

Napa Gateway Highway 29 Corridor Improvement Plan

**EMERGING VISION, GUIDING
PRINCIPLES,
AND OBJECTIVES**

For review by the Corridor Steering Committee

DRAFT

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Corridor Improvement Plan

The objective of the Gateway Corridor Improvement Plan process is to outline a vision and an implementation plan for improving State Route 29 (SR 29) between the cities of Vallejo and Napa, passing through the City of American Canyon and portions of unincorporated Napa County. This route is one of the most significant transportation corridors in Napa County, is often congested in several stretches especially during the peak hours, and improvements to the corridor have been long sought. As a State Highway, SR 29 is within the jurisdiction of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), which owns the right-of-way and maintains the highway. The planning effort will bring together diverse stakeholders from throughout the community and will consider the part played by all transportation modes including ferry, auto, truck, bus, rail, air, bicycle and pedestrian. The plan will address the needs of residents, visitors, businesses and school children focusing on community-based solutions to improve corridor safety, aesthetics and mobility.

The project will address 13.3 miles of the SR 29 corridor between the City of American Canyon and the Trancas Street Park and Ride lot in north Napa. It will also address linkages to the Vallejo Transit Center/Ferry Terminal, the new downtown Napa transit center, and incorporate input from planning work currently underway in the Sonoma Boulevard corridor (SR 29) in the City of Vallejo. The principal thrust will be improvements to SR 29 in American Canyon.

The route passes through both urban and rural areas as well as industrial/business parks adjacent to the Napa County Airport, and adjoins an active freight rail line. There is currently fixed route and paratransit bus service along the corridor. A continuous Class 1 bikeway (The Napa Valley Vine Trail) is currently being planned along the corridor and extensive additional bicycle facilities are also being planned nearby in association with the Bay Trail program. The corridor also serves the Napa County airport and nine industrial/business parks located between the cities of Napa and American Canyon. Altogether this is the most active transportation corridor in Napa County and also provides a major point of access between the rest of the Bay Area region and Napa County.

Within American Canyon, SR 29 also serves as the city's main thoroughfare and provides access to places visited by local residents and regional customers needing retail goods and services. Future development of transportation infrastructure in this corridor has a potential to provide even greater multi-modal access for thousands of local residents, daily commuters and millions of yearly visitors to Napa County.

This corridor is the most rapidly changing area in Napa County, and this project will energetically organize comprehensive community and stakeholder input to help plan the most effective use of the existing and planned transportation system. The Plan will introduce context-sensitive design solutions for existing and planned arterials including SR 29 and its connections to SR 37, SR 12,

SR 121, SR 221 as well as potential expansions of parallel routes in the City of American Canyon.

1.2 Role of the Vision Plan

The project includes two major phases: a Vision Plan and an Implementation Plan, which will be combined to create the final Corridor Plan.

The Vision Plan. The Vision Plan (this document) outlines a long-term high-level vision for the corridor based on community preferences and regional transportation needs. It consists of an overall vision, guiding principles, and objectives that describe general goals for transportation across all modes, as well as organizing concepts for long-term character of highway improvements along the corridor.

Guiding principles and objectives have been drafted to define overarching goals before focusing on specific design options and other recommendations. The draft principles and objectives build on adopted local policies and reflect common themes that emerged at the following meetings and workshops:

- Community Workshops on November 13 and 29, 2012
- The Citizens Advisory Committee on December 19, 2012 and February 6, 2012
- Staff Working Group on August 30, 2012 and February 21, 2013
- The Corridor Steering Committee on November 16, 2012; and March 21, 2013 (planned)
- Phone interviews conducted on January 16-19, 2013

All highway types described in the Vision Plan can be designed in ways that can handle preliminary estimates of future traffic volumes in the corridor. There is a wide range of design options associated with each of the highway types suggested, which will be explored and developed after a general direction for the corridor has been agreed to. After input on design options has been received, traffic modeling will be used to ensure that adequate capacity is provided and that the designs are refined to optimize performance across all modes.

