will thwart all future possibility of our neighborhood getting a ten-foot acoustical sound wall built to Caltrans standard specifications.

Proposed Sound Wall 5A and Oak Park Sound Wall 10A and 10B alignments are some of the last residential locations not protected by sound barriers. In both neighborhoods, sound walls would also serve as safety barriers where stretches of freeway are not protected by metal guardrails.

Before the STA provides any further funding for the US 50 Multimodal Corridor Enhancement and Rehabilitation Project (Fix 50 Project), residents of the Alhambra Triangle neighborhood ask STA to earmark construction funds given to Caltrans for the building of Sound Wall 5A identified in Section 6.1.4. of the “Caltrans US 50 HOV Lane I-5 to Watt Ave Project Report”.

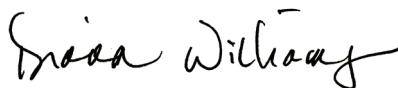
Please help us reclaim some of what our neighborhood was before the W/X freeway system dissected our community half a century ago. Please help us fulfill the recommendations cited in Section 6 - Caltrans Noise Abatement, contained in the “Caltrans US 50 HOV Lane I-5 to Watt Ave Project Report,” by funding construction of Sound Wall 5A.

Finally, as a parity request, we ask that the STA look further into addressing similar issues impacting the Oak Park neighborhood.

Sincerely,



Stacy Jarvis, NBNA Member,
Alhambra Triangle Resident



Diana Williams, NBNA President



Rory Hodgson, NBNA Board Member,
Alhambra Triangle Resident

cc: Sacramento City Councilmember Katie Valenzuela
Sacramento City Councilmember Catie Maple
Senator Angelique Ashby
Assemblymember Kevin McCarty