



# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR  
AND CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** John Ristow

**SUBJECT:** Actions Related to the  
I-280/Winchester Boulevard  
Improvement Project

**DATE:** May 27, 2025

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Approved

Date:

6/6/25

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**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** 1 and 6

## **RECOMMENDATION**

(a) Adopt a resolution:

- (1) Certifying that the City Council has considered the information in the I-280/Winchester Boulevard Improvement Project's Environmental Impact Report;
- (2) Adopting the Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations prepared by the Lead Agency; and
- (3) Formally approving the Project; and

(b) Adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager or her designee to negotiate and execute a fourth amendment to the funding agreement between the City of San José and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority for the I-280/Winchester Boulevard Improvement Project to extend the term of the agreement to December 27, 2027.

## **SUMMARY AND OUTCOME**

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) is managing the development of the I-280/Winchester Boulevard Improvement Project (Project) through the Caltrans approval process, including preliminary engineering, environmental clearance, and final design. The recommended actions provide the additional time VTA needs to continue the Project and complete the Plans, Specifications and Estimate (PS&E) phase and position it to a state of readiness that improves its competitiveness for state and regional funding opportunities, such as Senate Bill 1 programs.

## **BACKGROUND**

The I-280/Winchester Boulevard interchange area of west San José is home to two large retail commercial centers (Westfield Valley Fair Mall and Santana Row), the Winchester Mystery House, residential development, as well as smaller commercial and retail businesses. The area is also home to the Santa Clara Valley Medical Center, O'Connor Hospital, San José City College, and Stevens Creek Boulevard Auto Row. In addition to existing land uses, several Urban Village plans have been approved to bring higher density, transit-focused development to the Winchester and Stevens Creek corridors. The concentration of current and planned destinations, along with the existing inadequate interchange, result in significant congestion that the City and VTA are working to address.

On June 23, 2015, City Council approved the funding agreement with VTA to provide the City's initial share of \$250,000, combined with VTA's share of \$750,000, to identify, evaluate, and prioritize a range of possible transportation-related improvements to relieve congestion and improve traffic circulation in the area. This led to the Caltrans' Project Approval and Environmental Documents (PA&ED) phase of the Project. The initial agreement with VTA expired on December 31, 2017.

The first amendment to the agreement provided necessary funding for the VTA to continue project development of the PA&ED phase. The cost of the PA&ED phase was estimated at \$6,000,000, to be shared between the City and VTA. The City's share of the \$6,000,000 was \$2,250,000, and VTA's share was \$3,750,000, of which \$3,000,000 was allocated from the 2016 Measure B. The amended agreement remained in effect through December 31, 2020.

The second amendment to the agreement extended the termination date to complete the PA&ED phase, and the agreement remained in effect through December 31, 2022. On December 20, 2022, the City's Director of Transportation issued a letter to VTA authorizing the extension of the funding agreement for a 6-month term with an expiration date of June 30, 2023.

The third amendment extended the termination date to complete the PA&ED phase. The agreement remained in effect through June 30, 2025, and included provisions authorizing the City's Director of Transportation to extend the term an additional six months, through December 30, 2025.

The proposed fourth amendment to the agreement will provide the additional time VTA needs to continue the project and complete the PS&E phase. The amended agreement will remain in effect through December 27, 2027 and increase the City's contribution by \$3,750,000.

## **ANALYSIS**

Over the last two years, the City, VTA, and Caltrans worked to develop several viable project alternatives to advance into the PS&E phase. However, due to the density of the existing project area and the constrained amount of available right-of-way, additional time was needed to coordinate with major stakeholders, the City Council, and other City departments to prepare agreeable potential alternatives. After thorough analysis and coordination, Caltrans identified one viable build alternative and facilitated the environmental clearance process for the alternative through the remainder of the PA&ED phase, per Caltrans' project development requirements.

The Project build alternative proposes to construct a new off-ramp from northbound I-280 to the Tisch Way/Hatton Street intersection to provide new access from northbound I-280, improve traffic operations, and reduce congestion on local roadways. The Project will also construct a new freeway-to-freeway connector ramp to access northbound SR-17 to northbound I-280 and a new pedestrian overcrossing at Monroe Street to replace the existing pedestrian overcrossing that is currently underused and would conflict with the new northbound I-280 off-ramp. Additionally, this Project would include the following roadway improvements:

- Widening the existing Winchester Boulevard bridge over I-280 by approximately 35 feet to provide enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities in both directions. As part of the improvement, the lane configuration on Winchester Boulevard across the bridge will be modified to improve operations at both the Winchester Boulevard/Moorpark Avenue and the Winchester Boulevard/Tisch Way intersections;
- Removal and replacement of a portion of the existing soundwalls along the north side of I-280 and east of Winchester Boulevard;
- Construction of protected bike lanes and wider sidewalks on both northbound and southbound Winchester Boulevard within the project limits; and
- Construction of dedicated bike lanes on Tisch Way from Hatton Street to Winchester Boulevard.

