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**DATE:** June 18, 2020

**TO:** Alameda County Transportation Commission

**FROM:** Cathleen Sullivan, Director of Planning  
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**SUBJECT:** 2020 Countywide Transportation Plan: Multimodal Strategies

## Recommendation

This item is to provide the Commission with an overview of multimodal strategies under consideration for the 2020 Countywide Transportation Plan (CTP).

## Summary

At this inaugural meeting of the Multi-Modal Committee (MMC), staff will highlight some of the multimodal aspects of the 2020 CTP, which is a foundational document that guides the work of Alameda CTC. The focus of the discussion will be two key sets of strategies that are deeply rooted in a multimodal approach: Safe Systems Approach and Complete Corridors. At the end of this memo for context is the full list of draft strategies under consideration for the 2020 CTP, which were discussed at the planning area meetings with Commissioners in May. A revised set of strategies will be presented to the Planning, Policy and Legislation Committee (PPLC) in July.

## Background

Every four years, Alameda CTC prepares and updates the CTP, which is a long-range planning and policy document that guides future transportation decisions for all modes and users in Alameda County. Starting in 2012, the CTPs have become increasingly multimodal and integrated with land use planning. Since the start of developing the 2020 CTP, Commissioners have provided direction to create a multimodal system, as reflect in the vision and goals which emphasize creation of a connected and integrated multimodal transportation system promoting sustainability, access, transit operations, public health and economic opportunities.

As discussed in detail at PPLC earlier this year and with small groups of Commissioners in May, there are three primary outcomes of the CTP and each one of these is multimodal in nature:

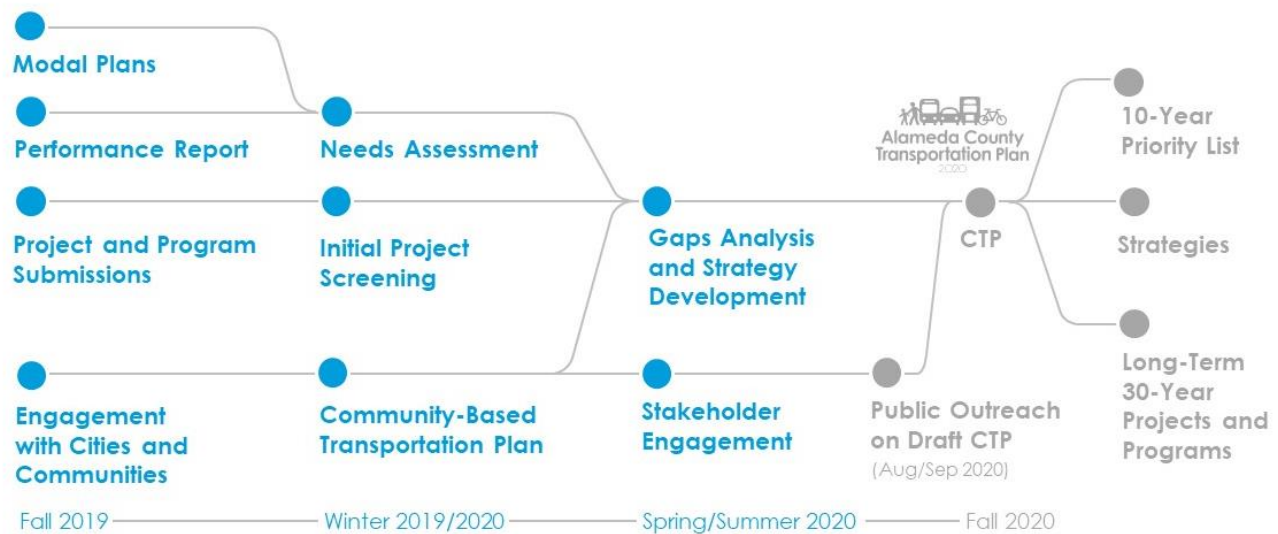
- **10-year Priorities:** The development of a near-term priority list is meant to help focus county efforts on those projects that best meet and advance the county goals and

reflect countywide and local priorities. The priority project list supports priorities for each mode, includes multimodal corridor projects and reinforces complete streets project bundles along corridors.

