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WCCTAC | West Contra Costa
Transportation
Advisory Committee

El Cerrito

May 22, 2017

Hercules

Steve Heminger, Executive Director
Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Attn: Plan Bay Area Correspondence
Bay Area Metro Center
375 Beale Street, Suite 800
San Francisco, CA 94105-2066

RECEIVED

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BAYAREATOLLAUTHO

Pinole

RE: Comments on the 2040 Plan Bay Area Draft Plan

Dear Mr. Heminger:

Richmond

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the 2040 Plan Bay Area Draft Plan. While this Draft Plan was being developed, the West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee (WCCTAC) undertook a transit study for the I-80 corridor, which expands upon the strategies identified in the Draft Plan.

San Pablo

The West County High Capacity Transit Study (funded with participation from MTC, BART and CCTA) analyzed transit needs and opportunities in West Contra Costa County to plan for future population growth and to address severe congestion on I-80. As you are aware, the I-80 corridor in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties is repeatedly ranked as one of the most severely congested freeways in the Bay Area. The CCTA projected that between 2010 and 2040, the PM peak hour traffic volumes on I-80 (in Richmond, just north of I-580) would increase by approximately 22 percent. A Caltrans study found that I-80 carries the third highest truck volume in the Bay Area and serves as a primary connector to transcontinental truck routes.

Contra Costa
County

AC Transit

Due to the nature of the I-80 corridor in West Contra Costa County, there is no opportunity for interstate expansion. Available corridor level operational and capacity improvements have already been implemented (e.g. the now degraded HOV3+ lanes and the I-80/San Pablo Avenue Integrated Corridor Mobility project). The I-80 congestion not only impacts the quality of life of West County residents and workers, but also affects Bay Area freight traffic and the economic vitality of the entire Bay Area region. Given these interstate capacity limitations and the impacts of increasing congestion, WCCTAC conducted the West County High Capacity Transit Study which found that additional and expanded express bus, bus rapid transit and other fixed guideway transit worked together to increase mobility, with the potential to improve economic development opportunity in the corridor, while providing benefits to low income communities.

BART

WestCAT

WCCTAC and the jurisdictions of West Contra Costa want to make sure that Plan Bay Area does not underestimate the existing and future transit need in West County. The West County study found that a forecasted growth in transit ridership of nearly 19,000 riders (from 38,880 current riders) by 2040 cannot be accommodated without substantial investment. As an example, BART's Richmond

line suffers from overcrowding and the El Cerrito del Norte BART Station is quickly reaching capacity. If no changes are made, that station will not be able to accommodate the short-term, let alone the long-term, ridership demand.

With acute awareness of the challenge in the I-80 corridor, the West County study developed investment alternatives that can form a stronger, high-capacity transit network to:

- reduce vehicle miles traveled
- improve air quality
- reduce congestion on local streets
- increase capacity for goods movement on I-80 and
- accommodate existing, near and long-term demand for high-capacity transit

Two of these alternatives are already included in the 2040 Plan Bay Area Draft (San Pablo Avenue BRT and the Regional Intermodal Transit Center in Hercules). We would like the Commission to be aware, however, that the study suggests the need for a greater level of transit investment and includes additional projects, such as:

- Expanded express bus service to San Francisco and El Cerrito Del Norte BART;
- New express bus service from West Contra Costa County into major northern Alameda County destinations (Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland);
- A Rapid Bus/BRT operating along 23rd Street that would better link Richmond, San Pablo, Pinole and Hercules to U.C. Berkeley's Richmond Field Station and the soon-to-be-operating Richmond WETA Ferry Terminal; and
- A potential BART extension to the north from the Richmond BART Station (one stop to San Pablo near Contra Costa College or further to Hercules).

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on and plan for West County's and our region's transportation future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Nemeth".

John Nemeth
Executive Director, WCCTAC