Design options and detailed traffic modeling will occur during development of the Implementation Plan.

The Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan will be developed after a general direction has been established with the Vision Plan. The Implementation Plan will recommend transportation programs and physical design improvements. Transportation programs include new technologies or transportation demand management programs. Physical improvements include different ways of configuring through traffic, local traffic, transit, bicycle paths, and pedestrian environments along the Corridor. Improvements have the potential to stimulate desirable forms of development and redevelopment on adjacent parcels. Strategies for financing improvements will be addressed.

2 Emerging Vision, Guiding Principles, and Objectives

2.1 Input to the Vision Plan

The Emerging Vision is a community-based product of several months of public input and focused review by the various committees associated with the Highway 29 Corridor Gateway Improvement Plan. The following summary describes how community engagement formed the basis for the Vision, as well as the specific input provided by the Community Advisory Committee and the Staff Working Group.

COMMUNITY AND COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

Visioning Workshops

Two community “visioning workshops” were held in November 2012 to solicit input on the Highway 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.

Over fifty community members participated between the two workshops. The first workshop was held in American Canyon on November 13, 2012; 29 community members attended and most were American Canyon residents. The second workshop was held in the city of Napa on November 27, 2012; 22 community members attended with participants split between Napa and American Canyon as their place of residence.

Participants identified many common themes surrounding the performance and character of the corridor, including the conflict between local and regional through traffic; a desire for improved pedestrian and bicycle access; the importance of beautification and community identity; and the challenges of reducing automobile congestion. These themes directly informed the guiding principles and objectives presented in the Emerging Vision Plan.

Workshop participants also took part in a mapping exercise, in which they were given stickers representing different roadway types and other transportation-related amenities (trails, pedestrian crossings, etc.). In small groups, participants placed the stickers on a large map of the corridor to illustrate their desired roadway character and potential improvements. A synthesis of the small groups’ maps and sticker placements formed the basis of the Highway Character Diagram presented in this document.

Citizens Advisory Committee

The feedback from the workshops was presented to the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) on December 19, 2012; the CAC was asked to affirm the general vision for the corridor that resulted from the workshops. Then, the first draft of the Vision Plan was presented to the CAC on February 6, 2013. The CAC engaged in a discussion in which members provided specific feedback on the draft, which the consultant team used to refine the document before presenting it to the Staff Working Group. Key contributions on the Draft Vision Plan included:

- Clarifying that any identified parallel routes to Highway 29 through American Canyon should be designed for local use and access, rather than as a regional highway bypass
- Including passenger rail as a potential future mode for the corridor
- Ensuring that the conceptual roadway types shown on the Highway Character Diagram can actually support the amount of automobile traffic projected for the corridor

Staff Working Group

The Staff Working Group (SWG) reviewed the Draft Vision Plan on February 21, 2013. The draft plan at this point incorporated the changes suggested by the CAC earlier in the month. In a similar format to the CAC meeting, the SWG discussed the emerging Vision and its various principles and objectives, and provided additional feedback that has now been incorporated into this document for presentation to the Corridor Steering Committee. Key contributions of the SWG included:

- Changing the proposed roadway type for the segment between Highway 37 and the American Canyon city limits to be designated as a parkway in the southbound direction (adjacent to existing residential areas) and a boulevard in the northbound direction (to provide better local access to current and future commercial developments)
- Amending the adjacent land uses shown on the Highway Character Diagram for the segment in the city of Napa to better reflect the existing mix of land uses
- Recognizing that while there is a strong desire to have a separate bikeway along the corridor (e.g. the Vine Trail), Caltrans has a commitment to accommodating bicycles within the right of way as well (except where it is a freeway)
- Ensuring that roundabouts are discussed as a possible roadway improvement
- Changing wording from “accommodating” alternative modes to “promoting” alternative modes
- Separating out the discussion of various non-automobile modes of travel, rather than treating them all as one category

In summary, input from community members directly informed the development of the initial Draft Vision Plan, which was then reviewed and refined by the CAC and the SWG. The key changes described above from the SWG and the CAC, as well as additional minor revisions for clarity, have been incorporated into the Vision Plan for presentation to the CSC.

