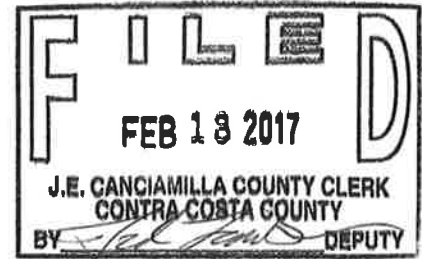




CONTRA COSTA
**transportation
authority**




Notice of Preparation of a Program Environmental Impact Report and Notice of a Public Scoping Meeting

Date: February 14, 2017

To: Responsible Agencies, Interested Organizations and Individuals

Subject: Preparation of Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the 2017 Update to the Contra Costa Countywide Comprehensive Transportation Plan

Lead Agency: Contra Costa Transportation Authority
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The Contra Costa Transportation Authority will prepare a Program EIR that considers the environmental impacts of the adoption of the 2017 Update to the Contra Costa Countywide Comprehensive Transportation Plan (2017 CTP). The results of this California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis will be provided to public agencies, the general public and other stakeholders, as well as to the Regional Transportation Planning Committees (RTPCs). This Program EIR for the CTP will provide comparative environmental information regarding the performance of alternative investment strategies against the Authority's CTP vision, goals and strategies, and will assist the Authority in making future transportation investment decisions.

The Authority is the Lead Agency for the proposed Project and is the public agency with the greatest responsibility for approving the Project and carrying it out. Under Measure C and subsequent Measure J provisions, the Authority is responsible for preparing and adopting a Countywide Comprehensive Transportation Plan. Individual projects pursuant to the CTP are generally established through the Authority's Strategic Plan, then implemented by project sponsors (i.e., local jurisdictions, transit agencies, the State

Route 4 Bypass Authority, and Caltrans). Accordingly, this notice is being sent to individual project sponsor agencies, other Responsible Agencies and interested parties.

The Project description, location, and list of potential environmental issues to be addressed in the Program EIR are provided below.

Comments

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) requests comments on the scope and content of the Program EIR. The Program EIR will address potential physical environmental effects related to each of the environmental topics outlined in the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"). Comments should focus on possible impacts of the proposed Project on the physical environment, ways in which potential adverse effects might be minimized, and alternatives to the Project.

Consistent with the CEQA Guidelines, this NOP will be circulated for a 30-day review period. Comments must be returned to the Authority no later than 30 days after receipt of this notice, and must be received by the Authority by 3:00 p.m. on Friday, March 17, 2017. Written comments and questions should be directed in writing to the contact person listed above.

Public Scoping Meeting

A public scoping meeting will be held to receive oral comments concerning the scope of the Program EIR. The meeting will be held at 2:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 28, 2017 at the Authority's offices at 2999 Oak Road, Suite 100 in Walnut Creek, California, 94597.

Project Description

Project Location

The 2017 CTP includes transportation projects and programs considered for implementation throughout the entirety of Contra Costa County as well as the Tri-Valley sub-region of Alameda County. A map of the Project Area is included as **Attachment A**.

Background

The Authority was established in 1989 to implement the *Measure C Transportation Improvement and Growth Management Program*, which was passed by the voters in November 1988, establishing a 20-year one-half percent sales tax that began on April 1, 1989, and expired on March 31, 2009. Measure C included an Expenditure Plan for allocating revenues from sales tax revenues to a variety of projects and programs including the construction and widening of freeways and arterials, the extension of

BART into East County, construction of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and support for transit and paratransit service and carpooling.

Measure J, which was passed by the voters in November of 2004, extended the one-half percent sales tax for twenty-five years, from April 1, 2009 through March 31, 2034. Both the Measure C and the Measure J expenditure plans included a Growth Management Program (GMP), “to be met by local jurisdictions for receipt of local street maintenance and improvements [LSM] funding.” The GMP established a requirement that local jurisdictions must participate in cooperative, multi-jurisdictional planning,, establish a Capital Improvement Program (CIP), and address the availability of housing. Measure J added the requirement that all jurisdictions must adhere to a voter-approved Urban Limit Line (ULL) to receive LSM and Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC) funding. Implementation of the GMP takes place at the local, sub-regional, and countywide level, while maintaining local authority over land use decisions. This planning process relies on the Regional Transportation Planning Committees (RTPCs), whose member jurisdictions work together to prepare and implement Action Plans for Routes of Regional Significance. The Action Plans establish quantifiable objectives – called Multi-modal Transportation Service Objectives (MTSOs) – and the RTPCs then agree on the actions, programs, and measures required for achieving the MTSOs.

