



CONTRA COSTA  
**transportation  
authority**

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February 17, 2012

Dear Interested Community Member:

The I-680/Norris Canyon HOV Direct Ramps Project is part of a regional plan to improve mobility in the I-680 corridor. Partially funded by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) Measure J half-cent sales tax, the purpose of the project is to promote carpooling, vanpooling and transit use by improving High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) freeway access into and out of San Ramon. HOVs include buses, carpools and vanpools.

We are in the beginning phase of the project development and environmental review process that will take place over the next year and a half. Members of the public are encouraged to participate in a series of three public workshops to be held over the next twelve months. Each workshop will provide community members the opportunity to learn more about the proposed project and environmental review process, provide an opportunity to give feedback about issues of concern, and discuss potential alternatives to be studied. The first workshop is being planned for Spring 2012, followed by workshops in Fall 2012 and Winter 2013.

Please refer to the enclosed project information sheet and frequently asked questions for more information and how to get involved.

You can also call CCTA at (925) 256-4700, visit us online at [www.ccta.net](http://www.ccta.net) or email [norriscanyonhovproject@gmail.com](mailto:norriscanyonhovproject@gmail.com) to ask questions, request information, or to be added to our project mailing list.

Thank you.

Susan H. Miller  
Director, Projects

Attachments

## I-680/NORRIS CANYON HOV DIRECT RAMPS PROJECT

### WHAT IS THE NORRIS CANYON HOV PROJECT?

The Norris Canyon HOV Project is part of a regional plan to improve mobility in the I-680 corridor. Funded by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority Measure J Expenditure Plan, the project will bring High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane access to residents of San Ramon. HOVs include buses, carpools and vanpools.

### WHY HOV?

The goal of the proposed Norris Canyon HOV Project is to provide several improvements to our existing transportation infrastructure, including:

- Direct access for transit vehicles and HOVs to and from San Ramon destinations, including the San Ramon Transit Center
- Reduced weaving across multiple freeway lanes by transit vehicles and HOVs entering or exiting the freeway
- Improved travel times for transit vehicles and HOVs
- Improved local and regional transit/HOV links
- Project is consistent with local and regional transportation plans and planned HOV improvements in the I-680 corridor

Let's Get Involved!



### SCOPING MEETING

Held Nov. 29

### WORKSHOP 1

- Project and process overview
- Information on comments received and how they will be addressed

### WORKSHOP 2

- Issues of concern to address
- Technical report information
- Findings on areas of concern
- Alternatives

## ONGOING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Spring 2010

Fall 2011

Spring 2012

Fall 2012

## ONGOING ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

### PROJECT STUDY REPORT

An engineering planning document that confirms the scope, schedule and estimated cost of a project.

A Project Study Report (PSR) does not approve a project for construction.

### PROJECT SCOPING

A public process where agencies and the public are invited to help identify the range of issues to be considered in an environmental document for a proposed project. Scoping does not result in the ultimate decision about a project or selection of an alternative.

### ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNICAL STUDIES

The various studies undertaken as part of the environmental review process to address issues such as traffic, environment and project alternatives. The period of environmental technical studies for the Norris Canyon HOV Project will continue until the Draft ED is published for public review in spring 2013. The results of these studies are incorporated into the Draft and Final ED.

### PROJECT AREA:



- ★ General Area for Proposed HOV On- and Off-Ramps
- San Ramon Transit Center

### HOW DOES THE PROCESS WORK?

The Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) is project sponsor for the environmental process. The Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is the lead agency for the Environmental Document, and the City of San Ramon is a supporting partner agency. Together, they completed a Project Study Report (PSR) for the Norris Canyon HOV Project in March 2010. A PSR does not approve a project for construction. A project scoping meeting was held in November 2011 to provide information about the proposed project and receive public input on the issues to study during the environmental process.

The next steps in the process involve conducting environmental technical studies and preparing a Draft Environmental Document (ED) for public review in spring 2013. A Final ED is anticipated to be published in summer 2013. Following approval of the Environmental Document and project design, construction of the estimated \$102 Million project would take place from winter 2016 to fall 2017, pending funding availability.

