City of Alameda California

To: Wajahat Nyaz
Deputy District Director of Design
Caltrans District 04

Subject: Oakland Alameda Access Project

Dear Wajahat Nyaz:

The City of Alameda (City) has been working with Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC) throughout the development of the Oakland Alameda Access Project (OAAP). We are excited to see this project reach the construction phase after many years of planning and collaboration, and we look forward to seeing it implemented. We concur conditionally with the proposed project improvements, but only if the following conditions are met before the construction plans are finalized:

- Conduct single-lane and/or full closures in the Webster and Posey Tubes only during nighttime hours and intermittent full weekend closures (no weekday peak-hour lane closures).
- Once full nighttime closures begin, require the contractor to complete the work in both Tubes in a specific number of working nights; then transition to single-lane night closures. This will reduce the impact to AC Transit riders for long-term detours.
- Work with the City – who will coordinate community and business stakeholders – to determine the hours and maximum number of nights and weekends for lane and full tube closures.
- Allow the City of Alameda to provide select blackout dates for full weekend Tube closures to accommodate large events.
- Open the Webster Tube pedestrian/bicyclist path before closing the Posey Tube path, or provide accommodations if both are closed.

Concomitant with this letter, the City is providing Alameda CTC with markups on the Plans, Specifications & Estimates (PS&E) package showing how the project can meet the City's conditions of approval without changing the project design or completion date. The City contracted with engineering firm HNTB Corporation (HNTB) to provide these detailed comments to help find logistically sound solutions that reduce project construction impacts.

City staff reviewed the Project Approval & Environmental Document (PA&ED), which showed temporary, off-peak Webster and Posey Tube closures for construction. City staff also reviewed and provided comments on the PS&E package at all stages leading up to this one. However, the full duration of closures expected in the PS&E, particularly the continuous single-lane closures, was not made clear despite City comments requesting clarification about closure lengths. Only after receiving the first 100% PS&E did City staff piece the following information together, confirmed by Alameda CTC: **In addition to intermittent full Tube closures at night and on weekends, the PS&E includes two years of continuous single-lane closures in the Posey Tube and 8 months in the Webster Tube, with 5 months of overlap.**

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The City understands that major projects cannot be constructed without roadway closures necessitating detours. However, these continuous single-lane closures surpass the temporary, off-peak Tube closures expected in the PA&ED.

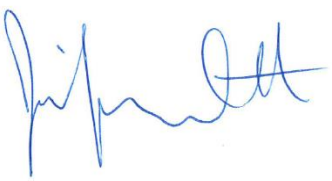
Alameda is an island city with limited ingress and egress points, and HNTB's evaluation found that the TMP's assumptions for lane closures and traffic relocation did not evaluate impacts to detour routes. HNTB also found that long-term single-lane closures, which were not comprehensively evaluated in the TMP, will cause extensive delays and queues during daytime peak hours. The City is concerned about the following:

- **Long rides and long wait times for bus riders.** Tube congestion and traffic detours will slow all buses serving Alameda, but the buses that run through the Tubes – including the 51A trunk line that serves Equity Priority Areas in Alameda and Oakland – would be most impacted. Slowing buses without additional buses also reduces headways and discourages people from using transit.
- **Delays for people traveling in motor vehicles throughout Alameda.** Congestion in the Tubes would also slow down commuters and visitors traveling into and out of Alameda from all gateways. HNTB analysis shows that with one lane open in the Posey Tube during peak hours, the delay would be 170 minutes if 20% of vehicles detoured. Only with 40% of vehicles detouring would the Tube delays be acceptable to travelers, sending over 900 peak-hour vehicles across Alameda to our east-end bridges, which already experience backups during peak times.
- **Losses for Alameda's West End & Park Street businesses.** There are over 380 businesses in West Alameda, and most weekend visitors to these businesses come from outside of Alameda: over 75% for Spirits Alley, 67% for Alameda Landing, and 60% for the Webster Street commercial district. Many will take their business elsewhere if the bus ride or drive will take too long. Park Street area businesses will be disrupted as well by increased delays on roadways and bridges.

Early public engagement is also of critical importance to this project. Given the significant disruption to the only regional connecting point in west Alameda, beginning engagement no later than October 2024 will be important to ensuring that residents and businesses can prepare for construction impacts.

We believe the City's requested revisions will greatly benefit the traveling public while allowing Alameda CTC to deliver this project without delays. We look partnering to working with Alameda CTC and Caltrans to complete this very important project for the community.

Best regards,



Jennifer Ott
City Manager, City of Alameda

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CC:
Alameda CTC:

- Tess Lengyel, Executive Director
- Gary Huisingh, Deputy Executive Director of Projects
- Jhay delos Reyes, Director of Project Delivery
- Gary Sidhu, Consultant Project Manager

Caltrans:

- Janis Mara, Public Information Officer, Alameda County

AC Transit:

- Mike Hursh, General Manager
- Jim Cunradi, Project Manager

City of Oakland:

- Nicole Ferrara, Major Projects Division Manager, OakDOT
- Audrey Harris, Planning Manager, OakDOT

City of Alameda:

- Abby Thorne-Lyman, Base Reuse and Economic Development Director
- Allen Tai, Planning, Building, and Transportation Director
- Erin Smith, Public Works Director

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