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General Project Questions

What is the purpose of the project and what is the project going to accomplish?

The purpose of the project is to:

- Improve operations, enhance safety, and reduce traffic congestion on the freeways and local roadway connections in the vicinity of the I-880/Stevens Creek Boulevard, SR-17/I-280/I-880, and I-280/Winchester Boulevard interchanges.

Motorists should experience reduced traffic congestion and delays on the freeways and local roadways within the project limits. In particular, the key operational issue that is being addressed through this project is the queue of traffic that backs up onto the northbound I-280 mainline due to the congestion at the I-880/Stevens Creek Boulevard interchange. This standing queue often exists with moving traffic traveling at high speeds on either side.

- Improve access between the I-280/I-880 freeway corridors and the land uses that are located in the vicinity of these interchanges. Access will be improved to O'Connor Hospital, Santa Clara Valley Medical Center, San Jose City College, residential neighborhoods in the Cities of San Jose and Santa Clara and several major shopping centers and retail destinations that surround the project area.

The proposed highway project includes the following:

- Upgrading the existing I-880/Stevens Creek Boulevard interchange (originally constructed in 1959) to meet current interchange design standards. This will reduce traffic congestion and delays currently experienced at the interchange by improving operations and enhancing safety on the freeways and local roadways by eliminating certain weaving and merging movements. The proposed interchange configuration also improves access and enhances safety for bicycle and pedestrian traffic over what exists for these travel modes today.
- Adding a new northbound I-280 to northbound I-880 direct connector ramp to eliminate the existing merging and weaving conflicts between the regional freeway traffic and local

traffic that is destined for westbound Stevens Creek Boulevard by separating these movements.

- Adding a new off-ramp from northbound I-280 to Winchester Boulevard to eliminate the current backup on northbound I-280 that is a result of the heavy congestion within the Stevens Creek Boulevard interchange and alleviating the traffic load at the I-880/Stevens Creek Boulevard interchange that serves as the one major point for traffic traveling between the freeway system and the local roadways in the area. This would improve freeway operations and enhance safety. [▲Go to Top](#)

What are the limits of the area you are studying as part of the project?

The project limits extend from Stevens Creek Boulevard interchange south to the I-280 juncture on I-880 and from the I-880/SR17 off-ramp northward to the Winchester Boulevard on-ramp on northbound I-280. [▲Go to Top](#)

What is the project schedule?

The current target dates are as follows:

Environmental: Early 2007 to Middle of 2010

Design: Early 2009 to Late 2011*

Right of Way: Middle of 2009 to Late 2011*

Construction: Middle of 2010 to Late 2013*

*Schedule tentative. Funding not identified for all phases of the project. [▲Go to Top](#)

Upcoming Environmental Milestones:

Draft Environmental Document Circulation: Fall 2009

Final Environmental Document: Spring 2010 [▲Go to Top](#)

What is the cost of the project?

The cost of the project is \$130 million to \$150 million [▲Go to Top](#)

How will the project be funded?

The project is currently not fully funded. However, VTA has approximately \$23M available to complete the first phase of the project. The current funds consist of federal funds, local from the City of San Jose and VTA. VTA and local elected officials continue to pursue other funding opportunities for the project. [▲Go to Top](#)

Will the project then be implemented in phases?

Yes, that is correct. The first phase of work will be the upgrading of the southbound half of the I-880/Stevens Creek Boulevard interchange. Included in this work will be

improvements to the Stevens Creek Boulevard crossing over I-880. The exact order of the remaining phases of the project is yet to be determined. [▲Go to Top](#)

Will Valley Fair and Santana Row contribute any funds to the project?

Working through the City of San Jose development process, Santana Row has contributed funds for the initial study of the I-880/Stevens Creek interchange improvements. Discussions coordinated through the City of San Jose have revealed Valley Fair's willingness to contribute funding for Stevens Creek Boulevard/Monroe Street improvements that would be implemented with the first phase of work to upgrade southbound half of the I-880/Stevens Creek Boulevard interchange.

Valley Fair and Santana Row are major economic generators for Santa Clara County. Major beneficiaries of the approximately \$8 to \$10 million in sales tax generated by Valley Fair and Santana Row alone are the many transportation programs in the county. [▲Go to Top](#)

Can you address the existing traffic issues for northbound I-280 traffic at the Leland Avenue, Leigh Avenue and Parkmoor Avenue on-ramps, for southbound I-280 traffic at the Moorpark Avenue on-ramp and at the I-280/Saratoga Avenue interchange?

Although the locations noted have existing traffic issues, they are outside scope of the subject project. These traffic issues would have to be addressed through a separate project. [▲Go to Top](#)

How will you address possible environmental impacts to air quality, noise, visual resources, etc. resulting from the project?

As part of the state and federally defined environmental processes, technical studies (Air quality, Biology, Cultural Resources (archaeological and historical), Geology, Hazardous Materials, Noise, Storm Water Data Report and Visual) will be completed to assess and document environmental impacts resulting from the project. These studies will become a part of the project Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to disclose the impacts created by the project as well as to document proposed mitigation measures. [▲Go to Top](#)

When will we be able to see the results from these studies?

