Chapter 3
Comments and Coordination

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

3.1 Public Agency Technical Meetings

Project Development Team (PDT) technical meetings have occurred regularly in conjunction with development of the I-80 ICM project. PDT participants include representatives from the Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC) and The Department. The PDT represents various fields of expertise including design, environmental review, traffic operations, and project management.

3.2 Stakeholder Consultation

Project stakeholders are public agencies or other planning entities that provide input and direction to the project. Each stakeholder has varying roles in the planning, environmental clearance, permitting, and operation of the project. The stakeholders also have varying jurisdictional roles and responsibilities regarding funding, operations, and maintenance of the project. The I-80 ICM project stakeholders include the following agencies:

- The Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC)
- The CEQA and NEPA Lead Agency (the Department)
- The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)
- County transportation planning entities [Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) and West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee (WCCTAC)]
- Transit providers (AC Transit, WestCAT, BART, and Water Emergency Transportation Authority)
- Local agencies traversed by the I-80 freeway between Carquinez Bridge and San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge (Contra Costa County, and Cities of Oakland, Emeryville, Berkeley, Albany, El Cerrito, Richmond, Pinole, San Pablo and Hercules)

The planning for the I-80 ICM project has followed the FHWA Systems Engineering Process which includes monthly stakeholder meetings. The project's needs, alternatives, and solutions were developed during these monthly stakeholder meetings. The stakeholder meetings included the following technical committees/teams:

- Executive Advisory Committee: comprised of the Executive Directors of Alameda CTC, CCTA, MTC and the Department;
- Project Leadership Team: comprised of the Senior staff members of Alameda CTC, CCTA, the Department, and MTC; and
- Technical Advisory Committee: comprised of the staff members for all participating agencies.

3.3 Native American Consultation

The following Native American Tribes, Groups, and Individuals have been contacted:

- Dave Singleton, Native American Heritage Commission February 3, 2009
- Jakki Kehl, Ohlone/Costanoan February 16, 2009
- Irene Zweierlein, Amah/Mutsun Tribal Band February 16, 2009
- Jean-Marie Feylin, Amah/Mutsun Tribal Band February 16, 2009
- Ann Marie Sayers, Indian Canyon Mutson Band of Costanoan February 16, 2009
- Rosemary Cambra, Muwekma Ohlone Indian Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area February 16, 2009
- Katherine Erolinda Perez, Ohlone/Costanoan Northern Valley Yokuts Bay Miwok February 16, 2009
- Andrew Galvan, The Ohlone Indian Tribe February 16, 2009
- Ramona Garibay, Trina Marine Ruano Family February 16, 2009

Ms. Debbie Pilas-Treadway from the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) responded on February 10, 2009 indicating that a search failed to indicate the presence of cultural resources in the immediate project vicinity. She provided a list of eight tribal groups or individuals who might have knowledge of cultural resources in the vicinity of the proposed improvements. A response requesting updated information on the project was received via telephone on March 7, 2009 from Ms. Jakki Kehl, Ohlone/Coastanoan, speaking for herself and on behalf of Ms. Irene Zweierlein, Ohlone/Coastanoan.

3.4 US Fish and Wildlife Service Consultation

The following meetings, field visits, and consultation occurred with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) with respect to federally listed species:

- USFWS Biologist, Jerry Roe, provided definitions of temporary and permanent effects regarding potential impacts to special-status species on August 10, 2010.

- USFWS Biologist, Jerry Roe, Coast-Bay Branch Endangered Species Division, met with the Department District 4 Biologist, Frances Malamud-Roam, and Trish Tatarian, Wildlife Research Associates, on August 9, 2010, to review the biological study area and discussed potential impact issues with regards to special-status species.

- The Department District 4 Biologist, Frances Malamud-Roam, requested technical assistance from USFWS, Coast-Bay Branch Endangered Species Division for review of the I-80 ICM proposed project on August 4, 2010.

- The Department District 4 Biologist, Frances Malamud-Roam, queried the USFWS list for federal endangered and threatened species that occur in or may be affected by projects within the five topographic quadrangles (Document No. 100730041646) on April 20, 2010.

A Biological Assessment (BA) was prepared as part of the consultation process with the USFWS to determine if the Build Alternative would likely jeopardize the continued existence of threatened or endangered species or adversely affect critical habitat. Pursuant to CEQA and NEPA, the Department proposed a number of reasonable and prudent measures to minimize and avoid impacts to threatened or endangered animal species. These measures are considered part of the project design and are described in detail in Chapter 1. As a result, the Build Alternative is not anticipated to result in the "take" of any of the listed species described in this section. The project effects are primarily temporary and discountable with the avoidance and minimization measures in place, and the permanent effects are insignificant and limited to very small discreet locations.

The USFWS issued a letter of concurrence for the project on June 30, 2011.

3.5 Required Permits

The Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), created prior to the California Coastal Act, retains oversight and planning responsibilities for development and conservation of coastal resources in the Bay Area. Portions of the Build Alternative would be within the BCDC jurisdiction (see Section 2.2.1). Implementation of the Build Alternative and associated construction activity within the coastal zone would require a coastal development permit from BCDC. In accordance with the BCDC permitting process, an application for the coastal permit shall occur after the certification of the environmental document and after all government agencies have granted their preliminary approvals (permits) for the project, as appropriate.

Construction easements would be required from the Cities of Emeryville, Berkeley, Richmond, and Pinole to accommodate work outside state-owned right-of-way (ROW).

3.6 Public Participation

3.6.1 Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Document

The Department notified the general public and all relevant agencies that the Draft Initial Study/Environmental Assessment (IS/EA) was available for review from April 25, 2011 to May 25, 2011. The Notice of Availability of the Draft IS/EA was sent to the various parties listed in the Distribution List (see Chapter 5). The notice provided information on the project, where the environmental document could be reviewed, the address to which comments should be sent, and the close of the comment period. Information regarding the location and dates of public meetings to discuss the project was also provided. The public notice and the Draft IS/EA were posted on the websites of Alameda CTC and the Department and copies of the Draft IS/EA were available for review at local libraries.

The notifications also included advertisements in the *San Jose Mercury News*, *Oakland Tribune/Alameda Times-Star*, *Contra Costa Times*, *East County Times*, *West County Times*, *Valley & San Ramon*, *Tri-Valley Herald/San Joaquin Herald*, *Marin Independent*, *The Daily Review/The Argus*, *San Mateo County Times*, *Vacaville Reporter*, *Vallejo Times Herald*, *Santa Cruz Sentinel* on Monday, April 25, 2011, and again in the *Contra Costa Times* and *West Valley Times* on Friday, May 6, 2011.

3.6.2 Public Hearing/Public Meetings

The public notice included the opportunity to request two public meetings. This was also included in the transmittal that accompanied each mailed copy of the Draft IS/EA.

Two public meetings were held by the Department and Alameda CTC to share information about the project and collect comment on the Draft IS/EA from interested parties. The first public meeting was held at the Albany Senior Center on May 4, 2011, from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM. The second public meeting was held at the City of San Pablo City Hall on May 11, 2011, from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM. At both public meetings, exhibits about the project were on display, and team members were available to answer questions. The meeting included a PowerPoint presentation with an overview of the project and design features. Public comments received during the meetings are included in Section 3.6.3 below.

In addition to the public meetings, the project team held two meetings with the Richmond Annex Neighborhood Council (RANC) following a comment letter received during the public comment period. In the comment letter, the RANC expressed concerns regarding the visual impacts of the gantries on adjacent neighborhood views of the San Francisco Bay. After meeting on June 16 and June 28, 2011, the Department and RANC came to a consensus on the location of the three structures: Gantry #9 will be relocated approximately 650 feet south to the south side of the Central Avenue undercrossing; Gantry #10 will remain in the same location as shown in the Draft IS/EA, and Gantry #11 will be relocated approximately 150 feet north to line up with an existing bridge sign. The RANC comment letter and resolution of the issue is included in the responses to comments section below (Section 3.6.3).

3.6.3 Comments and Responding to Comments

The Department made available the Draft IS/EA for a 30-day public and agency comment period. A list of state, regional, and local agencies, organizations, and individuals that have commented on the Draft IS/EA during the public comment period is provided in this section. Each piece of correspondence (referred to hereafter as “comment letter”) is assigned a number. Each individual comment within a comment letter is identified in the margins by a letter code. The accompanying responses are discussed after each respective comment letter (e.g., Response 1.A, Response 1.B).

