

**CHAPTER 7 COMMENTS AND RESPONSES TO COMMENTS ON THE DEA/EIR FROM
BUSINESSES/ORGANIZATIONS**

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AAA-California State Automobile Association



California State
Automobile Association

150 Van Ness Ave., A03B
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 241-5847

June 28, 2006

Mr. Gregory C. McConnell
Senior Environmental Planner
Department of Transportation, District 4
Environmental Analysis, Mail Station 8B
P.O. Box 23660
Oakland, CA 94623-0660

Dear Mr. McConnell:

I am writing on behalf of the AAA of Northern California in support of the Caldecott Improvement Project that will construct a fourth bore of the Caldecott Tunnel.

The Caldecott Tunnel is a major freeway bottleneck on State Route 24 (SR 24) that causes traffic to backup in both directions during peak and off-peak commute periods, and on weekends. Travel demand through the tunnel already exceeds capacity, and daily trips via the tunnel are forecast to increase up to 44% by 2032. A fourth bore of the Caldecott Tunnel will alleviate this bottleneck, thereby reducing delays and improving travel times for people and goods traveling on SR 24 between Alameda County, Contra Costa County, and the Central Valley.

The recurrent congestion on this stretch of freeway also makes it highly vulnerable to traffic accidents. Between 2001 and 2004, the accident rate reported for the project area was 1.62 per million vehicle miles, 54% higher than the statewide average for a comparable facility over the same period. The congestion relief provided by this project will enhance mobility and safety for the traveling public and emergency vehicles using SR 24. In addition, the fourth bore will eliminate the need for daily tunnel reversals and dangerous lane merges.

Bay Area residents overwhelmingly voted in support of the Caldecott Improvement Project when they passed Regional Measure 2 and Contra Costa County Measure J in 2004, together providing the majority of funding for the project. AAA stressed the importance of the project to Members and the voting public through public education materials and outreach efforts related to these measures.

AAA supports the Caldecott Improvement Project because it will provide much needed congestion relief and safety improvements to this overburdened roadway. AAA commends Caltrans for completing a comprehensive Draft Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Report (EA/EIR) that includes a detailed analysis of the project, potential impacts to the surrounding community, and mitigation measures to address these impacts. We encourage Caltrans to approve the Draft EA/EIR and complete the design in order to begin construction on the project as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Deborah J. Wong".

Deborah Wong
Transportation Policy Specialist

CC: Michael Cunningham, Bay Area Council

F21 (Rev. Sep 1998)

Thank you for your comments.

AGC California-The Associated General Contractors of America



June 29, 2006

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Mr. Gregory C. McConnell, Sr. Environmental Planner
ATTN: Sheryl Dorado, Associate Environmental Planner
Dept. of Transportation
District 4, Environmental Analysis
Mail Station 8B
PO Box 23660
Oakland, CA 94623-0660

Dear Mr. McConnell:

This letter is in regard to the Caldecott Tunnel Project Draft EA/EIR. As the oldest and largest association representing the construction industry, we would like to take this opportunity to commend Caltrans for its work so far on this important study and to urge the Department to move forward with the long-overdue fourth bore of the Caldecott Tunnel project.

As our members have stated previously, this project is a vital piece of the Bay Area's regional transportation infrastructure. A fourth bore of the tunnel will reduce congestion, air pollution and improve the quality of life for Bay Area residents.

Further, safety for motorists will be enhanced over the current system of alternating lanes, which no doubt prevent accidents and needless suffering.

AGC encourages Caltrans to approve the Draft EA/EIR and proceed with the design and construction of this important project.

Sincerely,

[Handwritten signature of Russell W. Snyder]

Russell W. Snyder
Regional Manager,
East Bay, North Bay & San Francisco Districts

RWS/lm



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THE ASSOCIATED GENERAL CONTRACTORS OF CALIFORNIA, INC.

Thank you for your comments.

Bay Area Bicycle Coalition



Bay Area Bicycle Coalition of the San Francisco Bay Area

PO Box 2214, Novato, CA 94948 2214 • 415.246.8078 • cole@bayareabikes.org

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July 27, 2006

Gregory C. McConnell, Senior Environmental Planner, Department of Transportation, District 4, Environmental Analysis Mail Station 8B, P.O. Box 23660, Oakland, CA 94623-0660

Re: CALDECOTT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT: DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

Dear Mr. McConnell,

The Bay Area Bicycle Coalition (BABC) represents local bicycle advocacy groups throughout the nine-county Bay Area on issues of regional significance. BABC has reviewed the draft Environmental Assessment/Environment Impact Report (DEIR) concerning the Caldecott Improvement Project. We provide comments on the DEIR below. Bicycle access between Alameda County and Contra Costa County is of vital significance on a regional level. We do not accept the notion that bicycle and pedestrian access in the Highway 24 corridor between Alameda and Contra Costa counties is beyond the scope of this project and the DEIR.

The DEIR is deficient in its analysis of the potential air quality impacts of the project. During the recent hot weather (June-July 2006), ozone levels in the region have exceeded both the Federal and State ozone standards on numerous occasions. With the prospect of climate change causing higher temperatures in future years, it is clear that complying with air quality standards will continue to be a major challenge for the Bay Area. Therefore, it is imperative that the air quality impacts of this project be rigorously examined. We believe that the DEIR underestimates the potential impacts of expanding the capacity of the tunnel in terms of inducing growth in VMT and travel demand. We suspect the estimated increase in VMT shown for Alternative 2N and 3N in Table S-1 are too low. But even if the estimates of increased VMT in the DEIR are on target, an increase of 93,000 to 118,000 VMT per day would be a significant impact in terms of increased emissions of ozone precursors, particulate matter, and greenhouse gases. The potential air quality impacts need to be closely analyzed in comparison to the thresholds of significance for criteria pollutants established in the BAAQMD CEQA Guidelines.

The DEIR fails to thoroughly examine potential mitigation measures, especially measures to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian travel in this corridor. We take serious issue with the attempt to dismiss the Bikeway Tunnel Alternative in the "Purpose and Need" section of the DEIR. The BABC endorses the mitigation measures that have been put forth by the East Bay Bicycle Coalition to accommodate both direct and indirect

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bicycle travel. The DEIR must provide serious consideration and analysis of these potential mitigations. We believe that low-cost direct bicycle access options are feasible, but these have not been seriously examined in the DEIR.

5

Indirect bicycle access (i.e., bike-to-transit) presently removes thousands of daily trips from the Caldecott Tunnel roadways and has the capacity to remove many more. These existing bicycle-transit trips are definitely within the "congestion reduction" purpose of the project and the need is well established. The region-wide Bikes on BART program has been in place since 1974. Nevertheless, bicyclists are not permitted to board BART in the peak-hour travel direction and thus must ride a considerable added distance and elevation gain to bypass the Caldecott Tunnel. These trips most often follow the Skyline Regional Bikeway to link the Rockridge BART Station with Skyline Blvd via Chabot and Tunnel Roads. This established regional bikeway intersects the project at multiple points, yet is unmentioned in the DEIR. Many safety issues currently exist and will only be more problematic with the increase in traffic that an additional Tunnel Bore will shift to the local routes in Alameda County.

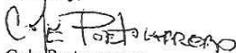
On the Contra Costa County side of the tunnel, Caltrans makes an extraordinary allowance for bicycle access on the SR24 freeway shoulder between Fish Ranch Road and Orinda. Again, the DEIR fails to acknowledge this important regional feature. Not only must this access for bicyclists be preserved, but the DEIR must consider ways to provide for improved access and safety in this corridor.

In summary, we believe that the DEIR is inadequate in terms of its analysis of both potential impacts and potential mitigation measures. We urge Caltrans to revise the DEIR so as to remedy these defects. In particular, the DEIR should include further analysis of the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians in this vital corridor and propose viable mitigation measures to address those needs.

6

We appreciate the opportunity to comment. We urge you to respond to our comments as you revise this important document.

Sincerely,



Cole Portocarrero
Executive Director
Bay Area Bicycle Coalition

Cc: Sheryl Dorado, Associate Environmental Planner Dept. of Transportation, District 4



1-Please see the essay on "Bicycle and Pedestrian Access/Improvements" in Chapter 1.

2- Ozone impacts are regional in nature and cannot be ascribed to any single project. Projects that are included in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) have already been included in a regional conformity analysis and require no further analysis for ozone. The Preferred Alternative, Alternative 2N, for this project is included in the 2007 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (which conforms to the State Implementation Plan (SIP)) and the 2005 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

In regards to particulates, the Bay Area is in attainment for PM2.5 (Annual Arithmetic Mean and 24-hour) and PM10 (Annual Arithmetic Mean). It is unclassified for PM10 (24-hour). No quantification of PM2.5 is required and there currently is no approved methodology for quantification of PM10.

