

**MEMORANDUM**

Date: October 18, 2012

To: Craig Scott, City of Cloverdale

Cc: Therese Trivedi, MTC  
Sailaja Kurella, ABAG

From: Ryan McClain

**Subject: City of Cloverdale FOCUS Final Report (Task 3.0)**

WC11-2824

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The FOCUS Program, led by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), with support from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), is a development and conservation strategy that promotes a more compact land use pattern for the Bay Area. The program provides financial assistance to Priority Development Areas (PDAs) that have a high level of transit accessibility and potential for redevelopment. The Downtown/SMART Transit Area in the City of Cloverdale is identified as a PDA and received a technical assistance grant to work with Caltrans to move the Cloverdale Greenway and Tarman Pedestrian Access projects forward.

The purpose of this report is to document the City of Cloverdale's experience and lessons learned in the process of working with Caltrans to develop mutually acceptable designs for the two projects. This report provides a case study for other jurisdictions wishing to pursue nonstandard roadway designs that require Caltrans approval.

**PROJECT BACKGROUND**

The City of Cloverdale Station Area/Downtown Plan adopted July 2010, provides recommendations to improve the connection between Downtown Cloverdale west of US 101 and the Cloverdale rail depot east of US 101. Item (g) of the *Building the Vision* section of the Plan states:

**“Create a strong transportation network to connect the downtown and the community to the SMART train depot and to improve community access to the downtown.”**

The plan identifies three steps toward achieving this goal, the first two of which are the subject of this FOCUS study.

The first step is to create a pedestrian connection from the Tarman tract to Citrus Fair Drive, by constructing a passage through the existing sound wall at the end of South Street. The soundwall was constructed as part of the US 101 bypass project. This new connection would allow pedestrians and bicyclists traveling between the Tarman Tract neighborhood and the Cloverdale Depot to bypass the Cloverdale Boulevard/Citrus Fair Drive intersection, thus, reducing travel distance by approximately 700 feet.

The second step toward connecting the community to the SMART train depot is to create a Cloverdale Greenway along Citrus Fair Drive to improve pedestrian and bicycle connections between Downtown Cloverdale and Cloverdale Depot. This would occur by reducing the four-lane divided road to a two-lane road, and converting the remaining lanes to pedestrian and bicycle paths. The reduction from four lanes to two lanes on Citrus Fair Drive would continue through the US 101 interchange and would require reconfiguration of the northbound and southbound US 101 ramp terminal intersections.

This FOCUS study included traffic operations analysis on Citrus Fair Drive, conceptual level designs and cost estimates, Caltrans coordination, and documentation for the Tarman Pedestrian Access and Cloverdale Greenway projects. Initial work included a review of completed traffic studies from the Cloverdale General Plan Background Report and the Cloverdale Rancheria Environmental Impact Statement (Task 1.1). The City of Cloverdale Station Area/Downtown Plan was also reviewed in detail to understand the overall context of the projects (Task 1.2).

## **CALTRANS COORDINATION**

Since both the Tarman Pedestrian Access and Cloverdale Greenway projects require construction within State right-of-way, Caltrans approval is required. Coordination with Caltrans District 4 throughout the development of the projects is critical to their success. Involving Caltrans early in the process will help reduce future issues and delay by identifying concerns at the concept level.

### ***Initial Coordination***

The initial concepts for both projects were presented to Caltrans during development of the Station Area Plan, prior to this FOCUS study. The focus of the presentation was on the overall concept of providing bicycle/pedestrian access between downtown and the train depot. At the time of the presentation, Beth Thomas, Caltrans Community Planning Branch Chief, was identified as the main point of contact for Caltrans coordination; however, Sergio Ruiz on Beth's staff eventually took over this role.

### ***Site Visit (Task 1.3)***

The first step toward engaging Caltrans in this FOCUS study was to schedule a site visit with Caltrans and the City of Cloverdale. The purpose of the meeting was to tour the site in order to identify constraints, concerns, and opportunities presented by the two projects. Ideally, the size of the group for such a meeting shouldn't exceed eight; otherwise it's difficult for all participants to be included in conversations in the field.

