



## **Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration**

# **Central Avenue at Interstate 80 (I-80) Local Road Improvement Project**

Richmond, CA

January 2023



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**January 2023**

## **Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration**

### **Prepared for:**

#### **City of Richmond**

Engineering Services Department  
450 Civic Center Plaza  
Richmond, CA 94804

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**Attachment A:** Revised Conceptual Site Plan

**Attachment B:** Public Review Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

## **Section 1 Introduction**

### **1.1 CEQA PROCESS**

Pursuant to Section 15085 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the City of Richmond submitted a Notice of Completion for the proposed Central Avenue at Interstate I-80 Local Road Improvement Project (Project), Public Review Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND), to the California State Clearinghouse on 11/08/2022. Also, pursuant to Section 15072 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City of Richmond posted a Notice of Intent to Adopt (NOI) the proposed MND. In accordance with Section 15105(b) of the CEQA Guidelines, the public review and comment period began on 11/08/2022, and ended on 12/09/2022. In response to the publication of the IS/MND for public review, public comments have been received. These comments are discussed in this document and the original letters are available for public review at:

City of Richmond  
Engineering Services Department  
450 Civic Center Plaza  
Richmond, CA 94804

This document incorporates comments from the general public and interested agencies and contains responses by the Lead Agency to those comments. No new significant environmental impacts were identified, and no revisions are required for the Draft IS/MND.

## Section 2 Comments on the Draft IS/MND and Responses

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section includes transcriptions of the comments received during the public review period on the Draft IS/MND and responses to those comments. The comments and responses plus the Public Review Draft IS/MND comprise the Final IS/MND.

### 2.2 PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT IS/MND

The following comments on the project were submitted via email. Transcribed comments are shown in italics. Full, technical responses to the comments received are provided below, followed by responses to each comment. Comments and responses are in order by date received.

#### **Comment 1: Mark Leong, 12/13/2022**

*Dear Lina Velasco:*

*Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for this project. We are committed to ensuring that impacts to the State's multimodal transportation system and to our natural environment are identified and mitigated to support a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system. The following comments are based on our review of the November 2020 MND.*

#### *Project Understanding*

*The project is intended improve traffic operations and increase spacing between signalized intersections east of I-80 on Central Avenue. The project objectives would be accomplished primarily by relocating traffic signals from Pierce Street at Central Avenue to San Mateo Street at Central Avenue; converting Pierce Street at Central Avenue to "right in, right out" access; and extending San Mateo Street to connect with Pierce Street.*

#### **Signage**

*Figure 2- Project Conceptual Layout- where stop bars are shown, Caltrans recommends that stop signs be installed. Refer to attached.*

#### **Multimodal Transportation**

*Although outside of Caltrans' right of way, Caltrans recommends the following:*

- Consider incorporating two-stage left turn bike boxes at signalized intersections such as Central Ave/San Mateo Street. Turn boxes help facilitate left turns for bicyclists who would otherwise have to maneuver*



*through multiple vehicle travel lanes to turn left and are thereby positioned far from the protection of the curb. Please note that any right turns on red conflicting with such placement of two-stage turn boxes would need to be prohibited. Refer to FHWA's Interim Approval 20 for more information;*

- A strong preference is for bicycle facilities that are Class I, Class II, buffered Class II, or Class IV, rather than Class III markings as currently proposed. Consider replacing the Class III markings currently proposed with Class II bike lanes wherever adequate space exists within this road improvement project;*
- A strong preference is for intersections to be marked with crosswalks at every leg. Consider adding the northern crosswalk at the San Mateo St/Pierce Street intersection, which is currently missing.*

*Thank you again for including Caltrans in the environmental review process. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, or for future notifications and requests for review of new projects, please email LDR-D4@dot.ca.gov.*

*Sincerely,*

*MARK LEONG*

*District Branch Chief Local Development Review*

*c: State Clearinghouse*

### **Response to Comment 1**

The comments provided by Caltrans address minor design elements and are not comments on the adequacy of the environmental analysis. The City, however, does provide the following responses to the design questions.

#### Signage

Appropriate traffic signs are planned to be installed along the project corridor in conformance with the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA MUTCD) and will be included on the final design plans. For clarity, "Figure 2 - Project Conceptual Layout" has been revised to show Stop Signs where stop bars are currently depicted. Please see Attachment A.

