Rockridge Community Planning Council

RCPC ROCKRIDGE COMMUNITY PLANNING COUNCIL

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July 10, 2006

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

Re: DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
(CalTrans D-EA/EIR, May 12, 2006)

Dear Mr. McConnell:

The Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization representing the common interests of approximately 11,000 people in the Oakland, California neighborhood of Rockridge, located in North Oakland bounded roughly by 51st Street to the south, Telegraph Avenue to the west, the Berkeley border to the north to Highway 13, along Margarido to the east and Broadway Terrace to the south to the intersection of College Avenue. The RCPC's focus is on areas of land use and design review, pedestrian safety and traffic, parks and open space, community schools and public safety. We are very concerned with how the proposed Caldecott Tunnel Improvement Project will affect our neighborhood, our schools, and our parks, both during the planned five years of construction and into the future. Caltrans' own Context Sensitive Design Policy states: "Quality transportation design is the culmination of philosophy and principles in the project development process that provides a transportation system that enhances the place in which it serves. Whether a project is in an urban, rural or natural setting, the transportation facility must be in harmony with the community goals and the natural environment." We believe that the current Draft EA/EIR (D-EA/EIR) submitted for the project meets none of these goals, and in fact fails to meet minimal requirements for disclosure, analysis, and mitigation required under NEPA and CEQA for the express purpose of ensuring projects such as this are environmentally and socio-economically responsible. 1

The Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) submitted a scoping letter to Caltrans on

January 28th, 2003. The RCPC listed several issues important to the Rockridge community to be included in the Caldecott Tunnel Improvement Project's environmental studies. Almost none of these issues were addressed in the proposed D-EA/EIR, giving rise to serious concerns with the thoroughness of the study and Caltrans' willingness to work with the affected communities surrounding the project area. The inadequacy of the D-EA/EIR is so severe that the RCPC requests that it be withdrawn, and that in its place Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration prepare and re-circulate for public review a full draft Environmental Impact Study/ Environmental Impact Report, which addresses the issues presented in detail below. On July 6, 2006, the RCPC Board of Directors voted to not only reject the current D-EA/EIR but, once again, as we did in 2003, voted to OPPOSE Caltrans' proposal for a fourth bore in the Caldecott Tunnel. 2

Included with this letter are four attachments:

- Attachment #1: Summarizes the issues that have **not** been identified and/or are not adequately addressed in the Draft EA/EIR.
- Attachment #2: A summary list of specific alternatives to the project, mitigations and enhancements that are needed in the Caldecott Improvement Project, should it proceed.
- Attachment #3: Copy of RCPC's letter submitted during the original scoping comment period in 2003.
- Attachment #4: Copies of public comments/questions submitted to CalTrans by local residents during a Rockridge Town Hall meeting in June 2005.

We continue to support the more global mitigations and enhancements (e.g. addressing public transportation and congestion of local streets) enumerated in the MTC report (Final Staff Report, Route 24/Caldecott Tunnel Corridor Study, January 5, 2001). We also support the goals articulated by the Fourth Bore Coalition (of which we are a member), which will be communicated separately.

As local residents of the Highway 24 corridor immediately west of the tunnel, we are familiar with local and regional environmental issues and have an excellent perspective on significant

environmental and public health concerns.

The RCPC strongly suggests that Caltrans and FHWA develop a new and thorough Draft EIS/EIR that fully incorporates the issues discussed within this document and address the relevant alternatives and appropriate mitigations and enhancements. Please feel free to contact Kent Deverell, our RCPC Board Director representative and Co-Chair of the 4th Bore Coalition, for any clarifications of these items.

Sincerely,

Jessica Pitt
RCPC Chairperson
510.655.1210

Kent Deverell
Co-Chair 4th Bore Coalition
415.235.1009

Hiroko Kurihara
RCPC, Chair of Land Use
510.384.0557

Attachments:
1. List of Omissions from the Draft EA/EIR
2. Summary List of Alternatives, Mitigations, and Enhancements
3. Original RCPC Response to Caltrans Proposed Scope of Environmental Studies
4. List of Questions Submitted to CalTrans at Rockridge Town Hall meeting June 16, 2005

cc: Fourth Bore Coalition, Co-Chairs Ann Smulka & Kent Deverell
Mayor Jerry Brown, City of Oakland
Ron Dellums, Incoming Mayor City of Oakland
Councilmember Jane Brunner, City of Oakland
Council President Ignacio De La Fuente, City of Oakland
City of Oakland Deputy Director of City Planning Claudia Cappio
Assemblymember Loni Hancock, California Assembly District 14
California State Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata
U.S. Senator Diane Feinstein
U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer
U.S. Congresswomen Barbara Lee, California 9th District
Ms. Christina Ferraz, Project Manager, California Dept. of Transportation
Mr. Frank Furger, Alameda County Congestion Management Agency
Mr. Horst Greczmiel, President's Council on Environmental Quality
Ms. Nancy Levin, U.S. EPA, Region 9 – Federal Activities Office

ATTACHMENT I

List of Omissions from the Draft EA/EIR

PART 1: ALTERNATIVES

The range of alternatives proposed is inadequate because it fails to reduce or eliminate the project's impacts which is required by CEQA (see CEQA Guidelines section 15004(b)2.) The lack of consideration for alternative combinations of transit modes or traffic reduction incentives is woefully unexplored. For example:

1. Slow existing traffic down in a programmed way through the merge and existing tunnels to 45 m.p.h. Roads can handle greater volume and flow at 45 mph than 65 mph (distances between drivers are smaller). The slower speed makes merging more efficient and safe 3
2. Add metering lights across the entire roadway; this has been effective on the Bay Bridge for years. This facilitates flow through the merge and cars slow down and stop only at one point. 4
3. Add an HOV lane, beginning at least at the Claremont Ave. exit, incentivizing carpooling, and reducing the total number of vehicles. 5
4. Charge less on the reverse commute on BART (congestion pricing). This will create incentive to utilize BART and reduce traffic volume. 6
5. Charge a small fee for going through the tunnel at peak periods encouraging people to drive at other times or switch to public transit. 7
6. Fund an employer shuttle service from eastern county BART stations, eliminating a barrier to transit for some people. 8
7. Enhanced capacity at Contra Costa County Bart parking lots for vehicles and bicycles will bring significant increases in the volume of BART riders. Increasing the frequency of BART trains to meet this increased demand is a logical step. Additionally, starting a small number of BART trains from a mid-system waypoint will more effectively service the Rockridge and greater downtown Oakland capacity needs. 9
8. Amend suburban development policies that would incorporate housing development in conjunction with business park development in to eliminate commuting all together. 10

PART 2: CONSTRUCTION

1. PURPOSE AND NEED:

The EA/EIR does not clearly state or rely on research that identifies the need or purpose for the 4th Bore. The transportation section of the document states that the reverse commute is 50% of the volume of the commute direction, indicating that if there is need for any improvement that it should focus on the commute direction. The report relies on studies done that did not consider the rising price of gasoline with either current or future prices and solely relies on commuter's perceptions.

