



December 4, 2012

Alameda County Transportation Commission
1333 Broadway, Suite 300
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Alameda CTC Commissioners:

The City of Alameda requests that the Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC) include "Near Active" Priority Development Areas (PDAs) with "proximate access" projects on the eligibility list for One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) funding. The City's PDA, which includes the 918-acre former Naval Air Station Alameda (NAS Alameda), is a multi-phase project of regional importance that will add thousands of new housing units and jobs to the inner core of the Bay Area over the next decade. This project will languish without upfront outside funding and support for transportation improvements over the next several years.

The City maintains a list of ready-to-build transportation improvements within proximate access to the City's PDA that will directly benefit and support reuse and development of the former NAS Alameda (i.e., Cross Alameda Trail, Perimeter Bay Trail, Mitchell Avenue construction and Wilver Stargell Avenue extension). Funding "proximate access" projects for "Near Active" PDAs will lower the threshold for financial feasibility and incentivize final entitlement planning and development without the risk of funding infrastructure that does not conform to final project approvals. The upfront funding of these "proximate access" projects signals: (1) to the local community that the region and City are serious about addressing transportation concerns, and (2) to private developers that the region and City are ready to be partners in reducing development risk. By allowing "proximate access" projects to be funded by OBAG in "Near Active" PDAs, which results in "taking off the table" the feasibility of some of the most significant transportation improvements, the final planning and entitlement process will be less contentious and be completed more expeditiously.

In many instances, local jurisdictions are able to move forward with "proximate access" projects while completing planning work within PDAs. For example, while City staff is completing the entitlement work for the NAS Alameda project, staff will also move forward with improved access to this area. For example, the Cross Alameda Trail is a proposed San Francisco Bay Trail project that would connect the City's PDA with other parts of the island including the College of Alameda, Webster Street business district, the Estuary Crossing Shuttle and the Marina Village

commercial, office and residential area. This proposed trail project already has a completed feasibility study so is ready to proceed with design and construction. There are other off-site Complete Streets improvements such as the extension of Wilver Stargell Avenue and the creation of Mitchell Avenue that will facilitate development of NAS Alameda that are ready to commence the design and construction phases as well.

The inclusion of “proximate access” projects is consistent with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission’s (MTC) OBAG program guidelines. OBAG focuses on supportive transportation investments that make PDAs more attractive to future development. Multi-modal transportation options and Complete Streets to/from PDAs are fundamental to ensuring successful PDAs. MTC passed Resolution 4035 on May 17, 2012, which provides the Congestion Management Agencies (CMAs) such as the Alameda CTC with flexibility on how to treat “proximate access” projects as shown below:

Defining “proximate access to PDAs”: The CMAs make the determination for projects to count toward the PDA minimum that are not otherwise geographically located within a PDA. For projects not geographically within a PDA, CMAs are required to map projects and designate which projects are considered to support a PDA along with policy justifications. This analysis would be subject to public review when the CMA board acts on OBAG programming decisions. This should allow decision makers, stakeholders, and the public to understand how an investment outside of a PDA is to be considered to support a PDA and to be credited towards the PDA investment minimum target. MTC staff will evaluate and report to the Commission on how well this approach achieves the OBAG objectives prior to the next programming cycle.

In conclusion, the City would like to recommend that the Alameda CTC designate “proximate access” projects as eligible OBAG projects for “Near Active” PDAs within Alameda County to maximize the opportunities for near-term development in some of the County’s largest and most important PDAs.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,



Marie L. Gilmore
Mayor

MLG/JO:mk