#### Multimodal Transportation

- The design team will further review the applicability and feasibility of two-stage left turn bike boxes at the San Mateo at Central Avenue intersection within the context of the approved project design objectives and in coordination with the Cities of El Cerrito and Richmond's bicycle master plans for this area.

- Where Class III bicycle facilities are currently depicted along portions of Pierce Street and San Mateo Street there are limitations regarding existing or proposed ROW and the typical roadway sections for implementation of alternative Class I, Class II, buffered Class II, or Class IV bicycle facilities.
- The design team will confirm the compatibility of a marked crosswalk on the northern leg of the proposed Pierce Street and San Mateo Street intersection with the proposed grading plan and drainage design. However, the proposed catch basin on the northwest corner of the proposed intersection along with the existing driveway would prohibit the installation of an ADA-compliant curb ramp and a corresponding marked crosswalk.

**Comment 2: Aidin Amiri, 12/13/2022**

*Hello Hector,*

*This letter is a regards to "City of Richmond 30-day Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration".*

*My name is Aidin Amiri and I am the son of Saeid Amiri whom is the owner of Central Valero. We are a Father and Son team that run the small business. We are a locally owned, family owned, and minority owned small business that has been serving the community for over 30 years.*

*This project will have an enormously negative impact on our business. Not only will it be diverting a large percentage of customers away from our business,*

*But also due to some of the proposed changes on Pierce street, mainly the suggested barrier to be installed, there are a number safety concerns which arise as well.*

*I'm hoping that with the city's promise to help small businesses, and your help as a city Planning leader, you can help answer some questions and possibly guide us to getting more information on protesting this Declaration.*

*Is there any possibility that we could sit down sometime or maybe even have a brief telephone conversation in the next day or two?*

*Thank you very much*

*Aidin Amiri  
Central Valero  
925 322-7895*

**Response to Comment 2**

The comments provided address design elements and socioeconomic concerns and are not comments on the adequacy of the environmental analysis.

City of Richmond Public Works staff as well as Planning staff in conjunction with NCE's staff met Aidin Amiri and Saeid Amiri during a virtual conference call on 12/15/2022 to better understand their site access concerns. It was clarified during the call that the business owner's main concern was maintaining existing site access from the Pierce Street driveway for vehicles traveling northbound along Pierce Street and making a left-turn into the business. The project team confirmed to the business owners that their existing driveway access from Pierce Street would be maintained despite the planned intersection reconfiguration at Pierce Street and Central Avenue. Therefore, it was mutually agreed with the business owners that no significant impacts to the business are anticipated due to the project.

**Comment 3: East Bay Municipal Utility Management District (EBMUD),  
12/13/2022**

*Dear Mr. Rojas:*

*East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Central Avenue at Interstate 80 (I-80) Local Road Improvement Project (Project) located at Central Avenue from east of I-80 Caltrans right-of-way (ROW) to the intersection with San Mateo Street, San Mateo Street from Central Avenue to the future proposed intersection with Pierce Street, Pierce Street from Central Avenue to the future proposed intersection with San Mateo Street, and a new connector street as an extension of San Mateo Street through two private properties to Pierce Street in the Cities of Richmond and El Cerrito.*

*EBMUD has the following comments.*

**WATER DISTRIBUTION PIPELINES**

*EBMUD owns and operates 6-inch and 8-inch water distribution pipelines in Central Avenue, Pierce Street, and San Mateo Street which provide continuous service to EBMUD's customers in the area. Any proposed construction activity in Central Avenue, Pierce Street, and San Mateo Street would need to be coordinated with EBMUD so that the integrity of these pipelines is maintained at all times.*

*It is imperative to continue to coordinate with EBMUD during the development of street improvement projects, so reasonable time can be provided for planning, design, and construction if conflicts exist to avoid schedule impacts. The City of Richmond and EBMUD will need to continue to work together in finalizing the scope of work for*

*EBMUD infrastructure adjustments and relocations. EBMUD requires reasonable time to allocate resources and modify internal construction schedules. EBMUD recommends at least 18 months advance notification for upcoming street improvement projects to allow for a reasonable amount of time to perform water*