The present plan studies the corridor between Highway 680 in Walnut Creek and Highway 580 in Oakland. Given that this project is scoped to service regional traffic capacity needs through the year 2030, system input projections are needed from Highway 4, Contra Costa, Solano and San Joaquin Counties. In evaluating SR24's regional input loads, and point to point traffic disbursement patterns, compared to projections of the traffic volume actually being digested by the Bay Bridge Toll Plaza complex, the outcome of this analysis will allow a more effective decision on the "real" need for additional east and west bound capacity at the Caldecott tunnel complex. In order to be adequate, the EA/EIR traffic analyses must be extended to follow the project traffic backups until they are free of project influence, well beyond the current arbitrarily defined traffic analyses cutoff points. 11

Caltrans has yet to thoroughly and effectively study traffic patterns to and from Contra Costa County.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The current study specifies the Project Area to the "State Route 24/Broadway Interchange in Alameda County to the State Route 24/Camino Pablo Interchange in Contra Costa County" (p. 1). This scope of study is flawed given that any changes to the current tunnel configuration will affect

traffic patterns throughout the region, and will have the most significant impacts on the Oakland and Berkeley neighborhoods immediately surrounding the tunnel. This includes many sensitive receptors such as Chabot Elementary School, Claremont Middle School, College Preparatory High School, Rock La Fleche Day School, Chabot Recreational Facilities, and Frog Park. As a result, nearly all the impacts in the current D-EIR are under-reported. At a minimum, on the Alameda County/Western side of the tunnel, the entire segment of highway from at least the 580/24 interchange – the next downstream travel choice and chokepoint - must be studied, as well as impacts on arterial surface streets, residencies, businesses and schools and parks for 1 mile in each direction surrounding Highway 24. 12

Further, the Project Description fails to define critical components of the project construction, such as:

- Where will spoils be disposed? 13
- What equipment will be used in the project construction? 14
- How many truck trips will occur during each day of construction?
- What route will the trucks follow?
- Will those trucks operate at night?
- Will blasting be done at night?
- Will night lighting be used? If so, where and what type?
- What temporary road closures will occur during construction?
- Will these road closures and/or construction-related congestion points effect streets and neighborhoods outside the currently defined project area?

3. STAGING AND DRILLING

The best and simplest environmental solution for staging and drilling would be to locate all activities East of the tunnel project where there would be no impact to homes and residents. 15
Homes would be protected from 24 daily hours of exposure to noise and dust. City traffic would not be impacted. Construction could proceed apace without the need for extensive mitigations and cumbersome restrictions that otherwise will certainly be demanded by the local community. East

of the tunnel there are no homes, there is plenty of space, and few valuable and vulnerable trees. The Caldecott Wildlife Corridor will suffer far less disturbance if drilling proceeds from the east. The trade off for the approximately two-years of added construction and expense this would require is the elimination of economic, environmental and health impacts on thousands of lives. Drilling from only the east would spare our community enormous disruption in individual lives, expensive and frustrating congestion on city streets and the cost of complicated neighborhood mitigations. The safety and well being of thousands of residents will be protected.

From the perspective of "best practices" environmental law, drilling from the West makes no sense.

After all challenges have been exhausted, should the project be allowed to drill from the West, the following issues must be included in the Environmental Documents:

4. A PLAN FOR NEIGHBORHOOD PARTICIPATION.

The Environmental Documents must specify the mechanisms by which the affected residents are represented in (1) the drafting of environmental rules and regulations for construction, and (2) the monitoring of infractions. 16

As residents adjacent to SR24 and those most affected by this 5-year long project, we need to be heard concerning the environmental impacts of construction. The D-EA/EIR states [p. 195] that the "Department is committed to working with the various communities within the project vicinity to address issues that pertain to the construction activities...". However, no mechanism is provided to govern the process. 17

Construction will be carried out according to standard industry practices and requirements stated in a variety of documents (Special Provisions and Standard Specifications; Construction General Permit; Best Management Practices; Plans, Specifications and Estimates; Traffic Management Plan, etc.). Means to reduce impacts will be used "where feasible". A neighborhood 18

representative, specified in the Environmental Documents, must participate in the drafting of these construction plans. Also, to monitor the daily conduct of the project, a hot line or web link must be set up (described in the Environmental Documents), that will allow prompt neighborhood reporting to halt egregious infractions of environmental rules. Of particular concern are dust control, and truck backup alarms at nighttime. There needs to be a hot line or web link to the proposed field office [p. 234] in order to halt the infractions when the dust is out of control, or when strobe lights or spotters are not being used according to plan [p. 202].

5. IDENTIFICATION OF CONSTRUCTION ACCESS STREETS AND CLOSURES. Caldecott Lane is the only street identified for ingress and egress of equipment [p. 206]. The statement [p.202], "it does not appear that residential routes will be used by construction traffic", requires supporting quantitative analysis in the Environmental Documents. The D-EA/EIR does not provide the routes that will be used to haul away the more than 300,000 cubic yards of excavation material. No streets are designated for closure. 19

6. MAPS/PLAN FOR EMERGENCIES. A map is needed for emergency response and escape routes, and a plan for exit in case of fire or earthquake. 20

7. TABLE FOR HOURS OF OPERATION. A table for the hours of operation should specify different activities, including the hours when trucks will be used at the staging area, particularly at night. 21

8. PLAN TO REPLACE MATURE TREES. A plan to minimize the loss of mature trees is needed. Locating a staging area next to Parkwoods will destroy 18-year growth of redwoods and other native trees. The local residents, at their expense, planted this forest to screen the noise and the view of the freeway. By replacing them, there would be a generation lost of visual screening. 22

If Caltrans is allowed to drill from the west, then additional staging areas need to be explored. 23

Some of the staging could be relocated to vacant lots on Caldecott Lane. Caltrans also has vacant land to the west of the proposed staging area. The trees on this land do not provide visual screening for houses above them so it would be more beneficial to use that area. The Environmental Documents must explore alternatives to minimize the lost of mature tees. Replacement of attractive mature trees with an ugly sound wall is not an acceptable option. More work must be done to save the current stand of trees.

9. DETAILED PLAN TO PROTECT TEMESCAL CREEK. Extra assurances are needed so that no runoff from the project construction reaches Temescal Creek, which is day-lighted west of Golden Gate Ave. 24

10. NOISE ABATEMENT PLAN. A detailed construction noise abatement plan that complies with City of Oakland noise standards as defined in the City of Oakland General Plan's Noise Element, California Noise/Land Use Compatibility standards, and eliminates increased single-event nighttime noise. 25

11. DUST CONTROL PLAN. A detailed dust-control plan that includes all of the BAAQMD's dust control requirements as set forth in their CEQA Guide. 26

PART 3: OPERATION

1. NEIGHBORHOOD COHESION

By not addressing neighborhood cohesion more fully [p.55], the D-EA/EIR perpetuates the unjust division of the community that was made by the State when Caltrans constructed the Grove-Shafter (SR24) and Warren Freeways (SR13). These freeways, built prior to the adoption of current environmental law, cut off pedestrian and bicycle traffic between the quadrants of the freeway intersection. The Landvale Bridge, a connection between Montclair neighborhood and South Berkeley, was torn down. The construction of the 24/13 freeway intersection without replacing the 27

pedestrian and bicycle access, to use language from the D-EA/EIR: constituted a physical and psychological barrier that divided, disrupted and isolated neighborhoods, individuals and community focal points. Caltrans will fail to comply with CEQA's and NEPA's requirements for assessment and mitigation of cumulative impacts of "past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects" if it does not address this issue now as a part of the cumulative impacts of the Caldecott Improvement Project. The Environmental Documents must include provisions to re-establish pedestrian and bicycle routes among the four quadrants of the SR24/SR13 intersection.