The Authority prepared its first CTP in 1995. This first CTP established a vision, goals, and objectives that provided an overall direction and coordinated approach for achieving and maintaining a balanced and functional transportation system, while strengthening links between land use decisions and transportation. The 1995 CTP knitted together the Action Plans prepared by the RTPCs. Since 1995, the Authority has updated the CTP three separate times. The 2000 CTP update refined the Authority’s vision and goals, and introduced a set of strategies for achieving them. The 2000 CTP also introduced the Comprehensive Transportation Project List (CTPL), which established a financially-unconstrained list of transportation project and programs reflecting Contra Costa’s future needs. The 2004 CTP kept the goals and strategies of the previous CTP and focused primarily on development of an Expenditure Plan for a sales tax extension, which was passed by the voters in November of 2004 as Measure J. The 2009 CTP focused on updating the vision, goals, trends, and strategies in light of updates to the Action Plans, and addressed the beginning of Measure J. This last update also began to examine the implications of new statewide legislation (SB 375) that required MTC to develop a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) component to its Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

2017 CTP Update

The 2017 CTP will be the fourth major CTP update. Similar to the 2009 CTP, the 2017 CTP will update the demographic, economic, and transportation trends in the Project Area, and refine the vision, goals and strategies of the Authority regarding transportation and growth management (the draft Vision, Goals and Strategies of the

2017 CTP are included as **Attachment B**). The 2017 CTP will also include recommended updates to the five sub-regional Action Plans, including changes to designated Routes of Regional Significance, and new or revised MTSOs.

The 2017 CTP will incorporate an updated CTPL, as well as a financially-constrained list of projects.

Alternatives

The Draft EIR will include a comparative assessment of various alternatives. These alternatives are anticipated to include the following:

- A No Project Alternative, which in this case includes a set of highway, transit, local roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian projects that are in advanced planning stages and slated to go forward independent of the CTP, since they already have full funding commitments;
- The RTP Alternative, which is a list of transportation improvements and investments that could be funded within the financial constraints identified in Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) most recently adopted RTP as of the date of this NOP;
- Three different Transportation Investment Options, each representing a different set of financially-constrained transportation projects and/or programs intended to emphasize or prioritize different investment strategies. Each option will be financially constrained, based upon the Authority's estimate of funding that may become available through future funding initiatives.

Approach and Scope of the Program EIR

The projects, programs, measures and other actions called for in the 2017 CTP and its alternatives may directly or indirectly affect the physical environment, and consequently require analysis pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Program EIR

CEQA Guidelines, section 15168 enable a "program EIR" to be prepared for projects that contain a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related either; 1) geographically; 2) as logical parts in a chain of contemplated actions; 3) in connection with issuance of rules, regulations, plans, or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program; or 4) as individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental effects which can be mitigated in similar ways. As with past CTP EIRs, the analysis contained within this EIR will be programmatic, evaluating impacts at a regional and cumulative level, and considering the 2017 CTP (together with various

investment options and subsequent individual projects) as a single project. The advantages of a program EIR include: 1) providing occasion for a more exhaustive consideration of effects and alternatives than would be practical in an EIR on an individual action; 2) ensuring consideration of cumulative impacts that might be slighted in a case-by-case analysis; 3) avoiding duplicative reconsideration of basic policy considerations; and 4) allowing the Authority to consider broad policy alternatives and program-wide mitigation measures at an early time, when the Authority has greater flexibility to deal with basic problems or cumulative impacts.