*pipeline relocations. The following table provides a typical project schedule for EBMUD to design and relocate approximately 1,500 feet of 8-inch water pipeline. The required time may increase or decrease depending on the size, length and complexity of the water pipeline project; and if constructed by EBMUD crews or by Contractor.*

<b>Required Time</b>	<b>Schedule Task</b>
<i>1 month</i>	<i>Receive Street Improvement and Understand Impacts</i>
<i>1 month</i>	<i>Review Project and Planning Assessment</i>
<i>2 months</i>	<i>Collect Survey Data or Use Existing Survey from Requesting Agency</i>
<i>2 months</i>	<i>Draft Base Drawing for Water Main Relocation</i>
<i>3 months</i>	<i>Design Water Main Relocation</i>
<i>2 months</i>	<i>Develop Construction Bid Documents</i>
<i>3 months</i>	<i>Advertise and Award Water Main Relocation Project</i>
<i>4 months</i>	<i>Install New Water Main and Provide Temporary Paving</i>

*18 months Reasonable Notification Time*

*(Typical Project: 1,500 feet of 8-inch pipe)*

*EBMUD will not design piping or services until soil and groundwater quality data and remediation plans have been received and reviewed and will not start underground work until remediation has been carried out and documentation of the effectiveness of the remediation has been received and reviewed. If no soil or groundwater quality data exists, or the information supplied by the project sponsor is insufficient, EBMUD may require the project sponsor to perform sampling and analysis to characterize the soil and groundwater that may be encountered during excavation, or EBMUD may perform such sampling and analysis at the project sponsor's expense. If evidence of contamination is discovered during EBMUD work on the project site, work may be suspended until such contamination is adequately characterized and remediated to EBMUD standards.*

*EBMUD's water distribution pipelines and valves must always be accessible to EBMUD staff in order to maintain high-quality domestic water and fire flow services and mitigate for planned and unplanned pipeline outages. The City of Richmond is responsible for protecting in-place pipeline valves and ensuring that pipeline valves are accessible (i.e., not paved over) during and after Project construction. EBMUD recommends that the City of Richmond review EBMUD as-built drawings and*

*identify potential utility conflicts between Project improvements and existing EBMUD pipelines.*

*Attached are EBMUD guidelines for requesting pipeline as-builts that include pipeline vertical data (see Attachment A - EBMUD Map & Utility Information Request Form and Guidelines). EBMUD's process for requesting as-built drawings is a two steps process: 1) request EBMUD water distribution maps, and 2) submit to EBMUD marked-up EBMUD water distribution maps identifying which water pipeline as-builts are needed to evaluate water pipelines within street improvements. In some cases, EBMUD as-builts are not available and in those situations EBMUD recommends for local agencies to pothole and field locate utilities.*

### **EBMUD'S DESIGN STANDARDS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

*When evaluating the need and method for relocating and adjusting EBMUD infrastructure (e.g., pipelines, meters, valves, and fire hydrants), please review EBMUD's Design Standards and Specifications for Mains 20-inches and Smaller, which are located on the following webpage under "Apply for Standard Water Service":*

*<https://www.ebmud.com/customers/new-meter-installation>*

### **PIPELINE VALVE COVER ADJUSTMENTS**

*For utility conflicts between the Project and existing EBMUD pipeline valve covers, the City of Richmond must share with EB MUD conflict locations, and existing and final pavement grade elevations. EBMUD will support paving street improvement projects as follows:*

- Grade change less than 0.5-inches - For street improvement projects with a grade change elevation less than 0.5-inches, EB MUD is not obligated to adjust pipeline valve covers to facilitate the construction of street improvements, pursuant to Streets & Highways Code Section 680, which states that EBMUD may not be required to relocate its facilities for a temporary purpose. However, EBMUD will provide valve cover rings, at no cost, to be used to make valve cover adjustments as needed. The City of Richmond is responsible for protecting in-place EBMUD pipeline valve covers which will be inspected by EBMUD staff post project completion. Pipeline valves must remain accessible during and after project construction for water distribution operations (i.e., not paved over).*
- Grade change greater than 0.5-inches - For street improvement projects with a grade change elevation greater than 0.5-inches, EBMUD will support the Project by adjusting pipelines valve covers (one time) to the final street grade. However, EBMUD is not obligated to adjust valves during construction to facilitate means and methods for completing street improvements,*

