



CONTRA COSTA  
**transportation  
authority**

## **Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report and Notice of a Public Scoping Meeting**

**Date** April 24, 2014

**To** Interested Agencies, Organizations, and Individuals

**Subject** Preparation of Draft Environmental Impact Report for the 2014 Update to the Contra Costa Countywide Comprehensive Transportation Plan

**Lead Agency** Contra Costa Transportation Authority

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The Contra Costa Transportation Authority (the Authority) is preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the 2014 Countywide Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP). The 2014 CTP is described further below and is also referred to as the “proposed Project”.

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. This notice is being sent to Responsible Agencies and other interested parties.

The project description, location, and potential environmental effects are included below.

## Comments

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) requests comments on the scope and content of the EIR. The EIR will address the potential physical, environmental effects for 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.

Per CEQA Guidelines, responses to this NOP must be sent no later than 30 days after receipt of this notice, and should be received by the Authority by 5:00 pm on May 27, 2014.

Written comments and questions should be directed in writing to Brad Beck, Senior Transportation Planner, by email at [bbeck@ccta.net](mailto:bbeck@ccta.net) or CCTA, 2999 Oak Road, Suite 100, Walnut Creek, CA, 94597.

## Public Scoping Meeting

A public scoping meeting will be held to receive oral comments concerning the scope of the EIR. The meeting will be held at 4:00 pm on May 15, 2014 at the Authority offices (2999 Oak Road, Suite 100, Walnut Creek CA 94597).

## Project Location

The 2014 CTP will cover 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**.

## Project Description

The Authority was established in April 1989 to implement the Measure C Transportation Improvement and Growth Management Program (GMP) passed by voters in November 1988. Measure C included an Expenditure Plan for allocating revenues from the collection of a one-half percent sales tax to a variety of projects and programs. Those projects and programs include 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.

The Expenditure Plan included funds for “Regional Transportation Planning and Growth Management” and a GMP “to be met by local jurisdictions for receipt of

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local street maintenance and improvements funding.” The Measure C GMP established eight requirements that local jurisdictions must meet. One of these was the requirement to participate in cooperative, multi-jurisdictional planning. This planning process was to occur on a countywide and sub-regional basis and was to maintain local authority over land use decisions and the establishment of performance standards. This process relies on the Regional Transportation Planning Committees (RTPCs), whose member jurisdictions work together to prepare and implement the Action Plans for Routes of Regional Significance, one of the key components of this cooperative planning process.

In 2004, the voters of Contra Costa approved Measure J, which extended the half percent sales tax from 2009 through 2034. The new measure continued its support for maintaining and improving transportation facilities in Contra Costa as well as transit, paratransit, and express bus service. Measure J also continued the requirement for local involvement in multi-jurisdictional planning, including the development and implementation of Action Plans.

As part of its Measure C and subsequent Measure J responsibilities, the Authority must prepare a countywide Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) to “support efforts to develop and maintain an ongoing planning process with the cities and the county.” The CTP is intended to provide the overall direction and a coordinated approach for achieving and maintaining a balanced and functional transportation system within the county while strengthening links between land use decisions and transportation. It outlines the Authority's vision for Contra Costa and its transportation system, and the goals, strategies, projects and other actions for achieving that vision. It also identifies potential projects for maintaining, expanding and operating the transportation network in Contra Costa.

The 2014 CTP will be the fourth major update since it was first adopted in 1995. The 1995 CTP established the overall direction of the Authority's transportation and growth management activities, knitting together Action Plans prepared by the RTPCs and building on the requirements of the Measure C GMP. The 2000 CTP further refined the Authority's vision, goals, and recommended strategies, and built on the refinements to the Action Plans carried out in 1999 and 2000. The 2004 CTP kept the goals and strategies of the previous CTP and focused primarily on the development of an Expenditure Plan for the proposed Measure J, which was passed by the voters in November of 2004. The 2009 CTP focused on updating the vision, goals, trends, and strategies in light of the beginning of Measure J.

Similar to the last update, the 2014 CTP will update the demographic, economic, and transportation trends in the Project Area and the vision, goals and strategies for achieving these goals. The draft vision, goals and strategies are included as

**Attachment B.** The proposed Project will also include updates of the five sub-regional Action Plans, which will include changes to designated Routes of Regional Significance and new or revised Multimodal Transportation Service Objectives (MTSOs), actions to achieve those MTSOs and responsibilities for implementing those actions.