The draft EIR is expected to be released for public review and comment in the fall of 2009. [▲Go to Top](#)

Can I still submit comments on this project?

Yes, there will be opportunities to comment on both the draft and final EIR as part of the environmental process. [▲Go to Top](#)

What will be the impacts to general traffic, emergency access and noise, for example, during construction of the project and how will these impacts be addressed?

No long-term lane/ramp closures are anticipated. Emergency access will be provided at all times during construction. The project will comply with local noise ordinances and regulations to limit construction noise. A comprehensive public outreach program will be in place for the duration of construction to keep neighborhoods informed of all upcoming construction activities, construction detours, and alternate routes. [▲Go to Top](#)

How will pedestrian and bicycle needs be addresses in the project?

The design will include a multi-modal approach and consider pedestrian and bicycle needs for local street improvements. For example, the reconfiguration of the I-880/Stevens Creek interchange is to include “squared-up” signalized ramps to better accommodate pedestrian and bicycle traffic. [▲Go to Top](#)

I-280/Winchester Boulevard/Tisch Way Connection Questions:

What alternatives are being considered for the proposed northbound I-280/ Winchester Boulevard exit?

Although the scope and overall design are very similar, there are two design variations being considered for the northbound I-280 connection to Winchester Boulevard:

- “Hook Ramp” – In this alternative, the off-ramp would terminate at Tisch Way with a signalized intersection. Ramp traffic would then be required to make a left turn and continue westbound on Tisch Way for approximately 200 feet to the intersection with Winchester Boulevard. Tisch Way would remain a 2-way street.
- “5-Legged Intersection” – In this alternative, the off-ramp would terminate at Winchester Boulevard forming a 5-legged intersection. Under this design, Tisch Way would be converted to a westbound one-way street between the 1st driveway of the Century Plaza (Chevy’s Building) to Winchester Boulevard, or for approximately 250 feet. The remainder of Tisch Way would remain 2-way. [▲Go to Top](#)

How is Tisch Way impacted by the two different alternatives being considered?

With the “Hook Ramp” alternative, Tisch Way would provide the same traffic movements as exists currently. Tisch Way would be widened between the ramp connection and Winchester Boulevard to accommodate additional volumes and left turning movement. Right turns would not be permitted for traffic exiting from the ramp.

This alternative would require that Tisch Way, a local two-lane roadway, be narrowed and shifted approximately 15 feet to the north between Baywood Avenue and Dudley Avenue. On-street parking would be eliminated.

Under the “5-legged intersection” alternative, the new off-ramp would form a 5-legged intersection with Winchester Boulevard, Tisch Way, and the northbound I-280 on-ramp. Tisch Way would be converted to a one-way westbound street between the 1st driveway from Century Plaza (Chevy’s Building) at the northwest corner of the intersection approximately 250 feet from Winchester Boulevard and Winchester Boulevard. East of this point, Tisch Way would remain a two-way street. Minor impacts to on-street parking are anticipated for the western end of Tisch Way. [▲Go to Top](#)

How would the traffic on Winchester Boulevard be impacted by the new connection from northbound I-280?

The proposed Winchester Boulevard off-ramp from northbound I-280 is expected to alter traffic patterns and volumes on Winchester Boulevard north of I-280 and on Stevens Creek Boulevard west of I-880. The new connection provides for an alternative route from northbound I-280 to the immediate area and points further south, north and west.

This is expected to result in higher traffic volumes on Winchester Boulevard in the northbound direction between I-280 and Stevens Creek Boulevard, but lower volumes westbound on Stevens Creek Boulevard between I-880 and Winchester Boulevard. Traffic volumes southbound on Winchester Boulevard and eastbound on Stevens Creek Boulevard, plus those to the north or west of the Winchester Boulevard /Stevens Creek Boulevard intersection, are not expected to change appreciably as a result of the new connection. [▲Go to Top](#)

Are there any changes to the traffic pattern south of Winchester Boulevard and Moorpark Avenue?

The proposed Winchester Boulevard off-ramp from northbound I-280 is not expected to appreciably change traffic patterns and volumes south of the Winchester Boulevard/Moorpark Avenue intersection. For traffic heading south on Winchester Boulevard, the new connection provides for a more direct route from northbound I-280, reducing the demand on other routes such as Stevens Creek Boulevard and Moorpark Avenue. [▲Go to Top](#)

Will the access and response time for the fire station on Monroe Street be affected?

Under both alternatives, “5-Legged Intersection” and “Hook Ramp”, egress of emergency vehicles from the fire station would be maintained. Therefore, response time should not be affected. [▲Go to Top](#)

I-880/Stevens Creek Boulevard Interchange Questions:

What are the differences between the proposed signalized ramp design and the existing full cloverleaf interchange design?

The proposed partial cloverleaf configuration would improve operations and enhance safety for motorists, as well as for pedestrians and bicyclists by eliminating the weaving movements between the on- and off-ramps both on the collector-distributor roadways and on Stevens Creek Boulevard.

