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# Memorandum

**TO:** Steering Committee Members

**FROM:** Winston Rhodes, AICP, Planning Manager

**SUBJECT:** Draft Circulation Background Report and Draft Circulation Element

**DATE:** January 11, 2010

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## Background

The Circulation Element Subcommittee reviewed draft Circulation Element and revised Background Report on December 3 and December 8, 2009. A copy of the revised draft Background Report and draft Circulation Element was forwarded electronically and in hard copy form on December 21, 2009. The material provided last month included both a “clean” version without edits noted and a copy in track changes mode that reflected the Circulation Subcommittee direction. Attachment A includes a revised Circulation Element with additional changes consistent with the Subcommittee direction. The substantive changes in the attached document are as follows:

- Figures have been added to the draft Circulation Element
- Policy 3.1 was modified to include volume to capacity (V/C) thresholds that will in conjunction with Figure 7.4 provide traffic operation significance thresholds for intersections along City of Pinole roadways.

The Background Report describes existing transportation conditions and the Draft Element provides the primary General Plan policy direction on transportation issues.

## Discussion

Some of the major changes made to the Circulation Element are summarized below:

The draft Circulation Element does not specifically mention AMTRAK service upgrades and BART service extension within West Contra Costa County.

The Draft Element utilizes different traffic levels of service (LOS) roadway performance standards than the existing Circulation Element.

- The Draft Element includes a lower( LOS F) standard rather than the current LOS E+ standard for the portion of San Pablo Avenue that is located within the Old Town Area (Oak Ridge to western City limits).
- The Draft Element includes a lower (LOS E-) standard rather than the current LOS D+ standard for portions of Pinole Valley Road (from Shea Drive to Pear Street), portions of Appian Way (from Mann Drive to I-80) and a portion of Tara Hills Drive (from Appian Way to Shawn Drive).
- The Draft Element includes a slightly higher (LOS D) standard than the current LOS D- for a portion of Pinole Valley Road (from Simas to the southern City limits).

These LOS changes above reflect greater emphasis on encouraging use of multiple modes of travel especially within the Old Town area. The draft element does include policy direction (see Policy CE.3.2 and CE.3.3 and related actions on pgs. 7.0-22 & -23) to ensure all projects pay their fair share of projects impacts on the circulation network to meet established LOS thresholds. The Steering Committee may want to consider whether the policies or actions need to be supplemented to address potential mitigation for incremental changes to LOS levels that are at or above established LOS thresholds.

- The Draft Element places greater policy emphasis on encouraging less single occupant auto travel and calls for more emphasis on non-capacity roadway improvements that relieve traffic congestions by making it easier to utilize other transportation modes. The policy shift reflects the effort to pursue a more sustainable transportation system that can help reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions over time.

Staff has the following recommendations for Steering Committee consideration to clarify the latest draft circulation information and correct several figures:

1. Additional policy language may be needed to address mitigation requirements for incremental decreases in roadway performance resulting from smaller infill projects that may not cause the level of service to drop below an established threshold. This language would strive to ensure that smaller projects contribute towards future necessary roadway improvements. This policy language could be added to Policy CE 3.2 or 3.3 or supporting actions and involve calling for a nexus study to quantify LOS changes that would trigger required mitigation utilizing various available approaches to address incremental worsening of traffic LOS.
2. Bus Service Map (Figure 7.1) – Add AC Transit Route 70 to Appian Way and Fitzgerald Drive. Add AC Transit Route 376 to I-80, Richmond Parkway, and Fitzgerald Drive.
3. Level of Service Thresholds (Figure 7.4) – Clarify that the LOS thresholds apply to intersections within the noted roadway segments and clarify the pertinent level of service when roadway segments with different LOS thresholds meet at a particular intersection. In addition, staff recommends that the Figure 7.4 legend include the V/C ratios that apply to each LOS threshold so readers do not have to flip back and forth between the Policy 3.1 language and the Figure.
4. Modify the Old Town Parking Figure (Figure 7.5) to note the existing public parking lot near the intersection of Park Street and Buena Vista Drive. Cross reference Figure 7.5 in Action CE.5.1.2.

5. Traffic Calming Program – Modify the traffic calming paragraph on page 5.0-33 of the draft Circulation Background Report and 7.0-13 of the draft Circulation Element to read as follows:

*Neighborhoods wishing to install or remove speed humps on local or collector streets within residential areas may submit an application to the Public Works Department. According to the adopted residential traffic calming policy approved by the City Council on April 21, 2009, the installation or removal of speed humps require approval from 65% of the property owners within a defined area.*

Steering Committee feedback and direction is desired on the draft Circulation Element so that it can be refined and finalized for study in the General Plan EIR.

Attachments:

- A. Revised Draft Circulation Element (without track changes noted)