

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The “State Route 29 Gateway Corridor Improvement Plan” is a planning project, led by the Napa County Transportation and Planning Agency (NCTPA), to develop a community-driven vision and improvement strategy for the southern portion of California State Route 29 (SR 29). The portion of SR 29 considered constitutes an important “gateway” to the Napa Valley as an experience and also as a corridor through which considerable regional traffic must pass.

The project area extends seventeen miles from the Vallejo ferry terminal at the southern end to Napa’s Trancas Park and Ride lot bus node at the northern end. Jurisdictions through which the corridor passes include: the City of Napa, unincorporated Napa County, the City of American Canyon, and the City of Vallejo. Napa County, Solano County and Caltrans have an interest in the project as an important part of county- and region-wide transportation networks. Caltrans owns and controls the SR 29 right of way and has made this project possible with a \$300,000 grant to implement its community-based planning program.

The project brings together diverse interests and addresses the needs and desires of residents, commuters, business owners, visitors and stakeholders, to improve mobility, safety, and community character along the Corridor. The project also considers the role played by all transportation modes including auto, truck, bus, rail, bicycle and pedestrian.

## Objectives

Specific objectives were developed as part of the project, which were used to identify appropriate improvement strategies and implementation measures. These objectives included:

**Transportation Performance.** The Improvement Plan will help minimize traffic congestion through the corridor, while enhancing pedestrian, bicycle and transit routes. Through traffic and local access needs will be addressed.

**Advanced Technologies and Programs.** Project goals will be advanced by the best available technologies and by “transportation demand management” (TDM) and other programs that can affect corridor use in beneficial ways.

**Physical and Design Improvements.** The Improvement Plan will include recommendations for physical modifications to enhance transportation improvements, but also to enhance the character of each community and support desirable adjacent development patterns.

**Implementation Tools.** The Plan will include strategies for implementing programs and improvements, such as financing tools and timing improvements to correspond with the timing of adjacent development.

**Alignment with each community’s aspirations.** NCTPA recognizes that the “right” design improvements or transportation programs mean different things to different communities, and may vary depending on whether the highway is passing through urban commercial areas, industrial areas, or rural farmland. Stakeholders and interest groups from all of these communities should have the opportunity to share their vision for how the corridor should be improved, which helps to ensure that the ultimate improvements that the Plan identifies will be effective and context-sensitive.

## PROCESS

### Project Phases

The project included two major phases: Vision and Implementation.

**Phase I: Vision.** The Vision for the corridor describes a long-term vision for each unique segment of the highway based on community preferences and regional transportation needs. In written and graphic form, the Vision is comprised of general goals and strategic objectives. The Vision addresses transportation performance and describes the community character aspired to in specific locations.

**Phase II: Implementation.** The Implementation Program recommends specific physical modifications and transportation programs for the corridor. Physical improvements include different ways of configuring through traffic, local traffic, transit, bicycle paths, and pedestrian environments. Transportation programs include new technologies, transportation demand management programs, or other policy-related actions to be undertaken by NCTPA and/or participating jurisdictions. Improvements have the potential to stimulate desirable forms of development and redevelopment on adjacent parcels. Place-based design guidelines are described, and strategies for prioritizing and financing improvements are addressed.

The results of both phases are combined here into the final Gateway Corridor Improvement

Plan. Technical analysis of existing conditions and modeling of future scenarios help inform development of both the Vision and the recommended improvements.

### Community Input

The SR 29 corridor community played a critical role in formulating the initial goals and objectives, ideas, vision, and ultimate recommendations for the corridor. Community members, elected officials, staff, Caltrans representatives, and other stakeholders participated throughout the process in a series of committee meetings and general public events. The formal committees that helped directly steer the process are described below.

#### Committees

The “Citizens Advisory Committee” (CAC) was formed to be a working group to review ideas, materials and recommendations, and to provide guidance for revisions and further development. The purpose of the CAC was to help ensure that all stakeholder perspectives would be considered, and to identify and address potential disagreements early on.

A “Staff Working Group” (SWG) also reviewed ideas, materials and recommendations in a process that roughly paralleled review by the CAC. The SWG was comprised of staff representatives from each of the participating jurisdictions, and reviewed draft recommendations critically to ensure consistency with policies, standards, and local community direction.

Input from the CAC and SWG was incorporated into recommendations that then went before to the “Corridor Steering Committee” (CSC) for formal action. The CSC consisted of mayors and other top-level decision-makers from jurisdictions with an interest in the project. CSC members are expected to work with their respective City Councils and Boards to adopt policies and programs to implement this project’s recommendations upon Plan adoption.

#### Stakeholder Interviews

Supporting the recommendations of the committees and the input gained from the workshops, the planning team conducted a series of interviews with additional stakeholders along the corridor. These focused on commuters using some or all of the corridor on a frequent or daily basis. Forty interviews were conducted by phone during the visioning stage of the process. Interviewees were selected to represent key community sectors including business developers, non-profit organizations, law enforcement, environmental advocates and concerned citizens.

#### Community Workshops

Two community “visioning workshops” were held in November 2012 to solicit input on the SR 29 Gateway Corridor Improvement Plan. The workshops were designed to engage a diverse set of community members representing a range of interests. The workshops provided opportunities for discussion and direct input relating to the development of a “Vision Plan” for the corridor. More detail on the input gained at this series of workshops is found in Chapter 3: Vision.

A second round of community workshops was held in February 2014 to review and comment on the Public Review Draft Implementation Plan. These workshops were conducted in an “open house” format and allowed community members the opportunity to learn about recommendations for various segments of the corridor, review proposed modifications, ask questions, and provide their feedback.

## ORGANIZATION OF THIS PLAN

The SR 29 Gateway Corridor Improvement Plan is organized into five chapters. Following this introduction, these are:

**Existing Conditions**, summarizing current physical conditions along the study corridor, as well as applicable local plans and policies that affect the roadway and adjacent development. Existing transportation conditions are also described, including roadway and intersection level of service, bicycle and pedestrian conditions, transit service, and current proposed projects.

**Vision**, describing the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles for corridor programs and improvements. The Vision chapter describes the results of the community workshops that helped create the vision, as well as specific preliminary recommendations for each segment of the corridor, upon which the proposals were based.

**Proposed Program**, describing the specific physical improvements recommended for each major segment and intersection of the study corridor.

Each section includes a narrative and graphics that describe existing and proposed conditions, alternatives considered, projected performance at buildout, and any constraints on implementation. Corridor-wide urban design guidelines and other community character-related recommendations are also included, as well as proposed improvements for active transportation (bicycles and pedestrians) and public transit service.

**Implementation**, including preliminary cost estimation of the various proposed improvements, potential funding sources, recommended phasing of the various improvements, and governance recommendations for implementing the plan across multiple jurisdictions.

## NEXT STEPS

Recommendations of this plan and the subsequent study will be used to inform other relevant planning documents and implementation programs, such as the Countywide Transportation Plan for Napa County, which will prioritize and direct funding for specific improvement projects. The plan will also guide the preparation of more detailed designs for roadway and intersection modifications by Caltrans and the other jurisdictions—the next steps necessary to program, fund, and initiate construction of a range of improvements that will result in a more balanced, comprehensive, multimodal transportation system for the corridor.

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