

Mr. Brad Beck  
Senior Transportation Planner  
Contra Costa Transportation Authority  
By fax: 925 407 0128

**RE: Recommendation to include Carlson Blvd in Countywide Bicycle Network**

Dear Mr. Beck:

We respectfully request that Carlson Boulevard from 23<sup>rd</sup> Street in Richmond to Central Avenue in El Cerrito be included in the Countywide Bicycle Network as an on-street facility. The portion of Carlson south of Central is already part of the recommended network. The length of the requested addition is three miles.

Existing Bicycling Patterns

Carlson Blvd. could provide an important regional bicycle route for residents in the Richmond Addition to El Cerrito Plaza BART. Residents in Central Richmond would also be able to utilize Carlson to access Richmond BART (via 23<sup>rd</sup> St. or the Richmond Greenway and Marina Way) as well as job sites that are accessible from Carlson. Figure 9 in the *Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Issues and Options Report* clearly depicts a bicycle mode demand for BART access from Richmond Addition residents.

Roadway Conditions

The existing four-lane configuration of Carlson Blvd in the El Cerrito and the Richmond addition is unwarranted given the low traffic volumes. This segment could best be reconfigured from 4-lanes to a 3-lane "road diet" with bike lanes. This would also serve to reduce speeding in this residential area. To the northwest of I-80, the wide ROW is sufficient to incorporate on-street bikeways. Speeding is a greater problem in this segment, yet the few intersections would allow bicyclists to safely share this important road if room for bicyclists were provided on the road.

General Connectivity and Directness of Route

Carlson Blvd. offers the most direct route for Richmond Addition residents to both Richmond and El Cerrito Plaza BART stations. Other recommended routes that Carlson crosses are the Richmond Greenway and Cutting Boulevard. The Richmond Greenway offers access to Richmond BART and Cutting Blvd. provides access to El Cerrito del Norte BART. Most importantly, Carlson Blvd. overcomes the barrier posed by I-80 in this area. At the southern end, the proposed Cerrito Creek crossing of San Pablo would serve both the proposed Cerrito Creek path and bicyclists on Carlson.

Destinations Served

The schools along the route include: Alvarado School; University of California Engineering Field Station; Gompers School; and John F. Kennedy High School.

The parks along the route include: Hungington Ave. Playground; Crescent Park Center and Bayview Branch Library; East Shore Park; and Boorman Welcome Park.

The employment centers along the route include: El Cerrito Plaza; University of California Engineering Field Station and nearby warehouse and manufacturing sites.

#### Topography and Gradients

The flat route is inland and roughly parallel to the Bay Shore along the Bay Plain. The elevation of Carlson Boulevard varies from about 20' to 30' above sea level.

#### Integration into the Regional System

At the southern end, Carlson Boulevard connects with Adams St in the *Alameda Countywide Bicycle Plan*. It also intersects San Pablo Avenue, identified on the MTC's *Regional Bicycle Plan*. The proposed Cerrito Creek crossing of San Pablo would serve both the proposed Cerrito Creek spur path of the Bay Trail and bicyclists on Carlson Boulevard. The existing Ohlone Trail is also nearby and serves to extend the route from El Cerrito through Albany and into Berkeley. Toward the northern end, Carlson Blvd intersects the Central Richmond Greenway, a project included in the *Regional Bicycle Plan*.

#### Presence of Reasonable Alternatives for Bicyclists of Various Skill Levels

As an on-street facility, Carlson Blvd. would primarily appeal to adult bicyclists, likely to travel along all or a majority of the route. No reasonable alternative to Carlson Blvd. exists for crossing I-80. The entirety of this spine route has no continuous alternative. For shorter trips, such as those likely to be taken by younger bicyclists, adjacent neighborhood streets provide alternative routes and also serve as a feeder network.

#### Collision and Safety Data

The *Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, Issues and Options* Report contains crash data depicted in a map titled, "Bicyclist Collisions in West County" (p.73). This map shows cluster of crashes on Carlson Blvd. at the I-80 undercrossing and near Central Avenue. These data clearly call for countermeasures to enhance bicyclist safety at these locations. Overall, a bikeway along Carlson Blvd. would help reduce the dispersed crashes along the route that are attributed to the existing inadequate room for bicyclists to safely share the road with motorists.

In conclusion, we greatly appreciate the efforts taken to prepare a *Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan*. We believe that the inclusion of Carlson Blvd. as a bikeway will enhance the long-term value of this document for West County residents.