- **Strategies:** Strategies are designed to complement projects; they reflect guiding principles, industry best practices and new focus areas that aren't fully covered in the current projects. Strategies can inform funding, advocacy, policy, planning, technical assistance, and project implementation. There are strategies for every mode and many cross-cutting strategies that pertain to multiple modes.
- **Long-Term Projects:** The full range of projects submitted to the CTP is included in the plan for the 30-year time horizon; these projects include projects of all modes as well as many complete streets projects and programmatic project.

The CTP development process is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 CTP Development Process



The CTP projects and strategies represent an ambitious vision for the future that will require partnership and leverage to deliver. Together with our partner agencies, these can have a transformative impact on moving Alameda County towards our vision for 2020 and beyond. The strategies element of the CTP is new and has the potential to have profound impact on how we deliver transportation improvements in coming years.

## Strategies

There are approximately twenty strategies currently proposed for inclusion in the CTP. This full set of strategies was presented in the planning area meetings conducted with Commissioners in May, and will be presented again in July as part of the core recommendations of the CTP. There will also be actions associated with the strategies that define how each strategy can be advanced, including a focus on the highest need and highest impact actions for Alameda CTC. These priority actions are currently under development and will also be presented to the Commission in July.

The June Multimodal Committee will cover two over-arching sets of strategies that are strongly rooted in a multimodal approach and encompass some of the most critical work the CTP aims to advance:

1. **Safe Systems Approach** includes strategies to address the high injury network, speed management and enforcement, implementation of the near-term low-stress biking and walking network, modernizing interchanges, and improving safety of at-grade rail crossings.
2. **Complete Corridors Approach** seeks to ensure users of all modes have safe, comfortable and efficient facilities to travel along major arterials, in particular acknowledging the importance of major arterials for the high capacity transit network. This strategy acknowledges the critical role that these main streets play in moving people as well as their role as places for people to do business and congregate; they are economic generators and the front door to businesses and homes.

### **Safe Systems Approach**

Development of the CTP has reinforced that safety is an over-arching priority that needs to permeate throughout the countywide transportation network. With the current COVID-19 crisis, communities have reported upticks in biking and walking activity. This represents an unprecedented opportunity to capitalize on this activity and ensure it is sustained by providing safe multimodal facilities. In addition, the concept of safety may need to expand in the future to include public safety issues like transit cleanliness to attract riders back to the system and ensure all riders feel safe.

The Safe Systems Approach has many components:

- **Supporting projects to address the high injury network** (HIN) where the majority of fatalities and injuries occur. While there are HIN segments throughout the county, high injury streets tend to be disproportionately located in historically disadvantaged communities.
- **Supporting policies to allow context-appropriate speeds and enforcement strategies** in order to reduce speeds on arterials to appropriate urban speeds. This is particularly important as cut-through traffic is increasing in neighborhoods throughout the county with usage of navigation apps.
- **Modernizing interchanges** to better allow for safe multimodal travel; interchanges pose major barriers to safe comfortable travel by biking and walking. This requires close partnerships with Caltrans, and cities and Alameda CTC can work together to seek ways to more quickly move projects through the Caltrans approval process.
- **Enhancing safety at at-grade rail crossings** which pose a barrier to walking and biking activity in many parts of the county. This requires close coordination with Union Pacific Railroad.

Alameda CTC is currently defining priority actions to implement a Safe Systems Approach. These could include actions such as funding projects on the high-injury network, supporting

legislation that enables automatic speed enforcement and context sensitive speed limit setting, facilitating discussions with Caltrans on expediting multimodal treatments at Interchanges, implementing the Rail Safety Enhancement Program, and implementing ongoing safety programs such as Safe Routes to Schools.

### **Complete Corridors**

As Alameda CTC and jurisdictions throughout the county are moving to support more multimodal systems, corridor planning is taking on a role of elevated importance and increasing in complexity. Multimodal corridor planning involves taking a more systematic approach to developing transportation improvements, rather than addressing each project and/or mode in a silo. It involves defining key travel corridors and working in partnership to improve travel by all modes within those corridors, acknowledging that one single street may not be able to serve all modes, but rather that a set of parallel facilities together can create strong multimodal travel options. These corridors often center on a major arterial, and include parallel and perpendicular access streets, as well as interfaces with the interstate system. This type of corridor planning requires partnerships between cities, transit operators, Caltrans and countywide agencies as our major arterials often cross jurisdictional boundaries, as well as active engagement with communities along the corridors.

