

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS
CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CTC Meeting: October 21-22, 2015

Reference No.: 2.2c.(2)
Action Item

From: NORMA ORTEGA
Chief Financial Officer

Prepared by: Katrina C. Pierce, Chief
Division of
Environmental Analysis

Subject: **APPROVAL OF PROJECT FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION OF FUNDING
04-SCI-680, PM 6.5/9.9, 04-Ala-680, PM 0.0/12.4
RESOLUTION E-15-57**

RECOMMENDATION:

The California Department of Transportation recommends that the California Transportation Commission (Commission), as a responsible agency, approve the attached Resolution E-15-57.

ISSUE:

The attached resolution proposes to approve for future consideration of funding the following project for which a Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) has been completed:

- Interstate 680 (I-680) in Santa Clara and Alameda Counties. Construct express lane facility on a portion of I-680 near the community of Sunol. (PPNO 0177, 0587E)

This project in Santa Clara and Alameda Counties will construct a high occupancy vehicle/express lane and rehabilitate the existing roadway on Northbound I-680 in or near the cities of Milpitas, Fremont, and Pleasanton, and the community of Sunol. The project is programmed in the Traffic Congestion Relief Program and the 2014 State Highway Operation and Protection Program. The project is not fully funded. The total estimated cost is approximately \$388,995,000 for capital and support. Depending on the availability of funding, construction is estimated to begin in Fiscal Year 2016-17.

A copy of the FEIR has been provided to Commission staff. Resources that may be impacted by the project include: aesthetics, community impacts, noise, geology and soils, traffic, and cumulative impacts.

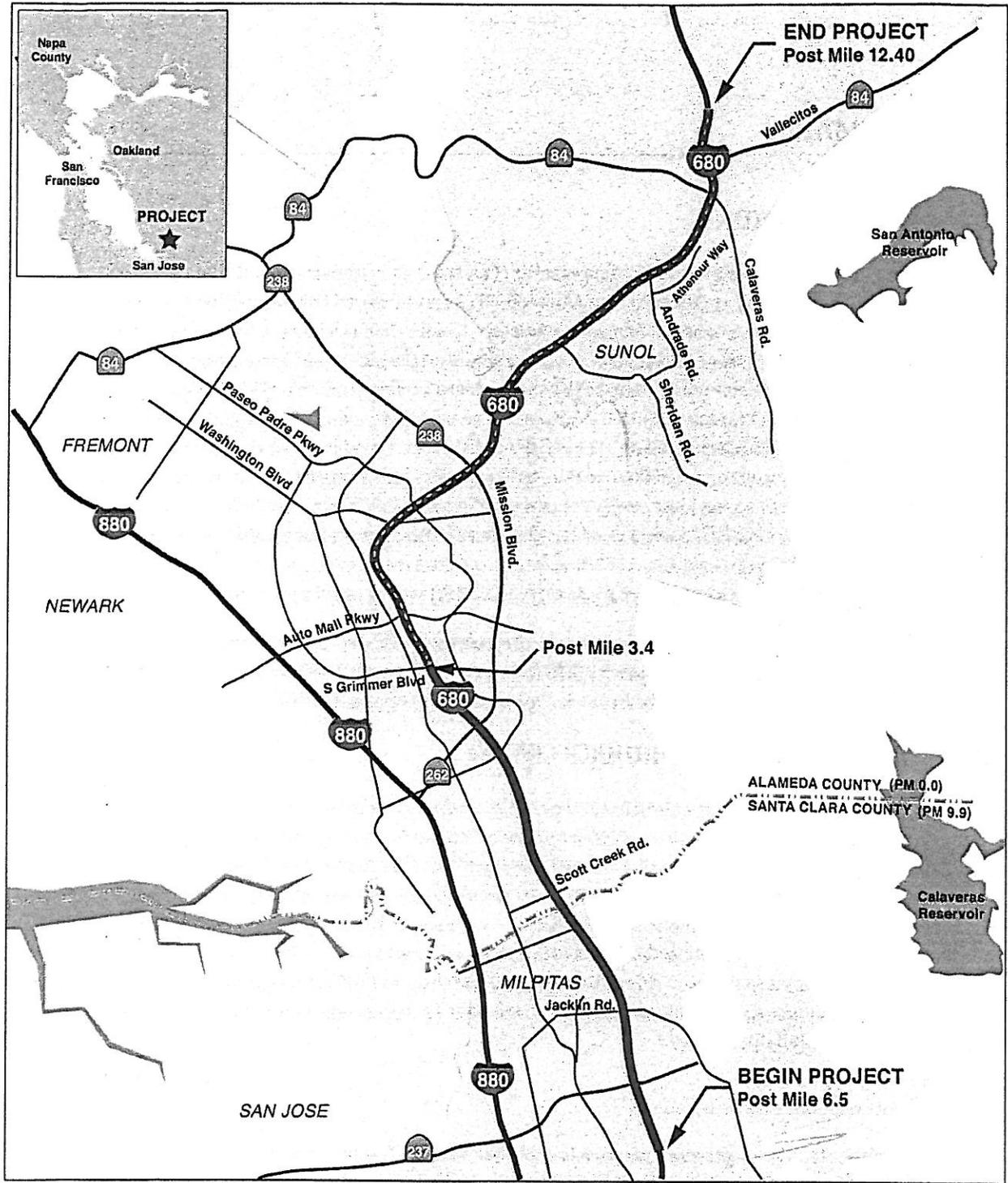
Potential impacts associated with the project can all be mitigated to below significance. As a result, an FEIR was prepared for the project.

Attachments

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Resolution for Future Consideration of Funding 04-SCI-680, PM 6.5/9.9, 04-Ala-680, PM 0.0/12.4 Resolution E-15-57

- 1.1 WHEREAS**, the California Department of Transportation (Department) has completed a Final Environmental Impact Report pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines for the following project:
- Interstate 680 (I-680) in Santa Clara and Alameda Counties. Construct express lane facility on a portion of I-680 near the community of Sunol. (PPNO 0177, 0587E)
- 1.2 WHEREAS**, the Department has certified that a Final Environmental Impact Report has been completed pursuant to CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines for its implementation; and
- 1.3 WHEREAS**, the California Transportation Commission, as a responsible agency, has considered the information contained in the Final Environmental Impact Report.
- 1.4 WHEREAS**, the project will have a significant effect on the environment.
- 1.5 WHEREAS**, Findings were made pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines.
- 2.1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the California Transportation Commission does hereby support approval of the above referenced project to allow for consideration of funding.



Legend

- Project Study Limits
- Phase 1 Project Study Limit



Project Location Map

Figure **S-1**

Source: Circlepoint, 2014

FINDINGS

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FINDINGS FOR I-680 NORTHBOUND HOV/EXPRESS LANE PROJECT SANTA CLARA AND ALAMEDA COUNTIES, CALIFORNIA

The following information is presented to comply with State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 California Code of Regulations, Chapter 3, Section 15901) and the Department of Transportation and California Transportation Commission Environmental Regulations (Title 21, California Code of Regulations, Chapter 11, Section 1501). Reference is made to the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the project, which is the basic source for the information.

The following effects have been identified in the EIR as resulting from the project. Effects found not to be significant have not been included.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Impact BIO-A

Significant Impact:

Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would have a significant impact on protected jurisdictional water features, including 0.18 acres of temporary impact and 0.07 acres of permanent impact.