2. AUTO TRAFFIC

One of the RCPC's main concerns in this issue is the unplanned, and unmitigated, traffic congestion on city feeder streets.

In such a situation, experience elsewhere in the Bay Area indicates that cars would get off the freeway and maneuver through surface streets, hoping to save time by cutting across to other freeway access points. That would mean more traffic on Miles and Forest, as well as Claremont, College, Alcatraz and Broadway.

In fact, this is already happening due to back-up in the commute direction, especially in the mornings just when children are headed to school. Rockridge residents have pointed out high-speed traffic and U-turns on upper Presley, related to cars taking a shortcut to the freeway. In addition, residents on central Chabot have noticed an increased number of large delivery vans using their street instead of taking Claremont and College to get to the Albertson's and Safeway supermarkets. These vehicles are simply too large to be commuting on local residential streets.

Additional community feedback we received was for the contingent need for extra traffic signals on Broadway, and left turn signals need to be added to both the Forest/Claremont and Hudson/Claremont intersection signals as mitigation measures.

Arterial streets located between the tunnel and the SR24/I580 maze area not identified. The

Environmental Documents should list the routes and intersections. Specific routes and intersections should be identified with input from City staff and residents. 28

General experience shows that when a traffic obstacle is removed, more people will take the new path. When the project is completed, the route from the Kay overpass to Claremont Avenue will receive more traffic. Bicyclists and pedestrians, who at this time are challenged to uses these roads, will find face many more obstacles. The effect of this traffic must be studied and appropriate mitigations provided. 29

Although the D-EA/EIR states that one of the purposes of the project is to relieve weekend backups, there is no supporting data presented for a weekend traffic analysis. 30

3. TRUCK TRAFFIC

No quantitative assessment of the volume of truck traffic is included in the D-EA/EIR.

The document [p. xii] states that the number of heavy-duty diesel trucks using the facility will not be increased by the project. No argument or data are presented to substantiate this claim. Increases in residential development along the 80/880 corridors in the East Bay will have an impact on available industrial lands. With this increase in population and traffic along 80/880 corridors, SR24 and 680 will become viable alternatives. It is inevitable that commercial traffic can be expected to increase when the reverse-commute backup is eliminated by the project. Planned expansion of the Port of Oakland will also create a demand for the use of SR24 for commercial traffic. The Environmental Documents must include a quantitative assessment of truck traffic and the movement of goods. 31

4. PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE TRAFFIC

It is not possible for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross Tunnel Road safely between Hiller Drive and Uplands. The increased traffic induced by the Fourth Bore will make the crossing much more hazardous. We therefore request that mitigations be included, such as: 32

A. Re-configure the intersection of the Warren Freeway with Tunnel Road so that pedestrians can cross the street. 33

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.

C. Fulfill the long-term plan for a ped/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. 34

D. A description of **SAFE ACCESS TO SCHOOLS** must be included in the Environmental Documents. Incomplete sidewalks and absence of crosswalks are hazardous to nearby Chabot Elementary, Rock La Fleche Day School, and Claremont Middle School. School pupils are forced to compete with motorized traffic at the Broadway on- and off- ramps, the College Avenue exit, and the Claremont Avenue on- and off- ramps, all located within a ½ mile or less of these schools. Exiting traffic then travels heavily on College, Miles, Keith, Patton and Shafter Avenues, also located in close proximity to these schools. 35

Section 2.1.3.3 – Impacts of the current D-EA/EIS (p.57), currently states that the "tunnel will likely cause slight increases in trip making, which could cause some increase in congestion on connecting streets such as Ashby Avenue and Broadway." The document then states that there are no public facilities close enough to the project area to be affected. This is incorrect. Chabot Elementary School is within 1000 feet of the Broadway on and off ramps, and would in fact be significantly impacted by any increased congestion on Broadway. Similarly, John Muir Elementary School, located at the intersection of Claremont and Ashby, and Bentley School would be significantly impacted by increased congestion on Ashby Avenue. The impact of increased arterial street traffic on these schools and other public facilities must be addressed, with particular attention paid to impacts from a three lane bore alternative which will migrates the current chokepoint located on the Eastern side of the tunnel to the 580/24 Interchange. 36

5. NOISE

The use of an average, Leq(h), to define "significant" noise is not acceptable. The benchmarks of "66 dBA Leq(h) or higher" for "noise level", of 12dBA Leq(h) as a "substantial noise increase", and 5

dBA Leq(h) for "significant reduction" do not accurately represent the human perception of noise. Members of the community can attest to the intrusion of noise from single events and at lower levels. Simple, inexpensive and effective means to abate noise are available below the given thresholds. The Environmental Documents must include a provision for community input to determine feasible noise abatement procedures and must adhere to the Noise Element of the City of Oakland's General Plan Simple measures that could be used include a lower speed limit, the deactivation of Jake brakes, restrictions on an increase in truck traffic, use of asphalt pavement on all pavement surfaces, including overpasses, tree plantings, sound berms, sound walls on elevated portions of the freeway, and restrictions on mufflers. 37

Noise abatement must be provided for homes with noise levels exceeding the Noise Abatement Criteria. Homes are listed [p.161] with NAC exceeding 66 dBA, but for which sound walls are ineffective. Simple, inexpensive and effective means to abate the traffic noise are available, as mentioned above. 38

Provide noise contours throughout the project, and for homes up to the ridgelines along the freeway canyon. Include entire bowl in sound studies, spanning from ridge to ridge. According to the technical report, "Revised Traffic Noise Impact Report", the noise analysis does not include the entire project area, with omission of noise analysis between the Broadway exit and SR13, as well as between the Gateway exit and Camino Pablo. This includes sensitive receptors such as Chabot Elementary School, Rock La Fleche Day School, and College Preparatory High School. Also, no noise measurements were reported for the upper trail on the west side of Lake Temescal, where the freeway noise is loud. 39

Single-event noise impacts must be considered, as well as the time-averaged. Comply with KJOB v. Port of Oakland. As a measure of the human impact of noise, the Leq(h) is inappropriate. Negotiations with the community concerning noise abatement are required. Easy, effective and inexpensive means of reducing noise are available, as mentioned above. 40

Eliminate noise from exhaust fans. The D-EA/EIR [p. xii] states that jet fans will be located within the tunnel. A new Operations Maintenance and Control building will be built. No assessment is given for the effects of noise produced by the new and existing fans controlled at the new installation. 41

6. BIOLOGICAL ISSUES

Replace Eucalyptus trees on Caltrans property with redwoods, oaks, and other fire-resistant trees; and remove the broom. 42

Include a plan to restore the Tunnel Branch sub-shed of the Temescal Creek Watershed ("Caldecott Creek") to its natural state insofar as this is possible. 43

7. LAND USE

Include the Caltrans land near the tunnel in a regional plan with trails, according to the Oakland General Plan (OSCAR Element). 44

8. CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts for Highway 24 in Oakland have never been assessed. New environmental laws have been enacted since the freeway was constructed. The assessment of cumulative impacts must use a baseline before the freeway was constructed, and take into account current law. 45

ATTACHMENT II

Summary List of Alternatives, Mitigations, and Enhancements

1. ALL possible transit and transportation combinations as alternatives to the fourth bore must be thoroughly studied. Viable incentive programs, increased public transit access, informal carpools, BART ridership incentives, employer shuttles, etc. need to be factored into a full EIR. 46