Any changes to the Draft IS/EA as a result of comments received are referenced in the response to comments, as well as in the margins of the document. Changes are also marked in the margins when text has been inserted that is specific to the needs of a Final IS/EA. Edits resulting from minor project changes are also denoted by a vertical line in the margin. Minor edits to grammar and punctuation have not been marked in the document margins.

Comment Letters Received on the Draft IS/EA

The following is a list of comment letters received on the Draft IS/EA:

- U.S. Department of the Interior
- California State Clearinghouse and Planning Unit
- City of El Cerrito, Public Works Department
- City of Pinole
- West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee
- Richmond Annex Neighborhood Council
- Mr. David Kurrent, Contra Costa Transportation Authority – Citizen Advisory Committee
- Mr. Joe Q. Citizen
- Ms. Pamela Stewart-Wagner
- Mr. Ralph Hueston Kratz, S.E.
- Ms. Teresa Puentes-Sweetser

Comment Letters and Responses

The following pages provide each of the comment letters and the corresponding comment responses.

United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance
Pacific Southwest Region
1111 Jackson Street, Suite 520
Oakland, California 94607

IN REPLY REFER TO:
ER#0383

(Electronically Filed)

25 May 2011

Valerie Shearer
Caltrans District 4
Office of Environmental Analysis, MS-8B
P.O. Box 23660
Oakland, California 94623-0600

Subject: Draft Initial Study (with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration)/ Environmental Assessment for the Interstate 80 (I-80) Integrated Corridor Mobility (ICM) Project, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, California

Dear Ms. Shearer:

The Department of the Interior has received and reviewed the subject document and has no comments to offer. 1.1

Thank you for the opportunity to review this project.

Sincerely,

Patricia Sanderson Port
Regional Environmental Officer

cc:
Director, OEPC
Alan Schmierer, NPS Pacific West Region

Response to Comment Letter 1 – U.S. Department of the Interior

Response 1.1 Thank you for taking the time to review this document. We appreciate your participation.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE *of* PLANNING AND RESEARCH

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE AND PLANNING UNIT

JERRY BROWN
GOVERNOR

May 25, 2011

Valerie Shearer
California Department of Transportation, District 4
P.O. Box 23660
Oakland, CA 94623-0660

Subject: I-80 Integrated Corridor Mobility (ICM) Project
SCH#: 2011042087

Dear Valerie Shearer:

The State Clearinghouse submitted the above named Mitigated Negative Declaration to selected state agencies for review. The review period closed on May 24, 2011, and no state agencies submitted comments by that date. This letter acknowledges that you have complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act. 2.1

Please call the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613 if you have any questions regarding the environmental review process. If you have a question about the above-named project, please refer to the ten-digit State Clearinghouse number when contacting this office.

Sincerely,

Scott Morgan
Director, State Clearinghouse

Document Details Report
State Clearinghouse Data Base

SCH# 2011042087
Project Title I-80 Integrated Corridor Mobility (ICM) Project
Lead Agency Caltrans #4

Type MND Mitigated Negative Declaration

Description The I-80 ICM project proposes the installation of operational improvements and the use of an intelligent Transportation System (ITS), along a 19.5 -mile portion of I-80, from the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge Toll Plaza to the Carquinez Bridge. ITS is a combination of computer and communication technologies that make transportation systems operate more efficiently and safely.

Lead Agency Contact

Name Valerie Shearer
Agency California Department of Transportation, District 4
Phone (510) 286-5594 **Fax**
email
Address P.O. Box 23660
City Oakland **State** CA **Zip** 94623-0660

Project Location

County Alameda, Contra Costa
City
Region
Lat / Long
Cross Streets I-80 Freeway, Between Carquinez Bridge & San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge
Parcel No. State Right of Way
Township **Range** **Section** **Base**

Proximity to:

Highways SR-4, I-880, I-580
Airports No
Railways Bay Area Rapid Transit
Waterways San Francisco Bay & Various Creeks
Schools Various
Land Use Existing freeway, on- and off-ramps, local roadways, existing disturbed areas in Caltrans right-of-way.

Project Issues Aesthetic/Visual; Air Quality; Archaeologic-Historic; Biological Resources; Coastal Zone; Drainage/Absorption; Flood Plain/Flooding; Geologic/Seismic; Noise; Soil Erosion/Compaction/Grading; Toxic/Hazardous; Traffic/Circulation; Vegetation; Water Quality; Wetland/Riparian; Landuse; Cumulative Effects; Other Issues

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Reviewing Agencies Resources Agency; Department of Fish and Game, Region 3; Department of Parks and Recreation; San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission; Department of Water Resources; California Highway Patrol; Air Resources Board, Transportation Projects; Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 2; Native American Heritage Commission; CA Department of Public Health

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Date Received 04/25/2011 **Start of Review** 04/25/2011 **End of Review** 05/24/2011

Note: Blanks in data fields result from insufficient information provided by lead agency.

Response to Comment Letter 2 – California State Clearinghouse and Planning Unit

Response 2.1 Thank you for contributing to a successful public comment period for this document.

THE CITY OF
EL CERRITO

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
(510) 215-4382

May 25, 2011

Valerie Shearer
Caltrans District 4
Via Email Valerie_Shearer@dot.ca.gov

RE: Draft Initial Study (with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration)/Environmental Assessment for the Interstate 80 Integrated Corridor Mobility (ICM) Project dated April 2011

Dear Ms. Shearer:

The City of El Cerrito, Public Works Department appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the above-referenced document. We support the efforts of Caltrans to reduce congestion and travel time and improve safety and travel time reliability along the I-80 corridor. We have several comments as summarized below.

- The traffic analysis indicates that the adaptive ramp metering element will, in some cases, result in increased delays on local arterials, although the delay would be offset by mainline speed improvements resulting in a negligible change in travel time for local travelers. Given this, El Cerrito, as part of the West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee, has supported the project with the understanding that an Operation and Maintenance Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) would be executed between Caltrans, regional agencies, local agencies and transit providers.
- The MOU is key for the successful implementation of the project and is needed to ensure all project elements are operated and maintained in an integrated manner providing equal benefits to all users of the I-80 freeway and local arterials (including San Pablo Avenue), and to ensure that the project does not result in unanticipated impacts on vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic on local arterials.
- The MOU has been drafted by Caltrans and is being reviewed by the project stakeholders.

3.1

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project and its environmental document. We recognize that the project is a complex, multi-agency effort and will require on-going coordination. Please contact me at (510) 215-4345 if you have any questions regarding the comments contained in this letter.

Sincerely,

Yvetteh Ortiz
Engineering Manager

cc: Christina Atienza, West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee
John Rudolf, West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee
Jerry Bradshaw, City of El Cerrito Public Works Director/City Engineer
Jennifer Carman, City of El Cerrito Development Services Manager

K:\Public Works\Engineering\Transportation\I-80 ICM Project\Let-Environmental Doc-EC Comments.doc

Response to Comment Letter 3 – City of El Cerrito, Public Works Department

Response 3.1 Thank you for pointing this out. The Department agrees that a Memorandum of Understanding for operation and maintenance of the project elements is key for the project's success. While project facilities might be installed in advance of the MOU being finalized, the Department and its partners will not make the project operational until all parties sign the MOU.

The project is expected to provide network-wide benefits, including improved traffic operations, shared between the freeway and local arterial network. Even though the benefits will not be equal, the improved freeway operations and/or lane capacity would encourage motorists already on the freeway to stay on the freeway and encourage local traffic to use the freeway, instead of local streets for longer trips. This would benefit the operations of the local arterial streets. Incident management systems that would be implemented as part of the proposed project will shorten the incident recovery time both on the freeway and local arterials/streets.

CITY OF PINOLE

2131 Pear Street
Pinole, CA 94564

Tel: (510) 724-8912
Fax: (510) 724-4921

May 17, 2011

Caltrans District 4
Attention: Valerie Shearer
P.O. Box 23660
Oakland, CA 94623-0660
Via Email: Valerie_Shearer@dot.ca.gov

RE: Mitigated Negative Declaration for Interstate 80 Integrated Corridor Mobility (ICM) Project

Dear Ms. Shearer:

The City of Pinole appreciates the opportunity to review the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Interstate 80 ICM Project. The City supports efforts to improve transportation efficiency, relieve auto congestion, and improve the viability of transit service within Pinole. The proposed project includes the installation of ramp metering equipment within Pinole as well as variable advisory speed signs, a closed circuit television camera, and includes two construction staging areas (#5 and #6) along Interstate 80 within the city limits.