Findings:

In addition to changes or alterations that have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, compensatory mitigation will be implemented to lessen the significant environmental impact as identified in the final EIR/EA.

Statement of Facts:

Any impacts jurisdictional water features that cannot be recreated on-site shall be subject to formalized mitigation requirements of the regulatory agencies. A conceptual restoration and mitigation plan shall be prepared prior to permit applications to regulatory agencies. The on-site restoration of Waters of the U.S. combined with the implementation of other components of the conceptual restoration and mitigation plan will ensure no net loss of functions and values of Waters of the U.S.

The off-site mitigation ratio proposed for Waters of the U.S., including wetlands, under jurisdiction of the USACE, is 1:1 acres of mitigation per acre of permanent impact. The

mitigation ratio proposed for temporary impacts is 1:1 acre of mitigation per acre of temporary impact. All of the mitigation for temporary impacts is anticipated to be achieved on-site by restoring impacted areas to pre-project conditions.

Off-site mitigation for permanent impacts is proposed through purchase of credits at an approved mitigation bank. A conceptual on-site restoration and mitigation plan would be included in the permit applications to regulatory agencies. This plan would include a native plant palette list, plant establishment period, success criteria, and a monitoring and reporting schedule that would be reviewed and approved by the regulatory agencies prior to project construction. In addition, under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, the RWQCB may request or require mitigation as part of the Water Quality Certification. Caltrans would obtain this certification during the permitting phase of project development.

Table 1 summarizes the anticipated compensatory mitigation requirements of the Preferred Alternative, isolating Phase 1 and future phase calculations.

Table 1 Proposed Compensatory Mitigation for Wetlands and Water Features Affected by the Preferred Alternative

Feature Type	Temporary Impacts (Acres)	Permanent Impacts (Acres)	Total Impacts (Acres)	Total Mitigation (1:1 Ratio) (Acres)
<i>Phase 1</i>				
Wetland Features	0.02	0.01	0.03	0.03
Other Water Features	0.10	0.01	0.11	0.11
Phase 1 Total	0.12	0.02	0.14	0.14
<i>Future Phases</i>				
Wetland Features	0.05	0.00	0.05	0.05
Other Water Features	0.02	0.05	0.07	0.07
Future Phases Total	0.06	0.05	0.12	0.12
<i>Preferred Alternative Total</i>				
Wetland Features	0.06	0.01	0.08	0.08
Other Water Features	0.12	0.06	0.18	0.18
Preferred Alternative Total	0.18	0.07	0.25	0.25

Note: Acreage figures have been rounded.

The on-site restoration of Waters of the U.S. combined with the implementation of other components of the conceptual restoration and mitigation plan will ensure no net loss of functions and values of Waters of the U.S.

Impact BIO-B

Potentially Significant Impact:

Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would have a potentially significant impact on the California tiger salamander, including 12.01 acres of temporary impact and 12.85 acres of permanent impact.

Findings:

In addition to changes or alterations that have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, compensatory mitigation will be implemented to lessen the significant environmental impact as identified in the final EIR/EA.

Statement of Facts:

In order to meet the requirements of California Fish and Game Code Section 2081 for obtaining an Incidental Take Permit for the California tiger salamander, compensatory mitigation is proposed to satisfy the conditions of multiple agencies and jurisdictions including FESA and the CEQA process. Caltrans will purchase Service-approved banking credits at the Ohlone West Conservation Bank or Ohlone Preserve Conservation Bank to offset impacts to Central California tiger salamander habitat. Caltrans will satisfy the habitat compensation by phase, starting with Phase 1. Compensation for the Future Phases will occur when funding is available. Compensation for each phase will be completed prior to ground-breaking on that phase. The proposed off-site habitat acquisition for the California tiger salamander is summarized in **Table 2**. In the event that banking credits are not available, Caltrans will coordinate with the regulatory agencies to establish an appropriate mitigation strategy.

Caltrans will implement restoration of temporary work areas at the conclusion of project construction. Areas will be restored to their particular baseline land cover and ecological functions.

Caltrans will compensate for the prolonged temporary loss of riparian woodland habitat by restoring 0.15 acre of riparian habitat within the temporary work areas, and planting an additional 0.18 acre of riparian woodland vegetation off-site but adjacent to the construction footprint within the Alameda Creek and Sheridan Creek riparian corridors. Riparian trees will be replaced at 3:1 in coordination with the CDFW.

Table 2 Proposed Compensatory Mitigation for the California Tiger Salamander Affected by the Build Alternative

Project Phase	Total Off-site Mitigation (Acres) for California Tiger Salamander
Phase 1	33.60
Future Phases	4.95
Build Alternative Total	38.55

Source: Biological Opinion (BO) number 08ESMF00-2015-F-0157-1

Impact BIO-C

Potentially Significant Impact:

Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would have a potentially significant impact on the California red-legged frog, including 12.21 acres of temporary impact and 12.93 acres of permanent impact.

Findings:

In addition to changes or alterations that have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, compensatory mitigation will be implemented to lessen the significant environmental impact as identified in the final EIR/EA.

Statement of Facts:

In order to meet the requirements of the USFWS for the California red-legged frog, compensatory mitigation is proposed. Caltrans will purchase Service-approved banking credits at the Ohlone West Conservation Bank or Ohlone Preserve Conservation Bank to offset impacts to California red-legged frog habitat. Caltrans will satisfy the habitat compensation by phase, starting with Phase 1. Compensation for the Future Phases will occur when funding is available. Compensation for each phase will be completed prior to ground-breaking on that phase. The proposed off-site habitat acquisition for the California red-legged frog is summarized in **Table 3**. In the event that banking credits are not available, Caltrans will coordinate with the regulatory agencies to establish an appropriate mitigation strategy.

Caltrans will implement restoration of temporary work areas at the conclusion of project construction. Areas will be restored to their particular baseline land cover and ecological functions.

Caltrans will compensate for the prolonged temporary loss of riparian woodland habitat by restoring 0.15 acre of riparian habitat within the temporary work areas, and planting an additional 0.18 acre of riparian woodland vegetation off-site but adjacent to the construction footprint within the Alameda Creek and Sheridan Creek riparian corridors. Riparian trees will be replaced at 3:1 in coordination with the CDFW.

Table 3 Proposed Compensatory Mitigation for the California Red-legged Frog Affected by the Build Alternative

Project Phase	Total Off-site Mitigation (Acres) for California Red-legged Frog
Phase 1	33.78
Future Phases	4.95
Build Alternative Total	38.73

Source: Biological Opinion (BO) number 08ESMF00-2015-F-0157-1

Impact BIO-D

Potentially Significant Impact:

Implementation of the Preferred Alternative could have a potentially significant impact on the Alameda whipsnake, including 12.06 acres of temporary impact and 12.91 acres of permanent impact.

Findings:

In addition to changes or alterations that have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, compensatory mitigation will be implemented to lessen the significant environmental impact as identified in the final EIR/EA.