2. CONSTRUCTION STAGING should utilize the unpopulated, open space on the Eastern, Contra Costa side of the tunnel as opposed to the densely populated Western side of the tunnel. Further, all drilling and excavation should be conducted from the East Side as well. Construction spoils should to be trucked to the East only. 47

3. Provide safe and effective pedestrian and bicycle access through the Caldecott tunnel. 48

4. Provide a pedestrian and bicycle crossing from Tunnel Road to Lake Temescal 49

5. Ensure safe bike and pedestrian passage throughout all areas of schools Kaiser Elementary, the Bentley School, the College Preparatory School, Chabot Elementary, Rock La Fleche Day School and Claremont Middle Schools and Parks. 50

6. Designate an HOV lane within the existing bores and/or within the proposed fourth bore. 51

7. Provide a total sound reduction package for Highway 24 from the Caldecott Tunnel to the 24/580 maze. This should include low noise pavement surface covering over all portions of the roadbed, including elevated roadways and bridges; tree planting, reduced speed limit, sound walls, and restrictions on truck traffic, Jake brakes and mufflers. 52

8. Noise studies and related mitigations for the Rockridge Bart Station, Kaiser Elementary, the 53

Bentley School, the College Preparatory School, Chabot Elementary, Rock La Fleche Day School and Claremont Middle Schools.

9. Air and lead levels studies and on-going monitoring, particularly at local schools (Kaiser Elementary, the Bentley School, the College Preparatory School, Chabot Elementary, Rock La Fleche Day School and Claremont Middle Schools), all local parks, and any existing and planned community/school gardens. 54

10. On-going financial support for School Gardening/Greening programs along SR 24/880/80, including those at Chabot Elementary and Claremont Middle School, which directly border Highway 24. 55

11. Caltrans should arrange for express buses to take Contra Costa residents to and from the West Oakland Bart Station or all the way to SF and downtown Oakland to prevent congestion through the tunnel and along the stretch between the MacArthur Maze and the tunnel through all the years of construction. 56

12. Conduct thorough multi-modal traffic studies and provide related support and implementation for traffic calming, and pedestrian and bicycle safety measures for Broadway, Miles, Keith and Claremont – particularly for safe passages to schools and all streets immediately adjacent to Highway 24 and effected by the Broadway, College, Telegraph and Claremont on-and-off ramps. Every on and off ramp for a minimum distance of one mile needs to be re-evaluated for bicycle pedestrian safety. Many parents and children are effectively barred from Frog Park at Hudson St. and SR24 because of the unsafe conditions along Claremont caused by the lack of transition from and to freeway speeds. Parents cannot allow their children to walk or bike to Chabot Elementary because of the conditions at Broadway and Patton. Telegraph at highway 24 is all but a dead zone for pedestrian bicycle travel. Martin Luther King Junior Way is a typical freeway viaduct that all but bars any other means of travel. Highway 13 is an example of a section of roadway that belongs to CalTrans and is not a good commute for pedestrians 57

and is marginal for bicycles.

13. Study and ensure that bus /shuttle transit meets current and future demand. 58

14. Include the Caltrans land near the tunnel in a regional plan with trails, according to the Oakland General Plan (OSCAR element). 59

15. The Rockridge community's greatest deficiency is the lack of level active playing fields for children and adults. This circumstance can be significantly improved by acquiring now for parkland the former Safeway site at the base of the Claremont Boulevard off-ramp, and ultimately relocating the DMV office so that its site and parking can also be transferred by the Business and Transportation Agency and added to the Safeway site as parkland. Both parcels with the existing FROG Park would create a significant active level recreational facility, and bring Rockridge recreational space per resident closer to region-wide levels. This enhancement is eminently attractive because of the land use pattern of the two parcels together with the FROG park, and because the State itself already owns the larger DMV one, now consisting mainly of parking spaces. (The former Safeway site, leased by Children's Hospital, if necessary could be obtained by eminent domain; but if the hospital follows through with its intentions to transfer major facilities to Contra Costa County, it may well be willing voluntarily to move off this site.) 60

    We recognize that the Department of Motor Vehicles has recently upgraded its facility on one of these parcels; we do not propose an immediate change of use. A binding commitment by the State to vacate this facility at the end of its useful life, a maximum of 40 years, and transfer it for recreational use, would still represent the form of meaningful and visible enhancement to parallel the two historic examples provided above. The EIR should propose as enhancement of the Fourth Bore Project the acquisition and transfer of the Safeway site within ten years, and transfer of the DMV site within 40 years, to the City of Oakland for active outdoor recreational use.

16. Provide funding for enhancements and improvements to Frog Park, situated between the 61

Claremont Avenue on –and-off ramps to Highway 24.

17. Provide Rockridge BART Plaza funding for street level improvements to improve usability and pedestrian safety 62

18. Provide funding for a Rockridge Area Community Center. 63

19. Provide support and promote a Farmers Market in Rockridge at Claremont Middle School. 64

20. Install signage in both directions on SR24 that demarcate the Rockridge Neighborhood Commercial District. 65

21. Install a right-hand turn light at the Broadway Avenue off-ramp. 66

22. Install dedicated bike-lanes on Broadway Avenue 67

ATTACHMENT III

Letter from RCPC regarding Scoping EIS January 28, 2003

January 28th, 2003

Cristina Ferraz, Project Manager
State of California,
Department of Transportation, District 4
PO Box 23660
Oakland, CA 94623

SCOPE OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES, CALDECOTT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
"FOURTH BORE "

Dear Ms. Ferraz:

As the Chair of the RCPC Traffic & Pedestrian Safety Committee representing 5,000 homes in the community of Rockridge, which is, as you know located in north Oakland. I am writing to outline some of the issues that we, the RCPC Board and the local community, feel need to be included in the environmental studies carried out in preparation for the construction/addition of a fourth bore to the Caldecott Tunnel (the Project).

After listening to views from Rockridge residents at our General Meeting on January 23, 2003, the Rockridge Community Planning Council is sending this letter to Caltrans, opposing any plan to create any new bore in the Caldecott Tunnel. The letter also urges Caltrans to broaden the scope of its environmental impact study and to make plans for any negative impacts on Rockridge and other neighborhoods in the Highway 24 Corridor.

Issues of Concern that Require Action/Resolution are:

Traffic Analysis/Research – Regional

The present plan studies the corridor between Highway 680 in Walnut Creek and Highway 580 in Oakland. "What it doesn't do is look at the real capacity for the Bay Bridge and its toll plaza to digest westbound traffic during the morning commute." With 28 lanes, the toll plaza is already the world's largest, and the new east span of the Bay Bridge will accommodate exactly the same traffic flow post replacement as it does today.

Given that this project is scoped to service regional traffic capacity needs through the year 2030, system input projections are needed from Highway 4, Contra Costa, Solano and San Joaquin Counties. In evaluating SR24's regional input loads, and point to point traffic disbursement patterns, compared to projections of the traffic volume actually being digested by the Bay Bridge Toll Plaza complex, the outcome of this analysis will allow a more effective decision on the "real" need for additional west bound capacity at the Caldecott tunnel complex.

Caltrans has yet to effectively study where traffic leaving Contra Costa in the morning goes, but experience suggests that much, if not most, of it heads for the Bay Bridge. "Imagine that from the Caldecott Tunnel to the Bay Bridge, it's bumper to bumper, stop and go traffic every day." "That's the worst-case scenario for Rockridge."

