Notice of Preparation

To: _____

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(Address)

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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 Ellen Doudna, Associate Environmental Planner at the address shown above. We will need the name for a contact person in your agency.

Project Title: US 101/Zanker Road/Skyport Drive/Fourth Street Improvement Project

Project Applicant, if any: Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority

Date 09/13/2021

Signature 

Title Associate Environmental Planner

Telephone 510-847-3804

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 construct improvements on US 101 and adjacent local roadways in San José, Santa Clara County, California (Figure 1). The Project limits on US 101 are postmiles 38.6 - 39.4, which are located between the US 101/State Route (SR) 87 interchange on the west and the US 101/Interstate 880 (I-880) interchange on the east.

Purpose and Need

Purpose

The purpose of the proposed Project is to improve traffic operations and safety, as well as improve access for pedestrians and bicyclists, in the project vicinity. To fulfill this purpose, the following are the specific objectives of the proposed Project:

- Enhance transportation network within the project area to accommodate planned growth as anticipated under the adopted *Envision San José 2040 General Plan*.
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the project area.
- Improve safety and traffic operations at the on- and off-ramps and mainline of US 101 within the Project limits.
- Improve access to/from the Norman Y. Mineta San José International Airport (SJIA).

Need

The following text describes the existing and projected deficiencies that establish the need for the improvements contemplated under the proposed Project.

Existing Congestion

Under existing conditions, there is substantial peak-period congestion in the project area, both on US 101 and on local streets. Northbound US 101 operates under congested conditions in the AM peak commute period and southbound US 101 operates under congested conditions in the PM peak commute period. Key bottlenecks along US 101 are at Trimble Road/De La Cruz Boulevard, SR 87, and I-880. During the peak hours, the queues from these key bottlenecks connect with each other and extend outside the study area.

Planned Growth and Projected Increases in Congestion

Congestion along local streets has been increasing in the North San José area in recent years and is predicted to worsen with planned development. The *Envision San José 2040 General Plan* provides for the development of 26,700,000 square feet of industrial uses, 300,000 square feet of commercial uses, and 32,000 residential dwelling units in North San José. Resulting from this growth, vehicle hours of delay will increase from 23,979 daily in 2025 to 40,731 daily in 2045.

The existing roadway network is inadequate to serve this planned growth. As a result, the connection of Zanker Road over US 101 to Skyport Drive and Fourth Street is identified as a key infrastructure improvement project in the *Envision San José 2040 General Plan*, the North San José Area Development Policy, and the North San José Deficiency Plan.

SJIA, just southwest of the North San José area, is also a substantial generator of traffic in the project area. SJIA, which accommodated 15.6 million passengers in 2019, is projected to serve 22.5 million passengers annually by 2037.

Insufficient Facilities for Bicyclists and Pedestrians

Current state, regional, and local plans include policies that mandate the provision of facilities to accommodate and promote safe travel by bicyclists and pedestrians. The project area is currently lacking adequate facilities for those modes of travel. Tenth Street and First Street are currently the only routes that bicyclists and pedestrians can use to cross US 101 in the project area. Between these two streets, a distance of 1.25 miles, there are no crossings of US 101. Along First Street, there is a narrow sidewalk on the east side, no sidewalk on the west side, and no bike lanes south of Brokaw Road under US 101. Within the Project limits, sidewalks are lacking on segments of Skyport Drive, Technology Place, Bering Drive, Old Bayshore Highway, Zanker Road, and Brokaw Road.

Roadway Deficiencies

Skyport Drive serves as the major gateway and entrance into SJIA from SR 87 and the First Street corridor. Currently, access between US 101 and SJIA is both indirect and circuitous as there is no connection to/from SR 87 and southbound US 101, as well as no connection between Skyport Drive and US 101.

Currently, there is no direct connection from southbound I-880 to northbound US 101. Such traffic must exit the southbound I-880/Gish Road off-ramp to access northbound US 101 via a nonstandard hook on-ramp at Old Bayshore Highway.

The existing off-ramp from northbound US 101 to Brokaw Road is a nonstandard freeway feature because it is “isolated” as there is no corresponding on-ramp associated with this off-ramp.

The existing US 101/Old Bayshore Highway northbound on- and off-ramps have very tight radii (60-foot), nonstandard superelevation rates and transitions, as well as nonstandard acceleration/deceleration lane lengths. Accident rates are higher than average at this location.

Project Description

The Project proposes to address the above-described needs and achieve the above-described objectives in three primary ways:

- Construct an overcrossing above US 101 that would connect Zanker Road on the north with Fourth Street and Skyport Drive on the south.
- Replace the existing nonstandard ramps on northbound US 101 at Old Bayshore Highway and Brokaw Road with new ramps at Bering Drive that meet higher design standards.
- Incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities into the Project design.