Statement of Facts:

In order to meet the requirements of California Fish and Game Code Section 2081 for obtaining an Incidental Take Permit for the Alameda whipsnake, compensatory mitigation is proposed. Caltrans will purchase Service-approved banking credits at the Ohlone West Conservation Bank or Ohlone Preserve Conservation Bank to offset impacts to Alameda whipsnake habitat. Caltrans will satisfy the habitat compensation by phase, starting with Phase 1. Compensation for the Future Phases will occur when funding is available. Compensation for each phase will be completed prior to ground-breaking on that phase. The proposed off-site habitat acquisition for the Alameda whipsnake is summarized in Table 4. In the event that banking credits are not available, Caltrans will coordinate with the regulatory agencies to establish an appropriate mitigation strategy.

Caltrans will implement restoration of temporary work areas at the conclusion of project construction. Areas will be restored to their particular baseline land cover and ecological functions.

Caltrans will compensate for the prolonged temporary loss of riparian woodland habitat by restoring 0.15 acre of riparian habitat within the temporary work areas, and planting an additional 0.18 acre of riparian woodland vegetation off-site but adjacent to the construction footprint within the Alameda Creek and Sheridan Creek riparian corridors. Riparian trees will be replaced at 3:1 in coordination with the CDFW.

Table 4 Proposed Compensatory Mitigation for the Alameda Whipsnake Affected by the Build Alternative

Project Phase	Total Off-site Mitigation (Acres) for Alameda Whipsnake
Phase 1	33.78
Future Phases	4.95
Build Alternative Total	38.73

Source: Biological Opinion (BO) number 08ESMF00-2015-F-0157-1

Impact BIO-E

Significant Impact:

Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would have a significant impact on approximately 0.68 acres of oak woodlands.

Findings:

In addition to changes or alterations that have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, compensatory mitigation will be implemented to lessen the significant environmental impact as identified in the final EIR/EA.

Statement of Facts:

Approximately 0.68 acre of oak woodland would be impacted by project activities. Caltrans will provide native oak woodland compensation at a 3:1 acre ratio for permanent impacts. Trees will be planted onsite in the project area to the maximum extent possible after the completion of roadway construction. Offsite planting areas near the project will be sought if onsite restoration cannot accommodate the acreage.

PALEONTOLOGY

Impact PAL-1

Potentially Significant Impact:

Implementation of the Preferred Alternative could have a potentially significant impact on previously undiscovered paleontological resources.

Findings:

In addition to changes or alterations that have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, compensatory mitigation will be implemented to lessen the significant environmental impact as identified in the final EIR/EA.

Statement of Facts:

Prior to construction, a qualified professional paleontologist (as defined by SVP [2010] and Caltrans SER) should be retained to both design a monitoring and mitigation program, and implement the program during project-related excavation and earth disturbance activities. The paleontological resource monitoring and mitigation program should include:
preconstruction coordination

- construction monitoring
- emergency discovery procedures
- sampling and data recovery, if needed
- preparation, identification, and analysis of the significance of fossil specimens salvaged, if any
- museum storage of any specimens and data recovered
- reporting

Prior to the start of construction, the professional paleontologist should conduct a field survey of exposures of sensitive stratigraphic units within the construction footprint that would be disturbed. Earth-moving construction activities should be monitored and inspected for the presence of potentially fossiliferous sediments. Monitoring would not need to be conducted in sediments that have been previously disturbed or in areas where exposed sediments would be buried, but not otherwise disturbed.

Prior to the start of construction, construction personnel involved with earth-moving activities should be informed that fossils could be discovered during excavating, that these fossils are protected by laws, on the appearance of common fossils, and on proper

notification procedures should fossils be discovered. This worker training would be prepared and presented by a qualified professional paleontologist.

Implementation of the monitoring and mitigation program will prevent impacts to previously undiscovered paleontological resources.

NOISE

Impact NOI-A

Significant Impact:

Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels.

Findings:

In addition to changes or alterations that have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, compensatory mitigation will be implemented to lessen the significant environmental impact as identified in the final EIR/EA.

Statement of Facts:

Based on the studies completed to date, Caltrans intends to incorporate noise abatement in the form of a replacement noise barrier (NB Wall 13), located along northbound I-680, between Palm Avenue and Mission Boulevard. Replacement barrier NB Wall 13 would replace portions of the existing soundwall that would be removed under the Preferred Alternative, with an equivalent height of 14 feet. Calculations based on preliminary design data indicate that the barrier will reduce noise levels by 14 to 15 dBA for ten residences at a cost of \$1,675,680. If during final design conditions have substantially changed, noise abatement may not be necessary. The final decision of the noise abatement will be made upon completion of the project design and the public involvement processes. The construction of this noise wall would decrease the noise impacts.

SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

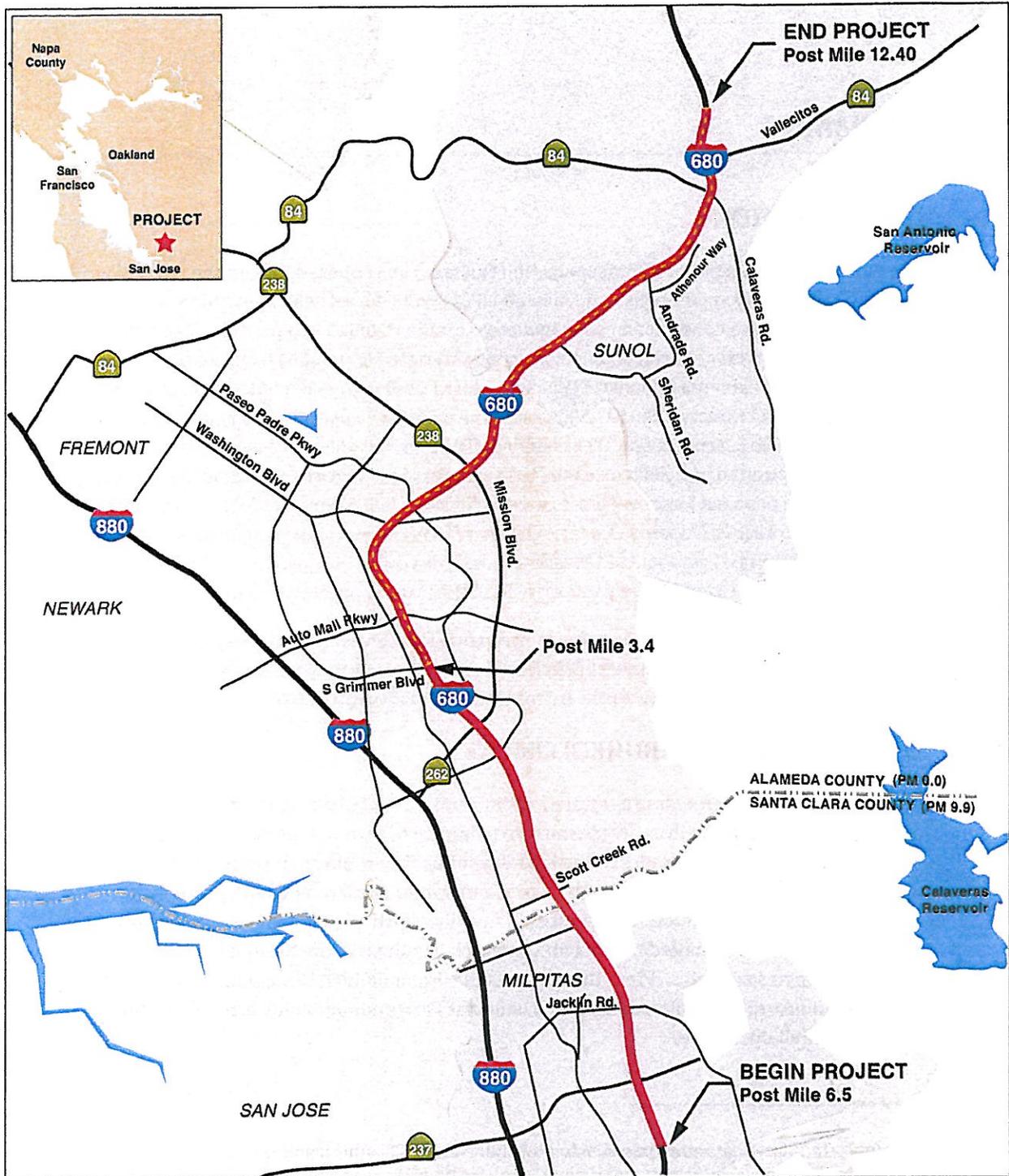
The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in cooperation with the Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), propose to construct an approximately 15-mile High Occupancy Vehicle/express lane (HOV/express lane) project on northbound Interstate 680 (I-680) from south of State Route (SR) 237 (Calaveras Boulevard) in Santa Clara County to north of SR 84 (Vallecitos Road) in Alameda County. The HOV/express lane would be a specially-designated freeway lane that is free for carpools and other eligible HOV users, but also gives single-occupancy-vehicles the option to pay tolls to use the HOV/express lane. **Figure S-1** shows the general location of the proposed improvements extending along I-680 from Post Mile 6.5 in Santa Clara County to 12.4 in Alameda County. The new HOV/express lane would pass in or near the cities of Milpitas, Fremont, and Pleasanton, and the community of Sunol. The I-680 Sunol Smart Carpool Lane Joint Powers Authority (SSCLJPA) would operate the express lane.¹