In such a situation, experience elsewhere in the Bay Area indicates that cars would get off the freeway and maneuver through surface streets, hoping to save time by cutting across to other freeway access points. That would mean more traffic on Miles and Forest, as well as Claremont, College, Alcatraz and Broadway. "It won't help to increase traffic flows out of

Contra Costa if there's nowhere for that traffic to go!"

Traffic Analysis/Research – Local

"The plan lacks a serious look at negative local impacts and what remediation steps would be needed to offset increased sound and traffic problems."

In fact, some impact may already be happening. Participants at the RCPC forum talked about high-speed traffic and U-turns on upper Presley, related to cars taking a shortcut to the freeway. In addition, residents on central Chabot have noticed an increased number of large delivery vans using their street instead of taking Claremont and College to get to the Albertson's Supermarket. These vehicles are simply too large to be commuting on local residential streets.

Besides collecting feedback on the Caldecott plan, the RCPC meeting looked at some tactical recommendations "if we're faced with the reality of a westbound bore, what do we need to do in Rockridge?"
Suggestions included building sound walls on the elevated section of Highway 24, where traffic noise would increase by 3 decibels according to one estimate. The walls would also provide some protection to neighboring homeowners. One Miles resident told the meeting he "doesn't sit in his backyard any more because of the debris and dust that comes off the freeway." As for traffic flows, the timing of traffic lights would have to be re-examined.

Additional community feedback we received was for the contingent need for extra traffic signals on Broadway, and left turn signals need to be added to both the Forest/Claremont and Hudson/Claremont intersection signals as mitigation steps.

Our main concern in this issue is the unplanned, and unmitigated, traffic congestion on city feeder streets.

Environmental Remediation Needs

Noise control: The Project studies must include the effects that the Fourth Bore will have on traffic noise. Increasing volume and speed of traffic are expected to increase noise pollution after the tunnel is constructed and the current Caltrans Engineering Staff projection of the increase in noise level is three (3) decibels.

The acoustic effect of decreasing vehicle speeds from 65 to 55 mph is the same as cutting the number of vehicles on the road by one-half. We suggest that State authorities consider that a 55 mph speed limit be enforced on SR24 from the tunnel to Interstate 580. For this short distance, transit time would not be affected very much. Project studies can cover this issue.

The studies can consider the prohibition of Jake Brakes on SR24 in Oakland. Hillside residents in Rockridge are all too familiar with this loud and vulgar noise. (We note that Santa Fe, New Mexico, is one of the cities that require truckers to deactivate their Jake Brakes within city limits.)

Current plan mitigations are weak to non-existent. This is a corridor study, and all along has stressed how all elements are of this plan are inter-related. Whereas mitigations are now considered ONLY at the bore, we recognize this as vastly too narrow a scope. Note: Our point of emphasis is that sound walls are a real solution and are VERY POPULAR in Rockridge. One resident requested that Caltrans consider funding a program for highly impacted residents to obtain insulation and double pained windows for their homes. This plan is similar to many utilized today by modern airports to deal with noise remediation.

More generally, The Project can study how best to integrate land uses along the SR24 corridor west of the tunnel, and how deliberate planning and the use of sound remediation and other technologies, and/or mitigation steps, can help to minimize air pollution, water pollution and noise pollution.

Vegetation Management: Project studies can examine the landscape vegetation to be planted along the SR24 corridor. This is particularly important because of the risk for serious fire along the freeway.

Mass Transit Options and Implementation

Mass transit options, including commuter lanes, are also notably absent from the current Caltrans plan. Contra Costa County based express and shuttle bus services with HOV lane support will move greater numbers of commuters into the City with no real negative impact experienced.

Enhanced capacity at Contra Costa County Bart parking lots for vehicles and bicycles will bring significant increases in the volume of BART riders. Increasing the frequency of BART trains to meet this increased demand is a logical step. Additionally, starting a small number of BART trains from a mid-system waypoint will more effectively service the Rockridge and greater downtown Oakland capacity needs.

Historical Process Concerns

TAC input was ignored or not included, and member cities planning departments not consulted. One example of ignored input was that Alameda CMA's proposed congestion tolling of all lanes in the Tunnel became PM tolling of Alameda-bound travelers. It is especially annoying since Kimsey had been videotaped at RCPC meeting saying it wasn't politically acceptable in CC and wouldn't be included.

The City of Oakland was not included in modeling City streets. MTC's model is notoriously unreliable at the street level, frequently underestimating real system loads. This is PRECISELY where the Rockridge community is most concerned.

The study is not technically rigorous. While others have compared the Caldecott backup to other backups, using vehicle miles, MTC has not. There is no sense to date of what these numbers mean, how they compare, what is the best corridor investment and why.

Cost estimates are incorrect. Inflation was never included in the #s, but the project will not be started, if it is, for several years. Using Alameda CMA's numbers, the cost in 6.5 yrs. is $230million for a 2 lane bore, let alone what the top end configurations would cost.

The community is concerned with local streets, and more freeway traffic. The City was not consulted on the first issue, and INDUCED GROWTH is never included in the models.

At our recent meeting, the RCPC Board of Directors voted to oppose adding another bore to the Caldecott Tunnel at this time. We base our opinion on the results of our community-based studies, which have found that Caltrans has failed to demonstrate the need or cost-effectiveness of the project. Furthermore, the EIR/EIS study plan does not include an in-depth analysis of possible impacts on neighborhood traffic in Oakland, or suggested mitigations. These serious flaws undermine the efficacy of the current study plan and leave us with no option but to oppose any new bore/s.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Whitfield
RCPC Chair of the Traffic & Pedestrian Safety Committee

ATTACHMENT IV

Copies of Questions Submitted to CalTrans
Rockridge Library June 16, 2005

1 and 2- The Department and FHWA as the lead agencies for NEPA and CEQA have determined that the project will not have any significant environmental effects and fully complies with CEQA and NEPA regulations and guidelines. See the 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.

3- Posting signs to reduce the freeway speed at the tunnel from 65 mph to 45 mph would not likely increase the throughput of the tunnel. Although the distance between vehicles could be decreased as suggested in the comment, the slower speed would not necessarily decrease the headway (the time it takes two consecutive vehicles to pass the same point), which is the determining factor in hourly throughput.

4- Please see response #8 in the essay on “Traffic Operations” in Chapter 1.

5- Please see response #5 in the essay on “Traffic Operations” in Chapter 1.

6- Please see essay on “Scope of the Project” in Chapter 1. The Department has no control over any other agency.

7- Charging a small fee would not be able to reduce long-term demand growth thus would not serve the purpose and need of the project. To implement, it would either require all vehicles to stop to pay toll thus reducing the capacity even further or require a system for all drivers to obtain transponders (similar to Fast Trak system). In short-term, it is not likely to reduce the existing conditions. Please also see comment #5 in the essay on “Traffic Operations" in Chapter 1.

Please see responses #6 and #9 in the essay on “Traffic Operations” in Chapter 1.

8, 9, and 10-Please see essay on “Scope of the Project” in Chapter 1.

11- Please see responses #1 and #7 in the essay on “Traffic Operations” in Chapter 1.

The travel demand model used for this project takes into account traffic generated throughout the nine Bay Area counties.

12- Please see essay on “Project Study Area Boundaries” in Chapter 1. Please also see responses #2 and #7 in the essay on “Traffic Operations” and response #6 in the essay on “Traffic Modeling/Forecasting” in Chapter 1.

13- The disposal of excavated material will be determined by the Contractor. The Contractor will be able to explore potential uses for the excavated material and disposal sites. The Contractor will be required to adhere to all state and federal regulations in disposal or use of the excavated material.