*pursuant to Streets & Highways Code Section 680, which states that EBMUD may not be required to relocate its facilities for a temporary purpose. The City of Richmond is responsible for protecting in-place EB MUD pipeline valve covers which will be inspected by EBMUD staff post project completion. Pipelines valves must remain accessible during and after project construction for water distribution operations (i.e., not paved over).*

*Pipeline Valve Cover Upgrades - If the City of Richmond determines a need to upgrade old pipeline valve covers to the new Christy G-05 Valve Box and Rise Installation, EBMUD will provide the valve boxes and covers, and will reimburse the City of Richmond for the valve box upgrade at a reasonable cost. To upgrade pipeline valve covers and boxes, the City of Richmond must enter into a Valve Box Agreement with EBMUD prior to start of pipeline valve cover upgrades. An EBMUD Union notification will be required to complete the work by the City's contractor.*

### **WATER METER RELOCATIONS AND ADJUSTMENTS**

*When an agency like the City of Richmond completes street improvements ( e.g., replace sidewalks, street pavement, and storm drain pipelines) to improve both street safety and street aesthetics, EBMUD supports the agency by relocating water meters to meet Project objectives, current design standards ( e.g., meters need to be placed at 1-foot off the face of curb), and mitigate utility conflicts. EBMUD relocates water meters to their new location once the area is staked and is ready for final meter placement ( e.g. .. forms for new sidewalk and other features are in place). The City of Richmond is then responsible for relocating the customer's private water service line to the new meter location. EB MUD is not financially liable for work beyond the water meter (i.e., private water line).*

### **HYDRANT RELOCATIONS OR ADJUSTMENTS (SET-BACKS/SET-FORWARDS)**

*When the City of Richmond completes street improvements (e.g., replace sidewalks and curbs) to improve both street safety and street aesthetics, the City of Richmond must ensure that there are no conflicts between existing EBMUD fire hydrants and new curb ramps and sidewalks. Fire hydrants must be located 5-feet from the edge of curb ramps and 20 to 24- inches from the face of street curbs. Hydrant relocations are horizontal offsets that require the installation of new hydrant service laterals; hydrant relocations require the City of Richmond to submit Hydrant Relocation Application with EBMUD's New Business Office (510-287- 1010) or via EBMUD's online water service application at <https://wsa.ebmud.com>.*

### **WASTEWATER**

*EBMUD owns and operates a 48-inch wastewater interceptor pipeline located in Central A venue. This pipeline is a critical infrastructure and due to its shallow*

*nature is potentially at risk of damage from nearby construction activities or structures built on top of them (see enclosed Attachment B - Wastewater Interceptor Drawing). The City of Richmond shall submit design drawings and detailed maps to EBMUD to determine if the Project will impact the wastewater interceptor pipeline. Any proposed construction activity across this pipeline would need to be coordinated with EB MUD so that the integrity of the pipeline is maintained at all times.*

**PRE-CONSTRUCTION MEETING**

*The City of Richmond shall invite EBMUD's North Area Service Center Superintendents, Shelly Frank (510-986-7733 or shelly.frank@ebmud.com), and the Assistant Superintendents, Mike Rangel (510-287-1829 or michael.rangel@ebmud.com) to all pre-construction meetings.*

*If you have any questions concerning this response, please contact Timothy R. McGowan, Senior Civil Engineer, Major Facilities Planning Section at (510) 287-1981.*

*Sincerely,*

*David J. Rehnstrom  
Manager of Water Distribution Planning*

**Response to Comment 3**

The comments provided address utility coordination and are not comments on the adequacy of the environmental analysis.

The City of Richmond Public Works Department via the project design consultant first notified EBMUD of the project via electronic Utility "A" Letter dated May 31, 2022, including a description of planned construction activities accompanied by a conceptual site plan as well as submittal of an EBMUD facility map request. The City appreciates EBMUD's continuing coordination efforts regarding the project including this letter and mapping information as well as other recent electronic communication concerning various facilities requiring relocation coordination around the project site. The City will continue to provide reasonable notification and coordination during the continuing design and eventual construction of the project (anticipated June 2025 to June 2027) regarding as-needed protection, relocation, or adjustment of EBMUD facilities within the project site.