Caltrans is the lead agency responsible for preparing this Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT LIMITS

The proposed improvements are located within a mixture of urban, suburban, and rural development patterns, with a diverse mixture of land uses through the cities of Milpitas, Fremont, and other communities in the East Bay hills. The southern portion of the study area, from SR 237 in Milpitas to the Alameda County line, is surrounded by residential, commercial, office, and public facility uses. Travelling north, through the City of Fremont, the I-680 corridor is surrounded by a mix of commercial, industrial, institutional, residential, parks and open space uses. From the northeastern Fremont hills through the community of Sunol, in unincorporated Alameda County, land uses are predominantly large agricultural properties and open space.

¹ In 2004, the State Legislature passed Assembly Bill (AB) 2032, authorizing two pilot express lanes in Northern California. The Streets and Highway Code Section 149.5, established the SSCLJPA, and further authorized the SSCLJPA and its members, consisting of Alameda CTC (formerly ACCMA and ACTIA), and Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) to conduct, administer, and operate a value pricing HOV program in the I-680 corridor in Alameda and Santa Clara counties.



Legend

- Project Study Limits
- Phase 1 Project Study Limit



Project Location Map

Figure **S-1**

Source: Circlepoint, 2014

PROJECTS IN THE STUDY AREA

There are 27 planned developments within the communities adjacent to the project limits, which are predominately residential development projects (refer to **Section 2.4.2, Cumulative Analysis**). Other planned development projects include several institutional, commercial, and mixed-use commercial/residential land uses. Construction is also underway for two new Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) stations in the Warm Springs area of Fremont and in downtown Milpitas.

Planned and approved transportation improvements along local routes may be implemented by local agencies or under other projects (see **Section 2.4.2, Cumulative Analysis**, for a detailed discussion). Such projects include the following:

- I-680 Ramp Metering Project
- I-680 Pavement Rehabilitation Project
- I-680 Northbound Express Lane Extension (from SR 84 to south of Alcosta Boulevard)
- I-680 Express Lanes Project, Bay Area Infrastructure Financing Authority (BAIFA) (HOV conversion from Rudgear Road to Alcosta Boulevard in the southbound direction and from Alcosta Boulevard to Livorna Road in the northbound direction)
- SR 84 Expressway Widening Project (Ruby Hills Drive to Jack London Boulevard)
- SR 84 Expressway Widening Project (I-680 to Pigeon Pass)
- I-680/I-880 Cross Connector
- I-580 Express Lanes (east of I-680)
- Mission Boulevard Streetscape Improvements (between Verde Way and Mission Creek, Fremont)

PURPOSE AND NEED

PURPOSE

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Transportation 2035 Plan establishes the implementation of a regional express lanes network to effectively improve throughput and reduce delays on the major travel corridors within the San Francisco Bay Area, including northbound I-680. To address these issues, the proposed project would fulfill the following goals:

- Increase the efficiency of the transportation system on northbound I-680 between SR 237 and SR 84 to accommodate current and future traffic demand

- Improve travel time and travel reliability for all users, including HOV and transit users
- Optimize freeway system management and traffic operations
- Maintain consistency with the provisions defined in California State Assembly Bill (AB) 2032 and AB 574 to implement an HOV/express lanes system in Alameda County

NEED

- **Capacity and Transportation Demand.** The existing roadway features and freeway mainline capacity of northbound I-680 within the project limits are inadequate to accommodate the existing traffic demand.² The result is traffic congestion and delay during afternoon peak travel periods, when the corridor serves as a major commute route for people who work in Silicon Valley and live in eastern Alameda County, Contra Costa County, or the northern part of the San Joaquin Valley.³ **Tables 2.1.7-1 and 2.1.7-2, in Section 2.1.7, Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities,** of this EIR/EA summarize current and forecast mainline and ramp operations along I-680 within the traffic study area, respectively. A substantial number of drivers divert off of I-680 and use local roads. The additional traffic diverted from the freeway is resulting in traffic congestion on city streets during peak commute periods.

Projections of future conditions on the I-680 corridor within the project limits indicate that the demand for travel is expected to far exceed the available capacity during peak periods, adversely affecting travel speeds and creating bottlenecks at constrained locations. It is projected that the number of vehicles using this segment of I-680 will increase by up to 28 percent, and the period of LOS F conditions will extend for more than six hours by the year 2040.⁴

- **Travel Time Delay for all Users.** Current data on corridor travel speeds indicate that travelers experience substantial delays during the peak period; the time required to traverse the corridor is twice as long as during off-peak periods, and each traveler experiences delays of 15 to 20 minutes when compared to free-flowing conditions. Forecasted conditions indicate a level of traffic congestion that is also expected to reduce transit service reliability.

² The freeway "mainline" refers to the general mixed-flow travel lanes that are open to all drivers.

³ According to 2011 traffic count data, the weekday three-hour peak commute period for the project corridor occurs from 3:45 to 6:45 PM, with the heaviest hour of traffic occurring from 5:15 to 6:15PM.

⁴ Caltrans, 2014n. *I-680 Express Lane, Traffic Operations Analysis Report.*

- **Traffic Diversion and Unused Capacity.** Based on fall 2011 traffic counts at all of the ramps, there is a sharp increase in traffic using the Sheridan Road off-ramp and a very similar spike in traffic using the Andrade Road on-ramp on weekdays between the 5:00 and 7:00 PM time period. This indicates a substantial number of drivers (approximately 600 vehicles in the peak hour alone) are choosing to divert off of I-680 and use local roads to avoid congestion on the freeway. Similarly, a large amount of traffic diversion occurs on Mission Boulevard, between SR 262 and SR 238, and on Calaveras Road, between SR 237 and SR 84. In the case of Mission Boulevard, the additional traffic diverted from the freeway is resulting in traffic congestion (LOS F conditions) on city streets during peak commute periods. Traffic diversion is likely to further increase as freeway traffic conditions worsen with anticipated growth, creating even more congestion on city streets during peak commute periods.