It is expected that the material resulting from the tunnel excavation will be free of anthropogenic contamination, thereby making it a very likely candidate for unrestricted reuse at other developments in need of imported fill. There is a chance that a small percentage of the excavation spoils will be impacted by the naturally occurring hydrocarbons (e.g., tar) observed in the geologic formations during the boring of the earlier tunnels. The excavation spoils will be screened for the presence of hydrocarbons and other chemicals (e.g., metals) to fully characterize the spoils' constituents and determine suitability for types of reuse.

Whether the spoils are reused as imported fill or disposed of at a landfill, the material will be handled in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations promulgated by federal, state, and local agencies. For example, landfill waste characterization will be governed by Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations and the federal parameters defined under the Resource, Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA); additionally, reuse as imported fill should satisfy guidelines established by, amongst others, the State Water Resources Control Board acting through its regional water quality control boards.

14- Sequentially excavated tunnel construction is equipment-intensive and requires a variety of relatively specialized equipment. Excavation will be largely performed using a roadheader*, but a hydraulic excavator similar to a backhoe but equipped with a digger paddle in lieu of a bucket will also be required in weaker and more intensely fractured ground. Rubber tired mine articulated trucks will be used to transport the excavated materials out of the tunnel. For excavation using the roadheader, the trucks will be charged directly from the roadheader, but where a hydraulic excavator is used, the trucks must be loaded with excavated material using a loader or an LHD**. Shotcrete will be supplied by rubber-tired transit mixers to a self-propelled shotcrete pump equipped with a robotic boom for shotcrete placement. Rock anchors and spiling will require the use of a drill jumbo. A separate drill jumbo*** may be required to install the relatively long pipe canopy members required in the poorer ground at the west portal. Outside the tunnel, diesel powered front end loaders will load excavated material onto highway trucks. Other equipment used outside the tunnel includes forklifts, cranes, and heavy trucks for material deliveries. These equipment requirements necessitate a relatively large maintenance shop to service and maintain this equipment in addition to a warehouse to maintain an adequate inventory of spare parts.

*Roadheader - A track-mounted unit equipped with a rotating cutterhead affixed to a hydraulic boom. Excavated materials are gathered in an apron at the front of the unit and transported by conveyor to the rear of the machine.

**Load-Haul-Dump. A low profile rubber-tired loader equipped with an oversize bucket.

***Drill jumbo - A self-propelled unit equipped with two or three drills and a man-basket, each mounted on a hydraulic boom.

Please see the essay on "Construction Impacts" in Chapter 1 regarding truck trips, truck routes, truck operating times, blasting and lighting.

No major ramp closures are required for the project construction activities, except for a limited number of nights and/or off-peak hour closures. In addition, four (4) weekend closures are required each for the westbound State Route 24/Fish Ranch Road, westbound State Route 24/Caldecott Lane and westbound State Route 24/Northbound State Route 13 ramps in order to facilitate construction activities, such as placing and removing Temporary Railing (Type K), and reconfiguring and repaving these existing ramps. Ten (10) working days prior to these weekend ramp closures and freeway closures, advance notices will be provided to the nearby residents, local businesses and emergency responders, via mail outs and advance warning signs. The mail outs will also include detour information. During these ramps closures, clearly marked detours will be in place at all times, in order to maintain local access.

15- Please see the essay on "Constructing The Tunnel from the East Side Only" in Chapter 1.

16, 17, and 18- There will be extensive public outreach during construction. In order to communicate with those in close proximity to the project site, Caltrans will implement an information/community outreach program. There will be a 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.

19- See response #13. The contract specifications will prohibit disposal trucks from using Tunnel Road, Claremont Avenue, Ashby Avenue, and College Avenue.

20- 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. 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. Construction will not result in road closures that would block egress from the area around the tunnel construction sites in the event of a fire. Limited road closures will occur during construction but in all cases detours would be available in the event of and emergency.

21- Tunnel excavation will utilize NATM. The nature of tunnel construction necessitates around the clock construction activity to control cost and schedule. When constructing a tunnel, construction work can proceed only in limited areas. For example, tunnel excavation can occur at only one location for each portal. Because of this limitation, the cost and schedule of a tunnel project will increase dramatically if the hours of construction are limited. In addition when the advance of a tunnel is delayed, additional support measures are required to assure that the face of the tunnel remains stable. Under the current plan, which involves tunnel construction 5 days per week, 24 hours per day, these additional support measures will be required only over the weekend. However, if tunnel construction were limited to one shift per day, these additional support measures would have to be installed every day, which would have significant cost implications. The estimated duration for the work

hours for each major stage of construction is summarized by Activity, Duration, and Shifts: Mobilize/Portal Development - 8 months, 10 hour shifts. Tunnel Excavation - 18 months, 24 hour shifts. Final Lining - 8 months, 10 hour shifts. Tunnel Systems - 7 months, 10 hour shifts. Tunnel Approaches - 7 months, 10 hour shifts. Other Activities – 6 months. Some nighttime work will be required during each construction phase. The schedule does not include risks and contractor could elect to work more shifts.

Please see the essay on "Construction Impacts" in Chapter 1. Off hauling of excavated material from the construction sites will be limited to daytime and evening hours only.

22- The western staging area adjacent to Parkwoods will have vegetation loss. In response to public comments, Caltrans developed Option C, which would have reduced the dimensions of the proposed earth berm and allowed a strip of existing vegetation, primarily large redwood trees to remain between State Route 24 and Parkwoods. As noted above however, Parkwoods residents reviewed the pro's and con's of the three alternatives and selected Option B as the collective, preferred alternative. Upon completion of the project, the earth berm/soundwall will be placed in the staging area, and will be planted with native or non-invasive species.

23- Caltrans is utilizing usable right-of-way within the project study area boundaries for staging areas. Efficient tunnel construction necessitates that the construction staging area be located adjacent to the tunnel portal. The space adjacent to the west portal is already quite small and it will all be necessary to support an efficient tunneling operation. It is also likely that the contractor will lease nearby areas for additional space to temporarily store materials and equipment.

24- The Department understands your concern regarding the importance for addressing the potential for downstream water quality impacts during construction and the importance of protecting water resources. The Department is required, under its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) and Construction General Permits, to consider the appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs) with the Best Available Technology (BAT), to the Maximum Extent Practicable (MEP) as mentioned in the Draft Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Report (DEA/EIR). As such, the Department shall include in the contract specific water pollution controls to be deployed during construction year round for the full duration of the contract. Additionally, the contractor is required to prepare and submit a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for approval by the Department. The SWPPP shall include BMPs to address any, or all, of the following to the MEP: soil stabilization, sediment control, tracking control, wind erosion control, non-stormwater management, and waste management and materials pollution control. Hazardous Waste, Solid Waste, Liquid Waste, and Contaminated Soil Management Construction Site BMPs shall also be required. In general, the choice of methods of construction and materials used would be dictated by the contractor. Department site inspections would ensure adequate implementation of those BMPs identified within the SWPPP. Further, a sampling and analysis plan shall be prepared as part of the SWPPP to verify and ensure that no materials or wastes may be released from the construction site, effectively monitoring and protecting downstream water resources. These BMPs address operations during the construction phase of the project.

25- Caltrans and FHWA conform to local guidelines to the extent practicable and feasible. However, well established principles of State and Federal sovereignty and preemption 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 and California Environmental Quality Act.