Subsequent projects, programs and activities pursuant to the 2017 CTP will be examined in light of the Program EIR to determine whether additional environmental review must be prepared. As stated in CEQA Guidelines section 15186(c)(5), "a program EIR will be most helpful in dealing with subsequent activities if it deals with the effects of the program as specifically and comprehensively as possible. With a good and detailed analysis of the program, many subsequent activities could be found to be within the scope of the project described in the program EIR, and no further environmental documents would be required." In this case, the details of many of the transportation projects, programs and actions contained in the 2017 CTP remain at a general level until such time as they may be fully funded, and consequently lack concrete details. Thus, most of the larger individual transportation projects included in the 2017 CTP are anticipated to undergo subsequent project-level environmental review at the local level, once those projects are more clearly defined and more detailed studies are prepared.

Environmental Topics to be Addressed

The environmental issues pertinent to the Project and identified for analysis in the Program EIR will include transportation, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, energy, geology and seismicity, biological resources, hydrology and water resources, visual resources, noise, cultural resources, hazards and hazardous materials, population growth and land use (inclusive of housing and agriculture). It is not anticipated that the 2017 CTP would have any impacts on mineral resources, public services or utilities/service systems, but these issues will also be addressed in the Program EIR. An Initial Study is not required, and has not been prepared.

It is anticipated that the Project may result in the following significant impacts, which will be specifically addressed in the Program EIR:

- Temporary air quality, soil erosion, visual, and noise impacts from construction
- Damage to transportation facilities from seismic events or expansive soils
- Adverse effects on rare, threatened or endangered, candidate, sensitive, or other special-status species plants and animals, their habitats, and their movement, and on wetland and riparian habitats
- Removal of protected trees

- Increases in stormwater runoff and non-point pollution from an increase in impervious surfaces
- Alteration of views from public vantage points
- Increased noise from new or enhanced transportation facilities
- Potential damage to archaeological, paleontological, or architectural resources
- Exposure to hazardous materials during construction and operations
- Conversion of agricultural land
- Disruption, division, or displacement of existing land uses

Provisional EIR Schedule

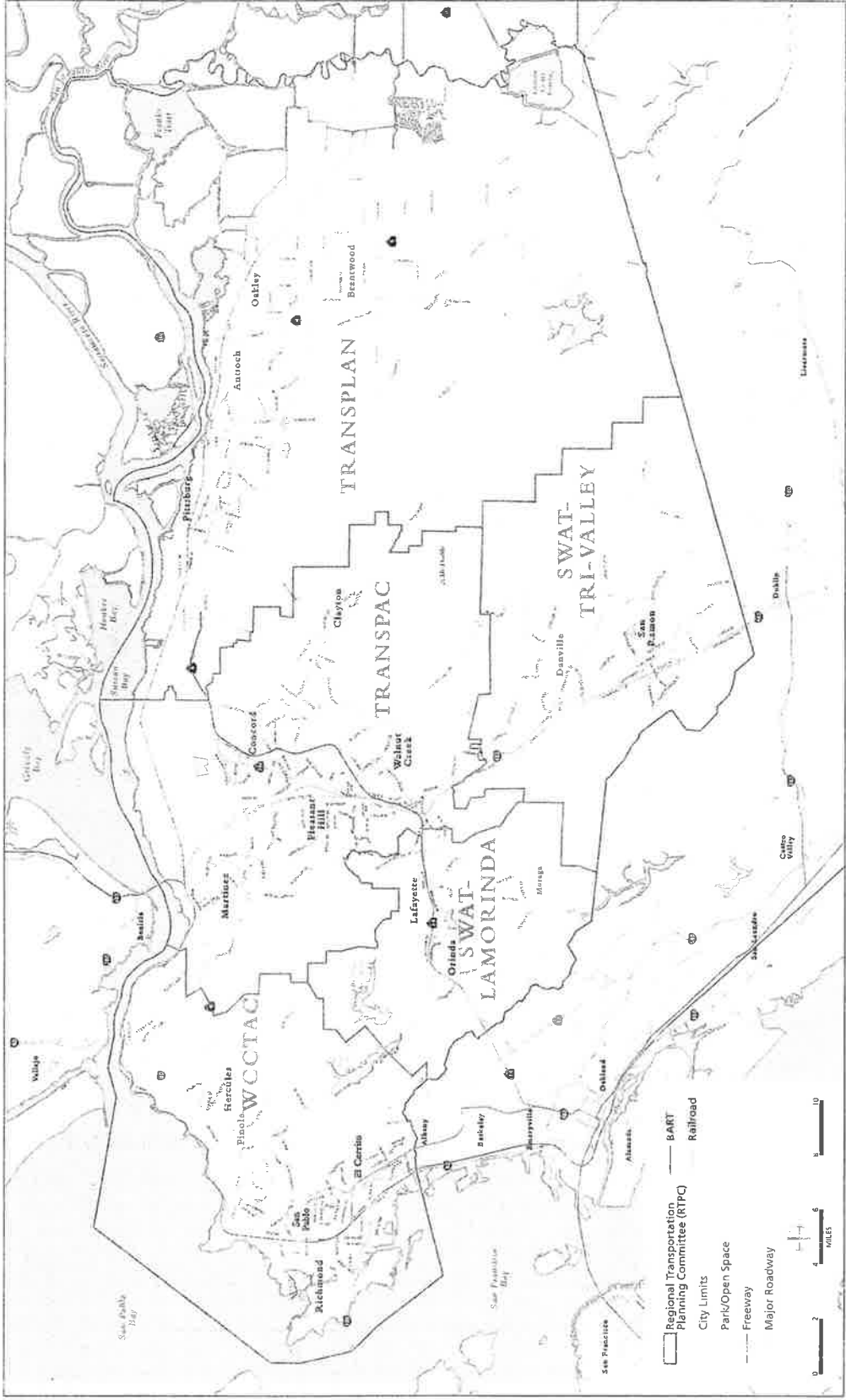
The Authority, as Lead Agency under CEQA, will review and consider responses to this NOP and may adjust the scope of environmental issues to be evaluated in the Program EIR. Depending upon such adjustments, the Authority is anticipating release the Draft Program EIR in May 2017. When the Draft Program EIR is published, notification will be sent to all responsible agencies and to others who respond to this NOP or who otherwise request notification. There will be a 45-day public review period for the Draft Program EIR.