Scheduling the meeting proved difficult due to the lengthy travel time between the District 4 offices and Cloverdale, and travel restrictions placed on State of California employees in mid-2011; however, since Caltrans participation was seen as critical, the site visit was delayed until all identified attendees were able to attend. Fehr & Peers staff coordinated internally and with City of Cloverdale staff; Sergio Ruiz coordinated the schedules of Caltrans employees.

Attendees included:

- Beth Thomas, Caltrans District 4 Community Planning Branch
- Sergio Ruiz, Caltrans District 4 Community Planning Branch
- Jonathan Lee, Caltrans District 4 Design, North Counties
- Phillipe Van, Caltrans District 4 Traffic Safety
- Susan Lindsay, Caltrans District 4 Office of Landscape Architecture
- Paul Wade, Cloverdale contract City Engineer
- Ryan McClain, Fehr & Peers transportation engineer
- Matthew Ridgway, Fehr & Peers transportation planner

Preliminary conceptual designs were provided to attendees several weeks prior to the site visit. This allowed Caltrans to identify areas of concern that could then be further investigated onsite. Providing these plans in advance was critical to receiving valuable feedback during the site visit and establishing where to focus attention. While the site visit was intended to cover areas both inside and outside of Caltrans right-of-way, Caltrans attendees returned to Oakland without reviewing the portions of the site outside State right-of-way. While it wasn't essential that they tour both project areas in their entirety, doing so would have provided Caltrans with additional project context. It is recommended that on future projects, Caltrans take part in the entire site visit.

***Draft Technical Memorandum (Task 1.4)***

Following the site visit, Fehr & Peers developed a preliminary technical memo that:

- Summarized the goal of the Tarman Pedestrian Access and Cloverdale Greenway projects
- Presented existing conditions at both sites
- Described the proposed projects
- Provided schematic designs of the Greenway
- Discussed the technical aspects of the projects, including intersection treatments, the design vehicle, needed design exceptions, a level of service analysis, potential mitigations
- Estimated the cost to deliver the projects and
- Laid out next steps in their development.

### ***District 4 Meeting (Task 2.1)***

Upon completion of the Draft Tarman Pedestrian Access and Cloverdale Greenway Concept Study Technical Memorandum, a meeting was scheduled at the Caltrans District 4 office in Oakland to solicit additional feedback on the conceptual design and traffic operations analysis. A copy of the study was provided to meeting attendees several weeks prior to the meeting. In addition to those who participated in the site visit, meeting attendees also included the following:

- Larry Moore, Caltrans Headquarters Design
- Ina Gerhard, Caltrans District 4 Bicycle Coordinator

Consistency between those who participated in the site visit and those who attended the meeting, coupled with the opportunity for participants to review the written materials in advance of the meeting, contributed to a productive meeting and avoided the need to repeat information and revisit points that had already been made.

### ***Final Technical Memorandum (Task 2.2)***

Caltrans and Cloverdale staff provided beneficial feedback during and subsequent to the District 4 meeting. Feedback was incorporated into the final Tarman Pedestrian Access and Cloverdale Greenway Concept Study Technical Memorandum.

### ***Results***

As a result of coordinating with Caltrans staff from multiple branches early in the process, concepts for both projects were developed that had informal Caltrans buy-in and could be moved forward with just one design exception: non-standard shoulder width on Citrus Fair Drive which is similar to existing conditions.

Though Caltrans does not have a formal process to approve concept plans, they did provide a letter to the City of Cloverdale documenting the efforts to date, the coordination between the City and Caltrans, and support for the projects. This letter may be used in support of grant funding that the City may pursue for the projects.

The costs to construct the projects were estimated to be less than \$1 million within the State right-of-way. This allows the projects to be constructed under the encroachment permit process. This process allows local jurisdictions to make improvements within State right-of-way without going through the complete Project Report and Project Study Report processes required for larger scale projects, which can require much more time and are costlier. Projects that exceed \$1 million but are less than \$3 million to construct can still be completed using an encroachment permit, but require additional documentation and oversight by Caltrans. Projects that cost over \$3 million follow the traditional project development process, including development of a Project

Report and Project Study Report. Details of the encroachment permit process and requirements is provided in the Caltrans Encroachment Permit Manual<sup>1</sup>

