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February 1, 2013

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Metropolitan Transportation Commission
101 8th Street
Oakland, CA 94607

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Dear Mr. Heminger, *Steve*

As part of Alameda County's Priority Development Area Investment and Growth Strategy, the Alameda CTC has also conducted an inventory of the county's Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs) and has met with local stakeholders to better understand planning and project needs related to open space, habitat and agricultural conservation in Alameda County. These needs and a list of stakeholders are described on the following pages, and the Alameda CTC hopes that the Joint MTC Planning Committee/ABAG Administrative Committee and MTC staff will consider these needs when developing the regional PCA funding program for this federal funding cycle.

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It is also important to note that, in some cases, PCA needs and circumstances have changed since 2007 when PCAs were originally designated as part for the regional FOCUS program. All stakeholders agreed that the PCA funding program should provide an opportunity for project sponsors to modify existing PCAs, identify and designate new PCAs and conduct needs assessments, feasibility studies and other planning studies related to open space, habitat and agricultural conservation in Alameda County.

If you or the Committee members have any questions, please feel free to contact Beth Walukas, Deputy Director of Planning at (510) 208-7405 or bwalukas@alamedactc.org. We appreciate this opportunity to provide feedback to the Committee and MTC staff and look forward to continuing to work with you on implementing the One Bay Area Grant Program.

City of San Leandro
Michael Gregory, Vice Mayor

City of Union City
Carol Dutra-Vernaci, Mayor

Executive Director
Arthur L. Dao

Sincerely,

ARTHUR L. DAO
Executive Director

cc: Alameda CTC Commissioners
Beth Walukas, Deputy Director of Planning, Alameda CTC
Tess Lengyel, Deputy Director of Policy, Public Affairs and Legislation
Alix Bockelman, Director of Programming and Allocations, MTC
Ken Kirkey, Director of Planning, MTC
Miriam Chion, Planning and Research Director, ABAG

Summary of Alameda County PCA Comments and Needs

“Farm to Market” and Local Food System Infrastructure

Stakeholders identified the need for an initial needs assessment and subsequent feasibility study to facilitate the development of local food system infrastructure and/or local market enhancement mechanisms in Alameda County. In short, the development of local food system infrastructure (such as slaughter/processing capacity or aggregation/distribution facilities) is needed to facilitate the production and distribution of locally grown food and support local farming and ranching, while market enhancement, such as an “East Bay Grown” designation would in turn serve as an engine to enhance demand for local agricultural products.

Local food production reduces the energy (and GHG emissions) required to transport food and helps reduce the environmental impacts of large-scale industrial farming operations. It also helps ensure food security and safety for urban populations, while creating local jobs and providing an economic incentive for agricultural preservation. There are significant barriers that prevent local small and mid-sized ranchers and farmers from bringing their products to local consumers. A needs assessment and feasibility study for local food system infrastructure would clearly identify these barriers and develop potential solutions to address them. Funding would then be needed for implementation of local food system infrastructure and supportive projects and programs.

Including “farm to market”/local food system infrastructure planning and market enhancement projects in the PCA program for Peninsula, Southern and Eastern Bay Area Counties would also ensure that this program is consistent with the North Counties PCA Program. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that the development of local food system infrastructure is a regional need that affects all Bay Area counties and can work to preserve and protect farmland throughout the region.

Development of Agricultural Water Systems

To enhance the viability of agricultural uses in the North Livermore area, funding is needed for water infrastructure (both potable and recycled) to support agricultural operations.

Conservation Easements for the Conservation of Farm and Ranchlands

Funds are needed to purchase conservation easements to maintain and protect existing farm and ranchlands, consistent with other PCA needs and objectives within the county.

Habitat and Open Space Conservation

Alameda County has significant needs for habitat and open space conservation (land and easement acquisitions), including conservation and restoration of wildlife corridors. Funding for open space conservation should enable the purchase of land strictly for habitat preservation purposes (as well as publicly accessible open space); in other words, public access would be considered as part of a management plan, but may be restricted or prohibited to avoid damage to the most sensitive ecosystems.

Regional and Major Multi-Use Trails –

Funding is needed to complete gaps in the Bay Trail, Bay Area Ridge Trail, Iron Horse Trail, and other major trail systems within the East Bay Regional Park District. Additionally, the East Bay Greenway is a designated PCA and should be eligible for funds as part of the regional PCA program. Project needs include facility planning and construction and may also include some right-of-way acquisition related to pathway construction. Revitalization of “farm trails” such as the system in Livermore might also be considered as a way to blend farm-to-market objectives and agricultural

tourism (which can provide an important source of income for farms, wineries and ranches) with those of enhancing regional and multi-use trails.

Rural Roads

As described in the enclosed letter from the Alameda County Public Works Agency, funding is needed for rural roadway improvements that facilitate agricultural operations and agricultural tourism in East Alameda County. Additionally, funding is needed to acquire mitigation lands or establish mitigation banks associated with mitigating habitat impacts from rural roadway improvements.

List of Alameda County PCA stakeholders who provided input:

- Art Carrera, Alameda County Public Works Agency
- Angela Robinson Pinar, Alameda County Planning Department
- Leslie Koenig, Alameda County Resource Conservation District
- Susan Ellsworth, Alameda County Resource Conservation District
- Nancy Schaefer, California Rangeland Trust
- Larry Tong, East Bay Regional Park District
- Bob Vinn, City of Livermore Planning Department
- Steve Stewart, City of Livermore Planning Department
- Rebecca Tuden, City of Oakland Department of Engineering and Construction
- Andy Ross, Tri-Valley Conservancy



Public Works Agency
Alameda County

ALAMEDA CTC

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Daniel Woldesenbet, Ph.D., P.E., Director

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December 19, 2012

Ms. Kara Vuicich
Senior Transportation Planner
Alameda County Transportation Commission
1333 Broadway, Suite 300
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Ms. Vuicich:

Subject: Priority Conservation Area Grant Funding – One Bay Area Grant

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the One Bay Area Grant Priority Conservation Area (PCA) Program. The Alameda County Public Works Agency requests that the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Alameda County Transportation Commission allocate Priority Conservation Area funding to improve Farm to Market (rural) roadways and to purchase mitigation lands for needed transportation safety projects in rural areas.

Many rural (farm to market) roadways were not designed to handle the traffic volumes they currently serve. As a result, a high percentage of fatal accidents occur on rural roadways. Making rural roadways safer while protecting the environment is a priority on Alameda County's over 150 miles of maintained rural roadways. Because nearly all of eastern Alameda County is designated as environmental sensitive, nearly all transportation improvement projects require mitigation for project impacts to endangered species habitat. PCA funds would be put to good use to acquire mitigation lands for required for the improvement of rural roadways.

Eastern Alameda County has become one of California's internationally renowned wine producing regions. To sustain this growth and compete successfully in this global economy, the existing transportation network must be improved and prioritized to serve these businesses with transportation improvements for traffic safety and multi-modal, context sensitive complete street elements. Major rural roadways such as Tesla Road in eastern Alameda County serve several wineries which not only produce wine, but are hosts to wine tasting, weddings, and other commercial business functions.

The Alameda County Public Works Agency is looking forward to working with the Alameda County Transportation Commission to provide funding assistance to support the East County area transportation needs. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact me at (510) 670-5581.

Yours truly,

Arthur G. Carrera, P.E., T.E.

Engineering and Transportation Program Manager

AC/pr

