CHAPTER 3 – COMMENTS AND COORDINATION
3 Comments and Coordination

Early and continuing coordination with the general public and appropriate public agencies is an essential part of the environmental process to determine the scope of environmental documentation, the level of analysis, potential impacts and mitigation measures and related environmental requirements. Agency consultation and public participation for this Project have been accomplished through a variety of formal and informal methods, including: Project Development Team meetings, interagency coordination meetings, and public information meetings. This chapter summarizes the results of the Department’s efforts to fully identify, address, and resolve Project-related issues through early and continuing coordination.

3.1 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION WITH PUBLIC AGENCIES

Coordination with local and state agencies began in August 2008 for this proposed Project. The first Project "kick-off" meeting was held on September 16, 2008 with Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (ACCMA) and the California Department of Transportation (Department), District 4. Subsequent monthly meetings (Project Development Team [PDT] meetings) have been held on the third Wednesday of every month at the Department District 4 office in Oakland to discuss the progress and any issues of the Project. Attendance at the PDT meetings generally involves ACCMA, the Department, City of Oakland, and City of Alameda.

As part of the Project planning process, a series of Value Analysis (VA) meetings were held between December 1st and 5th, 2008. These meetings were attended by the Department, ACCMA, and the City of Alameda to discuss Project alternatives and verify that all viable alternatives were considered.

3.1.1 Biological Resources

Lists for special status species were generated from the California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC), California Native Plant Society (CNPS), California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB), and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). A List of Endangered and Threatened Species that May Occur in Oakland East, Hayward, San Leandro, Oakland West, Richmond, Hunters Point, Las Trampas Ridge, Walnut Creek and Briones Valley 7.5 minute quadrangles was generated through the USFWS web page. The list, document number 081007040117, was generated on October 7, 2008. The CNDDB list was generated using CDFG RareFind, Version 3.1.0 (last updated August 2, 2008). The CNPS list of special status plant species was generated in October 2008. In addition to the special status species lists, an invasive plant species list was generated in October 2008 through the Cal-IPC web page to determine the most problematic and invasive species in the Project area.

3.1.2 Historic and Cultural Resources

Consultation with local experts on historic resources included personal communication with Betty Marvin, Historic Preservation Planner with the City of Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey
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(part of the Community and Economic Development Agency) and with Susana Villarreal, a knowledgeable former resident of the Kennedy Tract/"Jingletown" neighborhood. Consultation occurred during and following a building-by-building intensive survey of the properties within the Area of Potential Effects (APE).

The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) was contacted in September 2008 requesting a search of its sacred lands database and a list of Native American representatives who may have information or concerns regarding the Project. The NAHC replied in October 2008 providing the results of the database search and a list of local Native American representatives.

The Department, as assigned by FHWA, submitted the Historic Property Survey Report, Historical Resource Evaluation Report, and Archaeological Survey Report for Section 106 consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). On July 15, 2009, the SHPO provided a concurrence of eligibility letter to the Department. A Finding of Effect report has been prepared and will be submitted to SHPO in summer 2009.

3.2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A series of discussions between the Kennedy Tract/"Jingletown" neighborhood residents and the City of Oakland began in 1999. Community discussions revolved around the building of a sound wall and concerns about pedestrian safety in the vicinity of the I-880/29th Avenue off-ramp adjoining Lazear Elementary School. The other principal concerns of the community include noise generated by the freeway and local traffic circulation. A Neighborhood Action meeting was held on February 25, 2000 by the Mary Help of Christians Catholic Church Organizing Committee, an affiliate of Oakland Community Organizations. This group has held similar meetings every few months to monitor progress in addressing community concerns, mainly regarding noise, pedestrian safety and traffic circulation.

A community meeting was held on January 18, 2006 to solicit input from the community members. During that meeting, conceptual designs for the Project were presented, including Project goals, existing conditions, the proposed improvements, the issues of circulation, project funding and schedule. Potential opportunities for community involvement, including workshops, a newsletter, and briefing meetings were provided. Community participants attending generally expressed support for the Project.

A community meeting was held on August 11, 2009 to explain the Project scope, update the community on the Project schedule and receive additional community input. Approximately 40 community members attended the meeting. Overall, the community expressed support for the proposed Project. The following community comments were discussed.

- Pedestrian and bicycle enhancements should be a part of the overall Project.
- Business owners in the area need to understand the detailed schedule and how the Project may impact businesses.
- Access to the Shell Gas Station may be only through the neighborhood.
- Traffic circulation in the vicinity of 23rd Avenue and E. 11th Street.

The Project team presented the proposed Project at the August 26, 2009 City of Alameda Transportation Commission Meeting. This meeting was televised throughout the City of
Alameda community. Commissioners and community members asked several questions. The primary discussion items were focused on vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian circulation as follows:

- Consolidation of the existing two northbound on ramps at 23rd Avenue into a single on ramp will cause a significant increase in queue on local roadways.
- Preservation of the pedestrian and bicycle under crossing at the 29th Avenue / East 7th Street intersection is critical.

The Project team presented the proposed Project to the City of Oakland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee on September 17, 2009. The committee asked questions about the proposed Project. The clarifications were generally related to pedestrian safety circulation and improvements, as well as bicycle lane improvements.

The Project Team presented the proposed Project at the City of Oakland City Council meeting on September 22, 2009. The council members asked a few questions related to the Project schedule.

The Project team presented the proposed Project to the City of Alameda City Council on January 6, 2010. The council asked several questions primarily related to vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian circulation. The comments were as follows:

- Find a way for the Fruitvale Bridge to be more utilized. Do not divert more vehicles to the Park Street Bridge.
- The southbound I-880 ramps also need to be reconstructed and/or improved.
- Freeway noise will reflect off of the new soundwall and travel into the City of Alameda.

On January 21, 2010, the Project team facilitated a public information meeting regarding the proposed project. The meeting date, time, and location were advertised in local newspapers and via mailings to residences and businesses in the Project area. In addition, the Unity Council (a locally based neighborhood organization) made fliers available at community functions.

The public information meeting was set up as a “town hall” setting at the Lazear Elementary School. This allowed community members to interact with the project team members and ask questions. City of Oakland Council Member Ignacio De La Fuente welcomed the community members to the meeting and encouraged them to ask questions. The ACCMA project manager, Matt Todd, provided a brief project history and encouraged the community to provide written comments. He also noted that the public comment closing date ended on January 25, 2010.

The meeting participants provided written comments. Each of the comments received was evaluated and included in the response to comments in the environmental document. Several verbal comments were received indicating that the soundwall should be constructed as soon as possible.

### 3.2.1 Cultural Resources

In November 2008, letters were sent to all contacts identified on the NAHC list of Native American representatives. As of July 2009, none of the Native American representatives had responded with any concerns regarding the Project.
3.3 COMMENTS AND RESPONDING TO COMMENTS

Comments on the Proposed Project were obtained though the public participation process and the public scoping period. The Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment was publicly circulated between December 23, 2009 and January 25, 2010. All public comments received during the scoping period and the responses to those comments prepared are included in Appendix I of this document.