### ***Limitations***

A Caltrans project number was not issued during this FOCUS study because the projects have not yet entered the permitting stage. This limits the amount of formal review that Caltrans is able to perform at this time. For example, they did not review the traffic analysis that was included in the Tarman Pedestrian Access and Cloverdale Greenway Concept Study Technical Memorandum, and will need to do so before formal Caltrans approval can occur. Also, at this stage, while informal consensus was achieved, Caltrans has not formally approved the design, so there is a possibility that they could raise additional concerns in the future.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

#### ***Successes***

By engaging Caltrans early in the process, the FOCUS study was successful in receiving valuable feedback from Caltrans and addressing their concerns. While a formal approval was not achievable, the process will help avoid major issues or fatal flaws as the projects progress into design and construction. Working with Caltrans also demonstrates the City's desire to make this a cooperative, collaborative experience and takes advantage of Caltrans's level of statewide knowledge and experience.

#### ***Challenges***

As described above, the biggest challenges were related to schedule. The distance from the Caltrans office to the site required additional travel time and approvals. This meant the site visit did not occur until several months after the study began. It is therefore recommended to begin scheduling site visits and meetings as far in advance as possible, perhaps even before conceptual designs are ready for review.

#### ***Next Steps***

With the completion of the Tarman Pedestrian Access and Cloverdale Greenway Concept Study Technical Memorandum and a conceptual plan, the next steps to make these projects a reality are environmental clearance and final design, including details such as grading, drainage, and landscaping.

Since the portion of the projects within the State right-of-way is estimated to cost less than \$1 million to construct, a Caltrans encroachment permit is sufficient for construction. An encroachment permit application will be required to initiate formal review of final design plans and environmental documentation by Caltrans. During the review process, the Caltrans Permit Engineer or another functional unit may require a Permit Engineering Evaluation Report (PEER) if

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<sup>1</sup> Caltrans Encroachment Permit Manual available online at:  
[http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops/developserv/permits/encroachment\\_permits\\_manual/index.html](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops/developserv/permits/encroachment_permits_manual/index.html)

they determine that the projects may affect highway operations or liability. It is therefore recommended that the permit process be initiated as soon as the projects move into this next phase. At that time, Caltrans will review the traffic operations analysis that was completed as part of this study.

### ***Funding Opportunities***

A funding source for final design, environmental clearance, and construction has not yet been identified for these projects. Funding could come from a combination of local, regional, state, and/or federal sources, including competitive grants. The following opportunities have been used successfully to fund other bicycle/pedestrian projects in the San Francisco Bay Area.

- MTC's Safe Routes to Transit (SR2T) grant program, administered by TransForm and the East Bay Bicycle Coalition, provides funding to improve bicycle and/or pedestrian access in close proximity to or within existing regional transit facilities. By improving bicycle and pedestrian access to regional bus, and in the future, rail service, the Cloverdale projects would be excellent candidates for this program. The final funding cycle will occur in 2013 with \$4 million available and applications likely due in August 2013.
- The OneBayArea Grant program established by MTC and administered locally by the Sonoma County Transportation Authority SCTA, has recently released its call for projects. A portion of these funds are set aside for Transportation Alternatives, which includes bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Additionally, 50 percent of the funds must go to projects within a PDA, such as the Tarman Pedestrian Access and Cloverdale Greenway projects. Applications are due November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2012.
- The Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) is a core federal-aid program that aims to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries on public roads. Caltrans administers the program in California. HSIP funds can be used for projects that improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and for traffic calming measures. The Cloverdale Greenway has both of these features. Applications that identify a history of incidents and demonstrate their project's improvement to safety are most competitive for funding; therefore, a collision study would be needed for the Cloverdale Greenway project. Applications for the next funding cycle will likely be due in July 2013.
- At the County level, Sonoma County voters passed Measure M in 2004, which established a ¼ cent sales tax through 2025 to address transportation needs. Funds from this sales tax are administered by SCTA, with four percent of funding dedicated to bicycle and pedestrian projects. While the Tarman Pedestrian Access and Cloverdale Greenway projects are not currently programmed in the Measure M Strategic Plan, they could be added in the future and fit with the program's goal of providing safe routes to transit.
- At the local level, the City could add the projects to their existing development impact fee program. These are fees paid by developers on a per unit basis for residential development and a square footage basis for commercial and industrial development, and are used for City services and infrastructure improvements. This source of funding would be dependent on the level of development that occurs within the City.