# I-680/NORRIS CANYON HOV DIRECT RAMPS PROJECT

## HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

Conducting an open and transparent process that provides multiple opportunities for community involvement is a key goal of the project. Members of the public are encouraged to participate during a series of three public workshops to be held over the next year.

The purpose of these workshops will be for community members to learn more about the proposed project and environmental review process, provide an opportunity to give feedback about issues of concern, and discuss potential alternatives to be studied. The first workshop is being planned for spring 2012, followed by workshops in fall 2012 and winter 2013.

## WHERE CAN I GO FOR MORE INFORMATION?

Call the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA): **(925) 256-4700**

Go to: **www.ccta.net**

Email: **norriscanyonhovproject@gmail.com** to ask questions, request information, or be added to our project mailing list.



## PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD

Public review of the Draft ED for the Project will last approximately **45 days**. During this time, members of the public are encouraged to review the Draft ED and submit written comments.

## PUBLIC MEETING

A public hearing to discuss the Draft ED will be held during the public review period, allowing time for additional public comments to be submitted prior to publishing the Final ED.

## ONGOING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Summer/Fall 2013

Spring/Summer 2013

## ONGOING ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

### ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNICAL STUDIES

#### KEY ISSUES TO ADDRESS:

- HOV/Transit
- Bike & Pedestrian Safety
- Environment
- Traffic
- Project Alternatives

### DRAFT ED

The purpose of the Draft Environmental Document (ED) is to identify and analyze any environmental impacts that may result from the alternatives, including impacts to traffic, air quality and noise; whether they are potentially adverse or beneficial, and allow for the public to review and comment on the document. Measures to mitigate adverse environmental impacts are also studied in the Draft ED.

### PUBLIC/AGENCY REVIEW OF DRAFT ED

Comments received after the Public Meeting or during the Public Review Period are analyzed and incorporated into the Draft ED.

### FINAL ED

After the public comment period for the Draft ED, the next step is to prepare the Final ED. The Final ED addresses and responds to all of the comments received on the Draft ED. In addition, the Final ED must also define the "Preferred Alternative" that the lead agency recommends among all the alternatives considered. The chosen alternative is the one that meets the project's purpose and need.



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## WORKSHOP 3

- ° Explore project alternatives
- ° Prepare for Draft ED

Winter 2013

## I-680/ Norris Canyon HOV Direct Ramps Project

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Why is a project like this being considered?**

In 2004, Contra Costa voters approved Measure J, which continued the Contra Costa half-cent transportation sales tax program to 2035. The Measure was approved by 67 percent among those who voted in San Ramon. The Measure J Expenditure Plan includes a project titled I-680 Carpool Lane Gap Closure/Transit Corridor Improvements. This project will provide funding for significant improvements along the I-680 corridor. An I-680 Investment Options study completed in 2003 identified the I-680 project to be beneficial to improvements along the I-680 corridor. One component of the improvements is the addition of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) access to I-680 for travelers in San Ramon. HOVs include buses, carpools and vanpools.

#### **What will this project do?**

The purpose of the project is to promote and facilitate carpooling, vanpooling and transit use by improving freeway access for transit and HOVs traveling into and out of San Ramon. Residents and commuters will have access to the HOV ramps. The project is consistent with the intent of State Legislation (SB 375) to reduce green house gas emissions, and vehicle congestion, improve air quality and increase the use of HOVs. The Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) and the City of San Ramon also encourage carpooling, vanpooling and the use of transit as ways to reduce congestion on local roadways, improve air quality, reduce fuel consumption and improve the overall quality of life in our communities. In addition, the project may enhance west-east connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists if the Norris Canyon alternative is built.

#### **Who is working on this project and what are their roles?**

The CCTA is the project sponsor, and is working in cooperation with the Department of Transportation (Caltrans), who is the lead agency for the Environmental Document. The City of San Ramon is a partner agency facilitating the public outreach effort.

