



DATE: March 3, 2007  
TO: STA Board  
FROM: Janet Adams, Director of Projects  
RE: I-80/I-680/SR 12 Interchange Alternatives

**Background:**

I-80 is a major transcontinental highway route, typically six to eight lanes. The corridor within Solano county functions as an essential commuter route within the San Francisco Bay Area, connecting workers in Solano county with jobs in neighboring Contra Costa, Alameda, and San Francisco counties. Its regional significance is demonstrated by its high percentage of inter-county travel. In addition to its function as a commuter corridor, this route provides an important connection between the Bay Area and Sacramento, the Sierra Nevada and Lake Tahoe regions. Further, the route is also a primary truck route connecting the Port of Oakland to points east and north, contributing significantly to the economic health of the State of California by facilitating goods distribution throughout the western U.S. This section of I-80 is also a designated “Lifeline Highway Route”, which means that it is a key corridor for the deployment and return of emergency vehicles during a major emergency or disaster. One key reason for the need to address the I-80/I-680/SR 12 Interchange is that, at present, traffic congestion even absent an emergency, compromises the ability of police, fire and medical personnel to move along the corridor.

The I-80/I-680/SR 12 Interchange Project limits include an approximate 8-mile section of freeway containing nine separate interchanges. Tremendous growth in the region has resulted in substantial increases in regional traffic traveling through the interchange area. Traffic volumes are projected to grow by approximately 2% per year to 2035, the design year, bringing the total daily volume passing through the corridor to 270,000 vehicles.

In addition to the Interchange’s importance to commuter and regional travel, it includes a pair of regional truck scale facilities. This placement of the truck scales is ideal for monitoring and enforcing truck weight and safety requirements because it provides an opportunity to monitor truck traffic on three routes (I-80, I-680, and SR-12) with a single set of scales. The volume of trucks in the corridor has increased dramatically since the 1960s, and is projected to increase 70% by 2025, and 115% by 2040.

While the project has not yet identified a “preferred” build alternative, it is expected that two build alternatives will be carried forward for study in the Environmental Impact Statement/Report (EIS/R). Both of these would improve operations by providing improved roadway geometrics on the mainline and at interchanges. The purpose of the proposed project is to:

- Reduce congestion through the I-80/I-680/SR12 interchange to accommodate current and future traffic volumes.

- Reduce the amount of cut-through traffic on local roads attempting to avoid congestion on the freeway system.
- Establish logical and adequate access to and from the freeway system to accommodate existing and planned land uses in the project area.
- Accommodate current and future truck volumes using the I-80, I-680 and SR 12 corridors for goods movement.
- Accommodate current and future truck volumes accessing the truck scales facility within the interchange area.
- Improve safety conditions within the project limits.
- Increase the use of high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes and ridesharing through the project area.

The entire I-80/I-680/SR 12 Interchange Project is estimated to cost approximately \$1 to \$1.2 billion.

Accident rates near the truck scales and I-80/I-680/SR 12 interchange area are substantially higher than the statewide average for similar facilities. The project would be expected to improve safety, due to a reduction in rear-end collisions associated with congestion. In addition, because the local roadways in the vicinity of the interchange area serve as emergency vehicle routes for the local neighborhoods, an improvement to the local network would likely reduce emergency response times.

STA has completed several important studies and engineering tools that have been utilized in the alternatives development process for the Interchange Complex which include the following:

- I-80/I-680/I-780 Major Investment & Corridor Study (Adopted by the STA Board in 2004)
- Cordelia Truck Scales Relocation Study (Adopted by the STA Board 2004)
- Solano Napa Traffic Demand Model (Adopted by the STA Board 2005)
- Value Analysis Study of Project Alternatives (Spring 2006)

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) issued a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS on May 5, 2003. Caltrans in cooperation with STA and FHWA issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the I-80/I-680/SR 12 Interchange for a Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) on April 28, 2003. A Scoping Meeting was held on May 12, 2003 at Rodriguez High School in the City of Fairfield.

### **Discussion:**

Based on the Traffic Demand Model and the draft Purpose and Need of the Project, the STA project consultants in partnership with Caltrans and FHWA have developed and considered a wide variety of alternatives for the Project. These alternatives were then placed through a rigorous two (2) tier alternative screening process that has been concurred with by Caltrans. The first tier or initial tier of this two tier screening process

was to exclude alternatives that either did not meet the Purpose and Need of the Project or were considered not feasible. Four (4) alternatives for the project were carried forward into the second tier of screening. Of these four (4) alternatives, three (3) proposed reconstructing the I-80/I-680 Interchange in the same general vicinity and one (1) proposes a new alignment of the I-80/I-680 Interchange.

The STA in partnership with Caltrans has initiated the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)/404 process. This process is a requirement based on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Resource agencies<sup>1</sup> and Caltrans and FHWA. The initial activities under the NEPA/404 process, will focus on gaining concurrence between the agencies on the project's Purpose and Need and the alternatives to be carried forward for detailed study in the EIS/R. This process is important as it provides the Lead Agencies and STA with formal concurrence on the Purpose and Need and range of Alternatives before detailed studies are completed. The initial NEPA/404 meeting has been scheduled for March 15, 2007. After the initial meeting, the Resource agencies have 30 days to provide feedback or provide concurrence. The alternatives that are being presented to the STA Board are the two (2) alternatives that the project team and Caltrans believe to be the strongest candidates for further study and which represent the two approaches: that is having the interchange reconstructed in the same general vicinity as presently located or for an entirely new alignment for the I-80/I-680 interchange.

It is important to continue to engage the public on such an important project. Although the Draft EIS/R is not expected to be completed and ready for public review until summer 2008, staff recommends holding a public information/open house meeting in April 2007 to provide the public with information and to seek their input about the project alternatives proposed to be carried forward for study in the environmental document. The Resource agencies will have provided input on the proposed alternatives and the Project Purpose and Need prior to the open house.

**Fiscal Impact:**

The EIR/EIS for the I-80/I-680/SR 12 Project is being completed with Transportation Congestion Relief Plan (TCRP) funds that were granted to the project. Alternative development and public education are part of the work completed during the environmental phase of a project.

**Recommendation:**

Approve the following:

1. The public release of two alternatives that are recommended to be carried forward into the EIR/EIS for I-80/I-680/SR 12 project.
2. Authorize the Executive Director to schedule a Public Information/Open House in April 2007 to receive public input.

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<sup>1</sup> Resource agencies include: US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)