

COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

STATE ROUTE 85 EXPRESS LANES
PROJECT, SANTA CLARA COUNTY,
CALIFORNIA

EA 4A7900
SR 85 PM 0.0–24.1
US 101 PM 23.1–28.6
US 101 PM 47.9–52.0

Prepared for

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The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in cooperation with Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), proposes to convert the existing high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes on SR 85 to high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes (hereafter known as express lanes). The express lanes would allow HOVs to continue to use the lanes without cost and eligible single-occupant vehicles (SOVs) to pay a toll. The express lanes would be implemented on northbound and southbound SR 85 from U.S. Highway 101 (US 101) in southern San Jose to US 101 in Mountain View in Santa Clara County. The express lanes would continue for 3.3 miles on US 101 in southern San Jose. Express lane advance notification signage would also be added in a 4.1-mile segment of US 101 in Mountain View, for a total project length of 33.7 miles.

The purpose of this *Community Impact Assessment* is to identify land use, growth, and community impacts that may result from the implementation of the SR 85 Express Lanes Project (project). Areas evaluated for the purposes of this report include the State right-of-way for SR 85 and US 101 within the project limits (project corridor), land uses directly adjacent to the project corridor, and Census block groups with borders that lie within a 0.5-mile radius of the project corridor (environmental justice study area).

The project would not require any right-of-way acquisition. It would not result in direct or indirect changes to land uses, including designated farmland or grazing land. The project would not affect a public park, recreational area, wildlife or waterfowl refuge, or historic site protected under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act. The project is included in regional transportation planning and would not conflict with regional, local, or habitat conservation plans.

The project would not provide new access to previously inaccessible areas, improve access in ways that would foster local development beyond that which is already planned, or trigger further development beyond the project itself. Therefore, the project would accommodate but not induce growth. The project would not displace or relocate any residents, change any existing community boundaries, physically divide an established community, or create a new barrier to movement within the project corridor. Access to and from the project corridor and nearby streets would not change as a result of this project.

Demographic data from the 2010 U.S. Census indicate that the environmental justice study area surrounding the project corridor has lower average percentages of minority and low-income individuals than Santa Clara County, the San Francisco Bay Area, and the State of California. Minor impacts from project construction are not expected to adversely affect surrounding communities or disproportionately affect minority or low-income individuals.

VTA has studied the issue of fairness or equity in charging tolls and whether the practice has a disproportionately high and adverse effect on minority or low-income populations. Data collected from other express lane corridors in California indicate that both high- and low-income drivers use the lanes during periods of traffic congestion. Public outreach conducted by VTA found that respondents identified the use of toll revenues to fund other improvements in the corridor, including public transit, as the primary project benefit. These improvements would benefit all users of the local transportation and public transit system, regardless of race and income, even those who do not use the express lanes. In addition, the project would not deny drivers of a mobility choice that they previously had, because using the express lane is voluntary. Operation of the express lanes would not disproportionately affect minority and low-income populations.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABAG	Association of Bay Area Governments
ACS	American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau)
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CAP	Climate Action Plan (City of Sunnyvale)
CIA	Community Impact Assessment
CIDH	cast-in-drilled-hole
CTC	California Transportation Commission
DED	Draft Environmental Document
DMS	Dynamic Messaging Sign
EJ	Environmental Justice
HCP/NCCP	Habitat Conservation Plan/ Natural Communities Conservation Plan
HOT	high-occupancy toll
HOV	high-occupancy vehicle (lane)
I-280	Interstate 280
ITT	International Telephone and Telegraph Company
LOS	level of service
LUTE	Land Use Transportation Element (City of Sunnyvale)
MTC	Metropolitan Transportation Commission
project	SR 85 Express Lanes Project
PSR	Project Study Report
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
SOV	single-occupant vehicle

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SR 85	State Route 85
SPRR	Southern Pacific Railroad
US 101	U.S. Highway 101
VTA	Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority

This section describes the purpose of this document, the proposed project, and the public involvement activities conducted for the project.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the *Community Impact Assessment (CIA)* is to identify land use, growth, and community impacts that may result from the implementation of the State Route (SR) 85 Express Lanes Project (project). This CIA is intended to support the study requirements for the project to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and the California Environmental Quality Act. The CIA has been prepared pursuant to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Standard Environmental Reference, including Environmental Handbook Volume 4, Community Impact Assessment (Caltrans 2011).

1.2 PROPOSED PROJECT

Caltrans, in cooperation with the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), proposes to convert the existing high- occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes on SR 85 to high- occupancy toll (HOT) lanes (hereafter known as express lanes). The express lanes would allow HOVs to continue to use the lanes without cost and eligible single-occupant vehicles (SOVs) to pay a toll. The express lanes would be implemented on northbound and southbound SR 85 from U.S. Highway 101 (US 101) in southern San Jose to US 101 in Mountain View in Santa Clara County (see Figures 1 and 2). The express lanes would continue for 3.3 miles of a 5.5-mile segment on US 101 in southern San Jose. Express lane advance notification signage would also be added in a 4.1-mile segment of US 101 in Mountain View, for a total project length of 33.7 miles.

The proposed express lane facility would have one lane between US 101 in southern San Jose and SR 87, two lanes between SR 87 and Interstate 280 (I-280), and one lane between I-280 and US 101 in Mountain View. In the section between SR 87 and I-280, where the median width is approximately 46 feet, pavement widening would be conducted in the median to accommodate the second express lane. The median would be paved, and the existing three-beam barrier would be replaced with a Type 60 concrete barrier.

The project would also install new signage (including dynamic message signs [DMS]), tolling equipment, and striping. The overhead signs and tolling devices would be installed in the median on cantilever structures supported on piles. Trenching would be conducted along the outside edge of pavement for installation of conduits.

Work on the US 101 segments would mainly consist of striping and signing and would not include widening or any changes in system or HOV lane access. All work would be done in the existing right-of-way on both sides of the road and in the median. No work would be done in waterways in or adjacent to the project area. The project does not require any right-of-way acquisition.

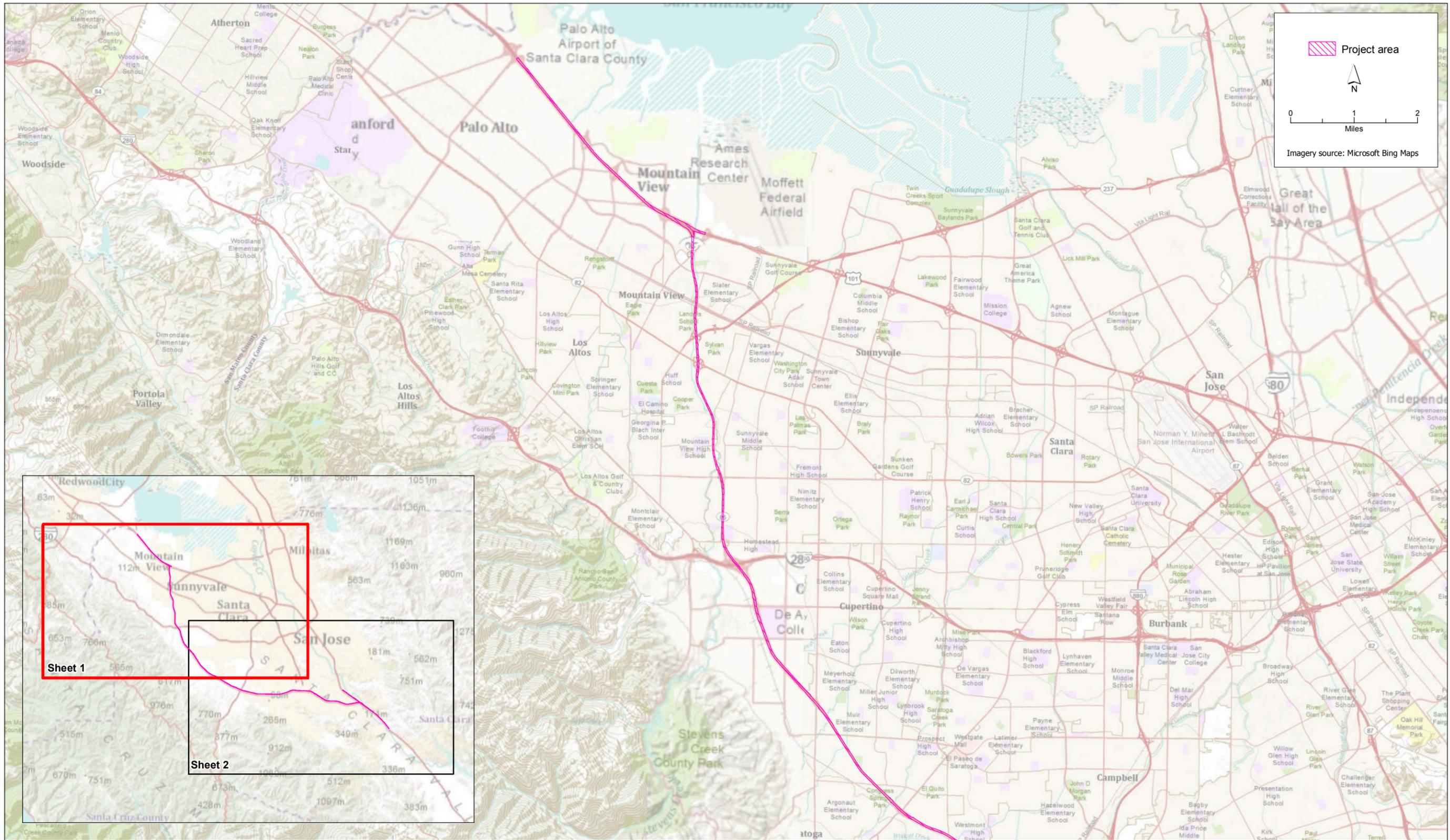
1.2.1 Background

The proposed project was originally conceived in 2003 as part of a VTA Adhoc Financial Stability Committee recommendation. In 2004 the California Legislature passed Assembly Bill 2032 authorizing the VTA, as part of a demonstration project to conduct, administer, and operate a value pricing and transit development program under which SOVs may use designated HOV lanes at certain times of the day for a fee. A Feasibility Study was completed in 2005. In 2007,



URS Corp. - Oakland CA - F:\Projects\Caltrans_SR_85_Express_Lanes_28645170\Maps\MXT\Figure 1_8x11_Project_Location.mxd

