SECOND ADDENDUM TO THE VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

FOR THE INTERSTATE 80/GILMAN STREET INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

ALAMEDA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
District 04 -ALA – 80 – POST MILE 6.38 / 6.95
EA 04-0A7700 / Project ID# 0400020155

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THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation
and Alameda County Transportation Commission

Prepared By: _____ Date: 5/6/2019

Jeffrey R. Lormand
Parsons
California Landscape Architect License No. 3576
Project Landscape Architect

Approved By: _____ Date: 5/8/2019

Lydia Mac
California Landscape Architect License No. 5035
Caltrans District Landscape Architect
Office of Landscape Architecture
Caltrans District 4

1.1 ADDENDUM SUMMARY OF CHANGES

The original *Visual Impact Assessment* (VIA) for the I-80/Gilman Street Interchange Improvement Project was approved by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in August 2018. This document was subsequently amended by a 2018 *Addendum to the Visual Impact Assessment*. The addendum was approved by Caltrans in December 2018.

This second addendum updates the previous findings regarding potential visual impacts. These updates originate from Caltrans feedback received during the review of the Final Initial Study (IS)/Environmental Assessment (EA).

1.2 LIGHT AND GLARE

Section 9.3 (Light and Glare) in the VIA outlines the existing and proposed lighting within the project area. Existing sources of light and glare include street lighting and lighting within the Tom Bates Regional Sports Complex. The proposed project would install additional lighting on the pedestrian overcrossing (POC) structure and associated ramps. This additional lighting would add new sources of glare within the project area. The VIA noted this would be partially minimized by shielding lighting so that light would only be directed onto the approach ramps and overcrossing.

The proposed lighting would be above the line of sight for both pedestrians and motorists. It represents an incremental increase in lighting within the project area. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires consideration of visual resource impacts. CEQA guidelines state that a project may have a significant impact on visual quality if it would:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway;
- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings; or
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day- or nighttime views in the area.

The additional lighting represents a change to the visual quality of the project area and merits re-consideration under the fourth CEQA item. This visual change proposed for this project would likely not be significant due to the presence of existing lighting within the project area. In addition, avoidance and minimization measures (AMMs) will be implemented to reduce impacts from light and glare. AMM VA-3 will be specifically updated to prevent light from being directed onto the waters of the San Francisco Bay (see Section 1.4 below). Based on this analysis, the light/glare category within the CEQA checklist in the Final IS/EA will be changed to “less than significant impact”.

1.3 HARDSCAPING

The project description within the VIA states that opportunities for new landscaping or aesthetic treatments would be available at the center of each proposed roundabout. Directional islands were noted as being too narrow for landscaping. For the roundabout islands, the VIA noted that hardscape treatments would be considered as well as the “possibility of planting”. Both decorative paving and rock/cobble were referenced in the VIA as possible hardscaping measures.

Since the approval of the VIA and its first addendum, the project development team has coordinated with stakeholders regarding the maintenance requirements associated with various roundabout island treatments. Based on this coordination, the roundabout islands would likely be hardscaped with no

vegetated elements. Despite their lack of vegetation, each roundabout would provide a degree of clarity and order to currently chaotic intersections and would still meet the originally identified aesthetic goals. Each roundabout would provide clear views of their associated intersection. Roundabout islands would likely become background elements to viewers regardless of the selected island treatment. The existing "low" visual quality associated with Key Views 3 and 4 are still anticipated to increase to a "moderately low" visual quality despite the lack of plantings within the roundabout islands.

As a result, AMM VA-9 within the Final IS/EA will be updated to reflect a focus on hardscaping (see Section 1.4 below).

1.4 AMM UPDATES

Several AMMs listed in Section 11 Avoidance and Minimization Measures (Table 11.1) in the original VIA have been updated. These updates are summarized below.

- In the Table 11.1, VA-3 stated the following: "For areas associated with an open sky, the design lighting should be dark sky friendly." The first VIA addendum updated this AMM to the following: "For areas associated with an open sky, the design lighting should be dark sky friendly, i.e. in places where the darkness of the night sky is relatively free of interference from artificial light."

  Within the Final IS/EA, this AMM has been renumbered VA-2. It now states the following: "For areas associated with an open sky (i.e., in places where the darkness of the night sky is relatively free of interference from artificial light), the design lighting shall be dark sky friendly. Lighting along the San Francisco Bay waterfront shall be designed so that it does not shine light onto the water."

- In Table 11.1, VA-9 stated the following: "To the extent feasible, plant the islands and medians within the roundabout, particularly the center island of the roundabout to soften the hard surfaces of the intersections."

  Within the Final IS/EA, this AMM has been renumbered VA-5. It states the following: "To the extent feasible, plant the surrounding available areas outside of the roundabouts to soften the hard surfaces of the intersections."

- In Table 11.1, VA-13 stated the following: "Include street tree plantings, and associated tree grates if necessary along Gilman Street to replace those removed by the project. Minimum spacing of trees should be no greater than 35 feet on-center." The first VIA addendum updated this AMM to the following: "Include street tree plantings, and associated tree grates if necessary, along Gilman Street to replace those removed by the project. Minimum spacing of trees within the City rights-of-way should be no greater than 35 feet on-center. Provide low maintenance and drought tolerant plantings within Caltrans right-of-way."

  Within the Final IS/EA, this AMM has been renumbered to VA-8. It states the following: "To the extent feasible, include street tree plantings, and associated tree grates if necessary, within the project footprint to replace those removed by the project. Minimum spacing of trees within the City rights-of-way shall be no greater than 35 feet on-center. Low-maintenance and drought-tolerant plantings will be provided within Caltrans right-of-way."

- In Table 11.1, VA-15 stated the following: "For areas of the project that fall within the BCDC jurisdictional area, develop any plantings or revegetation in compliance with the Commission's Landscape Guidelines."

In the Final IS/EA, this AMM has been renumbered as VA-11. It states the following: “For areas of the project that fall within the BCDC jurisdictional area, develop any plantings or revegetation in compliance with BCDC’s Landscape Guidelines and permit approvals.”