Finally, the 2014 CTP will incorporate an updated set of transportation projects, the Comprehensive Transportation Project List (CTPL). The CTPL included in the proposed Project is modest in scale, relative to past CTPs. It will contain a larger proportion of smaller local projects that enhance livability and ease of circulation. Many of the major projects in past CTPs, such as the fourth bore of the Caldecott Tunnel and the expansion of State Route 4, have been completed or are in the process of being completed. Some major projects, such as the improvement of the I-680/SR 4 interchange, the Tri-Link (SR 239) connection from Brentwood to Tracy, and the further extension of eBART, remain part of the CTPL, however.

## Scope of the Environmental Impact Report

The projects in the CTPL, as well as proposed programs, measures, projects and other actions called for in the Action Plans, may directly or indirectly affect the physical environment, and consequently require analysis per the CEQA guidelines.

## ENVIRONMENTAL TOPICS TO BE COVERED

Key environmental issues identified for analysis in this EIR include: transportation, air quality, energy, geology and seismicity, biological resources, hydrology and water resources, visual resources, noise, cultural resources, hazards and hazardous materials, population growth and land use (which includes impacts on housing and agriculture), and greenhouse gas emissions. It is not anticipated that the proposed Project would have any impacts on mineral resources, public services, or utilities/service systems. An Initial Study is not required, and has not been prepared.

## SCALE AND APPROACH OF THE EIR

The EIR for the 2014 CTP, including the proposed Action Plan Updates, will be prepared as a program EIR. That is, the EIR will consider the CTP as a single project and will evaluate its impacts at a regional, cumulative level. Furthermore, many of the transportation programs and actions contained in the CTP remain at a general level until fully funded and currently lack concrete details.

Consequently, individual transportation projects within the CTP which may have an impact on the physical environment will be subject to an additional, project-level CEQA review to determine localized impacts once the projects are more clearly defined and more detailed studies prepared.

The Authority expects to prepare a Supplemental EIR (SEIR). This approach is justified because of (1) the programmatic nature of the environmental assessment, (2) the great level of detail in the EIR for the 2009 CTP, particularly the existing conditions and physical setting sections, (3) the modest scale of the projects in the 2014 CTP, and (4) the relatively modest changes in the physical and regulatory situation since 2009.

An SEIR would follow the same process as a full EIR but will result in a smaller document by focusing on updating information only for those sections where changes have occurred in physical settings or regulations. It is anticipated that the SEIR will cover transportation, land use, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and noise in detail. All other topic areas will be reviewed for changes in settings, and the set of projects in the 2014 CTP will be examined to ensure they do not create impacts in locations or ways not studied previously.

The Authority is considering different thresholds of significance for some environmental topics from those used in the 2009 CTP EIR. These potential thresholds are shown in **Attachment C**. The thresholds for land use, air quality and greenhouse gas emissions could be aligned with those used in the Plan Bay Area EIR. These thresholds represent the latest analyses on these topics and would help ensure that the Authority's actions are in line with regional strategy set by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. New or changed thresholds would require an updated analysis of impacts from the 2009 EIR.

### **ANTICIPATED SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS**

It is anticipated that the 2014 CTP may result in the following significant impacts:

- 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

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- 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**