Because this corridor primarily serves commuters that tend to follow similar daily and weekly travel patterns, the experience with the southbound HOV/express lane indicates that there is a demand for this type of facility in the northbound direction. Based on future traffic forecasts, the HOV lane usage for the majority of the project limits would be in the range of 700 to 1,300 vehicles per hour during the peak commute periods in year 2020, while the capacity of an HOV lane is approximately 1,650 vehicles per hour. These numbers indicate that while there is substantial demand for an HOV lane, there would be unused capacity in the HOV lane, where the potential exists to “sell” the available capacity to toll-paying single-occupancy-vehicles.

- **Legislation.** On January 1, 2005, AB 2032 authorized the Alameda CTC and VTA to implement express lanes on 280 miles of freeway network. As part of a demonstration program, AB 2032 authorized both agencies to conduct, administer, and operate value pricing programs on two of their congested transportation corridors, including the I-680 corridor within the project limits. AB 2032 originally included a sunset provision that authorized the pilot program to operate for a period not to exceed four years after the agency first collects revenues. California State AB 574; approved October 11, 2007, eliminated the sunset provision in AB 2032, authorizing the program to operate indefinitely. The enabling legislation stipulates that revenue collected from the express lanes will be reinvested in projects and services that provide traffic congestion relief within the express lane corridor.

AB 2032 also includes provisions that require HOV/express lanes to operate at level of service (LOS) C conditions.^{5,6} This LOS C requirement generally corresponds to a minimum average operating speed of 45 miles per hour (mph) for HOV/express lanes with a speed limit of 50 mph or higher.⁷ The minimum LOS C requirement is intended to provide HOV/express lane users with reliable travel times.

PROPOSED ACTION

This section describes the proposed action and the design alternatives that were developed to meet the previously identified project purpose and need, while avoiding or minimizing environmental impacts. The alternatives are the “Build Alternative” and the “No-Build Alternative”.

Other alternatives were considered but eliminated as none were deemed viable because of physical constraints and feasibility, or because they did not meet the project’s purpose and need. See **Section 1.3.3, Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Discussion**. Caltrans and ACTC are continuing to evaluate additional design refinements that may reduce the project footprint and minimize environmental effects.

BUILD ALTERNATIVE

The Build Alternative proposes to construct a new HOV/express lane facility on northbound I-680 from SR 237 (Calaveras Boulevard) in Santa Clara County to SR 84 (Vallecitos Road) in Alameda County, a distance of approximately 15 miles. The Build Alternative is anticipated to be constructed in multiple phases and represents the long-term vision for build out of the HOV/express lane facility on northbound I-680 from SR 237 to SR 84. The Build Alternative would consist of the following primary improvements, discussed in detail further below:

- addition of a new HOV/express lane in the northbound direction on I-680 extending from SR 237 (Calaveras Boulevard) in Santa Clara County to SR 84 (Vallecitos Road) in Alameda County
- installation of electronic tolling equipment and signage
- widening of existing paved surfaces in the median and to the outside of the mainline

⁵ California Streets and Highways Code Section 149.5(b); LOS D operating conditions in the HOV lane are only allowed with written approval of Caltrans.

⁶ Level of Service (LOS) is a measure of traffic conditions and the perception of such conditions by motorists. There are six LOS ratings, ranging from LOS A (free traffic flow with low volumes and high speeds, resulting in low vehicle densities) to LOS F (traffic volumes exceeding the capacity of the infrastructure, resulting in forced flow operations, slow speeds, and high vehicle densities). LOS E or F is typically considered unacceptable by Caltrans, and indicates a need for improvement. Refer to **Section 2.1.7, Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities**, for a detailed discussion of LOS criteria.

⁷ USC Title 23, Section 166(d)(2)

- construction of auxiliary lanes at various locations on northbound I-680 to improve weaving operations at both ramp locations and express lane access points
- widening or modification of overcrossing and undercrossing structures to accommodate freeway widening
- demolition and replacement of the Sheridan Road overcrossing
- widening the east side of Alameda Creek Bridge
- construction of retaining walls at various locations to accommodate the northbound widening
- new and replacement sound walls, as required
- modification of existing ramp metering and Traffic Operations System (TOS) facilities
- pavement rehabilitation on northbound I-680 between Auto Mall Parkway and Koopman Road

Appendix G includes detailed exhibits of the improvements that would be constructed under the Build Alternative.

Phase 1 – Initial Construction Phase

The Build Alternative is anticipated to be constructed in multiple phases and represents the long-term vision for build out of the HOV/express lane facility on northbound I-680 from SR 237 to SR 84. A first phase of the Build Alternative (Phase 1) would include the construction of a new HOV/express lane facility on northbound I-680 from Auto Mall Parkway to SR 84 (Vallecitos Road), a distance of approximately 8 miles, and an auxiliary lane between the Washington Boulevard on-ramp and SR 238 (Mission Road) off-ramp. **Figure S-1** shows the general location of the proposed improvements within Phase 1, extending along I-680 from Post Mile 3.4 to Post Mile 12.4, in Alameda County.⁸

Chapter 2.0, Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures, of this environmental document evaluates the potential effects of the full Build Alternative, including the initial phase of construction (Phase 1). Where appropriate, the environmental consequences and avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures specific to the Phase 1 segment are identified.

⁸ The Phase 1 limits start at South Grimmer Boulevard (PM 3.4) to include an approximately 1-mile-long auxiliary lane leading up to the start of the HOV/express lane construction at Auto Mall Parkway.

CONSTRUCTION COST

The Build Alternative for this project was developed to meet the transportation demands of the project area, taking into consideration engineering, environmental, and other constraints with little focus on near-term financial constraints (i.e., to meet local agency CEQA and right-of-way acquisition needs). The fundable first phase of the Build Alternative (Phase 1) was developed as a subset of the Build Alternative and represents a fundable project based on near-term Caltrans and FHWA financial constraints.

The total project cost (in 2014 dollars) for the Build Alternative and Phase 1 is \$340,104,000 and \$233,459,000, respectively. The breakdown of project costs is provided in **Table S-1** below.

Table S-1 Construction Cost Estimate Summary

	Build Alternative	Phase 1
Roadway	\$162,650,000	\$97,319,000
Structures	\$45,399,000	\$38,853,000
Pavement Rehab	\$ 14,068,000	\$ 14,068,000
Time Related Overhead	\$2,063,000	\$1,375,000
Contingency (15%)	\$33,630,000	\$22,740,000
Subtotal (Construction Capital Costs)	\$257,810,000	\$174,355,000
Right-of-way	\$264,000	\$264,000
Utility Relocation	\$7,290,000	\$7,290,000
Environmental Mitigation	\$7,800,000	\$6,300,000
Tolling System Integration (design, installation, and maintenance)	\$15,000,000	\$10,000,000
Subtotal Other Capital Costs	\$30,354,000	\$23,854,000
Support Costs (PS&E, R/W Support and Construction Administration)	\$51,940,000	\$35,250,000
Total Cost	\$340,104,000	\$233,459,000

Note: Total project cost estimate is for remaining costs associated with the project. Funds required to complete the Project Approval and Environmental Document (PA&ED) phase of the project are therefore not included above. The PA&ED cost is \$9.6 million.