In regards to thresholds of significance, BAAQMD thresholds do not apply to Caltrans projects..

3- Table S-1 does not give the project's projected effect on total region wide vehicle miles traveled but gives the data for State Route 24 in the project area.

The travel demand model used for this project is capable of estimating the total vehicle miles traveled (VMT) throughout the San Francisco Bay Area in 2032 with and without the fourth bore project. The model estimates that with a two-lane fourth bore 80,251,260 VMT will occur in the Bay Area on a typical weekday. Without the fourth bore the model estimates 80,410,808 VMT would occur. This small 0.2% predicted decrease is likely caused by people taking advantage of the reduced congestion associated with the Caldecott Tunnel to take more direct routes to their destinations.

4-Please see answer #2 above.

5-Please see the essay on "Bicycle and Pedestrian Access/Improvements" in Chapter 1.

The level of traffic impacts from the proposed project would generally have minimal effect on pedestrians and bicyclists. VMT on local streets within the State Route 24 corridor is projected to increase by less than 0.4%. Specific bicycle/pedestrian improvements were considered to address bicycle/pedestrian issues in potentially affected areas of the corridor. Bicyclists will continue to be allowed shoulder use on State Route 24 as it exists today.

6-We believe that the DEA/EIR and the FEA/EIR provide an adequate analysis of both potential impacts and potential mitigation measures as discussed in Chapter 2, Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures. Please see the essay on "Bicycle and Pedestrian Access/ Improvements" in Chapter 1.

Bay Area Council



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President & CEO

■ *Founded in 1945, the Bay Area Council is a business-sponsored regional public policy organization that promotes economic prosperity and quality of life in the Bay Area.*

June 22, 2006

Mr. Gregory C. McConnell
Senior Environmental Planner
Mail Station 8B
Caltrans District 4, Environmental Analysis
P.O. Box 23660
Oakland, CA 94623-0660

Attention: Sheryl Dorado, Associate Environmental Planner

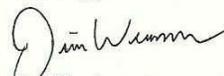
Dear Mr. McConnell:

The Bay Area Council is an employer-sponsored public policy organization that advocates for policies to improve quality-of-life and economic health in the Bay Area region. Our annual *Bay Area Council Poll* consistently shows that traffic congestion is the leading concern of Bay Area residents, and our members confirm that it is a top concern of employers as well. For this reason, the Bay Area Council places a high priority upon improving the regional transportation system, and the Caldecott Tunnel 4th Bore is one of the most important projects.

Rising employment and evolving commute patterns have created severe daily congestion in the off-peak direction. Addition of a fourth bore for the Caldecott Tunnel is the only effective way to provide balanced capacity in both directions, eliminating counter-commute congestion, dangerous merging, and idling emissions. The Caldecott 4th Bore is an important project that will improve regional mobility, employment access, and economic vitality. Residents and employers in Alameda and Contra Costa counties have shown strong support for the project, voting in overwhelming numbers to fund the project through two county sales tax measures and the Regional Measure 2 toll program.

The Draft EA/EIR is full and fair and includes a complete and comprehensive analysis of the project and its potential impacts to the surrounding community. Where impacts were found, the environmental document identifies appropriate and adequate mitigations. The Bay Area Council urges Caltrans to certify the EA/EIR and construct the project as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,


Jim Wunderman
President and CEO

Enc: 2005 Bay Area Council Poll

2006 BAY AREA POLL
 – Marginal Results Regionwide – (n = 600)

TREND QUESTIONS

1. What do you think is the most important problem facing the Bay Area today?

Transportation.....	35%	Homelessness	6%
Housing.....	19	Over-crowding.....	6
Economic concerns	17	Poor local government.....	5
Schools/education	14	Pollution.....	4
Clinic.....	12	Energy problems.....	3

2. Thinking about the overall quality of life in the Bay Area, as far as you are concerned, do you feel that things are going very well, somewhat well, somewhat badly or very badly?

VERY WELL	17%
SOMEWHAT WELL	59
SOMEWHAT BADLY	15
VERY BADLY	7
DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION	2

3. I am going to read some issues which people have mentioned as affecting the quality of life here in the Bay Area. For each category I read, please tell me if you think that over the past year it has gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse? (READ ITEMS IN RANDOM ORDER, ASKING:) Do you think (ITEM) in the Bay Area has gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse over the past year?

	BETTER	SAME	WORSE	NO OPINION
() a. the supply of housing.....	24%	31	40	5
() b. environmental quality.....	14%	51	31	4
() c. the cost of housing.....	6%	19	75	*
() d. poverty.....	6%	36	48	10
() e. the condition of local streets and roads	16%	35	48	1
() f. the supply of energy	12%	45	36	7
() g. the economy	30%	34	34	2
() h. unemployment	27%	32	29	12
() i. the adequacy of the highway system.....	14%	37	46	3
() j. the adequacy of public transportation	19%	43	26	12
() k. the quality of the public schools	9%	30	46	15
() l. crime.....	9%	43	44	4
() m. homelessness.....	9%	39	44	8
() n. the cost of energy	3%	11	83	3

4. How would you generally describe economic conditions in the Bay Area now? Would you say that economically, the Bay Area is in good times or bad times right now?

GOOD TIMES	46%
BAD TIMES	40
DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION	14

5. What about the next 12 months or so? Do you expect the economic conditions in the Bay Area to get better, stay the same or get worse?

GET BETTER	37%
STAY THE SAME	40
GET WORSE.....	18
DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION	5

6. Do you think it is possible for the Bay Area to grow as a region economically and at the same time improve the overall quality of life here?

YES	77%
NO	18
DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION	5

H:\POLL\2006\Thursday Top Problem\BA Poll Thurs Biggest Problem Basic Results.doc 1

IF NO, ASK:			
41.	For classification purposes, we'd like to know what your racial background is. Are you White, Black or African-American, Asian or Pacific Islander, or are you a member of another race? (ANSWER CAN BE A MULTIPLE)	WHITE / CAUCASIAN (non-Hisp.)	56%
		BLACK / AFRICAN-AMERICAN	6
		ASIAN / PACIFIC ISLANDER	12
		LATINO/HISPANIC (VOLUNTEERED)	22
		OTHER (SPECIFY)	1
		REFUSED	5
42.	Now, we don't want to know your exact income, but just roughly could you tell me if your annual household income before taxes is under \$20,000, \$20,000 to \$40,000, \$40,000 to \$60,000, \$60,000 to \$80,000 or more than \$80,000?	LESS THAN \$20,000	11%
		\$20,000 – \$39,999	16
		\$40,000 – \$59,999	14
		\$60,000 – \$79,999	11
		\$80,000 OR MORE	36
		NO ANSWER	12
43.	GENDER:	MALE	50%
		FEMALE	50
44.	In what county do you live?	ALAMEDA	21%
		CONTRA COSTA	15
		SAN FRANCISCO	13
		SAN MATEO	10
		SANTA CLARA	23
		MARIN	4
		SONOMA	8
		SOLANO	5
		NAPA	2
DON'T KNOW	--		

45. In what city or town do you live?		
Urban (SF/Oakland/San Jose).....	28%	
Suburban (ALL OTHER).....	72	
REFUSED.....	--	

Thank you for your comments.

Bicycle Friendly Berkeley Coalition



Dave Campbell
<dcampbel@lmi.net>
07/11/2006 10:48 AM

To Caldecott_Public_Comments@dot.ca.gov
cc
bcc
Subject Public Comment on Caldecott Improvement Project DEIR

July 11, 2006

Gregory C. McConnell, Senior Environmental Planner
Attention: Sheryl Dorado, Associate Environmental Planner
Department of Transportation, District 4, Environmental Analysis
Mail Station 8B
P.O. Box 23660



Oakland, CA 94623-0660 Response to DEIR.cwk.pdf
Re: Caldecott Improvement Project DEIR

Dear Mr. McConnell:

As we have stated in our previous letters to Caltrans, dated January 19, 2004 and August 23, 2005, and email communication of August 23, 2005, the Caldecott Improvement Project is going to add significant additional traffic to local streets in the Berkeley/Oakland area. The Draft Environmental Impact Report appears to claim that there will not be significantly more traffic and, as a result, contains little to no analysis of traffic conditions on local streets. We reject this conclusion of the DEIR.