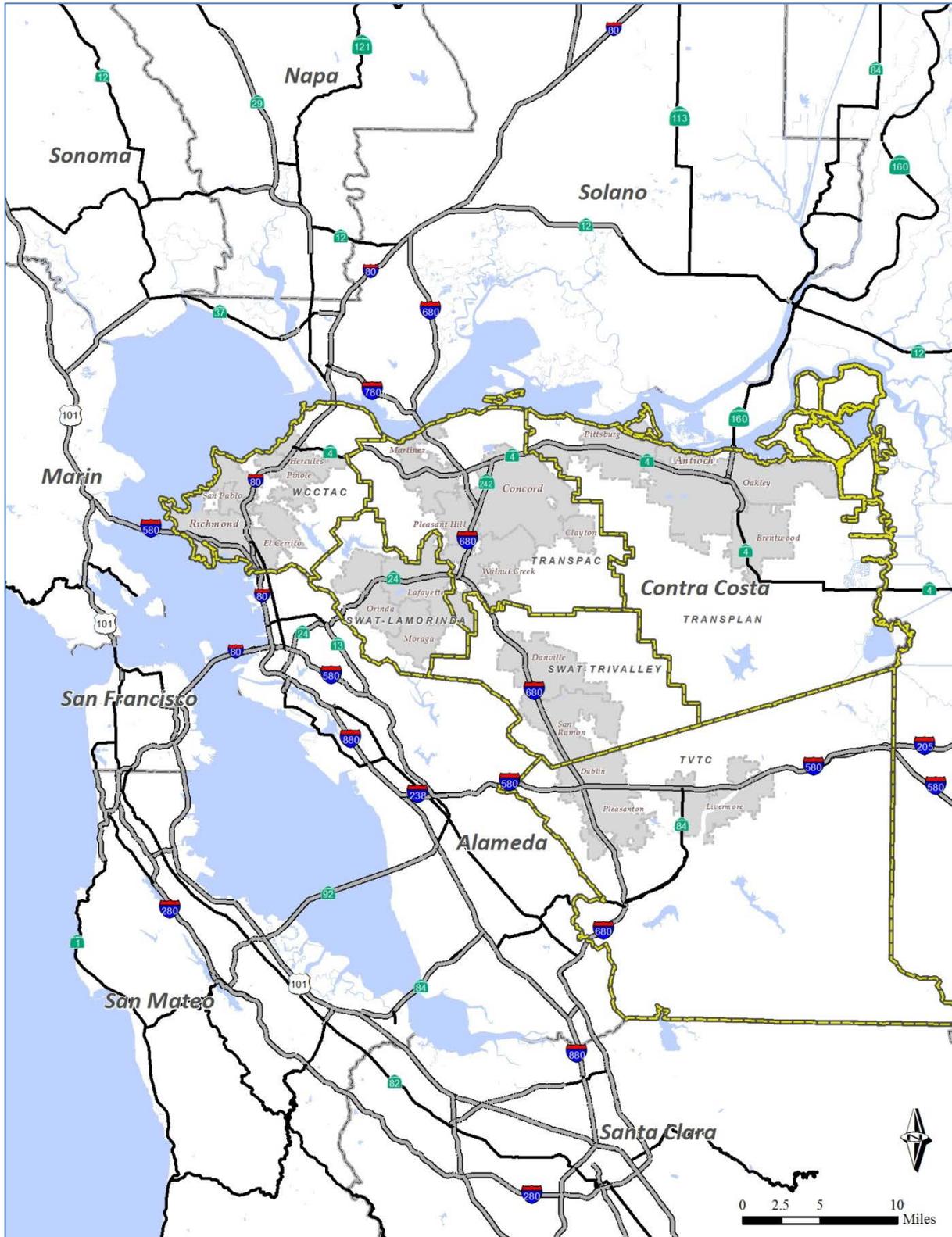
The Authority, as Lead Agency, will review and consider responses to this NOP and may adjust the scope of environmental issues to be evaluated in the EIR.

The Authority is planning to complete the draft CTP in July 2014, and will release the Draft EIR shortly thereafter. When the Draft 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 EIR.

The Authority will review and consider the comments received on the Draft EIR and may subsequently make adjustments to the EIR and/or the CTP. The Authority will also respond in writing to any comments received on the Draft EIR. These changes and responses, along with the comment letters, will be published as the Final EIR, incorporating the Draft EIR by reference.

The Final EIR will be considered and, if deemed adequate, certified at a public hearing of the Authority Board. This hearing is expected to occur in autumn 2014. Once the EIR is certified, the proposed Project can be approved and adopted by the Authority Board.

# Attachment A: Regional Setting



## **ATTACHMENT B:**

### **Draft Vision, Goals and Strategies, 2014 CTP**

*As revised by the Authority — 16 April 2014*

Revisions from the 2009 Plan are shown in redline/strikethrough format.

#### **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 for the 2014 CTP

### REFLECTS AUTHORITY REVISIONS – APRIL 16, 2014

The Authority will rely on a number of strategies to achieve these goals. The strategies, and the goals they will implement, are presented below.