New Overcrossing of US 101 Connecting Zanker Road, Skyport Drive and Fourth Street

An overcrossing of US 101 would be constructed to connect Zanker Road on the northside of US 101 to Skyport Drive and Fourth Street on the southside of US 101. The overcrossing would accommodate three lanes of traffic in each direction, turning lanes, median, bike lanes, and sidewalks. Skyport Drive would loop under the new overcrossing to intersect with Fourth Street approximately 500 feet south of the overcrossing.

Freeway On- and Off-Ramps Improvements

- The northbound US 101/Old Bayshore Highway hook off-ramp and Brokaw Road off-ramp would be consolidated into one off-ramp that intersects at Bering Drive.
- The northbound US 101/Old Bayshore Highway on-ramp and First Street on-ramp would be consolidated into one on-ramp from Bering Drive.
- The southbound US 101 on-ramp from Fourth Street would be replaced with a new loop on-ramp from Skyport Drive.
- The southbound US 101 on-ramp from Technology Place (formerly Matrix Boulevard) would remain at the current location but would be extended to provide additional storage.
- The on-ramps to US 101 would be modified to include High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes and ramp metering.

Construction of Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

- Buffered Class 2 bike lanes[1] and sidewalks would be provided along the new Zanker Road/ Fourth Street connection between Archer Street and Bering Drive.
- A Class 1 bikeway[2] would be provided beginning from Bering Drive, along the west side of Zanker Road, traversing under the US 101/Zanker Road overcrossing, and splitting into two Class 4 bikeways[3] on Old Bayshore Highway.
- Buffered Class 2 lanes and sidewalks would be provided along Skyport Drive between First Street and Fourth Street.
- Buffered Class 2 bike lanes and sidewalks would be provided along Old Bayshore Highway between Zanker Road and Terminal Avenue.
- Class 4 bike lanes and sidewalk would be provided on Technology Place between First Street and Skyport Drive.
- A Class 1 bikeway would be provided along the west side of Fourth Street between the Skyport Drive/Technology Place/Southbound US 101 on-ramp intersection and the Skyport Drive/ Fourth Street intersection.
- Buffered Class 2 bike lanes and sidewalks would be provided along eastbound Brokaw Road between Bering Drive and Zanker Road.
- Sidewalks would be provided on both sides of Bering Drive.
- A protected intersection[4] design would be provided at the following intersections:

[1] A ***buffered Class 2 bike lane*** is a painted bike lane with the added benefit of having extra space between cyclists and passing cars, usually designated with a painted safeguard area of one to two feet in width.
[2] A ***Class 1 bikeway***, also known as a bike path or shared-use path, is a facility with exclusive right-of-way for bicyclists and pedestrians, away from the roadway and with cross flows by motor traffic minimized.
[3] A ***Class 4 bike lane***, also known as a protected bike lane, is physically separated from the auto travel lanes. Physical separation can include concrete curbs, landscaping, parking lanes, bollards, or other vertical elements.
[4] A ***protected intersection*** includes design elements to create safe, comfortable conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians. Such features may include corner safety islands, corner aprons, forward stop bars, pedestrian safety islands, setback bicycle crossings, and bicycle signal optimization.

    - Skyport Drive/Technology Place/Southbound US 101 on-ramp.
    - Skyport Drive/ Fourth Street.
    - Zanker Road/Old Bayshore Highway/Northbound US 101 on-ramp.

Other Improvements

- Old Bayshore Highway would be elevated to intersect with the new Zanker Road overcrossing. Traffic from southbound I-880 heading for northbound US 101 would ascend to the intersection, go through the traffic signal, and descend to a new northbound US 101 collector-distributor road where it would enter the freeway at a new on-ramp location.
- The following local streets would be widened to accommodate traffic from the above-described overcrossing connection and ramp modifications:
    - Skyport Drive between First Street and Fourth Street
    - Bering Drive between Brokaw Road and Zanker Road
    - Brokaw Road between Bering Drive and Zanker Road
    - Zanker Road between Bering Drive and US 101
    - Fourth Street from north of Koll Circle to US 101
- Local traffic (accessing the Bay 101 Casino and an office building planned development) would be separated from the southbound on-ramp traffic along Technology Place.

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 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 community concerns during construction of the Project. If necessary, mitigation measures to reduce or avoid community impacts will be identified.

Cultural Resources

Archaeological and historic architectural 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 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

Hydraulic/flooding reports and a sea level rise analysis will be prepared to assess Project impacts on hydrologic conditions in the surrounding area. 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 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 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.