In regards to construction noise impact, hourly (Leq(h)), as well as maximum (Lmax), noise level descriptors were used to analyze impact. Measurements of existing ambient noise levels have been made at several locations adjacent to the Caldecott Tunnel. The locations were chosen based on their exposure to the construction noise. These measurements included both daytime and nighttime noise. Ambient noise levels vary throughout the day. Peak noise levels were recorded from single events (as measured by the descriptor Lmax) such as vehicular back firing (e.g., trucks, motorcycles). The ambient noise levels were then compared to expected noise levels from construction activities.

For the construction staging area the west portal, the analysis indicates that if noise from construction activities (including single events) does not exceed 86 dBA at a distance of 50 feet and a temporary noise barrier is constructed, construction noise at the measurement locations is expected to be no louder than existing ambient noise. Put another way, no single construction noise event will create noise higher than the single noise events

that are occurring now, hence there will be no significant impact due to construction noise. For this project the contract will require that noise from equipment be kept under the noise level of 86 dBA at 50 feet. This is a standard currently being used on other state projects and has been shown to be consistently attainable.

For the analysis of construction noise at the east portal, ambient noise readings were taken on Grizzly Terrace Drive, the neighborhood with the most exposure to the construction noise. The construction noise limit of 86 dBA at 50 feet will also apply to this staging area. The analysis indicates that with normal dissipation in noise over distance (with no temporary soundwall), construction noise, whether continuous or single event, will not reach levels higher than those that are now occurring.

Please also see the essay on "Methodologies Used for the Impact Assessments/Local Ordinances" in Chapter 1.

26- Comment noted. The BAAQMD CEQA guidelines for feasible control measures will be incorporated into the project to the extent possible.

27- Please see the essay on "Cumulative Impacts/Enhancements" in Chapter 1 regarding the unreasonableness of attempting to include the original State Route 24 and State Route 13 construction in cumulative impacts analysis for the present project some forty years later. Also see the essay on "Bicycle and Pedestrian Access/Improvements" in Chapter 1.

28-Table 2.1.5-17 lists 31 intersections of concern that were identified with the help of the Cities of Oakland, Berkeley, Orinda, Lafayette and Walnut Creek. Please also see the essay on "Scope of the Project" in Chapter 1.

29- Please see response #2 in the essay on "Traffic Operations" in Chapter 1.

Feasibility studies performed by the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (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. 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. ACCMA will carry this option forward for further study. The proposed project does incorporate a right-turn pocket at the Kay Overcrossing and is investigating signalization of both intersections on either end of the overcrossing. See Options E in the essay on "Bicycle and Pedestrian Access/ Improvements" in Chapter 1.

30- Please see response #1 in the essay on "Traffic Modeling/Forecasting" in Chapter 1.

31- Please see response #4 in the essay on "Traffic Modeling/Forecasting" in Chapter 1.

32- Please see response #2 in the essay on "Traffic Operations" in Chapter 1.

33- See Options A1, A2, and F, in the essay on "Bicycle and Pedestrian Access/Improvements" in Chapter 1.

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

35- Please see the essay on "Scope of the Project" in Chapter 1.

36- The environmental document correctly stated, "There are no fixed public facilities close enough to the project area to be directly affected by the construction." This statement refers to the direct impacts of construction activities. Long-term traffic impacts as discussed in Section 2.1.5.2, Impacts, subsection Intersection Analysis, would be minimal. See responses #2 and #7 in the "Traffic Operations" essay and the "Bicycle and Pedestrian Access/Improvements" in Chapter 1. The overall increase in VMT on local streets is less than 0.4%. The project would not cause substantial adverse impacts from increased traffic volumes or congestion on arterial streets.

37- Caltrans is not required to adhere to the noise standards established by general plans of local agencies. Caltrans will, however, take measures to comply with them to the extent possible.

The decision to repave the roadway with a quieter pavement will be based on the roadway surface's need for rehabilitation, in conformance with Caltrans' pavement rehabilitation strategy. Should Caltrans determine that repaving is required for maintenance purposes, open-graded asphalt pavement will be considered. Restriction of jake brakes and limitation on trucks is a joint decision of the local entities within the State Route 24 corridor and the California Highway Patrol. Caltrans does not have the authority to unilaterally set restrictions and cannot commit to them within this environmental document. Likewise, the regulation of vehicle equipment involves several agencies and likely a legislative process and is outside the scope of this environmental document. Caltrans will provide landscaping to the extent possible. A berm and sound wall combination Option B) was collectively selected by the Parkwoods residents and is considered to be the preferred alternative by Caltrans..

38- Federal regulations regarding noise abatement require only abatement that is feasible and reasonable. Abatement cannot reasonably be provided for residences that are too far away from the freeway.

39- The FHWA and Caltrans sanctioned methodology for assessing project impact does not involve noise contouring, since contouring does does not provide accurate enough information for specific receiver locations. Noise abatements are considered only at locations where noise impacts are identified within the project study area boundaries. Caltrans has no program to provide noise abatements for areas currently subject to freeway traffic noise, or where there is no new freeway or reconstruction of an existing freeway.

Note: Trails are usually not considered sensitive noise receiver sites because of the transitory nature of their usage.

Please see the essay on "Project Study Area Boundaries" in Chapter 1.

40 - The Berkeley Keep Jet Over the Bay vs. Board of Port Commissioners case holds that technical noise standards may not be arbitrarily applied and relied upon in assessing noise impacts, but rather, that noise must be subject to meaningful analysis and assessed and considered in the context of the disturbance it causes.

The commenter is not specific about whether the comment refers to construction impacts or after-project operational impacts; this response will address both.

For the analysis of after-project, operational impact, Caltrans' use of an hourly Leq as the noise descriptor was not an arbitrary application of a standard but was the appropriate and valid descriptor in evaluating noise impacts of the project because traffic noise is continuous, with inconsistent peaks, and is comprised of many different frequencies. Due to the complex nature of traffic noise no one particular noise descriptor can claim to represent all the different characteristics of traffic noise and the effects it has on people. The use of an hourly averaged noise descriptor is a methodology accepted by the Federal Highway Administration and is used nationwide. It has proven to be the most widely accepted and practical descriptor for traffic noise, because it accounts for both the continuous noise and the temporal variation.

It should be noted that the hourly averaged noise descriptor was used to determine the after-project, permanent traffic noise impacts. For construction noise impact, maximum, as well as hourly, noise level descriptors were used to analyze impact. Measurements of existing ambient noise levels have been made at several locations adjacent to the Caldecott Tunnel. The locations were chosen based on their exposure to the construction noise. These measurements included both daytime and nighttime noise. Ambient noise levels vary throughout the day. Peak noise levels were recorded from single events (as measured by the descriptor Lmax) such as vehicular back firing (e.g., trucks, motorcycles). The ambient noise levels were then compared to expected noise levels from construction activities.

The analysis indicates that if noise from construction activities (including single events) does not exceed 86 dBA at a distance of 50 feet and a temporary noise barrier is constructed, construction noise at the measurement locations is expected to be no louder than existing ambient noise. For this project the contract will require that noise from equipment be kept under the noise level of 86 dBA at 50 feet. This is a standard currently being used on other state projects and has been shown to be consistently attainable. Please also see the essay on "Methodologies Used for the Impact Assessments/Local Ordinances" in Chapter 1.