Source: WMH Corporation, 2015

NO-BUILD (NO ACTION) ALTERNATIVE

Under the No-Build Alternative, none of the project features described above would be constructed. The freeway travel lanes along the I-680 corridor would remain as they currently exist. No bridge structures would be widened or replaced. Under the No-Build Alternative, the planned and approved transportation improvements described below may be

implemented by local agencies or under other projects (see **Section 2.4.2, Cumulative Analysis**, for a detailed discussion).

The No-Build Alternative includes the potential for these improvements to be implemented through design year 2040. The No-Build Alternative is the baseline for comparing environmental impacts under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).⁹

- I-680 Ramp Metering Project
- I-680 Pavement Rehabilitation Project¹⁰
- I-680 Northbound Express Lane Extension (from SR 84 to south of Alcosta Boulevard)
- I-680 Express Lanes Project, Bay Area Infrastructure Financing Authority (BAIFA) (HOV conversion from Rudgear Road to Alcosta Boulevard in the southbound direction and from Alcosta Boulevard to Livorna Road in the northbound direction)
- SR 84 Expressway Widening Project (Ruby Hills Drive to Jack London Boulevard)
- SR 84 Expressway Widening Project (I-680 to Pigeon Pass)
- I-680/I-880 Cross Connector
- I-580 Express Lanes (east of I-680)

Traffic volumes within the project corridor would increase under the No-Build Alternative. The No-Build Alternative would not achieve the project purpose of increasing the efficiency of the transportation system by adding capacity on northbound I-680 between SR 237 and SR 84 to accommodate current and future traffic demand. In addition, the increased traffic volumes without capacity improvements would worsen the traffic congestion and slow traffic flow on the highway and local roadway network, resulting in increased potential for traffic congestion-related collisions.

JOINT CEQA/NEPA DOCUMENT

The proposed project is a joint project by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and is subject to state and federal environmental review requirements. Project documentation, therefore, has been prepared in compliance with both the CEQA and the NEPA. Caltrans is the lead agency under NEPA and CEQA. In addition, FHWA's responsibility for environmental review, consultation, and any other action required in accordance with applicable federal laws for this project is

⁹ Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the baseline for environmental impact analysis consists of the existing conditions at the time the Notice of Preparation (NOP) or at the time the environmental studies began. Near-term impacts (2020) and long-term impacts (2040) are also considered under CEQA; similar to the No-Build baseline used for NEPA.

¹⁰ Excluding the segment between Auto Mall Parkway (PM M4.0) to Koopman Road (PM R12.4) that would be rehabilitated under Phase 1 of the Build Alternative.

being, or has been, carried-out by Caltrans under its assumption of responsibility pursuant to 23 United States Code (USC) 327.

Some impacts determined to be significant under CEQA may not lead to a determination of significance under NEPA. Because NEPA is concerned with the significance of the project as a whole, quite often a "lower level" document is prepared for NEPA. The joint document prepared for this project is an EIR/EA.

Following receipt of comments from the public and reviewing agencies, this EIR/EA was prepared. This EIR/EA includes responses to comments received on the draft EIR/EA and identifies the preferred alternative. Any changes to the draft EIR/EA, as a result of comments received, are denoted with a vertical line in the right margin and referenced in **Chapter 4.0, Comments and Coordination**.

Caltrans has determined that the EIR/EA adequately and accurately discusses the need, environmental issues, and impacts of the proposed project and appropriate mitigation measures; and provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required. If the decision is made to approve the project, Caltrans will issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for compliance with NEPA. A Notice of Availability (NOA) of the FONSI will be sent to the affected units of federal, state, and local government, and to the State Clearinghouse in compliance with Executive Order 12372. A Notice of Determination (NOD) will be published for compliance with CEQA.

PROJECT IMPACTS

Table S-2 summarizes the adverse effects of the Build Alternative in comparison with the No-Build Alternative. The proposed avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures to reduce the effects of the Build Alternative are also presented. This environmental document evaluates the potential effects of the full Build Alternative, including the initial phase of construction. Where appropriate, the environmental consequences and avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation measures specific to the Phase 1 segment are identified. For a complete description of potential adverse effects and recommended measures, please refer to the specific sections within **Chapter 2.0, Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**.

Table S-2 Project Impacts

Environmental Topic	No-Build Alternative	Build Alternative	Phase 1	Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures
Land Use				
Division of and established community	None expected	None expected	None expected	None
Consistency with State, Regional, and Local Plans and Programs	Low	High consistency	High consistency	None
Compatibility with habitat conservation plan	No Conflict	No Conflict	No Conflict	None
Located in a Coastal Zone	No	No	No	None
Located near Wild and Scenic Rivers	No	No	No	None
Parks and Recreation Facilities				
No Effect				
Growth				
Growth-inducing	No	Indirectly, but within planned and forecasted growth	Same as Build Alternative	None
Farmlands				
Farmland acquisition	None expected	Low (1.21 acres of Unique Farmland)	Same as Build Alternative	None
Williamson Act Property Acquisition	None expected	Low (0.07 acres of land under a Williamson Act contract)	Same as Build Alternative	Measure FRM-1: Comply with Government Code Section 51293(d); land surface disturbed for the relocation of utilities would be restored to its original conditions

Environmental Topic	No-Build Alternative	Build Alternative	Phase 1	Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures
Community Impacts				
Community Character and Cohesion	None expected	None expected	None expected	None
Relocations and Real Property Acquisition	None expected	No relocations; Acquisition of portions (or slivers) of 13 parcels	Same as Build Alternative	Measure CMN-1: Implement community outreach program with affected property owners Measure TRA-1: a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) will be given one to two weeks in advance to emergency response services to address detours and roadway/street closures
Environmental Justice	None expected	None expected	Same as Build Alternative	None
Utilities/Emergency Services				
Utilities	None expected	Some relocations of existing gas and electric transmission lines	Same as Build Alternative	Measure UTL-1: Coordination and verification with the affected utility service providers
Emergency Services	None expected	Short-term operational effects to police, fire, and emergency service during construction	Same as Build Alternative	Measure TRA-1: Implement TMP with notifications of delays and/or detours during construction
Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities				
Conflict with applicable plans, ordinances, policies, or programs	Yes	None	None	None
Increase traffic congestion	Yes	Will reduce traffic congestion	Same as Build Alternative	Measure TRA-1: Implement TMP with notifications of delays and/or detours during construction

