

**\* DRAFT \***

November 18, 2020

Ms. Lindsay Vivian, Chief  
Office of Environmental Analysis  
Caltrans District 4  
111 Grand Avenue, MS-8B  
Oakland, CA 94612

Trinity Nguyen, Director of Project Delivery  
Alameda County Transportation Commission  
1111 Broadway, Suite 800  
Oakland, CA 94607  
510.208.7400

**Subject:** Oakland Alameda Access Project and Environmental Impact Report

Dear Ms. Lindsay Vivian and Ms. Trinity Nguyen:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Oakland Alameda Access project and the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (DEIR/EA). Our comments on the project are included below. Our comments on the DEIR/EA are included as Attachment 1.

In May 2014, the Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC) assured the City of Alameda that the Commission “remains committed to the delivery of improvement projects not only to resolve traffic and transportation issues in and around the Posey and Webster Tubes area in the vicinity of the Broadway-Jackson interchange, **but also to the delivery of multimodal and access circulation improvements for Alameda Point**, as well as Oakland Chinatown, Downtown Oakland, and Jack London Square.” (See Attachment 2: May 14, 2014 letter from ACTC Chair Scott Haggerty and Vice Chair Rebecca Kaplan to Alameda Mayor Marie Gilmore.)

In November 2014, the voters of Alameda County voted to include \$75 million for “**multimodal transportation and circulation improvements for Alameda Point**, Oakland Chinatown, Downtown Oakland, and Jack London Square” as part of the approval for Measure BB.

After six years of design work, the cities of Alameda and Oakland must now decide whether the project has fulfilled its promises to the voters. The City of Alameda believes the project does an excellent job of rectifying and reducing the ongoing impacts of the original freeway design on the Oakland Chinatown community, that the project will significantly improve pedestrian and bicycle safety in Oakland Chinatown, and that these improvements are long overdue.

However, the City of Alameda also believes the project does not improve transit, bicycle or pedestrian access between Alameda and Oakland, and will not reduce overall automobile traffic, congestion, or the greenhouse gas emissions generated by automobile travel between Alameda and Oakland.

The project will reduce travel time for Alameda motorists by 1 to 6 minutes in 2030 by reducing the number of Oakland city blocks an Alameda motorist needs to travel to access the freeway, but as shown in the DEIR/EA, the freeway traffic and associated on-ramps and off-ramps Alameda motorists will be using will be operating at a level of service (LOS) of F.

Ultimately, the goal for our cities, county and region must be to reduce automobile vehicle miles traveled and encourage and support non-single-occupant vehicle modes of travel. The proposed project includes a plan to open up the existing maintenance walkway in the Webster Tube and widen it to 4-feet. This path may provide an emergency evacuation route for motorists whose automobiles break down in the Tube, but it will not provide an effective bicycle or pedestrian facility between Oakland and Alameda. This new path will be just as inadequate and uninviting for bicyclists and pedestrians as the existing 3-foot walkway in the Posey Tube. We must hold ourselves to a higher standard if we are to achieve our goals of providing for the needs and safety of all users, not just motorists, and reducing regional congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

Yet, despite these significant reservations and concerns, the City of Alameda will stand with our Oakland Chinatown neighbors and support the expenditure of these precious public transportation dollars on two conditions: project support from the City of Oakland and ACTC commitment to multi-modal improvements for Alameda.

1. City of Oakland Support. If the City of Oakland wishes to proceed with the project, the City of Alameda will support the project. But if the City of Oakland chooses not to support the project, the City of Alameda will withdraw its support and request that ACTC stand by their 2014 written commitment to the City of Alameda (see Attachment 2) that, if for any reason the project does not proceed, Alameda CTC will re-allocate the funds to *“to alternative transportation methods to and from Alameda Point without the need to amend the 2014 TEP, and the signatories to this letter will support such action.”*
2. Multi-Modal Improvements for Alameda. The City of Alameda does not believe this project meets the commitment for multimodal improvements between Oakland and Alameda and Alameda Point made to voters who supported Measure BB in 2014. Therefore Alameda’s support for the project is also conditioned upon a commitment by the ACTC to grant our request that ACTC fund the Project Study Report (PSR) (estimated cost \$1.4 million) and Project Approval/Environmental Document phase (estimated cost \$4.4 million) for the Oakland to Alameda Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge between the Jack London Square area and West Alameda.

