



# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND  
CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Hans F. Larsen

**SUBJECT:** 280/880/STEVENS CREEK  
BLVD FREEWAY AGREEMENT

**DATE:** July 30, 2012

Approved

Date

8/9/12

**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** 1 & 6

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Approve actions to support the I-280/I-880/Stevens Creek Boulevard interchange improvement project:

- a) Adopt a resolution, as a responsible agency for the project under CEQA, in accordance with the provisions of Section 15096(h) of the CEQA Guidelines, with the following findings:
  1. that the City Council has read and considered the Environmental Impact Report for the project and concurs with the Lead Agency's (Caltrans') analysis; and
  2. that changes have been incorporated into the project that lessen the significant environmental effects of the project; and
  3. that the changes required to lessen the effects of the project are the responsibility of Caltrans, and that Caltrans has adopted those changes.
- b) Approve the Freeway Agreement between the City of San José and the State of California for the Highway 17 (from Downing Ave. to Highway 280), Highway 280 (from South Bascom Avenue to South Winchester Avenue) and Highway 880 (Highway 280 to Forest Avenue) authorizing the construction or reconstruction of certain City streets as part of the highway interchange project in accordance with California Streets and Highways Code Section 100.2.

## **OUTCOME**

The recommended actions acknowledge the City's support of the design configuration and environmental clearance for the transportation improvements planned in the vicinity of State Route (SR) 17, I-280, I-880, and Stevens Creek Boulevard. The 280/880/Stevens Creek interchange improvement project is scheduled to start construction in fall 2012.

## **BACKGROUND**

The City of San José, State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) are collaboratively developing highway and interchange improvements along I-280 and I-880 as depicted in the attached exhibit. The two major components of the project are the following:

- Reconfiguration of the I-880/Stevens Creek Boulevard interchange, widening of the Stevens Creek Boulevard overcrossing, and improvements to the southbound on and off ramps including a dedicated off-ramp to Monroe Street.
- Construction of the direct connector ramp from northbound I-280 to northbound I-880.

The total funding allocated for the project is \$64,600,000. Environmental clearance for the project was approved by Caltrans in July 2011. VTA is scheduled to start construction in the Fall of 2012 and complete the project towards the end of 2014.

## **ANALYSIS**

The California Streets and Highways Code (Section 100.2) requires Caltrans to enter into an agreement with the local agency having jurisdiction over the streets affected by a freeway project. The freeway agreement documents the general alignment and configuration of the planned freeway project, as shown in the attached Exhibit A, and it identifies local streets that will be affected by the project construction.

Currently, the City has several freeway agreements with Caltrans for specific segments of State Route (SR)17, I-280 and I-880 through San José. Approval of the recommended freeway agreement will update and consolidate these agreements to address the improvements at the I-880/Stevens Creek Boulevard interchange and the new direct connector ramp structure from northbound I-280 to northbound I-880. While the majority of the work will occur on freeway lands, improvements such as bicycle lanes, and widened sidewalks will be added to the widened Stevens Creek Boulevard bridge over I-880. Additionally, north Monroe Street will be widened to accommodate a freeway off-ramp to easier access to adjacent commercial properties.

The State will continue to own, operate, and maintain the freeway improvements and the City will continue to operate and maintain Monroe Street and the associated improvements within the City right-of-way in accordance with the freeway maintenance agreement currently in effect. The maintenance agreement will be updated prior to completion of the project to address changes to the physical and operational elements associated with the interchange improvement project. It is noted that the traffic signal located at Monroe Street/Stevens Creek Boulevard is currently operated by the City.

To support the City's approval of the new freeway agreement, the City also needs to adopt a resolution as a responsible agency for the project under CEQA. See further discussion in the CEQA section of this memorandum.

### **EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

The status of the project will be reported out to the Transportation and Environment Committee as part of the quarterly Regional Transportation Activities Report.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST**

- Criterion 1:** Requires Council action on the use of public funds equal to \$1 million or greater. **(Required: Website Posting)**
- Criterion 2:** Adoption of a new or revised policy that may have implications for public health, safety, quality of life, or financial/economic vitality of the City. **(Required: E-mail and Website Posting)**
- Criterion 3:** Consideration of proposed changes to service delivery, programs, staffing that may have impacts to community services and have been identified by staff, Council or a Community group that requires special outreach. **(Required: E-mail, Website Posting, Community Meetings, Notice in appropriate newspapers)**

This report will be posted on the City's website as part of the Council Agenda public outreach process. The VTA is the lead agency for public outreach on the project, with support provided by City and Caltrans staff. A public hearing was held on May 11, 2011. Other recent stakeholder meetings have been held with Burbank Community Association (January 2012), Valley Fair (May 2012), Santana Row (May 2012), and Cory Neighborhood (July 2012).

City Staff has also held separate meetings with Valley Fair and Santana Row representatives to discuss the status and schedule of the project. Both Valley Fair and Santana Row have expressed support for its timely implementation and have been working collaboratively with the City to coordinate the construction and funding of the interchange with their development conditions.

### **COORDINATION**

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office and the Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement.

### **FISCAL/POLICY ALIGNMENT**

The recommended action aligns with the Transportation and Aviation City Services Area's strategic goal related to facilitating efficient operations of the regional freeway systems. The adopted 2011-2012 Traffic Capital Budget identifies the as SR-17/I-280/I-880/Stevens Creek Boulevard Interchange improvement as a priority project for the City of San José.

### COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS

There are no cost implications associated with the recommended actions.

### CEQA

File No. OA12-002.

Resolution by the City, as a responsible agency for the Project under CEQA, to be adopted in accordance with the provisions of Section 15096(h) of the CEQA Guidelines (set forth at Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, Chapter 3).

The Final Environmental Impact Report prepared by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for interchange improvements at SR-17/ I-280 / I-880 interchange and the I-880/Stevens Creek Boulevard Interchange (the "Final EIR") was approved by the District 4 Director of Caltrans on July 8, 2011. The document is available at the following web address: [http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/280880stevenscreek/docs/approved\\_july\\_2011\\_complete\\_final\\_eir\\_ea.pdf](http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/280880stevenscreek/docs/approved_july_2011_complete_final_eir_ea.pdf).

In their analysis of the project, Caltrans found that the one environmental impact under CEQA that needed to be mitigated to a less-than-significant-level was aesthetics, due to the construction of new ramps near existing single-family homes located near Parkmoor Avenue and at single-family homes located on Pioneer Avenue near Hodges Avenue. Mitigation measures include retaining existing screening vegetation where possible behind metal guardrails, planting groves of new fast-growing trees especially in the vicinity of three houses to be removed, planting vines on soundwalls, and using textured or colored concrete in the construction process. No environmental impacts were found to be significant and unavoidable.

The Administration has reviewed the analysis and conclusions for the project and concurs with that analysis, which concurrence is reflected in the proposed CEQA resolution for this item.

/s/  
HANS F. LARSEN  
Director of Transportation

For questions please contact Ray Salvano, Division Manager for Regional Transportation, at (408) 975-3706.

Attachment