Figure 1
Project Location and Regional Setting

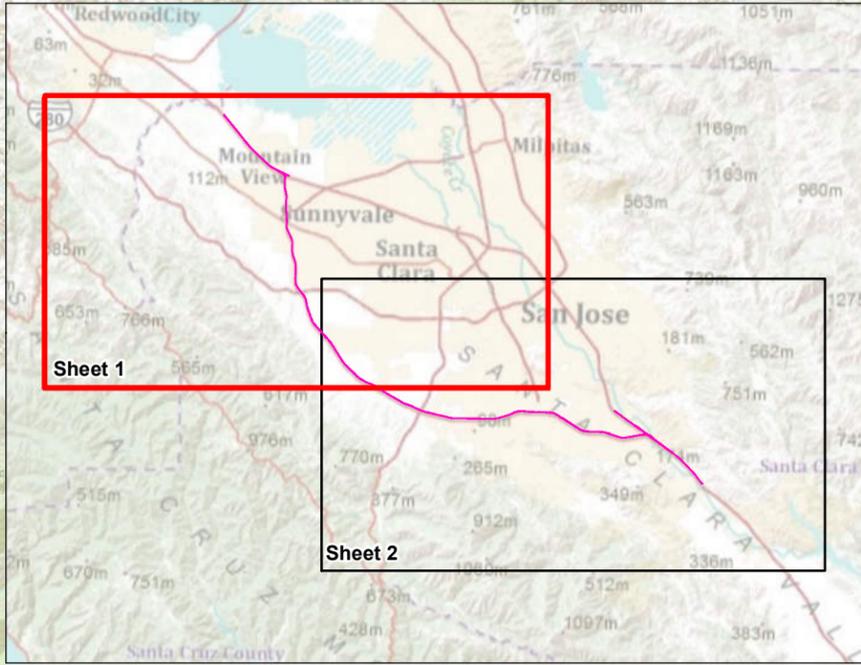


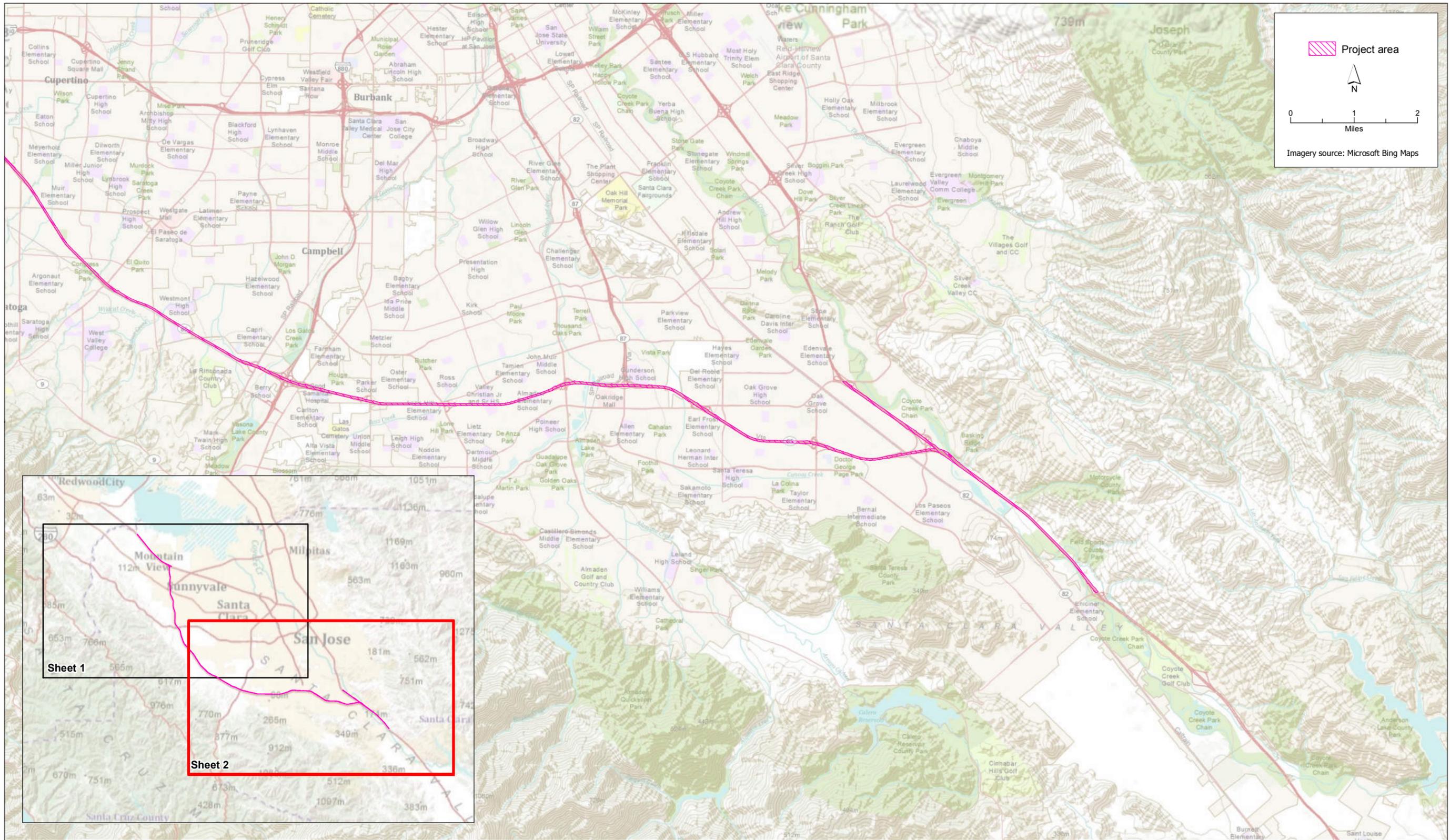
Project area

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Imagery source: Microsoft Bing Maps





Assembly Bill 574 was passed, removing the “demonstration” category from the law and allowing VTA to implement a value pricing program within any two corridors in the Santa Clara County HOV lane system.

VTA began preliminary engineering and public outreach in 2007, and the VTA Board approved a Silicon Valley Express Lane Program in December 2008. Work on the development of SR 85 express lanes has been on-going since 2007. As part of the preliminary engineering work, more than 19 express lane access configurations were reviewed, public outreach was conducted, and a technical memorandum was prepared that was used as input for the approval of the Silicon Valley Express Lanes Program by VTA Board of Directors. Approval of the project’s Project Study Report (PSR) advanced work into the preliminary engineering and environmental approval phase.

Net revenue generated from the use of the SR 85 express lanes would be used in the SR 85 corridor for highway improvements including transit service and operations.

1.2.2 Project Description

The project would convert existing HOV lanes to express lanes along SR 85 and portions of US 101. The express lanes would be restricted to HOVs and vehicles paying a toll. The purpose of the project is utilize excess capacity in the SR 85 HOV lanes, manage traffic congestion in the most congested HOV segments of the freeway between SR 87 and I-280, and maintain consistency with provisions defined in Assembly Bill 2032 (2004) and Assembly Bill 574 (2007) to implement express lanes in the SR 85 corridor.

The project would include multiple intermediate access points between the express lanes and the adjacent mixed-flow lanes. The access points would consist of entrance and exit openings in a striped 2-foot-wide buffer zone where traffic can enter and exit the express lane facility. The single express lane between US 101 in southern San Jose and SR 87 would continue for 3.3 miles on US 101.

1.2.2.1 Construction Activities

In the section between SR 87 and I-280, where the median width is approximately 46 feet, pavement widening would be conducted in the median to accommodate the second express lane. The median would be paved, and the existing three-beam barrier would be replaced with a Type 60 concrete barrier. In the areas where the median width is less than 46 feet, widening would occur in the available median width. No outside widening is currently proposed.

SR 85 bridge decks would be widened at Almaden Expressway (northbound side only), Camden Avenue, Oka Road, Pollard Road, and Saratoga Avenue, as well as at the San Tomas Aquino Creek and Saratoga Creek crossings. The existing gaps between the northbound and southbound bridges at these locations would be closed except at Almaden Expressway, where the northbound bridge would be widened on the inside (into the median).

Overhead signs and tolling devices would be installed in the median. Overhead DMS and fixed-message signs would be mounted on cantilever structures supported on cast-in-drilled-hole (CIDH) or driven piles of 3 to 6 feet in diameter that would extend 25 to 30 feet below ground surface. Overhead tolling equipment would be mounted on cantilever structures supported on CIDH or driven piles of 1 to 2.5 feet in diameter that would extend to approximately 10 feet below ground surface.

Conversion of the HOV lanes into single express lanes on SR 85 between US 101 in southern San Jose and SR 87 and between I-280 and US 101 in Mountain View would include restriping and installation of overhead signs and tolling devices in the median. The single express lane would continue in both directions of US 101 in southern San Jose and would include the installation of overhead signs in the median.

During construction, some lane closures could be required, but full freeway closures are not expected to be necessary.

1.2.2.2 Lane Operation

Static and dynamic overhead signs would be installed to advise qualified HOV and SOV users as they approach an express facility entrance point. The signs would display the current toll rates for each destination and exit served by the facility. The signs would be updated as the system is managed for changing speed and traffic density measured at intervals along the express lanes. Vehicles using the express lanes must have FasTrak transponders that would be monitored by tolling equipment mounted on an overhead structure at the beginning of the facility. Vehicles in the express lanes without a transponder would activate a signal that would be monitored by enforcement officers, who would observe from a distance whether the indicated vehicle has two or more passengers or is otherwise exempt from tolling.

1.2.2.3 SR 85/US 101 Direct Connectors

At the south end of the project in southern San Jose, both the northbound and southbound HOV direct connectors from SR 85 to US 101 would be converted to express connectors, allowing SOVs with valid FasTrak devices to use the direct connectors. The southern end of the proposed express lanes on US 101 would coincide with the beginning/ending of the double HOV lanes under the Metcalf overcrossing.

At the north end of the project in Mountain View, the buffer-separated express lane facility would end on SR 85 shortly before the SR 85/US 101 interchange. The direct connectors at this location are not proposed to be part of the SR 85 Express Lanes Project and would remain as HOV-only connectors. In the northbound direction on SR 85, the express lane would terminate in advance of the direct connectors, allowing enough distance for SOVs to exit the lane and merge across the mixed-flow lanes to use the mixed-flow ramp from northbound SR 85 to northbound US 101. In the southbound direction, the express lane would start shortly after the direct connector terminates on SR 85, allowing enough distance for SOVs entering southbound SR 85 from the mixed-flow ramp to merge across the mixed-flow lanes and enter the express lane.

1.2.2.4 Utility Work

Trenching would be conducted along the outside edge of pavement for installation of conduits. The depth of trenching would be approximately 3 to 5 feet below the roadway surface. Conduits would be jacked (tunneled) across the freeway to the median where needed to provide power and communication feeds to the new overhead signage and tolling equipment.

1.2.2.5 Express Lane Costs

No tolls would be charged for HOVs. Toll rates for SOVs will be determined based on congestion in the express and general purpose lanes and will vary by time and date. These toll

rates would be automatically adjusted to maintain a minimum speed of 45 miles per hour in the express lanes. The toll rate shown on the DMS at the time a driver enters the express lanes would be the cost charged for the trip until the driver exits the lanes, even if the toll rate changes after the driver enters the express lanes.