Planning for complete streets corridors requires balancing competing needs and engaging in difficult trade-off discussions as decisions are made about how to allocate limited right-of-way. These discussions have to balance the role that arterials play as transportation corridors with the role they play as places where people live, work, and do business. Arterials are key economic generators as well as critical means to move people around the county, second only to freeways for moving large numbers of people efficiently. Cities throughout the county are engaged in hard conversations with local communities about the future of arterials that have historically been auto- and through-put oriented, accommodating significant pass through traffic. Increasingly these are considered "main streets," places where people like to spend time and want to bike and walk safely and comfortably. Creative and innovative solutions are needed to ensure all needs are met.

Some key components of a Complete Streets strategy are:

- **Improving bus frequency, reliability, quality, and travel time** on major arterials as these are often the only routes available to serve transit within a travel corridor; this includes access to transit stops and enhancements to bus stops and stations.
- **Managing the curb** is a critical piece of a complete streets approach. Some of the hardest trade-offs are around how to use precious curb space, balancing needs for passenger and commercial loading, vehicle parking, and curb-running bikeways and transit lanes. There is a need for creative and innovative solutions.
- **Building the low-stress biking and walking network** is a key tool to facilitate more active travel. For walking this includes wide sidewalks, improved lighting, seating, safe crosswalks that ensure good visibility and sufficient crossing time, and greenery. For biking, this could include improvements to arterials such as protected bikeways, or

developing low-stress routes on parallel routes that provide a good alternative to biking on an arterial.

- **Planning and Delivering Urban Greenways and Trails** is a critical component of the low-stress active transportation network, as well as a key enhancement to quality of life. Urban greenways and trails are used for commuting and recreational trips.
- **Coordinating with Caltrans** to advance project approvals on conventional state highways more quickly and allow for innovative solutions and design exceptions.
- **Using technology to enhance operations** including transit signal priority, efficient and safe movement of vehicles, and addressing needs of bicycles and pedestrians.
- **Supporting placemaking & economic development** through street design to ensure that transportation projects truly enhance quality of life for communities and generate economic benefit.
- **Accommodating trucks and truck parking** safely and in a way that minimizes impacts on local communities. This is increasingly important as online shopping and home deliveries become ever more common.
- **Managing the relationship with freeways** by simultaneously investing in infrastructure and technology that guides interregional traffic to these facilities and reduces cut-through traffic along arterials.

Alameda CTC is currently defining priority actions to implement a Complete Corridors approach. These could include actions such as engaging in multi-jurisdictional multimodal corridor projects such as San Pablo Avenue and East 14<sup>th</sup>/Mission/Fremont Blvd., working in partnership to deliver urban greenway and trail projects, and working closely with our transit operators to enhance transit operations.

### **COVID-19 Risks and Opportunities**

Development of the 2020 CTP has been underway for a year; as CTP development was coming into its final stages, the COVID-19 pandemic occurred. Given the long-term horizon of the CTP, the projects and strategies that were already developed will be maintained, while also recognizing that this current crisis will influence near-term priorities and actions by all transportation agencies in Alameda County and the region.

These unique and unprecedented current conditions create both risks and opportunities. Alameda CTC is beginning to catalog these risks and opportunities. For example, a dramatic drop in transit ridership has created major challenges for our transit operators whereas a major drop in traffic on our streets has created opportunities for re-allocating right-of-way to biking and walking. Alameda CTC has also begun to work on short-term pandemic/economic response strategies; these may build off of the existing strategies, as current conditions accelerate the need for and importance of some strategies, while creating challenges for others. Development of this component of the CTP has just begun; initial COVID response risks, opportunities and strategies will be discussed at the July Commission meeting.

## **Next Steps**

In July, PPLC and the Commission will receive a full update on the CTP including the core recommendations: the 10-year priority list, the strategies and priority actions, and the long-term 30-year project list. The MMC will receive regular updates on the action items specifically related to the safe systems and complete corridors strategies.

**Fiscal Impact:** There is no fiscal impact. This is an information item only.