Notice of Preparation

To: _____

(Address)

From: Caltrans, District 4
111 Grand Avenue, MS 8B
Oakland, CA 94612
(Address)

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

Caltrans will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an environmental impact report for the project identified below. We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

The project description, location, and the potential environmental effects are contained in the attached materials. A copy of the Initial Study (☐ is ☒ is not) attached.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice.

Please send your response to Charlie Winter, Associate Environmental Planner at the address shown above. We will need the name for a contact person in your agency.

Project Title: I-280/Winchester Boulevard Interchange Improvements Project

Project Applicant, if any: Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority

Date 09/01/2020

Signature Charles Winter

Title Associate Environmental Planner

Telephone 510-286-6025

Reference: California Code of Regulations, Title 14, (CEQA Guidelines) Sections 15082(a), 15103, 15375.

Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment

SUPPLEMENTAL PROJECT INFORMATION:

Introduction

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in cooperation with the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) and the City of San José, proposes to modify the existing Interstate 280 (I-280)/ Winchester Boulevard interchange by constructing a new off-ramp from northbound I-280 to the intersection of Tisch Way and Hatton Street and a new direct connector ramp from northbound State Route (SR) 17 to northbound I-280. The project features are shown in Figure 1.

Purpose and Need

Purpose

The purpose of the Project is to improve traffic operations on freeways and local streets in the project area. Specifically, the objectives of the Project are to:

- Improve traffic operations and reduce congestion on the local roadways in the project area.
- Improve bicycle and pedestrian access and transit connectivity in the project area.
- Improve access from I-280 to the project area.

Need

There are several factors that, both individually and cumulatively, have resulted in significant congestion and delay on the freeways and local streets in the project area:

- Substantial local congestion has occurred along the Winchester Boulevard and Stevens Creek corridors. Traffic volumes on Winchester Boulevard and Stevens Creek Boulevard have increased by 15% over the past five years as a result of local growth. Traffic demands at the I-880/Stevens Creek interchange are expected to grow by another 20% by 2040 and will likely exceed capacity before that time.
- Substantial residential and commercial growth has occurred in the project area along the Winchester Boulevard corridor. Included in this growth are several expansions of Santana Row (large mixed-use development) and Westfield Valley Fair Mall (large regional shopping center); the planned Urban Villages including the Santana Row/Valley Fair Urban Village,

Winchester Boulevard Urban Village, and the Stevens Creek Urban Village; additional planned residential and commercial developments in the area; and regional economic growth. Increased travel demand has resulted from this growth and additional travel demand is expected from the planned developments.

- There is no direct access from northbound I-280 to the project area. Traffic that would otherwise exit northbound I-280 to the project area is forced to use the I-880/Stevens Creek Boulevard interchange.
- Insufficient multi-modal access and connectivity exist within the project area. The Winchester Boulevard corridor within the project area is heavily traveled by pedestrians and bicyclists. The Winchester Boulevard corridor is classified as "high caution" on the Santa Clara Valley Bikeways Map, identifying a need to better accommodate bicyclists. There are several existing local bus routes that serve the project area, including the 23, 25, and 60 lines, with added plans for a future Bus Rapid Transit line along Stevens Creek Boulevard. Safe and efficient multimodal connectivity within the project area is needed to integrate a multimodal transportation system in the project area.

Project Description

The Project would modify the existing I-280/Winchester Boulevard interchange by constructing a new off-ramp from northbound I-280 to the intersection of Tisch Way and Hatton Street and a new direct connector ramp from northbound SR17 to northbound I-280. These and other project features are described below.

Tunnel Off-ramp to Tisch Way

The new off-ramp to Tisch Way would diverge from the current northbound I-280 off-ramp to Stevens Creek Boulevard; run parallel to northbound I-280 separated by a concrete barrier; cross under the I-880 separation structure, which would be widened with tie-back walls; cross under the existing southbound I-280 to northbound I-880 connector ramp structure; tunnel for a total distance of approximately 500 feet under a new northbound SR17 to northbound I-280 connector ramp, the existing southbound I-880 to northbound I-280 connector ramp, and Tisch Way; and rise to terminate at the existing Tisch Way and Hatton Street intersection. Tisch Way would be realigned to accommodate the northbound I-280 off-ramp. Retaining walls would be constructed between Tisch Way and northbound I-280 to support the realigned portion. A new traffic signal would be installed at the intersection of Tisch Way and Hatton Street.