In spite of the positive objectives of the proposed project, the City of Pinole has several major concerns about the ICM project and the contents of the MND for this project.

Impact on City Roadway Circulation

The City is concerned about adverse impacts to local surface street traffic conditions associated with ramp meter settings adjacent to Interstate 80 (I-80). Specifically, we are concerned about the deterioration in levels of service and safety at or near I-80 on-ramps associated with the proposed project. Local peak hour traffic conditions and auto stacking could be adversely impacted over time by the installation of ramp meters. The MND did not include specific information about how ramp meter timing would adjust based on changes to I-80 conditions or pedestrian crossings near on-ramps. Additionally, changes in local traffic network conditions and new construction projects that affect trip distribution on and off I-80 are not specifically addressed in the scope of analysis included in the MND but will affect optimal trip meter timing over time. 4.1 4.2 4.3

Consequently, the City requests inclusion of a mitigation measure that states that the City of Pinole shall have control over ramp metering equipment within Pinole city limits. 4.4

The City is also concerned about adverse impacts to the portion of San Pablo Avenue within Pinole and traffic conditions on local streets that abut San Pablo Avenue. Specifically, the City is concerned about long delays for drivers wishing to access or cross San Pablo Avenue as well the safety of pedestrians or bicyclists within the San Pablo Avenue corridor. 4.5

Consequently, the City requests inclusion of a mitigation measure that states that the City of Pinole shall have control over San Pablo Avenue signal timing within Pinole city limits. 4.6

The City also wishes to reiterate prior feedback from the September 24, 2010 West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee (WCCTAC) Board Meeting regarding the I-80 ICM project prior to the release of the draft MND. The City requests that the project description (Section 1.3) clearly state that local jurisdictions affected by this State-initiated project shall not be responsible for any ongoing operation and management costs associated with project system management strategies for a period of 25 years commencing from the date that project operations begin. 4.7 Additionally, the City requests that the project's purpose (Section 1.2.1) be modified to include an operational objective to ensure that travel time savings attributable to the project be evenly balanced between the freeway and San Pablo Avenue within Contra Costa County since this route of regional significance is part of the heavily travelled existing transportation network. 4.8

Required City of Pinole Permits

The proposed project will require work performed within the City's public-right-way and will require City encroachment permits. Section 1.4 of the MND needs to be modified to include the need to obtain City of Pinole encroachment permits. 4.9

Traffic and Transit Information

The MND (page 1-10) mentions that the Build Alternative would utilize display boards to provide motorists with information regarding parking availability at the Richmond Parkway Transit Center. The City requests that build alternative display boards provide information about parking availability at existing BART stations along the I-80 ICM corridor within Richmond, El Cerrito, and Berkeley which currently divert far more auto trips from I-80 than the Richmond Parkway Transit Center. 4.10

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this MND. If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Development Services Director/City Engineer Dean Allison by phone (510) 724- 9017 or via email dallison@ci.pinole.ca.us or Planning Manager Winston Rhodes by phone at (510) 724-9832 or via email at wrhodes@ci.pinole.ca.us.

Sincerely,

Belinda B. Espinosa

Belinda B. Espinosa

CC: City Council
Project File

Response to Comment Letter 4 – City of Pinole

Response 4.1 As part of the environmental studies, the Department completed a Traffic Operational Analysis Report (TOAR) in which a general description of corridor-wide adaptive ramp metering was included. While specific rates will depend on actual ramp conditions at the time of metering implementation, it is expected that the adaptive ramp metering system will set initial metering rates based on traffic flow conditions on the mainline and ramps. An important point to note is that all ramp meter installations will include queue spillback detectors. When a ramp meter queue extends back to a spillback detector, the adaptive ramp metering system will increase the metering rate at that ramp to help shorten the queue. In addition, the system will decrease the metering rates at other ramp meters to compensate for the increased rates at the ramps where the queue is being managed. Therefore, the Department does not expect ramp meter queues to adversely impact local street operation. More specific information on the corridor-wide adaptive ramp metering system will be available when the algorithm is developed.

Response 4.2 Ramp meter timing is independent of signal operations at the ramp terminus and would not adjust based on pedestrians crossing the ramp near the intersection. The ramp meter signal will be “adaptive” to shorten the queue on the on-ramp and avoid spill over traffic onto the local street/intersection. There may be temporary spillover of traffic onto the local streets, which will be eliminated by adjusting the metering rates. Therefore, the project is not expected to impact pedestrian movement adjacent to the metered ramps.

Response 4.3 The analysis for 2015 was based on the Alameda County travel demand model with adjustments to account for land uses included in the Contra Costa County travel demand model. The adjustments to the model included assumptions about new development, future improvements and the resulting changes in trip generation/distribution/assignment. It is also important to note that the ramp metering operation can be adjusted to "adapt" to changing conditions.

Response 4.4 Since ramp metering is typically implemented at multiple locations within multiple jurisdictions along a corridor to achieve congestion and delay reduction, the Department does not allow local jurisdictions to control the ramp metering equipment. However, the Department works cooperatively with local jurisdictions for corridor-wide ramp meter activation to try to provide an equitable distribution of benefits and potential impacts. The City of Pinole will be included in the decision-making process for determining the parameters for the operation of the ramp meters. The City of Pinole will also have access to the Department's CCTV cameras to monitor ramp operations from city offices.

Response 4.5 All cities will have input and will approve the development of signal timing modifications for traffic signals along San Pablo and the crossing arterials. This will allow the cities to provide input to the phasing.

Response 4.6 The cities will have control of all city-owned signals during normal (i.e. non-incident) operating conditions. During freeway incidents, the Department will activate incident response strategies that will deploy traffic signal timing modifications that have been reviewed and pre-approved by the local agencies.

Response 4.7 As outlined in the Draft IS/EA, the project would provide a network-wide benefit to the commuters and other road users. The Department in cooperation with Alameda CTC and CCTA has been working with the City of Pinole to complete a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Any cost sharing and/or roles and responsibilities will be agreed upon in the MOU. Ramp metering will not be activated until the Department and all partnering agencies have reached an agreement on the MOU.

Response 4.8 The project, as discussed in the draft IS/EA will improve the freeway operations during 1) recurring congestion conditions by implementing adaptive ramp metering to optimize the freeway flow to the extent that it would not affect the local arterial/street operations and 2) incident-related congestion by activating various incident response techniques to quickly restore normal freeway conditions. During an incident, the trailblazer signs installed along San Pablo and cross streets to the freeway will direct the traffic efficiently back onto the freeway, downstream of the incident. This will facilitate faster recovery to normal freeway and local street operations. Drivers entering the freeway will experience an overall reduction in travel time compared to the No Build conditions (without improvements). While drivers may see a slight delay at the on-ramp due to ramp metering, they can expect an overall decrease in travel time because of improved operation of the freeway segment of their trip. For these reasons the Department and the project partners believe that the project will benefit both the freeway and local street operations.

An operational objective to balance travel time savings attributable to the project evenly between the freeway and San Pablo Avenue would be neither technically feasible nor practical. Such an objective would not be technically feasible because since the vast majority of traffic volume in the corridor travels on I-80 and the primary traffic management features of the project will be applied to I-80, the majority of the travel time savings would technically occur on I-80. Other than when flushing out traffic on local incident management routes during any freeway incident, the Department would only have active control over the traffic management strategies on I-80. The local agencies would have control over any traffic management strategies along most of San Pablo Avenue and other streets. In addition, it would not be practical because it would not be possible to actually measure travel time savings on the local streets attributable to the project. Therefore, the project cannot include an objective to balance the travel time savings evenly between the freeway and San Pablo Avenue.

Response 4.9 The paragraph below **Table 1-6** in Chapter 1.0 has been updated to indicate that an encroachment permit will be necessary from the Cities of Emeryville and Pinole.

Response 4.10 Based on discussions with BART, BART currently does not have any approved projects to monitor available parking spaces at its facilities. If BART implements projects to monitor the available spaces, the information can be displayed on the proposed Information Display Boards. AC Transit has obtained CEQA clearance for its Richmond Parkway Transit Center project and is in the process of seeking NEPA clearance. When funding is fully identified, the project will be implemented. Based on guidelines for completing a draft environmental document, the I-80 ICM Draft IS/EA discussed projects either approved or in the process of being approved, and could not speculate with regard to the timeline of any other future projects, including the BART projects.

