
Chapter 1

Purpose and Need

Section 1.1 Purpose

The basic purpose of the proposed project is to improve public transit service in the Capitol Expressway Corridor. More specifically, the purpose of the proposed project is to:

- improve public transit service in the Capitol Expressway Corridor by providing increased capacity and faster, convenient access to downtown San Jose and major employment and activity centers;
- make transit an attractive alternative to the automobile for travel along the expressway;
- enhance regional connectivity through expanded, interconnected transit services along some of the primary travel corridors in Santa Clara County, including U.S. 101 (Guadalupe Corridor) and I-680 (Tasman East, Capitol Avenue, and Capitol Expressway Corridors);
- improve regional air quality by reducing the growth in automobile emissions;
- improve mobility options to employment, education, medical and retail centers for all corridor residents and in particular, low-income, transit dependent, youth, elderly, disabled, and ethnic minority populations; and
- support local economic and land development goals.

The expanded transit system would link the residents of east and south San Jose with the existing light rail system, and provide improved connections and greater mobility options throughout the Santa Clara Valley. Access from the Capitol Expressway Corridor to the employment centers now served by the Guadalupe and Tasman Light Rail Transit (LRT) lines would be provided with the proposed linkage. The proposed project would serve two high schools, two middle schools, a regional shopping facility (Eastridge Mall), three libraries, recreational facilities, and two colleges/universities. Because expanded transit service would be available in the corridor, improved regional air quality could result because of reduced growth in automobile emissions.

Section 1.2 Need

The proposed project is needed to meet projected growth, associated development, and transit needs in the Capitol Expressway Corridor. The information below is based primarily on data from the 2000 United States Census (U.S. Census 2000) and describes the need for the project.

The study area as defined in this section includes the following eight Census tracts located adjacent to the Capitol Expressway Corridor: 5033.05, 5033.06, 5033.21, 5035.06, 5035.10, 5035.11, 5040.01, and 5040.02 (refer to Figure 3.14-2). Census tracts are small subdivisions of a county which the Census Bureau relies on to make statistical comparisons over time.

Table 1-1 lists the population, employment, and housing characteristics of the study area, City, and County. Data for the City and County is provided to compare the study area to the larger urbanized area of which it is a part. Overall, the Capitol Expressway study area contains approximately 3 percent of the County population and 5 percent of the City population. The study area has neighborhoods with an average household size (4.9) that is larger than in either the City or County as a whole (3.2 and 2.9, respectively).

Table 1-1. Population, Employment, and Housing Characteristics

Location	Population	Total Jobs	Household Size
Capitol Expressway Study Area	44,917	6,889	4.9
City of San Jose	894,943	436,890	3.2
Santa Clara County	1,682,585	858,615	2.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000.

Santa Clara County is expected to substantially gain population and employment over the next 20 years. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) projects 512,900 new residents and 427,480 new jobs in Santa Clara County between 2010 and 2035, an increase of 27 and 46 percent respectively. These increases in Santa Clara County outpace the entire nine-county Bay area average, and 68.5 percent of that growth will occur in the City of San Jose. The study area population is expected to rise by 53 percent, from 44,917 persons, in 2000, to 83,710 persons, in 2035. Likewise, jobs are expected to increase by 45 percent from 6,889 jobs, in 2000, to 15,187 jobs, in 2035 (ABAG 2009).

Increases in population and employment tend to correlate with increases in traffic and congestion. This tendency is expected to be worse in the study area since most of the employment centers in the region are located outside of the Capitol Expressway Corridor in downtown San Jose and to the northwest of the study area. Traffic

forecasts for 2035 confirm this tendency in the Capitol Expressway Corridor where traffic is estimated to increase by 60 percent (AECOM 2010), refer to Section 3.1, *Transportation*.

Direct transit service between the study area and employment centers is limited to two routes (Routes 22 and 26) and a few express routes (Routes 103 and 522) that do not serve the entire corridor. In 2014, the current 522 Rapid will be upgraded to Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Service, and an additional line, BRT 523, will be added that will provide 10 minute frequency between downtown San Jose and the Eastridge Transit Center. While these improvements will provide faster and more frequent connections to downtown San Jose, the need for improved service to other major employment centers still exists.

Table 1-2 characterizes the study area, City, and County in terms of transit dependency. Transit dependency is depicted by the population unlikely to drive (those under 18 and over 65 years of age), the number of workers using public transportation, and the number of persons below the poverty line.

Table 1-2. Transit Dependency Characteristics

Location	Persons Under 18	Persons Over 65	Workers Using Transportation	Persons Below the Poverty Line
Capitol Expressway Study Area	31%	7%	4%	11%
City of San Jose	26%	8%	4%	9%
Santa Clara County	25%	10%	4%	8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000.

People under the age of 18 and over 65 are less likely to drive their own vehicles and are therefore more likely to be transit dependent. The percentage of people under 18 is higher in the study area (31 percent) than the City and County (26 percent and 25 percent, respectively). The percentage of people over 65 is slightly lower (7 percent) than the City and County (8 percent and 10 percent, respectively). Most of the individual Census tracts exhibit roughly the same percentages.

The study area, City, and County have the same percentage of workers that use public transportation (4 percent). The individual Census tracts in the study area have varying percentages of workers that use public transportation, varying from 1-5 percent.

The study area has a higher percentage of people living below the poverty line (11 percent) than the City and County (9 percent and 8 percent, respectively). For individual Census tracts, the percentage of people living below the poverty line varies from 4-15 percent (U.S. Census 2000). The average household income of San Jose is \$70,243, while the study area is higher, averaging \$94,924, with a range of \$74,241 to \$146,794 per household for individual Census tracts (ABAG 2009). However, on a per capita level, the average income of the study area (\$16,234) is lower than the City

(\$26,697) and the County (\$32,795) (U.S. Census 2000). The study area also has a lower percentage (43 percent) of employed residents than the County (51 percent) and the City¹ (48 percent) (ABAG 2009).

Overall, the proposed project is needed to sustain the growth in population, jobs and transit demand in the study area.

¹ For the Environmental Justice section, data on the poverty line and household income for the study area and the City were updated based on the 2010 U.S. Census. For the study area, the percentage of people living below the poverty line increased (varies from 3.3 - 20.5 percent) as it did for the City (15.3 percent). For the study area, median income decreased (varies from \$44,831 - \$117,303) relative to the City (\$79,405) with only one census tract (5033.21) higher than the City.