Environmental Topic	No-Build Alternative	Build Alternative	Phase 1	Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures
Increase hazards as a result of a design feature	None expected	None	None	None
Visual/Aesthetics				
Adverse effect on scenic views/damage scenic resources	None expected	None	None	None
Degradation of existing visual character or quality	None expected	Potential visual quality lost	Same as Build Alternative	Measures VIS-1 through VIS-5: Roadway design would adhere to Caltrans final design requirements in cooperation with the Caltrans District Landscape Architect
Create a new source of light or glare	None expected	New nighttime lighting; temporary construction lighting	Same as Build Alternative	Measure VIS-6: Lighting would adhere to Caltrans Standard Specifications Implement construction light and glare screening measures
Cultural Resources				
Create an adverse change in the significance of a historical resource	None expected	No effect	No effect	None
Create an adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource	None expected	Potential due to excavation and construction activities	Same as Build Alternative	Measure CUL-2: If unidentified cultural materials are unearthed during construction work shall be halted in that area. Measure CUL-3: An ESA and AMA Action Plan has been prepared to specify avoidance areas and areas requiring monitoring during construction to avoid all impacts to known archaeological resources

Environmental Topic	No-Build Alternative	Build Alternative	Phase 1	Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures
Disturbance to human remains	None expected	None expected	Same as Build Alternative	Measure CUL-1: If human remains discovered, activity will stop (State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5). If the remains are thought to be Native American, the Native American Heritage Commission will be contacted (Public Resources Code Section 5097.98)
Hydrology and Floodplain				
Within a 100-year floodplain	Yes	Yes	Yes	Measure HYDR-1: Implement re-vegetation, storm water treatment, or other requirements as designated by the relevant permits
Expose people/structures to a significant risk of loss	None expected	Low risk; minimal increases in storm water runoff (less than 0.6-percent) and changes in the 100-year water surface elevations (approximately 0.1 foot)	Similar to Build Alternative; minimal increases in storm water runoff (less than 0.1 percent) and changes in the 100-year water surface elevations (approximately 0.1 foot)	None
Water Quality and Storm Water Runoff				
Result in substantial drainage pattern alteration	None expected	Modification/removal of existing drainage structures	Same as Build Alternative	Measure WQ-1: Comply with Caltrans National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit and Storm Water Management Plan
Violation of water quality standards	None expected	Potential due to excavation and construction activities	Same as Build Alternative	Measure WQ-1: Implement Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan

Environmental Topic	No-Build Alternative	Build Alternative	Phase 1	Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures
Change to groundwater supply or groundwater recharge	None expected	None Expected	Same as Build Alternative	None
Substantially degrade water quality	None expected	Potential construction and operational effects	Same as Build Alternative	Measure WQ-2 and WQ-3: Implement Design Pollution Prevention and Treatment Best Management Practices
Geology/Soils/Seismic/Topography				
Expected likelihood of seismic related issues, including ground shaking and liquefaction	Same as Build Alternative	High potential for ground shaking, liquefaction potential varies	Same as Build Alternative	Measure GEO-1: Implement Caltrans' seismic design standards, and preparation of geotechnical design reports
Expose people or structures to potential adverse effects	None expected	Worker safety	Same as Build Alternative	Measure GEO-2: Comply with Occupational Safety and Health Act Section 5(a)(1)
Mineral Resources	None expected	None expected	None expected	None
Paleontology				
Destruction of paleontological resources (i.e., fossil remains and sites) as a result of ground disturbance	None expected	Potential due to excavation and construction activities in previously undisturbed fossiliferous geologic formations	Same as Build Alternative	Mitigation Measure PAL-A: Preparation and implementation of a Caltrans-approved paleontological monitoring and mitigation program.
Hazardous Waste/Materials				
Create a hazard to the environment	None expected	Potential due to excavation and construction activities	Same as Build Alternative	Measures HAZ-1 through HAZ-5: Additional subsurface sampling and proper management of soil/groundwater contaminants; Site Safety Plan; Lead Compliance Plan Follow regulations requiring abatement of asbestos-containing materials and lead-based paint.

Environmental Topic	No-Build Alternative	Build Alternative	Phase 1	Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures
Create a hazard to the public	None expected	None expected	Same as Build Alternative	Measures HAZ-1 through HAZ-5: Additional subsurface sampling and proper management of soil/groundwater contaminants; Site Safety Plan; Lead Compliance Plan Follow regulations requiring abatement of asbestos-containing materials and lead-based paint
Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites, and, as a result, would create a hazard to the public or environment	Same as Build Alternative	Varies throughout project limits, sites on several lists	Same as Build Alternative	Measures HAZ-1 through HAZ-5: Additional subsurface sampling and proper management of soil/groundwater contaminants; Site Safety Plan; Lead Compliance Plan Follow regulations requiring abatement of asbestos-containing materials and lead-based paint
Air Quality				
Operational Emissions	Greater than Build Alternative	Regional and project-level conformity achieved, No considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant (no localized carbon monoxide violations, 3 percent increase in diesel particulate matter, and no substantial increase in emissions for all other Mobile Source Air Toxics)	4 percent increase in diesel particulate matter; no substantial increase in emissions for Mobile Source Air Toxics	None

Environmental Topic	No-Build Alternative	Build Alternative	Phase 1	Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures
Emissions from construction equipment	Unknown	Temporary increases in daily maximum construction emissions (reactive organic gases = 8.1 pounds (lbs)/day; nitrogen oxides = 39.3 lbs/day; exhaust particulate matter (10 microns) = 2.3 lbs/day; exhaust particulate matter (2.5 microns) = 2.0 lbs/day)	Same as Build Alternative	Measures AIR-1 through AIR-3: Implement Caltrans Standard Specifications and control measures for construction emissions from the BAAQMD CEQA Guidelines
Noise				
A substantial increase in permanent noise levels	None expected	Potential permanent noise level increases ranging from 0 to 15 dBA (varies throughout project limits)	Same as Build Alternative	Mitigation Measure NOI-A: Potential noise abatement measures
A substantial increase in temporary noise levels	None	Potential due to construction activities	Same as Build Alternative	Measure NOI-1: Compliance with Caltrans Standard Specifications for construction equipment and restricted construction hours, where feasible. Where not feasible, construction noise monitoring program will be implemented.
Energy				
No Effect				
Biological Resources				
Effects to habitat or sensitive natural communities	None	Potential effects to oak woodland habitat (0.68 acres) during and post construction activities	Same as Build Alternative	Measure BIO-33: Avoid/minimize impacts to Oak Woodland; Mitigation Measure BIO-E: Compensatory mitigation for oak woodlands

Environmental Topic	No-Build Alternative	Build Alternative	Phase 1	Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures
Effects to wetlands and other waters	None	<p>Potential direct impacts (0.26 acres) and indirect water quality effects to wetlands and other waters.</p> <p>A total of 0.22 acres of impacts, all located within Phase 1, are likely to be subject to a Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement (1602)</p>	<p>Potential direct impacts (0.14 acres) and indirect water quality effects to wetlands and other waters.</p> <p>A total of 0.22 acre of impacts, all located within Phase 1, are likely to be subject to a Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement (1602)</p>	<p>Measures WQ-1 through WQ-3: Temporary and permanent best management practices to protect water quality</p> <p>Mitigation Measure BIO-A: Compensatory Mitigation for Jurisdictional Water Features</p>
Effects to sensitive or special status species	None	<p>Direct impacts to habitat types (89.08 acres of temporarily and permanently disturbed habitat, 63.94 acres of which is urbanized/landscaped; 1,021 trees trimmed or removed) with the potential to support Western burrowing owl, Western pond turtle, American badger, dusky-footed woodrat, migratory birds, and bat species</p> <p>See Table 2.3.1-1</p>	<p>Similar to Build Alternative (59.12 acres of temporarily and permanently disturbed habitat, 40.21 acres of which is urbanized/landscaped; 867 trees trimmed or removed)</p> <p>See Table 2.3.1-1</p>	<p>Measures WQ-1 through WQ-3: See above</p> <p>Measures BIO-1 through BIO-23, BIO-29, and BIO-32: Requirements for qualified biological monitor(s) during construction, worker environmental awareness training, preventing inadvertent entrapment of animals during construction, implementing seasonal restrictions and work windows for certain construction activities, conducting pre-construction species surveys, minimization of bat and bird disturbance, proper vehicle use near sensitive natural communities, limiting nighttime construction and artificial nighttime lighting, maintaining good housekeeping practices regarding food-related trash items and pets, restricting firearms, implementing local tree</p>