Letter 5

WCCTAC

West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee

El Cerrito

Hercules

Pinole

Richmond

San Pablo

Contra Costa County

AC Transit

BART

WestCAT

May 25, 2011

Ms. Valerie Shearer
Caltrans District 4
Via Electronic Mail
Valerie_Shearer@dot.ca.gov

RE: Comments on I-80 Integrated Corridor Mobility (ICM) Project, Draft Initial Study (with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration)/Environmental Assessment

Dear Ms. Shearer:

WCCTAC is a joint powers authority whose charge is the cross-cutting transportation interests of the jurisdictions in western Contra Costa County, including the public transit agencies that serve the area. As a project partner in the larger I-80 ICM project that includes the San Pablo Corridor Arterial and Transit Improvements, we join Caltrans in its efforts to improve mobility, safety, and air quality along the I-80 corridor. We have reviewed the subject study, which focuses primarily on the freeway components of the larger ICM project, and respectfully submit the following comments:

1. Please indicate how ramp metering analysis results based on the Traffic Operations System v2 program, which is locally traffic-responsive, might differ from that based on an adaptive ramp metering algorithm, which would decrease 'green rates' at some ramps to compensate for increasing 'green rates' at other ramps at which queues may have reached a maximum length. The latter seems to indicate that at some locations, metering rates would be less than optimal for local conditions; and if so, please explain how was this accounted for in the analysis. 5.1

2. Please indicate specific locations where mainline speed improvements are not expected to offset ramp meter delay, and indicate either proposed mitigations for those locations or why no mitigation would be necessary. 5.2

3. Ramp metering is likely to require changes to signal timing at nearby signalized intersections, which would have a ripple effect on other nearby signalized intersections. If signal timing is not optimized for these new conditions, mobility, safety, and air quality are likely to degrade in the vicinity of the arterials. We believe the study underestimates these impacts, and request that all signalized intersections along San Pablo Avenue and the crossing arterials be studied as part of the environmental document. 5.3

13831 San Pablo Avenue, San Pablo, CA 94806
Ph: 510.215.3035 ~ Fx: 510.235.7059 ~ www.wcctac.org

4. Within the project area lies four communities of concern, which the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, for the purposes of analyzing regional equity, defines as communities that have concentrations of either minority or low-income resides. Those communities of concern include Richmond, San Pablo/North Richmond, Hercules/Rodeo/ Crockett, and Berkeley/Albany. The project will affect access to I-80 by people from those communities. On that basis, we request an environmental justice analysis be conducted to determine that the project would not result in disproportionately adverse impacts to those communities. 5.4

Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide comments on the draft document. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with Caltrans toward improving conditions along the I-80 corridor. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding our comments.

Sincerely,

Christina M. Atienza
Executive Director

cc: John Hemiup, Alameda CTC; Cristina Ferraz, Caltrans; Ross Chittenden and Hisham Noeimi, CCTA; Yvetteh Ortiz, El Cerrito; Edric Kwan, Richmond; Adele Ho, San Pablo; Dean Allison, Pinole; Robert Reber, Hercules; Mark de la O, Contra Costa County; Rob Thompson, WestCAT

Response to Comment Letter 5 – West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee

Response 5.1 Adaptive ramp metering operations use mainline traffic flow, ramp traffic flow, ramp queue length, time of day, day of week, and other parameters in an algorithm to determine optimal metering rates for the entire corridor. The specific adaptive ramp metering algorithm has not been developed therefore it has not been modeled. However, when the algorithm is developed, it will be required to optimize corridor-wide conditions, with the ability to consider localized parameters such as maximum queue length.

A traffic simulation model was run for the entire corridor using a localized adaptive metering algorithm (localized adaptive metering means that the algorithm adjusted the rates by considering the traffic conditions on each individual ramp and the adjacent mainline segment and not the conditions within the corridor as a whole) to demonstrate that there is no significant change in arterial delay with the implementation of ramp metering. The model explicitly looked at those intersections closest to ramps and with the highest potential of being impacted. This analysis indicated that through adjustments to metering rates, impacts would be avoided. The ramp meter design, with queue spillback detection, is intended to avoid possible ramp queue impacts on local streets. The ramp meter turn-on process will include field review to assess and fine-tune metering rates as well.

Response 5.2 For every trip that uses a ramp and travels to the end of the corridor, the net travel time will be lower in most cases. Exceptions may be those trips that travel a short distance along the corridor (e.g., ramp to ramp, starting near the end of the corridor). In these cases, the delay at the metered ramp will not be offset by the travel time savings on the freeway. However, the delay associated with these short distance trips would not be significantly different than those under the No-Build Alternative.

Response 5.3 San Pablo Avenue and the crossing arterials/streets will not be impacted by ramp meter queues; so ramp metering will not require changes to signal timing at signalized intersections along these arterials/streets. The ramp meter queue may have some temporary impacts to some intersections. As part of traffic operations analysis, the Department studied 30 intersections throughout the corridor. The study results show that the intersections adjacent to the ramps will not see a decrease in level of service.

Response 5.4 Environmental Justice populations were analyzed during the environmental process and the Department determined that the project would not result in disproportionate impacts on environmental justice communities.

The Department's criteria and methodology for determining environmental justice communities is slightly different than that used by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) in their transportation equity analysis. MTC defines

communities that have at least 70% minority residents or 30% low-income residents (below 200% of the federal poverty level) as communities of concern for the purpose of analyzing regional equity.

Using these criteria, MTC identified Richmond, San Pablo/North Richmond, Hercules/Rodeo/Crockett, and Berkeley/Albany as COCs.

Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) use the following criteria for determining populations that meet Environmental Justice (EJ) criteria:

- A low-income population that is greater than 25 percent of the total population of the community, or a minority population that is greater than 50 percent of the total population of the community.
- A low-income and/or minority population that is more than 10 percentage points higher than the City or County average.

Under Caltrans/FHWA criteria the following communities would be considered EJ communities: Emeryville, Richmond, San Pablo, Pinole, and Hercules. These communities are the focus of Caltrans' EJ analysis summarized below.

The project includes installing 40 ramp meters. Using Caltrans EJ criteria, 12 ramp meters would be placed in non-EJ communities and 28 would be placed in EJ communities.

Specific to delay that may occur at ramp meters being activated by the project the traffic analysis shows the following average delay at ramp meter locations in EJ and non-EJ communities.

Ramp Meters	Westbound AM Peak Period	Eastbound PM Peak Period
Ramp Meter locations in EJ communities – Average Delay	+0.55 minutes per vehicle	+0.24 minutes per vehicle
Ramp Meter Locations in Non-EJ communities – Average Delay.	+0.35 minutes per vehicle	+0.47 minutes per vehicle

The analysis looks at the westbound AM and eastbound PM peak periods because these are the primary daily commute directions during which ramp meters would be operating with congestion on I-80. The data show that the delay experienced at the ramps would not be disproportionately borne by EJ populations and communities. Rather the effects would be shared across all ramp locations and communities in the corridor.

A traffic analysis was also performed to determine the effect of ramp metering at intersections throughout the project area. As indicated in Table 2.2-6 in Chapter 2, the project would not result in a change in the Level of Service at the majority of intersections studied. As a result, Caltrans focused its analysis on 30 intersections

experiencing an increase in delay. Using Caltrans criteria for EJ communities, 24 of the intersections are in EJ communities and 6 intersections are in non-EJ communities.

Table 2.2-6 shows that the project will result in reduced delay at many of the studied intersections in both the AM and PM peak traffic hours. However, some intersections would experience increased delay. While most increases in delay are relatively small (between 0.4 seconds and 4 seconds), some intersections could experience as much as 30 seconds to 1 minute of increased delay. The largest increase in delay would occur at Central Avenue at Pierce Street with a 64-second increase in the PM Peak hour.

The following table provides the average change in delay at intersections in EJ vs. non-EJ communities.

Intersections	AM peak period	PM peak period
Intersections in EJ communities – Average Change in Delay	-0.59 seconds	-1.17 seconds
Intersections in non- EJ communities- Average Change in Delay	-7.2 seconds	+0.4 seconds

Note: -seconds equals a reduction in delay. + seconds equals an increase in delay.

Based on this analysis the project impacts in terms of average change in delay would not be disproportionately borne by EJ populations and communities. Rather the effects would be shared across all communities in the corridor. One exception would be the community surrounding Central Avenue at Pierce where a longer increase in delay than at other intersection could occur as a result of the project. During the implementation of ramp metering, the Department will evaluate ways to improve the operation of the system to reduce delay at this intersection as well as others through the corridor.