As stated above, SOVs would need to have FasTrak transponders to use the express lanes. The transponder is a small battery-powered radio toll collection device that can be mounted to the inside of a vehicle windshield. FasTrak transponders are already used to automatically pay tolls on Bay Area bridges. Transponders can be applied for and purchased online; by phone, mail, or fax; in person from the FasTrak Customer Service Center; or from retail outlets such as Walgreens, Safeway, and Costco.

There is no charge to open a FasTrak account. However, each user must complete an application and provide a minimum balance in the prepaid account, which is determined by the method of payment:

- When a credit card is used to open the account, an initial prepaid balance of \$25 is charged, and the transponder deposit is waived unless more than three transponders are requested.
- When an account is opened with cash or check, an initial prepaid balance of \$50 is charged, plus a \$20 deposit for each transponder. The deposit is refunded when the account is closed and the transponder is returned in good condition (Bay Area FasTrak 2009).

1.3 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

VTA began seeking public input on express lanes for SR 85 and US 101 in Santa Clara County in 2004. A primary focus of the public outreach has been fairness and equity issues of charging tolls for express lane use. A study prepared for VTA during early express lane planning, *Assessing the Equity Implications of HOT Lanes* (Weinstein and Sciara 2004) examines these issues and provides strategies to address equity concerns, including public outreach and education, documentation of equity analysis in project planning, and project design elements and approaches that increase equity in express lane benefits and costs. The study is available on VTA's Web site at http://www.vta.org/projects/hot_lanes/hot_equity.pdf.

In 2008, VTA conducted a research, public outreach, and education program to gauge public sentiment about the adoption of express lanes. The program consisted of polling and interviewing approximately 750 Santa Clara County citizens, including 681 SR 85 and US 101 users, 4 focus groups of HOV users and solo drivers who use SR 85, 13 one-on-one interviews with community stakeholders, and 10 one-on-one interviews with VTA managers and staff. Section 6 of the *Silicon Valley Express Lanes Program Implementation Assessment and Plan* (VTA 2008), which is available on VTA's Web site at http://www.vta.org/expresslanes/documents/reports/svel_program_112108.pdf, provides additional information about the program and public perceptions and concerns about the express lanes.

Focus group participants were screened to reflect diversity in the ethnicity, income and education level, age, sex, and commute patterns of the general population in Santa Clara County (SA Opinion Research 2008). The program found the following:

- In focus groups, concerns about a “Lexus Lane” initially divided survey respondents evenly. However, once more information was given and project benefits were explained, respondents were more likely to view the project favorably.
- The dedication of toll revenues to other improvements in the corridor, including public transit improvements, was identified by focus group participants as the number one benefit.
- Fifty-eight percent of those surveyed thought that dual use (combining HOVs and toll-paying SOVs in the same facility) is an efficient approach to relieving traffic congestion.
- Focus group participants reported they could see how everyone could benefit from express lanes, whether through public transit improvements, better air quality, or improved quality of life from less congestion.
- Respondents from all income levels surveyed said they would use the lanes (VTA 2008).

A detailed description of the focus group findings is available on VTA’s Web site at http://www.vta.org/expresslanes/documents/reports/el_focus_group.pdf.

In 2008 through 2010, VTA outreach staff participated in five public events and made presentations about the express lanes projects to business, environmental, and community groups as described below (VTA 2008, 2010):

- Public events (2008)
 - Silicon Valley Leadership Group’s “Clean and Green” Conference
 - Santa Teresa Citizen Action Group Community Festival in south San Jose
 - “Let the Children Play” Concert in downtown San Jose
 - San Jose Mariachi Festival in downtown San Jose
 - Japantown Festival in San Jose
- Presentations and meetings
 - Mineta Transportation Institute (San Jose State University; 4/16/08)
 - California Highway Patrol (7/14/08)
 - Sierra Club, Loma Prieta Chapter meeting (9/22/08)
 - Employee Transportation Coordinator meeting (Moffett Park Business and Transportation Association; 9/25/08)
 - Contra Costa County Transportation Authority Board of Directors meeting (10/15/08)
 - Silicon Valley Leadership Group (12/02/08)
 - Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce (12/02/08)
 - Board of Directors meeting for the Moffett Park Business and Transportation Association (12/08/08)
 - TransForm (Transportation and Land Use Coalition) regional meeting (3/18/09)

- Transportation Authority of Marin County meeting (4/28/09)
- Solano County Transportation Authority meeting (6/04/09)
- Transportation Research Board poster presentation (Washington D.C.; 1/10/10)
- Northern California Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (4/23/10)
- South Bay Transportation Officials Association (6/10/10)
- Presentations to VTA Standing and Advisory committees that include elected officials from municipalities in the proposed project corridor (multiple dates)

On October 19, 2011, VTA held a public information meeting about the project at the Saratoga Senior Center, 19655 Allendale Avenue, Saratoga. The meeting was advertised through VTA press releases (October 12 and 18, 2011); local English-language newspapers (*Mercury News*, *Mountain View Voice*, *Sunnyvale Sun*, *Cupertino Carrier*, *Saratoga News*, and *Philippines Today*); and foreign-language newspapers that serve the project corridor (*El Observador*—Spanish, *Sing Tao*—Chinese, *Korea Times*—Korean, and *Thoi Bao*—Vietnamese).

Representatives from VTA, Caltrans, and URS were present at the October 19, 2011 public information meeting to discuss the project and answer questions from members of the public. Meeting materials included an SR 85 fact sheet, a “frequently asked questions” handout, display boards and maps, and an express lanes video. Four members of the public attended: a middle school student on a school assignment, two Saratoga residents, and an employee of the City of Saratoga. The attendees did not express specific concerns or comments about the project and were primarily interested in learning more about it.

Public input on the project will be solicited during the review period for the Draft Environmental Document (DED), which will last a minimum of 30 days. The public will be notified of the availability of the DED by a number of methods, including postings on the Caltrans and VTA Web sites and a mailed announcement to interested agencies and individuals. During the review period, Caltrans and VTA will hold a public meeting to share information about the project and collect comments on the DED from interested parties. All formal comments will be addressed and responses published in the Final Environmental Document.

1.4 REPORT STRUCTURE

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- Section 2, Land Use: Existing and Future Land Use, Consistency with State, Regional, and Local Plans and Programs, Coastal Zone / Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Park and Recreational Facilities
- Section 3, Growth
- Section 4, Farmlands/Timberlands
- Section 5, Community Impacts: Community Character and Cohesion, Relocations and Real Property Acquisition, and Environmental Justice

This assessment of community impacts is presented in the order listed in the Caltrans Annotated Outline for an Initial Study/Environmental Assessment (Caltrans 2011), which is the outline being used for the DED.

This section addresses the project setting and potential impacts with regard to existing and future land use; consistency with state, regional, and local plans and programs; the coastal zone and wild and scenic rivers; and parks and recreational facilities.

2.1 EXISTING AND FUTURE LAND USE

2.1.1 Affected Environment

The project corridor is occupied by the SR 85 and US 101 rights-of-way; therefore, existing land use is transportation.

Existing land use adjacent to the project corridor is described within the following segments.

- **US 101 in the Cities of Palo Alto and Mountain View:** Land uses consist of commercial/industrial interspersed with a few areas of residential and institutional/public services. Major institutional uses include the NASA Ames Research Center and Moffett Federal Airfield. In the northern portion of this segment, the Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve lies east of US 101.
- **SR 85 in the Cities of Mountain View and Sunnyvale:** Land uses are primarily residential with a few areas of commercial/industrial. Several City and County parks are adjacent to the alignment in this segment, including the Stevens Creek Trail extending southward along SR 85 from Mountain View through Sunnyvale.
- **SR 85 in the Cities of Los Altos, Cupertino, Saratoga, Los Gatos, and San Jose:** Land uses are primarily residential, with a few areas of undeveloped land, public services (schools and hospitals) and industrial/commercial.
- **US 101 in the City of San Jose:** Land uses include residential, commercial/industrial, and institutional/public services. Undeveloped land and open space areas, such as the Coyote Creek Parkway, Motorcycle County Park, and Field Sports County Park, are adjacent or in the vicinity of the alignment.

Future development within one-quarter mile of the project corridor is described in Table 2-1, below. The table is organized by jurisdiction, and provides the name of each development, the status (built, under construction, or proposed), and the size of each development in acres.

**Table 2-1
Future Development in the Project Vicinity**

Name	Jurisdiction	Proposed Uses	Status
Cleo Avenue Housing	Cupertino	Construct 4 two-story, 1,000 square foot (sf) single-family homes on .30 acre.	Proposed. City Council approved the project in July 2011
The Oaks Shopping Center	Cupertino	Demolish existing theater and 2,430 sf of commercial space and construct a four-story hotel and a 51,000 sf mixed use retail/office/convention center building on 8.1 acres.	Proposed. Project will begin in 2012.

**Table 2-1
Future Development in the Project Vicinity**

Name	Jurisdiction	Proposed Uses	Status
Mary Avenue Dog Park	Cupertino	West of Mary Avenue, south of Lubec Street	Proposed.
90-160 Albright Way and 14600 Winchester Boulevard PD-10-005	Los Gatos	Demolish five existing commercial buildings and construct two new office buildings and a parking structure on 75 acres.	Proposed. Project Approved by City Council in September 2011.
Mountain View High School Expansion Project	Mountain View	Construct two, one-story classroom buildings with 12 classrooms totaling 15,280 sf on the existing Mountain View High School campus (acreage unknown).	Proposed. Draft EIR filed October 2011.
445 Calderon Avenue Senior Co-Housing Project	Mountain View	Relocate existing historic single-family home on-site and redevelop the 1-acre site with 2 three-story, buildings, totaling 38,236 s f, with 19 co-housing units for older adults.	Proposed. Project approved by City Council; Notice of Determination filed November 2011.
100 Moffett Avenue	Mountain View	Construct 132 apartment units (acreage unknown).	Proposed. Under informal review by Planning Division.
209-405 W. Evelyn Avenue	Mountain View	Construct 65 residential units on 4.3 acres.	Under construction as of 10/4/2011.
1991 Sun Mor Avenue	Mountain View	Construct a residential subdivision.	Proposed. Under informal review by Planning Division.
Almaden/Chynoweth Retail Center Planned Development	San Jose	Develop up to 400,000 sf of commercial on approximately 43 acres and construct Chynoweth Avenue through the site to connect with Sanchez Drive to the south.	Proposed. Notice of Preparation filed May 2011.
Site Development on Southeast Corner of S. De Anza Boulevard	San Jose	Demolish existing restaurant and construct a 3,438 sf dental and possible retail use on 0.29 acre.	Proposed. Permit Application filed June 2010.
iSTAR Great Oaks Place	San Jose	Establish Planned Development Rezoning to allow up to 1,500 single-family and multi-family detached and attached residences on 76.2 acres.	Proposed. Permit Application filed November 2007.
Lester Property Housing Project	San Jose	Construct 86 single-family and multi-family residential units.	Proposed. Under review by Planning Division.