2.2 Emerging Vision

Enhance multi-modal mobility along the SR 29 corridor, while ensuring that improvements are sensitive to adjacent land use and development context. Undertake strategic improvements to reduce automobile congestion and minimize delays. Identify opportunities for transit and passenger rail and provide for bicycle and pedestrian access and safety along and across the corridor. Maintain local access, and enhance the identity and distinctiveness of the corridor.

2.3 Guiding Principles and Objectives

Draft guiding principles (**in bold italics below**) outline actions to achieve desired outcomes. Objectives (lettered and indented) describe general strategies. Recommendations for design improvements and transportation programs will be made during the next phase of the project, after general agreement has been reached over guiding principles and objectives.

1. ***Undertake improvements to reduce congestion and delays along the SR 29 Corridor, while balancing the corridor's role as both a regional and a local route through American Canyon and Vallejo.***
 - a) Undertake improvements to the corridor to reduce vehicular delays and congestion, especially during the peak hours. Add new lanes, improve intersections and consider other measures to optimize the mobility of people and vehicles along the corridor.
 - b) Consider best practices and technologies, including but not limited to express lanes, roundabouts where appropriate, and synchronized traffic lights, to maximize operational efficiencies.
 - c) Prioritize capacity increase (vehicles per hour) over high vehicle speeds, especially along stretches such as through the American Canyon Priority Development Area, where local access is desired.
 - d) Avoid overbuilding. Consider cost of widening the highway. Recognize that the congestion problems usually occur only during commute hours.
2. ***Develop solutions that are context sensitive.***
 - a) Ensure that planned improvements are sensitive to and respectful of the plans and desires of local communities.
 - b) Develop varied solutions—such as boulevard, parkway, and landscaped rural highway—appropriate to adjacent land use needs.
 - c) Enhance corridor identity as a principal “Gateway” to the Napa Valley.
 - d) Seek to provide frontage roads in the American Canyon PDA, potentially with parking along some stretches, to enhance access to businesses and other developments and ease of movement for local traffic.

3. ***Reduce motorists' need to use SR 29 by managing demand and encouraging use of alternative/parallel routes.***
 - a) Promote alternatives to traveling in single-occupant vehicles by promoting public transit, park and ride facilities, carpooling/vanpooling, bicycle use and walking.
 - b) Promote transportation demand programs such as alternative work schedules and telecommuting, especially among major employers.
 - c) Support local and regional growth management efforts to reduce future travel demand along the corridor, such as by balancing jobs and housing.
 - d) Encourage motorists to make trips along the corridor during off-peak rather than peak travel times.
 - e) Encourage development of local-serving routes that will give residents alternatives to SR 29 for local trips.
4. ***Expand the network of pedestrian paths and supporting infrastructure to provide convenient routes to work, schools, open space, and commercial destinations.***
 - a) Create continuous pedestrian facilities along both sides of SR 29. Where the roadway is designated as a Boulevard, these should be sidewalks; where the roadway is designated as a parkway or a rural highway, these may be on multi-use paths adjacent to the highway.
 - b) Provide safe pedestrian crossings in convenient locations. Study whether at-grade crossings or pedestrian bridges are more appropriate based on whether pedestrians will use the facility as intended and implications for traffic congestion.
 - c) Create a pedestrian-oriented environment and improve streetscapes, ensuring full access to and between public areas and private developments.
5. ***Expand the network of bicycle paths and supporting infrastructure to provide convenient access to destinations and promote travel by bicycle as a viable alternative to the automobile.***
 - a) Provide continuous bicycle access within the SR 29 right of way, per Caltrans' standards, except where the roadway is a limited-access freeway.
 - b) Where practical and consistent with plans for the Vine Trail, create additional bicycle routes parallel to, but separate from, the SR 29 right of way. Prioritize creation of Class I multi-use paths that cater to recreational bicyclists.
 - c) Ensure that bicycle travel is facilitated by clear signage and wayfinding elements, focusing on providing guidance where the bicycle paths intersect with highway interchanges and other similarly complex natural or manmade features.
6. ***Maintain the safety, health and livability of local communities, especially adjacent residential areas.***