#### **Has the project already been approved?**

No, the project has not been approved. The CCTA, Caltrans and the City of San Ramon are beginning the project development and environmental review process that will take place over the next year and a half (through fall 2013). Once project development and environmental review is complete, CCTA, City of San Ramon and Caltrans will decide whether to proceed with the project. The project design will only proceed at this point – after the Final Environmental Document is released and approved. Project construction would begin in the winter 2016 at the earliest, pending the availability of funding.

### **What alternatives are being studied?**

The alternatives being studied include:

1. The addition of on- and off-ramps for HOV and transit use at Norris Canyon Road, including enhanced pedestrian/bike facilities on the overpass.
2. The addition of on- and off- ramps for HOV and transit use at Executive Parkway
3. A “no build” alternative

### **Who is Funding the Project?**

The project is included in Contra Costa Measure J approved by Contra Costa voters in 2004. The project would be funded through a variety of sources, including \$10.2 million from Measure J with the remainder from other State and Federal funding sources. No local funds are required from the City of San Ramon for this project.

### **Won't this project create a car centric/drive through environment in our community?**

Making it easier and more attractive to carpool, vanpool and use transit would result in just the opposite. Studies show that increased carpooling, vanpooling and transit use results in less single-occupant vehicle trips and reduces overall congestion.

### **Won't the project increase noise, congestion, accidents, pollution, crime and pedestrian/bike safety?**

The project is consistent with the intent of State Legislation (SB 375) to reduce vehicle congestion, air pollution and increase the use of HOVs. By conducting a project development and environmental review process, CCTA, Caltrans and the City of San Ramon will determine any potentially significant impacts the project may have on the community. The environmental study will thoroughly evaluate all three (3) alternatives, study potential impacts, and identify ways to avoid, reduce or minimize impacts to acceptable levels. At the end of this process, one of the three alternatives will be chosen. A “no build” alternative may be chosen.

### **What has happened so far?**

The CCTA, City of San Ramon and Caltrans completed a Project Study Report (PSR) in March 2010. However, completion of the PSR does not approve the project for construction. The PSR determines the scope, schedule and estimated cost of the project and allows proceeding with the project development and environmental review phase.

A scoping meeting was held in November 2011 to provide information about the proposed project and receive public input on the range of issues to study during the environmental analysis. Scoping does not result in the ultimate decision about a project or selection of an alternative – it is one of the beginning stages of the overall process to initiate the study of a proposed project.

### **What happens next?**

The CCTA, City of San Ramon and Caltrans will conduct a series of workshops over the next 9-12 months to receive input and feedback during the project development and environmental review process. Engineering and environmental technical studies will be conducted at the same time to evaluate a wide range of topics and issues including traffic, noise, air quality, and community impacts.

This information will be documented in a Draft Environmental Document (Draft ED), which will be made available to the public for review and comment (anticipated in spring 2013). The public will be encouraged to review the Draft ED and submit written comments on the project during this time. A public meeting will also be held, allowing for additional public comments to be submitted.

Once the public comment period for the Draft ED is complete, the next step is to prepare a Final ED which addresses all of the comments received on the Draft ED. The Final ED must also define the "preferred alternative" that the lead agency recommends among all the alternatives considered. The chosen alternative is identified as the most suitable to meet the project's purpose and need. This could be an action (build) alternative or the "no action" (no-build) alternative. Publication of the Final ED is anticipated to occur in late 2013.

### **How can I get involved?**

Conducting an open process that provides multiple opportunities for community involvement is a key goal of the CCTA, City of San Ramon and Caltrans. A series of workshops will be held over the next 9-12 months to receive input and feedback during the project development and environmental review process. These meetings will be widely publicized in the community and everyone is encouraged to attend. In addition to the workshops, there will be a formal public review period for the Draft ED during which the community will be encouraged to review the Draft ED and provide written comments and input.

### **Where can I go for more information?**

Go to [www.ccta.net](http://www.ccta.net)

Call the CCTA at (925) 256-4700

Email [norriscanyonhovproject@gmail.com](mailto:norriscanyonhovproject@gmail.com) to ask questions, request information, or be added to our project mailing list.