The Department also evaluated the following issues that could affect EJ populations:

- Aesthetics –The most substantial changes in visual quality will result from the installation of the Active Traffic Management (ATM) gantries and stand-alone Information Display Boards (IDB). There are 11 ATMs and 6 IDBs. Using Caltrans EJ criteria, 4 of the 11 ATMs would be located in EJ communities and 4 of the 6 IDBs would be located in EJ communities. Please refer to Section 2.2.3 in Chapter 2 for an analysis of visual impacts.

- Noise – There are three areas where ramp widening would occur (determined to be the only proposed improvement that could have an effect on existing noise levels). However there are no noise sensitive land uses in the vicinity of these three ramps (John Muir Parkway on-ramp, University Avenue westbound loop on-ramp and Ashby Avenue westbound on-ramp).

- Hydrology/Water Quality – the project would not affect local or regional hydrology or water quality

- Hazardous Materials – There are known sites in the vicinity of University Avenue and Ashby Avenue in the city of Berkeley that have active cases for the unauthorized release of various hazardous materials (A COC as defined by MTC, but does not meet Caltrans EJ criteria). There are project improvements in these areas, therefore the contractor could encounter hazardous materials during construction. However, the hazardous materials are not expected to pose health exposure risks to the environment, the public or construction personnel.

Based on this analysis, the Department has determined the project would not disproportionately affect EJ populations and communities.

Letter 6

smart corridor

Caltrans | METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION | ALAMEDA County Transportation Commission | CONTRA COSTA transportation authority

I-80/Integrated Corridor Mobility
Draft Initial Study/Environmental Assessment (Draft IS/EA)
Public Meeting
Wednesday, May 11, 2011

COMMENT FORM

Comments must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. May 25, 2011.

Comment forms may be deposited in the comment box tonight or mailed/emailed to:

California Department of Transportation
Attention: Valerie Shearer
P.O. Box 23660
Oakland, CA 94623-0660

Email: Valerie_Shearer@dot.ca.gov.

Name: Mary Selva, President **Date:** 5-11-11

Affiliation (if applicable): Richmond Annex Neighborhood Council

Address: P.O. Box 264, Richmond, CA 94804

Comment/Question:

Please see attached comments.

Please continue on back if necessary.

For more information, contact Traci Ruth, Caltrans Public Information Officer, at (510) 286-6120.

Richmond Annex Neighborhood Council

Founded 1974 **PO Box 264, Richmond, California 94808** **** Neighbors Helping Neighbors ****

May 10, 2011

Caltrans District 4
Attention: Valerie Shearer
Office of Environmental Analysis, MS-8B
PO Box 23660
Oakland, CA 94623-0660

Re: Draft Interstate 80 Integrated Corridor Mobility (ICM) Project (Crockett to Oakland) – Draft Initial Study (with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration) / Environmental Assessment

Dear Ms. Shearer:

Below are the Richmond Annex Neighborhood Council's comments / recommendations to the above-titled project:

The Richmond Annex Neighborhood Council (RANC) is strongly opposed to the proposal to add three Overhead Sign Bridge Structures (gantries), plus one Variable Advisory Speed Sign along I-80, all of them located within the Richmond Annex area. These large gantry structures would be located only 1/2 to 1/3 mile apart from one another, in the vicinity of 1.) San Jose Ave. 2.) Burlingame Ave. and 3.) Jefferson Ave. Gantry structures will detract or block significant views of the S.F. Bay that Richmond Annex residents currently enjoy and value. **It makes more sense to locate these structures one mile apart, which would be much more preferred.** 6.1

The Greater Richmond Annex will continue to be a "Community of Bungalow Homes." The predominant land use pattern in the Annex consists of single-family residences on mostly sloped coastal hills. Residents on these coastal hills have dramatic views of the scenic San Francisco Bay and Marin, including a rare direct-in-line view out through the Golden Gate Bridge. This major land use and organizational pattern will not change in the foreseeable future. Thus a major goal of our community is to protect the character of these residential neighborhoods, including preserving the dramatic views that Richmond Annex residents invested into when they purchased their homes.

Historical:

For many years, the Richmond Annex Neighborhood Council has reviewed and approved projects west of this area, to protect significant S.F. Bay views along this corridor. We have also set conditions of approval for these projects to prevent blockage of this major view corridor, which were all approved by the Design Review Board and Planning Commission.

We worked diligently on three major projects with Caltrans throughout the 1990s. They are the I-80 Sound Wall Project, the I-80 Landscaping Project, and the Richmond Annex I-80 Carlson Overpass Mural Project. It was our Council group, along with Annex residents, that worked together with Caltrans project engineers and landscape architects toward the successful completion of these projects. The height of the sound wall and tree species were designed and selected, specifically to avoid blockage of the S.F. Bay view corridor.

Issues:

After working for many years to preserve significant views, we are now confronted with a series of Overhead Sign Bridge Structures (gantries) that are located directly in the middle of a major view corridor for much of the Richmond Annex residential neighborhoods to the east. The proposed areas for these structures are Emeryville (2 gantries), Berkeley (4 gantries), Albany (2 gantries), and Richmond (4 gantries). Gantry structures are mostly located in a small segment of Richmond, where a total of 3 gantries are concentrated in the Richmond Annex area. There is one more gantry located near the Cutting Blvd. exit (outside the boundaries of the Richmond Annex area). According to the project plans, there are no gantry structures at all between Cutting Blvd. in Richmond and Crockett.

If permitted, excessive gantry structures will tend to create an "overhead signage jungle" that will detract from the magnificent Bay views and affect property values! Development in this area has been directed toward less cluttered and obtrusive structures and signs. Richmond has strongly promoted a no clutter signage, no billboard policy (and supporting code) for its freeway corridors, and particularly around shoreline and major view corridors. There is no major necessity to place gantry structures in an area in direct-line-of-site of considerable Richmond Annex neighborhoods. 6.2

RANC Recommendations: Pursuant to Public Resources Code, the proposed project is subject to modification based on comments received by interested agencies and the public. The modifications we ask, if addressed positively and cooperatively, can be made with relatively little reworking of the Draft I-80 ICM plan. Our recommendation would remove one gantry structure and simply shift two gantry structures south, locating them one mile apart and at the same time, preserving the S.F. Bay views.

Sign Bridge Structure (Gantry) #11: Shift gantry from Jefferson Ave. to Highland Avenue at So. 56th, which would be relocated slightly south. This portion of I-80 is below a steep hill (several feet below the sound wall) and gantry structure will not block views.

Sign Bridge Structure (Gantry) #10: Remove gantry altogether from Burlingame Ave. This area is located in a major view corridor.

Sign Bridge Structure (Gantry) #9: Shift gantry from San Jose Ave. (another major view corridor area) towards the south city border near the Pacific East Mall (3288 Pierce St.) and 101 Auto Body Shop (5327 Jacuzzi St.) in Richmond. This portion of I-80 is lower in elevation and gantry at this location will not block views. 6.3

Other comments noted from our group:

- The pole sign—Information Display Board would be better read, if it was horizontal rather than a vertical (list view). It would be harder to read quickly while driving on the freeway. 6.4
- Perhaps there should be **much fewer** signs and not so close in proximity to each other. This seems too excessive and redundant. 6.5
- The signs are spaced so close in our area. Why aren't some of the gantry structures placed further east and **earlier** on I-80 to warn drivers from Hwy 4 and Carquinez Bridge area for alternate diversions such as the Richmond Parkway, San Pablo Ave., Cutting Blvd. off-ramps? It gives drivers more time to divert to Richmond-San Rafael to Golden Gate bridge or Richmond Parkway—I-580. By the time it is in our area, alternative routes are reduced. 6.6

It is our Neighborhood Council policy to assist local agencies toward achievement of a plan suited to the best interests of all—residential and regulatory (city; state). We believe this is a reasonable compromise that will satisfy all parties involved. As we have worked with you before on 3 previous projects in our neighborhood, we would like to work with you on this current project and discuss this more fully at one of our Neighborhood Council meetings (Mary Selva, 510-375-7769).