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**1. ~~Enhance the~~ Support the efficient and reliable movement of people and goods on highways and arterial roads using all available travel modes.**

- 1.1 Increase the ~~capacity efficiency~~ of existing highways and arterial roads through capital investments, ~~and~~ operational enhancements, and use of technology.
  - 1.2 Work with jurisdictions and other agencies to identify and implement strategies for managing congestion and increasing multi-modal mobility.
  - 1.3 Define and close gaps in the existing highway and arterial system, including gaps in the regional express lane and high-occupancy vehicle lane networks.
  - 1.4 Improve the highway and arterial system ~~consistent with~~ according to a countywide plan consistent with the General Plans of local jurisdictions to influence the location and nature of anticipated growth.
  - 1.5 Identify new strategies to improve freight movement on freeways and rail lines to improve air quality and the safety and efficiency of shipping goods movement.
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**2. ~~Manage the impacts of growth to sustain Contra Costa's economy, and preserve its environment and support its communities.~~**

- 2.1 Continue to Require cooperative transportation and land use planning among Contra Costa County, cities, towns, and transportation agencies.
- 2.2 Work to maintain and expand partnerships to achieve the Authority's goals.

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- 2.3 Participate in a regional cooperative land use planning process with agencies both within and outside of Contra Costa.
  - 2.4 Support land use patterns within Contra Costa that make more efficient use of the transportation system, consistent with the General Plans of local jurisdictions.
  - 2.5 Require local jurisdictions to (i) evaluate and report on the impacts of their 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 and multi-modal improvements, and (iii) have new growth pay its fair share of the cost of such improvements.
  - 2.6 Link transportation investments to support (i) a voter-approved urban limit line endorsed by the County and each city and town, (ii) new developments which enhance transportation efficiency and economic vitality, and (iii) infill and redevelopment in existing urban and brownfields areas.
  - 2.7 Work within Contra Costa and the region to ensure that new transportation projects are fiscally viable and are environmentally sustainable ~~promote a healthy environment, while respecting~~ community character and ~~maintaining or enhancing~~ the quality of life of our communities.
  - 2.8 Work with local jurisdictions and other agencies to develop a connected and coordinated network for alternative fuel vehicles.
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**3. ~~Provide and e~~Expand safe, convenient and affordable alternatives to the single-occupant automobile vehicle.**

- 3.1 Help fund the expansion of existing transit services and regional express lanes that support transit service, and maintenance of existing operations, including BART, bus transit, school buses, and paratransit.

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- 3.2 Link transit investments to increased coordination and integration of public transit services, and improved connections between travel modes.
  - 3.3 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.
  - 3.4 Support transit-oriented and pedestrian-friendly developments.
  - 3.5 Invest in trails, walkways, and pedestrian-oriented improvements.
  - 3.6 Promote formation of more carpools and vanpools, and greater use of transit, bicycling, and walking.
  - 3.7 Support the expansion of a coordinated system of 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, whether or not they reside in a “community of concern” as defined by MTC and ABAG.
  - 3.8 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.
  - 3.9 Support congestion pricing and parking pricing programs, transportation demand management programs and other innovative strategies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
  - 3.10 Support Safe Routes to Schools projects and programs.
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**4. Maintain the transportation system.**

- 4.1 Advocate for stable sources of funds for transit operations and other programs that support the transportation system.

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- 4.2 Require programs for effective preventive maintenance and rehabilitation of the transportation system.
  - 4.3 Provide funding to reduce the backlog of transportation rehabilitation and maintenance needs and other projects and programs that will sustain the transportation system.
  - 4.4 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.
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**5. Continue to invest wisely to maximize the benefits of available funding.**

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

## ATTACHMENT C:

### Draft Thresholds of Significance, 2014 CTP EIR

This attachment shows the proposed thresholds of significance for the 2014 CTP EIR, highlighting potential changes from the 2009 CTP EIR. Topic areas are listed in the order they appear in the 2009 CTP EIR. Revisions from the 2009 CTP EIR are shown in redline/strikethrough format.

### Transportation and Circulation

In addition to the changes proposed below, each criterion in the 2014 CTP EIR may need to define what constitutes an “appreciable” change. For example, “an appreciable increase in VMT” might be defined as 5 percent. Any quantified criteria will be accompanied by a justification.