1

There will be additional traffic and it is going to impact bicycle and pedestrian access and safety. It is not sufficient for Caltrans to only study vehicle LOS when analyzing traffic impacts. Caltrans also has to study impacts to bicycle and pedestrian travel. When more cars are using a roadway, there are more conflicts with bicyclists and pedestrians, and this is particularly true on roadways that are already congested. Bicycle and pedestrian safety is an environmentally significant issue that Caltrans legally must study and report to the public under the mandates of CEQA.

2

CEQA also requires that feasible mitigations be included as part of the project. In our letter of August 23, 2005, we requested the following mitigations be considered as part of the project:

1. Funding for a West Span of the Bay Bridge bicycle and pedestrian path
2. Traffic light at Ashby/Hillegass and additional traffic calming on Hillegass
3. Tunnel Rd shoulder improvements, including southbound right turn at Domingo
4. Telegraph Ave bike lanes
5. High visibility crossing/traffic light at Ashby/California
6. Cyclists access over the maintenance roadway which crosses highway 24.
7. Cyclists access across Highway 24, connecting Montclair with Berkeley
8. Better undercrossings of 24 at Telegraph, Shattuck, etc.
9. All hours bike access to BART between Orinda & Rockridge
10. High visibility crossing/traffic light at Alcatraz/California
11. High visibility crossing/traffic light at Alcatraz/Colby
12. Safe and convenient bike/ped access thru the Ashby/I-80 interchange
13. Traffic light at Ninth St. bike boulevard and Ashby

We repeat our comments and requests from the August 23 letter:

"Our most important request is this: please make sure that Caltrans includes as part of the EIR a full study of the impacts on local neighborhoods, including air quality impacts and noise impacts, traffic safety impacts (including the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists), and the impacts on neighborhood livability. In this respect, we join the previously expressed concerns of the Cities of Orinda and Lafayette.

3

In the Route 24/Caldecott Tunnel Corridor Study, January 2001, in §7.233 it is stated that the impacts on local traffic would be minimal with a new 4th bore, but that a formal environmental analysis would provide a more detailed assessment of the impacts on local streets. We would like Caltrans to fully study the impact increased highway traffic will have on local neighborhoods. We also want to request that Caltrans do a full noise impact and neighborhood livability analysis of increased highway traffic. It is important to us, as it is to many local residents, that the public have full information on the negative impacts of freeway projects, before final public approval is given. It is also important, as you know, that full disclosure of environmental impacts be studied and provided by an EIR in order for the EIR to be legally sufficient.

We also wish to point out that Caltrans, MTC, and other transportation planning agencies have a responsibility to address the existing problem of traffic safety, traffic volumes, and neighborhood livability in the nearby neighborhoods, aside from any plans to add a 4th bore. Because of decisions made in the last several decades, more traffic uses local streets than these streets can handle. As a result, air pollution and noise pollution have increased to dangerous levels, and traffic safety is at an all time worse. This problem has to be addressed and it is your agency, in cooperation with other agencies, that has the responsibility. We trust you agree with our concerns and will fully address this issue as part of the proposed project.

Furthermore, please study every alternative that reduces the number of vehicles on our streets. In connection with this, please study an alternative of charging tolls for all single-occupant vehicles using the Tunnel. The above study did not address this issue, choosing instead to look at HOT lanes. The study of tolls should extend to all single-occupant vehicles, not just those opting to pay for use of a toll lane.

4

Finally, as mitigation for the numerous adverse impacts of the existing tunnel and proposed 4th bore, we request that a new bicycle/pedestrian bridge be constructed from the upper end of Tunnel Rd., across the barrier created by highway 24, over to Lake Temescal. A new bridge like this would provide a vital link for bicyclists between the Montclair District of Oakland and the southside area of Berkeley, including UC Berkeley. Your full analysis of charging all single-occupant vehicles a toll for use of the tunnel should shed light on how much money is available to pay for such an important and needed mitigation.

5

We look forward to Caltrans changing its traditional approach to freeway building by joining with local communities to improve neighborhood livability, and specifically by taking a leading roll in studying the effects that freeway projects have on local communities."

We also echo the mitigations requested by the North Hills Phoenix

Association regarding bike/ped access:

- A. Reconfigure the intersection of the Warren Freeway with Tunnel Road so pedestrians can cross the street. 6
- B. Provide a walkway between Chabot Road and the traffic light at the intersection of the Warren Freeway with Tunnel Road, for pedestrian access to BART by residents of the hill area. 7
- C. Fulfill the long-term plan for a pedestrian/bike path connecting Lake Temescal with Tunnel Road. This has been an ACCMA high-priority in the long-range plan, and has 25 years of history. 8

The much faster traffic on Tunnel Road caused by the Fourth Bore will make walking very difficult on Tunnel Road from its intersection with the Kay Street Overpass to Claremont Avenue. Mitigations must be included to alleviate this impact.

- A. Sidewalks need to be completed on both sides of Tunnel Road from the Hiller traffic light at the intersection with the Warren Freeway to the existing sidewalks that extend toward Claremont Avenue. 9
- B. A sidewalk is needed along Caldecott Lane and Tunnel Road between the Hiller Highland traffic light and the Parkwoods. 10
- C. A full bike lane must be provided from the Hiller traffic light to Claremont Avenue in the westbound direction, since bicyclists will have difficulty traveling on Tunnel Road to Berkeley. 11

It is our opinion that the DEIR does not accurately analyze traffic conditions and traffic safety and access impacts and, thus, does not satisfy CEQA. For this reason, it should be withdrawn and redone. 12

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*

Dave Campbell
President

cc: BFBC Board of Directors
Berkeley City Council
Berkeley Transportation Commission

- 1- Please see response #2 in the essay on “Traffic Operations” in Chapter 1.
- 2- Please see the essay on “Bicycle and Pedestrian Access/Improvements” and response #2 in the essay on “Traffic Operations” in Chapter 1.
- 3- Please see the essays on “Methodologies Used for the Impact Assessments/Local Ordinances” and “Project Study Area Boundaries” in Chapter 1.
- 4- Please see essay on “Alternatives Considered in the Draft Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Report (DEA/EIR)” and response #9 in the essay on “Traffic Operations” in Chapter 1.
- 5- This option was investigated by the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (ACCMA)-led 13/24 Bicycle/Pedestrian Feasibility Study. That study concluded that the potential environmental impacts, combined with a cost of \$6-7.2 million, significantly reduces its viability as a regional bikeway improvement. It is identified as a future project on the Vision Network in ACCMA’s Final 2006 Countywide Bicycle Plan. The Vision Network is equivalent to a Tier 3, unfunded project and is not on ACCMA’s Financially Constrained (Tier 2) or High Priority Networks. Please see Options C1, C2, and D in the essay on “Bicycle and Pedestrian Access/Improvements” in Chapter 1.
- 6- ACCMA's Feasibility Study (Option A1) concluded that provisions for an at-grade bicycle/pedestrian crossing at this location could be a viable option. The cost would be \$400,000-\$500,000. Traffic signal studies are required to determine operation adequacy if implemented. A bike/ped overcrossing was also investigated for this location (Option A2), estimated to cost between \$3.2-\$3.8 million, and recommended for follow-up with the City of Oakland to pursue additional studies and funding. Please see Options A1 and A2 in the essay on “Bicycle and Pedestrian Access/Improvements” in Chapter 1.

7- ACCMA's Feasibility Study (Option F) concluded that provisions for an ADA compliant walkway and bike path from Chabot Road to the intersection would cost in the range of \$4-\$5 million. The steep grades in this area, combined with an 150-ft elevation differential, renders this option undesirable. This option was dropped from further study. Please see Option F in the essay on "Bicycle and Pedestrian Access/Improvements" in Chapter 1.

8- Feasibility studies performed by the ACCMA, in conjunction with various local user groups, have shown that upgrading the existing Kay Overcrossing bicycle route to link Lake Temescal with Tunnel Road is a viable option (Option E). Improvements for this existing route along Broadway and Caldecott Lane would cost in the range of \$2.0 - \$2.5 Million. Upgrading the same route for pedestrians would double the cost due to ADA compliance issues, specifically steep existing grades on both Broadway and Caldecott Lane. Please see Option E in the essay on "Bicycle and Pedestrian Access/Improvements" in Chapter 1.

9- Options A1, E, and H from the ACCMA study included completion of sidewalks on Tunnel Road (to intersection of Caldecott Lane/State Route 13) and sidewalks on Caldecott Lane where grades allow meeting ADA requirements. These options are being carried forward to the next phase of project development. Please see Options A1, E, and H in the essay on "Bicycle and Pedestrian Access/ Improvements in Chapter 1.