Flyover Connector Ramp

A new direct connector ramp would be constructed to provide access from northbound SR17 to northbound I-280. The connector ramp would diverge from the existing northbound SR17 to southbound I-280 connector ramp and would "flyover" the I-280/I-880/SR17 interchange as a fourth level ramp structure and would merge with I-280 northbound west of the I-280/I-880/SR17 interchange. The new connector ramp would reach a maximum height of approximately 70 feet above I-280. The

connector ramp would widen to two (2) lanes along its length before merging to one lane and entering onto northbound I-280 as an auxiliary lane to Saratoga Avenue.

The existing northbound SR17 to northbound I-280 loop ramp would be removed. The existing northbound lane drop on I-280 west of the I-880 separation structure would be eliminated and I-280 would carry three (3) mixed flow and one (1) high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes under the I-880 separation structure.

The existing Monroe Pedestrian Overcrossing (POC) conflicts with the proposed northbound I-280 off-ramp and would be replaced with a new POC. The new Monroe POC would be constructed at the corner of Monroe Street and Tisch Way within Santana Park and be approximately 16-feet wide. The POC would rise to the west for approximately 450 feet. The POC would then turn south for approximately 400 feet, crossing Tisch Way, the proposed northbound I-280 off-ramp, I-280, and the southbound I-280 to northbound I-880/southbound SR17 connector ramp. The POC would then turn to the east and descend for approximately 550 feet to conform with the existing Monroe pedestrian path north of Moorpark Avenue.

In addition, the Project would include the following roadway improvements:

- The existing Winchester Boulevard bridge over I-280 would be widened by approximately 35 feet to provide enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities in both directions. As part of this, the lane configuration on Winchester Boulevard across the bridge would be modified to improve operations at both the Winchester Boulevard/Moorpark Avenue and the Winchester Boulevard/Tisch Way intersections.
- A portion of the existing soundwalls along the north side of I-280 and east of Winchester Boulevard would be removed and replaced.
- Buffered bike lanes and approximately 10-foot wide sidewalks would be added on both northbound and southbound Winchester Boulevard within the project limits.
- Dedicated bike lanes would be constructed on Tisch Way from Hatton Street to Winchester Boulevard.

Probable Environmental Effects

Based on preliminary surveys and information, Caltrans has identified the following main subject areas for analysis in the EIR/EA. The scope of environmental analysis will be modified based on public input during the project scoping period.

Air Quality

An air quality analysis will be completed to quantify the effects of the Project on the ambient air quality of the project study area, and the region. An air quality study will be completed to document if the Project will expose residences or other sensitive receptors to substantial air quality pollutants. The

environmental document will summarize this study and identify Best Management Practices (BMPs) and, if necessary, mitigation measures to reduce impacts to air quality during Project construction and operation.

Biological Resources

A biological study will be completed to determine if sensitive wildlife, plants, or habitat is present within the project study area. In addition, a tree survey will be completed to identify the trees anticipated to be removed by the project. The environmental document will summarize the biological study and tree survey and, if necessary, identify mitigation measures to reduce or avoid impacts to biological resources.

Community Impacts

Potential social, economic, public services, land use, and growth impacts will be discussed and addressed in the environmental document, including potential impacts to Frank Santana Park and potential community concerns during construction of the Project. If necessary, mitigation measures to reduce or avoid community impacts will be identified.

Cultural Resources

Archaeology and historic reports, and Native American consultation, will be completed to determine if cultural resources would be impacted by the Project. The environmental document will summarize the reports and consultation process and, if necessary, identify mitigation measures to reduce or avoid impacts to cultural resources.

Geology and Soils

Geology and paleontology reports will be completed to identify geologic hazards, such as active faults, landslides, and liquefiable soils, and the potential for fossils to be present in the project area. The reports will be summarized in the environmental document. If necessary, mitigation measures to reduce or avoid geology and soils impacts will be identified.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

A greenhouse gas (GHG) study will be completed for the Project to determine if the project would substantially increase GHG emissions. The environmental document will summarize the study and, if necessary, identify mitigation measures to reduce or avoid GHG emission impacts.

Hazardous Materials

A hazardous materials report will be completed to determine the potential for the project to disturb contaminated soil. The report will be summarized in the environmental document. If necessary, mitigation measures will be identified to reduce or avoid hazardous materials impacts.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Short and long-term effects of the Project on water quality will be analyzed and summarized in the environmental document, including temporary water quality impacts resulting from Project construction activities. Construction BMPs and, if necessary, mitigation measures to reduce or avoid water quality impacts will be identified.

