



Office of the City Manager

ACTION CALENDAR

November 15, 2005

To: Honorable Mayor and  
Members of the City Council

From: *PK* Phil Kamlarz, City Manager

Submitted by: Claudette Ford, Acting Director, Public Works

Subject: Recommendations on Caldecott Tunnel EIR

RECOMMENDATION

Support the technical recommendations of the Transportation Commission regarding the scope of study of the Caldecott Tunnel Fourth Bore EIR (September 15, 2005 Transportation Commission recommendations 2 to 5, inclusive) and refer the issue of staff review of the draft EIR to the City Manager.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Cost of hiring a consultant to assist Public Works Transportation staff if it is determined that one is needed. The scope of work cannot be determined until the draft Environmental Impact Report is circulated, and the range and depth of issues determined. Staff estimates that the cost of the consulting work could range from \$20,000 to \$50,000.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The current situation is described in the companion Transportation Commission report entitled Comments on Scope of Environmental Impact Report on Caldecott Tunnel 4th Bore Project.

BACKGROUND

In addition to the background information provided in the companion Transportation Commission report, the attached letter from the City Manager to the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency, dated July 22, 2002 (Attachment 1), lists the previous action taken by the City of Berkeley to formally express its opposition to the Caldecott Tunnel Fourth Bore.

Even though the City formally opposes the fourth bore project, the State is proceeding with the EIR and funding for this project is being amassed. Therefore, the City could request more attention be directed to local impacts upon Berkeley streets, and upon transit service, during this EIR, as suggested by the Transportation Commission.

The evaluation of draft EIRs is a staff responsibility and work priorities for Transportation staff are normally shifted, temporarily, to allow for staff time to study and respond to such fluctuating demands and priorities. It is important for the Council and the community at large to recognize

the need to diminish expectations of staff in other tasks when these temporary demands take over.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

There may be regional funding available to local communities to fund traffic mitigations related to the impacts of the Caldecott Tunnel Fourth Bore. In order to identify the impacts and potential mitigations, more detailed study is required in Berkeley by Caltrans on numerous streets in Berkeley. The Transportation Commission and City staff are of the opinion that Caltrans is not giving appropriate consideration to local impacts at this stage of the Environmental Impact Study (EIS).

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

The City could refuse to acknowledge the EIS, based on its formal objection to the fourth bore project in the past. However, it is prudent to try to influence the EIS in the direction which the City needs, and then comment on the draft EIR when it is released.

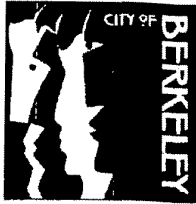
The City can re-evaluate its legal options, if necessary, after review of the draft EIR.

CONTACT PERSON

Peter Hillier, Assistant Director, Public Works Department, 981-7010.

Attachment:

1: 7/22/02 City Manager letter to the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency



Office of Transportation

July 22, 2002

Mr. Dennis Fay  
Executive Director  
Alameda County Congestion Management Agency  
1333 Broadway, Suite 220  
Oakland, California 94612

Re: CALDECOTT TUNNEL/I-24

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of June 27, 2002, wherein you ask for comments on one project being considered by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority, which would involve Alameda County. The project in question is the addition of a fourth bore on the north side of the existing Caldecott Tunnel.

You are likely aware that the City of Berkeley has consistently opposed the proposal to add a fourth bore to the tunnel. Listed below are motions adopted by the Berkeley City Council in the recent past:

**9/15/98 Meeting**

**Reject Study on Adding Four Bore to the Caldecott Tunnel**

Reject the concept of a fourth bore for the Caldecott Tunnel, and call on the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the State Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to NOT participate in a feasibility study on adding a fourth bore.

**7/18/00 Meeting**

**Caldecott Tunnel (Highway 24) Corridor Study**

1) Reaffirm opposition to the proposal for a fourth bore of the Highway 24 (Caldecott) Tunnel; and 2) if the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and/or Caltrans proceed with development of a fourth bore, no funds which would have otherwise been available to Berkeley or Alameda County should be used to plan or construct the fourth bore, and a program of mitigations should be developed and implemented in conjunction with the City.