10- Options A1, E, and H from the ACCMA study included completion of sidewalks on Tunnel Road (to the intersection of Caldecott Lane/State Route 13) and sidewalks on Caldecott Lane where grades allow meeting ADA requirements. These options are being carried forward to the next phase of project development. Please see Options A1, E, and H in the essay on "Bicycle and Pedestrian Access/ Improvements" in Chapter 1.

11-The traffic operations analysis does not show a significant impact on peak hour traffic on Tunnel Road/Ashby Avenue between the Hiller traffic light and Claremont Avenue. The appropriate agencies having jurisdiction in this area should be contacted for upgrades to Ashby Avenue west of this intersection. Please refer to the Options A1, A2, and H G13 in the essay on "Bicycle and Pedestrian Access/Improvements" in Chapter 1. Please also see essay on "The Environmental Process; Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) versus an Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Report (EA/EIR); and Criteria for Significance" in Chapter 1.

12- We believe that the DEA/EIR and the FEA/EIR provide an adequate analysis of both potential impacts and potential mitigation measures as discussed in Chapter 2, Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures. Please see the essay on "Bicycle and Pedestrian Access/ Improvements" in Chapter 1.

California Alliance for Jobs



2000 Powell St., Suite 1175
Emeryville, CA 94608
Phone: 510.547.9300
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928 2nd St. suite 200
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www.calcommuters.org

Representing the Heavy Construction Industry

June 19, 2006

Gregory C. McConnell, Senior Environmental Planner
Attention: Sheryl Dorado, Associate Environmental Planner
Dept. of Transportation, District 4, Environmental Analysis, Mail Station 8B
P.O. Box 23660, Oakland, CA 94623-0660.

Dear Mr. McConnell:

The California Alliance for Jobs has reviewed the Draft EA/EIR for the Caldecott Improvement Project and supports approval with no further studies or delays. The document clearly identifies the possible impacts and offers appropriate corresponding mitigations.

The local and regional benefits of this project far outweigh the local impacts. The Caldecott Tunnel is an important conduit for the movement of both people and commerce traveling locally and regionally. In its current configuration it serves more as a bottleneck that creates air pollution from idling cars and compels frustrated commuters onto local streets.

The California Alliance for Jobs prefers the three-lane bore option as the preferred alternative. It would be unfortunate to build two lanes now, only to return in the future to further expand. Good planning dictates that we do it right the first time. Adding the third lane now will provide for maximum traffic flow and offset future construction impacts. While some view the construction activity as an inconvenience, our membership values the project as it will generate high wage jobs during construction and then be an improved facility supporting the economic vitality of the area.

The California Alliance for Jobs represents 2,000 construction firms and their 50,000 union workers in Northern and Central California. We ask that you approve the Draft EA/EIR, finish the design of the 4th Bore, and begin construction on the project as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

Tomi Van de Brooke

Tomi Van de Brooke
Director, Bay Area Government Relations

Attachment: Contra Costa Times editorial

Associated General Contractors of California	Operating Engineers Local Union #3	Engineering and Utility Contractors Association	Northern California District Council of Laborers	Association of Engineering Construction Employers
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1-Please see the essay "Preferred Alternative" in Chapter 1.

California Native Plant Society



"Lech Naumovich"
<conservation@ebcnps.org>
Sent by: lechroy@gmail.com

To Caldecott_Public_Comments@dot.ca.gov
cc "lbake66@aol.com" <lbake66@aol.com>
bcc

07/12/2006 08:42 AM

Please respond to
conservation@ebcnps.org

Subject Caldecott Comments - EBCNPS

The following are the comments of the East Bay Chapter of the California Native Plant Society on the Caldecott Improvement Project. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Lech Naumovich

Lech Naumovich
Conservation Analyst
California Native Plant Society
East Bay Chapter
510-734-0335 (work)
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Caldecott IP-DEIR Comments-EBCNPS.pdf

California Native Plant Society

East Bay Chapter

P O Box 5597, Elmwood Station, Berkeley, CA 94705

July 11, 2006

Gregory C. McConnell, Senior Environmental Planner
Attention: Sheryl Dorado, Associate Environmental Planner
Dept. of Transportation, District 4, Environmental Analysis
Mail Station 8B
P.O. Box 23660
Oakland, CA 94623-0660

Re: Comments, Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Caldecott Improvement Project on State Route 24

Dear Mr. McConnell:

The East Bay Chapter of the California Native Plant Society greatly appreciates the opportunity to comment on the *Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Caldecott Improvement Project on State Route 24 (DEIR)*. The California Native Plant Society (CNPS) is a non-profit organization of more than 10,000 laypersons and professional botanists organized into 32 chapters throughout California. The mission of the CNPS is to increase the understanding and appreciation of California's native plants and to preserve them in their natural habitat through scientific activities, education, and conservation.

After reviewing the Draft Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Report prepared for the Caldecott Improvement Project on State Route 24 in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, the Conservation Committee of the East Bay Chapter of the California Native Plant Society (EBCNPS) has a number of concerns.

- (1) The DEIR has not adequately considered the cumulative impacts of the Caldecott Improvement Project on the East Bay environment. The environmental impact of this project needs to be considered in context of other projects and their impacts, including: 1) the two developments (by the Mayer-Luce and Baca groups) on the western slope of the Oakland Hills south of the Caldecott Tunnel and 2) the Fuel break management plan for the City of Oakland. The cumulative effects of increased nitrous oxide (NO_x) pollution which tends to shift California ecosystems towards a more weedy, non-native species composition, and increased disturbed land allowing for easier spread and establishment of non-native species need to be considered on a larger scale. 1
- (2) The report claims in Appendix A that the project will not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources such as local tree preservation ordinances. We found to the contrary that with respect to trees in 2



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California Native Plant Society

Oakland in your “Caldecott Improvement Project Mitigation Memorandum” that you acknowledged “Both tunnel alternatives will affect trees protected by this ordinance”. The conclusion of “No Impact” with respect to the assessment of Biological Resources and impacts on trees found in Appendix A of the Draft report is clearly undercut by the false claim. In a recent survey of trees that might be impacted in Oakland by the project, it was found that as many as 19 protected trees under the City of Oakland’s Tree Protection Ordinance would be clear cut, potentially in violation of the City of Oakland’s Municipal Code. We are also concerned that the report fails to list the number of trees protected under the protected tree ordinances in the City of Oakland and the City of Orinda, which would be cut down if the project is built as proposed, and also failed to adequately discuss what might be done to reduce the number of protected trees that might be impacted by the project.

- (3) The assurances contained in the existing EA/EIR regarding what is proposed as mitigation for the impacts identified upon protected trees or the number of trees that will be impacted by the proposed project are also inadequate and require further surveys and clarification by the partners as to what will be done and actually embodied in the “Final Tree Replacement and Planting Plan” document. It is noteworthy that the Draft report does not clarify on page 179 when the partners will actually prepare the “Final Tree Replacement and Planting Plan” or what the actual content of this plan and any actual tree replacement numbers will be. The report just notes some “preliminary recommendations” in regard to a potential plan that might be developed at some unspecified future date. 3
- (4) The Conservation Committee is also concerned that the Draft report does not satisfy the obligations outlined on page 180 under Executive Order 13112 (building on the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974, and the Endangered Species Act of 1973) to “prevent the introduction of invasive species; provide for their control; and take measures to minimize economic, ecological, and human health effects”. The report notes in Table 2.3.4-1 the “Noxious Weeds Noted in the Project Area During May 2004 Surveys”. There are substantial numbers and species of noxious weeds in the area that will be impacted by the project. 4
- (5) While the report provides a series of pictures on pages 107-120 that purport to show what the condition of the area might be either “immediately following construction” or “showing re-establishment of vegetation at 10-15 years” these simulations don’t account for the continuing existence and spread of invasive weeds in the project area from many of the poorly landscaped and poorly maintained California Department of Transportation properties in the project area. We note that the California Department of Transportation has historically done very little to control invasive weeds on its properties in the Highway 24 corridor project area west of the Caldecott Tunnel, and sometimes has refused to maintain its properties even denying that the properties were owned by the State or Caltrans. The invasive weed species on some of the Caltrans’ properties represent an on-going, serious fire hazard in the area, threatening if a fire got started not only other sensitive plant communities and many native plant species, but also the lives and properties of local residents in Oakland and Berkeley. 5



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California Native Plant Society

It is noteworthy that the Draft report acknowledged on page 180 that “Construction activities associated with the proposed project have the potential to introduce noxious weeds from the project area into un-infested natural areas. Natural areas that are potentially at risk include neighboring wildland areas and other areas where machinery used on the project may be used subsequently”.