The Authority is also considering criteria to address topics such as return-on-investment and the equity of transportation investments. One option is for these criteria to not be used as thresholds of significance, but to be part of the EIR’s evaluation of alternatives to the proposed CTP. Possible criteria include:

- *Implementation of the CTP would have potentially significant adverse impacts if it results in an appreciable decrease in the proportion of the population residing within a 30-minute transit ride of a major employment center.*
- *Implementation of the CTP would have potentially significant adverse impacts if it results in an appreciable increase in vehicle hours of delay per lane mile.*

Finally, a new criterion to measure VMT is proposed, while the 2009 criteria addressing single-occupancy vehicles (SOV) are proposed to be combined.

The proposed 2014 CTP EIR thresholds for traffic and circulation are as follows:

- *Criterion 1: **Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) at LOS F.** Implementation of the CTP would have a potentially significant adverse impact if it results in an appreciable increase in VMT at LOS F compared to existing condition (LOS F defines a condition on roads where traffic substantially exceeds capacity, resulting in very low speeds and stop and go conditions for extended periods of time).*

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- *NEW – Criterion 2: **Total VMT**. Implementation of the CTP would have a potentially significant adverse impact if it results in an appreciable increase in total per capita VMT compared to existing conditions.*
- *Criterion 23: ~~Vehicle Hours Traveled (VHT)~~. **Average Travel Time**. Implementation of the CTP would have an adverse impact if it results in an appreciable increase in average travel time for commute trips by each of the major travel modes. ~~the overall vehicle hours traveled increase compared to existing conditions.~~*
- *Criterion 34: **Average Speeds**. Implementation of the CTP would have potentially significant impacts if it results in an appreciable decrease in average speeds on freeways and on expressways/major arterials as compared to existing conditions.*
- *Criterion 45: ~~Transit~~ **Non-SOV Mode Share**. Implementation of the CTP would have potential significant adverse impacts if it results in an appreciable decrease in ~~transit-mode shares~~ for transit, HOV, and other non-SOV modes as compared to existing conditions.*
- *Criterion 5: ~~Total Number of SOV Vehicle Trips~~. Implementation of the 2009 CTP would have a potentially significant adverse impact if it results in an increased number of vehicle trips compared to existing conditions.*
- *Criterion 6: **Transit Ridership**. Implementation of the CTP would have potentially significant adverse impact if it results in an appreciable decrease in transit ridership as compared to existing conditions.*

## Air Quality

~~According to CEQA Guidelines, a project may be found to have a significant impact if it would “violate any ambient air quality standard, contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation, or expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations” (State CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G). In its December 1999 CEQA Guidelines, the BAAQMD identifies potential impacts from both the construction and operation of projects that could be found to be significant (while the BAAQMD guidelines discuss thresholds of significance for plans, those thresholds generally refer to local land use plans rather the transportation projects and programs outlined in a transportation plan such as the 2009 CTP Update).~~

~~The BAAQMD thresholds for construction impacts refer to short term increases in PM-10, while the “project operation” thresholds refer to local carbon monoxide concentrations, total emissions, and odors.~~

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For the analysis of impacts of the CTP, this EIR assesses the significance of foreseeable changes in various air quality indicators that would occur under the CTP. One such indicator is vehicular emissions, and this section compares vehicular emissions between existing conditions for the year ~~2007~~2014 and future conditions with and without the project for the year ~~2030~~2035.

The following significance criteria are used to assess whether proposed improvements in the CTP would have a significant adverse effect on air quality for criteria air pollutants:

- *NEW – Criterion 1: The CTP would be considered to have a significant impact if it fundamentally conflicts with the primary goals of the Bay Area Clean Air Plan (CAP) or interferes with implementation of applicable CAP control measures.*
- *Criterion ~~12~~: The CTP would be considered to have a significant impact if construction emissions associated with associated projects would ~~lead~~be expected to contribute substantially to local violations of the ambient air quality standards.*
- *Criterion ~~23~~: Implementation of the CTP would have a potentially significant impact if it would result in a ~~cumulatively considerable~~ net increase in emissions of ROG, NOx, PM-10, PM-2.5 and CO from on-road mobile sources compared to existing/projected conditions. This assessment will be based on the potential for encouraging increased vehicle use contrasted with decreased congestion.*
- *Criterion ~~34~~: Implementation of the CTP would have a significant impact if it would result in a ~~cumulatively considerable~~ net increase in emissions of exposure level of sensitive receptors to diesel particulate matter (DPM) from on-road mobile sources compared to existing/projected conditions. This assessment will be based on estimated percent increase or decrease given the potential for encouraging more vehicle use contrasted with decreased congestion.*