The Project promotes mobility and equity by enhancing accessibility and safety for bicyclists and pedestrians. The Winchester Boulevard corridor is classified as "high caution" on the Santa Clara County Valley Bikeways Maps. As a result of the project improvements, bicyclists would be better accommodated through the Winchester Boulevard bridge widening and the construction of the new protected bike lanes. The existing Monroe pedestrian overcrossing will be replaced with a new pedestrian overcrossing that will follow Americans with Disabilities Act requirements with greater width, reduced incline slopes, and the provision of stairs at the west end of the new pedestrian overcrossing within Santana Park, thus shortening access for pedestrians walking to/from the residential and commercial areas to the west. The new pedestrian overcrossing will also enable the closure of the existing tunnel, which users have characterized as unsafe due to being dark, narrow, and secluded.

On April 26, 2025, Caltrans approved the Project, which marked the conclusion of the PA&ED phase.

Prior to construction, a Transportation Management Plan will be prepared to address traffic-related impacts like traffic handling at each construction stage, pedestrian safety/access, and bicycle safety/access. The Transportation Management Plan will involve public outreach/engagement through notices to neighborhoods, press releases, electronic changeable message signs, and coordination with the San José Fire Department and other emergency responders regarding temporary lane closures or detours.

The proposed amendment will extend the agreement term to December 27, 2027, to provide additional time for VTA to complete the PS&E phase of the Project. Additionally, the City's contribution will increase by \$3,750,000. The completion of the PS&E phase will allow VTA to seek Caltrans' approval to proceed with the construction of the preferred alternative. It is important to note that funding for right-of-way acquisition and construction is not fully programmed at this time but is anticipated to be funded by 2016 Measure B and potentially federal or state funds.

### ***Climate Smart San José Analysis***

The recommendation in this memorandum aligns with one or more Climate Smart San José strategies by improving traffic operations on the local roadway, expanding bicycle/pedestrian access and transit connectivity, and facilitating regional access from northbound I-280 to the project area. The improved multi-modal network will yield benefits for bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users. For instance, the widened Winchester Boulevard bridge and protected bike lanes on Winchester Boulevard and the north side of Tisch Way will provide safer and more comfortable facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians. The Project will also promote better traffic operations and transit connectivity, namely for VTA bus services like Express Route 103, which utilizes I-280, Rapid Bus Route 523 and Bus Route 23, which utilizes Stevens Creek Boulevard, and Bus Route 25 and 60, which utilize Winchester Boulevard.

### **EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

Updates on this Project will be included in future regional transportation activities in the quarterly reports to the Transportation and Environmental Committee.

### **COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS**

The amended funding agreement increases the City's contribution by \$3,750,000, an amount not to exceed \$6,000,000, towards the development of the PA&ED and PS&E phases. The table below identifies the funds and appropriations to fund the agreement recommended as part of this memorandum.

Fund #	Appn. #	Appropriation Name	Total Appropriation*	Amount for Contract	2026-2030 Proposed Capital Budget Page**	Last Budget Action (Date, Ord. No.)
429	406G	I-280 Winchester Boulevard Interchange	\$2,650,000	\$2,550,000	775	N/A
311	406G	I-280 Winchester Boulevard Interchange	\$1,361,697	\$1,200,000	775	N/A

\*Includes unexpended 2024-2025 funds that are recommended to be rebudgeted as part of the 2025-2027 Adopted Biennial Capital Budget process.

\*\*The 2025-2027 Proposed Biennial Capital Budget was released on April 26, 2025 and is scheduled to be reviewed on June 10, 2025 and adopted on June 17, 2025 by the City Council.

## **COORDINATION**

This memorandum and agreement have been coordinated with the City Manager's Budget Office, the Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement Department, and the Office of the City Attorney.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

This memorandum will be posted on the City's Council Agenda website for the June 17, 2025 City Council Meeting.

## **COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION AND INPUT**

No commission recommendation or input is associated with this action.

## **CEQA**

Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Environmental Assessment for the I-280/Winchester Boulevard Interchange Improvements Project, 2024.

In its role as the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Caltrans prepared an EIR for the Project. The EIR concluded that the Project would result in significant impacts with regard to air quality, biological resources, noise and vibration, and parks, but that all of those effects would be reduced to less-than-

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significant by mitigation measures included in the Project. The EIR also concluded that the Project would result in significant and unavoidable visual/aesthetic impacts.

In September 2024, the EIR was certified by Caltrans as being in compliance with CEQA, and a Findings and a Statement of Overriding Considerations were adopted.

As one of the funding agencies for the Project, the City of San José is considered a Responsible Agency under CEQA and is obligated to independently evaluate the adequacy of the EIR and make findings regarding the significant environmental impacts identified in the EIR. These findings are included in the resolution, which must be adopted prior to the City's approval of the Project.

### **PUBLIC SUBSIDY REPORTING**

This item does not include a public subsidy as defined in section 53083 or 53083.1 of the California Government Code or the City's Open Government Resolution.

/s/  
JOHN RISTOW  
Director, Department of Transportation

For questions, please contact Florin Lapustea, Division Manager, Department of Transportation at [Florin.Lapustea@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:Florin.Lapustea@sanjoseca.gov) or (408) 705-5209.

### **ATTACHMENT:**

Figure 1 – Project Area Map

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