- (6) The project partners will have to do more to prevent the introduction of invasives into wildland areas or the areas west of the Caldecott Tunnel where it is proposing to clear cut all trees and shrubs and subsequently replant. Recent observations for example of efforts by Caltrans in the Highway 24 corridor on the south side of the freeway indicated that instead of treating with herbicide the stumps of thousands of French broom plants that were cut down with or hand pulling broom plants during the rainy season, that the stumps were left to resprout and the large populations of flammable French broom plants were left substantially intact to continue spreading to other public and/or private properties in the Highway 24 corridor or the larger project area. The seeds from the monoculture of French broom on Caltrans’ properties in the corridor have a viable life of nearly 40 years, and it is going to take more than the very limited mitigation proposal lacking in specificity contained in this Draft report to make even a small reduction in the large population of French broom or other noxious weeds identified. 6
- (7) As many local residents know, the Sibley Volcanic Preserve is an important nature preserve that has been granted this “resource preservation” status due to its unique geological and biological resources. Additionally, this preserve is an integral element of the preserved ridge tops of the East Bay Hills, which provide an invaluable preserve for plants and animals. The 4th Bore Project may have some indirect and direct impacts on this park including: increased noise changing the activity of native animals that may pollinate or otherwise use the plant communities of this park. Additionally, it is not unlikely that invasive weeds may spread via wind to this park. EBCNPS recommends the monitoring and maintenance of this park for invasive species that may be spread through the 4th Bore project. 7
- (8) As projects of such a large magnitude unfold, there are certain “unforeseeable” impacts that may need attention. EBCNPS recommends the establishment of a budget that will allow for monitoring of invasive species and the monitoring native trees that may be affected indirectly by increased particulate matter and water pollution. 8
- (9) Restoration work and mitigation work must utilize only certified native plants grown from locally collected seed in order to maintain the genetic integrity of the existing populations. We advise the use of local contractors with local knowledge for these projects. Best management practices will be utilized in order to restrict any introduction of weeds and invasive species. If such new species are found post-construction, the abatement and removal of this damage need to be addressed in mitigation practices. 9
- (10) Most importantly, EBCNPS recommends that mitigation measures and projects take place either on-site or as close to the site as possible. The North Oakland Sports Complex has a large portion of natural area which is some of the last remaining wild areas in the Caldecott Wildlife Corridor on the western side of the 10



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slope. Much of this land is currently being contemplated for large-scale housing developments. We suggest that one important mitigation measure would be to purchase and give to the City of Oakland the more ecologically valuable portions of this land including the riparian areas at the back of the canyon which are adjacent to city open space. EBCNPS recommends also that a portion of mitigation funding be directed to the restoration of native Coastal Scrub and Live Oak communities on the Western slope of this park where French broom and eucalyptus have invaded.

CNPS looks forward to submitting further comments through the EIR process. Questions and concerns can be addressed to the Conservation Analyst. We look forward to working with you on this process.

Sincerely,

Lech Naumovich
East Bay Conservation Analyst
California Native Plant Society
(510) 734 - 0335



1- The Mayer-Luce & Baca developments you refer to do not have environmental documents available for review. Caltrans has requested information on these developments from the City of Oakland, but the information the City has is very preliminary. In general, “[t]he Lead Agency is required to discuss unapproved projects *currently under environmental review* with related impacts or which result in significant cumulative....” To address “the problem of where to draw the line on projects undergoing environmental review since application of new projects are constantly being submitted,” the general rule is that a “reasonable point” is “after the preparation of the draft EIR.” See CEQA Guidelines §15130 “Discussion” (emphasis added).

Mitigation for invasive species removal, fire management, and restoration will occur both inside and outside the immediate project study area boundaries, and will be finalized during consultation with resource agencies and project partners. Mitigation sites outside of the project area will be planted with native trees and shrubs to reestablish habitat values. Measures would include invasive weed control and fire management for a maximum period of three years. Additional highway planting, which would occur inside of the project study area boundaries, will include both mitigation planting and replacement planting to integrate the proposed facility with the adjacent community and natural environment. Mitigation tree planting and invasive weed removal/control at sites located outside of the project will be performed concurrent with the roadway contract. Additional highway planting within the immediate freeway corridor, including three years of plant establishment and invasive weed control within specific areas, would be completed under a separate contract and implemented immediately following the completion of all roadwork.

The Preferred Alternative (Alternative 2N) of this project is included in the 2007 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (which conforms to the State Implementation Plan (SIP)) and the 2005 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and thus is in conformance with all related federal air quality requirements. Since air pollution is a regional issue, it is addressed through a statewide process (the State Implementation Plan), which was designed to address the issues that the commenter has stated.

Additional studies on statewide nitrous oxide (No_x) pollution are beyond the scope of the project.

2 – Caltrans is proactive in protecting and preserving existing vegetation on all of its projects. In addition to Caltrans' own policy, the intent of the City of Oakland's Tree Protection Ordinance is and will continue to be considered during all stages of project development. Please see the essay on "Methodologies Used for Impact Assessments/Local Ordinances" in Chapter 1.

Trees within the western portal staging area were incorrectly counted; all other areas checked were correctly counted. An additional tree survey was conducted in the western portal staging area, and additional trees were added to the previous count to produce an accurate count of trees to be impacted by the project. The updated tree count information can be found in the final environmental document. In addition, tree loss will not be significant.

3 – Caltrans has allocated funding for replacement landscaping to mitigate for tree removal within the immediate freeway corridor. This will be implemented immediately following completion of roadwork and will include a three-year plant establishment period. Off-site mitigation will occur concurrent with the tunnel project. Mitigation measures provide for the replacement of oaks at a 5:1 ratio. All other native trees with a diameter breast height of 6 inches will be replaced at a ratio of 3:1. Trees will be replaced at a higher ratio to compensate for the temporal loss of habitat; more trees planted will result in better species establishment and higher quality habitat in the future. Generally, where water is available, replacement trees are usually 5-gallon size but can be upsized to 15-gallon and 24-inch box trees to accelerate the re-establishment of aesthetic and habitat values. In off-site mitigation areas, water is generally unavailable and is usually provided through more labor-intensive means. Plant materials selected for these areas are generally planted as seedlings having intact taproots and will mostly subsist on seasonal rains. Depending upon the tree species, 5-gallon size trees range in height from 5-8 feet, 15-gallon trees are generally 8-10 feet, and 24-inch box trees are 10-12 feet or more in height. Areas adjacent to the Caldecott lane will have the appearance of being newly landscaped and in addition to trees will include lower-story shrubs and woody ground covers. Planted areas would be mulched to provide a neat appearance, conserve water and to control weeds. Re-establishment of the habitat quality comparable to existing conditions would take approximately 8-10 years.

4 – As described in Section 2.3.4.4 of the DEA/EIR, measures such as worker training, avoidance of sensitive communities, and cleaning of construction machinery before use on subsequent projects in sensitive communities would reduce the likelihood that noxious weeds would be spread by the proposed project. Furthermore, as part of future invasive species control, only native or non-invasive plant species appropriate for the project area will be used in any restoration or revegetation seed mix or stock. Identified invasives will be mechanically or chemically removed during the three-year plant establishment period (PEP), as necessary; this treatment will ensure that invasive populations do not become established. The frequency and type of treatment will be site specific and will be determined during project construction and/or completion. Since this DEA/EIR focuses on the Caldecott Improvement Project and not other lands, the status of other nearby lands was not

considered for the analysis; however, project-specific measures to control the spread of noxious weeds on site would also help to minimize the spread of non-native species in areas adjacent to the project corridor.

5 – Comment noted.

6 – Please see response #4 above.

7 –The project will impact low-quality wildlife habitat immediately adjacent to State Route 24 within Caltrans right-of-way. Few wildlife species utilize this low-quality habitat. Wildlife will be able to use the higher-quality habitat abundant throughout the project vicinity and within the Caldecott Wildlife Corridor located above the existing and proposed tunnel.

Caltrans does not anticipate the need to monitor the park for invasive species introduced by the project. Maintenance of the park is beyond the scope of the project.