**Table 2-1
Future Development in the Project Vicinity**

Name	Jurisdiction	Proposed Uses	Status
Hitachi Site Mixed-Use Project	San Jose	Construct 2,930 single-family residential units.	Approved in June 2006 by San Jose Planning Division.
Condominiums on Corner of Monterey Road and Bernal Road	San Jose	Reconfigure one parcel into one lot for 224 single-family attached residential units on 10 acres.	Proposed. Permit Application filed 2004.
Samaritan Medical Center	San Jose	Construct 74,800 sf for medical office uses on 5.4 acres.	Proposed. Permit Application filed March 2008; recommended for approval.
13686 Quito Road 4-Lot Subdivision	Saratoga	Create a four lot subdivision for construction of 4 new single-family homes on 3 acres.	Proposed. Notice of Determination filed April 2010.

2.1.2 Environmental Consequences

The project would not permanently expand the existing State right-of-way. The project would not result in direct or indirect changes to land uses. The proposed project would serve an existing developed urban area and would not involve unused rural land.

2.1.3 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures

None required.

2.2 CONSISTENCY WITH STATE, REGIONAL, AND LOCAL PLANS AND PROGRAMS

2.2.1 Affected Environment

The project's consistency with the following types of plans was considered and is discussed in the following subsections:

- Transportation Plans/Programs
- Regional Growth Plans
- Santa Clara Valley Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Communities Conservation Plan
- General and Community Plans

2.2.1.1 Transportation Plans/Programs

The project is listed in the *Santa Clara Valley Transportation Plan 2035* (VTA 2009) and in the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC's) *Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) 2035* (ID 230674; MTC 2009). In addition to including the proposed project, the RTP proposes development of a Bay Area Express Lane Network. The purpose of the network would be to

increase the efficiency of the region's existing freeways by adding capacity without requiring the purchase of large amounts of right-of-way and the associated costs and environmental impacts. The network is intended to provide a funding mechanism to help close the gaps in Bay Area HOV lane connectivity, which inhibit seamless travel for carpools and buses and create bottlenecks where existing HOV lanes end (MTC 2009).

The proposed project is part of an initial group of Bay Area express lanes authorized under Assembly Bills 2032 and 574. The first express lane opened on southbound I-680 over the Sunol Grade in 2010. Express lanes are also being planned for westbound I-580 and northbound I-680 in Alameda County, and US 101 in Santa Clara County and portions of San Mateo County. In October 2011, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) authorized an MTC plan to develop an additional 290 miles of express lanes in Alameda, Contra Costa, and Solano counties.

2.2.1.2 Regional Growth Plans

Regional growth is addressed in the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) report *A Place to Call Home: Housing in the San Francisco Bay Area 2007* (ABAG 2007). The report emphasizes the importance of building housing developments in existing communities, or "infill" locations, near public transit. The report presents best practices and tools that local communities are using to support this development trend. Appendix A includes additional information on regional growth.

2.2.1.3 Habitat Conservation Plans

The Draft Santa Clara Valley Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Communities Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP) will identify and preserve land that provides habitat for endangered and threatened species, and provide authorization for incidental take of species as part of specific activities that will occur in accordance with approved land-use and capital-improvement plans. The Santa Clara Valley HCP/NCCP is a regional partnership between six local partners (the County of Santa Clara, VTA, Santa Clara Valley Water District, and the Cities of San Jose, Gilroy and Morgan Hill), the California Department of Fish and Game, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The HCP/NCCP covers approximately 520,000 acres and has a study area that extends from the Santa Clara/Alameda County border south to Santa Clara County's boundary with San Benito County, and from the western edge of San Jose east to the Santa Clara County border. The proposed SR 85 Express Lanes Project is a covered project in the HCP/NCCP.

A draft of the HCP/NCCP was issued in December 2010, and the final plan is expected to be approved in early 2013.

2.2.1.4 General and Community Plans

General and community plans were reviewed for the jurisdictions in the project vicinity, which are Santa Clara County and the Cities of Palo Alto, Mountain View, Sunnyvale, Los Altos, Cupertino, Saratoga, Los Gatos, and San Jose. Summaries of the relevant plans that apply to the proposed project are provided in Appendix A. The plans, which generally focus on ways to maximize the efficiency of existing transportation facilities, do not specifically evaluate or reference the proposed project. However, the development of toll lanes is included as Action TR-11.3 of the City of San Jose Envision 2040 General Plan [Draft]: "Support and collaborate on the development of toll lanes on all major freeways and expressways in Santa Clara County."

The following plan policies address transportation improvements relevant to the project corridor.

Santa Clara County General Plan, 1995 – 2010

C-TR(i) 10: Continue to implement incentives to encourage carpooling and vanpooling such as:

- a. Preferential carpool parking;
- b. High occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes in congested areas;
- c. Special access lanes on metered freeway on-ramps; and
- d. Encourage employers to replace free employee parking with a “Transportation Allowance.”

C-TR(i) 12: Continue to implement techniques which increase highway and expressway efficiency, including:

- a. Designation of high occupancy vehicle lanes;
- b. Construction of special freeway on-ramps for buses, carpools, and vanpools;
- c. Traffic signal preemption systems for transit vehicles on freeway on-ramps;
- d. A coordinated program of signalization, channelization, ramp metering; and
- e. Traffic signal preemption systems for rail transit vehicles on city streets.

City of Mountain View General Plan, Circulation Chapter

Policy 9: Support, where appropriate, improvements that will allow freeways and expressways to operate more efficiently.

City of Sunnyvale General Plan

Policy LT-1.7b: Advocate improvements to state and county roadways serving Sunnyvale.

Policy LT-5.1d: Study and implement physical and operational improvements to optimize roadway and intersection capacities.

City of Los Altos General Plan, Circulation Element

Goal 1: Support development of an efficient regional transportation system.

Policy 1.1: Promote improvement and maintenance of all regional highways, expressways, and freeways in the area, consistent with other circulation policies.

Policy 1.3: Cooperate with regional agencies to promote area-wide transportation solutions, and actively participate in area-wide planning studies and commissions.

2.2.2 Environmental Consequences

The project is included in the most recent RTP and is consistent with the RTP goal of providing a regional network of express lanes. The project would not conflict with regional growth plans or the Santa Clara Valley HCP/NCCP.

By converting underutilized HOV lanes to express lanes and adding a second express lane between SR 87 and I-280, the project would support transportation policies of local plans, as shown below in Table 2-2.

**Table 2-2
Consistency with Local Plans**

Policy	Build Alternative	No Build Alternative
Santa Clara County General Plan, 1995 – 2010		
<p><i>C-TR(i) 10: Continue to implement incentives to encourage carpooling and vanpooling such as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>e. Preferential carpool parking;</i> <i>f. High occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes in congested areas;</i> <i>g. Special access lanes on metered freeway on-ramps; and</i> <i>h. Encourage employers to replace free employee parking with a “Transportation Allowance.”</i> 	<p>Consistent. The project would continue to allow HOVs to use the express lanes without cost.</p>	<p>Consistent. The No Build Alternative assumes no modifications would be made, including the continuous access HOV lane. Therefore, this alternative would continue to serve HOVs.</p>
<p><i>C-TR(i) 12: Continue to implement techniques which increase highway and expressway efficiency, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>f. Designation of high occupancy vehicle lanes;</i> <i>g. Construction of special freeway on-ramps for buses, carpools, and vanpools;</i> <i>h. Traffic signal preemption systems for transit vehicles on freeway on-ramps;</i> <i>i. A coordinated program of signalization, channelization, ramp metering; and</i> <i>j. Traffic signal preemption systems for rail transit vehicles on city streets.</i> 	<p>Consistent. The project would convert underutilized HOV lanes to express lanes and allow SOVs to use the lanes by paying a toll. The project would increase highway and expressway efficiency by utilizing the excess capacity in the SR 85 HOV lanes. In addition, the project would further increase efficiency by adding a second express lane on the segment of SR 85 between SR 87 and I-280.</p>	<p>Inconsistent. The No Build Alternative would not increase highway and expressway efficiency. Under this scenario, traffic conditions and congestion would continue to degrade.</p>
City of Mountain View General Plan, Circulation Chapter		
<p><i>Policy 9: Support, where appropriate, improvements that will allow freeways and expressways to operate more efficiently.</i></p>	<p>Consistent. The project would convert underutilized HOV lanes to express lanes and allow SOVs to use the lanes by paying a toll. The project would increase highway and expressway efficiency by utilizing the excess capacity in the SR 85 HOV lanes. In addition, the project would further increase efficiency by adding a second express lane on the segment of SR 85 between SR 87 and I-280.</p>	<p>Inconsistent. The No Build Alternative would not provide traffic congestion management that would result from the proposed project, and would therefore not continue to increase highway and expressway efficiency. Under this scenario, traffic conditions and congestion would continue to degrade.</p>
City of Sunnyvale General Plan		
<p><i>Policy LT-1.7b: Advocate</i></p>	<p>Consistent. The project would</p>	<p>Inconsistent. The No Build</p>

**Table 2-2
Consistency with Local Plans**

Policy	Build Alternative	No Build Alternative
<p><i>improvements to state and county roadways serving Sunnyvale.</i></p> <p><i>Policy LT-5.1d: Study and implement physical and operational improvements to optimize roadway and intersection capacities.</i></p>	<p>convert underutilized HOV lanes to express lanes and allow SOVs to use the lanes by paying a toll. The project would improve highway and expressway efficiency by utilizing the excess capacity in the SR 85 HOV lanes.</p>	<p>Alternative would not provide traffic congestion management that would result from the proposed project, and would therefore not continue to improve highway and expressway efficiency or optimize roadway capacities.</p>
<p>City of Los Altos General Plan, Circulation Element</p>		
<p><i>Goal 1: Support development of an efficient regional transportation system.</i></p> <p><i>Policy 1.1: Promote improvement and maintenance of all regional highways, expressways, and freeways in the area, consistent with other circulation policies.</i></p> <p><i>Policy 1.3: Cooperate with regional agencies to promote area-wide transportation solutions, and actively participate in area-wide planning studies and commissions.</i></p>	<p>Consistent. The project would convert underutilized HOV lanes to express lanes and allow SOVs to use the lanes by paying a toll. The project would improve regional highway and expressway efficiency by utilizing the excess capacity in the SR 85 HOV lanes. In addition, the project would further increase efficiency by adding a second express lane on the segment of SR 85 between SR 87 and I-280.</p>	<p>Inconsistent. The No Build Alternative would not provide traffic congestion management that would result from the proposed project, and would therefore not continue to improve regional highway and expressway efficiency. Under this scenario, traffic conditions and congestion would continue to degrade.</p>
<p>City of San Jose Envision 2040 General Plan [Draft]</p>		
<p><i>Action TR-11.3 Support and collaborate on the development of toll lanes on all major freeways and expressways in Santa Clara County.</i></p>	<p>Consistent. The project would convert existing HOV lanes on SR 85 and a portion of US 101 to express lanes, requiring SOVs to pay a toll to use the express lanes.</p>	<p>Inconsistent. The No Build Alternative would not convert existing HOV lanes to express lanes for use by SOVs after paying a toll.</p>

Sources: Santa Clara County 1994; City of Palo Alto 1998; City of Mountain View 1992; City of Sunnyvale 2011b; City of Los Altos 2002b; City of Cupertino 2005; City of San 2011b

2.2.3 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

None required.