Following the public review period, the Authority will review and consider the comments received on the Draft Program EIR and may make adjustments to the Draft Program EIR and the 2017 CTP. The Authority will respond in writing to any comments timely submitted on the Draft Program EIR. Changes and responses, along with the comment letters, will be published as the Final Program EIR, incorporating the Draft Program EIR by reference.

The Final Program EIR will then be considered along with the Project at a public hearing of the Authority's Board.

Attachments: A: Project Area Map

B: Draft Vision, Goals and Strategies, 2017 CTP



Attachment A: Project Area and Regional Transportation Planning Committee Boundaries

ATTACHMENT B: Draft Vision, Goals and Strategies, 2014 CTP

Reflects revisions made by the Authority at its 18 February 2015 meeting

VISION

Strive to preserve and enhance the quality of life of local communities by promoting a healthy environment and strong economy to benefit all people and areas of Contra Costa, through (1) a balanced, safe, and efficient transportation network, (2) cooperative planning, and (3) growth management. The transportation network should integrate all modes of transportation to meet the diverse needs of Contra Costa.

GOALS

- Support the efficient, safe, and reliable movement of people and goods using all available travel modes;
- Manage growth to sustain Contra Costa's economy, preserve its environment and support its communities;
- Expand safe, convenient and affordable alternatives to the single-occupant vehicle;
- Maintain the transportation system; and
- Continue to invest wisely to maximize the benefits of available funding.

STRATEGIES

- 1. Support the efficient, safe and reliable movement of people and goods using all available travel modes**
 - Increase the efficiency of the transportation system through capital investments, operational enhancements, and use of technology.
 - Work with jurisdictions and other agencies to identify and implement strategies for managing congestion and increasing multimodal mobility.

- Define and close gaps in the existing highway and arterial system, including gaps in the regional high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane and express lane network.¹
- Define and close gaps in the Countywide and Regional Bikeway Network, including gaps in Class I and major off-street paths.
- Improve the transportation system to influence the location and nature of anticipated growth in accordance with the General Plans of local jurisdictions and consistent with the Authority's adopted Countywide Transportation Plan.
- Identify new strategies to improve the efficiency and safety of goods movement on freeways, waterways, rail lines, and arterial roads, including local truck routes, while supporting economic development, improving air quality, and mitigating impacts on local communities and neighborhoods.