- a) Calm traffic on local routes that parallel SR 29.
 - b) Preserve and accentuate unique and desirable community character and the existing quality of life in adjacent neighborhoods.
- 7. *Promote convenient and reliable public transit to encourage its use by commuters and to provide a reasonable option for getting to local destinations.***
- a) Minimize transit travel times with improvements and operational technologies, such as with methods for prioritizing bus movement along the corridor and potential Bus Rapid Transit service.
 - b) Support convenient access to transit where homes and jobs are concentrated.
- 8. *Use highway improvements to enhance community character and promote economic development.***
- a) Design highway improvements to complement and support the envisioned character of corridor segments, as indicated by the Highway Character Diagram.
 - b) Where the corridor is designated as a “rural highway,” improvements should:
 - Incorporate landscape features and motifs that are similar to what those associated with Napa Valley vineyards and heritage roadways;
 - Minimize use of more pavement than is functionally necessary;
 - Ensure bicycle access within the highway right of way, at a safe distance from automobile traffic; and
 - Provide additional continuous and parallel multi-use trails, although these may be at a distance from the highway.
 - c) Where the corridor is designated as a “parkway,” improvements should:
 - Create and maintain bicycle-pedestrian trails parallel to and within and/or adjacent to the highway right-of-way;
 - Provide a landscaped buffer between trails and traffic;
 - Provide a landscaped buffer between trails and abutting uses; and
 - Use design features and motifs along that complement and highlight the unique character of the different parkway segments that will occur, as are generally described in the Highway Character Diagram.
 - d) Where the corridor is designated as a “boulevard:”
 - Provide local access, such as with an access lane and on-street parking, to support the creation of street-facing businesses;

- Provide an attractive pedestrian route along the outside edge of the highway that encourages development to have entrances that front onto the boulevard;
 - Ensure that safe and convenient bicycle routes are provided within the highway right-of-way; and
 - Ensure that street trees, light standards and furnishings create an urban environment supportive of adjacent mix of uses and higher development intensities.
- e) Create unique “gateways” at key entrances to communities, districts, and along the Napa Valley Vine Trail. Use landscaping, public art and signage to accentuate gateways in context-sensitive ways.
- f) Through design treatment—such as gateway landscaping, lighting, signs and banners—highlight the bridges along SR 29 (i.e. the Napa River crossing and railroad crossing) to be landmarks that heighten awareness of their vistas and geography.
- g) Design improvements and operations to support land use patterns on adjacent properties, consistent with local policies and regional planning goals.
- h) Implement procedures to ensure ongoing dialogue and consultation as highway designs are developed among local jurisdictions, Caltrans, and NCTPA.
- i) Minimize negative economic impacts during the construction of improvements.
- 9. *Support planned development activities.***
- a) Use highway improvements to encourage compact development along the corridor in locations consistent with local general plans and where transit service may be provided.
- b) In urban locations, encourage building and site design that helps create pedestrian environments that are attractive and safe.
- c) Filter pollutants from urban and highway runoff with green infrastructure, especially by using features that incorporate attractive paving and landscaping.

2.4 Elements of the Draft Vision Plan

Community members who participated in the two visioning workshops reached a significant level of agreement, as noted above and highlighted below. The Citizens Advisory Committee and the Staff Working Group both offered additional guidance for components to be included within a long-term Vision Plan for the addressing the highway’s design and community character. These elements are provided below as a starting point for further CSC discussion.

ELEMENTS THROUGHOUT CORRIDOR

- Provide parallel routes for pedestrians and bicyclists, which may or may not be within the highway right-of-way, as is appropriate.