2.3 COASTAL ZONE / WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

The project corridor is not within the coastal zone. Therefore, the project does not have the potential to impact the coastal zone.

Eighteen waterways cross or are adjacent to the project corridor. However, none of these waterways are National or California Designated Wild and Scenic Rivers or rivers under study for this designation. Therefore, the project does not have the potential to affect a Wild and Scenic River or a river under study for this designation.

2.4 PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Per the Department of Transportation Act (49 United States Code 303), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and other Department of Transportation Agencies cannot approve the use of certain types of land, known as 4(f) resources, unless there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of land, and the action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from use.

Section 4(f) resources include:

- Publicly-owned public parks, recreational areas, or wildlife or waterfowl refuges
- Historic sites on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places

The “use” of a Section 4(f) resource is defined as:

- Land from a Section 4(f) resource is permanently incorporated into a transportation facility or project;
- There is temporary occupancy of a Section 4(f) resource that does not meet the criteria of temporary use; and
- There is constructive use¹ of the Section 4(f) resource.

According to Chapter 20 of the Caltrans Standard Environmental Reference, “historic sites” mean properties listed on or eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Archaeological sites may be protected under Section 4(f) only if all consulting parties have agreed that the site’s primary value warrants preservation in place. An archaeological site whose value is in the data it contains, whether or not the data are recovered, and has minimal value for preservation in place, is not protected by Section 4(f).

2.4.1 Affected Environment

The following sections describe parks, trails, and bikeways that are adjacent to the project corridor.

2.4.1.1 Palo Alto

In Palo Alto, two City-owned parks are adjacent to the project corridor: the John Lucas Greer Park and the Baylands Nature Preserve (City of Palo Alto n.d.).

Jon Lucas Greer Park is a multi-use, 22-acre district park that includes a playground and a skateboard park. The park underwent renovation that was completed in Fall 2010.

The Baylands Preserve is a 1,940-acre preserve and is also officially called the John Fletcher Byxbee Recreation Area. The preserve includes fifteen miles of multi-use trails, an interpretive center, a golf course, an athletic center, and an airport. Paved, multi-use trails adjacent to the project corridor are the Adobe Creek Loop, the Bay Trail, and the Bay to Ridge Trail (City of Palo Alto 2011b). The Bay to Ridge Trail crosses over the project corridor by bridge. A parking

¹ A constructive use occurs when the project’s “indirect impacts” are so severe that the protected activities, features or attributes that qualify the resource for protection under Section 4(f) are “substantially impaired.”

area for the nature preserve is also adjacent to the project corridor. Additional bicycle paths are proposed adjacent to the project, including two trails that will cross over the project corridor by bridge at Matadero Creek and Adobe Creek, respectively, to connect with the Bay Trail (City of Palo Alto 2011a).

2.4.1.2 Mountain View

In Mountain View, City-owned parks adjacent to the project corridor are the Whisman Park and School, Creekside Park, and Landels Park and School. These parks provide access to the Stevens Creek Trail.

The Stevens Creek Trail is a 4.8-mile multi-use trail that extends south from its connection to the Bay Trail in Shoreline Park. A portion of the Stevens Creek Trail runs adjacent and parallel to the project corridor along SR 85 between Terra Bella Avenue and Sleeper Avenue (City of Mountain View 2004). The trail crosses under the project corridor near Central Avenue.

In addition to the Stevens Creek Trail, several bicycle paths or routes intersect the project corridor by bridge or undercrossing, such as at Middlefield Road, Evelyn Avenue, and East Dana Street (City of Mountain View 2010). Proposed bike routes that would intersect the project corridor are at Moffett Boulevard and Dale Avenue.

2.4.1.3 Sunnyvale

There are no parks adjacent to the project corridor in Sunnyvale. Roads with bike lanes that intersect the project corridor by bridge or undercrossing are Fremont Avenue and Homestead Road (City of Sunnyvale 2005).

2.4.1.4 Los Altos

There are no parks adjacent to the project corridor in Los Altos. An existing bike lane on Fremont Avenue intersects the project corridor by means of a bicycle/pedestrian overcrossing (City of Los Altos 2002a).

On October 14, 2008, the City of Los Altos adopted the Los Altos Stevens Creek Trail Feasibility Study (Feasibility Study) (City of Los Altos 2008). The Feasibility Study provides a plan for linking the Stevens Creek Trail in Mountain View to a connection in Cupertino, offering recreational and transportation benefits to south Los Altos residents. The plan presents the preferred alternative for the trail, which would extend from Mountain View High School adjacent to the project corridor, cross under SR 85 at Stevens Creek, and proceed to Fremont Avenue heading west. The proposed trail alignment would consist of a multi-use path adjacent to the creek.

2.4.1.5 Cupertino

There are no parks or trails adjacent to the project corridor in Cupertino. Roads with bike lanes that intersect the project corridor by bridge or undercrossing are Stevens Creek Boulevard, McClellan Road, and Stelling Road (City of Cupertino 2011). Roads with bike lanes that are adjacent to the project corridor are South De Anza Boulevard, Mary Avenue, and Rainbow Drive.

2.4.1.6 Saratoga

In Saratoga, three City-owned parks are adjacent to the project corridor: Azule Park, Kevin Moran Park, and Congress Springs Park (City of Saratoga 2009). Azule Park is a 4.3-acre park that features playground areas, par course stations, and a turf area. Kevin Moran Park is a 10.3-acre park with play areas, basketball and tennis courts, par course stations, turf areas, and a garden. Congress Springs Park is a 10-acre park that has several sports fields and play areas (City of Saratoga n.d.b).

Azule Park and Kevin Moran Park have pedestrian/ bicycle trail loops that connect by a bridge crossing over the project corridor (City of Saratoga 2011). Kevin Moran Park features a 0.25 mile loop, and Azule Park features a 0.25 mile loop. Both loops, including the overpass, total 0.85 mile.

Roads with bicycle lanes that intersect the project corridor by bridge or undercrossing are Prospect Road, Cox Avenue, Saratoga Avenue, and Quito Road. A newly constructed 3.7-mile, multi-use bicycle path, formally known as “The De Anza Trail” and renamed Joe’s Trail at Saratoga De Anza, runs parallel to the Union Pacific Railroad tracks and then continues adjacent to a portion of the project corridor at Saratoga Avenue (City of Saratoga n.d.a). The trail had its grand opening on November 17, 2011.

2.4.1.7 Los Gatos

There are no parks adjacent to the project corridor in Los Gatos.

The Los Gatos Creek Trail intersects the project corridor near SR 17 (Town of Los Gatos n.d.b). The Los Gatos Creek Trail is an 11.2-mile, paved, multi-use trail that runs through several jurisdictions and is operated by the County of Santa Clara Parks and Recreation Department, City of Campbell, Town of Los Gatos, and City of San Jose. The trail connects several parks, including Los Gatos Creek County Park and Vasona Lake County Park, which are in the vicinity of the project corridor.

A bike lane is proposed on Winchester Boulevard, which intersects the project corridor (Town of Los Gatos 2011).

2.4.1.8 San Jose

In San Jose, two County-owned parks are adjacent to the project corridor: Coyote Creek Parkway and Field Sports Park. Motorcycle Park is also in proximity to the project corridor (Santa Clara County Parks 2011).

Coyote Creek Parkway is a 15-mile scenic parkway that runs along Coyote Creek. The northern portion of the parkway is a paved, multi-use trail. An equestrian trail runs parallel to the paved trail south of Metcalf Road. Field Sports Park features a firing range, providing opportunities for trap and skeet, as well as rifle and pistol shooting. Motorcycle Park offers areas and tracks for All Terrain Vehicles, All Terrain Cycles, and motocross. The park also includes 18 miles of trails.

Several roads with bicycle lanes intersect or are adjacent to the project corridor (City of San Jose 2005). These roads include Rainbow Drive, Prospect Road, Quito Road, Leigh Avenue, Santa Teresa Boulevard, Blossom Hill Road, Cottle Road, and Monterey Road.

Paved, multi-use trails that intersect the project corridor by bridge or undercrossing are the Los Gatos Creek Trail, Upper Guadalupe River Trail, and the Coyote Creek Trail. Bike and pedestrian bridges or undercrossings along the project corridor are located at Pollard Road, White Oaks Road, Dent Avenue, and Russo Drive.

2.4.2 Environmental Consequences

The project would not require the temporary or permanent use of any parkland or recreational facility. No temporary or permanent closures of bike or pedestrian trails are anticipated. The Noise Study Report for the proposed project (Illingworth and Rodkin 2012) evaluated parks or trail segments near the project corridor for noise levels and potential noise impacts and found that the project would increase noise levels by 0 to 2 decibels over existing conditions, depending on location. A 2-decibel increase in a typical noisy environment is generally not noticeable (Illingworth and Rodkin 2012), and no noise barriers are proposed at any of the parks along the project corridor.

The project would not directly or indirectly affect a Section 4(f) public park, recreational area, or wildlife or waterfowl refuge.

Cultural resources previously identified in the project area will be avoided with the exception of one archaeological site previously determined ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Therefore, the project would not affect historic sites recognized under Section 4(f).

2.4.3 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

None required.

Transportation projects can foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly. These effects can occur if a project removes obstacles to growth, particularly by creating new or additional access to areas not previously served by a transportation mode or facility; facilitates or accelerates growth beyond planned or projected developments; or induces growth elsewhere in the region.

While highway improvements in general have the ability to enhance accessibility within local communities, all permanent features of the proposed project would be within existing SR 85 and US 101, and would not include the construction of new interchanges. As a result, the project would not provide new access to previously inaccessible areas or improve access in ways that would foster local development beyond that which is already planned.

The Santa Clara County General Plan projects that most of the growth in the County will occur in San Jose, and to a somewhat lesser extent, in the South County. The General Plan states that most of the county's growth will be accommodated through infill development within existing urban areas to achieve more compact development patterns. As a result, the amount of land dedicated to urban uses with and without the project will be essentially the same as current conditions. The project would optimize throughput on SR 85 and US 101 to better meet current and future traffic demands by using excess capacity in the existing HOV system. The conversion of the HOV lanes to an express lane facility would not influence the land use development patterns or growth anticipated in the County General Plan.

The project is not expected to induce growth outside of the project area (in this case, the project corridor and the adjacent vicinity). The project would add a second express lane to the segment of SR 85 between I-280 and SR 87. The primary travel benefit from the second lane would be to motorists on SR 85, which is completely within the project area. Motorists who would pay a toll to use the proposed express lanes as part of a longer-distance commute would experience travel benefits as well, but not to the extent of causing large numbers of motorists to move to outlying areas where growth is not planned.