2. Manage growth to sustain Contra Costa's economy, preserve its environment and support its communities

- Continue to require cooperative transportation and land use planning among Contra Costa County, cities, towns, and transportation agencies.
- Work to maintain and expand partnerships to achieve the Authority's goals.
- Participate in a cooperative land use and transportation planning process with agencies both within and outside of Contra Costa to help achieve regional, State, and federal objectives.
- Support land use patterns within Contra Costa that make more efficient use of the transportation system, consistent with the General Plans of local jurisdictions.
- Require local jurisdictions to (i) evaluate and report on new development and the impacts of local land use decisions on the transportation system using methodologies consistent with the Action Plans and the Authority's technical procedures, (ii) identify necessary capital improvements and/or supportive operational improvements, transit options, and multimodal improvements, and (iv) have new growth pay its fair share of the cost of such improvements.
- Link transportation investments to support (i) a voter-approved urban limit line endorsed by the County and each city and town, (ii) new developments that support transportation efficiency, economic vitality, or reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, and (iii) infill and redevelopment in existing urban and brownfield areas.

¹ Express Lanes (formerly known as High-occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes) are HOV lanes that have been modified to allow single occupant vehicles to travel in the HOV lane, provided they pay a toll.

- Work to ensure that new transportation projects are environmentally sustainable and fiscally viable, respect community character, support economic development, and maintain or enhance the quality of life of our communities.
- Work with State, regional, and local agencies to develop cost-effective programs and approaches to mitigate the impacts of growth and conserve resources.
- Incorporate measures into the Authority's policies and procedures to help minimize or eliminate the impacts of GHG emissions.
- Work with local jurisdictions and other agencies to develop a connected and coordinated network for electric vehicles.

3. Expand safe, convenient and affordable alternatives to the single-occupant vehicle

- Help fund the expansion of existing transit services and regional express lanes, BART station access programs, and maintenance of existing operations, including BART, bus transit, school buses, paratransit, and ridesharing services, where appropriate.
- Support transit investments that lead to increased capacity, coordination and integration of public transit services, and improved connections between travel modes, where appropriate.
- Require local jurisdictions to incorporate policies and standards for "complete streets" that support transit, bicycle and pedestrian access in new developments and in infill development areas ("Priority Development Areas") and transit priority areas.
- Support transit-oriented and pedestrian-friendly developments.
- Invest in trails, walkways, and pedestrian-oriented improvements.
- Promote the formation of more carpools and vanpools, and greater use of transit, bicycling, and walking.
- Support the expansion of a coordinated system of affordable transit and paratransit service to address the mobility needs of low-income, elderly, young and disabled travelers, households without cars, single-parent households, and people paying more than 50 percent of their income for rent.
- Encourage local jurisdictions and other agencies to develop a connected and coordinated system of bicycle facilities through financial assistance, technical support and other aid and encouragement.

- Support congestion and parking pricing programs, transportation demand management programs, and technological innovations such as universal transit payment systems, ridesharing apps, and real-time transit routing and arrival information.
- Support Safe Routes to Schools projects and programs.

4. Maintain the transportation system

- Promote stable funding and preventive maintenance programs that will (i) address the backlog of rehabilitation needs and (ii) maintain the long-term health of all components of the transportation system.
- Advocate for stable sources of funds for transit operations and maintenance programs.
- Support programs for effective preventive maintenance and rehabilitation of the transportation system.
- Provide funding to reduce the backlog of transportation rehabilitation and maintenance needs and other projects and programs that will sustain the transportation system. Facilitate meeting new requirements, such as Complete Streets and stormwater quality management, which may affect maintenance and rehabilitation projects.

5. Continue to invest wisely to maximize the benefits of available funding.

- Use performance measures to evaluate and compare potential transportation investments.
- Seek matching funds, whenever possible, and offer incentives and priority funding to projects that provide greater return on investment.
- Develop public-private partnerships and pursue innovative financing mechanisms to accelerate project delivery.
- Use Measure J funds to leverage State, federal and other funding whenever possible.
- Consider the needs of all areas and communities in Contra Costa in funding decisions to ensure fairness in the Authority's transportation investments.