8 – Mitigations for invasive species removal, fire management, and restoration will occur both inside and outside the immediate project study area boundaries, and will be finalized during consultation with resource agencies and project partners. Mitigation sites outside of the project area will be planted with native or non-invasive trees and shrubs to reestablish habitat values and would include invasive weed control and fire management for a maximum period of three years. Additional highway planting, which would occur inside of the project study area boundaries, will include both mitigation planting and replacement planting to integrate the proposed facility with the adjacent community and natural environment. Mitigation tree planting and invasive weed removal/control at sites located outside of the project will be performed concurrent with the roadway contract. Additional highway planting within the immediate freeway corridor, including three years of plant establishment and invasive weed control within specific areas, would be completed under a separate contract and implemented immediately following the completion of all roadwork.

No separate budget will be set aside for additional monitoring of invasive species and native trees.

The Preferred Alternative (Alternative 2N) of this project is included in the 2007 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (which conforms to the State Implementation Plan (SIP)) and the 2005 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and thus is in conformance with all related federal air quality requirements. Since air pollution is a regional issue, it is addressed through a statewide process (the State Implementation Plan). The plan was designed to address the issues that the commenter has stated. Please see the essay on “Construction Impacts” regarding dust in Chapter 1.

The project will not result in any significant water pollution. Please see section 2.2.2, Water Quality, in Volume I.

9 – Caltrans is replacing removed vegetation with native and non-native species. Best management practices will be utilized.

10 – Precise plans for replacement planting, invasive weed species control, and fire management are not prepared during the environmental phase of the project. Mitigation for invasive species removal, fire management, and restoration will occur both inside and outside the immediate project study area boundaries, and will be finalized per consultation with resource agencies and project partners. A Comprehensive Conceptual Mitigation Plan will be prepared to address mitigation for impacts resulting from the proposed project during the design phase.

California Shakespeare Theater

California Shakespeare Theater

Jonathan Moscone
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Debbie Chinn
MANAGING DIRECTOR

701 Heinz Avenue
Berkeley CA
94710-2732
Tel 510.548.3422
Fax 510.843.9921
www.calshakes.org

July 5, 2006

Mr. Gregory C. McConnell, Senior Environmental Planner
Att: Sheryl Dorado, Associate Environment Planner
Dept. of Transportation, District 4, Environmental Analysis
Mail Station 8B
PO Box 23660
Oakland, CA 94623-0660

Dear Mr. McConnell and Ms. Dorado,

The California Shakespeare Theater (“Cal Shakes”) wishes to comment on the Draft EIR regarding the Caldecott Improvement Project on State Route 24.

Our facility (known as the Bruns Memorial Amphitheater) is located on the north side of Route 24 at the Gateway interchange, on land leased from EBMUD. Cal Shakes offers a series of performances from June through October (Tuesdays through Sundays). Our outdoor amphitheater seats 545 patrons and our shows generally sell out. Parking for our facility is located immediately adjacent to the Gateway interchange’s westbound on-ramp.

We are concerned that the Draft EIR does not acknowledge Cal Shakes or the scope of our activities, and fails to consider potential impacts of the Caldecott project:

- The discussion of existing land uses shows the site simply as “open space” (figure 2.1.1-1). 1
- The introductory discussion of Cultural Facilities vaguely mentions “one performance venue” in Orinda without naming it, and then concludes without discussion that there will be no impact (page 57) 2
- In two places, the Draft EIR states that the Department of Transportation will work to minimize construction impacts on “special events” such as the California Shakespeare Festival – which implies that we only offer a single, short-term activity rather than operate continuously for five months (pages 87 and 203). 3
- The evaluation of noise briefly mentions the Bruns Amphitheater as a possible sensitive receptor, but does not discuss possible impacts (page 151). 4
- The analysis of impacts for the 3-lane south bore alternative identifies the need to reconfigure the north side of the Gateway interchange and build a frontage road to Fish Ranch Road, but does not recognize possible effects on Cal Shakes (page 27). 5

Reimagining the classics.

Mr. Gregory C. McConnell
Ms. Sheryl Dorado
July 5, 2006
Page two

We wish to advise the Department of Transportation of possible negative impacts of the project on our summer season, and to visitors to our facility and to request that the EIR address these topics:

- 1) Construction may cause increased levels of truck traffic, noise, dust and visual impacts. Our performances begin 7:30 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, 8:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturdays, 2:00 p.m. on select Saturday matinees, and 4:00 p.m. on Sundays. We also have Student Matinee performances which run from 11:00 – 2:00 on select week days during the school year. We ask that the construction noise during performances be kept to a minimum. We recognize that this still will leave our staff, artists and other workers exposed to construction-related impacts. 6
- 2) The Draft EIR discusses blasting which will result in peak particle vibrations high enough to warrant special consideration to homes. We ask that the Department of Transportation include special consideration to the California Shakespeare Theater's 3-acre leased area that may be within direct alignment of the new bore. 7
- 3) It is not clear if the Draft EIR proposes using land near our site or the Gateway interchange for construction staging. If so, this might reduce available parking for our patrons or cause congestion at the interchange. 8
- 4) Possible utility disruption to our facility should the surrounding PG&E lines be rerouted or temporarily shut off during construction. We ask that accommodations be made so as to not disrupt any electrical power to the site. Scene building and other normal theater operations will be taking place during the daytime in preparation for the shows, and if power were to be off over night or during a performance, 600 people could be stranded in the dark far from their cars – which would create a serious safety hazard. If such power disruption is unavoidable, then we must be given advance warning and generators should be provided (along with personnel to operate them). 9

We thank you for factoring these concerns into the EIR and would appreciate having confirmation from you that the California Shakespeare Theater's interests are being taken into consideration as plans for the Caldecott Improvement Project gets underway.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or wish to take a tour of our premises to fully understand the possible impacts that the Caldecott Improvement Project may have on the California Shakespeare Theater.

Sincerely,

Debbie Chinn
Managing Director

Copy: Bill Gray, Gray-Bowen and Company,
1820 Bonanza Street, #204
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

1 and 2- The performance venue in Orinda referred to on page 57, Section 2.1.3.3, Community Facilities and Public Services, is the Bruns Amphitheater used by Cal Shakes. The text has been revised to identify the use of the theater. The impact on the theater would be positive because of improved highway access, as was stated on page 57. Without the proposed project, delays in accessing the theater from Contra Costa County would increase substantially in the future as a result of westbound traffic queuing through Orinda on State Route 24 in the evening. See Table 2.1.5-5, No-Build Westbound p.m. Peak Period (2032), for information on expected traffic speeds westbound on State Route 24 from I-680 to Orinda.

3-The change has been made in the FEA/EIR. It now reads, "The Department will work with local agencies to minimize traffic impacts during construction for events such as the California Shakespeare Theater located on the north side of State Route 24 at the Gateway interchange during its continuous operation from May to October of every year. Should the operation of the California Shakespeare Theater change, the Department will work closely with them to minimize any traffic impacts during construction."

4- The projected future noise level at the theater would not constitute an impact.

5- Alternative 2N has been chosen as the Preferred Alternative (see essay on “Preferred Alternative” in Chapter 1 for a discussion on the Preferred Alternative selection process). The reconfiguration of the north side of the Gateway Boulevard interchange and frontage road to Fish Ranch Road are not included in the Preferred Alternative.

6- Please see the essay on "Construction Impacts" in Chapter 1. The mountain that is between the Caldecott Contra Costa County fourth bore portal site, and the Shakespeare theater will serve as a natural noise barrier to the construction noise generated at the Portal.

The Traffic Congestion Management Plan to be prepared for the project during the design phase will include language regarding the need to reduce construction impacts, whenever feasible, during the Shakespeare Festival.

7- The Shakespeare Theatre is located approximately 4000 feet from the east portal of the proposed fourth Bore. The vibration studies performed in support of the environmental process indicate that the vibrations induced by blasting performed within the fourth Bore will not adversely effect any structures associated with the theatre and would be less than the vibrations associated with general road traffic.

The acoustical needs of the Shakespeare Theater are well known and have been accounted for in the study of noise from proposed construction operations. It is anticipated that the construction noise will not be audible at the Shakespeare Theater over the din created by the traffic noise.

8- Caltrans is proposing to utilize property within Caltrans right-of-way for potential staging at the Gateway interchange.

9- Electric poles will be relocated by PG&E on Fish Ranch Road. If disruptions are required, which would be during weekday daytime hours, PG&E will coordinate with those affected.

Chamber of Commerce of Moraga
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF MORAGA
1480 Moraga Road, Suite 1, Box 254
Moraga, CA 94556

July 5, 2006

Gregory C. McConnell, Senior Environmental Planner
Attention: Sheryl Dorado, Associate Environmental Planner
Dept. of Transportation, District 4, Environmental Analysis, Mail Station 8B
P.O. Box 23660
Oakland, CA 94623-0660.