The proposed project would respond to existing and foreseeable demands of the community served, rather than trigger further development beyond the project itself. Therefore, the project would accommodate but not induce growth.

Farmland is adjacent to the project corridor in San Jose and unincorporated Santa Clara County (California Department of Conservation 2011). Farmland designations adjacent to the project corridor include Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Grazing Land. Prime Farmland is defined as having the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long-term agricultural production; Unique Farmland is land with lesser quality soils used for the production of the state's leading agricultural crops; and Grazing Land has existing vegetation suited to the grazing of livestock.

Prime Farmland is adjacent to the project corridor along US 101 at Bailey Avenue, located at the southern end of the project corridor in unincorporated Santa Clara County. Unique Farmland is adjacent to the project corridor in San Jose along SR 85 between Almaden Expressway and Winfield Boulevard, and between Perimeter Road and Great Oaks Boulevard. Grazing Land is adjacent to the project corridor in San Jose along SR 85 between Almaden Expressway and Great Oaks Boulevard, between Barron Park Drive and Colony Field Drive, and between Silicon Valley Boulevard and Metcalf Road.

All permanent improvements associated with the proposed project would occur within the existing right-of-way. Therefore, the project does not have the potential to result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Grazing Land.

There is no timberland in or adjacent to the project corridor. Therefore, the project does not have the potential to result in timberland conversion.

This section addresses the existing setting and project-related changes with regard to community character and cohesion, relocations, and environmental justice (EJ).

5.1 COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND COHESION

The project would not displace or relocate any residents, change any existing community boundaries, physically divide an established community, or create a new barrier to movement within the project corridor. Access to and from the project corridor and nearby streets would not change as a result of this project.

The project would change HOV access within the project corridor. Motorists can currently enter and exit the HOV lanes freely except at the HOV-only direct connector ramps between SR 85 and US 101 in Mountain View and San Jose.

The proposed project would replace the existing HOV lane striping with multiple intermediate access points between the express lanes and the adjacent mixed-flow lanes, as described in Section 1.2.2. The access points would consist of openings in a striped 2-foot-wide buffer zone where traffic can enter and exit the express lane facility. Not every interchange would be served by express lane access points. In general, the proposed project would provide one access point for every two or three interchanges along the corridor. As a result, some HOVs may have to make adjustments to their travel patterns by entering and exiting the express lanes in different locations than they currently do with the HOV lanes.

The proposed access points were designed to provide connections to all major arterials and expressways that cross the project corridor. All interchanges would continue to be served by the mixed-flow lanes. The project would also include signage that clearly identifies which local interchanges can be accessed from each express lane segment, so motorists have adequate time and distance to plan for lane changes. Although the change in HOV lane access may inconvenience some HOVs, the project has been designed to minimize this effect.

Studies of express lanes in other cities indicate that changes in HOV lane access do not adversely affect HOV use of express lanes. In San Diego, Minneapolis, and Denver, HOV use increased after the implementation of express lanes (VTA 2012). At the I-15 corridor in San Diego, the rate of HOVs using the express lanes has increased by 13 percent annually since 1997 (VTA 2012).

5.2 RELOCATIONS AND REAL PROPERTY ACQUISITION

The project would not require acquisition or relocation of any residences, businesses, or other land uses.

5.3 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

5.3.1 Affected Environment

The study area for this analysis included all Census block groups whose borders lie within a 0.5-mile radius of the project corridor. The baseline analysis for this study area was conducted for the communities along the entire project corridor.

For each Census block group within the study area, the following data were gathered:

- Total population (U.S. Census Bureau 2010)

- Ethnicity and race (U.S. Census Bureau 2010)
- The ratio of income to poverty level of individuals in the past 12 months (U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey [ACS] 2006-2010 5-Year Estimates)

For this analysis, the newest data available at the Census block group level was collected—2010 Census data for minority populations and 2006-2010 ACS estimates of block group data for low-income populations.

Minority persons are defined by the 2010 U.S. Census as all individuals not identified as “White only,” including those identified as Hispanic or Latino. Low-income persons were defined as those individuals with household incomes below the Census poverty threshold, which is a ratio of income to poverty level in the past 12 months that is below 1.0.²

The state-, region-, county-, and city-wide percentages of minority and low-income populations were also reviewed, so that the definition of “disproportionate” adverse effects could be established (U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2010 1-year estimates for state-, region-, and county-level data; 2008-2010 3-year estimates for city-level data). It should be noted that San Mateo County data was included in the analysis because a portion of the study area extends into southern San Mateo County.

Based on the data collected, minority or low-income communities, also referred to as EJ communities, were identified within the study area. EJ communities are traditionally defined as a Census block group population that meets either or both of the following criteria:

- The Census block group contains 50 percent or more minority persons, and/or the block group contains 25 percent or more low-income persons.
- The percentage of minority and/or low-income persons in any Census block group is substantially (e.g., more than 10 percentage points) greater than the average of the surrounding region (e.g., the counties overlapping the study area).

The percentage of the population that is a minority in San Mateo County and Santa Clara County exceeds 50 percent, to 57.7 percent and 64.8 percent, respectively. Therefore, the first criterion was appropriate to determine the presence of an EJ community for minority populations.

The percentage of low-income persons in San Mateo County and Santa Clara County is 6.8 percent and 10.5 percent, respectively. These percentages are both below 25 percent, and thus the first criterion was not appropriate to determine the presence of an EJ community for low-income populations as most of the Census block groups in the study area would be below 25 percent. Therefore, the second criterion was used for low-income populations. For the second criterion, the “surrounding region” for the study area was defined as San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. The average low-income population for these counties was calculated to be 9 percent. Thus, a Census block group that would be identified as an EJ community would have a low-income population of more than 19 percent (more than 10 percentage points greater than the average low-income population of 9 percent).

² The Census assigns each person or family one of 48 possible poverty thresholds, which vary according to the size of the family and the age of the members. The 2010 weighted average threshold for a family of four is \$22,314. The 2010 Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines for a family of four is similar, at \$22,050.

Table 5-1 presents population estimates with minority and low-income percentages for the region as a whole and also for the population living within the 0.5-mile EJ study area. Approximately 98 percent of the population living within the EJ study area is in Santa Clara County, with the remaining 2 percent in southern San Mateo County.

The San Francisco Bay Area as a whole has a high percentage of minority individuals. According to the 2010 Census, 57.6 percent of the total population is minority and according to the 2010 ACS estimate, 11.1 percent are living below the U.S. Census poverty threshold.

As stated earlier, the surrounding region of the project was defined as San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. According to an average of 2010 Census data, 62.8 percent of the surrounding region is minority and according to the 2010 ACS estimate, 9.4 percent are living below the U.S. Census poverty threshold. Within the study area, these percentages are lower, with minority and low-income individuals representing 54.6 percent and 6.1 percent of the study area population, respectively. Hispanics are the predominant minority in all portions of the EJ study area.

**Table 5-1
Minority and Low-Income Percentages in the Region and EJ Study Area**

Location	Total Population 2010^a	% Minority^a	% Low-Income^b
State			
California	37,253,956	59.9%	15.8%
Region			
San Francisco Bay Area	7,150,739	57.6%	11.1%
San Mateo County	718,451	57.7%	6.8%
Santa Clara County	1,781,642	64.8%	10.5%
Communities			
Palo Alto	64,403	39.4%	5.2%
Mountain View	74,066	54.0%	6.7%
Sunnyvale	140,081	65.5%	6.6%
Los Altos	28,976	32.2%	2.5%
Cupertino	58,302	70.7%	3.8%
Saratoga	29,926	48.4%	3.8%
Los Gatos	29,413	23.0%	3.9%
San Jose	945,942	71.3%	11.5%
EJ Study Area	341,347	54.6%	6.1%

Sources:

^a U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census

^b U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2010 1-year estimates for State and Regional data, 2008-2010 3-year estimates for Community data, and 2006-2010 5-year estimates for the EJ Study Area.

5.3.2 Environmental Consequences

The data above indicates that there are EJ communities in the study area with a substantial population of minority and/or low-income residents. The potential for EJ implications from the project is discussed below.

5.3.2.1 Project Construction

Construction is planned within the existing State right-of-way. Minor construction impacts from the proposed project would include noise, dust, and visual impacts from bridge widening and installation of overhead signs and tolling devices, and associated cantilever structures and pile supports, in the median. The installation of conduits for electrical and communications lines would require trenching to approximately 3 to 5 feet below the roadway surface. In addition, conduits would be jacked across the freeway to the median where needed to provide power and communication feeds to the new overhead signage and tolling equipment. During construction, some lane closures could be required, but full closures are not expected to be necessary. In the segment of SR 85 between SR 87 and I-280, a second express lane would be added through pavement widening in the median. Existing sound walls would reduce visibility of the construction activities, as well as construction noise. As construction would occur primarily in the median of the corridor and potential impacts would be minimal and temporary, construction impacts are not expected to adversely affect adjacent and surrounding communities, including those communities identified as EJ areas.

5.3.2.2 Project Operation

Once in operation, the express lanes would result in minor changes to the visual setting, noise levels, and air quality, which are being evaluated in detail in the DED. In general, those impacts would affect all communities along the project corridor at similar levels.

Use of the express lanes requires the ability to obtain a FasTrak transponder. As described in Section 1.2.2.5, FasTrak transponders are available through several outlets, and prepaid accounts can be established with credit card, cash, or check. With the number of options available, persons of all income levels and races would have generally similar access to a FasTrak account. The initial cost to establish an account is less when paid with a credit card than with cash or check (\$25 versus \$70, although \$20 of the \$70 is refunded when the account is closed). The higher initial cost for cash or check accounts could be considered an additional economic burden to those who do not pay by credit card, a portion of whom could be low-income or minority persons. However, as the choice to use the express lanes (and establish the necessary FasTrak account) is voluntary, the higher initial costs for cash or check accounts do not constitute a disproportionately high and adverse effect.

Use of the express lanes also requires the ability to pay tolls, which will vary based on traffic conditions. VTA has studied the issue of equity or fairness in charging tolls and whether this practice has a disproportionately high and adverse effect on any minority or low-income populations.³ Express lanes have been in use for several years around the country. More than 10

³ The literature surveyed for this report did not address the racial distribution of express lane users or potential for equity impacts to minorities. As described in Section 5.3.1, Hispanics are the predominant minority population in all portions of the EJ study area. Bay Area FasTrak has a Spanish-language portion of its website and offers the account application form in Spanish. Outreach to minority groups for the proposed project is discussed in Section 1.3.

years of data are available in California for express lanes in Orange and San Diego counties, where FasTrak is also used. The data indicate that both high- and low-income drivers use express lanes during periods of traffic congestion. A study by Cal Poly San Luis Obispo of the SR 91 Express Lanes in Orange County found that roughly one-quarter of the motorists who elect to use the toll lanes at any given time are in the high-income bracket, but the majority are low- and middle-income motorists (MTC 2011b). In focus groups of drivers who use SR 85, respondents from all income levels said they would use express lanes (VTA 2008).