### **12/19/00 Meeting**

#### **Fourth Bore to the Caldecott Tunnel**

Send a letter to the California Transportation Commission protesting their funding of preliminary work for a fourth bore of the Caldecott Tunnel before appropriate public review of a Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) study is completed.

### **7/10/01 Meeting**

#### **Fourth Highway Bore for Caldecott Tunnel**

Request the City Manager send a letter to the BART Board of Directors with copies to the AC Transit Board of Directors and the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency requesting the following: 1) That BART District Board of Directors consider rescinding its endorsement of the fourth highway bore for the Caldecott Tunnel; and 2) BART work with other transit agencies and the Congestion Management Agencies of Alameda and Contra Costa counties to develop services for reverse-commute trips on transit and to encourage the compact development of jobs and housing around its stations.

These four resolutions show that the City of Berkeley has consistently opposed the expansion of the Caldecott Tunnel. The City is concerned about a number of major issues, some of which are discussed below:

- A. Increasing road capacity for private motor vehicles: In order to protect the environment in the near term and long term, sustainable and environmentally sensitive transportation should be the only type of transportation being considered, planned or funded, especially in the Bay Area. To increase road capacity to accommodate the movement of private automobiles will only contribute to encouraging more private motor vehicle use, and further deterioration of air quality and other negative effects of pollution. This is known as "induced traffic."

A recent study conducted by the U.C. Berkeley Institute for Transportation Studies concluded that 90 percent of all new highway capacity added to California's metropolitan areas is filled within four years, and 60 percent-70 percent of all new county-level highway capacity is filled within two years.

To invest capital funds to ease congestion in this area of Interstate 24 is shortsighted. Immediately, more vehicles will be able to flow to other congested areas. Furthermore, the overall trend of increased use of personal motor vehicles will be encouraged even more. Similar levels of congestion will eventually return after construction is completed, because operators of personal motor vehicles will anticipate improvements on the route and will return to it or try to use it anew. Furthermore, types of land development will be encouraged to take advantage of the increased road capacity, which will exacerbate the downward spiral of motor vehicle use and environmental degradation.

- B. Through traffic on Ashby Avenue: Any actions which may increase the volume of through traffic on the Ashby Avenue/Tunnel Road corridor in Berkeley must be resisted. The City of Berkeley is calling upon all regional road and transit authorities to work together to strategize and plan for a combination of measures which will encourage through traffic to stay on the freeway network, and to discourage the use of the Ashby/Tunnel corridor for through traffic.

The addition of a fourth bore will exacerbate this problem of through traffic use on the Ashby/Tunnel corridor, not relieve it.

- C. Priorities for transportation system expenditures: Transportation system funding must be directed to the expansion of the operation and development of transit systems in the Bay Area, and to other strategies which will promote alternatives to the use of private automobiles, especially single occupancy vehicles.

The transportation system issues and the environmental problems, which form the basis of the City of Berkeley's objections to the increase in capacity at the Caldecott Tunnel, are now well documented and well understood. Therefore, we question the wisdom of continued major funding for road capacity improvements which will exacerbate these problems.

The City of Berkeley is requesting that the recent traffic data which has been collected for the fourth bore project be used by regional transportation agencies as the basis for developing a strategy and plan for "decreasing" the volume of through traffic on the Ashby/Tunnel corridor. Measures to mitigate the effects of traffic flow on the Ashby/Tunnel corridor must be implemented before the Caldecott Tunnel expansion is considered any further. The City of Berkeley would be pleased to participate in this crucial endeavor. Furthermore, ridesharing, shuttle, housing near BART stations, and AC Transit, should all be developed prior to any possible road expansion.

Thank you for providing another opportunity for us to comment on this crucial issue. If you wish to discuss this further, please contact Peter Hillier, Assistant City Manager for Transportation, at 981-7000.

Yours truly,

Weldon Rucker  
City Manager