- Examine whether parallel local routes can provide alternative routes to residents, without attracting through-traffic in residential neighborhoods.
- Serve surrounding uses of sufficient intensity with well-located bus stops.

SOUTH OF HIGHWAY 37

- Defer to Sonoma Boulevard Specific Plan for highway improvements and community character.
- Examine methods to speed bus transit service to and from the Vallejo Ferry Terminal, including along routes in addition to SR 29.
- Strengthen the ferry terminal as a regional transit hub.

HIGHWAY 37 TO JUST SOUTH OF AMERICAN CANYON ROAD

- In the southbound direction, where residential uses are adjacent to the roadway, examine the development of a Parkway with landscaping and bicycle/pedestrian paths along the right-of-way but buffered from traffic.
- In the northbound direction, develop options for a Boulevard that allows local access to current and future businesses and creates a pedestrian-oriented environment along the highway.
- Design a “gateway” to American Canyon and the Napa Valley.
- Examine demand for pedestrian crossings (none identified during workshops), as well as their location and type.
- Accommodate a park and ride transit node near the convergence of Highways 29 and 37.

JUST SOUTH OF AMERICAN CANYON ROAD TO NAPA JUNCTION ROAD

- Develop options for a Boulevard to allow local access and create pedestrian-oriented environments along the highway.
- Consider the appropriate balance between users making regional trips versus users making local trips and local connectivity.
- Recommend specific locations for pedestrian/bicycle crossings at-grade and bridges, such as at American Canyon Road, Donaldson Way, Napa Junction Road and the High School.
- Create scenic trails with views of San Pablo Bay.
- Examine feasibility of grade-separating major intersections, such as at American Canyon Road or Napa Junction Road.

NAPA JUNCTION ROAD TO JUST SOUTH OF HIGHWAY 12

- Develop options for a Parkway with landscaping and other features that gives this employment area a distinct identity.
- Strive to maintain the rural character of this segment, especially to the east.

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- Examine feasibility of a pedestrian at-grade crossing or bridge at Highway 12 and at Green Island Road.
- Locate bus stops to serve employers. Consider establishing a transit park and ride facility near Napa County Airport.
- Provide bicycle/pedestrian trails along the Corridor, with good connections to employers.
- Create scenic trails with views of San Pablo Bay, if possible.

JUST SOUTH OF HIGHWAY 12 TO URBANIZED CITY OF NAPA

- Maintain a similar look and feel to current conditions. Recognize rural character as important to the identity of the Napa Valley, and tourism in the area.
- Provide a separated trail system paralleling Corridor. Address how the trail crosses the Napa River.
- Address functionality of intersection of Highway 29 with Highway 12/121.

FREEWAY IN URBANIZED CITY OF NAPA

- Examine ways to enhance this segment as a Parkway, such as with additional landscaping and special features.
- Address functionality of First Street/Highway 29 interchange.

3 Illustrations

This section presents the Highway Character Diagram, which shows conceptually the elements of the Draft Vision Plan described in the previous section. The diagram illustrates and describes the roadway type, key character elements, and generalized adjacent land uses for each segment. Gateways/Community Identity Markers and transition points between segments are also shown.

This diagram is intended to be a general, “high level” visual representation of the ideas expressed in the Vision, which will guide the development of specific roadway improvement options that can implement the specific recommendations. After the Vision Plan is approved, the next phase of the project will be design, model, and assess potential improvements that are consistent with the Vision and can accomplish the community’s goals for the corridor.

Following the Highway Character Diagram, two preliminary illustrations of the Boulevard concept are presented. A consistent request heard throughout the visioning process was the desire to see that such a concept as described in the workshops would be actually feasible in the SR 29 right of way. These illustrations were developed and presented to the CAC and the SWG in response to this request to provide assurance that the roadway types being presented to the public would in fact be feasible improvements. They are not meant to represent finalized designs.

Napa Gateway Highway 29 Corridor Improvement Plan

[Insert Highway Character Diagram]

BOULEVARD IDEAS