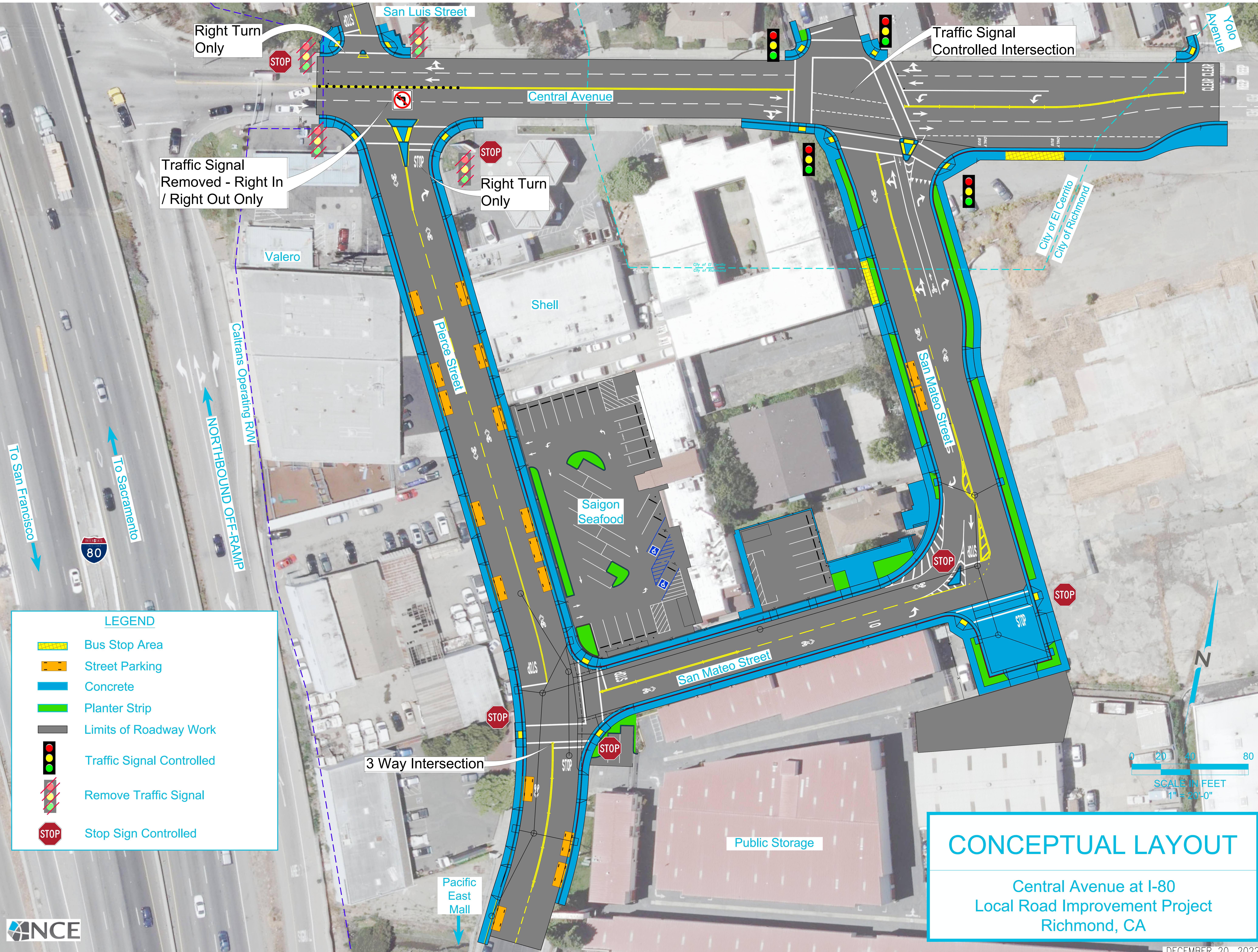
## **Attachment A**

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### **REVISED CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN**



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**LEGEND**

- Bus Stop Area
- Street Parking
- Concrete
- Planter Strip
- Limits of Roadway Work
- Traffic Signal Controlled
- Remove Traffic Signal
- Stop Sign Controlled

**CONCEPTUAL LAYOUT**

Central Avenue at I-80  
Local Road Improvement Project  
Richmond, CA

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## **Attachment B**

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**PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION**

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