Environmental Topic	No-Build Alternative	Build Alternative	Phase 1	Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures
Effects to sensitive or special status species <i>(Continued)</i>		Potential effects to the California tiger salamander (24.86 acres), California red-legged frog (25.14 acres) and Alameda whipsnake (24.97 acres)	Similar to Build Alternative; Potential effects to the California tiger salamander (18.01 acres), California red-legged frog (18.91 acres) and Alameda whipsnake (18.80 acres)	preservation policies, and implementing colonial bird nesting deterrence plan Measure BIO-28: complying with the Executive Order on Invasive Species (EO 13112). Measures WQ-1 through WQ-3: See above Measures BIO-1 through BIO-23, BIO-29 and BIO-32: see above Measures BIO-24 through BIO-27: adherence to the conservation measures and terms of the biological opinion, suspend construction activities if special-status species observed in construction areas, implementing seasonal restrictions and work windows for certain construction activities, and restrict the use of plastic monofilament netting (erosion control matting) Mitigation Measures BIO-B, BIO-C, and BIO-D: Compensatory mitigation for impacts to California tiger salamander, California red-legged frog, and Alameda whipsnake
Conflict with local policies/plans	None	None	None	None

COORDINATION WITH PUBLIC AND OTHER AGENCIES

NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND SCOPING

“Scoping” is the process of determining the scope, focus, and content of an environmental document. The scoping process allows agencies and other interested parties to provide input on the proposed project, range of alternatives, topics being evaluated, environmental effects, methods of assessment, and mitigation measures being considered.

Scoping for this project included the use of several channels of communication, including the Notice of Preparation (NOP), mailers, internet, and newspaper ads. In addition, two public scoping meetings were held to solicit comments from agencies and the community. All efforts were conducted to meet Caltrans Title VI goals to prevent discrimination. The scoping meetings were held on Wednesday, October 3, 2012 at Hearst Elementary School in Pleasanton between 6:30 PM and 8:30 PM and on Thursday, October 4, 2012 at Chadbourne Elementary School in Fremont from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM.

A Public Attendee Observation Tally Sheet was completed by Caltrans staff for each scoping meeting. The tally sheet is used to obtain statistical data on the people attending the meetings. Observation on gender, ethnicity, disabilities, and age were made and documented. Based on personal observation and the information recorded on the tally sheets, a total of 22 people attended both meetings; 5 females and 17 males, of which, all were non-Hispanic ethnicity. No attendees had a physical disability. All attendees were over the age of 40 except for one individual.

The scoping meetings were organized in open house format, with informational stations displaying exhibit boards staffed by representatives from Caltrans, Alameda CTC and its consultant staff. The exhibit boards portrayed the following subjects: project map, description of proposed project, how express lanes work, express lane access options being studied, the environmental process, environmental studies to be performed, project timeline, and proposed improvements throughout the I-680 corridor. The public was encouraged to ask questions and to fill out and submit comment sheets at the meeting, or by mail or e-mail before the close of the scoping period (October 16, 2012).

A total of 20 comments were submitted at the meetings, by mail, or by email. Meeting attendees also provided verbal comments to the project team. Additionally, two letters were received from local agencies, including the Alameda County Water District and the City of Pleasanton. Common issues raised during the scoping process included aesthetics, air and water quality, the environmental document, the auxiliary lanes, noise, funding, timeline, safety, and traffic. Relevant CEQA and NEPA-related comments are addressed in **Chapter 2.0, Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures** and **Chapter 3.0, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Evaluation** of this EIR/EA.

The concern of downstream traffic, air quality, and noise, impacts, as well as traffic congestion along and through Pleasanton was raised by the City of Pleasanton during the scoping process. The evaluation of downstream impacts and effects on the local circulation system within Pleasanton has been evaluated and is presented in **Chapter 4.0, Comments and Coordination.**

CIRCULATION OF THE DRAFT EIR/EA

The public review period of the draft EIR/EA started November 20, 2014 and ended January 23, 2015. Information on this project was presented at the following public meetings during the 60-day public review period:

JANUARY 8, 2015 6:30-8:30 PM
Mission High School
41717 Palm Avenue
Fremont, CA 94539

JANUARY 13, 2015 6:30-8:30 PM
Hearst Elementary School
5301 Case Avenue
Pleasanton, CA 94566

The intent of the public meetings was to solicit comments and receive input from the public and agencies on the environmental analyses and conclusions presented in the draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Environmental Assessment (EA) document. Two public meetings were held in order to serve the geographic extent of the project; both meetings presented the same information.

Ten members of the public signed in at the Fremont meeting, and six members of the public signed in at the Pleasanton meeting. The public open forum hearings utilized an open house format, allowing members of the public to speak to, and ask questions of, the project team. During the open forum hearing, attendees were invited to move around the room, viewing informational exhibits and a map of the corridor while expressing comments and concerns to project team members. Attendees were also encouraged to submit written comments and/or provide testimony to a court reporter. In addition to the stations, layout sheets of the entire project alignment in aerial representation were provided in the center of the room for viewing purposes. These layout sheets included projected noise barrier locations and sound walls.

One written comment was received at each meeting. Two verbal comments were submitted during the Fremont meeting, and none during the Pleasanton meeting. The concerns raised included the timeline for the project and the labeling of signs in Fremont. Two comments expressed general support for the project. Copies of the written comments received during the meeting and transcripts of the verbal comments are included in **Section 4.2.2, Responses to Comments.**

NECESSARY PERMITS AND APPROVALS

Table S-3 identifies the permits/approvals that would be required for project construction.

Table S-3 Permits and Approvals

Agency	Permit/Approval	Status
United States Army Corps of Engineers	Section 404 Permit – Nationwide	To be issued during the final design phase
United States Fish and Wildlife Service	Biological Opinion	Issued July 14, 2015
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement	To be issued during the final design phase
	Incidental Take Permit (ITP)	To be issued during final design phase
Regional Water Quality Control Board	Section 401 Certification	To be issued during the final design phase
State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)	Concurrence on Eligibility Determinations/Finding of No Adverse Effect with Standard Conditions – Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA)	Concurrence issued January 13, 2014
Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Air Quality Conformity Task Force/ Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)	Regional Air Quality Conformity	MTC Determination July 18, 2013 FHWA Determination August 12, 2013
	Project-Level Air Quality Conformity	Caltrans sent out to FHWA February 9, 2015 FHWA Conformity received by Caltrans April 14, 2015
Department of Conservation	Notification of Public Acquisition of Williamson Act Land	Notification Letter Sent by Caltrans October 30, 2014

Source: Circlepoint, 2015