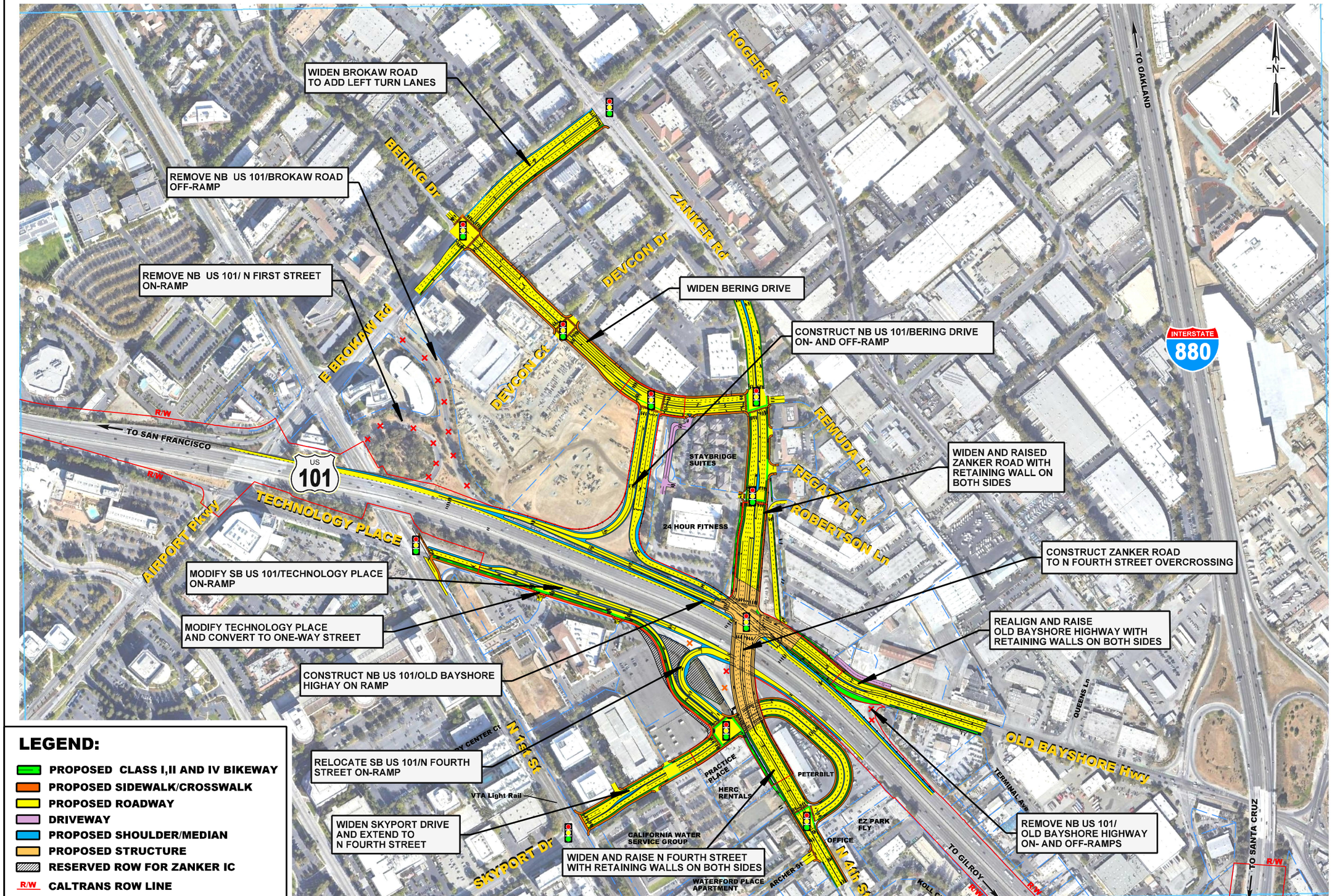
Visual

An assessment of visual and aesthetic effects due to the Project and related to 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 will be completed for the Project. The traffic analysis will focus on 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.

US 101/ZANKER ROAD/SKYPORT DRIVE/FOURTH STREET IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN



LEGEND:

- PROPOSED CLASS I,II AND IV BIKEWAY
- PROPOSED SIDEWALK/CROSSWALK
- PROPOSED ROADWAY
- DRIVEWAY
- PROPOSED SHOULDER/MEDIAN
- PROPOSED STRUCTURE
- RESERVED ROW FOR ZANKER IC
- R/W CALTRANS ROW LINE
- × × × RAMPS TO BE REMOVED
- × × × LOCAL STREETS TO BE REMOVED

AUGUST 10, 2021

CITY OF SAN JOSE · Caltrans · Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority · AECOM