

NORTH RICHMOND TRUCK ROUTE STUDY

Alternative Route Concepts

Executive Summary

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Prepared For:
The Contra Costa County Redevelopment Agency

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PROJECT PURPOSE

The purpose of the North Richmond Truck Route Study was to develop an alternative route for trucks to connect to existing designated truck routes that would 1) reduce truck traffic in the residential area of North Richmond and Verde Elementary School, and 2) establish a link to major transportation corridors, including Richmond Parkway. The final route and related roadway concepts will reflect relevant community values, be supported by the community, be technically feasible and cost-effective.

The study accomplished these goals through technical investigations and an inclusive community-based planning process that integrated land use, transportation and community values. The Contra Costa County Redevelopment Agency (RDA) partnered with four local community based organizations (CBOs) to gain valuable residential and business community input that helped shape preliminary alternatives to meet the needs and values of the local community.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The project was divided into three components: 1) a preliminary assessment of truck route design alternatives, 2) a community planning process that involved members of the business and residential community providing input on the preliminary alternatives, and 3) development of a final alternative(s) based on community input and an action plan for further project development. The overriding project goal is to improve pedestrian travel in North Richmond particularly for school children; improve community livability; reduce diesel related risks of asthma and other respiratory illness; promote economic development; and, link routes to planned/programmed infrastructure improvements.



In order to understand existing conditions, a preliminary review was conducted concerning land use, traffic and transportation, environment, public health and safety issues. The findings of the analysis were used in conjunction with the findings from the preliminary assessment to develop alternative routes and inform the public participation process.

This preliminary assessment was produced to identify technical issues that pose significant risks to the efficient, expeditious, and economical implementation of the project. The assessment takes into account environmental constraints in crossing Wildcat Creek or San Pablo Creek that must be met. It has been concluded from the preliminary assessment that construction over the creeks is feasible at the proposed connection.



The alternative route concepts were developed as part of the North Richmond Truck Route Study. The development of the route concepts was based on findings of the preliminary assessment and the input from community stakeholders and participants in three public meetings.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation in the project was vital to the successful design of an alternative route – a route that has the full support of the business and residential community because of its consistency with community values.

To this end, the Contra Costa County Redevelopment Agency (RDA) subcontracted with four local CBOs to execute the public participation portion of this project. The CBOs were selected based on their presence and trust in the North Richmond community. The CBOs were tasked with identifying the residential and business community, helping to craft outreach material, distributing outreach material and project information to key stakeholders, and organizing and executing community meetings.

Three community meetings were held in support of this project: a project kick-off meeting, a planning meeting with break-out sessions where members of the community discussed preliminary alternatives, identified issues and provided input on what they liked and didn't like about each of the alternatives, and a final community meeting that presented the final alternative that was shaped by community input.

NEXT STEPS

The next steps for the development of the North Richmond Alternative Truck Route include Planning, Preliminary Engineering, Policy Body Actions, Low-Cost Improvements, Environmental Review/Final Design, and Construction. The RDA will continue to manage the project through the planning and preliminary engineering stages, in close coordination with multi-agencies and community stakeholders.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The following are the major findings and outcomes from the North Richmond Truck Route Study:

- Construction of an alternative route that allows trucks to connect with existing designated truck routes while located away from residential streets is feasible. The concentration of truck-dependent businesses at the eastern end of Market Avenue provides an opportunity for channeling the legitimately present trucks to such a route. Feasibility issues and route design considerations include creek crossings, proximity to Verde Elementary School, proximity to residential areas, obtaining permit/easement for railroad right-of-way and acquiring additional right-of-way for Soto Street, topography issues, and connectivity to existing designated truck routes.
- The proposed connection to existing truck routes is not a “designated” truck route but rather a non-restrictive route that accommodates for trucks. The connection is not an expressway but a two-lane road with curb/gutters and a sidewalk.

- There is a near-term need to improve enforcement and signage in the project area immediately on residential streets especially on Third Street, Hensley Street, Chesley Avenue and Gertrude Avenue. These residential streets will have street elements that will restrict truck usage in the form of truck restriction signage, corner bulb-outs, and speed humps. Enforcement methods to explore include the City of San Pablo Police Department assuming enforcement via a memorandum of agreement.
- The local community and businesses played a key role in shaping route concepts and strongly support the project. Community members strongly support better enforcement and alternative routes the farthest away from Verde Elementary School and residential areas. Public health and safety are an ongoing concern of the local community, as well as diesel emissions coming from big rig trucks. Special design features to address enforcement were also included in alternative route development.
- Two alternative route connections with two phases were developed: Alternative 1, Soto to Parr; and Alternative 2, Soto to Brookside. Phase 1 is the same for Alternatives 1 and 2 and includes signage, enforcement, and street design elements. Alternative 1, Phase 2 extends Soto Street to Parr Boulevard linking to Richmond Parkway. Alternative 2, Phase 2 begins on Market Street, turns north on Soto Street along the railroad right-of-way, heads west on Brookside Drive, then north on Third Street connecting to Parr Boulevard. Elements of Phase 2 can be added to Phase 1 over time or if funding is available. Elements included in Phase 1 were considered by the community to be particularly important and necessary.
- The estimated capital cost for Phase 1 is \$100,000. Phase 2 cost estimate for the Alternative 1 is approximately \$22.1 million, Alternative 2 is approximately \$15.6 million.

Table ES.1 - Alternatives in Phase 1 (short-term) and Phase 2 (long-term)

| | Phase 1 | Phase 2 |
|--|---|--|
| Alternative 1 Soto to Parr Blvd. <i>Preferred</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage • Enforcement • Street design (Approx. \$100,000) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct Soto between Market and Parr Blvd • Extend Soto to Parr Blvd • Obtain appropriate permits and right of way (Approx. \$22.1 million) |
| Alternative 2 Soto to Brookside | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage • Enforcement • Street design (Approx. \$100,000) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct Soto between Market and Brookside • Reconstruct Brookside Drive between Soto and Third Street • Obtain appropriate permits and right of way (Approx. \$15.6 million) |

- The RDA will continue to manage the project through Planning and Preliminary Engineering stages, in close coordination with multi-agencies from the City of San Pablo, City of Richmond, community and local business stakeholders. Assuming availability of funds, it is estimated that Phase 1 could begin in 2007.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Alternative 1, Soto to Parr, was selected as the preferred alternative based on community input. This route is the farthest away from the residential areas and Verde Elementary School. The route also avoids topography issues on Brookside, and directly connects with existing designated truck routes.

Alternative 2, Soto to Brookside was not determined to be the preferred alternative based on community input and a residential area to be developed on 500 Pittsburg Avenue, a Signature Properties site. The site is bounded by the Richmond Parkway to the west, Pittsburg Avenue on the north, and Wildcat Creek on the south. On February 23, 2007, the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors approved a General Plan amendment and Preliminary and final Development Plan related to the Nove Property Residential Project (Signature Properties).

Figure ES.1 - Preferred Alternative - Phase 1
Soto Street to Parr Boulevard - Signage, Enforcement and Street Design Elements



Figure ES.2 - Preferred Alternative - Phase 2
Soto Street to Parr Boulevard - New Construction