RE: Caldecott Tunnel Project and to the Draft EA/EIR

Dear Mr. McConnell:

This is to advise you that the Chamber of Commerce of Moraga fully supports the fourth bore of the Caldecott Tunnel, and would like to see its completion as soon as possible. It is obvious to anyone who uses the tunnel that the fourth bore is necessary. The fourth bore will provide a public benefit; it will reduce traffic congestion, facilitate the flow of people and commerce throughout the region, and improve the quality of life for area residents and businesses.

Caltrans has prepared a fair Draft EA/EIR that includes a complete and comprehensive analysis of the project and its potential impacts to the surrounding community.

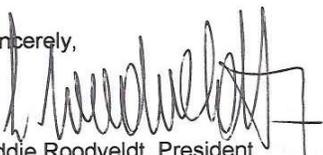
We note that the document includes an appropriate list of project mitigations that you believe are adequate to alleviate (mitigate) the impacts of the project on community.

Bay Area residents overwhelmingly voted in support of the project when they voted to support Regional Measure 2 in March of 2004, and approved Measure J on November 2, 2004.

Please approve the Draft EA/EIR, complete the design and begin construction on the project as soon as possible.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Eddie Roodveldt, President
Chamber of Commerce of Moraga

Thank you for your comments.

Chamber of Commerce of Pleasant Hill



91 Gregory Lane
Suite 11
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
(925) 687-0700

July 21, 2006

Gregory C. McConnell, Senior Environmental Planner
Attention: Sheryl Dorado, Associate Environmental Planner
Dept. of Transportation, District 4, Environmental Analysis, Mail Station 8B
P.O. Box 23660, Oakland, CA 94623-0660.

Dear Ms. Dorado:

The Pleasant Hill Chamber of Commerce has passed a resolution supporting CalTrans' efforts to construct and complete the Caldecott 4th Bore Tunnel Project. We urge Caltrans to approve the Draft Environmental Document, finish design and begin construction of the 4th Caldecott tunnel bore as soon as possible within current fiscal parameters.

There is a tremendous ongoing need for the completion of the 4th bore project. It will reduce traffic congestion and facilitate the flow of people and commerce to and from the East bay. The 4th Bore will also provide additional emergency response capabilities in the event of closures of any of the other bores due to catastrophic failure resulting from natural or man made disaster such as an earthquake or fuel tank explosion as occurred several years ago.

The Pleasant Hill Chamber of Commerce strongly supports the construction of the 4th Caldecott Tunnel Bore on behalf of numerous Pleasant Hill consumers, businesses and workers who will significantly benefit from this project.

Sincerely,

Steven M. Lack Ph.D.

Vice President - Government Affairs

Thank you for your comments.

Claremont Elmwood Neighborhood Association

SALLY WILLIAMS

Greg,

I am enclosing a hard copy of the comments of the Claremont Elmwood Neighborhood Association and I am enclosing a 'summary' of the CENNA response to the D-EA/EIR that a circulated to the community. Since this memo preceeds the July 31st deadline for comments, there are a couple of thoughts on the consensus memo that are not in the formal comments that CENNA would like addressed.

You certainly have your work cut out for you!

Thanks for your thoughtfulness and for the deadline extension.



17 July 06

Claremont Elmwood Neighborhood Association-Summary

Claremont Elmwood Neighborhood Association
P. O. Box 5108 Berkeley, Ca. 94705 Dean Metzger, President

SUMMARY OF CENA RESPONSE TO DRAFT FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (D-EA)
AND DRAFT CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (CALTRANS)
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (D-EIR)
FOR THE CALTRANS CALDECOTT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (CIP)

1. Caltrans states that a fourth bore will not relieve traffic congestion for westbound morning commuters and east bound evening commuters. Caltrans did state that a new bore would increase A.M. traffic on N. SR13 (p.57). Caltrans excluded consideration of weekend and evening traffic and it excluded consideration of the demands that the new University of California stadium and other facilities will have on SR 24, SR13 and arterial streets. Caltrans has stated that eastbound traffic to Contra Costa County will improve during peak hours in the morning and westbound traffic from Contra Costa County will improve in the afternoon peak period. New traffic demand measurements must be taken to determine unmeasured projected traffic demands including new congestion areas on SR 24 if the bore is built, and to determine if taxpayer money would be better spent on other traffic alleviation measures that would more easily facilitate access to the workplace and to recreation. 1
2. Signage should be removed on SR 24 on the eastern side of the tunnel that directs traffic to Berkeley to use SR 13 North. Rather, the signs should direct traffic to the University to stay on the freeway network and exit at University Avenue. Signage on SR 13 North should be replaced with exit signs labeled Tunnel Road noting that Tunnel Road is a residential street with a 25 mph speed limit. (Note: It is CENA's position that SR 13 should become a city street instead of a State Highway.) 2
3. The Berkeley study area (D-EIR p. 55) and the CIP project area are discordant. The D-EIR describes the study area as "South Berkeley and South Shattuck, due to their proximity to Ashby Avenue, the major arterial connecting the City of Berkeley to SR 24, the Caldecott Tunnel and Contra Costa County" (Note the direction of traffic in the study area.) The project area is SR 24 from the western tunnel entrance to the SR 24 Broadway exit. CENA requests that these areas be redefined. The study area should focus on the needs of the Claremont, Elmwood, Vicente Canyon, and the Hillcrest Ridge neighborhoods, and the project area needs to be expanded to include the revised study area and the project area should be extended to the maze and Berkeley arterials feeding into the maze. 3
4. New maps need to be added to a revised EA/EIR that reflect correct study areas and correct arterial streets. The current maps are incomplete and often unreadable. 4
5. Caltrans maps, study areas, project areas, traffic data, noise and air pollution data should reflect the data and standards of the cities of Oakland and Berkeley, and they should meet National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The D-EIR/EA does not meet these standards. 5
6. Cumulative impacts of noise and air pollution need to be measured at several road level and hillside spots along the 24 corridor noting that canyons have a special dynamic, that noise and pollution impacts should include BART issues, and the effects of seismic retrofits to the understructure of BART and SR 24. 6
7. Noise and pollution mitigations should be proposed that reflect the newest technologies and solutions used in North America and Europe. 7
8. Trucks (and autos) will avoid SR 238, I-580 and I-880 while cargo lanes and cargo flyovers are built as part of MTC's "Goods Movement" Program. Caltrans data on truck usage of 24 should be coordinated with the induced traffic that will result from expansion at the port of Oakland and the MTC data used to develop the Goods Movement program. 8
9. Trucks should be required to disengage "Jake Brakes" while on 24 between Gateway and I-580 and they should be required to use other noise reduction devices and air pollution reduction devices that reduce soot levels from diesel engines to meet EPA standards. 9

10. A fourth bore will likely reduce the use of public transportation. Caltrans should enhance the use of public transportation by using the MTC recommendations for feeder buses to/from BART, an inter-county bus service using HOT lane or freeway shoulders, and reduced fares and parking lot fees for BART, inter-city buses and van pools. 10
11. The concept of tunnel tolls should be evaluated. Many regions in the United States charge a toll for tunnels to relieve congestion, and to encourage the use of public transportation. The toll revenue should be used for the development and maintenance of pedestrian and bicycle facilities and for enhancements to reduce noise and air pollution. 11
12. If new data shows that a fourth bore is needed, tunnel boring should occur solely from the eastern portal because there are too many noise, pollution and traffic issues to mitigate in the highly populated western side of the portal. 12
13. Construction noise and pollution reductions should be clearly described in a revised EIR and an EA. This includes, but is not limited to, a list of special precautions for air compressors, vents, shotcrete production, maintenance labs, idling diesel engines, worker parking, equipment storage, delivery routes, and disposal truck routes. Back-up alarms on equipment should be replaced with new technologies such as those used on SUV's or a flag person should be engaged. Temporary noise barriers should not be constructed of metal, but should utilize the new rubberized coating technologies used on the undersides of freeway overpasses and structural columns as well as for paving. 13
14. Night work should be limited due to the impact of night lighting and noise events that interrupt sleep and affect the quality of life of the residents. 14
15. Weather is unpredictable, earthquakes are unpredictable. The D-EA/EIR has not included information that indicates neither a clear understanding of these events nor how to deal with natural or man-made disasters. An Evacuation Plan should be distributed by Caltrans to all workers and all residents in the area in case of fires, land slides, earthquake, explosions, blasting accidents, tunnel collapses etc. 15
16. Special provisions need to be made for emergency vehicles because SR 24 is a lifeline route and emergency vehicles have not been accommodated with a special lane. Fish Ranch Road must be kept clear rather than being used as a disposal site and a construction launch site because it is an integral part of the lifeline route system – especially if there is tunnel failure. 16
17. Vegetation management should include a space frame with planting over SR 24 and BART from the tunnel exit to 580 that would capture pollutants and noise. 17
18. All architectural details should conform to the existing art deco details that are landmarked. 18
19. A Caltrans/Community liaison office should be established along with a CIP website and e-mail address for communication. Regular meeting and special meetings should be called to keep the community updated on the project. The Cypress Freeway model should be emulated. 19
20. The draft EA/EIR should be replaced with an EA that is upgraded to an Environmental Impact Study and a new EIR that meets CEQA and NEPA standards. All Caltrans context-sensitive solutions should be employed. (See www.Caltrans) 20

A copy of the formal comments (25 pages) submitted by CENA to Caltrans is available at williamssally@gmail.com

The draft EA/EIR is available at www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/caldecott/news/htm or at the Rockridge Library. The technical reports also are at the library.