We now know, based upon work completed over the last year which was funded by ACTC, that it is feasible to build a world-class bicycle and pedestrian bridge between the two cities that meets Coast Guard and Port of Oakland navigational clearance requirements. We also know that approximately 5,000 to 6,000 bicyclists and pedestrians will use the bridge each week day, resulting in over 40,000 fewer auto trips across the estuary per week. This bicycle and pedestrian bridge is recommended in the City of Oakland’s Downtown Specific Plan and their Bicycle Plan, the Caltrans District 4 Bicycle Plan, and the City of Alameda’s Transportation Choices Plan, Climate Action and Resiliency Plan, draft General Plan 2040 and draft Active Transportation Plan. This bridge will provide significant

“multimodal improvement” between Alameda and Oakland as promised to the voters in 2014. It will also reduce vehicle miles traveled, greenhouse gas emissions, and automobile traffic in Chinatown and surrounding areas, and will support Alameda County’s and the Cities of Oakland and Alameda’s commitment to building a better, more equitable, and more sustainable Bay Area.

Finally, Alameda understands that public dollars for transportation improvements are scarce and competition for those dollars is fierce. To fund the estimated \$5.8 million for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge PSR and environmental phases, we would not oppose a decision by the ACTC to remove the \$7.4 million walkway proposed for the Webster Tube. Thank you for your consideration of our concerns and requests.

Our specific technical comments on the draft DEIR/EA. are included in Attachment 1 to this letter. Thank you for your consideration of our comments and suggestions.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft, Mayor

#### Attachments

1. City of Alameda Comments on OAAP DEIR/EA *[Under development]*
2. May 2014 Letter from ACTC to City of Alameda



**Commission Chair**  
Supervisor Scott Haggerty, District 1

**Commission Vice Chair**  
Councilmember Rebecca Kaplan,  
City of Oakland

**AC Transit**  
Director Elsa Ortiz

**Alameda County**  
Supervisor Richard Valle, District 2  
Supervisor Wilma Chan, District 3  
Supervisor Nate Miley, District 4  
Supervisor Keith Carson, District 5

**BART**  
Director Thomas Blalock

**City of Alameda**  
Mayor Marie Gilmore

**City of Albany**  
Mayor Peggy Thomsen

**City of Berkeley**  
Councilmember Laurie Capitelli

**City of Dublin**  
Mayor Tim Sbranti

**City of Emeryville**  
Vice Mayor Ruth Atkin

**City of Fremont**  
Mayor Bill Harrison

**City of Hayward**  
Councilmember Marvin Peixoto

**City of Livermore**  
Mayor John Marchand

**City of Newark**  
Councilmember Luis Freitas

**City of Oakland**  
Vice Mayor Larry Reid

**City of Piedmont**  
Mayor Margaret Fujioka

**City of Pleasanton**  
Mayor Jerry Thorne

**City of San Leandro**  
Councilmember Michael Gregory

**City of Union City**  
Mayor Carol Dutra-Vernaci

**Executive Director**  
Arthur L. Dao

May 30, 2014

Mayor Marie Gilmore  
City of Alameda  
2263 Santa Clara Avenue, Room 320  
Alameda, California 94501-4477

**Subject: I-880 / Broadway Jackson Interchange Area Improvements Project (Project); Multimodal and Circulation Improvements for Alameda Point, Oakland Chinatown, Downtown Oakland, and Jack London Square**

Dear Mayor Gilmore,

As you know in late 2013, the Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC) created an Ad-Hoc Project Advisory Committee (PAC) to guide and advance the Project, as defined in the 2000 Alameda County Transportation Expenditure Plan (TEP) and funded through 2000 Measure B, through the development process. The PAC has met a few times since December 2013, and although a planned traffic study focused on the I-880/Broadway-Jackson Interchange area as well as on Downtown Oakland has occupied most of the attention of the PAC in the last five months, these issues have now been resolved and Alameda CTC will begin the process to bring a consultant team on-board to prepare the traffic study this month.

This letter provides assurance that Alameda CTC remains committed to the delivery of improvement projects not only to resolve traffic and transportation issues in and around the Posey and Webster Tubes area in the vicinity of the Broadway-Jackson interchange, but also to the delivery of multimodal and access circulation improvements for Alameda Point, as well as Oakland Chinatown, Downtown Oakland, and Jack London Square.