## Energy

CEQA requires that EIRs include a discussion of the potential energy impacts of proposed projects, with particular emphasis on avoiding or reducing inefficient, wasteful and unnecessary consumption of energy. Given that, the below adjustment to Energy Criterion 1 would better measure efficiency of the transportation system in the proposed Plan:

- *Criterion 1: Results in a greater than 5 percent increase in per capita transportation energy consumption compared to existing conditions.*

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- *Criterion 2: Conflicts with adopted plans or policies related to energy conservation.*

## **Geology and Seismicity**

No changes proposed from 2009 CTP EIR thresholds.

- *Criterion 1: Would increase the exposure of people or structures to potential damaging geologic forces resulting in increased risk of property loss, injury, or death involving:*
  - *Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Fault Rupture Hazard Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault;*
  - *Strong seismic ground shaking;*
  - *Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction; and*
  - *Landslides.*
- *Criterion 2: Would substantially increase soil erosion or topsoil loss.*
- *Criterion 3: Would be located on expansive soils (high shrink-swell potential), as defined in Section 1802A.3.2 of the 2007 California Building Code, or on weak, unconsolidated soils creating substantial risks to life or property.*

## **Biological Resources**

The California Department of Fish & Game (CDFG) is now the California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW). Otherwise no changes proposed from 2009 CTP EIR thresholds.

- *Criterion 1: Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS;*
- *Criterion 2: Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS;*

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- *Criterion 3: Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means;*
- *Criterion 4: Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites;*
- *Criterion 5: Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance; or*
- *Criterion 6: Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan.*

In addition to the above, CDFWG and USFWS guidelines consider a project to have a significant impact if it were to cause a change in species composition or result in the measurable degradation of sensitive habitats such as wetlands, oak woodlands, and/or perennial grasslands.

## **Hydrology and Water Resources**

No changes proposed from 2009 CTP EIR thresholds.

- *Criterion 1: Violate any water quality standard or waste discharge requirement.*
- *Criterion 2: Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted).*
- *Criterion 3: Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or project area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner that would cause substantial erosion and sedimentation on- or off-site.*
- *Criterion 4: Create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff.*
- *Criterion 5: Otherwise substantially degrade water quality.*

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- *Criterion 6: Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows.*

Criterion 7: Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam.

## Visual Resources

No changes proposed from 2009 CTP EIR thresholds.

- *Criterion 1: Block panoramic views or views of significant features or landforms (mountains, bays, rivers or significant human-made structures), as seen from the transportation facility or from the surrounding area;*
- *Criterion 2: Substantially damage scenic resources (such as trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings) that would alter the appearance of or from state- or county-designated or eligible scenic highways;*
- *Criterion 3: Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings;*
- *Criterion 4: Add a visual element that is incongruous with the existing character of an area; or*
- *Criterion 5: Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.*

## Noise

Minor clarifications as shown below:

- *Criterion 1: Construction noise levels or groundborne vibration that would lead to a violation of the standards contained within the General Plans and noise ordinances of applicable jurisdictions (cities, towns, ~~and~~ Contra Costa County and Alameda County).*
- *Criterion 2: Highway noise levels that approach or exceed the FHWA Noise Abatement Criteria or increase substantially above existing levels (a 3.0 dBA change would be considered noticeable). A noise level is defined as "approaching" if it is within 1 dB of the applicable criterion. Generally, a 100 percent increase in traffic volume approximately results in a 3.0 dBA increase in noise.*

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- *Criterion 3: Transit noise levels that increase by more than the allowable noise exposure permitted under the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) criteria, as shown in Table 2.8-4. These criteria are intended to apply to noise-sensitive uses, such as residences and schools, rather than commercial or industrial areas.*

## Cultural Resources

No changes proposed from 2009 CTP EIR thresholds.