Thank you for your attention and assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Mary Selva

Mary Selva, President
(510) 375-7769

Jeff Jones

Jeff Jones, 2nd Vice President
Streets/Traffic Committee Chair

Jerry Yoshida, Planning/Zoning
Committee member

Attachments: Maps showing Richmond Annex Neighborhood Council's modifications
A Brief History of the Richmond Annex Neighborhood Council

A Brief History of

The Richmond Annex Neighborhood Council

The Richmond Annex Neighborhood Council is a non-partisan, wholly volunteer group dating from postwar 1940s. Founded under its present name in 1974, the Richmond Annex Neighborhood Council (RANC) represents a long proven example of what the Neighborhood Council is intended and best able to accomplish. We are a founding member of the Richmond Neighborhood Coordinating Council (RNCC), an umbrella group of all neighborhood councils throughout Richmond, under the wing of the City. Meeting monthly for now 37 years the RANC has maintained active involvement in development, crime, traffic, schools, parks, environmental problems, and shoreline issues for the Greater Richmond Annex area. Some people operate businesses in the Greater Richmond Annex area that have long been supportive members. Our long success has resulted from the trust and good faith of neighbors able to place community beyond purely personal agendas. It is a record we share with pride.

Major achievements are a result of our Council's long years of dedicated work: Some of our work includes major redesign of building projects, several multi-unit buildings, commercial and shoreline businesses; 2/3rds reduction of heavy industrial shoreline zoning allowing lt. Industrial and public use/open space; major modifications of Richmond's 1994 General Plan and 1997 Zoning Ordinance (preserving neighborhoods, parks and schools, Bay view corridor preservation, and preserving the natural and scenic character of our shoreline area—we are working diligently on Richmond's 2011 General Plan, San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, and upcoming Zoning Ordinance); Annex Senior Center (converted fire station); paving company air pollution elimination; continuous freeway sound wall and landscaping; Annex Mural Project and fund raising, completed in 1998 (Annex Mural will be cleaned & touched up Summer 2011); saved 2 public schools (Alvarado & Fairmont); Phase I Carlson Corridor Improvement Project (major overhaul currently under construction); traffic lights, stop signs & traffic modifications; illegal massage parlor, motel based drug/prostitution curtailment. We were the only Council to work on the Bay Shoreline Trail (Central Ave. to Marina Bay portion), Hoffman Marsh Preserve, and the sound wall on both the east and west sides of the I-80 freeway. We won two National Awards from NUSA (Neighborhoods USA) for *"Uniting Neighbors Against Hate"* (a televised public forum consisting of federal, state, and local officials, created and organized by our Neighborhood Council to address and eradicate incidents of hate crime and harassment in the Greater Richmond Annex area and the City as a whole), and for *"The Richmond Annex I-80 Carlson Overpass Mural Project."* Our officers, Board members, and RANC members, stemming back 50 years (some still serving), have worked diligently on major projects.

Description of area: The Greater Richmond Annex is an informal designation, which for our organization includes an extensive geographical area: San Pablo Avenue (east) to the S.F. Bay Shoreline (west) and San Jose/Central Avenues (south City border) up to Potrero/Marina Bay (north). (We have been reviewing major projects within this area since 1974. We have extensive archives of all our agendas, minutes, letters of all major projects that RANC worked on from 1974 to present, including historical photos and documents.)

It includes a mix of single-family and multiple residences; commercial, research and small manufacturing business; senior center, churches, public and private schools; medium and pocket parks and a portion of S.F. Bay Shoreline from Central Avenue up to Marina Bay that we strive to maintain.

Our area has long had a diverse ethnic mix; residential neighborhoods are largely on narrow, tree-lined streets, with mostly older postwar 1940s bungalow homes. Two and three generation residents are not uncommon. Population is relatively stable, including both first-home young families and retired senior citizens.

It is this base of longer residents, diverse socio-economic mix, and physically well-maintained homes and multiple residences which gives our community its character and strength.

SIGN BRIDGE STRUCTURE (GANTRY)
INFORMATION DISPLAY BOARD
VARIABLE ADVISORY SPEED SIGN
VARIABLE MESSAGE SIGN (TYPE 4)
CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION CAMERA
STAGING AREA (LOCATION NUMBER)
CONDUIT RUNS
CITY BOUNDARY
LOCATION OF RAMP WIDENING FOR HOV PREFERENTIAL LANE

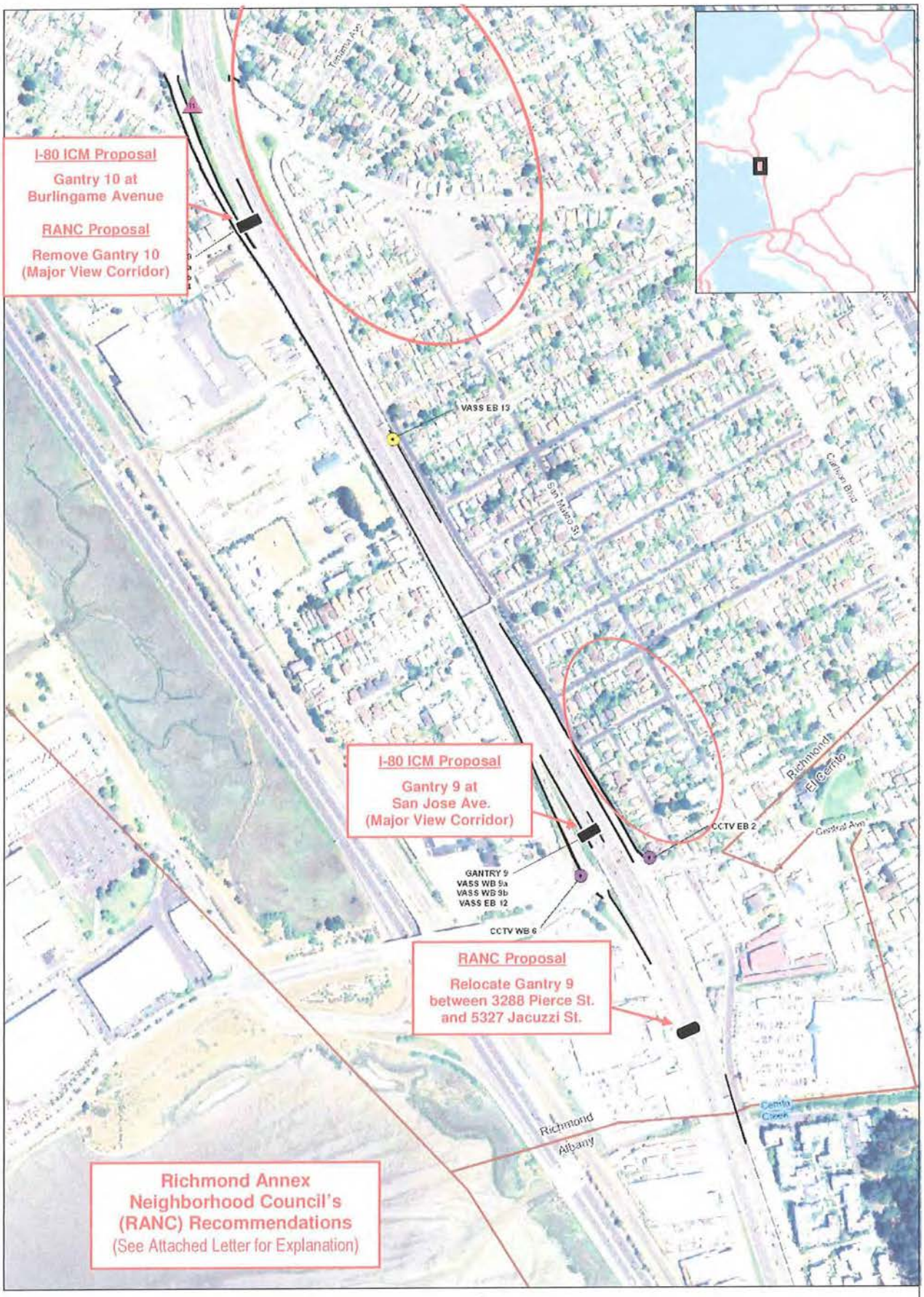
0 125 250 500 750 1,000 Feet

SOURCE: ©2006, Aerial Express Maps

APPENDIX C
SHEET 16 OF 22

Interstate 80 Integrated Corridor Mobility Project

DETAILED MAPS OF THE PROJECT COMPONENTS



SIGN BRIDGE STRUCTURE (GANTRY)
INFORMATION DISPLAY BOARD
VARIABLE ADVISORY SPEED SIGN
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CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION CAMERA
STAGING AREA (LOCATION NUMBER)
CONDUIT RUNS
CITY BOUNDARY
LOCATION OF RAMP WIDENING FOR HOV PREFERENTIAL LANE

0 125 250 500 750 1,000 Feet

SOURCE: 2000a, Aerial Express Maps

APPENDIX C
SHEET 17 OF 22

Interstate 80 Integrated Corridor Mobility Project

DETAILED MAPS OF THE PROJECT COMPONENTS

Response to Comment Letter 6 – Richmond Annex Neighborhood Council

Response 6.1 Please see response to comment 6.3.