The traditional full cloverleaf design, so named because it resembles a four-leaf clover, was patented in 1916 and first constructed in 1929. This design that allows vehicles to freely enter and exit a freeway, works well with low traffic volumes. However, the full cloverleaf design experiences a significant reduction in operational efficiencies when traffic volumes are high, as is the situation at the I-880/Stevens Creek Boulevard Interchange. Congestion occurs when high volumes of traffic exist for both the freeway loop on-ramps and the freeway loop off-ramps. This causes backups not only on the ramps but also on the freeway and collector/distributor road as well. In addition, there is a high rate of traffic accidents due to the increase in congestion.

The related merging and weaving maneuvers associated with these two movements also pose a challenge for pedestrians and bicyclists passing through the interchange across the various ramps, particularly since there is no mechanism to control or interrupt the traffic flow to cross the roadway, for example. The new ramp configurations with added traffic signals will reduce vehicle speeds where there are conflicts between pedestrians/bicyclist and motorists thereby enhancing the safety. Due to these operational challenges, many full cloverleaf interchanges in urbanized areas of the United States have been reconfigured to alternate designs such as the proposed signalized ramp design.

At the I-880/Stevens Creek Boulevard interchange, traffic signals would be installed at the two new ramp intersections. Multiple left turn lanes are proposed at the ramp intersections (two lanes on the southbound ramp; three lanes on the northbound ramp), which would improve the distribution of traffic across the lanes on Stevens Creek Boulevard while the current full cloverleaf design leads to more traffic on the rightmost lanes. This right lane overload on the local roadway often lead to congestion on the collector-distributor roadway that connects the local roadway to the freeway. Both the elimination of the vehicle merging and weaving associated with the existing collector-distributor roadways and the control of traffic with traffic signals would provide improved operations and enhanced safety for bicyclists and pedestrians. [▲Go to Top](#)

How would the new traffic signal at the northbound I-880 off-ramp and Stevens Creek Boulevard improve the traffic operations in this area?

The new traffic signal would provide improved access for travel through the interchange for vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian movements. The relocation of the freeway traffic destined for westbound Stevens Creek Boulevard from the existing loop ramp to the diagonal ramp at a signal would provide better access for the freeway traffic to use all lanes on westbound Stevens Creek Boulevard. The existing loop ramp provides for direct access for freeway traffic to the right lane on westbound Stevens Creek Boulevard, but requires this traffic to weave with westbound through traffic to move to the other lanes on westbound Stevens Creek Boulevard. The added traffic signal control for the freeway traffic also reduces the need for bicycle and pedestrian traffic to find gaps in the freeway-related traffic to travel along Stevens Creek Boulevard.

In addition, the improved traffic operations at this intersection would eliminate the traffic that currently goes eastbound on Stevens Creek Boulevard and makes a u-turn at Di Salvo Avenue or Bellerose Drive to go back on westbound Stevens Creek Boulevard.

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NB I-280/NB I-880 Direct Connector Questions:

How will noise impacts to residential neighborhoods be addressed?

Noise impacts resulting from the project as well as measures to reduce the impacts would be identified and discussed in the draft EIR. Sound walls would be constructed to address noise impacts where feasible and reasonable. [▲Go to Top](#)

How high is the proposed northbound I-280 to northbound I-880 direct connector ramp?

At its highest point, the new ramp would be 33 feet above the ground level of the adjacent residences. [▲Go to Top](#)

Are there any right of way impacts by the project?

Three full residential property acquisitions have been identified based on the currently proposed design for the project. [▲Go to Top](#)

Stevens Creek Boulevard/West San Carlos Street Questions:

Will the public transportation on the Stevens Creek Boulevard/West San Carlos Street corridor be improved?

The VTA Board adopted the recently-completed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Strategic Plan at its May 2009 meeting. The Strategic Plan identifies three projects for near-term

development and the Stevens Creek Boulevard Corridor is one of them. The Stevens Creek Boulevard corridor BRT improvements will include dedicated lanes, rail-like stations and specialized vehicles. Service will be at 10-minute frequencies all day and the Stevens Creek Line will extend from De Anza College on the western end of the corridor through Downtown San Jose and eastward to Eastridge Transit Center. In the vicinity of the 880 interchange, the BRT project will feature a dedicated lane starting from east of I-880 and extending to Winchester Boulevard with a station at Santana Row/Baywood. The Stevens Creek BRT project is scheduled to be in operation by 2014.

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How will the project address the traffic congestion on the Stevens Creek Boulevard and West San Carlos Street corridor?

The project does not directly address traffic congestion on Stevens Creek Boulevard and West San Carlos Street in areas that are outside of the direct vicinity of the interchange and the project location. However, the new interchange configuration will provide overall improved traffic operation in the project vicinity and adjacent areas. In particular, the improvements at the Stevens Creek Boulevard/Monroe Street intersection would alleviate an identified point of congestion at this location for westbound travel on Stevens Creek Boulevard.

Additionally, the City of San Jose has a future signal coordination project on Stevens Creek Boulevard that would lead to improved traffic operations on Stevens Creek Boulevard. [▲Go to Top](#)