- *Criterion 1: Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5;*
- *Criterion 2: Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5;*
- *Criterion 3: Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature; or*
- *Criterion 4: Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.*

## Hazardous Materials

No changes proposed from 2009 CTP EIR thresholds.

- *Criterion 1: Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.*
- *Criterion 2: Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset or accident conditions involving their release into the environment.*
- *Criterion 3: Emit hazardous emissions or involve the handling of hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school.*
- *Criterion 4: Be located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, and as a result, create a significant hazard to the public or environment.*

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- *Criterion 5: Result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in a project area that is located within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport.*
- *Criterion 6: Result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area within the vicinity of a private airstrip.*
- *Criterion 7: Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response or evacuation plan.*
- *Criterion 8: Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands.*

## **Land Use/Housing**

No changes proposed from 2009 CTP EIR thresholds.

- *Criterion 1: Converts substantial amounts of important agricultural lands and open space (Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance) to nonagricultural use. Such conversion from agricultural use would be significant whether or not the proposed Project is consistent with local or regional plans.*
- *Criterion 2: Disrupts, divides or displaces substantial numbers of existing residential or business uses.*
- *Criterion 3: Conflicts substantially with the land use portion of adopted local general plans or other applicable land use plans, including specific plans, existing zoning, or Williamson Act contracts. A potentially significant impact would also be identified if transportation projects would substantially influence future land use patterns and development contrary to adopted plans.*

## **Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change**

Expectations in analysis of GHG and response to sea level rise have changed since the 2009 CTP EIR. The State has continued to clarify its expectation of CEQA analysis, best practices have focused more on quantitative measurement, and MTC/ABAG's Plan Bay Area has been developed and adopted. Consequently, the Authority is considering totally re-setting the thresholds of significance for GHG and climate change:

~~Guidance documents, such as the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association's white paper "CEQA & Climate Change: Evaluating and Addressing Greenhouse Gas~~

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Emissions from Projects Subject to the California Environmental Quality Act” (January 2008), suggest that there are three reasonable approaches to evaluating the significance of the impacts of project related greenhouse gas emissions:

- ~~a “no set threshold” approach, wherein the lead agency determines there are sufficient reasons to not specify a universal threshold for GHG emissions, and instead requires analysis on a project-by-project basis;~~
- ~~a “zero emissions” threshold, wherein all projects under the lead agency must quantify and mitigate GHG emissions regardless of the size of the project, or prepare EIRs to disclose the unmitigable significant impact; or~~
- ~~a “non-zero” threshold, wherein the lead agency decides that there are certain GHG emissions sources that are so small they will not contribute substantially to the global GHG problem, and sets thresholds of significance, or a de minimus value for cumulative impact.~~

Using a “zero” threshold approach, the following significance criterion has been applied:

- ~~Criterion 1: Implementation of the 2009 CTP would have a potentially significant adverse impact if the projects and actions in it would result in any increase in CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions compared to existing conditions.~~

[ The following introductory paragraph and criteria are new ]

BAAQMD has suggested a GHG threshold of significance for regional transportation plans of no net increase. While the ability of BAAQMD to implement its proposed thresholds is currently working its way through the courts, these would replace the thresholds in their 1999 CEQA Guidelines document, which did not include thresholds specific to regional transportation plans. Plan Bay Area and the region’s CARB goals also suggest using this threshold in addition to the others listed below for this analysis:

- *Criterion 1: Result in an increase in per capita passenger vehicle and light duty truck GHG emissions in 2020 or 2035 as compared to 2005 baseline.*
- *Criterion 2: Result in a net increase in direct and indirect GHG emissions in 2040 when compared to existing conditions.*
- *Criterion 3: Substantially conflict with the attainment of the goals or implementation strategy of Plan Bay Area, which serves as the regional sustainable communities strategy required under SB 375. Potentially significant impacts include transportation investments that would encourage land development in locations not supported in Plan Bay Area, or which would impede transit use within Priority Development Areas.*

Attachment C — Draft Thresholds of Significance  
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- *Criterion 4: Substantially impede attainment of goals set forth in Executive Order S-3-05 and Executive Order B-16-2012.*
- *Criterion 5: Substantially conflict with any other applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs.*
- *Criterion 6: Result in a net increase in transportation investments within areas regularly inundated by sea level rise by midcentury.*