Response 6.2 Please see response to comment 6.3.

Response 6.3 The Richmond Annex Neighborhood Council (RANC) comments suggest alternate locations for Gantries #9, #10, and #11 to minimize visual impacts on the adjacent residential neighborhoods. In response, the Department conducted additional analyses of the potential visual impact of these structures and met with the RANC on June 16, and June 28, 2011, to come to the following consensus in regards the location of Gantries #9, #10, and #11:

1. Gantry #9 will be relocated approximately 650 feet southward to the south side of the Central Avenue undercrossing in an area of light industrial and commercial land uses;
2. Gantry #10 will remain in the same location as shown in the Draft IS/EA because it was determined the original location would not result in an visual impact; and,
3. Gantry #11 will be relocated approximately 150 feet northward to line up with a row of large trees along the freeway and an existing bridge sign that would screen the gantry from residents.

Based on the further analysis conducted by the Department, discussions with RANC, and changes to the project listed above, the Department concludes that the Build Alternative would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or visual quality, or introduce substantial new sources of light or glare. The visual quality in this area would not change substantially.

The project description, **Figure 1-3**, and the visual discussion in Section 2.2.3 of the Final IS/EA have been updated to reflect the new locations of Gantries #9 and #11 following consultation with the RANC.

Letters of correspondence between the Department and the RANC concurring on the location of the gantries follow this response.

Response 6.4 This sign will include graphics, which are best displayed in a portrait orientation.

Response 6.5 The gantries which include lane use signals and variable message signs have been located with 0.4-0.9 mile spacing in order to effectively impact driver behavior. Adequate consistent information is necessary for the motorist to reduce speeds and change lanes in an orderly fashion. The gantry spacing also captures traffic entering the freeway at interchanges along the southern corridor so that information is provided as soon as possible and is reinforced as motorists proceed through the corridor.

Response 6.6 Information display boards (IDB) will be placed at other points along the corridor to serve the purpose suggested in the comment (although not advising drivers to divert).

For example, there would be IDBs located between the Carquinez Bridge and State Route 4 and west of State Route 4 along westbound I-80 providing information to motorists about congestion, mode options and other information, enabling motorists to seek alternatives before reaching the Richmond, El Cerrito, or Berkeley area.

Gantries, primarily employed for lane management will be placed in the westbound direction from Cutting to Powell since this section has the highest concentration of accidents. No other portion of the corridor experiences the same level of accident density.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
P.O. BOX 23660
OAKLAND, CA 94623-0660
PHONE (510) 286-3890
FAX (510) 622-5977
TTY 711

Flex your power!
Be energy efficient!

July 8, 2011

Ms. Mary Selva, President
Richmond Annex Neighborhood Council (RANC)
PO Box 264
Richmond, California 94808

Dear Mary:

Thank you for submitting comments addressing the Interstate 80 Integrated Corridor Mobility (ICM) project and for meeting with the California Department of Transportation (Department) and the Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC) staff on June 16 and June 28, 2011. At these meetings we had the opportunity to discuss the proposed location of Gantries # 9, 10 and 11 and the effect that these gantries would have on views of the San Francisco Bay from publically-accessible streets in the residential areas that are within the RANC's jurisdiction.

With regard to Gantry #9, the Department determined that this gantry would be visible to residents along San Luis Street just north of Central Avenue. While the gantry structure would not be tall enough to obstruct views of San Francisco Bay, the gantry could substantially detract from the view. As a result the Department has relocated Gantry #9 about 650 feet to the south which moves the structure out of the primary view corridor for these residents and to an area of predominately commercial/industrial development.

The Department determined that the location of Gantry # 10 would not detract from or obstruct views of San Francisco Bay from publically-accessible view corridors in areas east of I-80 particularly down Tehama Avenue and Burlingame Avenue. Thus, no change to the location of Gantry #10 has been made.

The Department determined that Gantry #11 would not affect views to San Francisco Bay because nearby residential areas on flat ground to the east of I-80 do not have direct views of the Bay. This is because of a large sound wall that lines I-80 and the relatively flat topography of the area. However, Gantry #11 would be visible above the top of the sound wall. Therefore, the Department has determined that Gantry #11 should be moved approximately 150 feet north to where it would be screened from view by a row of tall trees that line the highway. This will reduce any potential visual concern.

I would appreciate if you submit a letter concurring with these revisions. If you have any questions or need further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 510-286-3890.

Sincerely,

CRISTINA FERRAZ
Regional Project Manager

Richmond Annex Neighborhood Council

Founded 1974 **PO Box 5436, Richmond, California 94805** **** Neighbors Helping Neighbors ****

July 10, 2011

Christina Ferraz, Regional Project Manager
Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 23660
Oakland, CA 94623-0660

Re Interstate 80 Integrated Corridor Mobility (ICM) Project

Dear Ms. Ferraz:

Thank you for taking the time and consideration to review our concerns, collaborate with us, and resolve San Francisco Bay view corridor issues from the public right-of-way in the Greater Richmond Annex Neighborhood area.

We concur with the modifications to shift gantry bridge structures #9 and #11, therefore eliminating view blockage and/or detraction of the significant S.F. Bay view that residents currently enjoy and greatly value.

Our Neighborhood Council policy, as well as Caltrans policy, is to work together with public agencies and communities for the betterment of our City and State. Working with you and your team (Alameda CTC; Kimley-Horn; and Caltrans Associates) has accomplished just that.

Sincerely,

Mary Selva, President
Richmond Annex Neighborhood Council

cc: John Hemiup, Alameda CTC
Randy Durrenberger, Kimley-Horn
Thomas Packard, Caltrans

Letter 7

smart corridor
INTERSTATE 80
INTEGRATED CORRIDOR MOBILITY

Caltrans | METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION | ALAMEDA County Transportation Commission | CONTRA COSTA transportation authority

I-80/Integrated Corridor Mobility
Draft Initial Study/Environmental Assessment (Draft IS/EA)
Public Meeting
Wednesday, May 11, 2011

COMMENT FORM

Comments must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. May 25, 2011.

Comment forms may be deposited in the comment box tonight or mailed/emailed to:

California Department of Transportation
Attention: Valerie Shearer
P.O. Box 23660
Oakland, CA 94623-0660

Email: Valerie_Shearer@dot.ca.gov.

Name: DAVID KURRLENT **Date:** 5/11/2011

Affiliation (if applicable): CCTA-CAC

Address: 980 BARKLEY CT. PINOLE, CA 94564

Comment/Question: (1) I am disappointed that the variable speed limits on the freeway will not be enforced. To me, this was an important way to ensure equity between those being metered and those on the freeway. It will not take long for drivers to realize that they need not slow down and defeat the purpose of the variable speed limits, negatively affecting those being metered. 7.1

-over-

Please continue on back if necessary.

For more information, contact Traci Ruth, Caltrans Public Information Officer, at (510) 286-6120.

② Encouraging freeway traffic to bypass backups and incidents to local streets, especially San Pablo Ave., will have a severe impact on local communities. The increased traffic on local roads will create grid lock that will make local travel difficult if not impossible. Local streets are for local communities, not for out-of-town commuters. The impact of encouraging/diverting traffic to local streets must be analyzed in the EIR. For instance, Pinole experienced 2 pedestrian deaths in the last 2 years. Increased traffic will make these streets even less safe. It will also increase noise to the local residences. 7.2 7.3 7.4

Response to Comment Letter 7 – Mr. David Kurrent, Contra Costa Transportation Authority – Citizen Advisory Committee

Response 7.1 Legislative action is required to legalize the changes to the posted speed limits within a corridor. Moreover, the CHP indicated that the variable speed limit signs could not be enforced for several reasons. If the speed limits dynamically change, there will be potential discrepancy between what the CHP officer sees and what the driver claims was displayed. However, functionality will be in place that would address the potential discrepancy if in the future legislative action were to occur to legalize enforcement of the variable speed signs. Regardless, the variable advisory speed signs will help advise the motorist of reduced speed conditions or queues ahead, and thereby, will reduce the number and severity of secondary accidents.