41- Currently the ventilation fans for the third bore are run only on an infrequent basis because the natural ventilation through the tunnel is sufficient to meet air quality requirements. Similarly, it is anticipated that the ventilation fans within the new fourth bore will only be run on an infrequent basis and, therefore any noise impacts will be infrequent and temporary. Further, when the fans run we do not expect their noise level in residential areas to exceed the sound of traffic.

42- 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. Mitigation sites outside of the project area will be planted with native trees and shrubs to reestablish habitat values and would include invasive weed control and fire management for a maximum period of three years. Mitigation work outside of the project area will be performed concurrent with the roadway contract.

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. Highway planting within the immediate freeway corridor, would include three years of plant establishment and invasive weed control within specific areas, and would be implemented under a separate contract immediately following the completion of all tunnel and roadway work. With respect to project economics, Caltrans identifies staging areas that are located within the Caltrans right-of-way at locations within close proximity of the construction zone.

43- A plan to restore the Tunnel Branch sub-shed of the Temescal Creek Watershed is beyond the scope of the Caldecott Tunnel Improvement Project. This would involve work outside of the Department right-of-way, where such restoration activities could not occur without procurement of additional right-of-way, making this infeasible for the proposed project.

44- There are no current plans to relinquish state right-of-way in the vicinity of the Caldecott Tunnel to the City of Oakland. Please also see the essay on “Methodologies Used for the Impact Assessment/Local Ordinances” in Chapter 1.

45- Please see the essay on “Cumulative Impacts/Enhancements” in Chapter 1.

46- Please see the essays on “Alternatives Considered in the Draft Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Report (DEA/EIR)”, “Transit”, and “Scope of the Project” in Chapter 1.

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

48- Please see Option J in the essay on “Bicycle and Pedestrian Access/Improvements” in Chapter 1.

49- This option was investigated by the ACCMA-led routes 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 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. Also see the essay on “Bicycle and Pedestrian Access/Improvements” in Chapter 1.

50- Bentley School is located on Hiller Drive west of the Tunnel Road/Hiller intersection. 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. Other schools along the corridor are not impacted by the Caldecott project and those improvements should be coordinated with the appropriate agency having jurisdiction. See Options A1 and A2 in the essay on “Bicycle and Pedestrian Access/Improvements” in Chapter 1.

51- Please see response #5 in the essay on “Traffic Operations” in Chapter 1.

52-The decision to repave the roadway with a quieter pavement will be based on the roadway surface's need for rehabilitation, in conformance with the Caltrans' pavement rehabilitation strategy. Should Caltrans determine that repaving is required for maintenance purposes, open-graded asphalt pavement will be considered. Restriction of trucks and jake brakes is a joint decision of the local entities within the State Route 24 corridor and the California Highway Patrol. Caltrans does not have the authority to unilaterally set restrictions and cannot commit to them within this environmental document. Caltrans does not have the authority to unilaterally set these and cannot commit to them within this environmental document. Caltrans will provide landscaping to the extent possible.

In regards to the noise abatement of structural columns, the contribution of noise reflecting off of the columns is negligible and would not warrant abatement. For noise abatement on arterial streets, Caltrans is required by federal regulation to consider noise abatement from projects on streets and freeways within its jurisdiction. Caltrans does not have the authority or the federal funding to commit to abatement of noise from streets that are within the jurisdiction of the local agencies.

There are no current plans for additional bridges or elevated roadways for State Route 24 from the Caldecott Tunnel to the 24/580 maze.

53- Noise abatements are considered only at locations where noise impacts are identified within the project study area boundaries. Caltrans has no program to provide noise abatements for areas currently subject to freeway traffic noise, or where there is no new freeway or reconstruction of an existing freeway. Please see the essay on "Scope of the Project" in Chapter 1.

54-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. The SIP is designed to be protective of human health.

55-The Department has no plans to provide financial support for the schools that border State Route 24. All mitigation listed in the Final Environmental Document will be provided, in accordance with CEQA and NEPA requirements. Please see the essay on "Scope of the Project" in Chapter 1.

56- Please see the essay on "Scope of the Project" in Chapter 1.

57- 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. Bicycle Lanes and sidewalks on Broadway west of Lake Temescal, as well as on Miles, Keith and Claremont, should be upgraded by the appropriate agency having jurisdiction through other funding sources. The Caldecott Improvement Project does not affect traffic in those areas, therefore, no mitigations are required. See Option E in the essay on "Bicycle and Pedestrian Access/Improvements" in Chapter 1. Please also see "Scope of the Project" in Chapter 1.

58- Please see the essay on "Scope of the Project" in Chapter 1.

59- Please see response #44, above.

60- Please see the essays on "Cumulative Impacts/Enhancements" and "Project Study Area Boundaries" in Chapter 1.

61-Please see the essay on "Cumulative Impacts/Enhancements" in Chapter 1.

There are no plans for the Department to provide funding for enhancements and improvements to FROG Park. Please see the essay on "Scope of the Project and Project Study Area Boundaries" in Chapter 1.

62, 63, and 64- Please see the essay on "Scope of the Project" in Chapter 1.

65- The current signing policy does not allow the installation of signs on freeways directing to a district within the city limits. The only exception is signing for "Civic Center", "Downtown", or "Central Commercial District". Rockridge Neighborhood Commercial District is not the Central Commercial District for the City of Oakland. Therefore, we cannot comply with the request.

66 and 67- Please see the essay on “Scope of the Project” in Chapter 1.

Rockridge Soccer Club

July 17, 2006

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

Greetings:

The Rockridge Soccer Club strongly endorses the proposed enhancement measure for the Fourth Bore Project, outlined by the Rockridge Community Planning Council, for transfer of the former Safeway site and present DMV site on Claremont Avenue to ultimate city recreational use. This measure will fill the Rockridge community's greatest deficiency, the lack of level active playing fields for children and adults.

The Rockridge Soccer Club was founded in 1972, and presently includes more than 1,800 players and 942 adult volunteers. (The Rockridge Soccer Club is a member of the Jack London Soccer League which has over 6,000 players throughout Oakland, Piedmont and Alameda. www.jlysl.org).

Throughout our existence we have scrambled to find adequate fields for our teams to practice and play. In recent years this shortage has become even more acute, as the Rockridge Soccer becomes the leading sports activity for youth in our community. A the Rockridge "trademark," as much as the shops on College Avenue and craftsman houses in our neighborhoods, is the sight of yellow and green uniforms on weekend days.

While our community has many fine attributes, its piecemeal block-by-block development in the early years of the 20th century did not plan for accessible, active public recreation. We are grateful that despite the losses to our community arising from the construction of route 24, one benefit created the North Oakland Recreation Center. But this one site – too far removed from our neighborhoods to be within walking or bicycling distance for youth – does not meet the needs of our thousands of youngsters in our club and within the Jack London Youth Soccer League.

This circumstance can be significantly improved by acquiring now for parkland (including a youth soccer field) the former Safeway site at the base of the Claremont Boulevard off-ramp, and ultimately relocating the DMV office so that its site and parking can also be transferred by the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency and added to the Safeway site as parkland (creating two more fields, one full size). Both parcels with the existing FROG Park would create a significant active level recreational facility, and bring Rockridge recreational space per resident closer to region-wide levels. This enhancement is eminently attractive because of the land use pattern of the two parcels together with the FROG park, and because the State itself already owns the larger one, now consisting mainly of parking spaces. (The former Safeway site, leased by Children's Hospital, if necessary could be obtained by eminent domain; but if the hospital follows