Factors other than income alone appear to influence drivers' decisions to use express lanes. On SR 91 in Orange County, for example, most drivers choose the express lanes infrequently but strategically, when they stand to benefit most (Weinstein and Sciara 2004). Express lane projects across the country have shown that 80 percent of solo drivers who use the express lane only use it occasionally, on an as-needed basis (VTA 2012). In situations where being late due to traffic congestion has high economic or convenience costs, such as missing an airline flight or rushing to a child care facility that charges by the minute for late pickups, even low-income drivers are sometimes willing to pay to use express lanes. The reliable travel time associated with express lanes may have particular value to low-income persons who lack the schedule flexibility that higher-income or retired persons may have.

Although express lane tolls would represent a slightly greater economic burden to low-income drivers than to middle- and high-income drivers, the burden is not disproportionate because express lane use is voluntary. Drivers may either choose to pay a toll when being late is costly or inconvenient or continue to use the general purpose lanes. Drivers are not denied a mobility option they previously had; rather, the option of paying a toll to obtain travel time savings would be available to drivers of all income groups. Unlike sales taxes for transportation measures, express lane tolls do not affect non-users and non-drivers.

The proposed project would have other potential benefits to drivers of all income levels and races. By converting the HOV lanes to express lanes and adding a second express lane to part of the corridor, traffic in the general purpose lanes would improve, directly benefiting drivers in the non-express lanes. As required by the authorizing legislation (Assembly Bills 2032 [2004] and 574 [2007]), tolls collected from the express lanes would be used for other transportation and transit improvements in the project corridor, providing direct benefits to both drivers and transit customers whose trips include SR 85. (In fact, as described in Section 1.3, public outreach conducted by VTA found that respondents identified the reinvestment of toll revenues as the primary project benefit.) Congestion relief from the project would also result in slightly lower pollutant emissions from vehicle idling (URS 2012). Indirect benefits could include additional economic opportunities for low-income drivers, who could use the express lanes to ensure a reliable commute. VTA focus group participants also identified improved quality of life from less congestion as a project benefit (Section 1.3). These improvements would benefit all users of the local transportation and public transit system, regardless of race and income, even those who do not use the express lanes.

Express lanes allow drivers of all income groups an additional travel option that they did not have previously. Therefore, the project would not have disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority and low-income populations.

VTA has sought public input on equity issues since early project planning began in 2004. Public outreach, described in detail in Section 1.3, has included minorities and persons from varying

income levels. Outreach will continue during the public review period for the DED, which will last a minimum of 30 days. Comments regarding potential effects to minority and low-income populations will be addressed and approaches to avoid or minimize effects will be considered in the Final Environmental Document.

5.3.3 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

None required.

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Appendix A
Land Use Planning

REGIONAL GROWTH PLANS

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) recently released two reports addressing regional growth and housing development in the Bay Area. *A Place to Call Home: Housing in the San Francisco Bay Area 2007* emphasizes the importance of building housing developments in existing communities, or “infill” locations, near public transit (ABAG 2007). The report presents best practices and tools that local communities are using to support this development trend. The report also documents the current status of local government efforts to meet the housing targets established for 1999-2006 as part of the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) process. During the 1999-2006 RHNA period, Santa Clara County issued building permits for 90 percent of the total estimated housing need for the County.

The June 2008 *San Francisco Bay Area Housing Needs Plan 2007-2014* plan documents the RHNA requirements for the Bay Area (ABAG 2008). RHNA is a state-mandated process to determine how many housing units that each community must have available to meet housing needs. The determination of housing need is based on existing need and estimated population growth. According to the report, Santa Clara County is the most populated county in the region and will experience the greatest amount of growth, increasing by nearly 23 percent over the next 25 years. The County’s Housing Needs Allocation for 2007 to 2014 totals 60,338 housing units.

LOCAL PLANS

Santa Clara County

Santa Clara County General Plan, 1995 – 2010

The Santa Clara County General Plan was adopted on December 20, 1994 (County of Santa Clara 1994). The plan provides strategies, policies, and actions for accommodating the county’s growing population, which is expected to reach 1.8 million people in 2010. The vision of the General Plan is focused on the goals of managed, balanced growth; livable communities; responsible resource conservation; and social and economic well-being. Specific approaches promoted by the plan include compact development and protection of rural areas. The plan encourages increased housing densities along transit corridors, or “transportation-efficient land use” combined with mixed use “urban activity centers” at transit stations. Other policies related to the project are listed in Table 2-2 in Section 2.2.2 of this report.

Santa Clara County General Plan Housing Element Update 2009-2014

The Housing Element Update 2009-2014 (2009 Update) was adopted on August 24, 2010 (County of Santa Clara 2010). The update serves to document local housing needs, provide approaches to meeting those needs, and present urban growth management policies. The 2009 Update includes detailed analysis to determine whether housing capacity existing within the existing General Plan and Zoning Ordinance can accommodate the housing needs set forth in the RHNA. The 2009 Update concludes that the County has sufficient capacity to meet the RHNA requirements.

The 2009 Update promotes housing at urban densities within cities, not in unincorporated areas. According to Census data, there has been a steady decrease in population in unincorporated areas of the County from 1970 to 2009, while the Countywide population has increased. This difference is due to annexations of County pockets by the cities, and partly due to growth

management policies that focus growth within the cities instead of rural, unincorporated areas. The 2009 Update does not include any policies specifically related to the project.

City of Palo Alto

City of Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan and Amendment

The City of Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1998 and has a horizon year of 2010 (City of Palo Alto 1998). Major themes of the Comprehensive Plan include building community and neighborhoods, maintaining and enhancing community character, reducing reliance on automobiles, meeting housing supply challenges, protecting and restoring natural features, meeting residential and commercial needs, and providing responsive governance and regional leadership. Specific policies relating to the proposed project are described in Table 2-2 in Section 2.2.2 of this report.

The City is in the process of completing a Comprehensive Plan Amendment, which would extend the horizon year of the plan through 2020 (City of Palo Alto 2008b). The amendment would focus on the availability of public services for new housing development and the preservation of land for neighborhood-serving retail uses. Public meetings to discuss the amendment have been on-going since early 2009.

As part of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment, the City will prepare Concept Plans for two areas: the California Avenue neighborhood and the East Meadow Circle/Fabian Way neighborhood. The East Meadow Circle/Fabian Way neighborhood is adjacent to the project area. This neighborhood is an approximately 175-acre site bordered by US 101 and the Mountain View border (City of Palo Alto 2008c). The area includes light industrial, commercial, and office uses, with two recently built multifamily housing developments. A large, mixed use development with housing, a Jewish community center, and a theater are currently under construction. The Concept Plan will contain policies and implementation measures specific to the area and will incorporate input from a series of neighborhood workshops. A specific issue that has already been identified for this neighborhood is the lack of daily shopping options for employees and residents.

Baylands Master Plan 2008

The fourth edition of the Baylands Master Plan was adopted on October 6, 2008 (City of Palo Alto 2008a). This edition includes an up-to-date record of approved policies and actions in the Baylands. A portion of the Palo Alto Baylands is adjacent to the project corridor. This portion of the Baylands is comprised of private lands occupied by research and office buildings; public land occupied by the City's Municipal Services Center (public works, utilities, purchasing, and maintenance) and Animal Services; an undeveloped marsh preserve; and undeveloped, parkland known as the former International Telephone and Telegraph Company (ITT) property.

The undeveloped marsh preserve, referred to as the Flood Basin, is adjacent to the project corridor, and includes a 4.5-mile section of the Baylands trail system. The 154-acre former ITT Property, excluding a 36.5-acre easement for an antenna field, was dedicated as parkland in 1982 and is referred to by the ordinance as the "John Fletcher Byxbee Recreation Area Addition." Since then, restoration activities, including the creation of a saltwater marsh and freshwater pond, have occurred at the site. The antenna field remains as a transmitter station for a Marine Mobile Service facility providing communication to ships at sea.

The majority of policies regarding the adjacent Bayland properties are to maintain the current function or operation of these properties and keep them as is, except for minor flood or landscaping improvements. The plan proposes to remove the antenna field on the former ITT Property, replace it with marshland, and incorporate it into Byxbee Park. In regards to access and circulation policies, the plan calls for maintaining access to the regional trail system, including the pedestrian bridge over US 101 at Embarcadero Road and under Highway 101 at Adobe Creek. The proposed project does not have the potential to affect land use at these adjacent properties or access to the regional trail system, and is therefore consistent with the Bayland Master Plan policies.

City of Mountain View

City of Mountain View General Plan

The City of Mountain View General Plan was adopted on October 29, 1992 (City of Mountain View 1992). The plan provides a framework for future decisions in the City, especially for community development and preservation and environmental conservation, until 2005. Specific policies relevant to the proposed project are listed in Table 2-2 in Section 2.2.2 of this report.

The City is in the process of updating its 1992 General Plan to anticipate job and population change to the year 2030 (City of Mountain View 2007). The Draft 2030 General Plan was released for public review in November 2011. Public comments were received on the draft through January 2012, and the plan is tentatively scheduled to be finalized in May 2012.

City of Mountain View Precise Plans

The City has several precise plans for specific properties, some of which are adjacent to the project corridor (City of Mountain View 2012). The precise plans for properties adjacent to the project corridor are: Shoreline West, Charleston South Industrial, L’Avenida South, Evelyn Avenue Corridor, Americana Center, and Sylvan – Dale. For each these properties, the precise plans delineate type and intensity of use, relationship of new development to other areas, circulation requirements, design criteria, procedures for development review, and special conditions. The precise plans do not contain policies that are relevant to the proposed project.

City of Sunnyvale

Sunnyvale Community Vision: A Guiding Framework for General Planning

The Sunnyvale Community Vision was adopted on May 8, 2007 and provides a broad description of the past, present, and future that is desired for the City (City of Sunnyvale 2007). The functional elements of the General Plan are based on the Community Vision, which describes the City’s aspirations for a strong, diverse community; a vibrant and innovative local economy; a position as a regional leader in environmental sustainability; a safe, secure, and healthy place for all people; a city managed by a responsible and responsive government; and a distinctive identity.

The vision advocates for a balanced transportation system, consisting of streets, freeways, mass transit, bikeways, and walkways. The Community Vision states that automobile travel will continue to be the dominant mode, although a reasonable balance of the other modes will be required to provide access to those without an automobile and to reduce energy consumption, air pollution, and congestion.

In addition, the Community Vision includes the goal of a transportation system with the physical and financial capacity to expand with the growth of the city. The vision states that many of the transportation capacity improvements will be made over the next 20 years and will be funded by State, regional, and county agencies. The Community Vision does not include goals or policies specific to the proposed project.