Response 7.2 There are no tools on this project that will encourage or advise drivers to leave the freeway and use local streets. This is a Department policy. Today when an incident occurs on the freeway, drivers naturally exit the freeway to use local streets to bypass the incident. The local traffic signals do not adjust to accommodate this increased demand. Drivers can only guess when the best time to go back to the freeway is. The I-80 ICM project will implement signal timing that is more responsive to the anticipated increase in demand that occurs under incident conditions. Informational Message Signs (aka Trailblazer Signs) will guide traffic back onto the freeway, downstream of the incident. These tools will help both the freeway and local streets return to normal flow more quickly.

Response 7.3 Along the pre-determined incident management routes, the signal controls on parallel arterial and connecting roads to the freeway will be taken over by the Department's Traffic Management Center (TMC) only during freeway incidents. By adjusting signal timing plans, the TMC will be able to more efficiently clear the freeway traffic meandering on local streets during incidents. These incident signal timing plans and trailblazer signs installed on local incident routes will facilitate orderly movement of traffic on local streets and return the motorists back onto the freeway, downstream of a freeway incident. By implementing this strategy, the local arterials/cross streets will return to normal conditions faster, enhancing pedestrian and bicyclist movement/safety.

Response 7.4 The incident management tools included in this project will be used to manage traffic already using local streets. Traffic will not be encouraged to leave the freeway to use local streets. Therefore, the project is not expected to increase traffic on local roads and/or induce additional noise.

Letter 8

smart corridor
INTERSTATE 80
INTEGRATED CORRIDOR MOBILITY

Caltrans | METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION | ALAMEDA County Transportation Commission | CONTRA COSTA transportation authority

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California Department of Transportation
Attention: Valerie Shearer
P.O. Box 23660
Oakland, CA 94623-0660

Email: Valerie_Shearer@dot.ca.gov.

Name: Joe Q. Citizen **Date:** 5/11/11

Affiliation (if applicable): Proud Member of the Ignorant Masses

Address: The Noosphere

Comment/Question: They should take all of these resources and build a Museum of Cheesecake. 8.1

Please continue on back if necessary.

For more information, contact Traci Ruth, Caltrans Public Information Officer, at (510) 286-6120.

Response to Comment Letter 8 – Mr. Joe Q. Citizen

Response 8.1 Thank you for taking the time to review this document. We appreciate your participation.

Letter 9

smart corridor
INTERSTATE 80
INTEGRATED CORRIDOR MOBILITY

Caltrans | METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION | ALAMEDA County Transportation Commission | CONTRA COSTA transportation authority

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California Department of Transportation
Attention: Valerie Shearer
P.O. Box 23660
Oakland, CA 94623-0660

Email: Valerie_Shearer@dot.ca.gov.

Name: Pamela Shearer-Wagner **Date:** 5/11/11

Affiliation (if applicable):

Address: 6630 Hagen Blvd. El Cerrito

Comment/Question:

1) My concern is with traffic going onto streets such as Gilman, Berkeley, University Avenue & Page Street 9.1

2) When there are accidents near El Cerrito del Norte — actual streets are severely impacted. Will ICM do away with these problems? 9.2

Please continue on back if necessary.

For more information, contact Traci Ruth, Caltrans Public Information Officer, at (510) 286-6120.

Response to Comment Letter 9 – Ms. Pamela Stewart-Wagner

Response 9.1 The incident management tools included in this project will be used to manage traffic already using local streets. Traffic will not be encouraged to leave the freeway to use local streets. Therefore, the project is not expected to increase traffic on local roads and will implement strategies to better manage that traffic.

Response 9.2 As outlined in the Draft IS/EA, the project will provide a network-wide benefit. Improvements to freeway operations will keep diverting traffic away from local streets. In addition, any improvements to freeway operations will encourage motorists to use the freeway, instead of local streets, thereby having a beneficial effect on local arterial operations.

Letter 10

From: Jessie Shen
To: Jessie Shen
Subject: FW: I-80 Corridor
Date: Tuesday, May 24, 2011 9:16:51 AM

-----Original Message-----

From: <Rhkratzse@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2011 09:58 PM
To: <Valerie_Shearer@dot.ca.gov>
Subject: I-80 Corridor

Hi!

Save your (our) money! The state's broke, remember.

As traffic gets worse people will figure out other ways to get there, or they'll just spend more time getting there. So what else is new? ;) 10.1

Best wishes,

Ralph
Ralph Hueston Kratz, S.E.
Structural Engineer
S-2498

Rhkratzse@aol.com
www.rhkse.com

office 510-236-6668
cell 510-918-2256
fax 510-215-2430

724 McLaughlin Street
Richmond CA 94805-1402 USA

Response to Comment Letter 10 – Mr. Ralph Hueston Kratz, S.E.

Response 10.1 The project partners are seeking cost effective solutions to proactively manage the existing level of congestion that the I-80 corridor experiences as well as future levels of congestion, based on population growth. This project will implement intelligent transportation system components for improving the traffic operations without any significant roadway widening. Not implementing the project will not address traffic congestion and will adversely impact the region's economic vitality.

Letter 11

From: Jessie Shen
To: Jessie Shen
Subject: FW: I-80 Corridor Metering Lights- Public Comment
Date: Wednesday, May 25, 2011 11:55:32 AM

-----Original Message-----
From: Teresa Puentes-Sweetser <Teresa_Puentes-Sweetser@ci.richmond.ca.us>
Sent: Wednesday, May 24, 2011 3:33 PM
To: Valerie Shearer [mailto:valerie_shearer@dot.ca.gov]
Subject: I-80 Corridor Metering Lights- Public Comment

Dear Valerie;
The metering lights at the proposed locations in Richmond and San Pablo sounds like a great plan to manage both street and freeway on and off ramp congestion. I will benefit from reduced congestion on city streets. I am referring to the metering light planned in San Pablo at the Sam Pablo Dam Rd entrance. This overpass is my main freeway access both east and west bound on I-80. I am delighted for the improved efficiency. 11.1

Construction – How are these projects going to be scattered out in the cities of San Pablo and Richmond? If you do them all at the same time it will cause a traffic nightmare. I assume there is a schedule I can look at. 11.2
Honestly, I didn't read the entire 244 page document.

Funding- I read about the various funding sources and wondering just how much I will pay in taxes for this project as a resident of Richmond? 11.3

Teresa Puentes-Sweetser
Public Policy Intern
Office of the City Council
440 Civic Center Plaza
Richmond Ca 94804-1630
Bus: (510) 620-6515
Fax: (510) 620-6824
Hours of availability:
Mon. 2-5pm
Tue. 2 - 5pm
Wed. 2-5 pm
Fri. 9am to 4pm

Response to Comment Letter 11 – Ms. Teresa Puentes-Sweetser

Response 11.1 The commenter's support of the project is acknowledged and included in the project record.

Response 11.2 The majority of the activities done for the installation of the ramp metering devices are within the limits of the ramps and the closest intersection to the ramp. The contractors doing the installation of the devices for the Traffic Operations Systems (TOS) and Active Traffic Management (ATM) components of the project will be primarily working on Interstate 80 (I-80). In addition to these three contracts (ramp metering, TOS and ATM) there will be a contractor working on San Pablo Avenue and on arterials between San Pablo Avenue and I-80. The contract documents for the San Pablo Avenue project require the contractor to limit his operations to a 5-mile radius. The work within this radius must be completed before the contractor is allowed to proceed to another area. In addition, the contract documents for these four contracts require that coordination of construction activities among the various contractors be done. Lane closures will be coordinated to efficiently manage traffic through construction zones. A Transportation Management Plan (TMP) has been prepared for each contract and is tailored to prevent and mitigate the impacts of the construction projects by applying a variety of techniques including Motorist Information, Incident Management, Construction Strategies, and Public Information Strategies. The major objectives of the TMP are to maintain efficient and safe movement of vehicles through the construction zone; and to provide intensive public awareness of potential closures on I-80 and San Pablo/local arterials. As part of the TMP, a public outreach strategy will be implemented to disseminate construction updates to the public, including a schedule of upcoming activities. The information will be updated regularly on the project webpage.

Response 11.3 The project construction is funded by Corridor Mobility Improvement Account funds, a state bond measure fund approved by the California voters in late 2006. Local CCTA – Measure J funds, approved by the Contra Costa County voters in late 2004 are included for project environmental clearance and final design efforts. It will be difficult to segregate and identify individual contributions from various jurisdictions. However, your sales tax revenue is included in this project, as outlined above.

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