The first step to move this Project towards design and construction is to obtain environmental clearance for the Project as required by federal and state laws. As you know, the Project is full of complexities and will indeed be challenging, but the Alameda CTC is committed to working with all appropriate stakeholders, agencies, and authorities to obtain certified environmental clearance as required by CEQA and NEPA, and start the final design engineering process within the

timeframe of three years from the date of this letter. As a matter of course, nothing could happen on the ground without environmental clearance and engineering plans completed. To make up for lost time, Alameda CTC staff has been directed to proceed with the process to bring on an engineering consultant team by mid-June 2014.

The project delivery approach and commitment outlined above increases the likelihood that the Project will obtain early sales tax funding for construction and implementation should voters approve the sales tax measure supporting the 2014 Alameda County Transportation Expenditure Plan. The 2014 TEP includes \$75 million in sales tax funding for I-880 Broadway-Jackson multimodal and circulation improvements for Alameda Point, Oakland Chinatown, Downtown Oakland, and Jack London Square. If for any reason the current Project at Broadway-Jackson should prove to be infeasible within the timeframe of three years from the date of this letter and/or if other sources of funding become available, Alameda CTC could allocate these funds to alternative transportation methods to and from Alameda Point without the need to amend the 2014 TEP, and the signatories to this letter will support such action.

In addition to significant sales tax funding for improvements described above, the 2014 TEP also includes multiple programs and projects that will directly benefit the City of Alameda. The 2014 TEP will continue to provide financial resources for the City of Alameda to invest in locally identified priorities such as local streets, biking and walking, and paratransit services. With the approval of the 2014 TEP, the City of Alameda will annually receive \$3.76 million, a 95% increase over the funding received through the 2000 TEP.

Estimated City of Alameda Revenue for Local Priorities - 1<sup>st</sup> Year with the 2014 TEP

Local Streets Maintenance and Safety	\$ 3,000,000
Bicycle and Pedestrian Paths and Safety	\$ 380,000
Paratransit for Seniors and People with Disabilities	\$ 380,000
	\$ 3,760,000

Over the life of the 2014 TEP, the City of Alameda will directly receive over \$122 million to invest in local priorities.

Total City of Alameda Revenue for Local Priorities- 2014 TEP Plan

Local Streets Maintenance and Safety	\$ 96,280,000
Bicycle and Pedestrian Paths and Safety	\$ 11,380,000
Paratransit for Seniors and People with Disabilities	\$ 14,400,000
	\$122,060,000

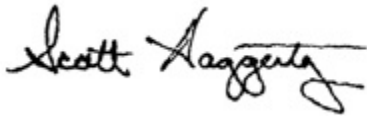
Furthermore, the 2014 TEP will also provide significant funding for transit and bicycle and pedestrian improvements. The Alameda to Fruitvale Rapid Bus project is specified in the Plan for \$9 million. The Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA) will receive \$39 million for ferry service in Alameda County, providing two routes serving the City of Alameda.

The 2014 TEP will also make significant investments in transportation infrastructure countywide, and several of these investments will also benefit the City of Alameda, albeit indirectly. These investments include significant funding to improve BART stations, bus services, freeways and major arterials, bicycle and pedestrian safety, and local land-use development.

We look forward to your agreement of our proposed approach to delivering needed transportation improvements for the City and for Alameda Point, and our commitment to delivering the Project in a timely manner. We also look forward to your City Council's approval of the 2014 Transportation Expenditure Plan, in recognition of the fact that approval of the related sales tax measure by Alameda County voters in November would bring significant benefits to your City and allow many of the City's goals and objectives to be realized.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Alameda CTC Executive Director, Art Dao, at (510) 208-7400.

Sincerely,



Scott Haggerty, Chair  
Alameda County Transportation Commission,  
and Alameda County First District Supervisor



Rebecca Kaplan, Vice Chair  
Alameda County Transportation Commission  
and Oakland Councilmember At-Large

Cc: Members of the Alameda City Council  
John Russo, Alameda City Manager  
Arthur Dao, Alameda CTC  
R. Zachary Wasserman, Alameda CTC General Counsel