City of Sunnyvale Consolidated General Plan

The City of Sunnyvale Consolidated General Plan was adopted on July 26, 2011 (City of Sunnyvale 2011c). The City Council consolidated the plan into a single document that was tiered off the Community Vision and is the first step in creating a Comprehensive General Plan. The Consolidated General Plan was assembled from 22 separate General Plan elements and sub-elements that had been previously adopted at different times.

The Land Use and Transportation Element includes some specific policies relevant to the proposed project. These policies are listed in Table 2-2 in Section 2.2.2 of this report.

Horizon 2035: Land Use and Transportation Element Update and Climate Action Plan

The City of Sunnyvale's Horizon 2035 initiative consists of two current projects that share the goals of sustainable use of resources, efficient growth, and greenhouse gas emissions reduction. These two projects are the Land Use and Transportation Element (LUTE) Update and Climate Action Plan (CAP) (City of Sunnyvale 2011b). The Draft LUTE and CAP were presented at a public meeting on November 29, 2011. The documents address land use, transportation, and greenhouse gas reduction activities through the year 2035.

The LUTE Update is expected to be finalized in 2012 and will focus on upgrading and using the transportation system to support a variety of travel modes, other than single-occupant automobiles (City of Sunnyvale n.d.). The Draft LUTE Update includes policies that support the implementation of a CAP and advocates for the City's participation in regional climate change efforts. The Draft LUTE update also includes a policy to "support regional and cross-regional transportation improvements and corridors while minimizing impacts to the City's form and to intracity travel" (Policy 45). The Draft LUTE Update does not include any other policies relevant to the proposed project.

The CAP will examine how the LUTE policies will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and also will present policies related to energy, waste, and water conservation (City of Sunnyvale 2011a). The Draft CAP includes a policy to "improve the flow and efficiency of vehicular traffic throughout the city to avoid idling and reduce fuel consumption" (OVT-3 Circulation Efficiency). The Draft CAP does not include any other specific policies relevant to the proposed project.

City of Los Altos

City of Los Altos General Plan

The City of Los Altos General Plan was adopted in November 2002 and contains goals, policies, and plans to guide land use and development decisions through the year 2020 (City of Los Altos 2002b). The General Plan is centered on the goals of stimulating new economic growth, revitalizing older neighborhoods, assuring public safety, finding new uses for underutilized land, and enhancing the City's amenities and environmental resources.

The Circulation Element of the General Plan states that SR 85 is often congested northbound in the morning peak period and southbound in the evening peak period. The General Plan states that some traffic will divert to City streets between I-280 and points to the north to avoid congestion on SR 85. Specific policies relevant to the proposed project are listed in Table 2-2 in Section 2.2.2 of this report.

City of Cupertino

City of Cupertino General Plan

The City of Cupertino General Plan describes the long-term goals for the City’s future and covers the period from 2000 to 2020. A comprehensive review of the General Plan was completed on November 15, 2005 when plan amendments were adopted (City of Cupertino 2005). The plan is based on twelve underlying principles: neighborhoods; health and safety; connectivity; mobility; a balanced community; vibrant, mixed-use businesses and “Heart of the City”; attractive community design; diversity; education and technology; environment and sustainability; fiscal self-reliance; and responsive government and regional leadership.

The Circulation Element of the General Plan states that single-passenger automobiles have put a strain on the inter-city transportation system. The plan specifically mentions SR 85 as an example of a freeway that is at or near capacity during commute hours. The intersections of SR 85 with De Anza Boulevard and with Stevens Creek Boulevard are specifically listed as having traffic volumes that would increase in 2020, according to traffic modeling conducted for the countywide Congestion Management Plan. However, the Levels of Service at these intersections would still meet the standards in the General Plan. Specific policies and strategies relevant to the proposed project are listed in Table 2-2 in Section 2.2.2 of this report.

Cupertino Heart of the City Specific Plan

The Cupertino Heart of the City Specific Plan covers an approximately 635-acre area, a portion of which is adjacent to the project corridor. The plan has been revised several times from 1997 to 2010 and is a means to implement the City’s 1993 and 2005 General Plans (City of Cupertino 2010).

The specific plan provides development guidance for the Stevens Creek Boulevard Corridor, an important commercial corridor in the City. The overall goal of the plan is to develop a Heart of the City, which will serve as a collection of pedestrian-inclusive gathering places for the purpose of creating a “greater sense of place and community identity in Cupertino.”

The portion of the planning area adjacent to the project corridor is referenced as the West Stevens Creek Boulevard activity center. This activity center is in the Education/Public/Park District with the primary uses of quasi-public/public facilities. Supporting uses are mixed commercial/residential. The specific plan does not contain any policies that are relevant to the proposed project.

Monta Vista Design Guidelines

The Monta Vista Design Guidelines apply to a portion of Cupertino that includes the Monta Vista Commercial Area (“Downtown Monta Vista”) and the Area East of Southern Pacific Railroad (SPRR) right-of-way, including the areas north and south of Stevens Creek Boulevard from the SPRR to SR 85 (City of Cupertino n.d.). A portion of the planning area for the Monta Vista Design Guidelines is adjacent to the project corridor.

The Monta Vista Design Guidelines implement policies of the Cupertino General Plan and outline design details, landscaping treatment, signage, and public improvement details for new development or redevelopment proposals in the planning area. The design guidelines have several objectives, including enhancing the area as a neighborhood shopping district, emphasizing pedestrian orientation, and rectifying site, landscaping, and street deficiencies. The guidelines do not contain specific policies relevant to the proposed project.

City of Saratoga

City of Saratoga General Plan

The City of Saratoga General Plan includes several elements, some of which have been updated in recent years. The Circulation and Scenic Highway Element of the General Plan was last updated on November 17, 2010 (City of Saratoga 2010). This element presents goals, policies, and implementation measures that focus on maintaining the character of Saratoga as expressed in the General Plan and Specific Plans; controlling density, traffic, and noise; improving the transportation system to balance the needs of bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users; promoting a healthy and active community by providing transportation options for bicyclists and pedestrians; and being a responsible partner in the development of regional transportation solutions. The City of Saratoga General Plan does not contain specific policies relevant to the proposed project.

City of Saratoga Area Plans: Background Report and Guidelines for Area Development

The City of Saratoga Area Plans: Background Report and Guidelines for Area Development was adopted on August 17, 1988 (City of Saratoga 1988). The plans cover several areas identified by street names and intersections. For each area, a description of the concerns and issues for the area is provided, followed by a list of area development guidelines.

At the time the area plans were prepared, SR 85 had not been developed as a full freeway. Therefore, the plans discuss traffic concerns and state that the development of SR 85, or the West Valley Corridor as it is referred to in the plans, would relieve increasing traffic on neighborhood streets. The plans do not contain specific policies relevant to the proposed project.

Town of Los Gatos

Town of Los Gatos 2020 General Plan

The Town of Los Gatos 2020 General Plan was adopted on September 20, 2010 (Town of Los Gatos 2011). The General Plan presents the community vision for the Town, which is a pedestrian-oriented community with small-town character; a balanced, well-designed mix of residential, commercial, service, and open space uses; a full-service community that is also environmentally sensitive; an active business community that provides a wide variety of goods and services and a broad range of employment opportunities; and a well-run efficient municipal government that is fiscally health.

The Town of Los Gatos 2020 General Plan does not contain specific policies relevant to the proposed project.

Town of Los Gatos Draft Housing Element 2007-2014

The Town of Los Gatos Draft Housing Element reflects the planning period from July 1, 2007 to June 3, 2014 (Town of Los Gatos n.d.a). The element presents a housing needs summary, a

description of constraints to housing development, an adequate sites analysis, energy conservation policies, a summary of quantified housing objectives, and other goals, policies, and actions related to accommodating housing needs in the Town.

According to the Draft Housing Element, the Los Gatos population has grown very little and at a fairly steady pace over the last three decades. The adequate sites analysis determined that the Town can accommodate housing needs at all income categories on various vacant and underutilized sites throughout Los Gatos. The Draft Housing Element does not include specific policies related to the proposed project.

Los Gatos Boulevard Plan

The Los Gatos Boulevard Plan was adopted in Fall 1997 (Town of Los Gatos 1997). The Los Gatos Boulevard Plan Study Area extends for approximately 1.8 miles between SR 85 to the north and Spencer Road to the south. The Plan Study Area is adjacent to the proposed project. Land use in the area is predominantly mixed use commercial, neighborhood shopping centers, auto sales and repair, and offices.

The overall goals of the plan are to preserve and project the essence of Los Gatos' history, individuality, character, and natural environment; promote commercial activity that complements the whole Town; provide a dependable source of income, employment opportunities, and goods and services; provide for attractive, easy, and effective access to, from, and through the Boulevard; and provide effective links and interfaces between neighborhoods and commercial areas.

The Los Gatos Boulevard Plan does not contain any specific policies relevant to the proposed project.

City of San Jose

City of San Jose 2020 General Plan

The City of San Jose 2020 General Plan includes policies on the future character and quality of development to achieve the City's social, economic, and environmental goals (City of San Jose 2011a). The central themes of the General Plan are maximizing the economic potential of the City's land resources and employment opportunities; addressing the need to balance the urban services demand of new development with the need to balance the City's budget; emphasizing the importance of a prominent and attractive downtown; seeking to preserve land that protects water, habitat, agricultural, or recreational resources; striving to provide a variety of housing opportunities; and promoting the management and conservation of resources for present and future generations.

The Land Use/Transportation Diagram was updated on December 7, 2010. According to the diagram, six LRT stations are adjacent to the proposed project from SR 85 at Winfield Boulevard to SR 85 near Miyuki Road/Perimeter Road. Pedestrian Cores are also located at each of these stations. Pedestrian cores include areas around light rail stations defined by a circle with a radius of 2,000 feet.

In addition, a Pedestrian Corridor is shown along this portion of the proposed project. Pedestrian Corridors include Transit-Oriented Development corridors and neighborhood shopping streets, and are intended to increase neighborhood connectivity, and linkages to transit stations or Pedestrian Cores.

The Land Use/Transportation Diagram does not include specific policies pertaining to the proposed project.

Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan

The City of San Jose is currently in the process of updating its General Plan. The full draft of the San Jose 2040 General Plan is available for public review. An annual General Plan Hearing process will occur in 2013.

The Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan presents a vision to guide the City's growth through the year 2040 (City of San Jose 2011b). The General Plan discusses planned development projects, including a project approved in 2005 for the 332-acre Hitachi industrial park campus in South San Jose adjacent to SR 85 and Monterey Highway. The development would include 3.6 million square feet of office and industrial space, almost 3,000 units of new affordable and market rate housing, up to 460,000 square feet of new retail space, and a 10.5-acre public park. The industrial park would be adjacent to the project corridor.

In addition, the General Plan discusses Gateways, or the locations which announce to a visitor or resident that they are entering the city, or a unique neighborhood. A Gateway location is at Highway 101 in the vicinity of the Highway 85 Interchange, which is within the project corridor. Policy CD-10.2 requires that new public and private development adjacent to Gateways consist of high-quality architecture and contribute to the positive image of San Jose.