



Bicycle-Friendly Berkeley Coalition
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January 19, 2004

Cristina Ferraz, Project Manager
Department of Transportation, District 4
P.O. Box 23660
Oakland, CA 94623-0660

Re: Caldecott Improvement Project

Dear Ms. Ferraz:

The Bicycle-Friendly Berkeley Coalition is concerned about traffic volumes and traffic safety in neighborhoods of Berkeley and Oakland already adversely affected by Caldecott Tunnel traffic. We are also greatly concerned about the livability of these nearby neighborhoods that suffer daily due to heavy traffic volumes on their streets. In addition, there is a great need for bicycle access across SR 24 at Lake Temescal Park. Because of this, we provide the following comments on the scope of the project's EIR Caltrans will be preparing in the coming months.

Our most important request is this: please make sure that Caltrans includes as part of the EIR a full study of the impacts on local neighborhoods, including air quality impacts and noise impacts, traffic safety impacts (including the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists), and the impacts on neighborhood livability. In this respect, we join the previously expressed concerns of the Cities of Orinda and Lafayette.

In the *Route 24/Caldecott Tunnel Corridor Study*, January 2001, in §7.233 it is stated that the impacts on local traffic would be minimal with a new 4th bore, but that a formal environmental analysis would provide a more detailed assessment of the impacts on local streets. We would like Caltrans to fully study the impact increased highway traffic will have on local neighborhoods. We also want to request that Caltrans do a full noise impact and neighborhood livability analysis of increased highway traffic. It is important to us, as it is to many local residents, that the public

have full information on the negative impacts of freeway projects, before final public approval is given. It is also important, as you know, that full disclosure of environmental impacts be studied and provided by an EIR in order for the EIR to be legally sufficient.

We also wish to point out that Caltrans, MTC, and other transportation planning agencies have a responsibility to address the *existing* problem of traffic safety, traffic volumes, and neighborhood livability in the nearby neighborhoods, aside from any plans to add a 4th bore. Because of decisions made in the last several decades, more traffic uses local streets than these streets can handle. As a result, air pollution and noise pollution have increased to dangerous levels, and traffic safety is at an all time worse. This problem has to be addressed and it is your agency, in cooperation with other agencies, that has the responsibility. We trust you agree with our concerns and will fully address this issue as part of the proposed project.

Furthermore, please study every alternative that reduces the number of vehicles on our streets. In connection with this, please study an alternative of charging tolls for all single-occupant vehicles using the Tunnel. The above study did not address this issue, choosing instead to look at HOT lanes. The study of tolls should extend to all single-occupant vehicles, not just those opting to pay for use of a toll lane.

Finally, as mitigation for the numerous adverse impacts of the existing tunnel and proposed 4th bore, we request that a new bicycle/pedestrian bridge be constructed from the upper end of Tunnel Rd., across the barrier created by highway 24, over to Lake Temescal. A new bridge like this would provide a vital link for bicyclists between the Montclair District of Oakland and the southside area of Berkeley, including UC Berkeley. Your full analysis of charging all single-occupant vehicles a toll for use of the tunnel should shed light on how much money is available to pay for such an important and needed mitigation.

We look forward to Caltrans changing its traditional approach to freeway building by joining with local communities to improve neighborhood livability, and specifically by taking a leading roll in studying the effects that freeway projects have on local communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dave Campbell
President

cc: BFBC Board of Directors
Berkeley City Council
Berkeley Transportation Commission
Robert Raburn, East Bay Bicycle Coalition