1- Evening traffic after the p.m. peak period (3 to 7 p.m.) was not analyzed because traffic during that period is almost always lighter than traffic in the p.m. peak period.

Constructing a fourth bore would provide congestion relief and facilitate access for those traveling in the off-peak direction. It is important to emphasize that constructing a fourth bore will provide significant and efficient congestion relief because it would increase the off-peak direction capacity to four lanes, consistent with the average corridor capacity. In order to benefit commuters in the peak direction, corridor capacity would need to be increased along with the tunnel capacity, requiring even greater financial investment for the benefit.

Please see responses #1 and #2 in the essay on “Traffic Modeling/Forecasting” in Chapter 1.

No additional traffic demand studies are planned for this project.

2- State Route 13 north terminates in Berkeley and is the shortest route to reach Berkeley from State Route 24. We must include a destination on the overhead signs for State Route 13 north and "Berkeley" is the appropriate message. Omitting the "Berkeley" message from the signs for State Route 13 north would cause motorist confusion, especially for those who planned their trip by consulting a map.

We do not place signs indicating a street is a residential street with a 25 MPH speed limit. If this practice is adopted, that means we will need to install or modify many signs along the various State highways.

3- Please see the essay on “Project Study Area Boundaries” in Chapter 1.

4- No additional mapping has been added to the Final Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Report (FEA/EIR). We have done our best to make the maps as readable as possible.

5- Caltrans and FHWA conform to local guidelines to the extent practicable and feasible. However, well-established principles of State and Federal sovereignty preclude the application of local regulation to State and Federal activities. Caltrans and FHWA are not required to adhere to local ordinances for highway projects, but follow the environmental analysis requirements set forth in both the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Please see essay on “Methodologies used for the Impact Assessments/Local Ordinances” in Chapter 1.

6- Noise measurements were made at representative locations throughout the project area. The measurements reflect all terrains and man-made conditions that existed at the time of the study, according to federal guidelines. BART is not situated within the project study area boundaries and, therefore, was not evaluated.

7- The State must comply with federal regulation 23CFR772 as a prerequisite for federal funding. Untested types of abatement have not been verified to provide the noise attenuation that is required by the regulations so compliance cannot be demonstrated. These types of abatement are more appropriate for smaller pilot projects where the variables can be controlled and their effectiveness can be documented..

8- The MTC is studying methods to improve goods movement in the Bay Area but the studies are preliminary and it is uncertain what improvements may result from these studies, when they might be constructed, or what effect they would have on regional traffic. It is therefore impossible to estimate what effects these projects might have on Caldecott Tunnel traffic. Any significant effects that result from these projects will have to be dealt with in the environmental documents for these projects. Future expansion in the Port of Oakland was included in the travel demand model used for this project.

9- Restriction of jake brakes is a decision of the local entities (cities, counties) within the State Route 24 corridor and is enforced by the California Highway Patrol. The Department does not have the authority to unilaterally set restrictions and cannot commit to it within this environmental document. Likewise, the regulation of vehicle equipment involves several agencies and is outside the scope of this environmental document. In regards to the "soot" from diesel engines, this is generally referred to as particulate matter or PM10 and PM2.5 (particles of 10 microns and 2.5 microns). The EPA has set conformity criteria for ambient levels of PM10 and PM2.5. The Bay Area is either in attainment or unclassified for federal PM10 and is undesignated for federal PM2.5, so there is no need for a particulate microscale analysis. Qualitatively, we expect that this project will not have adverse effects on microscale particulate levels since actual non-truck vehicle emissions of particulates are believed to be small and the number of heavy-duty trucks using the facility will not be increased by the project. The California Legislature has already passed SB 656, which is intended to move the State toward attainment of the State and national PM levels and is far more effective regionally than any measures that would be taken on this single project.

10- Please see response #3 in the essay on “Traffic Modeling/Forecasting” in Chapter 1.

11- Please see response #9 in the essay on “Traffic Operations” and the essay “Scope of the Project” in Chapter 1.

12-Please see the essay on “Constructing the Tunnel from the East Side Only” in Chapter 1.

13- Many of these suggestions have been incorporated in the FEA/EIR. Tunnel construction will proceed on a 24-hour-a-day, 5-days-per-week basis. However, the major construction activities that will be performed at night will be underground. In addition, mitigation measures will be implemented to limit construction impacts. Please see the essay on “Construction Impacts” in Chapter 1.

14- All night-time construction lighting will be shielded so that the lighting filaments will not be visible to nearby residents. Please see the essay on “Construction Impacts” in Chapter 1.

15- The local jurisdictions, such as the local fire department, ambulance services and police, are responsible for responding to any emergencies. Caltrans, however, will facilitate “coordinated” emergency responses, by closely working with all local jurisdictions during an event. Caltrans will also make every effort to maintain local access via its facilities. Caltrans has various emergency response plans in place, and periodically performs “emergency response mock drills” with various local entities, such as the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). As part of the coordinated effort with local jurisdictions, if required, Caltrans will close portions of the tunnel to provide emergency vehicle access only. Based on the above discussion, Caltrans does not prepare and maintain emergency response maps or escape routes for each local jurisdiction, within the local boundaries. However, Caltrans will coordinate and support the local plans and emergency responses by maintaining access via its facilities. There are no known “high risk” utilities within the project study area boundaries. During a natural or man-made disaster, as part of the utility encroachment agreement with Caltrans, the utility owners are required to report to the site immediately after an event and be responsible for securing the site to safety. This response and the responsibility is the same throughout the State Highway System.

16- See response #15.

The Department has no plans to request written statements of need from the emergency services using State Route 24. The lifeline criterion requires that the designed lifeline route be open to emergency vehicles within 72 hours after a major event that requires the closure of the route. There is no need to designate lanes for emergency vehicles to meet the performance criteria for a lifeline route. Currently, the Oakland and Orinda Fire Departments and other emergency response vehicles may respond using the reverse lane. Since the proposed fourth bore of the Caldecott Tunnel will have a 10-foot shoulder, emergency vehicles will have better access through the tunnel, and therefore should be able to respond to emergencies in less time.

The tunnel is being designed to meet seismic standards specified for lifeline facilities. Such facilities are required to clear for emergency vehicle traffic 72 hours after a major earthquake.

17- Please see our response to comment #13 responding to Ms. Aileen Frankel’s letter regarding the “hallway of plants”. The concept is the same but the suggested approach is on a much grander scale. Putting cost and feasibility aside, the overriding consideration is providing the public with a safe transportation facility.

18- Caltrans is currently developing the architectural and aesthetic treatments for the east and west portals, electrical equipment buildings, the Operations and Maintenance Center (OMC) sound walls and retaining walls. Although in the conceptual stage, facility design will be based on the premise that the appearance of the entire complex should be unified and share some of the common Art Deco forms of existing structures. Computer simulations of the proposed facilities and more detailed discussion are included in the Final EA/EIR.

19- There will be extensive public outreach during construction. In order to coordinate with those in close proximity to the project site, Caltrans will implement a construction information/community outreach program. There will be a construction public information phone number for community members to call to ask questions, voice concerns or to make a comment. A project website with construction information will also be updated on a regular basis. The Caltrans construction Resident Engineer (RE) will coordinate closely with the Contractor to ensure there are responses to comments/concerns, and to make sure that the Contractor is following contract requirements to mitigate and/or abate and minimize construction impacts. The Contractor will be required to implement abatement procedures and to work closely with the RE to minimize disturbance to the community.