Noise and Vibration

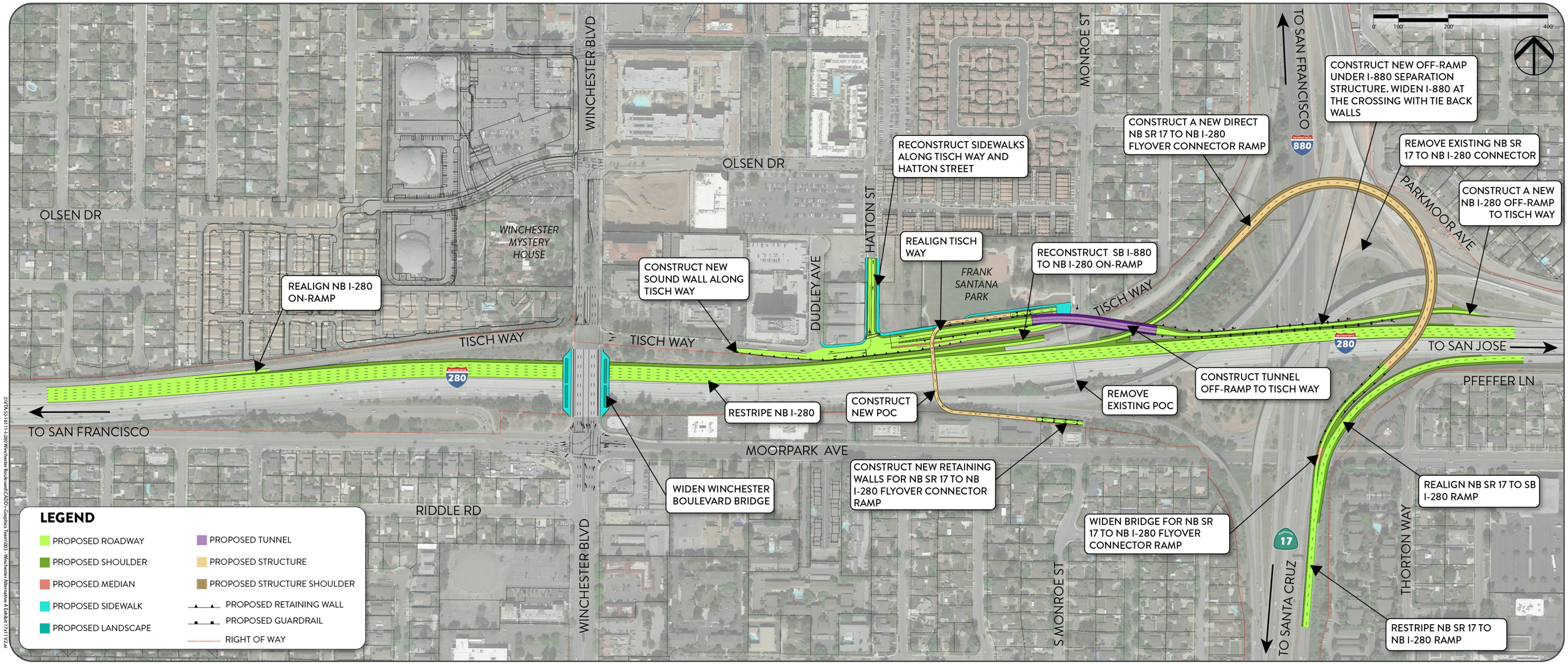
A noise study report will be prepared to determine if Project construction and/or operational noise or vibration impacts would occur on nearby land uses. Current noise levels will be measured, and future noise levels will be modeled based on Project traffic operations. The environmental document will summarize the noise study and, if necessary, identify mitigation measures to reduce or avoid noise impacts.

Visual

An assessment of Project visual and aesthetic effects, such as, proposed structures, lighting, and tree and vegetation removal, will be completed and summarized in the environmental document. If necessary, mitigation measures will be identified to reduce or avoid visual and aesthetic impacts.

Traffic and Transportation

A traffic analysis would be completed for the Project. The traffic analysis will focus on Project improvements to freeway and roadway operations in the project area and calculate vehicle miles travelled (VMT) with and without the Project. Potential impacts to bicycle and pedestrian circulation will also be analyzed and summarized in the environmental document. If necessary, mitigation measures will be identified to reduce or avoid transportation impacts.



I-280 WINCHESTER BOULEVARD IMPROVEMENTS

BUILD ALTERNATIVE